



VOLUME 1 • A–J
INDEX

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE
BLUES

EDWARD
KOMARA
EDITOR

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BLUES

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BLUES

VOLUME 1

A–J
INDEX

EDWARD KOMARA
EDITOR

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Ace, Johnny

Aces, The

Acey, Johnny

Acklin, Barbara

Adams, Alberta

Adams, Arthur

Adams, Dr. Jo Jo

Adams, Faye

Adams, John Tyler “J. T.”

Adams, Johnny

Adams, Marie

Adams, Woodrow Wilson

Adelphi Records

Adins, Joris “Georges”

Admirals, The

Advent Records

A.F.O.

Africa

Agee, Raymond Clinton “Ray”

Agram Blues/Old Tramp

Agwada, Vince

Ajax

Akers, Garfield

Alabama

Aladdin/Score

Alert

Alexander, Algernon “Texas”

Alexander, Arthur

Alexander, Dave (Omar Hakim Khayyam)

Alix, May

Allen, Annisteen

Allen, Bill “Hoss”

Allen, Lee

Allen, Pete

Allen, Ricky

Alligator

Allison, Bernard

Allison, Luther

Allison, Mose

Allison, Ray “Killer”

Allman Brothers Band

Alston, Jamie

Alzheimer, Joshua “Josh”

American Folk Blues Festival (AFBF)

Amerson, Richard

Ammons, Albert

Anderson, Alvin “Little Pink”

Anderson, Bob “Little Bobby”

Anderson, Elester

Anderson, Jimmy

Anderson, Kip

Anderson, “Little” Willie

Anderson, Pinkney “Pink”

Animals

Antone’s

Apollo/Lloyds/Timely

ARC (American Record Corporation)

Arcenaux, Fernest

Archia, Tom

Archibald

Archive of American Folk Song

Ardoin, Alphonse “Bois Sec”

Ardoin, Amédé

Arhoolie/Blues Classics/Folk Lyric

Arkansas

Armstrong, Howard “Louie Bluie”

Armstrong, James

Armstrong, Louis

Armstrong, Thomas Lee “Tom”

Arnett, Al

Arnold, Billy Boy

Arnold, Jerome

Arnold, Kokomo

Arrington, Manuel

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Ashford, R. T.

Atlanta

Atlantic/Atco/Spark

Atlas

AudioQuest

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August, Lynn

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Austin, Lovie

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Bailey, Deford
Bailey, Kid
Bailey, Mildred
Bailey, Ray
Baker, Etta
Baker, Houston
Baker, LaVern
Baker, Mickey
Baker, Willie
Baldry, “Long” John
Ball, Marcia
Ballard, Hank
Ballou, Classie
Bandera
Bands
Banjo
Bankhead, Tommy
Banks, Chico
Banks, Jerry
Banks, L. V.
Bankston, Dick
Banner
Baraka, Amiri
Barbecue Bob
Barbee, John Henry
Barker, Blue Lu
Barker, Danny
Barksdale, Everett
Barner, Wiley
Barnes, George
Barnes, Roosevelt Melvin “Booba”
Barrelhouse
Bartholomew, Dave
Barton, Lou Ann
Bascomb, Paul
Basie, Count
Bass
Bass, Fontella
Bass, Ralph
Bassett, Johnnie
Bastin, Bruce
Bates, Lefty
Batts, Will
Bayou
Bea & Baby

Beacon
Beaman, Lottie
Bear Family
Beard, Chris
Beard, Joe
Beasley, Jimmy
Beauregard, Nathan
Belfour, Robert
Bell, Brenda
Bell, Carey
Bell, Earl
Bell, Ed
Bell, Jimmie
Bell, Lurrie
Bell, T. D.
Below, Fred
Below, LaMarr Chatmon
Belvin, Jesse
Bender, D. C.
Bennet, Bobby “Guitar”
Bennett, Anthony “Duster”
Bennett, Wayne T.
Benoit, Tab
Benson, Al
Bentley, Gladys Alberta
Benton, Brook
Benton, Buster
Bernhardt, Clyde (Edric Barron)
Berry, Chuck
Berry, Richard
Bibb, Eric
Big Bad Smitty
Big Boss Man (Hi-Heel Sneakers)
Big Doo Wopper
Big Lucky
Big Maceo
Big Maybelle
Big Memphis Ma Rainey
Big Three Trio
Big Time Sarah
Big Town
Big Twist
Bigeou, Esther
Billington, Johnnie
Binder, Dennis “Long Man”
Biograph
Bishop, Elvin
Bizor, Billy
Black & Blue/Isabel/Riverboat
Black & White
Black Ace
Black Angel Blues (Sweet Little Angel)
Black Bob
Black Magic
Black Newspaper Press

Black Patti
 Black Sacred Music
 Black Swan Records
 Black Top
 Blackwell, Otis
 Blackwell, Robert “Bumps”
 Blackwell, Scrapper
 Blackwell, Willie “61”
 Blake, Cicero
 Bland, Bobby “Blue”
 Blanks, Birleanna
 Blaylock, Travis “Harmonica Slim”
 Blind Blake
 Blind Pig
 Block, Rory
 Bloomfield, Michael
 Blue Horizon
 Blue Lake
 Blue, Little Joe
 Blue Moon (Spain)
 Blue Smitty
 Blue Suit
 Blue Thumb
 Bluebird
 Blues
 Blues and Rhythm
 Blues Ballad
 Blues Boy Willie
 Blues Boy’s Kingdom
 Blues Brothers
 Blues Connoisseur
 Blues Folklore
 Blues in the Night
 Blues Incorporated
 Blues Project
 Bluesbreakers
 Bo, Eddie
 Bobbin
 Bogan, Lucille
 Bogan, Ted
 Bogart, Deanna
 Bohee Brothers
 Boines, Sylvester
 Boll Weevil Bill
 Bollin, Zuzu
 Bond, Graham
 Bonds, Son
 Bonner, Weldon H. Phillip “Juke Boy”
 Boogie Chillen’
 Boogie Jake
 Boogie Woogie Red
 Book Binder, Roy
 Booker, Charlie (Charley)
 Booker, James
 Booze, Beatrice “Wee Bea”
 Borum, “Memphis” Willie
 Bostic, Earl
 Boston Blackie
 Bouchillon, Chris
 Bowman, Priscilla
 Bowser, Erbie
 Boy Blue
 Boyack, Pat
 Boyd, Eddie
 Boyd, Louie
 Boykin, Brenda
 Boyson, Cornelius “Boysaw”
 Boze, Calvin B.
 Bracey, Ishmon
 Bracken, James C.
 Bradford, Perry
 Bradshaw, Evans
 Bradshaw, Myron “Tiny”
 Braggs, Al “TNT”
 Brainstorm
 Bramhall, Doyle
 Branch, William Earl “Billy”
 Brandon, Skeeter
 Brenston, Jackie
 Brewer, Clarence “King Clarentz”
 Brewer, Jim “Blind”
 Brewster, Reverend William Herbert
 Bridges, Curley
 Brim, Grace
 Brim, John
 Brim, John Jr.
 Britton, Joe
 Broadway
 Brockman, Polk
 Bronze
 Brooks, “Big” Leon
 Brooks, Columbus
 Brooks, Hadda
 Brooks, Lonnie
 Broonzy, Big Bill
 Brown, Ada
 Brown, Andrew
 Brown, Arelean
 Brown, Bessie (Ohio)
 Brown, Bessie (Texas)
 Brown, Buster
 Brown, Charles
 Brown, Clarence “Gatemouth”
 Brown, Cleo
 Brown, Dusty
 Brown, Gabriel
 Brown, Hash
 Brown, Henry “Papa”
 Brown, Ida G.
 Brown, J. T.

LIST OF ENTRIES A–Z

Brown, James
 Brown, John Henry “Bubba”
 Brown, Lillyn
 Brown, Nappy
 Brown, Olive
 Brown, Oscar III “Bobo”
 Brown, Pete
 Brown, Richard “Rabbit”
 Brown, Roy James
 Brown, Ruth
 Brown, “Texas” Johnny
 Brown, Walter
 Brown, Willie Lee
 Brozman, Bob
 Brunswick
 Bruynoghe, Yannick
 Bryant, Beulah
 Bryant, Precious
 Bryant, Rusty
 Buchanan, Roy
 Buckner, Willie (Willa) Mae
 Buckwheat Zydeco
 Buford, George “Mojo”
 Bull City Red
 Bullet
 Bunn, Teddy
 Burks, Eddie
 Burley, Dan
 Burns, Eddie
 Burns, Jimmy
 Burnside, R. L.
 Burnside Records
 Burrage, Harold
 Burris, J.C.
 Burrow, Cassell
 Burse, Charlie
 Burton, Aron
 Butler, George “Wild Child”
 Butler, Henry
 Butler, Jerry
 Butler Twins
 Butterbeans and Susie
 Butterfield, Paul
 Byrd, John

C

Cadillac Baby
 Caesar, Harry “Little”
 Cage, James “Butch”
 Cain, Chris
 Cain, Perry
 Callender, Red

Callicott, Joe
 Calloway, Cab
 Calloway, Harrison
 Cameo
 Campbell, “Blind” James
 Campbell, Carl
 Campbell, Eddie C.
 Campbell, John
 Canned Heat
 Cannon, Gus
 Cannonball Records
 Capitol
 Carbo, Hayward “Chuck”
 Carbo, Leonard “Chick”
 Careless Love
 Carmichael, James “Lucky”
 Carolina Slim
 Caron, Danny
 Carr, Barbara
 Carr, Leroy
 Carr, Sam
 Carradine, William “Cat-Iron”
 Carrier, Roy Jr. “Chubby”
 Carson, Nelson
 Carter, Betty
 Carter, Bo
 Carter, Goree
 Carter, Joe
 Carter, Levester “Big Lucky”
 Carter, Vivian
 Casey Jones
 Casey, Smith
 Caston, Leonard “Baby Doo”
 Castro, Tommy
 Catfish
 Catfish Blues
 Catfish Keith
 Cava-Tone Recording
 C.C. Rider
 Cee-Jay
 Celeste
 Cephas, John
 Chamblee, Edward Leon “Eddie”
 Champion (Indiana)
 Champion (Tennessee)
 Chance
 Chandler, Gene
 Charity, Pernell
 Charles Ford Band, The
 Charles, Ray
 Charles, Rockie
 Charly
 Chart
 Charters, Samuel Barclay
 Chatmon, Sam

Chavis, Boozoo
 Cheatham, Jimmy and Jeannie
 Cheeks, Reverend Julius
 Chenier, C. J.
 Chenier, Cleveland
 Chenier, Clifton
 Chenier, Morris "Big"
 Chenier, Roscoe
 Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet
 Chicago
 Chief/Profile/Age
 Chitlin Circuit
 Christian, Charlie
 Christian, Johnny "Little"
 Chudd, Lewis Robert "Lew"
 Church, Eugene
 Cincinnati
 C.J.
 Clapton, Eric
 Clark, "Big" Sam
 Clark, Dave
 Clark, Dee
 Clark, W. C.
 Clarke, William
 Class
 Classics
 Clay, Francis
 Clay, Otis
 Clayton, Peter Joe "Doctor"
 Clayton, Willie
 Clearwater, Eddy
 Cleveland, Reverend James
 Clovers, The
 Club 51
 Coasters, The
 Cobb, Arnett
 Cobbs, Willie
 Cobra/Artistic
 Cohn, Larry
 Cole, Ann
 Cole, Nat King
 Coleman, Deborah
 Coleman, Gary "B. B."
 Coleman, Jaybird
 Coleman, Michael
 Coleman, Wallace
 Collectables
 Collins, Albert
 Collins, Little Mac
 Collins, Louis "Mr. Bo"
 Collins, Sam
 Columbia
 Combo
 Conley, Charles
 Connor, Joanna

Conqueror
 Convict Labor
 Cooder, Ry
 Cook, Ann
 Cooke, Sam
 Cooper, Jack L.
 Copeland, Johnny "Clyde"
 Copeland, Shemekia
 Copley, Al
 Corley, Dewey
 Cosse, Ike
 Costello, Sean
 Cotten, Elizabeth
 Cotton, James
 Council, Floyd "Dipper Boy"
 Coun-tree
 Country Music
 Courtney, Tom "Tomcat"
 Cousin Joe
 Covington, Robert
 Cow Cow Blues
 Cox, Ida
 Crafton, Harry "Fats"
 Crawford, James "Sugar Boy"
 Cray, Robert
 Crayton, Connie Curtis "Pee Wee"
 Crazy Cajun Records
 Creach, Papa John
 Cream
 Crippen, Katie
 Crochet, Cleveland
 Crockett, G. L.
 Crothers, Benjamin "Scatman"
 Crown
 Crudup, Arthur William "Big Boy"
 Crump, Jesse "Tiny"
 Cuby and the Blizzards
 Curtis, James "Peck"
 Cusic, Eddie

D

Dale, Larry
 Dallas, Leroy
 Dallas String Band
 Dance: Artistic
 Dance: Audience Participation
 Danceland
 Dane, Barbara
 Daniels, Jack
 Daniels, Julius
 Darby, Ike "Big Ike"
 Darby, Teddy

LIST OF ENTRIES A–Z

Darnell, Larry
 Davenport, Cow-Cow
 Davenport, Jed
 Davenport, Lester “Mad Dog”
 Davies, Cyril
 Davies, Debbie
 Davis, “Blind” John
 Davis, Carl
 Davis, Cedell
 Davis, Eddie “Lockjaw”
 Davis, Geater
 Davis, Guy
 Davis, James “Thunderbird”
 Davis, Katherine
 Davis, Larry
 Davis, “Little” Sammy
 Davis, Mamie “Galore”
 Davis, Maxwell
 Davis, “Maxwell Street” Jimmy
 Davis, Quint
 Davis, Reverend Gary
 Davis, Tiny
 Davis, Tyrone
 Davis, Walter
 Dawkins, James Henry “Jimmy”
 Day, Bobby
 De Luxe/Regal
 Dean, Joe “Joe Dean from Bowling Green”
 Decca
 Decca/Coral/MCA
 Dee, David
 Delafosse, Geno
 Delafosse, John
 Delaney, Mattie
 Delaney, Thomas Henry “Tom”
 DeLay, Paul
 Delmark
 Derby (New York)
 DeSanto, Sugar Pie
 DeShay, James
 Detroit
 Detroit Junior
 Dial
 Dickerson, “Big” John
 Diddley, Bo
 Diddley Bow
 Dig/Ultra
 Dillard, Varetta
 Dirty Dozens
 Discography
 Dixie Hummingbirds
 Dixieland Jug Blowers
 Dixon, Floyd
 Dixon, Willie James
 Dizz, Lefty
 Document
 Doggett, Bill
 Dollar, Johnny
 Dolphin, John
 Domino, Fats
 Donegan, Dorothy
 Dooley, Simmie
 DooTone/DooTo/Authentic
 Dorsey, Lee
 Dorsey, Mattie
 Dorsey, Thomas A.
 Dot Records
 Dotson, Jimmy “Louisiana”
 Douglas, K. C.
 Down Home Blues
 Doyle, Charlie “Little Buddy”
 Dr. Daddy-O
 Dr. Hepcat
 Dr. John
 Drain, Charles
 Drifters
 Drifting Blues
 Drummond
 Drums
 Duarte, Chris
 Duke
 Duke/Peacock/Back Beat
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 Dunbar, Scott
 Duncan, Al
 Duncan, Little Arthur
 Dunn, Roy Sidney
 Dunson, Johnnie Mae
 Dupont, August “Dimes”
 Dupree, Al “Big Al”
 Dupree, Champion Jack
 Dupree, Cornell
 Durham, Eddie
 Duskin, Big Joe
 Dyer, Johnny

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 Ealey, Robert
 Earl, Ronnie
 Earwig
 Easton, Amos
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 Ebony (1)
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 Eckstine, Billy

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 Edmonds, Elga
 Edsel
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 Edwards, Bernice
 Edwards, Chuck
 Edwards, Clarence
 Edwards, David “Honeyboy”
 Edwards, Frank
 Edwards, “Good Rockin’” Charles
 Edwards, Willie
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 El, Edward H. “Eddie”
 Electric Flag
 Electro-Fi
 Elektra Records
 Elem, Robert “Big Mojo”
 11-29
 Elko
 Ellis, Big Chief
 Ellis, Tinsley
 Embry, “Queen” Sylvia
 Emerson, William Robert “Billy the Kid”
 Erby, Jack
 Esquerita
 Estes, John Adam “Sleepy John”
 Evans, David Huhne, Jr.
 Evans, Margie
 Everett, Betty
 Evidence
 Excello/Nashboro
 Excelsior/Exclusive
 Ezell, Will

F

Fabulous Thunderbirds
 Fahey, John
 Fairfield Four
 Fame
 Fantasy/Prestige/Bluesville/Galaxy/
 Milestone/Riverside Record Companies
 Farr, Deitra
 Fattening Frogs for Snakes
 Feature
 Fedora
 Ferguson, Robert “H-Bomb”
 Fiddle
 Field Hollers
 Fields, Bobby
 Fields, Kansas

Fieldstones
 Fife and Drums
 Films
 Finnell, Doug
 Fire/Fury/Enjoy/Red Robin
 Five Blind Boys of Alabama
 Five (“5”) Royales
 Flash
 Fleetwood Mac
 Flemons, Wade
 Flerlage, Raeburn
 Flower, Mary
 Floyd, Frank “Harmonica”
 Flying Fish
 Flynn, Billy
 Foddrrell, Turner
 Foghat
 Foley, Sue
 Fontenot, Canray
 Ford, Clarence J.
 Ford, James Lewis Carter “T-Model”
 Ford, Robben Lee
 Forehand, A. C. and “Blind” Mamie
 Formal
 Forms
 Forsyth, Guy
 Fortune/Hi-Q
 Fortune, Jesse
 Foster, “Baby Face” Leroy
 Foster, Little Willie
 Foster, Willie James
 Fountain, Clarence
 Four Brothers
 Fowler, T. J.
 Foxx, Inez and Charlie
 Fran, Carol
 Francis, David Albert “Panama”
 Frank, Edward
 Frankie and Johnny
 Franklin, Guitar Pete
 Frankin, Reverend C. L.
 Frazier, Calvin
 Freedom/Eddie’s
 Freeman, Denny
 Freund, Steve
 Frisco
 Frog/Cygnnet
 Frost, Frank Otis
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 Fuller, Jesse “Lone Cat”
 Fuller, Johnny
 Fulp, Preston
 Fulson, Lowell
 Funderburgh, Anson
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G

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Gaillard, Bulee “Slim”
Gaines, Earl
Gaines, Grady
Gaines, Roy
Gaither, Bill (1)
Gaither, Bill (2) “Leroy’s Buddy”
Gales Brothers
Gallagher, Rory
Gandy Dancers
Gant, Cecil
Garcia, Jerome John “Jerry”
Garibay, Randy Jr.
Garland, Terry
Garlow, Clarence “Bon Ton”
Garner, Larry
Garon, Paul
Garrett, Robert “Bud”
Garrett, Vernon
Gary, Indiana
Gary, Tommy
Gates, Reverend James M.
Gayles, Billy
Gayten, Paul
Geddins, Bob
Gennett
Georgia
Geremia, Paul
Giant/Gamma/Globe
Gibson, Clifford
Gibson, Jack
Gibson, Lacy
Gillum, Jazz
Gilmore, Boyd
Gipson, Byron “Wild Child”
Glenn, Lloyd
Glover
Glover, Henry
Going Down Slow (I’ve Had My Fun)
Gold Star
Goldband Records
Golden Gate Quartet
Goldstein, Kenneth
Goldwax
Gooden, Tony
Goodman, Shirley
Gordon, Jay
Gordon, Jimmie
Gordon, Rosco(e)
Gordon, Sax
Gotham/20th Century
Granderson, John Lee

Grant, Leola “Coot”
Graves, Roosevelt
Gray, Arvella “Blind”
Gray, Henry
Great Depression
Great Migration
Green, Al
Green, Cal
Green, Charlie
Green, Clarence
Green, Clarence “Candy”
Green, Grant
Green, Jesse
Green, Lil
Green, Norman G. “Guitar Slim”
Green, Peter
Greene, L. C.
Greene, Rudolph Spencer “Rudy”
Greer, “Big” John Marshall
Grey Ghost
Griffin, Bessie
Griffin, “Big” Mike
Griffin, Johnny
Griffin, Raymond L. “R. L.”
Griffith, Shirley
Grimes, Lloyd “Tiny”
Griswold, Art and Roman
Grossman, Stefan
Guesnon, George “Curley” “Creole”
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Guitar Crusher
Guitar Gabriel
Guitar Jr.
Guitar Kelley
Guitar Nubbitt
Guitar Shorty
Guitar Slim
Guitar Slim Jr.
Gunter, Arthur Neal
Guralnick, Peter
Guthrie, Woodrow Wilson “Woody”
Guy, George “Buddy”
Guy, Phil
Guy, Vernon

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Hairston, “Brother” Will
Hall, René (Joseph)
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Hamilton, Larry
Hammond, Clay

Hammond, John Henry, Jr.
 Hammond, John Paul
 Hampton, Lionel
 Handy, William Christopher “W. C.”
 Hare, Auburn “Pat”
 Harlem Hamfats
 Harman, James
 Harmograph
 Harmonica
 Harmonica Fats
 Harney, Richard “Hacksaw”
 Harper, Joe
 Harpo, Slim
 Harrington/Clearwater Family
 Harris, Corey
 Harris, Don “Sugarcane”
 Harris, Hi Tide
 Harris, Homer
 Harris, Kent L. “Boogaloo”
 Harris, Peppermint
 Harris, Thurston
 Harris, Tony
 Harris, William “Big Foot”
 Harris, Wynonie
 Harrison, Wilbert
 Hart, Alvin “Youngblood”
 Hart, Hattie
 Harvey, Ted
 Hatch, Provine, Jr. “Little Hatch”
 Hawkins, Ernie
 Hawkins, Erskine
 Hawkins, Screamin’ Jay
 Hawkins, Ted
 Hawkins, Walter “Buddy Boy”
 Hayes, Clifford
 Hayes, Henry
 Hazell, Patrick
 Healey, Jeff
 Heartsman, Johnny
 Hegamin, Lucille
 Helfer, Erwin
 Hemphill, Jessie Mae
 Hemphill, Julius Arthur
 Hemphill, Sid
 Henderson, Bugs
 Henderson, Duke “Big”
 Henderson, Katherine
 Henderson, Mike (I)
 Henderson, Mike (II)
 Henderson, Rosa
 Hendrix, Jimi
 Henry, Clarence “Frogman”
 Henry, Richard “Big Boy”
 Hensley, William P. “Washboard Willie”
 Herald/Ember
 Heritage
 Herwin (1943 and Before)
 Herwin (1967 and After)
 Hesitation Blues
 Hess, Chicago Bob
 Hi Records
 Hicks, Charlie
 Hicks, Edna
 Hide Away
 Higgins, Charles William “Chuck”
 Higgins, Monk
 Higgs, George
 High Water
 HighTone
 Highways
 Hill, Bertha “Chippie”
 Hill, Jessie
 Hill, Joseph “Blind Joe”
 Hill, King Solomon
 Hill, Michael
 Hill, Raymond
 Hill, Rosa Lee
 Hill, Z. Z.
 Hillery, Mabel
 Hinton, Algia Mae
 Hinton, Edward Craig “Eddie”
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 Historiography
 Hite, Les
 Hite, Mattie
 Hoeke, Rob
 Hogan, Silas
 Hogg, John
 Hogg, Smokey
 Holder, Ace
 Hole, Dave
 Holeman, John Dee
 Holiday, Billie
 Hollimon, Clarence
 Hollins, Tony
 Holloway, Red
 Hollywood Fats
 Holmes Brothers
 Holmes, Wright
 Holmstrom, Rick
 Holt, Nick
 Holts, Roosevelt
 Home Cooking
 Homesick James
 Hoochie Coochie Man
 Hoodoo
 Hooker, Earl Zebedee
 Hooker, John Lee
 Hopkins, Joel
 Hopkins, Linda

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Hornbuckle, Linda
Horton, Big Walter
House, Eddie "Son"
House of Blues Records
House-Rent Parties
Houston, Edward Wilson "Bee"
Houston Guitar Slim
Houston, Joe (Joseph Abraham)
Hovington, Franklin "Frank"
How Long How Long (Sitting
on Top of the World)
Howard, Camille
Howard, Rosetta
Howell, Joshua Barnes "Peg Leg"
Howlin' Wolf
Huff, Luther and Percy
Hughes, Joe "Guitar"
Humes, Helen
Hummel, Mark
Humor
Hunt, Daniel Augusta "D. A."
Hunt, Otis "Sleepy"
Hunt, Van Zula Carter
Hunter, Alberta
Hunter, Ivory Joe
Hunter, Long John
Hurt, John Smith "Mississippi John"
Hutto, Joseph Benjamin "J.B."
Hy-Tone

I

I Believe I'll Make a Change (Dust My Broom)
I Just Want to Make Love to You
Ichiban Records
I'm a Man (Mannish Boy)
I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town
Imperial
Instant
Irma
Ironing Board Sam
Ivory Records

J

Jackson, Armand "Jump"
Jackson, Benjamin Clarence "Bullmoose"
Jackson, Bill
Jackson, Bo Weavil
Jackson Brothers

Jackson, Calvin (1)
Jackson, Calvin (2)
Jackson, Charles "Papa Charlie"
Jackson, Cordell "Guitar Granny"
Jackson, Fruteland
Jackson, George Henry
Jackson, Grady "Fats"
Jackson, Jim
Jackson, John
Jackson, Lee
Jackson, Lil' Son
Jackson, Little Willie
Jackson, Mahalia
Jackson, Vasti
Jackson, Willis "Gator" "Gator Tail"
Jacque, Beau
Jacquet, Illinois
James, Clifton
James, Elmore
James, Etta
James, Jesse
James, Nehemiah "Skip"
James, Steve
Japan
Jarrett, James "Pigmeat"
Jarrett, Theodore "Ted"
Jaxon, Frankie "Half Pint"
Jaxyson
Jazz
Jefferson, Blind Lemon
Jefferson, Bonnie
Jeffrey, Robert Ernest Lee "Bob"
JEMF (John Edwards Memorial Foundation)
Jenkins, Bobo
Jenkins, Duke
Jenkins, Gus
Jenkins, Johnny
Jesus Is a Dying Bed Maker (In
My Time of Dying)
Jewel/Paula/Ronn
JOB (J.O.B.)
Joe Davis/Davis/Beacon
John Henry
John, Little Willie
Johnny Nocturne Band
Johnson, Alvin Lee
Johnson, Al "Snuff"
Johnson, Big Jack
Johnson, Blind Willie
Johnson, Buddy
Johnson, Conrad
Johnson, Earnest "44 Flunkey"
Johnson, Edith North
Johnson, Ernie

Johnson, Henry "Rufe"
 Johnson, Herman E.
 Johnson, James Price
 Johnson, James "Steady Roll"
 Johnson, James "Stump"
 Johnson, Joe
 Johnson, Johnnie
 Johnson, L. V.
 Johnson, Larry
 Johnson, Lemuel Charles "Lem"
 Johnson, Lonnie
 Johnson, Louise
 Johnson, Luther "Georgia Boy" "Snake"
 Johnson, Luther "Houserocker"
 Johnson, Margaret
 Johnson, Mary
 Johnson, Pete
 Johnson, Plas
 Johnson, Robert Leroy
 Johnson, Syl
 Johnson, Tommy
 Johnson, Wallace
 Johnson, Willie Lee
 Joliet
 Jones, Albennie
 Jones, Andrew "Junior Boy"
 Jones, Bessie
 Jones, Birmingham
 Jones, Calvin "Fuzzy"
 Jones, Carl
 Jones, Casey
 Jones, Clarence M.
 Jones, Curtis
 Jones, Dennis "Little Hat"
 Jones, Eddie "One-String"
 Jones, Floyd
 Jones, James "Middle Walter"
 Jones, Joe
 Jones, "Little" Johnny
 Jones, Little Sonny
 Jones, Maggie
 Jones, Max
 Jones, Moody
 Jones, Paul "Wine"
 Jones, Tutu
 Jones, Willie
 Joplin, Janis
 Jordan, Charley
 Jordan, Louis
 Jordan, Luke
 JSP
 Jubilee/Josie/It's a Natural
 Jug
 Juke Joints
 JVB

K

Kane, Candye
 Kansas City
 Kansas City Red
 Kaplan, Fred
 Katz, Bruce
 Kazoo
 K-Doe, Ernie
 Keb' Mo'
 Kellum, Alphonso "Country"
 Kelly, Jo Ann
 Kelly, Paul
 Kelly, Vance
 Kelton, Robert "Bob"
 Kemble, Will Ed
 Kennedy, Jesse "Tiny"
 Kenner, Chris
 Kent, Willie
 Key to the Highway
 Keynote
 Kid Stormy Weather
 Killing Floor (The Lemon Song)
 Kimbrough, David, Jr.
 Kimbrough, Junior
 Kimbrough, Lottie
 King, Al
 King, Albert
 King, Bnois
 King, Bobby
 King, Chris Thomas
 King Curtis
 King, Earl
 King, Eddie
 King Ernest
 King/Federal/Queen
 King, Freddie
 King, "Little" Jimmy
 King, Riley B. "B. B."
 King, Saunders
 King Snake
 Kinsey, Lester "Big Daddy"
 Kinsey Report
 Kirk, Andrew Dewey "Andy"
 Kirkland, Eddie
 Kirkland, Leroy
 Kirkpatrick, Bob
 Kittrell, Christine
 Kizart, Lee
 Kizart, Willie
 K.O.B. (Kings of The Blues)
 Koda, Michael "Cub"
 Koerner, Ray & Glover
 Kokomo

LIST OF ENTRIES A–Z

Kolax, King
 Korner, Alexis
 Kubek, Smokin' Joe

L

L + R

Lacey, Rubin "Rube"
 Lacey, William James "Bill"
 Lambert, Lloyd
 Lance, Major
 Landreth, Sonny
 Lane, Mary
 Lang, Eddie
 Lang, Jonny
 Lanor Records
 Larkin, Milton "Tippy"
 LaSalle, Denise
 Lastie, David
 Latimore, Benny
 Laury, Booker T.
 Lawhorn, Samuel "Sammy"
 Lawlars, Ernest "Little Son Joe"
 Laws, Johnny
 Lay, Sam
 Lazy Lester
 Leadbelly
 Leadbitter, Michael Andrew "Mike"
 Leake, Lafayette
 Leaner, George and Ernest
 Leary, S. P.
 Leavy, Calvin
 Leavy, Hosea
 Led Zeppelin
 Lee, Bonnie
 Lee, Frankie
 Lee, John Arthur
 Lee, Julia
 Lee, Lovie
 Leecan, Bobby
 Left Hand Frank
 Legendary Blues Band
 Leiber and Stoller
 Leigh, Keri
 Lejeune, Iry
 Lembo, Kim
 Lenoir, J.B.
 Leonard, Harlan
 Let the Good Times Roll
 Levee Blues
 Levy, Louis "Lou"
 Levy, Morris
 Levy, Ron

Lewis, Bobby
 Lewis, Furry
 Lewis, Johnie (Johnny)
 Lewis, Meade "Lux"
 Lewis, Noah
 Lewis, Pete "Guitar"
 Lewis, Smiley
 Libraries
 Liggins, Jimmy
 Liggins, Joe
 Liggions, Dave
 Lightfoot, Alexander "Papa George"
 Lightnin' Slim
 Lincoln, Charlie
 Linkchain, Hip
 Lipscomb, Mance
 Liston, Virginia
 Literature, Blues in
 Little, Bobby
 Little Buster
 Little Charlie
 Little Mike
 Little Milton
 Little Miss Cornshucks
 Little Richard
 Little Sonny
 Little Walter
 Littlefield, "Little" Willie
 Littlejohn, John
 Lockwood, Robert, Jr.
 Lofton, "Cripple" Clarence
 Logan, John "Juke"
 Lomax, Alan
 Lomax, John Avery
 London-American
 Lonesome Sundown
 Long, James Baxter "J. B."
 Lornell, Christopher "Kip"
 Louis, Joe Hill
 Louisiana
 Louisiana Red
 Love, Clayton
 Love, Coy "Hot Shot"
 Love, Preston
 Love, Willie
 Lowe, Sammy
 Lowery, Robert "Bob"
 Lowry, Peter B. "Pete"
 Lucas, William "Lazy Bill"
 Lumber Camps
 LuPine
 Lusk, "Professor" Eddie
 Lutchter, Joe
 Lutchter, Nellie
 Lynching and the Blues

Lynn, Barbara
 Lynn, Trudy
 Lyons, Lonnie

M

M & O Blues
 Mabon, Willie
 Mack, Lonnie
 MacLeod, Doug
 Macon, Albert
 Macon, John Wesley “Mr. Shortstuff”
 Macon, Q. T.
 Macy’s
 Mad/M&M
 Maghett, Samuel Gene “Magic Sam”
 Magic Slim
 Maiden, Sidney
 Maison du Soul
 Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor
 Malaco/Waldoxy
 Mallard, Sax
 Malo, Ron
 Malone, “John Jacob” J. J.
 Mama Talk to Your Daughter
 Mamlish Records
 Mandolin
 Mapleshade Records
 Mardi Gras
 Margolin, Bob
 Marketing
 Mars, Johnny
 Martin, Carl
 Martin, “Fiddlin’” Joe
 Martin, Sallie
 Martin, Sara
 Matchbox
 Matchbox Blues
 Maxwell, David
 May, Roosevelt
 Mayall, John
 Mayes, Pete
 Mayfield, Curtis
 Mayfield, Percy
 Mays, Curley
 Mayweather, “Earring” George
 McCain, Jerry “Boogie”
 McCall, Cash
 McClain, Mary “Diamond Teeth”
 McClain, “Mighty” Sam
 McClennan, Tommy
 McClinton, Delbert

McClure, Bobby
 McCoy, Charlie
 McCoy, George and Ethel
 McCoy, “Kansas” Joe
 McCoy, Robert Edward
 McCoy, Rose Marie
 McCoy, Viola
 McCracklin, Jimmy
 McCray, Larry
 McDaniel, Clara “Big”
 McDaniel, Floyd
 McDaniel, Hattie
 McDowell, Fred
 McGee, Cleo “Big Bo”
 McGee, Reverend F. W.
 McGhee, Brownie
 McGhee, Granville “Sticks”
 McGill, Rollee
 McGuirt, Clarence “Candyman”
 McIlwaine, Ellen
 McKune, James
 McMahan, Andrew “Blueblood”
 McMullen, Fred
 McNeely, Cecil James “Big Jay”
 McPhatter, Clyde Lensley
 McPhee, Tony “T. S.”
 McShann, James Columbus “Jay”
 McTell, Blind Willie
 McVea, John Vivian “Jack”
 Mean Mistreater Mama
 Meaux, Huey P.
 Medwick, Joe
 Melodeon Records
 Melotone
 Melrose, Lester
 Memphis
 Memphis Blues, The (“Mama Don’ ’low”
 or “Mister Crump”)
 Memphis Jug Band
 Memphis Minnie
 Memphis Piano Red
 Memphis Slim
 Mercury/Fontana/Keynote/Blue Rock
 Merritt
 MGM (55000 R&B series)
 Mickle, Elmon “Drifting Slim”
 Mighty Clouds of Joy
 Milburn, Amos
 Miles, Josephine “Josie”
 Miles, Lizzie
 Miles, Luke “Long Gone”
 Miller, Clarence Horatio “Big”
 Miller, Jay D. “J. D.”
 Miller, Polk

LIST OF ENTRIES A–Z

Millet, McKinley “Li’l”
 Millinder, Lucky
 Milton, Roy
 Miltone
 Minner, D. C.
 Miracle/Premium
 Miss Rhapsody
 Mississippi
 Mississippi Jook Band
 Mississippi Matilda
 Mississippi Sheiks
 Mitchell, Bobby
 Mitchell, George
 Mitchell, “Little” Walter
 Mitchell, McKinley
 Mitchell, Willie
 Modern Blues Recordings
 Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM
 Molton, Flora
 Montgomery, Eurreal “Little Brother”
 Montgomery Ward
 Montoya, Coco
 Montrell, Roy
 Mooney, John
 Moore, Aaron
 Moore, Alexander “Whistlin’ Alex”
 Moore, Alice “Little”
 Moore, Dorothy
 Moore, Gary
 Moore, Johnny
 Moore, Johnny B.
 Moore, Monette
 Moore, Oscar
 Moore, Reverend Arnold Dwight “Gatemouth”
 Moore, Samuel David “Sam”
 Moore, William “Bill”
 Morello, Jimmy
 Morgan, Mike
 Morgan, Teddy
 Morganfield, “Big” Bill
 Morisette, Johnny “Two-Voice”
 Morton, Jelly Roll
 Mosaic
 Moss, Eugene “Buddy”
 Moten, Benjamin “Bennie”
 Motley, Frank Jr.
 Motown
 Mr. R&B Records
 Murphy, Matt “Guitar”
 Murphy, Willie
 Murray, Bobby
 Musselwhite, Charlie
 Mustang Sally
 My Black Mama (Walking Blues)
 Myers, Bob

Myers, Dave “Thumper”
 Myers, Louis
 Myers, Sam

N

Naftalin, Mark
 Napier, Simon
 Nappy Chin
 Nardella, Steve
 Nashville
 Neal, Kenny
 Neal, Raful
 Neely, “Little” Bobby
 Negro Art
 Nelson, Chicago Bob
 Nelson, Jimmy “T-99”
 Nelson, Romeo
 Nelson, Tracy
 Nettles, Isaiah
 Neville Brothers
 Newbern, Willie “Hambone Willie”
 Newborn, Calvin
 Newborn, Phineas, Jr.
 Newell, “Little” Eddie
 Nicholson, James David “J. D.”
 Nighthawk Records
 Nighthawk, Robert
 Nighthawks
 Nix, Willie
 Nixon, Elmore
 Nixon, Hattie
 Nolan, Lloyd
 Nolen, Jimmy
 North Mississippi AllStars
 Norwood, Sam
 Nulisch, Darrell

O

Oakland
 Oden, “St. Louis” Jimmy
 Odetta
 Odom, Andrew “Big Voice” “Little B. B.”
 Offitt, Lillian
 Oh Pretty Woman (Can’t Make You Make Love Me)
 OJL (Origin Jazz Library)
 O’Keh
 Old Swing-Master/Master
 Old Town
 Oldie Blues

Oliver, Paul
 Omar and the Howlers
 One Time Blues/Kokomo Blues (Sweet Home
 Chicago)
 O’Neal, Winston James “Jim”
 One-derful/M-Pac/Mar-V-lus/Toddlin Town
 Opera
 Ora Nelle
 Oriole
 Orioles
 Orleans
 Oscher, Paul
 Otis, Johnny
 Otis, Shuggie
 Overbea, Danny
 Overstreet, Nathaniel “Pops”
 Owens, Calvin
 Owens, Jack
 Owens, Jay
 Owens, Marshall

P

Page, Oran Thaddeus “Hot Lips”
 Palm, Horace M.
 Palmer, Earl
 Palmer, Robert
 Palmer, Sylvester
 Paramount
 Parker, Charlie
 Parker, Herman, Jr.
 “Little Junior” “Junior”
 Parker, Sonny
 Parkway
 Parr, Elven “L. V.”
 Pathé
 Patt, Frank “Honeyboy”
 Patterson, Bobby
 Pattman, Neal
 Patton, Charley
 Payne, John W. “Sonny”
 Payne, Odie Jr.
 Payton, Asie
 Peebles, Ann
 Peeples, Robert
 Peg Leg Sam
 Pejoe, Morris
 Perfect
 Periodicals
 Perkins, Al
 Perkins, Joe Willie “Pinetop”
 Perry, Bill (Mississippi)
 Perry, Bill (New York)
 Perry, Oscar Lee
 Peterson, James
 Peterson, Lucky
 Petway, Robert
 Phelps, Kelly Joe
 Phelps, Walter
 Phillips, Brewer
 Phillips, Earl
 Phillips, Gene
 Phillips, Little Esther
 Phillips, Washington
 Piano
 Piano C. Red
 Piano Red
 Piazza, Rod
 Piccolo, Greg
 Pichon, Walter G. “Fats”
 Pickens, Buster
 Pickett, Dan
 Piedmont (label)
 Piedmont (region)
 Pierce, Billie
 Pierson, Eugene
 Pierson, Leroy
 Ping
 Pinson, Reverend Leon
 Pitchford, Lonnie
 Pittman, Sampson
 Pittsburgh
 Plunkett, Robert
 Pomus, Jerome “Doc”
 Poonanny
 Popa Chubby
 Porter, David
 Porter, Jake
 Porter, King
 Portnoy, Jerry
 Powell, Eugene
 Powell, Vance “Tiny”
 Prater, Dave
 Presley, Elvis Aron
 Preston, Jimmy
 Prez Kenneth
 Price, “Big” Walter “The Thunderbird”
 Price, Lloyd
 Price, Sammy
 Primer, John
 Primich, Gary
 Professor Longhair
 Pryor, James Edward “Snooky”
 Prysock, Arthur
 Prysock, Wilbert “Red”
 Pugh, Joe Bennie “Forrest City Joe”
 Pullum, Joe
 Puritan

LIST OF ENTRIES A–Z

P-Vine Special
Pye/Nixa

Q

QRS
Qualls, Henry
Quattlebaum, Doug

R

R and B (1)
R and B (2)
Rachell, Yank
Racial Issues and the Blues
Radcliff, Bobby
Radio
Railroads
Rainey, Gertrude “Ma”
Rainey, Willie Guy
Raitt, Bonnie
Rankin, R. S.
Rap
Rapone, Al
Rascoe, Moses
Rawls, Johnny
Rawls, Louis Allen “Lou”
Ray, Floyd
Ray, Harmon
Ray, Kenny “Blue”
RCA/Victor/Bluebird/Camden/Groove/X/Vik
Recorded in Hollywood/Hollywood/
Cash/Lucky/Money
Recording
Rector, Milton
Red Lightnin’
Red Rooster, The
Reed, A. C.
Reed, Dalton
Reed, Francine
Reed, Jimmy
Reed, Lula
Reed, Mama
Reynolds, Big Jack
Reynolds, Blind Joe
Reynolds, Theodore “Teddy”
Rhino
Rhodes, Sonny
Rhodes, Todd
Rhodes, Walter “Lightnin’ Bug”

Rhumboogie
Rhythm
Rhythm and Blues
Rhythm Willie
Ric
Rice, “Sir Mack” Bonny
Richard, Rudolph “Rudy”
Richardson, C. C.
Richardson, Mona
Richbourg, John
Ricks, “Philadelphia” Jerry
Ridgley, Thomas “Tommy”
Riedy, Bob
Riggins, Richard “Harmonica Slim”
Riley, Judge Lawrence
Rishell, Paul
Rivers, Boyd
Roberts, Roy
Robicheaux, Coco
Robillard, Duke
Robinson, Alvin “Shine”
Robinson, Arthur Clay “A. C.”
Robinson, Bobby
Robinson, Elzadie
Robinson, Fenton
Robinson, Freddy
Robinson, James “Bat The Hummingbird”
Robinson, Jessie Mae
Robinson, Jimmie Lee
Robinson, L. C. “Good Rockin”
Robinson, Tad
Rochester, NY
Rock ‘n’ Roll
Rockin’ Dopsie
Rockin’/Glory
Rodgers, James Charles “Jimmie”
Rodgers, Sonny “Cat Daddy”
Rogers, Jimmy
Rogers, Roy
Roland, Walter
Roll and Tumble Blues
Rolling Stones
Romeo
Ron
Roomful of Blues
Rooster Blues
Roots/Paltram/Truth/For Specialists Only
Rosetta Records
Ross, Doctor Isaiah
Rothchild, Paul A.
Roulette, Freddie
Roulette/Rama
Rounder
Rounds, Ernestine Smith
Roy, Earnest “Guitar”

Royal, Marshal
 RST/RST Blues Document/Fantasy By
 Rubboard
 Rush, Bobby
 Rush, Otis
 Rushing, James Andrew "Jimmy"
 Russell, Tommie Lee
 Rykodisc

S

Sadler, Haskell Robert "Cool Papa"
 Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women
 Sain, Oliver
 Salgado, Curtis
 Samples, John T.
 San Francisco
 Sanders, Will Roy "Wilroy"
 Sane, Dan
 Sanford, Amos "Little"
 SAR/Derby
 Satherly, Art
 Saunders, Red
 Savoy Brown
 Savoy/National/Regent/Acorn
 Saxophone
 Saydak, Ken
 Sayles, Charlie
 Sayles, Johnny
 Scales
 Scales, Alonzo "Lonnie"
 Scepter/Wand
 Scott, Buddy
 Scott, Clifford
 Scott, Ecrettia Jacobs "E. C."
 Scott, Esther Mae "Mother"
 Scott, James, Jr.
 Scott, Joe
 Scott, "Little" Jimmy
 Scott, Marylin
 Scott, Sonny
 Scott-Adams, Peggy
 Scruggs, Irene
 SD (Steiner Davis)
 Seals, Son
 Sears, "Big" Al
 Sease, Marvin
 See That My Grave Is Kept Clean
 Seeley, Bob
 Sellers, Brother John
 Semien, "King Ivory" Lee
 Senegal, Paul "Lil' Buck"
 Sensation

Sequel
 7-11
 Seward, Alexander T. "Alec"
 Sex as Lyric Concept
 Seymour
 Shad
 Shake 'Em on Down
 Shakey Jake
 Shama
 Shanachie/Yazoo/Belzona/Blue Goose
 Shannon, Mem
 Shannon, Preston
 Shaw, Allen
 Shaw, Eddie
 Shaw, Eddie "Vaun," Jr.
 Shaw, Robert
 Shaw, Thomas "Tom"
 Shepherd, Kenny Wayne
 Sheppard, Bill "Bunky"
 Shields, Lonnie
 Shines, Johnny
 Shirley & Lee
 Short, J. D.
 Shower, "Little" Hudson
 Siegel-Schwall Band
 Signature
 Signifying Monkey, The
 Simien, "Rockin'" Sidney
 Simmons, Malcolm "Little Mack"
 Sims, Frankie Lee
 Sims, Henry "Son"
 Since I Met You Baby
 Singer, Hal
 Singing
 Singleton, T-Bone
 Sirens
 Sista Monica
 Sittin' In With/Jade/Jax/Mainstream
 Sloan, Henry
 Small, Drink
 Smith, Albert "Al"
 Smith, "Barkin'" Bill
 Smith, Bessie
 Smith, Boston
 Smith, Buster
 Smith, Byther
 Smith, Carrie
 Smith, Clara
 Smith, Clarence "Pine Top"
 Smith, Effie
 Smith, Floyd
 Smith, George "Harmonica"
 Smith, Huey "Piano"
 Smith, J. B.
 Smith, John T.

LIST OF ENTRIES A–Z

Smith, Lucius
 Smith, Mamie
 Smith, Moses “Whispering”
 Smith, Robert Curtis
 Smith, Talmadge “Tab”
 Smith, Trixie
 Smith, Willie “Big Eyes”
 Smith, Willie Mae Ford “Mother”
 Smither, Chris
 Smokestack Lightning
 Smokey Babe
 Smothers, Abraham “Little Smokey”
 Smothers, Otis “Big Smokey”
 Snow, Eddie
 Soileau, Floyd
 Solberg, James
 Solomon, Clifford
 Sons of Blues, The (The S.O.B. Band)
 SONY/Legacy/Columbia/Epic/OKeh
 Soul
 Sound Stage 7
 Spady, Clarence
 Spain
 Spand, Charlie
 Spann, Lucille
 Spann, Otis
 Spann, Pervis
 Sparks Brothers
 Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box
 Speckled Red
 Specter, Dave
 Speir, H.C.
 Spencer, Evans
 Spire
 Spires, Arthur “Big Boy”
 Spires, Bud
 Spirit of Memphis Quartet
 Spivey, Addie “Sweet Pease”
 Spivey, Elton “The Za Zu Girl”
 Spivey Records
 Spivey, Victoria
 Spoonful (A Spoonful Blues)
 Spoons
 Sprott, Horace
 Spruell, Freddie
 Spruill, James “Wild Jimmy”
 St. Louis Blues
 St. Louis, Missouri
 Stack Lee
 Stackhouse, Houston
 Staff/Dessa
 Staples, Roebuck “Pops”
 Star Talent/Talent
 Stark, Cootie
 Starr Piano Company
 Stash Records
 Stax/Volt
 Steiner, John
 Stephens, James “Guitar Slim”
 Stepney, Billie
 Stidham, Arbee
 Stinson Records
 Stokes, Frank
 Stone, Jesse
 Stormy Monday
 Storyville Records
 Stovall, Jewell “Babe”
 Stovepipe No. 1
 Straight Alky Blues
 Strehli, Angela
 Stroger, Bob
 Strother, James “Jimmie”
 Strother, Percy
 Stuckey, Henry
 Studebaker John
 Sue (1)
 Sue (2)
 Sugar Blue
 Sultan
 Sumlin, Hubert
 Sun/Phillips International/Flip
 Sunbeam
 Sunnyland Slim
 Sunrise (postwar)
 Sunrise (prewar)
 Super Chikan
 Super Disc
 Superior
 Supertone
 Supreme
 Swan Silvertone Singers
 Sweden
 Sweet Honey in the Rock
 Sweet Miss Coffy
 Swing Time/Down Beat
 Sykes, Roosevelt
 Sylvester, Hannah

T

Taggart, Blind Joe
 Tail Dragger
 Taj Mahal
 Takoma
 Talbot, Johnny
 Talty, Don
 Tampa Red

Tangerine Records
 Tarheel Slim
 Tarnopol, Nat
 Tarrant, Rabon
 Tarter and Gay
 Tasby, Finis
 Tate, Buddy
 Tate, Charles Henry “Baby”
 Tate, Tommy
 Taylor, Eddie
 Taylor, Eva
 Taylor, Hound Dog
 Taylor, Johnnie Harrison
 Taylor, Johnny Lamar “Little”
 Taylor, Koko
 Taylor, Melvin
 Taylor, Montana
 Taylor, Otis
 Taylor, Sam “Bluzman”
 Taylor, Sam “The Man”
 Taylor, Ted
 Tedeschi, Susan
 Telarc
 Television
 Temple, Johnny “Geechie”
 Tempo-Tone
 Ten Years After
 Tennessee
 Terry, Cooper
 Terry, Doc
 Terry, Sonny
 Testament
 Texas
 Thackery, Jimmy
 Tharpe, Sister Rosetta
 Theard, Sam “Spo-Dee-O-Dee”
 Theater, Blues in
 Theron
 Thierry, Huey Peter “Cookie”
 This Train (My Babe)
 Thomas, Blanche
 Thomas, Earl
 Thomas, Elmer Lee
 Thomas, Frank, Jr.
 Thomas, George
 Thomas, Henry “Ragtime Texas”
 Thomas, Hersal
 Thomas, Hociel
 Thomas, Irma
 Thomas, James “Son” “Ford”
 Thomas, Jesse “Babyface”
 Thomas, Joe
 Thomas, Lafayette Jerl “Thing”
 Thomas, Leon
 Thomas, Robert
 Thomas, Rufus
 Thomas, Tabby
 Thomas, Willard “Rambling”
 Thomas, Willie B.
 Thompson, Alphonso “Sonny”
 Thompson, David “Little Dave”
 Thompson, Mac
 Thompson, Odell
 Thompson, Ron
 Thornton, Willie Mae
 “Big Mama”
 Thorogood, George
 Tibbs, Andrew
 Tight Like That
 Timmons, Terry
 Tinsley, John E.
 Tip Top
 Tisdorn, James “Smokestack”
 TOBA
 Tomato Records
 Tone-Cool
 Too Tight Henry
 Top Cat
 Topical Blues: Disasters
 Topical Blues: Sports
 Topical Blues: Urban Renewal
 Toure, Ali Farka
 Toussaint, Allen
 Townsend, Henry
 Townsend, Vernell Perry
 Transatlantic
 Transcription
 Treniers
 Tribble, Thomas E. “TNT”
 Trice, Richard
 Trice, William Augusta “Willie”
 Trilon
 Tri-sax-ual Soul Champs
 Trix
 Trout, Walter
 Trucks, Derek
 Trumpet Records/Globe Music/Diamond
 Record Company
 Tucker, Bessie
 Tucker, Ira
 Tucker, Luther
 Tucker, Tommy
 Turner, Ike
 Turner, Joseph Vernon “Big Joe”
 Turner, Othar
 Turner, Troy
 Turner, Twist
 TV Slim
 Twinnight/Twilight
 Tyler, Alvin “Red”

LIST OF ENTRIES A–Z

U

United Kingdom and Ireland
 United States
 United/States
 Upchurch, Phil
 USA

V

Valentine, Cal
 Van Ronk, Dave
 Van Singel, Amy
 Vanguard
 Vanleer, Jimmy
 Varsity
 Vaughan, Jimmy
 Vaughan, Stevie Ray
 Vaughn, Jimmy
 Vaughn, Maurice John
 Vault
 Vee-Jay/Abner/Falcon
 Venson, Tenner “Playboy” “Coot”
 Verve
 Vicksburg Blues
 Victor
 Vinson, Eddie “Cleanhead”
 Vinson, Mose
 Vinson, Walter
 Violence as Lyric Concept
 Vita
 Vitacoustic
 Vocalion
 Vogue

W

Walker, Blind Willie
 Walker, Charles
 Walker, Dennis
 Walker, George “Chicken George”
 Walker, Jimmy
 Walker, Joe Louis
 Walker, Johnny Mayon “Big Moose”
 Walker, Junior
 Walker, Phillip
 Walker, Robert “Bilbo”
 Walker, T-Bone
 Wallace, Sippie
 Wallace, Wesley

Walls, Harry Eugene Vann “Piano Man”
 Walton, Mercy Dee
 Walton, Wade
 Ward, Robert
 Wardlow, Gayle Dean
 Warren, Robert Henry “Baby Boy”
 Washboard Doc
 Washboard Sam
 Washboard Slim
 Washboard Willie
 Washington (state)
 Washington, Albert
 Washington, Dinah
 Washington, Isidore “Tuts”
 Washington, Leroy
 Washington, Marion “Little Joe”
 Washington, Toni Lynn
 Washington, Walter “Wolfman”
 Waterford, Charles “Crown Prince”
 Waterman, Richard A. “Dick”
 Waterman, Richard Alan
 Waters, Ethel
 Waters, Mississippi Johnny
 Waters, Muddy
 Watkins, Beverly “Guitar”
 Watkins, John “Mad Dog”
 Watson, Johnny “Daddy Stovepipe”
 Watson, Johnny “Guitar”
 Watson, Mike “Junior”
 Watts, Louis Thomas
 Watts, Noble “Thin Man”
 Weathersby, Carl
 Weaver, James “Curley”
 Weaver, Sylvester
 Webb, “Boogie” Bill
 Webb, Willie “Jitterbug”
 Webster, Katie
 Weepin’ Willie
 Welch, “Monster” Mike
 Welding, Pete
 Weldon, Casey Bill
 Wellington, Valerie
 Wells, Junior
 Wells, Michael “Lightnin’”
 West, Charlie
 Weston, John
 Westside
 Wheatstraw, Peetie
 Wheeler, Golden “Big”
 Wheeler, Thomas James “T.J.”
 Whistler’s Jug Band
 Whitaker, “King” Herbert
 White, Artie “Blues Boy”
 White, Bukka
 White, Cleve “Schoolboy Cleve”

White, Georgia
 White, Joshua Daniel “Josh”
 White, Lynn
 White, Miss Lavelle
 Wiggins, Phil
 Wilborn, Nelson
 (“Red Nelson,” “Dirty Red”)
 Wiley, Geechie
 Wilkins, Joe Willie
 Wilkins, Lane
 Wilkins, Reverend Robert Timothy “Tim”
 Williams, Andre “Mr. Rhythm”
 Williams, Andy “Too-Hard”
 Williams, Arbess
 Williams, Arthur Lee “Oscar Mississippi”
 Williams, “Big” Joe Lee
 Williams, Bill
 Williams, Charles Melvin “Cootie”
 Williams, Clarence
 Williams, Ed “Lil’ Ed”
 Williams, George “Bullet”
 Williams, Henry “Rubberlegs”
 Williams, J. Mayo
 Williams, Jabo
 Williams, Jimmy Lee
 Williams, Joe
 Williams, Johnny (1)
 Williams, Johnny (2)
 Williams, Joseph “Jo Jo”
 Williams, Joseph Leon “Jody”
 Williams, L. C.
 Williams, Larry
 Williams, Lee “Shot”
 Williams, Lester
 Williams, Nathan
 Williams, Paul “Hucklebuck”
 Williams, Robert Pete
 Williams, Willie “Rough Dried”
 Williamson, Sonny Boy I (John Lee Williamson)
 Williamson, Sonny Boy II (Aleck Miller)
 Willis, Harold “Chuck”
 Willis, Ralph
 Willis, Robert Lee “Chick”
 Willis, Willie
 Willson, Michelle
 Wilmer, Val

Wilson, Al
 Wilson, Charles
 Wilson, Edith
 Wilson, Harding “Hop”
 Wilson, Jimmy
 Wilson, Kim
 Wilson, Lena
 Wilson, Quinn
 Wilson, Smokey
 Wilson, U. P.
 Winter, Johnny
 Withers, Earnest
 Witherspoon, Jimmy
 Wolf/Best of Blues
 Wolfman Jack
 Women and the Blues
 Woodfork, “Poor” Bob
 Woods, Johnny
 Woods, Mitch
 Woods, Oscar “Buddy”
 Work with Me Annie
 World War II
 Wrencher, “Big” John Thomas
 Wright, Billy
 Wright, Early
 Wright, Marva
 Wright, Overton Ellis “O. V.”

Y

Yancey, James Edward(s) “Jimmy”
 Yancey, Mama Estelle
 Yardbirds
 Young, Johnny
 Young, “Mighty” Joe
 Young, Zora

Z

Ziegler, John Lee
 Zinn, Rusty
 ZZ Top

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Biographical Entries

Abner, Ewart
Abshire, Nathan
Ace, Buddy
Ace, Johnny
Aces, The
Acey, Johnny
Acklin, Barbara
Adams, Alberta
Adams, Arthur
Adams, Dr. Jo Jo
Adams, Faye
Adams, John Tyler "J. T."
Adams, Johnny
Adams, Marie
Adams, Woodrow Wilson
Adins, Joris "Georges"
Admirals, The
Agee, Raymond Clinton "Ray"
Agwada, Vince
Akers, Garfield
Alexander, Algernon "Texas"
Alexander, Arthur
Alexander, Dave (Omar Hakim Khayyam)
Alix, May
Allen, Annisteen
Allen, Bill "Hoss"
Allen, Lee
Allen, Pete
Allen, Ricky
Allison, Bernard
Allison, Luther
Allison, Mose
Allison, Ray "Killer"
Allman Brothers Band
Alston, Jamie
Alzheimer, Joshua "Josh"
Amerson, Richard
Ammons, Albert
Anderson, Alvin "Little Pink"
Anderson, Bob "Little Bobby"
Anderson, Elester
Anderson, Jimmy
Anderson, Kip
Anderson, "Little" Willie
Anderson, Pinkney "Pink"
Animals
Arcenaux, Fernest
Archia, Tom
Archibald
Ardoin, Alphonse "Bois Sec"
Ardoin, Amédé
Armstrong, Howard "Louie Bluie"
Armstrong, James
Armstrong, Louis
Armstrong, Thomas Lee "Tom"
Arnett, Al
Arnold, Billy Boy
Arnold, Jerome
Arnold, Kokomo
Arrington, Manuel
Ashford, R. T.
August, Joe "Mr. Google Eyes"
August, Lynn
Austin, Claire
Austin, Jesse "Wild Bill"
Austin, Lovie
Bailey, Deford
Bailey, Kid
Bailey, Mildred
Bailey, Ray
Baker, Etta
Baker, Houston
Baker, LaVern
Baker, Mickey
Baker, Willie
Baldry, "Long" John
Ball, Marcia
Ballard, Hank
Ballou, Classie
Bankhead, Tommy
Banks, Chico
Banks, Jerry
Banks, L. V.
Bankston, Dick
Baraka, Amiri
Barbecue Bob
Barbee, John Henry
Barker, Blue Lu

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Barker, Danny
Barksdale, Everett
Barner, Wiley
Barnes, George
Barnes, Roosevelt Melvin “Booba”
Bartholomew, Dave
Barton, Lou Ann
Bascomb, Paul
Basie, Count
Bass, Fontella
Bass, Ralph
Bassett, Johnnie
Bastin, Bruce
Bates, Lefty
Batts, Will
Beaman, Lottie
Beard, Chris
Beard, Joe
Beasley, Jimmy
Beauregard, Nathan
Belfour, Robert
Bell, Brenda
Bell, Carey
Bell, Earl
Bell, Ed
Bell, Jimmie
Bell, Lurrie
Bell, T. D.
Below, Fred
Below, LaMarr Chatmon
Belvin, Jesse
Bender, D. C.
Bennet, Bobby “Guitar”
Bennett, Anthony “Duster”
Bennett, Wayne T.
Benoit, Tab
Benson, Al
Bentley, Gladys Alberta
Benton, Brook
Benton, Buster
Bernhardt, Clyde (Edric Barron)
Berry, Chuck
Berry, Richard
Bibb, Eric
Big Bad Smitty
Big Doo Wopper
Big Lucky
Big Maceo
Big Maybelle
Big Memphis Ma Rainey
Big Three Trio
Big Time Sarah
Big Twist
Bigeou, Esther
Billington, Johnnie
Binder, Dennis “Long Man”
Bishop, Elvin
Bizer, Billy
Black Ace
Black Bob
Blackwell, Otis
Blackwell, Robert “Bumps”
Blackwell, Scrapper
Blackwell, Willie “61”
Blake, Cicero
Bland, Bobby “Blue”
Blanks, Birleanna
Blaylock, Travis “Harmonica Slim”
Blind Blake
Block, Rory
Bloomfield, Michael
Blue, Little Joe
Blue Smitty
Blues Boy Willie
Blues Brothers
Blues Incorporated
Blues Project
Bluesbreakers
Bo, Eddie
Bogan, Lucille
Bogan, Ted
Bogart, Deanna
Bohee Brothers
Boines, Sylvester
Boll Weevil Bill
Bollin, Zuzu
Bond, Graham
Bonds, Son
Bonner, Weldon H. Phillip “Juke Boy”
Boogie Jake
Boogie Woogie Red
Book Binder, Roy
Booker, Charlie (Charley)
Booker, James
Booze, Beatrice “Wee Bea”
Borum, “Memphis” Willie
Bostic, Earl
Boston Blackie
Bouchillon, Chris
Bowman, Priscilla
Bowser, Erbie
Boy Blue
Boyack, Pat
Boyd, Eddie
Boyd, Louie
Boykin, Brenda
Boyson, Cornelius “Boysaw”
Boze, Calvin B.
Bracey, Ishmon
Bracken, James C.

Bradford, Perry
 Bradshaw, Evans
 Bradshaw, Myron "Tiny"
 Braggs, Al "TNT"
 Bramhall, Doyle
 Branch, William Earl "Billy"
 Brandon, Skeeter
 Brenston, Jackie
 Brewer, Clarence "King Clarentz"
 Brewer, Jim "Blind"
 Brewster, Rev. William Herbert
 Bridges, Curley
 Brim, Grace
 Brim, John
 Brim, John Jr.
 Britton, Joe
 Brockman, Polk
 Brooks, "Big" Leon
 Brooks, Columbus
 Brooks, Hadda
 Brooks, Lonnie
 Broonzy, Big Bill
 Brown, Ada
 Brown, Andrew
 Brown, Arelean
 Brown, Bessie (Ohio)
 Brown, Bessie (Texas)
 Brown, Buster
 Brown, Charles
 Brown, Clarence "Gatemouth"
 Brown, Cleo
 Brown, Dusty
 Brown, Gabriel
 Brown, Hash
 Brown, Henry "Papa"
 Brown, Ida G.
 Brown, J. T.
 Brown, James
 Brown, John Henry "Bubba"
 Brown, Lillyn
 Brown, Nappy
 Brown, Olive
 Brown, Oscar III "Bobo"
 Brown, Pete
 Brown, Richard "Rabbit"
 Brown, Roy James
 Brown, Ruth
 Brown, "Texas" Johnny
 Brown, Walter
 Brown, Willie Lee
 Brozman, Bob
 Bruynoghe, Yannick
 Bryant, Beulah
 Bryant, Precious
 Bryant, Rusty
 Buchanan, Roy
 Buckner, Willie (Willa) Mae
 Buckwheat Zydeco
 Buford, George "Mojo"
 Bull City Red
 Bunn, Teddy
 Burks, Eddie
 Burley, Dan
 Burns, Eddie
 Burns, Jimmy
 Burnside, R. L.
 Burrage, Harold
 Burris, J.C.
 Burrow, Cassell
 Burse, Charlie
 Burton, Aron
 Butler, George "Wild Child"
 Butler, Henry
 Butler, Jerry
 Butler Twins
 Butterbeans and Susie
 Butterfield, Paul
 Byrd, John
 Cadillac Baby
 Caesar, Harry "Little"
 Cage, James "Butch"
 Cain, Chris
 Cain, Perry
 Callender, Red
 Callicott, Joe
 Calloway, Cab
 Calloway, Harrison
 Campbell, "Blind" James
 Campbell, Carl
 Campbell, Eddie C.
 Campbell, John
 Canned Heat
 Cannon, Gus
 Carbo, Hayward "Chuck"
 Carbo, Leonard "Chick"
 Carmichael, James "Lucky"
 Carolina Slim
 Caron, Danny
 Carr, Barbara
 Carr, Leroy
 Carr, Sam
 Carradine, William "Cat-Iron"
 Carrier, Roy Jr. "Chubby"
 Carson, Nelson
 Carter, Betty
 Carter, Bo
 Carter, Goree
 Carter, Joe
 Carter, Levester "Big Lucky"
 Carter, Vivian

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Casey, Smith
 Caston, Leonard "Baby Doo"
 Castro, Tommy
 Catfish Keith
 Cephas, John
 Chamblee, Edward Leon "Eddie"
 Chandler, Gene
 Charity, Pernell
 Charles Ford Band, The
 Charles, Ray
 Charles, Rockie
 Charters, Samuel Barclay
 Chatmon, Sam
 Chavis, Boozoo
 Cheatham, Jimmy and Jeannie
 Cheeks, Reverend Julius
 Chenier, C. J.
 Chenier, Cleveland
 Chenier, Clifton
 Chenier, Morris "Big"
 Chenier, Roscoe
 Christian, Charlie
 Christian, Johnny "Little"
 Chudd, Lewis Robert "Lew"
 Church, Eugene
 Clapton, Eric
 Clark, "Big" Sam
 Clark, Dave
 Clark, Dee
 Clark, W. C.
 Clarke, William
 Clay, Francis
 Clay, Otis
 Clayton, Peter Joe "Doctor"
 Clayton, Willie
 Clearwater, Eddy
 Cleveland, Reverend James
 Clovers, The
 Coasters
 Cobb, Arnett
 Cobbs, Willie
 Cohn, Larry
 Cole, Ann
 Cole, Nat King
 Coleman, Deborah
 Coleman, Gary "B. B."
 Coleman, Jaybird
 Coleman, Michael
 Coleman, Wallace
 Collins, Albert
 Collins, Little Mac
 Collins, Louis "Mr. Bo"
 Collins, Sam
 Conley, Charles
 Connor, Joanna
 Cooder, Ry
 Cook, Ann
 Cooke, Sam
 Cooper, Jack L.
 Copeland, Johnny "Clyde"
 Copeland, Shemekia
 Copley, Al
 Corley, Dewey
 Cosse, Ike
 Costello, Sean
 Cotten, Elizabeth
 Cotton, James
 Council, Floyd "Dipper Boy"
 Courtney, Tom "Tomcat"
 Cousin Joe
 Covington, Robert
 Cox, Ida
 Crafton, Harry "Fats"
 Crawford, James "Sugar Boy"
 Cray, Robert
 Crayton, Connie Curtis "Pee Wee"
 Creach, Papa John
 Cream
 Crippen, Katie
 Crochet, Cleveland
 Crockett, G. L.
 Crothers, Benjamin "Scatman"
 Crudup, Arthur William "Big Boy"
 Crump, Jesse "Tiny"
 Cuby and the Blizzards
 Curtis, James "Peck"
 Cusic, Eddie
 Dale, Larry
 Dallas, Leroy
 Dallas String Band
 Dane, Barbara
 Daniels, Jack
 Daniels, Julius
 Darby, Ike "Big Ike"
 Darby, Teddy
 Darnell, Larry
 Davenport, Cow-Cow
 Davenport, Jed
 Davenport, Lester "Mad Dog"
 Davies, Cyril
 Davies, Debbie
 Davis, "Blind" John
 Davis, Carl
 Davis, Cedell
 Davis, Eddie "Lockjaw"
 Davis, Geater
 Davis, Guy
 Davis, James "Thunderbird"
 Davis, Katherine
 Davis, Larry

Davis, "Little" Sammy
 Davis, Mamie "Galore"
 Davis, Maxwell
 Davis, "Maxwell Street" Jimmy
 Davis, Quint
 Davis, Reverend Gary
 Davis, Tiny
 Davis, Tyrone
 Davis, Walter
 Dawkins, James Henry "Jimmy"
 Day, Bobby
 Dean, Joe "Joe Dean from Bowling Green"
 Dee, David
 Delafosse, Geno
 Delafosse, John
 Delaney, Mattie
 Delaney, Thomas Henry "Tom"
 DeLay, Paul
 DeSanto, Sugar Pie
 DeShay, James
 Detroit Junior
 Dickerson, "Big" John
 Diddley, Bo
 Dillard, Varetta
 Dixie Hummingbirds
 Dixieland Jug Blowers
 Dixon, Floyd
 Dixon, Willie James
 Dizz, Lefty
 Doggett, Bill
 Dollar, Johnny
 Dolphin, John
 Domino, Fats
 Donegan, Dorothy
 Dooley, Simmie
 Dorsey, Lee
 Dorsey, Mattie
 Dorsey, Thomas A.
 Dotson, Jimmy "Louisiana"
 Douglas, K. C.
 Doyle, Charlie "Little Buddy"
 Dr. Daddy-O
 Dr. Hepcat
 Dr. John
 Drain, Charles
 Drifters
 Duarte, Chris
 Dukes, Laura
 Dunbar, Scott
 Duncan, Al
 Duncan, Little Arthur
 Dunn, Roy Sidney
 Dunson, Johnnie Mae
 Dupont, August "Dimes"
 Dupree, Al "Big Al"

Dupree, Champion Jack
 Dupree, Cornell
 Durham, Eddie
 Duskin, Big Joe
 Dyer, Johnny
 Eaglin, Snooks
 Ealey, Robert
 Earl, Ronnie
 Easton, Amos
 Easy Baby
 Eckstine, Billy
 Edmonds, Elga
 Edwards, Archie
 Edwards, Bernice
 Edwards, Chuck
 Edwards, Clarence
 Edwards, David "Honeyboy"
 Edwards, Frank
 Edwards, "Good Rockin'" Charles
 Edwards, Willie
 Egan, Willie Lee
 El, Edward H. "Eddie"
 Electric Flag
 Elem, Robert "Big Mojo"
 Ellis, Big Chief
 Ellis, Tinsley
 Embry, "Queen" Sylvia
 Emerson, William Robert "Billy the Kid"
 Erby, Jack
 Esquerita
 Estes, John Adam "Sleepy John"
 Evans, David Huhne, Jr.
 Evans, Margie
 Everett, Betty
 Ezell, Will
 Fabulous Thunderbirds
 Fahey, John
 Fairfield Four
 Farr, Deitra
 Ferguson, Robert "H-Bomb"
 Fields, Bobby
 Fields, Kansas
 Fieldstones
 Finnell, Doug
 Five Blind Boys of Alabama
 Five ("5") Royales
 Fleetwood Mac
 Flemons, Wade
 Flerlage, Raeburn
 Flower, Mary
 Floyd, Frank "Harmonica"
 Flynn, Billy
 Foddrell, Turner
 Foghat
 Foley, Sue

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Fontenot, Canray
 Ford, Clarence J.
 Ford, James Lewis Carter "T-Model"
 Ford, Robben Lee
 Forehand, A. C. and "Blind" Mamie
 Forsyth, Guy
 Fortune, Jesse
 Foster, "Baby Face" Leroy
 Foster, Little Willie
 Fountain, Clarence
 Fowler, T. J.
 Foxx, Inez and Charlie
 Fran, Carol
 Francis, David Albert "Panama"
 Frank, Edward
 Franklin, Guitar Pete
 Frankin, Reverend C. L.
 Frazier, Calvin
 Freeman, Denny
 Freund, Steve
 Frost, Frank Otis
 Fuller, Blind Boy
 Fuller, Jesse "Lone Cat"
 Fuller, Johnny
 Fulp, Preston
 Fulson, Lowell
 Funderburgh, Anson
 Gaddy, Bob
 Gaillard, Bulee "Slim"
 Gaines, Earl
 Gaines, Grady
 Gaines, Roy
 Gaither, Bill (1)
 Gaither, Bill (2) "Leroy's Buddy"
 Gales Brothers
 Gallagher, Rory
 Gant, Cecil
 Garcia, Jerome John "Jerry"
 Garibay, Randy Jr.
 Garland, Terry
 Garlow, Clarence "Bon Ton"
 Garner, Larry
 Garon, Paul
 Garrett, Robert "Bud"
 Garrett, Vernon
 Gary, Tommy
 Gates, Reverend James M.
 Gayles, Billy
 Gayten, Paul
 Geddings, Bob
 Geremia, Paul
 Gibson, Clifford
 Gibson, Jack
 Gibson, Lacy
 Gillum, Jazz
 Gilmore, Boyd
 Gipson, Byron "Wild Child"
 Glenn, Lloyd
 Glover, Henry
 Golden Gate Quartet
 Goldstein, Kenneth
 Gooden, Tony
 Goodman, Shirley
 Gordon, Jay
 Gordon, Jimmie
 Gordon, Rosco(e)
 Gordon, Sax
 Granderson, John Lee
 Grant, Leola "Coot"
 Graves, Roosevelt
 Gray, Arvella "Blind"
 Gray, Henry
 Green, Al
 Green, Cal
 Green, Charlie
 Green, Clarence
 Green, Clarence "Candy"
 Green, Grant
 Green, Jesse
 Green, Lil
 Green, Norman G. "Guitar Slim"
 Green, Peter
 Greene, L. C.
 Greene, Rudolph Spencer "Rudy"
 Greer, "Big" John Marshall
 Grey Ghost
 Griffin, Bessie
 Griffin, "Big" Mike
 Griffin, Johnny
 Griffin, Raymond L. "R. L."
 Griffith, Shirley
 Grimes, Lloyd "Tiny"
 Griswold, Art and Roman
 Grossman, Stefan
 Guesnon, George "Curley" "Creole"
 Guitar Crusher
 Guitar Gabriel
 Guitar Jr.
 Guitar Kelley
 Guitar Nubbitt
 Guitar Shorty
 Guitar Slim
 Guitar Slim Jr.
 Gunter, Arthur Neal
 Guralnick, Peter
 Guthrie, Woodrow Wilson "Woody"
 Guy, George "Buddy"
 Guy, Phil
 Guy, Vernon
 Haddix, Travis

Hairston, "Brother" Will
 Hall, René (Joseph)
 Hall, Vera
 Hamilton, Larry
 Hammond, Clay
 Hammond, John Henry, Jr.
 Hammond, John Paul
 Hampton, Lionel
 Handy, William Christopher "W. C."
 Hare, Auburn "Pat"
 Harlem Hamfats
 Harman, James
 Harmonica Fats
 Harney, Richard "Hacksaw"
 Harper, Joe
 Harpo, Slim
 Harrington/Clearwater Family
 Harris, Corey
 Harris, Don "Sugarcane"
 Harris, Hi Tide
 Harris, Homer
 Harris, Kent L. "Boogaloo"
 Harris, Peppermint
 Harris, Thurston
 Harris, Tony
 Harris, William "Big Foot"
 Harris, Wynonie
 Harrison, Wilbert
 Hart, Alvin "Youngblood"
 Hart, Hattie
 Harvey, Ted
 Hatch, Provine Jr. "Little Hatch"
 Hawkins, Ernie
 Hawkins, Erskine
 Hawkins, Screamin' Jay
 Hawkins, Ted
 Hawkins, Walter "Buddy Boy"
 Hayes, Clifford
 Hayes, Henry
 Hazell, Patrick
 Healey, Jeff
 Heartsman, Johnny
 Hegamin, Lucille
 Helfer, Erwin
 Hemphill, Jessie Mae
 Hemphill, Julius Arthur
 Hemphill, Sid
 Henderson, Bugs
 Henderson, Duke "Big"
 Henderson, Katherine
 Henderson, Mike (I)
 Henderson, Mike (II)
 Henderson, Rosa
 Hendrix, Jimi
 Henry, Clarence "Frogman"
 Henry, Richard "Big Boy"
 Hensley, William P. "Washboard Willie"
 Hess, Chicago Bob
 Hicks, Charlie
 Hicks, Edna
 Higgins, Charles William "Chuck"
 Higgins, Monk
 Higgs, George
 Hill, Bertha "Chippie"
 Hill, Jessie
 Hill, Joseph "Blind Joe"
 Hill, King Solomon
 Hill, Michael
 Hill, Raymond
 Hill, Rosa Lee
 Hill, Z. Z.
 Hillery, Mabel
 Hinton, Algia Mae
 Hinton, Edward Craig "Eddie"
 Hite, Les
 Hite, Mattie
 Hoeke, Rob
 Hogan, Silas
 Hogg, John
 Hogg, Smokey
 Holder, Ace
 Hole, Dave
 Holeman, John Dee
 Holiday, Billie
 Hollimon, Clarence
 Hollins, Tony
 Holloway, Red
 Hollywood Fats
 Holmes Brothers
 Holmes, Wright
 Holmstrom, Rick
 Holt, Nick
 Holts, Roosevelt
 Homesick James
 Hooker, Earl Zebedee
 Hooker, John Lee
 Hopkins, Joel
 Hopkins, Linda
 Hopkins, Sam "Lightnin'"
 Hornbuckle, Linda
 Horton, Big Walter
 House, Eddie "Son"
 Houston, Edward Wilson "Bee"
 Houston Guitar Slim
 Houston, Joe (Joseph Abraham)
 Hovington, Franklin "Frank"
 Howard, Camille
 Howard, Rosetta
 Howell, Joshua Barnes "Peg Leg"
 Howlin' Wolf

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Huff, Luther and Percy
 Hughes, Joe "Guitar"
 Humes, Helen
 Hummel, Mark
 Hunt, Daniel Augusta "D. A."
 Hunt, Otis "Sleepy"
 Hunt, Van Zula Carter
 Hunter, Alberta
 Hunter, Ivory Joe
 Hunter, Long John
 Hurt, John Smith "Mississippi John"
 Hutto, Joseph Benjamin "J.B."
 Ironing Board Sam
 Jackson, Armand "Jump"
 Jackson, Benjamin Clarence "Bullmoose"
 Jackson, Bill
 Jackson, Bo Weavil
 Jackson Brothers
 Jackson, Calvin (1)
 Jackson, Calvin (2)
 Jackson, Charles "Papa Charlie"
 Jackson, Cordell "Guitar Granny"
 Jackson, Fruteland
 Jackson, George Henry
 Jackson, Grady "Fats"
 Jackson, Jim
 Jackson, John
 Jackson, Lee
 Jackson, Lil' Son
 Jackson, Little Willie
 Jackson, Mahalia
 Jackson, Vasti
 Jackson, Willis "Gator" "Gator Tail"
 Jacque, Beau
 Jacquet, Illinois
 James, Clifton
 James, Elmore
 James, Etta
 James, Jesse
 James, Nehemiah "Skip"
 James, Steve
 Jarrett, James "Pigmeat"
 Jarrett, Theodore "Ted"
 Jaxon, Frankie "Half Pint"
 Jefferson, Blind Lemon
 Jefferson, Bonnie
 Jeffrey, Robert Ernest Lee "Bob"
 Jenkins, Bobo
 Jenkins, Duke
 Jenkins, Gus
 Jenkins, Johnny
 John, Little Willie
 Johnny Nocturne Band
 Johnson, Alvin Lee
 Johnson, Al "Snuff"
 Johnson, Big Jack
 Johnson, Blind Willie
 Johnson, Buddy
 Johnson, Conrad
 Johnson, Earnest "44 Flunkey"
 Johnson, Edith North
 Johnson, Ernie
 Johnson, Henry "Rufe"
 Johnson, Herman E.
 Johnson, James Price
 Johnson, James "Steady Roll"
 Johnson, James "Stump"
 Johnson, Joe
 Johnson, Johnnie
 Johnson, L. V.
 Johnson, Larry
 Johnson, Lemuel Charles "Lem"
 Johnson, Lonnie
 Johnson, Louise
 Johnson, Luther "Georgia Boy" "Snake"
 Johnson, Luther "Houserocker"
 Johnson, Margaret
 Johnson, Mary
 Johnson, Pete
 Johnson, Plas
 Johnson, Robert Leroy
 Johnson, Syl
 Johnson, Tommy
 Johnson, Wallace
 Johnson, Willie Lee
 Jones, Albennie
 Jones, Andrew "Junior Boy"
 Jones, Bessie
 Jones, Birmingham
 Jones, Calvin "Fuzzy"
 Jones, Carl
 Jones, Casey
 Jones, Clarence M.
 Jones, Curtis
 Jones, Dennis "Little Hat"
 Jones, Eddie "One-String"
 Jones, Floyd
 Jones, James "Middle Walter"
 Jones, Joe
 Jones, "Little" Johnny
 Jones, Little Sonny
 Jones, Maggie
 Jones, Max
 Jones, Moody
 Jones, Paul "Wine"
 Jones, Tutu
 Jones, Willie
 Joplin, Janis
 Jordan, Charley
 Jordan, Louis

Jordan, Luke
 Kane, Candye
 Kansas City Red
 Kaplan, Fred
 Katz, Bruce
 K-Doe, Ernie
 Keb' Mo'
 Kellum, Alphonso "Country"
 Kelly, Jo Ann
 Kelly, Paul
 Kelly, Vance
 Kelton, Robert "Bob"
 Kemble, Will Ed
 Kennedy, Jesse "Tiny"
 Kenner, Chris
 Kent, Willie
 Kid Stormy Weather
 Kimbrough, David, Jr.
 Kimbrough, Junior
 Kimbrough, Lottie
 King Curtis
 King Ernest
 King, Al
 King, Albert
 King, Bnois
 King, Bobby
 King, Chris Thomas
 King, Earl
 King, Eddie
 King, Freddie
 King, "Little" Jimmy
 King, Riley B. "B. B."
 King, Saunders
 Kinsey, Lester "Big Daddy"
 Kinsey Report
 Kirk, Andrew Dewey "Andy"
 Kirkland, Eddie
 Kirkland, Leroy
 Kirkpatrick, Bob
 Kittrell, Christine
 Kizart, Lee
 Kizart, Willie
 Koda, Michael "Cub"
 Koerner, Ray & Glover
 Kolax, King
 Korner, Alexis
 Kubek, Smokin' Joe
 Lacey, Rubin "Rube"
 Lacey, William James "Bill"
 Lambert, Lloyd
 Lance, Major
 Landreth, Sonny
 Lane, Mary
 Lang, Eddie
 Lang, Jonny
 Larkin, Milton "Tippy"
 LaSalle, Denise
 Lastie, David
 Latimore, Benny
 Laury, Booker T.
 Lawhorn, Samuel "Sammy"
 Lawlars, Ernest "Little Son Joe"
 Laws, Johnny
 Lay, Sam
 Lazy Lester
 Leadbelly
 Leadbitter, Michael Andrew "Mike"
 Leake, Lafayette
 Leaner, George and Ernest
 Leary, S. P.
 Leavy, Calvin
 Leavy, Hosea
 Led Zeppelin
 Lee, Bonnie
 Lee, Frankie
 Lee, John Arthur
 Lee, Julia
 Lee, Lovie
 Leecan, Bobby
 Left Hand Frank
 Legendary Blues Band
 Leiber and Stoller
 Leigh, Keri
 Lejeune, Iry
 Lembo, Kim
 Lenoir, J.B.
 Leonard, Harlan
 Levy, Louis "Lou"
 Levy, Morris
 Levy, Ron
 Lewis, Bobby
 Lewis, Furry
 Lewis, Johnie (Johnny)
 Lewis, Meade "Lux"
 Lewis, Noah
 Lewis, Pete "Guitar"
 Lewis, Smiley
 Liggins, Jimmy
 Liggins, Joe
 Liggions, Dave
 Lightfoot, Alexander "Papa George"
 Lightnin' Slim
 Lincoln, Charlie
 Linkchain, Hip
 Lipscomb, Mance
 Liston, Virginia
 Little, Bobby
 Little Buster
 Little Charlie
 Little Mike

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Little Milton
 Little Miss Cornshucks
 Little Richard
 Little Sonny
 Little Walter
 Littlefield, "Little" Willie
 Littlejohn, John
 Lockwood, Robert, Jr.
 Lofton, "Cripple" Clarence
 Logan, John "Juke"
 Lomax, Alan
 Lomax, John Avery
 Lonesome Sundown
 Long, James Baxter "J. B."
 Lornell, Christopher "Kip"
 Louis, Joe Hill
 Louisiana Red
 Love, Clayton
 Love, Coy "Hot Shot"
 Love, Preston
 Love, Willie
 Lowe, Sammy
 Lowery, Robert "Bob"
 Lowry, Peter B. "Pete"
 Lucas, William "Lazy Bill"
 Lusk, "Professor" Eddie
 Lutcher, Joe
 Lutcher, Nellie
 Lynn, Barbara
 Lynn, Trudy
 Lyons, Lonnie
 Mabon, Willie
 Mack, Lonnie
 MacLeod, Doug
 Macon, Albert
 Macon, John Wesley "Mr. Shortstuff"
 Macon, Q. T.
 Maghett, Samuel Gene "Magic Sam"
 Magic Slim
 Maiden, Sidney
 Mallard, Sax
 Malo, Ron
 Malone, "John Jacob" J. J.
 Margolin, Bob
 Mars, Johnny
 Martin, Carl
 Martin, "Fiddlin'" Joe
 Martin, Sallie
 Martin, Sara
 Maxwell, David
 May, Roosevelt
 Mayall, John
 Mayes, Pete
 Mayfield, Curtis
 Mayfield, Percy
 Mays, Curley
 Mayweather, "Earring" George
 McCain, Jerry "Boogie"
 McCall, Cash
 McClain, Mary "Diamond Teeth"
 McClain, "Mighty" Sam
 McClennan, Tommy
 McClinton, Delbert
 McClure, Bobby
 McCoy, Charlie
 McCoy, George and Ethel
 McCoy, "Kansas" Joe
 McCoy, Robert Edward
 McCoy, Rose Marie
 McCoy, Viola
 McCracklin, Jimmy
 McCray, Larry
 McDaniel, Clara "Big"
 McDaniel, Floyd
 McDaniel, Hattie
 McDowell, Fred
 McGee, Bo Cleo "Big Bo"
 McGee, Reverend F. W.
 McGhee, Brownie
 McGhee, Granville "Sticks"
 McGill, Rollee
 McGuirt, Clarence "Candyman"
 McIlwaine, Ellen
 McKune, James
 McMahan, Andrew "Blueblood"
 McMullen, Fred
 McNeely, Cecil James "Big Jay"
 McPhatter, Clyde Lensley
 McPhee, Tony "T. S."
 McShann, James Columbus "Jay"
 McTell, Blind Willie
 McVea, John Vivian "Jack"
 Meaux, Huey P.
 Medwick, Joe
 Melrose, Lester
 Memphis Jug Band
 Memphis Minnie
 Memphis Piano Red
 Memphis Slim
 Mickle, Elmon "Drifting Slim"
 Mighty Clouds of Joy
 Milburn, Amos
 Miles, Josephine "Josie"
 Miles, Lizzie
 Miles, Luke "Long Gone"
 Miller, Clarence Horatio "Big"
 Miller, Jay D. "J. D."
 Miller, Polk
 Millet, McKinley "Li'l"
 Millinder, Lucky

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Milton, Roy
 Minner, D. C.
 Miss Rhapsody
 Mississippi Jook Band
 Mississippi Matilda
 Mississippi Sheiks
 Mitchell, Bobby
 Mitchell, George
 Mitchell, "Little" Walter
 Mitchell, McKinley
 Mitchell, Willie
 Molton, Flora
 Montgomery, Eurreal "Little Brother"
 Montoya, Coco
 Montrell, Roy
 Mooney, John
 Moore, Aaron
 Moore, Alexander "Whistlin' Alex"
 Moore, Alice "Little"
 Moore, Dorothy
 Moore, Gary
 Moore, Johnny
 Moore, Johnny B.
 Moore, Monette
 Moore, Oscar
 Moore, Reverend Arnold Dwight "Gatemouth"
 Moore, Samuel David "Sam"
 Moore, William "Bill"
 Morello, Jimmy
 Morgan, Mike
 Morgan, Teddy
 Morganfield, "Big" Bill
 Morisette, Johnny "Two-Voice"
 Morton, Jelly Roll
 Moss, Eugene "Buddy"
 Moten, Benjamin "Bennie"
 Motley, Frank Jr.
 Murphy, Matt "Guitar"
 Murphy, Willie
 Murray, Bobby
 Musselwhite, Charlie
 Myers, Bob
 Myers, Dave "Thumper"
 Myers, Louis
 Myers, Sam
 Naftalin, Mark
 Napier, Simon
 Nappy Chin
 Nardella, Steve
 Neal, Kenny
 Neal, Raful
 Neely, "Little" Bobby
 Nelson, Chicago Bob
 Nelson, Jimmy "T-99"
 Nelson, Romeo
 Nelson, Tracy
 Nettles, Isaiah
 Neville Brothers
 Newbern, Willie "Hambone Willie"
 Newborn, Calvin
 Newborn, Phineas, Jr.
 Newell, "Little" Eddie
 Nicholson, James David "J. D."
 Nighthawk, Robert
 Nighthawks
 Nix, Willie
 Nixon, Elmore
 Nixon, Hammie
 Nolan, Lloyd
 Nolen, Jimmy
 North Mississippi All Stars
 Norwood, Sam
 Nulisch, Darrell
 Oden, "St. Louis" Jimmy
 Odetta
 Odom, Andrew "Big Voice" "Little B. B."
 Offitt, Lillian
 Oliver, Paul
 Omar and the Howlers
 O'Neal, Winston James "Jim"
 Orioles
 Oscher, Paul
 Otis, Johnny
 Otis, Shuggie
 Overbea, Danny
 Overstreet, Nathaniel "Pops"
 Owens, Calvin
 Owens, Jack
 Owens, Jay
 Owens, Marshall
 Page, Oran Thaddeus "Hot Lips"
 Palm, Horace M.
 Palmer, Earl
 Palmer, Robert
 Palmer, Sylvester
 Parker, Charlie
 Parker, Herman, Jr. "Little Junior" "Junior"
 Parker, Sonny
 Parr, Elven "L. V."
 Patt, Frank "Honeyboy"
 Patterson, Bobby
 Pattman, Neal
 Patton, Charley
 Payne, John W. "Sonny"
 Payne, Odie Jr.
 Payton, Asie
 Peebles, Ann
 Peebles, Robert
 Peg Leg Sam
 Pejoe, Morris

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Perkins, Al
Perkins, Joe Willie "Pinetop"
Perry, Bill (Mississippi)
Perry, Bill (New York)
Perry, Oscar Lee
Peterson, James
Peterson, Lucky
Petway, Robert
Phelps, Kelly Joe
Phelps, Walter
Phillips, Brewer
Phillips, Earl
Phillips, Gene
Phillips, Little Esther
Phillips, Washington
Piano C. Red
Piano Red
Piazza, Rod
Piccolo, Greg
Pichon, Walter G. "Fats"
Pickens, Buster
Pickett, Dan
Pierce, Billie
Pierson, Eugene
Pierson, Leroy
Pinson, Reverend Leon
Pitchford, Lonnie
Pittman, Sampson
Plunkett, Robert
Pomus, Jerome "Doc"
Poonanny
Popa Chubby
Porter, David
Porter, Jake
Porter, King
Portnoy, Jerry
Powell, Eugene
Powell, Vance "Tiny"
Prater, Dave
Presley, Elvis Aron
Preston, Jimmy
Prez Kenneth
Price, "Big" Walter "The Thunderbird"
Price, Lloyd
Price, Sammy
Primer, John
Primich, Gary
Professor Longhair
Pryor, James Edward "Snooky"
Prysock, Arthur
Prysock, Wilbert "Red"
Pugh, Joe Bennie "Forrest City Joe"
Pullum, Joe
Qualls, Henry
Quattlebaum, Doug
Rachell, Yank
Radcliff, Bobby
Rainey, Gertrude "Ma"
Rainey, Willie Guy
Raitt, Bonnie
Rankin, R. S.
Rapone, Al
Rascoe, Moses
Rawls, Johnny
Rawls, Louis Allen "Lou"
Ray, Floyd
Ray, Harmon
Ray, Kenny "Blue"
Rector, Milton
Reed, A. C.
Reed, Dalton
Reed, Francine
Reed, Jimmy
Reed, Lula
Reed, Mama
Reynolds, Big Jack
Reynolds, Blind Joe
Reynolds, Theodore "Teddy"
Rhodes, Sonny
Rhodes, Todd
Rhodes, Walter "Lightnin' Bug"
Rhythm Willie
Rice, "Sir Mack" Bonny
Richard, Rudolph "Rudy"
Richardson, C. C.
Richardson, Mona
Richbourg, John
Ricks, "Philadelphia" Jerry
Ridgley, Thomas "Tommy"
Riedy, Bob
Riley, Judge Lawrence
Rishell, Paul
Rivers, Boyd
Roberts, Roy
Robicheaux, Coco
Robillard, Duke
Robinson, Alvin "Shine"
Robinson, Arthur Clay "A. C."
Robinson, Bobby
Robinson, Elzadie
Robinson, Fenton
Robinson, Freddy
Robinson, James "Bat The Hummingbird"
Robinson, Jessie Mae
Robinson, Jimmie Lee
Robinson, L. C. "Good Rockin'"
Robinson, Tad
Rockin' Dopsie
Rodgers, James Charles "Jimmie"
Rodgers, Sonny "Cat Daddy"

Rogers, Jimmy
 Rogers, Roy
 Roland, Walter
 Rolling Stones
 Roomful of Blues
 Ross, Doctor Isaiah
 Rothchild, Paul A.
 Roulette, Freddie
 Rounds, Ernestine Smith
 Roy, Earnest "Guitar"
 Royal, Marshal
 Rush, Bobby
 Rush, Otis
 Rushing, James Andrew "Jimmy"
 Russell, Tommie Lee
 Sadler, Haskell Robert "Cool Papa"
 Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women
 Sain, Oliver
 Salgado, Curtis
 Samples, John T.
 Sanders, Will Roy "Wilroy"
 Sane, Dan
 Sanford, Amos "Little"
 Satherly, Art
 Saunders, Red
 Savoy Brown
 Saydak, Ken
 Sayles, Charlie
 Sayles, Johnny
 Scales, Alonzo "Lonnie"
 Scott, Buddy
 Scott, Clifford
 Scott, Ecrettia Jacobs "E. C."
 Scott, Esther Mae "Mother"
 Scott, James Jr.
 Scott, Joe
 Scott, "Little" Jimmy
 Scott, Marylin
 Scott, Sonny
 Scott-Adams, Peggy
 Scruggs, Irene
 Seals, Son
 Sears, "Big" Al
 Sease, Marvin
 Seeley, Bob
 Sellers, Brother John
 Semien, "King Ivory" Lee
 Senegal, Paul "Lil' Buck"
 Seward, Alexander T. "Alec"
 Shakey Jake
 Shannon, Mem
 Shannon, Preston
 Shaw, Allen
 Shaw, Eddie
 Shaw, Eddie "Vaun," Jr.
 Shaw, Robert
 Shaw, Thomas "Tom"
 Shepherd, Kenny Wayne
 Sheppard, Bill "Bunky"
 Shields, Lonnie
 Shines, Johnny
 Shirley & Lee
 Short, J. D.
 Shower, "Little" Hudson
 Siegel-Schwall Band
 Simien, "Rockin'" Sidney
 Simmons, Malcolm "Little Mack"
 Sims, Frankie Lee
 Sims, Henry "Son"
 Singer, Hal
 Singleton, T-Bone
 Sista Monica
 Sloan, Henry
 Small, Drink
 Smith, Albert "Al"
 Smith, "Barkin'" Bill
 Smith, Bessie
 Smith, Boston
 Smith, Buster
 Smith, Byther
 Smith, Carrie
 Smith, Clara
 Smith, Clarence "Pine Top"
 Smith, Effie
 Smith, Floyd
 Smith, George "Harmonica"
 Smith, Huey "Piano"
 Smith, J. B.
 Smith, John T.
 Smith, Lucius
 Smith, Mamie
 Smith, Moses "Whispering"
 Smith, Robert Curtis
 Smith, Talmadge "Tab"
 Smith, Trixie
 Smith, Willie "Big Eyes"
 Smith, Willie Mae Ford "Mother"
 Smither, Chris
 Smokey Babe
 Smothers, Abraham "Little Smokey"
 Smothers, Otis "Big Smokey"
 Snow, Eddie
 Soileau, Floyd
 Solberg, James
 Solomon, Clifford
 Sons of Blues, The (The S.O.B. Band)
 Spady, Clarence
 Spand, Charlie
 Spann, Lucille
 Spann, Otis

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Spann, Pervis
 Sparks Brothers
 Speckled Red
 Specter, Dave
 Speir, H.C.
 Spencer, Evans
 Spires, Arthur "Big Boy"
 Spires, Bud
 Spirit of Memphis Quartet
 Spivey, Addie "Sweet Pease"
 Spivey, Elton "The Za Zu Girl"
 Spivey, Victoria
 Sprott, Horace
 Spruell, Freddie
 Spruill, James "Wild Jimmy"
 Stackhouse, Houston
 Staples, Roebuck "Pops"
 Stark, Cootie
 Steiner, John
 Stephens, James "Guitar Slim"
 Stepney, Billie
 Stidham, Arbee
 Stokes, Frank
 Stone, Jesse
 Stovall, Jewell "Babe"
 Stovepipe No. 1
 Strehli, Angela
 Stroger, Bob
 Strother, James "Jimmie"
 Strother, Percy
 Stuckey, Henry
 Studebaker John
 Sugar Blue
 Sumlin, Hubert
 Sunnyland Slim
 Super Chikan
 Swan Silvertone Singers
 Sweet Honey in the Rock
 Sweet Miss Coffy
 Sykes, Roosevelt
 Sylvester, Hannah
 Taggart, Blind Joe
 Tail Dragger
 Taj Mahal
 Talbot, Johnny
 Talty, Don
 Tampa Red
 Tarheel Slim
 Tarnopol, Nat
 Tarrant, Rabon
 Tarter and Gay
 Tasby, Finis
 Tate, Buddy
 Tate, Charles Henry "Baby"
 Tate, Tommy
 Taylor, Eddie
 Taylor, Eva
 Taylor, Hound Dog
 Taylor, Johnnie Harrison
 Taylor, Johnny Lamar "Little"
 Taylor, Koko
 Taylor, Melvin
 Taylor, Montana
 Taylor, Otis
 Taylor, Sam "Bluzman"
 Taylor, Sam "The Man"
 Taylor, Ted
 Tedeschi, Susan
 Temple, Johnny "Geechie"
 Ten Years After
 Terry, Cooper
 Terry, Doc
 Terry, Sonny
 Thackery, Jimmy
 Tharpe, Sister Rosetta
 Theard, Sam "Spo-Dee-O-Dee"
 Thierry, Huey Peter "Cookie"
 Thomas, Blanche
 Thomas, Earl
 Thomas, Elmer Lee
 Thomas, Frank, Jr.
 Thomas, George
 Thomas, Henry "Ragtime Texas"
 Thomas, Hersal
 Thomas, Hociel
 Thomas, Irma
 Thomas, James "Son" "Ford"
 Thomas, Jesse "Babyface"
 Thomas, Joe
 Thomas, Lafayette Jerl "Thing"
 Thomas, Leon
 Thomas, Robert
 Thomas, Rufus
 Thomas, Tabby
 Thomas, Willard "Rambling"
 Thomas, Willie B.
 Thompson, Alphonso "Sonny"
 Thompson, David "Little Dave"
 Thompson, Mac
 Thompson, Odell
 Thompson, Ron
 Thornton, Willie Mae "Big Mama"
 Thorogood, George
 Tibbs, Andrew
 Timmons, Terry
 Tinsley, John E.
 Tisdom, James "Smokestack"
 Too Tight Henry
 Toure, Ali Farka
 Toussaint, Allen

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Townsend, Henry	Washboard Willie
Townsend, Vernell Perry	Washington, Albert
Treniers	Washington, Dinah
Tribble, Thomas E. "TNT"	Washington, Isidore "Tuts"
Trice, Richard	Washington, Leroy
Trice, William Augusta "Willie"	Washington, Marion "Little Joe"
Tri-sax-ual Soul Champs	Washington, Toni Lynn
Trout, Walter	Washington, Walter "Wolfman"
Trucks, Derek	Waterford, Charles "Crown Prince"
Tucker, Bessie	Waterman, Richard A. "Dick"
Tucker, Ira	Waterman, Richard Alan
Tucker, Luther	Waters, Ethel
Tucker, Tommy	Waters, Mississippi Johnny
Turner, Ike	Waters, Muddy
Turner, Joseph Vernon "Big Joe"	Watkins, Beverly "Guitar"
Turner, Othar	Watkins, John "Mad Dog"
Turner, Troy	Watson, Johnny "Daddy Stovepipe"
Turner, Twist	Watson, Johnny "Guitar"
TV Slim	Watson, Mike "Junior"
Tyler, Alvin "Red"	Watts, Louis Thomas
Upchurch, Phil	Watts, Noble "Thin Man"
Valentine, Cal	Weathersby, Carl
Van Ronk, Dave	Weaver, James "Curley"
Van Singel, Amy	Weaver, Sylvester
Vanleer, Jimmy	Webb, "Boogie" Bill
Vaughan, Jimmy	Webb, Willie "Jitterbug"
Vaughan, Stevie Ray	Webster, Katie
Vaughn, Jimmy	Weepin' Willie
Vaughn, Maurice John	Welch, "Monster" Mike
Venson, Tenner "Playboy" "Coot"	Welding, Pete
Vinson, Eddie "Cleanhead"	Weldon, Casey Bill
Vinson, Mose	Wellington, Valerie
Vinson, Walter	Wells, Junior
Walker, Blind Willie	Wells, Michael "Lightnin'"
Walker, Charles	West, Charlie
Walker, Dennis	Weston, John
Walker, George "Chicken George"	Wheatstraw, Peetie
Walker, Jimmy	Wheeler, Golden "Big"
Walker, Joe Louis	Wheeler, Thomas James "T.J."
Walker, Johnny Mayon "Big Moose"	Whistler's Jug Band
Walker, Junior	Whitaker, "King" Herbert
Walker, Phillip	White, Artie "Blues Boy"
Walker, Robert "Bilbo"	White, Bukka
Walker, T-Bone	White, Cleve "Schoolboy Cleve"
Wallace, Sippie	White, Georgia
Wallace, Wesley	White, Joshua Daniel "Josh"
Walls, Harry Eugene Vann "Piano Man"	White, Lynn
Walton, Mercy Dee	White, Miss Lavelle
Walton, Wade	Wiggins, Phil
Ward, Robert	Wilborn, Nelson
Wardlow, Gayle Dean	("Red Nelson," "Dirty Red")
Warren, Robert Henry "Baby Boy"	Wiley, Geechie
Washboard Doc	Wilkins, Joe Willie
Washboard Sam	Wilkins, Lane
Washboard Slim	Wilkins, Reverend Robert Timothy "Tim"

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Williams, Andre “Mr. Rhythm”
Williams, Andy “Too-Hard”
Williams, Arbess
Williams, Arthur Lee “Oscar Mississippi”
Williams, “Big” Joe Lee
Williams, Bill
Williams, Charles Melvin “Cootie”
Williams, Clarence
Williams, Ed “Lil’ Ed”
Williams, George “Bullet”
Williams, Henry “Rubberlegs”
Williams, J. Mayo
Williams, Jabo
Williams, Jimmy Lee
Williams, Joe
Williams, Johnny (1)
Williams, Johnny (2)
Williams, Joseph “Jo Jo”
Williams, Joseph Leon “Jody”
Williams, L. C.
Williams, Larry
Williams, Lee “Shot”
Williams, Lester
Williams, Nathan
Williams, Paul “Hucklebuck”
Williams, Robert Pete
Williams, Willie “Rough Dried”
Williamson, Sonny Boy I (John Lee Williamson)
Williamson, Sonny Boy II (Aleck Miller)
Willis, Harold “Chuck”
Willis, Ralph
Willis, Robert Lee “Chick”
Willis, Willie
Willson, Michelle
Wilmer, Val
Wilson, Al
Wilson, Charles
Wilson, Edith
Wilson, Harding “Hop”
Wilson, Jimmy
Wilson, Kim
Wilson, Lena
Wilson, Quinn
Wilson, Smokey
Wilson, U. P.
Winter, Johnny
Withers, Earnest
Witherspoon, Jimmy
Wolfman Jack
Woodfork, “Poor” Bob
Woods, Johnny
Woods, Mitch
Woods, Oscar “Buddy”
Wrencher, “Big” John Thomas

Wright, Billy
Wright, Early
Wright, Marva
Wright, Overton Ellis “O. V.”
Yancey, James Edward(s) “Jimmy”
Yancey, Mama Estelle
Yardbirds
Young, “Mighty” Joe
Young, Johnny
Young, Zora
Ziegler, John Lee
Zinn, Rusty
ZZ Top

Cultural Entries

Blues Folklore
Convict Labor
11-29
Gandy Dancers
Highways
Hispanic Influences on the Blues
Hoodoo
House-Rent Parties
Juke Joints
Levee Blues
Lumber Camps
Lynching and the Blues
Racial Issues and the Blues
Railroads
Sex as Lyric Concept
Topical Blues: Disasters
Topical Blues: Sports
Topical Blues: Urban Renewal
Violence as Lyric Concept
Women and the Blues

Geographical Entries

Africa
Alabama
Arkansas
Atlanta
Chicago
Cincinnati
Detroit
Gary, Indiana
Georgia
Japan
Kansas City
Louisiana

Memphis
 Mississippi
 Nashville
 Oakland
 Piedmont (region)
 Pittsburgh
 Rochester, New York
 San Francisco
 Spain
 St. Louis, Missouri
 Sweden
 Texas
 United Kingdom and Ireland
 United States
 Washington (state)

Historiography

Discography
 Great Depression
 Great Migration
 Historiography
 Libraries
 Periodicals
 World War II

Instruments

Accordion
 Bands
 Banjo
 Bass
 Diddley Bow
 Drums
 Fiddle
 Fife and Drums
 Guitar
 Harmonica
 Jug
 Kazoo
 Mandolin
 Piano
 Rubboard
 Saxophone
 Singing
 Spoons

Music Business

American Folk Blues Festival (AFBF)
 Chitlin Circuit

Marketing
 Radio
 Recording
 TOBA

Musical Styles

Black Sacred Music
 Blues
 Blues Ballad
 Country Music
 Field Hollers
 Funk
 Jazz
 Rap
 Rhythm and Blues
 Rock 'n' Roll
 Soul

Musical Techniques

Forms
 Scales
 Transcription

Record Labels

ABC-Paramount/Bluesway
 Ace (United Kingdom)
 Ace (United States)
 Adelphi Records
 Advent Records
 A.F.O.
 Agram Blues/Old Tramp
 Ajax
 Aladdin/Score
 Alert
 Alligator
 Antone's
 Apollo/Lloyds/Timely
 ARC (American Record Corporation)
 Archive of American Folk Song
 Arhoolie/Blues Classics/Folk Lyric
 Asch/Disc/Folkways/RBF
 Atlantic/Atco/Spark
 Atlas
 AudioQuest
 Bandera
 Banner

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Barrelhouse
Bayou
Bea & Baby
Beacon
Bear Family
Big Town
Biograph
Black & Blue/Isabel/Riverboat
Black & White
Black Magic
Black Patti
Black Swan Records
Black Top
Blind Pig
Blue Horizon
Blue Lake
Blue Moon (Spain)
Blue Suit
Blue Thumb
Bluebird
Blues and Rhythm
Blues Boy's Kingdom
Blues Connoisseur
Bobbin
Brainstorm
Broadway
Bronze
Brunswick
Bullet
Burnside Records
C.J.
Cameo
Cannonball Records
Capitol
Catfish
Cava-Tone Recording
Cee-Jay
Celeste
Champion (Indiana)
Champion (Tennessee)
Chance
Charly
Chart
Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet
Chief/Profile/Age
Class
Classics
Club 51
Cobra/Artistic
Collectables
Columbia
Combo
Conqueror
Coun-tree
Crazy Cajun Records
Crown
Danceland
De Luxe/Regal
Decca
Decca/Coral/MCA
Delmark
Derby (New York)
Dial
Dig/Ultra
Document
DooTone/DooTo/Authentic
Dot
Drummond
Duke
Duke/Peacock/Back Beat
Earwig
Ebony (1)
Ebony (2)
Edison
Edsel
El Bee (El + Bee)
Electro-Fi
Elektra Records
Elko
Evidence
Excello/Nashboro
Excelsior/Exclusive
Fame
Fantasy/Prestige/Bluesville/Galaxy/Milestone/
Riverside Record Companies
Feature
Fedora
Fire/Fury/Enjoy/Red Robin
Flash
Flying Fish
Formal
Fortune/Hi-Q
Four Brothers
Freedom/Eddie's
Frisco
Frog/Cygnnet
Gennett
Giant/Gamma/Globe
Glover
Gold Star
Goldband Records
Goldwax
Gotham/20th Century
Harmograph
Herald/Ember
Heritage
Herwin (1943 and Before)
Herwin (1967 and After)
Hi Records
High Water

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

HighTone	One-derful/M-Pac/Mar-V-lus/Toddlin Town
Home Cooking	Opera
House of Blues Records	Ora Nelle
Hy-Tone	Oriole
Ichiban Records	Orleans
Imperial	Paramount
Instant	Parkway
Irma	Pathé
Ivory Records	Perfect
Jaxyson	Piedmont (label)
JEMF (John Edwards Memorial Foundation)	Ping
Jewel/Paula/Ronn	Puritan
JOB (J.O.B.)	P-Vine Special
Joe Davis/Davis/Beacon	Pye/Nixa
Joliet	QRS
JSP	R and B (1)
Jubilee/Josie/It's a Natural	R and B (2)
JVB	RCA/Victor/Bluebird/Camden/Groove/X/Vik
Keynote	Recorded in Hollywood/Hollywood/ Cash/Lucky/Money
King/Federal/Queen	Red Lightnin'
King Snake	Rhino
K.O.B. (Kings of The Blues)	Rhumboogie
Kokomo	Rhythm
L + R	Ric
Lanor Records	Rockin'/Glory
London-American	Romeo
LuPine	Ron
Macy's	Rooster Blues
Mad/M&M	Roots/Paltram/Truth/For Specialists Only
Maison du Soul	Rosetta Records
Malaco/Waldoxy	Roulette/Rama
Mamlish Records	Rounder
Mapleshade Records	RST/RST Blues Document/Fantasy By
Mardi Gras	Rykodisc
Matchbox	SAR/Derby
Melodeon Records	Savoy/National/Regent/Acorn
Melotone	Scepter/Wand
Mercury/Fontana/Keynote/Blue Rock	SD (Steiner Davis)
Merritt	Sensation
MGM (55000 R&B series)	Sequel
Miltone	7-11
Miracle/Premium	Seymour
Modern Blues Recordings	Shad
Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM	Shama
Montgomery Ward	Shanachie/Yazoo/Belzona/Blue Goose
Mosaic	Signature
Motown	Sirens
Mr. R&B Records	Sittin' In With/Jade/Jax/Mainstream
Negro Art	SONY/Legacy/Columbia/Epic/OKeh
Nighthawk Records	Sound Stage 7
OJL (Origin Jazz Library)	Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box
OKeh	Spire
Old Swing-Master/Master	Spivey Records
Old Town	Staff/Dessa
Oldie Blues	

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

Star Talent/Talent
Starr Piano Company
Stash Records
Stax/Volt
Stinson Records
Storyville Records
Sue (1)
Sue (2)
Sultan
Sun/Phillips International/Flip
Sunbeam
Sunrise (postwar)
Sunrise (prewar)
Super Disc
Superior
Supertone
Supreme
Swing Time/Down Beat
Takoma
Tangerine Records
Telarc
Tempo-Tone
Tennessee
Testament
Theron
Tip Top
Tomato Records
Tone-Cool
Top Cat
Transatlantic
Trilon
Trix
Trumpet Records/Globe Music/Diamond
Record Company
Twilight/Twilight
United/States
USA
Vanguard
Varsity
Vault
Vee-Jay/Abner/Falcon
Verve
Victor
Vita
Vitacoustic
Vocalion
Vogue
Westside
Wolf/Best of Blues

Related Art Forms

Black Newspaper Press
Dance: Artistic

Dance: Audience Participation
Films
Humor
Literature, Blues in
Television
Theater, Blues in

Song Titles

Baby Please Don't Go/Don't
You Leave Me Here
Big Boss Man (Hi-Heel Sneakers)
Black Angel Blues (Sweet Little Angel)
Blues in the Night
Boogie Chillen'
C.C. Rider
Careless Love
Casey Jones
Catfish Blues
Cow Cow Blues
Dirty Dozens
Down Home Blues
Drifting Blues
Fattening Frogs for Snakes
Frankie and Johnny
Going Down Slow (I've Had My Fun)
Hesitation Blues
Hide Away
Hoochie Coochie Man
How Long How Long (Sitting
on Top of the World)
I Believe I'll Make a Change (Dust My Broom)
I Just Want to Make Love to You
I'm A Man (Mannish Boy)
I'm Gonna Move to The Outskirts of Town
Jesus Is a Dying Bed Maker (In My
Time of Dying)
John Henry
Key to the Highway
Killing Floor (The Lemon Song)
Let the Good Times Roll
M & O Blues
Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor
Mama Talk to Your Daughter
Matchbox Blues
Mean Mistreater Mama/Blues Before
Sunrise (Kindhearted Woman)
Memphis Blues, The ("Mama Don' 'low"
or "Mister Crump")
Mustang Sally
My Black Mama (Walking Blues)
Oh Pretty Woman (Can't Make
You Make Love Me)

THEMATIC LIST OF ENTRIES

One Time Blues/Kokomo Blues (Sweet
Home Chicago)
Red Rooster, The
Roll and Tumble Blues
See That My Grave Is Kept Clean
Shake 'Em on Down
Signifying Monkey, The
Since I Met You Baby
Smokestack Lightning

Spoonful (A Spoonful Blues)
St. Louis Blues
Stack Lee
Stormy Monday
Straight Alky Blues
This Train (My Babe)
Tight Like That
Vicksburg Blues
Work with Me Annie

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INTRODUCTION

The *Encyclopedia of the Blues* provides a historical, musical, and cultural foundation for the study of blues music. It traces musical and cultural trends engendered by the blues and the aspects of the music industry and of American society that helped to nurture those trends. The blues is a uniquely American form, and thus the majority of the individuals discussed are American; however, as many entries will address, the blues has grown far beyond its regional origins to become a form of entertainment and self-expression for all races, classes, and nationalities. (For an overview of the blues as a musical genre, see the “Blues” entry in volume one.) The *Encyclopedia of the Blues* is a multidisciplinary project, combining the work of approximately 140 scholars of music, bibliography, and American history and culture. Many of the contributors count musicianship as part of their scholarship, and they bring to the project a first-hand knowledge of the rich heritage of the blues; many have been involved in groundbreaking recordings such as the Library of Congress sessions; and many bring experience in music journalism to the project.

How to Use This Book

The *Encyclopedia of the Blues*, the first multivolume reference work devoted to the blues, consists of approximately 2100 entries, which range from brief, fact-based summaries of 50 words to comprehensive analytical articles of 5000 words or more. The two volumes encompass the whole history of the blues, from its antecedents in African and American traditional music, through its late 19th century beginnings among African Americans, the classic pre-World War II era, the influential postwar era, to the contemporary styles performed today for audiences of all races and classes. The *Encyclopedia of the Blues* features profiles of artists and other persons influential to the development of the genre, such as historians, songwriters, and label owners. It also discusses the business of the blues, including its marketing as well as its presentation on film, television, radio, and recorded media. Lastly, many entries discuss the music itself:

musical forms, characteristics, instruments, and individual songs. Rounding out the work are entries on race, gender, culture, and the blues as a whole.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the encyclopedia is the easily accessible **A to Z format**. Cross-referencing in the form of **See Alsos** at the end of most entries refer the reader to other related entries. Each article contains a **bibliography** and **discography**. The citations include sources used by the writer and editor as well as additional items that may be of interest to the reader. Most books or articles cited are easily available through interlibrary loan services in libraries. LP and CD notes are cited when used by the entry author. Songs, first album issues, and LP or CD reissues suggested by the entry writer are also included. There are several widely used reference works to which bibliographies and discographies refer. Because they are so frequently cited, we have used abbreviations within the entries, but provide the full citations in the list “Frequently Cited Sources” following this introduction. **Blind Entries** direct readers to essays listed under another title. For example, the blind entry “Morganfield, McKinley” refers the reader to the article on Muddy Waters. A thorough, analytical **index** complements the accessibility of the entries, easing the reader’s entry into the wealth of information provided. A **thematic list of entries** is also included to assist readers with research in particular subjects.

Coverage

The encyclopedia includes:

- **Biographies** – Birth and death dates are provided, many discovered through research exclusive to this project, as well as up-to-date career histories. Biographical entries will include the individual’s performing name or best-known nickname as well as the birth name, if applicable, and any additional pseudonyms. Longer entries include sections on music and influence. Readers should be aware that many musicians came from non-literate or semi-literate cultural backgrounds, often in regions and eras where vital

records were kept erratically if at all. Thus, some dates are simply unknown, while others are indicated as uncertain.

- **Culture** – Cultural entries treat issues of race, gender, and culture, including topics such as Blues Folklore, the Great Migration, House Rent Parties, Highways, Racial Issues and the Blues, Women and the Blues, and Hoodoo.
- **Geographic regions** – Entries in this category focus on specific American cities, states, and regions, as well as foreign countries in which a blues culture has developed. Some of the regions treated are the Piedmont, Chicago, Detroit, Texas, St. Louis, Louisiana, Oakland, San Francisco, Memphis, and Japan.
- **Historiography** – Entries in this category address the study, criticism, and archiving of the blues. Discography, Libraries, Periodicals, and a general entry on historiography, among other subjects, are included.
- **Instruments** – Entries examine the adaptation and role of specific instruments in the development of the blues, as well as the influence of the blues form on the use of the instrument. Entries include Singing, Guitar, Drums, Bass, Piano, Saxophone, Fife and Drums, Diddley Bow, Accordion, and Jug.
- **Music business** – This category discusses the business of the blues: its marketing, distribution, and commercial performance. Entries include topics such as the American Folk Blues Festival, Chitlin Circuit, Marketing, Radio, and Recording.
- **Music styles** – Entries in this category examine the influence of certain styles of music on the blues—for example, Black Sacred Music and Field Hollers—as well as the influence of the blues on other forms and its role in the development of later styles such as Jazz, Soul, Rock-and-Roll, and Rap.
- **Music technique** – Discussion of the technical and theoretical aspects of the music of the blues forms an important component of the encyclopedia. Entries include such topics as Forms, Scales, and Transcription.
- **Record labels** – These entries provide overviews of labels, including both active labels and those no longer in business, which have been influential in the development and dissemination of the blues. Years of operation are provided, as is information on mergers and other shifts in the music industry. As with biographical entries, longer articles include sections on specific influence.
- **Related Arts** – Other art forms have had a significant influence on the blues, and its styles

and themes emerge in many types of artistic expression. Entries include Dance: Artistic, Films, Literature, Television, and Theatre.

- **Song Titles** – These entries consider the treatments of lyrics and melodies by various musicians through successive generations. Entries include such significant songs as “Frankie and Johnny,” “Hoochie Coochie Man,” “I’m A Man (Mannish Boy),” “John Henry,” “Mean Mistreater Mama”/“Blues Before Sunrise (Kindhearted Woman),” “Mustang Sally,” and “Red Rooster.”

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the October 1924 Ma Rainey session data from *Blues and Gospel Records 1890–1943* as an example in the “Discography” entry. The project is also greatly indebted to Frank Driggs and Gene Tomko, who graciously supplied the cover photos and the great majority of the interior images. I would also like to thank my parents and my brother’s family for their support, however bogged they were sometimes by the immensity of the task.

If a dedication is appropriate, it is to the men and women in the blues, whether as musicians, venue owners, label owners, media professionals, or front-line journalists and writers. Without their activity and their written reports, there would be no encyclopedia.

In closing, I view this encyclopedia not as an editorial accomplishment, but as a rare gift bestowed by a community of blues performers and listeners. May we continue to nurture them and their art to the utmost of our abilities.

Edward Komara

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A

ABC-PARAMOUNT/BLUESWAY

Formed in Hollywood in 1956 as a branch of the film corporation, ABC-Paramount's first artists were post-Elvis rock 'n' roll acts (such as Paul Anka and Danny and the Juniors) and R&B singer Lloyd Price. The label surrounded Price's voice with big band arrangements and white choruses and made him a star with "Stagger Lee" and "Personality". In 1959, ABC-Paramount lured Ray Charles from Atlantic Records, and the next three years brought Charles three #1 records: "Georgia on My Mind", "Hit the Road, Jack", and "I Can't Stop Loving You". The subsidiary BluesWay was founded in 1966 and some of the greatest blues performers recorded for the label, including Jimmy Reed, B. B. King, John Lee Hooker, Otis Spann, Jimmy Rushing, and T-Bone Walker. ABC acquired other labels in the late 1960s, including Dot and Blue Thumb, but in 1978, Paramount sold all of its music interests to MCA.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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ABNER, EWART

b. 11 May 1923; Chicago, IL
d. 27 December 1997; Los Angeles, CA

Record executive of the post-World War II era, heading at different times two of the biggest black-owned labels of all time, Vee-Jay and Motown. With owner Art Sheridan, he first ran the Chance label (1950-1954) and then served as the general manager and part owner at Vee-Jay beginning in 1955, running the company for founders Vivian Carter and James Bracken. In 1961 he became president. Under his stewardship, Vee-Jay (and its subsidiary label Abner) became a major independent by not only getting hits on such blues acts as Jimmy Reed and John Lee Hooker, but also such soul acts as Jerry Butler, Gene Chandler, Dee Clark, Betty Everett, and such rock 'n' roll acts as the Beatles and the Four Seasons. Abner owned and headed Constellation (1963-1966), and then joined Motown, where he served as its president from 1973 to 1975. Abner continued to work with Motown's Berry Gordy in various capacities until his death.

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See also Bracken, James C.; Carter, Vivian; Chance; Motown; Vee-Jay/Abner/Falcon

ABSHIRE, NATHAN

b. 27 June 1913; near Gueydan, LA

d. 13 May 1981; Basile, LA

Cajun vocalist and accordionist, noted for his “Pine Grove Blues,” which he first recorded in 1949 for the OT label run by Virgil Bozeman. For many years he was active mostly in south Louisiana, although in the 1970s he performed widely at festivals and colleges.

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Discography: Lord

See also Louisiana

ACCORDION

The accordion reached its peak popularity with African American musicians between the end of Reconstruction (1865–1877) and the early twentieth century. Clarence Tross, a West Virginian musician, reported that it was “mostly the colored man” playing accordions in that period, and a contemporary from coastal Virginia remembered that accordions were “the only kind of music we had back then.” In Mississippi, some of the earliest ensembles playing blues used accordions, and one accordionist, Walter “Pat” Rhodes, was among the earliest Delta blues singers to make records.

As the first mass-produced instrument marketed to rural blacks, the accordion served as the precursor to the mass marketing of guitars that fueled the growth of rural blues. Even so, few early blues musicians played accordions and by the mid-1930s a number of factors combined to bring about the demise of its use in almost any popular black music. With the emergence of zydeco—the blues-influenced music of the French-speaking African American population of southwest Louisiana—in the late 1950s a new bluesy accordion sound emerged. Zydeco showcased accordion virtuosity the way blues bands featured the electric guitar. In the hands of master accordionist Clifton Chenier, the accordion achieved unprecedented credibility as a blues instrument.

Types of Accordions

Two types of accordions concern us here: the diatonic button accordion and the piano accordion. All accordions are two rectangular boxes connected by a

bellows with the melody notes on the right side and the accompaniment chords on the left side. As the name implies, the button accordion has buttons for both melody and accompaniment. The diatonic scale is the same scale found on the single-key harmonicas (such as the Marine Band) commonly played by blues harpists. Like the slots on those harmonicas, each button on the accordion produces a different tone depending on whether the bellows are pushed or pulled. The original design was for a single row in a single key, but later models featured two and three rows in related keys allowing the accordionist to play in multiple keys. The accompaniment may have as few as two buttons or up to twenty-four in various configurations. This single-row design is the model still popular with the Cajuns of southwest Louisiana.

Diatonic accordions dominated sales to the general populace from the 1840s to 1925 when sales of the piano accordion began to dominate. This instrument offered several immediate advantages over the button accordion. First, the piano keyboard offered a full chromatic scale that sounded the same note regardless of the bellows direction. Secondly, the accompaniment provided up to 128 buttons arranged in bass-chord combinations to allow playing of almost any chord progression. The button accordion was reduced to a niche instrument while the piano accordion became wildly popular in America and remained so until the advent of rock ‘n’ roll.

Pre-Blues Usage

One of the earliest photographic images of an American accordionist is a daguerreotype from 1850 of a black man from a southeast Louisiana plantation playing a button accordion. The slave narratives collected by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s contain recollections of accordions being played as accompaniment for dancing. The largest concentration of accordion players occurred in the post-Civil War period, a time referred to as Reconstruction (1865–1877). The newly emancipated slaves purchased instruments with their own earnings and they seem to have bought accordions in significant numbers. Accordions were cheap, lightweight, durable, loud, and provided built-in accompaniment.

Mississippi Blues

In Mississippi, older relatives of Big Joe Williams, K. C. Douglas, Jim Brewer, Eli Owens, and Henry

Townsend all played accordion. Two of the most important Mississippi accordionists were Homer Lewis and Walter “Pat” Rhodes. Lewis performed with blues guitarist Charley Patton at Dockery’s plantation in the early part of the twentieth century in an ensemble made up of one or two guitarists, Lewis, and a fiddler. It was likely a popular sound—Rhodes, a street singer from nearby Cleveland, regularly played in an ensemble with similar instrumentation. In 1927 he became the first Sunflower County musician to record. His recording of “Crowing Rooster Blues” accompanied by Richard “Hacksaw” and Mylon Harney on guitars precedes Patton’s own more famous recording of “Banty Rooster Blues” by two years. This record, backed with “Leaving Home Blues,” is the only commercial blues recording in English that used the accordion until the emergence of zydeco. Folklorist John Lomax did record another Mississippi accordionist in 1937 for the Library of Congress. Blind Jesse Harris sang ballads and reels for the most part, but did perform a memorable version of the popular blues tune “Sun Gonna Shine in My Door Someday.”

Both the Harris and Rhodes recordings show how hard it is to play blues on the diatonic button accordion. The instrument is incapable of playing many of the slides, glissandos, and flatted notes that are dominant features of blues music. Both men stop playing while they sing and play simple melodic lines using only bellows shakes to emulate the vocal line. These shortcomings made it easy for a number of musicians who started on the accordion to decide to switch to guitar as soon as one became available. Some of those young musicians included Big Joe Williams, Blind Willie McTell, and McKinley Morganfield, aka Muddy Waters. Huddie Ledbetter or “Leadbelly” was born in 1885 in the far northwest corner of Louisiana where he learned to play the button accordion for the local dances called “Sukey Jumps” with the older musicians in the area. As a young adult he switched to the twelve-string guitar, but continued to play the accordion, eventually recording four tunes on it for various small New York record companies in the early 1940s.

Amédé Ardoin and Creole Blues

A unique blues accordion tradition, unrelated to the northwest Louisiana style played by Leadbelly, developed in southwest Louisiana among the French-speaking people of African descent. Their music synthesized elements of the French Caribbean, Cajun, American Indian, French, and African (Wolof

and Bambara) cultures. The music of English-speaking African Americans made a relatively late entrance into this mix. For example, accordionist Sidney Babineaux recalled first hearing the blues on a Bessie Smith record in the late 1920s. Blues were considered risqué and crude and were banned from Creole dances. Still the most influential musician of the period, Amédé Ardoin, recorded a handful of “blues” songs. These did not follow the chord structure common to the twelve-bar format, but instead followed the harmonic pattern caused by the left-hand accompaniment of the accordion. Ardoin played his blues in the “cross position” that blues harmonica players commonly use and this caused the instrument’s standard accompaniment to be reversed. Accordionists cannot play the critical fifth chord; they can merely imply it, leaving the blues with an unresolved feel.

Ardoin’s blues conceded structure to this harmonic reality, but not to the spirit of the blues. His vocals are blues inflected, full of flatted thirds and sevenths and the slurs and glissandos associated with the best Delta blues singing. His most distinct blues records include “Blues de Basile,” “Les Blues de Voyage,” and “Les Blues de Crowley.” Ardoin’s playing career ended in late 1930s when he was beat up by a group of white patrons at a dance, run over, and left for dead. The incident caused Ardoin to lose his mind and led to his eventual commitment to a Louisiana asylum for the insane where he eventually died. His two steps and waltzes are still performed by both Cajuns and Creoles, but it is his blues in particular that influenced zydeco pioneer Clifton Chenier.

Zydeco

Ardoin’s final recordings made in December 1934 were the last by a Creole musician until 1954. During this undocumented period, musical influences from the greater English-speaking African American culture became more important in Creole music. Blues, which had often been taboo even in Ardoin’s time, became an integral part of the repertoire of younger Creoles. The “rub board” or “frattoir” became the standard for accompaniment of the accordion and accordionists began to favor multiple-row accordions. In 1954 a Lake Charles appliance dealer named Eddie Shuler recorded one of these younger accordionists, Boozoo Chavis. Shuler recruited Houston-based bandleader Classie Ballou to accompany Chavis and the resulting record, “Paper in My Shoe,” became a huge regional hit. Chavis’s success gave a visibility to this new music outside of the

French-speaking community. The success of “Paper in My Shoe” was partially responsible for getting Clifton Chenier signed by Specialty Records in 1955.

Clifton Chenier

Clifton Chenier has the distinction of being the first Creole musician to master the piano accordion. With a full four-octave piano keyboard, Chenier could emulate the licks of any blues pianist, but the bellows-driven free reeds created a much more nuanced, vocal quality similar to that of blues harpists. Chenier also used the full 128 accompaniment buttons to approximate the left hand of boogie-woogie and blues pianists. His recordings for Specialty Records such as “Boppin’ the Rock” and “All the Things I Did for You” display the masterful blues playing that garnered him a large regional audience throughout the Gulf Coast.

While other Creole musicians remained local or, like Chavis, retired, Chenier embarked on endless touring, both nationally and internationally, and slowly developed a following for his style, which was now labeled zydeco. The name derived from the title of a traditional Creole dance “Les Haricots Sont Pas Sale” (“The Snap Beans Are Not Salty”) cut to a phonetic spelling of the Creole pronunciation of *haricots* (snap beans). Chenier, billed as the “King of Zydeco,” scored his largest regional hits with his blues tunes: “Louisiana Blues,” “Black Gal,” and “Black Snake Blues.” As a national presence, he performed at venues that commonly presented blues performers, which created a large crossover audience for zydeco. For Americans he presented a completely new image of the accordion as a soulful instrument that contrasted greatly with their preconceptions of saccharine sweet accordion music that were drawn from Lawrence Welk’s popular TV show.

Chenier’s talent combined with tireless touring and consistent recordings brought zydeco a national popularity that allowed other zydeco performers to follow on the path that he had blazed. This included Chavis, who returned from retirement to have enormous success with his own more rural version of the music. Still Chenier remained the King until his death in 1987. His legacy is heard in the playing of his son, C. J. Chenier; Stanley Dural, aka “Buckwheat Zydeco,” his former organist; and Nathan Williams. All play piano accordion in a blues style that owes greatly to Chenier. The success of zydeco and quality of Chenier’s blues performances have inspired many to pick up the accordion and will continue to inspire more.

JARED SNYDER

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Chenier, Clifton

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See also Louisiana; Mississippi; Williams, Nathan

ACE (UNITED KINGDOM)

London-based British record label, started in 1978 as a division of Chiswick Records, founded in 1975 by Ted Carroll and Roger Armstrong, as the imprint for the company's reissue catalog. Ace soon became the principal label and grew into one of the most important sources of reissues of blues and R&B recordings from the 1940s onward. A&R consultants prominent in programming blues and R&B releases have included John Broven, Ray Topping, and Tony Rounce.

Striking licensing deals with American labels, Ace was prominent in the LP era both for high-quality reissues of mainstream blues artists such as B. B. King, Elmore James, and Smokey Hogg and for systematic reissues of many R&B artists including Maxwell Davis, Floyd Dixon, Gene Phillips, Pee Wee Crayton, Jimmy McCracklin, Joe Houston, Saunders King, Little Willie Littlefield, Jimmy Nelson, and Joe Lucher. In pursuit of this endeavor, the company briefly revived the long-defunct ten-inch LP and further pursued the idea in 2003 by issuing a series of CDs called "The Ace 10" Series," that catered to situations in which the intended program made for a short CD. The Modern and associated labels, whose masters Ace acquired in the CD era, have figured largely among the sources drawn on for reissues and have been repackaged systematically on CDs in the twenty-first century. Such CDs include lavishly annotated boxed sets by B. B. King and Elmore James. Similar access to Detroit's Sensation label has allowed releases by John Lee Hooker and Todd Rhodes.

Significant blues releases have been licensed from Excello and from Specialty, including releases from Joe and Jimmy Liggins, Roy Milton and Camille Howard. These releases were unusual in that they used American-compiled packages; most Ace issues are assembled in house. Other labels that have been drawn on include Decca, Combo, Bandera, Bobbin, Peacock, King/Federal, Old Town, Goldband, Stax, Dig, and other labels associated with Johnny Otis. In 1995 the catalog included eleven CDs by John Lee Hooker, six CDs and a seven-CD boxed set by Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, and ten CDs by B. B. King. In 2003 there were twenty CDs in the catalog by Albert King alone. These statistics exemplify the lavish scale of Ace's operations.

HOWARD RYE

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Ace Records website, <http://www.acerecords.co.uk/>.

ACE (UNITED STATES)

Jackson, Mississippi, label founded in 1955 by Johnny Vincent, who held nearly all of his recording sessions in New Orleans, especially at Cosimo Matassa's recording studio. Hits include Huey "Piano" Smith's "Rocking Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu" and Frankie Ford's "Sea Cruise." Releases slowed to a trickle after the mid-1960s, but in 1971 Vincent reactivated it to reissue classic performances and some new material.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: McGrath

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ACE, BUDDY

b. James L. Land, 11 November 1936; Jasper, TX
d. 24 December 1994; Waco, TX

Singer. The "Silver Fox of the Blues" grew up in Houston, singing in a gospel group with Joe Tex before beginning his R&B and blues activities. After touring with Bobby "Blue" Bland and Junior Parker, he was signed to the Duke/Peacock label in 1955. Ace had a few hits, such as "Nothing In the World Can Hurt Me (Except You)" in the 1960s before relocating to Los Angeles and then Oakland in 1970 where he built up a following with his soul-drenched live shows. His most prolific recording period came shortly before his death as "Silver Fox" and "Don't Hurt No More" were released in 1994. He was also represented by several posthumous releases, most notably "From Me to You," his Bobby "Blue" Bland tribute.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography

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"Don't Hurt No More" (1994. Evejim Records 2018).
"From Me to You" (1995. Evejim Records 2048).
"The Real Thing" (1996. Jewel 5054).

ACE, JOHNNY

ACE, JOHNNY

b. John Marshall Alexander, Jr., 9 June 1929; Memphis, TN

d. 25 December 1954; Houston, TX

Ace served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and returned to Memphis in 1946 to perform with several groups, including the B. B. King and the Beale Street Boys group. After King and Bobby Bland left the group, Ace renamed the group the Beale Streeters. He joined the Duke label in 1952 and scored a #1 hit with his first release, "My Song." Following releases were hits as well: "Cross My Heart," "The Clock," "Never Let Me Go," "Please Forgive Me," and "Saving My Love for You."

Ace died tragically at the age of twenty-five. His death was attributed to Russian Roulette, despite widely circulated rumors of murder and career manipulation, and came at the peak of his career. That year, he had been voted most programmed artist of the year by a *Cashbox* magazine poll.

Following his death, his career culminated with the release of "Pledging My Love." It is an anthem to love and youthful angst; its success was fueled partially by the mystique surrounding his tragically young death and its soulful rendition of what would turn out to be an R&B standard.

Unfortunately, few recordings exist for Ace. In his brief career, virtually everything was released in the months following his death. The limited amount of material does not, however, diminish his role as an essential troubadour of this phase of R&B music in America.

TOM FISHER

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Discography

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Anymore (1955, Duke-136).

Johnny Ace Memorial Album (1955, Duke LP-70).

Memorial Album for Johnny Ace (1957, Duke DLP-71).

Johnny Ace Memorial Album (1974, Duke X-71).

See also Duke; Duke/Peacock/Back Beat; Memphis; Rhythm and Blues

ACES, THE

Also known as the Jukes. Members consisted of Louis Myers (guitar, harmonica, and vocals), Dave Myers

(bass guitar), and Fred Below (drums). They were the backing band for Little Walter in the early 1950s, and as such they are considered by historians to be one of first Chicago blues bands to venture on tours outside their native city. In the 1970s they toured Europe, recording on the European labels Vogue, Black and Blues, and MCM.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG; Larkin; Santelli

See also Below, Fred; Chicago; Little Walter; Myers, Dave "Thumper"; Myers, Louis

ACEY, JOHNNY

b. 1925

Pianist and vocalist active in the 1950s and 1960s; also performed and recorded with Paul "Hucklebuck" Williams. His best known solo songs are "You Walked Out" and "Stay Away Love." Recorded for the DJL, Flyright, and Falew labels.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: Lord, LSFP

See also Interstate/Flyright/Krazy Kat/Magpie/Harlequin/Heritage/Texas Blues; Williams, Paul "Hucklebuck"

ACKLIN, BARBARA

b. 28 February 1943; Oakland, CA

d. 27 November 1998; Omaha, NE

An R&B singer from Chicago whose vulnerable soprano voice typified the city's brand of soft soul during the 1960s and 1970s. After Acklin joined Brunswick Records in 1966, her first singles did not meet major success, but when she teamed up with Gene Chandler in 1968, the duo scored two hits: "Show Me the Way to Go" and "From the Teacher to the Preacher." Her solo career was also established in 1968 with two big hits, "Love Makes a Woman" and "Just Ain't No Love." Acklin was a valuable songwriter for Brunswick, achieving her first big success in 1966 by cowriting one of Jackie Wilson's best hits, "Whispers (Gettin' Louder)." Collaborating with the company's ace songwriter, Eugene Record, she contributed "Have I Seen Her," "Let Me Be the Man My Daddy Was," and "Toby" for the Chi-Lites.

Acklin moved to Capitol Records in 1974 and, working with producer Willie Henderson, created the hit called “Raindrops.” Her last chart record was in 1975. Acklin performed at the 1994 Chicago Blues Festival.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

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See also Brunswick; Capitol; Chicago

ADAMS, ALBERTA

b. Roberta Louise Osborn, 26 July 1917; Indianapolis, IN

Vocalist. Santelli gives a birth date of July 26, 1923. Adams moved to Detroit before age five and began her career in the late 1930s as a tap dancer. She started to sing at Club B&C in 1942, worked steadily as a vocalist from 1942 onward, and then began incorporating blues into her repertoire. By 1944 she was billed locally as “Queen of the Blues.” Adams toured with Lionel Hampton, Louis Jordan, and T-Bone Walker and recorded for Chess in 1952 and under her own name for Cannonball.

JIM GALLERT/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Santelli

Discography: LSFP**Selected Recordings**

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See also Cannonball Records; Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet; Detroit

ADAMS, ARTHUR

b. 25 December 1940; Medon (near Jackson), TN

Adams learned to play his uncle’s Silvertone guitar. Gospel music shaped his first interest in music, but he soon switched to blues. In the early 1960s, Adams moved to Los Angeles where he became a top studio guitarist, writing songs for television movies and touring the United States and Europe with soul divas (Nina Simone, Diana Ross, Maria Muldaur, and

others) before achieving a dream and becoming head of the house band at B. B. King’s club in Los Angeles in 1995. In 1999 he recorded his first blues album and started an unending series of gigs in clubs and festivals throughout the world.

ROBERT SACRÉ

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AMG (Bill Dahl)

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Back on Track (1999, Blind Pig CD-5055).

Soul of the Blues (2003, PMRC PM2–60301).

ADAMS, DR. JO JO

b. 1918; Alabama

d. 27 February 1988; Chicago, IL

Vocalist in the style of Cab Calloway, active especially during the 1940s and 1950s. Recorded six sides with Tom Archia for Aristocrat in Chicago, and also for the ML, Ald, Hy, Change, and Parrot labels. In his later years, he occasionally performed in small neighborhood venues in Chicago.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

See also Archia, Tom; Blue Lake; Calloway, Cab; Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet; Chicago

ADAMS, FAYE

b. ca. 1932; Newark, NJ

Aka Faye Scruggs, Fayle Tuell. Larkin gives birth year as circa 1925. Blues, R&B, and “pre-soul” singer who gained fame for such hits on the Herald label as “Shake A Hand,” “I’ll Be True” (which were #1 hits in 1953), and “Hurts Me to My Heart” (reached #1 in 1954). Also recorded on the Lido, Warwick, Savoy, and Prestige labels in the early 1960s. In later years she devoted her time to church activities.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

ADAMS, FAYE

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: LSFP

See also **Fantasy/Prestige/Bluesville/Galaxy/Milestone/Riverside; Herald/Ember; Rhythm and Blues; Savoy/National/Regent/Acorn**

ADAMS, JOHN TYLER “J. T.”

b. 17 February 1911; Morganfield, KY

Learned guitar from his father. Moved to Indianapolis in 1941, where he met Scrapper Blackwell. His main musical partner was Shirley Griffith, with whom he made the Bluesville album *J. T. Adams and Shirley Griffith* (Bluesville BVLP-1077). Activity not known after 1977.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

“J. T. Adams.” *Cadence* 3 no. 3 (September 1977): 10.

Discography: LSFP

See also **Blackwell, Scrapper; Fantasy/Prestige/Bluesville/Galaxy/Milestone/Riverside; Griffith, Shirley**

ADAMS, JOHNNY

b. Latham John Adams, 5 January 1932; New Orleans, LA

d. 14 September 1998; Baton Rouge, LA

Singer. The “Tan Canary” of New Orleans, often considered the musicians’ favorite Crescent City vocalist, began his career with a decade of gospel, singing with the Soul Revivers and the Soul Consolators before crossing over to the secular side and signing with the New Orleans-based Ric label in 1959. The Adams vocal style, at once both urbane and intense, proved to be immediately popular as he recorded a series of regional hits, the first, “I Won’t Cry,” produced by a teenage Mac “Dr. John” Rebennack. Adams, who recruited longtime associate and swamp soul guitar star Walter “Wolfman” Washington for his live act, scored his biggest hit, “Reconsider Me,” in 1969.

Adams, however, soon dropped out of the national scene, performing almost exclusively in New Orleans, primarily at his regular gig at Dorothy’s Medallion

Lounge, and also making an annual appearance at the Heritage & Jazz Festival. Adams reappeared in 1984 when he resumed recording, beginning a long affiliation with Rounder Records on the release of “From the Heart,” an album featuring Washington leading his working band in the only time it was recorded. A series of critically acclaimed albums, including *After Dark*, *Room with a View of the Blues*, *I Won’t Cry Now*, *One Foot in the Blues*; the Percy Mayfield tribute *Walking on a Tightrope* followed. Adams emphasized his jazzier side on “Good Morning Heartache” in 1993 and on “The Verdict,” which featured hometown fan Harry, Connick, Jr., on piano in 1995. He also recorded a duet on an album by R&B legend Ruth Brown. “Man of My Word” in 1998, which reunited him with Washington, was his final recording.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

See also **Louisiana; Ric; Rounder; Washington, Walter “Wolfman”**

ADAMS, MARIE

b. Ollie Marie Givens, 19 October 1925; Linden, TX
d. 23 February 1998; Houston, TX (?)

Vocalist who was a highlight of the *Johnny Otis Show* lineups of the 1950s. She began her recording career on the Peacock label, accompanied by the Cherokee Conyers Orchestra. Remained with the Jimmy Otis band until the late 1950s. Recorded for Capitol, Sure Play, Vended, and Encore Artists. Reported to have died in Houston, Texas, on February 23, 1998.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin
Burke, Tony. “Marie Adams.” *Blues and Rhythm* no. 129 (April 1998): 12.

Discography: LSFP

See also **Capitol; Duke/Peacock/Back Beat; Otis, Johnny**

ADAMS, WOODROW WILSON

b. 9 April 1917; Tchula, MS

Performed on guitar and harmonica. Worked with Howlin' Wolf from the late 1940s through the early 1950s. Known for "Baby You Just Don't Know," "Pretty Baby Blues," and "The Train Is Coming." Adams earned his living driving a tractor throughout life.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSPF

See also *Howlin' Wolf*

ADELPHI RECORDS

Adelphi Records was founded by siblings Gene and Carol Rosenthal, who were country blues enthusiasts. The Adelphi crew made extensive field recordings in 1969, from Chicago to St. Louis, Memphis, and the Mississippi Delta, in search of prewar blues artists. A few of these were released as compilations representing talent recorded at each major stop: *Really Chicago's Blues*, *The Memphis Blues Again*, and *Things Have Changed*, which featured the artists from St. Louis. Individual albums by Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery, George and Ethel McCoy, and Furry Lewis with Bukka White and Gus Cannon were released in the early 1970s, as were recordings by folk artists, including Roy Book Binder, Paul Geremia, and Chris Smither.

In the 1970s, Adelphi released albums by regional blues rock pioneers: the Nighthawks, Catfish Hodge, the Charlottesville Allstars, and Roy Buchanan. The Nighthawks, led by guitarist Jimmy Thackery, recorded "Jacks and Kings" with members of Muddy Waters's band: Pinetop Perkins, Bob Margolin, Guitar Junior, David Maxwell, and Calvin "Fuzzy" Jones.

In the early 1990s, Adelphi announced an 80+ CD release schedule of blues recordings made during the 1960s, marketed as the Blues Vault Series™. The line opened with material by Mississippi John Hurt, Nehemiah "Skip" James, Reverend Robert Wilkins, and Bukka White; in recent years, releases have slowed from the pace first set. Noteworthy additions during the late 1990s and early 2000s include those by R. L. Burnside, Furry Lewis, and David "Honeyboy" Edwards.

DENISE TAPP

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Adelphi Records website, <http://www.adelphirecords.com/>.

See also**ADINS, JORIS "GEORGES"**

b. 16 October 1932; Kortrijk, Belgium

d. 5 May 1999; Kortrijk, Belgium

Author, blues photographer. Georges Adins was a Belgian blues fan who made pioneering trips to the United States in 1959, 1962, 1966, 1968, and 1969. His fame rests on the photos (particularly of Elmore James) and recordings from those journeys.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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ADMIRALS, THE

Doo-wop vocal group active in 1955, consisting of Gene McDaniels, Wesley Devereaux, Will Barnes, James Farmer, and Richard Beasley. Previously known as the Sultans, the Admirals recorded for King Records in Cincinnati; the releases were not successful. After the group's breakup, McDaniels went on to a songwriting career.

EDWARD KOMARA

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See also *Cincinnati*; *King/Federal/Queen*

ADVENT RECORDS

Label owned and operated by Frank Scott from approximately 1972 through 1978, releasing at least nine LP issues. Among its artists were Robert Jr. Lockwood, Johnny Shines, Thomas Shaw, Sonny Rhodes, and Eddie Taylor. Many Advent albums have been reissued through HighTone Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography

Stefan Wirz. "Illustrated Advent Records Discography."
<http://www.wirz.de/music/advent.htm> (accessed September 27, 2004).

A.F.O.

Record label operating in Louisiana from 1961 to 1963 owned by Harold Raymond Battiste Jr. (b. November 28, 1931; New Orleans, LA). Funded and distributed by Sue Records, A.F.O. artists included Barbara George ("I Know [You Don't Love Me No More]"), Wallace Johnson, Prince La La ("She Put the Hurt on Me"), Ellis Marsalis, Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack, and Willie Tee.

ROBERT EAGLE

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McGrath

Broven, John. "All for One: The AFO Label of New Orleans." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 76 (February 1993): 12–13.

See also **Dr. John; Johnson, Wallace**

AFRICA

A familiarity with Africa is necessary to reach a full appreciation of African American music, especially of the blues and black sacred music. In recordings of blues through 1970, including the 1933–1942 Library of Congress field recordings of black southern singers and instrumentalists, listeners hear a number of vocal inflections and effects, and instrumental rhythms and timbral colors, that do not fit within Anglo-American culture. These include vocal growls and moans; poly-rhythmic (if not polyphonic) percussion; vocal calls and responses or, for that matter, vocal calls and instrumental responses; or the percussive ax-fall rests at the beginning of a field-holler or work-song phrase. Such characteristics may be retentions from African music, passed across generations to the present.

Africa is an unfathomably large continent, and casual references to it are hardly mindful of this expanse and diversity. It is the second largest continent in the world. It is about 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles) long and 7,000 kilometers (4,375 miles) wide, encompassing 28 million square kilometers (17.5 million square miles). The Sahara Desert takes up much of north Africa, and the Kalahari much of the south. Yet a staggering array of regions can be found: Morocco and Algeria to the northeast, the west coast including Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Congo,

and Angola. The south tip is south Africa, with Zimbabwe and Mozambique just north. The further north one travels along the west coast, from Mozambique, Tanzania, and Kenya, through Somalia, to Sudan and Egypt, the greater the impact of Arabian trade and culture.

The heart of the continent includes Chad, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), with Rwanda and Uganda among the countries just east. Reciting these countries' names hints at the diversity of the languages spoken on the continent, the number of which is estimated to be around 1,000. Among the peoples are various cultures and histories, far more than can be packed into any one state in the United States.

Some areas of Africa are more likely than others to be relevant to African American blues. Of obvious pertinence are the west African countries whose Atlantic coastline faces North and South America, especially those from Ghana east to Gabon along which lies the Guinea Coast (also known as the Slave Coast), with Mali lying some ways inland north of that coast. Less obvious, but argued for by Paul Oliver in *Savannah Syncopators*, is the savanna north of that coast where African Arabian traders from the east may have had some cultural influence. For example, the *griots* and *jali* of the western Sudan were itinerant musicians, many from the Hausa ethnic group in the *sahel* and savanna belt of the southern Sahara in northern Mali and Nigeria. They traveled throughout west Africa performing songs of praise, organizing festivals, and carrying the news. Some researchers believe that some African musical practices were strongly influenced by the Arabic-Islamic music they heard as the result of the conversion to Islam of the area and the "Arabization" of many of its customs. It is likely that it was, in turn, adapted by the people of other villages and tribes that they visited on their musical travels throughout much of west Africa.

Even if west Africa and western Sudan were the primary areas where slaves were taken and sent to the Americas, it must be acknowledged that there were large multitudes of villages where they had once lived, each with its own history and customs, and there would have been many dialects. The gathering of such diverse people into a small area, even a holding dungeon such as those on Goree Island or at Elmina Castle, Ghana, did not automatically mean their cultures instantly meshed into one. Also, the African slave trade was conducted for several centuries through 1860, during which an estimated 10 million Africans were captured, sold, and led away. So in addition to the variety of local languages and

customs, generational beliefs and customs changed every 15 years or so.

If the Africans sent to the Americas were far from homogeneous, then it is equally difficult today to make sweeping generalizations about the Africans whose ancestors were not captured, and who exercised their particular languages and customs according to their village and to their surrounding land. To state clearly: Not all Africans, then or now, share the same customs, nor do they all, then or now, speak the same language. Even how one language may be spoken is subject to misunderstanding by those marginal or outside to that culture. For example, some west African languages are “tonal” languages, that is, the meaning of a word or syllable can have as many as four different meanings, depending on the pitch in which it is spoken. How well someone understands a speaker depends on one’s familiarity with the “how” as well as the “what” of an utterance that is being spoken. There is also the possibility that Africans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including those captured as slaves, were accustomed to “micro-tonal inflections” and probably used them in normal speech and perhaps also in their music, including the antecedents to the blues.

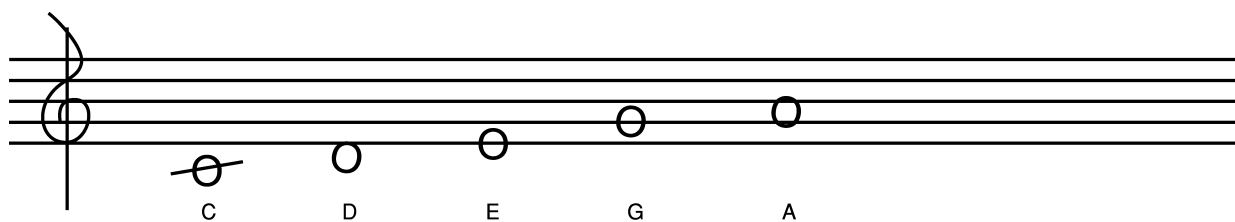
If similarities in African speech are subject to misunderstanding, even among two Africans of different cultures, they are even more subject to misunderstanding between an African and an African American. With regard to music in particular, most if not all similarities between African American blues and African music may be regarded simply as similarities, with no direct or even indirect connection between the similar things. For example, the pentatonic scale (see figure), C–D–E–G–A, is very widely used in blues, and this is found in much African vocal music. Whether the scale is retained from African practice is subject to research. Another African characteristic found in blues is the call-and-response pattern of much African vocal music, with the first two lines of the blues verse resembling the call and the third the response. This too would have to be subject to scholarly affirmation.

Much research would be needed to demonstrate that such a similarity is the result of an African American retention of an antecedent African practice. From the end of American slavery in 1865 to the

earliest datable blues songs stretch 30 to 40 years of oral, informal retention of African practice, years that possibly entail distortions of memory and oral communication. When the time period is extended to the initial period of blues sound recordings (1920–1932), then there are at least 70 years of African retention, and the oldest and earliest African American musicians on 78-rpm records were Daddy Stovepipe no. 1 (born 1867) and Henry Thomas (born 1874), both of whom were born in the United States. If one were to extend the period of retention to 1801, when the cotton gin enabled the increase of cotton production and hence raised the demand for slaves on cotton plantations, then there are 140 years from then to the end of the pre–World War II era. Over such a range, the transmission of African practices becomes more subject to distortion of memory or of communication.

In recent decades, especially since 1945, the influence on the blues has gone in the opposite direction, from African American to African. When big band swing, boogie-woogie, jive, progressive jazz, bebop, soul, disco, rock and its various derivatives, and R&B became popular and in turn faded in their popularity in the United States, recordings of them were imported to Africa, where they were widely distributed and consequently heard in urban centers. As of the mid-2000s, huge numbers of pirated audio cassettes of numerous American and English rock groups are widely available in west Africa at surprisingly low cost.

Blues, especially southern acoustic guitar blues, has had some impact on African musicians. For example, Ali Farka Toure, a contemporary guitarist and singer from Mali, has shown much interest in blues singing and playing since the 1960s as evidenced in his CD *African Blues* (1990, Shanachie). He popularized the idea that the roots of the blues were in the western Sudanic belt, that is, the *sahel*. As a youngster he was discouraged from becoming a working musician because music was considered to be inappropriate other than for young people and *griots*, traveling professional music makers somewhat similar to the troubadours of the Middle Ages. The griots were held in low social esteem. However, after hearing recordings of American blues singers such as John Lee Hooker, Albert King, Otis Redding, James Brown,



Pentatonic scale on C

Wilson Pickett, and Ray Charles, he became deeply involved in the idiom and made it his life's work. But in *African Blues*, he does not use standard blues harmonies and rarely twelve-bar phrases although he does use the pentatonic scale. The African-music scholar Gerhard Kubik says in his book *Africa and the Blues* that he feels Toure's music is only vaguely related to any type of blues. But he captures the vocal and guitar style of African American blues musicians and his lyrics reflect similar feelings. He has toured the United States as the "Malian Bluesman." His popularity has motivated the production of recordings by other musicians from the savanna and the sahel such as *Kankan Blues* by Kante Manfila & Kalla (*Popular African Music*, Out of Africa Series OA 201, Frankfurt, through World Circuit), and *Desert Blues—Ambiances du Sahara* (Network LC 6795).

Yet many purported blues in present-day Africa turn out to be anything but the blues on examination. "Ebony" from the LP *Voices of Africa* (Nonesuch Explorer Series) by Saka Acquaye and his African Ensemble from Ghana is called "blues" in Acquaye's liner notes, but the only slight resemblance to blues is a short passage in the middle of the piece when the winds (trumpets and saxophones) briefly play a progression of repeated I-IV-V-I block chords over which the vibraphone performers improvise, but without the characteristic "blue notes." From his perspective, Kubik feels that the label "blues" seems to be used for anything that comes from the west central African Sudanic belt, regardless of any link with the blues. This appears to be a valid judgment considering the large number of recording artists from Mali and Sudan, including such names as Abdel Gadir Salium, Afel Boucoum, Bajourou, and Habib Koite who have recorded "blues." A promotional statement for Distance Music's CD *African Blues* states after its subtitle, "Color in Rhythm Stimulates Mind Freedom" and that the album "showcases a deep, moody sound. It is a very personal project aimed at the mature open-minded listener, utilizing live percussion & keys and combining vocal, spoken word and instrumental tracks for an organic, earthy feel. Music with longevity & soul in the true sense of the word." This would appear to be stretching the traditional meaning of "blues" considerably, even in Africa.

There is a belief that the blues have made a "round trip" from Africa to the Western nations and back to their perceived homeland in a more or less unaltered state. Although there may be elements of truth in this belief, the diverse roots of blues and jazz are geographically and sociologically complex, and the manner of their "return" to the African continent is equally so. Various writers on the subject have

oversimplified the characteristic and histories of these styles in the United States, and they have drawn superficial conclusions based on skimming the surface of the evidence of their "return" to various African nations through recordings and festival concerts in Africa.

On other matters, individual authors disagree on assumptions and conflicting use of scholarly language. An example is in Oliver's epilogue to the reprint of *Savannah Syncopators*, where he contrasts his word "acculturation" with Evans's preferred term "syncretion" with regard as to how individual practices could have been retained in a culture.

Confusion in discussion and application sometimes prevails over disagreement on semantic matters. One example is scale. African melodic practices, including the widely used pentatonic scale, when superimposed on European-style harmonies, seem to produce the flatted (by a half-step scale degree) third and seventh steps of the diatonic scale. Blues and jazz are often characterized with this scale. However, we should observe, and be mindful, that the folk and traditional music of several other cultures also employs variable pitched scale thirds and sevenths, notably that of India, the Arab world, and Great Britain; in these settings the major and minor thirds and sevenths are not simultaneously sounded as they are in blues, but in immediate melodic juxtaposition. Some scholars have even disagreed on the African provenance of the flatted-seventh diatonic scale tone. The African music authority Kwabena Nketia, a native African, says in his *African Music in Ghana*, "The flatted seventh is frequent and well established in Akan vocal music." To the contrary, Bruno Nettl, a widely recognized ethnomusicologist, says in his *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents*, "A frequently mentioned characteristic of U.S. Negro songs is the so called 'blue note,' the flatted or slightly lowered third and seventh degrees in a major scale. The origin of this phenomenon is not known, but it probably cannot be traced to Africa."

Because of these disagreements among expert scholars, it is difficult to state any research finding with certainty. Such ambiguity and scholarly diplomacy are illustrated by Kubik's statement in *Africa and the Blues* that "blues is an African-American tradition that developed under certain social conditions on U.S. American soil, in the Deep South. It did not develop as such in Africa. And yet it is a phenomenon belonging essentially to the African culture world."

The bibliography at the end of this article offers to the interested reader citations of various books and articles about African music and its likely retentions in African American blues. We should be thankful

that we have as much research in general about African music as we do. In addition to the excellent items cited here, various sound recording series and videotape resources can be found in libraries. Although the amount of scholarship regarding African retentions in the blues in particular is fairly limited, the most encompassing of them are Oliver's *Savannah Syncopators*, Gerhard Kubik's *Africa and the Blues*, and selected articles by David Evans and Richard A. Waterman.

EDWARD KOMARA/ROBERT WASHBURN

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AGEE, RAYMOND CLINTON "RAY"

b. 10 April 1930; Dixons Mills, AL
d. ca. 1990 (?)

A fine singer, even though he never achieved more than local success. After moving with his family to Los Angeles in the late 1930s he sang with the family

gospel group, then from 1951 to the mid-1970s recorded more than a hundred titles for a myriad of West Coast labels.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

- AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli
Hanley, Bob. "Ray Agee." *Whiskey, Women and . . .* 10 (November 1982): 19–21.

Discography: LSFP; AMG

AGRAM BLUES/OLD TRAMP

Agram is a Dutch label that mainly reissues prewar blues. It was founded by Dutch blues scholar Guido van Rijn in 1978 and has released fifteen LPs and three CDs, beginning with a deluxe Barbecue Bob box set (ABLP 2001) that also contains a booklet by Dave Moore. Agram albums are known for their thoroughly researched liner notes. Another noteworthy release is ABLP 2009 by Algernon "Texas" Alexander, which features the first published life story of this renowned Texas blues singer. Recent productions include Guido van Rijn's books *Roosevelt's Blues* (ABCD 2017) and *The Truman and Eisenhower Blues* (ABCD 2018).

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Discography

- Agram Blues website, <http://presidentblues.talkin.nl/index.htm> (accessed November 9, 2004).

AGWADA, VINCE

Chicago blues guitarist, active since the 1980s. He got his start at the Checkerboard Lounge after sitting in with Lefty Dizz. Has played behind Son Seals, Valerie Washington, and Koko Taylor. Leads his own trio, One Eyed Jax.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

- Bonner, Brett J., et al. "40 Under 40." *Living Blues* no. 120 (March/April 1995): 77–90.

See also **Chicago; Dizz, Lefty; Seals, Son; Taylor, Koko**

AJAX

Record label of the Ajax Record Company of Chicago, a subsidiary of the Compo Company of Lachine, Quebec. Despite registration of the trademark in 1921, issues did not begin until October 1923 and continued until summer 1925 in a 17000 Race series which ended at 17136. African American artists accounted for ninety percent of the output, most recorded in New York. Although the records were pressed in Canada, they were not issued there. The label's blues catalog included Edna Hicks, Viola McCoy, Hazel Meyers, Rosa Henderson, Helen Gross, Josephine Miles, Monette Moore (usually disguised as Susie Smith), and three issues by Mamie Smith after she left OKeh. A&R supervision was carried out by music publisher and promoter Joe Davis and by Herbert Berliner of Compo, son of recording pioneer Emile Berliner. A blues piano issue by Millard G. Thomas was recorded in Montreal. After its demise, a few of Ajax's blues masters appeared on Pathé and Perfect labels.

HOWARD RYE

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AKERS, GARFIELD

- b. ca. 1900; Brights, MS
 d. late 1950s; perhaps Memphis, TN

Akers, a first-generation bluesman, had a repetitive, percussive guitar style that reached a new sense of urgency on duets with Joe Callicott and influenced other musicians from Memphis and beyond. He had an expressive, high-pitched voice, danced, and was a popular entertainer. Akers recorded four sides for Vocalion in 1929 and 1930 with Callicott, including his noted "Cottonfield Blues Parts 1 and 2" but remained essentially a local musician.

DAVID HARRISON

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- Larkin; Santelli
 O'Neal, Jim. "Garfield Akers: To Beale Street and the Juke Joints." *Living Blues* no. 50 (Spring 1981): 27–28.
 Wardlow, Gayle Dean. "Garfield Akers and Mississippi Joe Callicott: From the Hernando Cottonfields." *Living Blues* no. 50 (Spring 1981): 26–27.

Discography: DGR

See also Callicott, Joe; Memphis; Stokes, Frank; Vocalion; Wilkins, Rev. Robert Timothy "Tim"

ALABAMA

Alabama's 1819 constitution designated the state's land boundaries:

Beginning at the point where the thirty-first degree of north latitude intersects the Perdido River; thence, east, to the western boundary line of the State of Georgia; thence, along said line, to the southern boundary line of the State of Tennessee; thence, west, along said boundary line, to the Tennessee River; thence, up the same, to the mouth of Bear Creek; thence, by a direct line, to the northwest corner of Washington county; thence, due south, to the Gulf of Mexico; thence, eastwardly, including all Islands within six leagues of the shore, to the Perdido River; and thence, up the same, to the beginning; subject to such alteration as is provided in the third section of said act of Congress, and subject to such enlargement as may be made by law in consequence of any cession of territory by the United States, or either of them.

The House of Representatives of the United States used the above boundaries when it declared in the spring of 1817 that the eastern-most part of the Mississippi Territory "shall for the purpose of a temporary government, constitute a separate Territory, and be called 'Alabama'." By 1818, the General Assembly of the Alabama Territory petitioned the U.S. Congress for its inclusion into the confederacy. As sufficient cause for this change, the petition cited the continual population growth of "free men" numbering in the area of sixty thousand persons, an increase of nearly forty-one thousand "souls" in just two years owing to the "general fertility of our soil and the happy temperature of our Climate." The dramatic increase of "free men," however, was likely due far more to the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory and to the practice of westward manifest destiny with the forced removal of the territory's native populations.

According to the Alabama Department of Archives and History website, the etymology of the word "Alabama" is still under debate. The word,

which was in use as far back as the Desoto expedition of the 1500s, underwent some spelling changes due to the confluence of Europeans in the area, but the actual meaning remains disputed. At times the word is attributed to the languages of the Chickasaws, the Muskogee, and the Choctaw as well as being the name of a Central Alabama native tribe, with the meaning of the word being either "Here we rest" or "thicket clearers."

From 1819 through 1945, Alabama's economy, society, and politics were shaped by agriculture, especially by cotton. Three important factors led to the settlement of Alabama: the depletion of lands east of Alabama, due to overcultivation; the forceful removal of the area's Native American populations; and Napoleon's sale of the Louisiana Territory. As white farmers moved into the Alabama territory, many of them brought slaves. After the Civil War and the ensuing Reconstruction, black labor on white-owned lands continued, especially in the "Black Belt," a stretch of land ending along Alabama's central western border with the eastern boarder of Mississippi and cutting through the lower region of the state to its most southeastern edge. This Black Belt belongs to a larger land mass that is crescent shaped and cuts across the heart of the southern United States. Originally named for its deep dark-colored soil, which was rich in minerals and ideal for agricultural harvest, the name later denoted a sense of politics because the majority of the land, which had once been populated by Native Americans, became populated by African American descendants of former slaves. Hence, sharecropping environments and Jim Crow society prevailed in the Black Belt region of Alabama in much the same way it prevailed in the Mississippi Delta. Alabama's 1900 census reports that blacks comprised nearly two hundred persons short of one million persons within its population, whereas whites tipped the scales at just one thousand persons above a million. That same census reflects that the cotton crop, grown mainly within the Black Belt region of the state, consisted of more than a million bales.

During the prewar era of the blues through 1941, Alabama produced a number of blues figures. The most famous of them was W. C. Handy, "The Father of the Blues," who was born in Florence, Alabama, in 1873. Although he was raised by a Baptist minister who had higher hopes for his son than being a musician, Handy nevertheless pursued a career as musician, bandleader, composer, and music entrepreneur in Mississippi, Memphis, and ultimately New York City.

During the 1920s a number of rural bluesmen and guitarists made records, including Ed Bell, Pillie Bolling, Daddy Stovepipe, Clifford Gibson, and

Ed Thompson, as well as Buddy Boy Hawkins, who had more of a city style. There were also several excellent, evocative harmonica players such as Jaybird Coleman and George "Bullet" Williams. Other nonblues artists whose records are treasurable are the notable jazz group from Birmingham, the Black Birds of Paradise, and the sanctified preacher D. C. Rice, who for a time ran a church in Chicago before returning to Alabama in later years.

The employees of the steel mills in Huntsville and Birmingham supported a number of public establishments that had pianos. One of the earliest, and best, boogie-woogie pianists was Cow Cow Davenport, whose "Cow Cow Blues" of 1925 was a much-imitated standard. Another great pianist of the era was Jabo Williams, who recorded a pounding two-part rendition of "Ko-Ko-Mo Blues" in 1932. A Williams protégé was Walter Roland, who shared a piano repertoire. Roland made several excellent records on his own, but he remains best known for his performances with singer Lucille Bogan.

Bogan herself had been a remarkable singer since the early 1920s, but her best-selling, most famous, and most ribald records were made from 1933 through 1935. The guitarist Sonny Scott performed with Roland and Bogan during one set of ARC label sessions. Another remarkable guitarist of the 1930s and later was Marshall Owens. Bogan, Roland, Scott, and Owens all sang songs about the Red Cross stores that existed in poor neighborhoods during the Depression. One unrecorded black musician was "Tee Tot" Rufe Payne of Montgomery, Alabama, who made a great impression on the future country star Hank Williams during the 1930s and early 1940s.

Postwar musicians in Alabama performed mostly locally. One example was John Lee. Lee recorded several knife-slide guitar numbers for the Federal subsidiary of King Records in 1951, and for many years afterward record collectors thought perhaps Lee was a pseudonym for John Lee Hooker. Jerry McCain began his long career as blues harmonica player in the early 1950s, making his first records for the Trumpet label in Jackson, Mississippi, a few hours drive due west across the western Alabama border. Another fine harmonica player was George "Wild Child" Butler, who was born in Autaugaville, Alabama, in 1936.

Two of the most famous and enduring Alabama-born singers have been Dinah Washington, who began in gospel music in the 1940s, then became the leading rhythm and blues singer of the 1950s and early 1960s, and Willa Mae "Big Mama" Thornton, famous for her first recordings of "Hound Dog" and "Ball and Chain." Another great singer is Clarence Carter, who has been a fan favorite since the 1970s with hits like "Patches." Two more are Lynn White,

ALABAMA

whose raucous soul blues have been well known to black southern audiences since the 1980s, and Peggy Scott-Adams, whose career rebounded from obscurity when she made recordings with Ray Charles and garnered a topical hit song “Bill.”

There was also a phenomenon of notable musicians having been born in Alabama, then moving north or west while young, growing up, and having remarkable careers in blues and folk music. Electric guitarist Jody Williams was in Howlin’ Wolf’s first Chicago band, drummer Sam Lay would play in various Chicago blues bands including the integrated Paul Butterfield Blues Band in the 1960s, and folk singer/guitarist Odetta was raised in California but built her career on performing traditional African American folk music.

However, some talent came to north Alabama to record, especially with the remarkable horn sections in the Muscle Shoals Sound studio in Muscle Shoals and the Fame studio. In two instances of reverse migration, Tennessee-born bluesman Johnny Shines moved from Chicago to Holt, Alabama, in the mid-1970s, and Mississippi-born topical blues composer and guitarist Willie King moved from Chicago to Old Memphis, Alabama, in the late 1960s.

Several excellent white blues musicians were from or were based in Alabama, including Keri Leigh (who would establish her career in Austin, Texas), “Little Charlie” Baty with the Nightcats, harmonica player and composer James Harman, and soul composer Dan Penn, who made his impact in Memphis during the 1960s and 1970s.

Although Alabama’s blues history seems meager compared to those of its neighboring states Mississippi and Georgia, it is celebrated by many of its institutions and residents. Two notable museums are the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in Tuscumbia, and the W. C. Handy Birthplace, Museum, and Library in Florence. Birmingham hosts several music festivals featuring blues talent, including the City Stages Festival every June.

PHOENIX SAVAGE-WISEMAN/EDWARD KOMARA

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ALADDIN/SCORE

Founded in Beverly Hills, California, in 1945 by brothers Edward and Leo Mesner as Philo Records, the independent label had substantial hits within its first few months of business with releases by Illinois Jacquet (“Flying Home”), Wynonie Harris (“Around the Clock Blues”), Helen Humes (“Be-Baba-Leba”), and Johnny Moore’s Three Blazers (“Drifting Blues”). However the Mesner brothers were soon forced to change the label name because of the similarity to the major household appliance company, Philco. The Philo name was discontinued and Aladdin Records was launched in April 1946, to become one of the major independent record labels of the late 1940s, finding commercial success with black blues, R&B, jazz, and gospel artists such as Amos Milburn, Charles Brown, Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins, Lester Young, and the Soul Stirrers. During the 1950s, Aladdin Records went on to corner the market in male/female duets, having hits with Shirley & Lee and Gene & Eunice.

Primarily a gospel label to showcase the vocal group the Trumpeteers, the Score subsidiary was launched in 1948, but included a short-lived 4000 R&B and jazz series, featuring Lightnin’ Hopkins, Lonnie Johnson, Calvin Boze, Red Saunders, and the Robins vocal group. Score remained sporadically active until 1954. The Aladdin label—along with its subsidiaries Score, Intro (launched 1950), 7-11 (1952), Ultra (1955), Jazz West (1955), and Lamp (1956)—was sold to Imperial in 1961, following its final release, “One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer” by Thurston Harris.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography

The Aladdin Records Story (1994, EMI CD E2-30882).

See also 7-11

ALERT

Label founded in Brooklyn, New York, by Solly Abrams in 1946, lasting through 1950. Most of its 400 series releases were by Brownie McGhee; the 600 series was devoted to gospel. The 200 series released urban blues, including jump blues. Champion Jack Dupree was one of Alert's recording artists.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath**ALEXANDER, ALGERNON "TEXAS"**

b. 12 September 1900; Jewett, TX

d. 16 April 1954; Richards, TX

Texas Alexander began recording for OKeh in 1927, recording 56 sides for them. He played no instrument, but from 1927 to 1930 he was accompanied by Lonnie Johnson, Eddie Heywood, Eddie Lang, King Oliver, Little Hat Jones, the Mississippi Sheiks, Carl Davis, or Willie Reed, among others. Alexander often carried a guitar with him in case there was a guitarist around when he sang on the street. His records sold well, and new versions of "Range in My Kitchen" were recorded by William Harris and Rinehart & Stubblefield, and Lightnin' Hopkins and Smokey Hogg both remade "Penitentiary Moan Blues," now a classic of Texas blues.

Alexander's style, so often consisting of lengthy moans and hums, often drawn out over unevenly spaced measures, sounds very close to the field holler. Indeed, combining a field holler with the shouts of the section gang caller—where Alexander once worked—and tailoring it into a recordable blues song would produce a sound very similar to Alexander's. He recorded for Vocalion in 1934, backed either by a small jazz group or two guitars. He was passed over by an Aladdin scout in favor of Amos Milburn and Lightnin' Hopkins in 1946 or 1947. His last recording was for the Freedom label in Houston in 1950.

PAUL GARON

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

"Range in My Kitchen Blues" (1927, OKeh 8528).

"Penitentiary Moan Blues" (1928, OKeh 8640).

See also Field Hollers; Freedom/Eddie's; Okeh; Texas; Vocalion

ALEXANDER, ARTHUR

b. 10 May 1940; Florence, AL

d. 9 June 1993; Nashville, TN

Southern soul singer whose ballads were especially popular during the early 1960s with the rock 'n' roll audience. Alexander first recorded for the Judd label in 1960. He was one of the first artists to record for Rick Hall's studio in Florence, Alabama. Hall placed Alexander's first records with Dot Records. His initial record, "You Better Move On," became a pop and R&B hit in early 1962; the flip, "A Shot of Rhythm and Blues," received heavy airplay as well. He followed with another ballad, "Where Have You Been (All My Life)," also a pop and R&B success in 1962. His third single from 1962 was the ballad "Anna (Go to Him)," a top ten R&B hit and a pop hit as well. He also recorded the well-regarded but unreleased "Every Day I Have to Cry." These songs were influential and were frequently remade by other acts. "Anna" was subsequently recorded by the Beatles and Humble Pie, "You Better Move On" was recorded by the Rolling Stones and the Hollies, and "Everyday I Have to Cry" by Steve Alaimo and Joe Stampley.

After Dot, Alexander recorded for the Sound Stage 7 subsidiary of Monument (1965–1969) and then for Warner Brothers (1971–1972). Neither label affiliation produced any hits, however. In 1975, Alexander rerecorded "Everyday I Have to Cry Some" (note the slight change in the title), and he got a hit on Buddah. The following year he charted with "Sharing the Night Together." In 1977 Alexander retired, but revived his career in 1990, after he was inducted into the Alabama Music Hall of Fame. Just prior to his death he recorded an album for Electra.

ROBERT PRUTER

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See also Dot; Soul; Sound Stage 7

ALEXANDER, DAVE (OMAR HAKIM KHAYYAM)

b. Dave Alexander Elam; 10 March 1938; Shreveport, LA

Alexander began playing piano professionally in 1954 and served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1958. He

ALEXANDER, DAVE (OMAR HAKIM KHAYYAM)

recorded with Albert Collins under the World Pacific Label in 1969, then recorded for himself for Arhoolie during the early 1970s. In 1976 he changed his name to Omar Khayyam and since then has performed as Omar the Magnificent.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG, Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

See also *Arhoolie/Blues Classics/Folk Lyric; Collins, Albert*

ALIX, MAY

b. Liza Mae (or May) Alix, 31 August 1902; Chicago, IL

Vocalist; birth year of 1904 also given in some sources. Early career was in Chicago clubs and cabarets. Recorded "Big Butter and Egg Man" and "Sunset Café Stomp" with Louis Armstrong's Hot Five (1926). Recorded six titles with Jimmie Noone (1929–1930) for the Vocalion label. From 1931 through 1941, her base of activity was New York City.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

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Chilton, John. *Who's Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*, 4th ed. London: Macmillan; New York: Da Capo, 1985.

Discography: Lord (see entries for Louis Armstrong and Jimmie Noone)

See also *Armstrong, Louis; Vocalion*

ALLEN, ANNISTEEN

b. Ernestine Letitia Allen, 11 November 1920; Champaign, IL
d. August 10, 1992; New York City, NY

Singer with the Lucky Millinder band from 1945 to 1951, recording for Queen/King, Decca, and RCA Victor. Her rhythm and blues hits with Millinder include "More, More, More," "Let It Roll," "Moanin' the Blues," and "I'll Never Be Free." She was a solo artist through the early 1960s, making

more records with King/Federal, Capitol Records, and Tru-Sound (with the King Curtis band).

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

See also *Capitol; Decca/Coral/MCA; King Curtis; King/Federal/Queen; Millinder, Lucky; RCA/Victor/Bluebird/Camden/Groove/X/Vik; Rhythm and Blues*

ALLEN, BILL "HOSS"

b. 1922 or 1923

d. 25 February 1997; Nashville, TN

One of three legendary white DJs who reached millions of listeners of all races with black blues and R&B through nightly broadcasts on WLAC (1510 AM) in Nashville, Tennessee, during the 1950s and 1960s. The station's fifty thousand watts and clear-channel status after sundown enabled Allen (known as "Hoss" or "Hossman") and his station-mates Gene Nobles and John R (Richbourg) to reach broad swaths of the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, introducing authentic blues and R&B to millions of young listeners at the dawn of rock 'n' roll.

Like John R, Hoss not only played black music but talked on the air in a black dialect, using black street slang, which he absorbed through interracial friendships dating back to his childhood in Gallatin, Tennessee. A Vanderbilt University graduate, he spent a year at WIHN, Gallatin, hosting a show called "Harlem Hop" before joining WLAC in 1949 as a salesman and part-time announcer. In the early 1950s, he often substituted for Nobles, and took over Nobles's 10 p.m. to midnight DJ slot in 1955. From 1960 to 1963, Hoss left radio to work as a southern promo man for Chess Records, then returned to WLAC. In 1966, he hosted the syndicated TV series "The Beat," which presented blues and soul performers like Bobby Bland, Junior Parker, Freddie King, Little Milton, and Etta James.

Allen had a well-deserved reputation as a heavy drinker and carouser until going sober in the early 1970s, after which he broadcast gospel music on WLAC. In 1994, along with Nobles and John R, Allen was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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ALLEN, LEE

b. 2 July 1927; Pittsburg, KS

d. 18 October 1994; Los Angeles, CA

One of the foremost tenor sax players in R&B, and part of the nucleus of the classic New Orleans R&B sound, Allen was not a Louisiana native. Raised in Denver, he came to the Crescent City to attend Xavier University in 1943, but got his music education in the city's clubs and by 1947 had joined the Paul Gayten Band. This association led to a long-running association with Dave Bartholomew's band, regularly backing artists like Fats Domino, Smiley Lewis, Lloyd Price, Little Richard, and many others at Cosimo Matassa's studio. He played on hundreds of hits recorded at Cosimo's for labels such as Imperial, Specialty, and Aladdin, working out horn arrangements on the spot with fellow reed-men Alvin "Red" Tyler and Herb Hardesty in return for session fees but no royalties, even though their intense rhythm riffs (often tracking the bass lines) and robust solos helped sell the records.

His only major hit under his own name was the instrumental "Walkin' with Mr. Lee" on Ember (1957); he also produced other New Orleans artists for Ember and its sister label, Herald. In the early 1960s he rejoined Fats Domino's band, but in 1965 he relocated to Los Angeles, working in an aerospace factory while doing session and club work. After a return stint with Domino in the early 1970s, Allen capped an illustrious career in R&B by hooking up with the young retro-rock groups the Blasters and Stray Cats in the 1980s.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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b. 11 August 1949; McComb, MS

Guitarist, singer. Allen's career took off in the late 1980s. He was involved with spiritual music. Allen has

worked with B. B. King, Albert Collins, and Mick Jagger, and has recorded with Buddy Guy and Junior Wells among others.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE

BibliographySharp, Steven. "Chicago Special." *Living Blues* no. 123 (September/October 1995): 36–43.**ALLEN, RICKY**

b. 6 January 1935; Nashville, TN

Chicago blues singer who briefly made a name for himself in the early 1960s recording hard soul and blues. Allen started his singing in church choirs in his native Nashville, but after he came to Chicago in 1960 he immersed himself in the West Side blues scene. He began recording for Mel London's Age label in 1961 and attained success with a local hit, "You Better Be Sure," a fast blues tune with a rock 'n' roll feel. Allen scored his only national R&B hit in 1963 with the driving blues, "Cut You A-Loose." His subsequent recording successes remained largely local, with such standouts as "It's a Mess I Tell You" (1966) and "I Can't Stand No Signifying" (1967) both issued on Willie Barney's Bright Star label. These soulfully sung numbers presaged the later soul-blues style that emerged in the 1970s. He retired from the music business in the early 1970s to run a laundry and later a limousine service. In 2001, Allen was lured out of retirement to perform in Sweden at the Monsteras Festival; a live CD recording was released of his performance.

ROBERT PRUTER

BibliographyLillsunde, Anders. "Ouch!—The Return of Ricky Allen." *Blues & Rhythm: The Gospel Truth* 168 (April 2002): 14–17.**Discography: LSFP****See also Chicago; Four Brothers; Soul****ALLIGATOR**

Founded in 1971 in Chicago. Alligator Records, with its trademarked "Genuine Houserockin' Music" slogan, is one of the best-known independent blues

ALLIGATOR

labels and in many cases is more influential in shaping musical trends within blues than the major labels.

Bruce Iglauer was in his early twenties and working for Bob Koester at Delmark Records in Chicago in 1971 when he suggested recording local musician Hound Dog Taylor. Koester was not interested in the idea, so Iglauer decided to issue it on his own. He reportedly named his new label after his own nickname, acquired from a habit of clicking his teeth.

Within a year, Iglauer had left Delmark to handle both his fledgling label and Taylor's career. Selling records from his car trunk, Iglauer managed to make enough money to finance the next recording, *Big Walter Horton with Carey Bell*, released a year later. During the next few years, Alligator added recordings by Son Seals and Fenton Robinson and another Hound Dog Taylor release to its catalog.

Chicago blues singer Koko Taylor's 1975 debut with the label, *I Got What It Takes*, earned Alligator its first Grammy nomination. In 1978, Alligator was nominated for three Grammys, including one for the first of a series of albums with Albert Collins. That same year, Alligator issued the first volumes of the Living Chicago Blues anthology series, which highlighted some of the city's best musicians for a national audience and earned another of the label's Grammy nominations.

Multiple Grammy nominations in 1980 and 1981 finally led to Alligator's first Grammy Award in 1982 for zydeco pioneer Clifton Chenier's *I'm Here!* Three years later, the label won its second Grammy for *Showdown!*, an all-star recording with Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland, and Robert Cray that went on to become one of the biggest selling blues records ever.

In the mid-1980s, Alligator recorded three all-blues albums by onetime rock star Johnny Winter, who wanted to return to the blues music he had played in his youth. In the years to follow, Alligator continued helping veteran musicians reestablish their careers by issuing "comeback" albums by artists ranging from Charles Brown to Elvin Bishop and Lonnie Mack, while still introducing popular new artists such as Kenny Neal, Saffire: the Uppity Blues Women, and Corey Harris.

A short experiment with issuing reggae albums in the early and mid-1980s did not last long, but did produce what is considered one of the best albums of reggae pioneer Joe Higgs's career.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Alligator continued in its role as one of the top blues labels on the scene, still discovering new artists while also mining its extensive catalog to issue various compilations and anthologies.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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Showdown! (1984, Alligator AL-4743).
The Alligator Records 20th Anniversary Tour (1992, Alligator AL-107/108).
The Alligator Records 25th Anniversary Collection (1996, Alligator AL-110/111).
The Alligator Records 30th Anniversary Collection (2001, Alligator AL-112/113).

ALLISON, BERNARD

b. 26 November 1965; Chicago, IL

Guitarist and vocalist. Son of bluesman Luther Allison, he joined Koko Taylor's Blues Machine after graduating from high school. Two years later, he toured with his own group, Bernard Allison and Backtalk. Allison then rejoined Taylor for another year in the late 1980s before moving to Europe to serve as bandleader for his father's Paris-based group. Allison recorded several albums on foreign labels, including *Next Generation*, *Hang On, No Mercy*, and *Funkifino*. His U.S. debut, *Keepin' the Blues Alive*, was released on Cannonball Records in 1997. Despite critical acclaim and successful tours in the United States, Allison remains based in Paris.

JOE C. CLARK

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Sinclair, John. "Bernard Allison: Keeping the Flame." *Living Blues* no. 167 (March/April/May 2003): 35–41.

Discography: AMG

See also Allison, Luther; Cannonball Records; Taylor, Koko

ALLISON, LUTHER

b. 17 August 1939; Widener, AR
d. 12 August 1997; Madison, WI

Singer, songwriter, guitarist, harmonica player. One of many great Chicago bluesmen to emerge from the

Chicago club scene of the 1950s and 1960s, Allison found considerable local success, which translated into a more wide-ranging popularity during the late 1960s and early 1970s with a reemergence in the mid-1990s after some time spent touring in Europe. Some resources give his birthplace as Mayflower, Arkansas. Allison was the fourteenth of fifteen children born into a family of cotton farmers that moved to Chicago in 1951. At the age of eighteen, he learned the basics of guitar playing from his older brother, Ollie. Eventually, Allison met Freddie King, who encouraged the fledgling musician.

Allison cut his first album with Delmark in 1969 then headlined the Ann Arbor Blues Festival in 1969, and subsequently signed with Berry Gordy's Motown Records. His debut record on Motown, *Bad News Is Coming* (1972), showcases his vocal intensity and instrumental virtuosity on blues standards such as "The Little Red Rooster," "Rock Me Baby," and "Dust My Broom." On these tunes, and on "Sweet Home Chicago" and the instrumental "The Stumble" (bonus tracks on the 2001 reissue), some of Allison's primary influences are apparent: Magic Sam, Freddy King, Muddy Waters, Elmore James, and B. B. King.

His subsequent Motown release, *Luther's Blues* (1974), is an album that further demonstrates Allison's blues influences: Magic Sam's double-note rhythm/solo progressions and vocal blends of soulful crooning and piercing falsetto on "Easy Baby" and "Someday Pretty Baby"; Freddy King's shuffle-rhythms on the bonus track "San-Ho-Zay"; Elmore James's searing slide-work on "Driving Wheel"; and B. B. King's tremolos "Someday Pretty Baby" and the live bonus "Medley" track.

After a third release on Motown, *Night Life* (1975), Allison began playing extensively in Europe. During the late 1970s when blues music waned in popularity, Allison left the United States, toured in Europe, and then settled in Paris in 1984. During this period, Allison made a handful of European recordings on minor labels with one exception: *Serious* (1987) on Blind Pig Records, featuring Allison's songwriting abilities, guitar work, and vocals on songs such as "Backtrack," "Life Is a Bitch," and "Reaching Out."

In the mid-1990s, Allison returned to the United States for some gigs at festivals such as the Chicago Blues Festival and made several excellent studio recordings: *Soul Fixin' Man* (1994), which displays Allison's solid songwriting (along with band member/guitarist James Solberg) and powerful guitar work/vocals on "Bad Love," "Soul Fixin' Man," and "Nobody But You"; *Blue Streak* (1995), featuring a version of Magic Sam's "What Have I Done Wrong?" and numerous Allison/Solberg originals; and *Reckless* (1997), which was nominated for a Grammy Award,

highlighted by the raucous "Low Down and Dirty," the social criticism of "Will It Ever Change," and two powerful ballads—"Just As I Am" and "Drowning at the Bottom."

Allison received many awards for his recording/performing efforts in the 1990s, including five W. C. Handy Awards. Allison's return to America was bitter-sweet, however, as he succumbed to cancer in 1997. *Live in Chicago* (1999) is a testament to Allison's remarkable live performances and to Allison's stature as a vibrant blues performer. His son Bernard Allison continues Luther's blues legacy and can be heard on his own recordings and in collaboration with Luther on the all-acoustic *Hand Me Down My Moonshine* (1998).

JUSTIN WERT

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Harris; Larkin; Santelli
 "Bad News Is Coming: Luther Allison!" *Living Blues* no. 14 (Autumn 1973): 23–25.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

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Luther's Blues (1974, Gordy LP 967).
Serious (1987, Blind Pig 72287).
Soul Fixin' Man (1994, Alligator LP 4820).
Blue Streak (1995, Alligator 4834).
Reckless (1997, Alligator 4849).
Hand Me Down My Moonshine (1998, Ruf 161413).
Live in Chicago (1999, Alligator 4869).

See also Allison, Bernard; Blind Pig; Chicago; Delmark; I Believe I'll Make a Change (Dust My Broom); James, Elmore; King, Riley B. "B. B."; King, Freddie; Maghett, Samuel Gene "Magic Sam"; Motown; One Time Blues/Kokomo Blues (Sweet Home Chicago); Solberg, James; Waters, Muddy

ALLISON, MOSE

b. 11 November 1927; Tippo, MS

Pianist, singer, and songwriter. Allison grew up in Mississippi, where the blues and related styles like stride and boogie-woogie became the bedrock of his musical style. He learned to play both piano and trumpet before leaving high school. He graduated from Louisiana State University in 1952, then moved to New York, where he established himself on the jazz scene, working with Zoot Sims, Stan Getz, and Gerry Mulligan, among others. He made his debut album as a leader, *Back Country Suite*, for Prestige in 1957.

ALLISON, MOSE

He led his own trio from 1958, and developed an idiosyncratic vocal and piano style that was more dependent on evoking moods and exercising his sly, ironic humor than on technical wizardry. Both his piano playing and his vocal phrasing were predicated on a quirky, occasionally wayward individuality. Nonetheless, his approach influenced many singers, particularly in the United Kingdom, where Georgie Fame was the most notable example.

He recorded extensively for Prestige, Columbia, Atlantic, Elektra, and Blue Note. His many compositions include a widely covered modern blues song, "Parchman Farm," which was first recorded on *Local Color* (Prestige, 1957).

He is an intriguing artist who seems to inhabit the space between genres, rather than belonging firmly to any particular style. His approach is far from the conventional model of the Mississippi Delta blues singer, but the influences he absorbed in that heartland of the blues have always been strongly evident in his music, both in his use of blues form and in less overt blues inflexions and feeling within his music.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: AMG; Lord

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Local Color (1957, Prestige, 7121).
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Transfiguration of Hiram Brown (1960, Columbia CS8248).
Mose Alive! (1966, Atlantic 1450).
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Middle Class White Boy (1982, Elektra 60125).
Ever Since the World Ended (1987, Blue Note B21Y-48015).
The Earth Wants You (1993, Blue Note B21Z-27640).
Gimcracks and Gewgaws (1997, Blue Note 23211).

See also Atlantic/Atco/Spark; Fantasy/Prestige/Bluesville/Galaxy/Milestone/Riverside; Mississippi; SONY/Legacy/Columbia/Epic/Okeh; United Kingdom and Ireland

ALLISON, RAY "KILLER"

b. 20 June 1956; Chicago, IL

Drummer and percussionist. Recorded the album *Spider in My Stew*. Allison worked with Muddy Waters

and freelanced in Europe for several years where he recorded many albums and did session work.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE

Bibliography

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ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

A major name in 1970s blues-rock. Duane Allman (b. 1946; d. 1971) (guitar) formed the band in Macon, Georgia, in 1969, with Gregg Allman (b. 1947) (keyboards, vocals), Dickey Betts (b. 1943) (second lead guitar), Berry Oakley (b. 1948; d. 1972) (bass), and two drummers, Jai "Johanny" Johansson and Butch Trucks. Although essentially a southern rock band, blues played a major role in their music, alongside country, soul, and jazz. The death of Duane Allman in a motorcycle accident in 1971, and the loss of his distinctive slide guitar playing, led to a more country-rock direction. They split and subsequently reformed twice, in 1978 and 1989.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Swensson, John. Booklet essay in LP/CD anthology, *The Allman Brothers Band: Dreams*. New York: Polydor Records, 1989.

Selected Recordings

The Allman Brothers Band (1969, Capricorn 308).
Idlewild South (1970, Capricorn 342).
At Fillmore East (1971, Capricorn 802).
Eat A Peach (1972, Capricorn 0102).
Brothers and Sisters (1973, Capricorn 0111).
Enlightened Rogues (1979, Capricorn 0218).
Dreams (1989, Polydor 839417).
Seven Turns (1990, Epic 46144).

See also Guitar; Rock-and-Roll

ALSTON, JAMIE

b. James Lenny Alston, 18 October 1907; Orange County, NC

d. August 1978; Orange County, NC

Drummer and percussionist in North Carolina blues and dance music. Recorded tracks in 1973 on Fly-right's *Orange County Special* LP.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

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“Obituaries.” *Living Blues* no. 41 (November/December 1978): 40.

See also Interstate/Flyright/Krazy Kat/Magpie/Harlequin/Heritage/Texas Blues

ALTHEIMER, JOSHUA “JOSH”

b. 17 May 1910; Pine Bluff, AR

d. 18 November 1940; Chicago, IL

Alzheimer’s piano backed many of the most prominent Chicago blues stars of the late 1930s on the Bluebird label, including Big Bill Broonzy, John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, Washboard Sam, and Jazz Gillum. Along with Black Bob, Bob Call, and “Blind” John Davis, he was an active member of the set of blues pianists used by producer Lester Melrose. Although he never recorded on his own, some of his best work can be heard on recordings by Broonzy and Williamson made in the 1938–1940 period. After Alzheimer’s death at age thirty, Memphis Slim replaced him as Broonzy’s primary pianist.

ROBERT RIESMAN

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Sonny Boy Williamson. *Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order, Vol. 3 (21 July 1939 to 4 April 1941)*. 1991. DOCD-5057.

See also Broonzy, Big Bill; Gillum, Jazz; Melrose, Lester; RCA/Victor/Bluebird/Camden/Groove/X/Vik; Washboard Sam; Williamson, Sonny Boy I (John Lee Williamson)

AMERICAN FOLK BLUES FESTIVAL (AFBF)

From 1962 to 1972, the American Folk Blues Festival, featuring no less than eighty different artists, popularized blues music all over Europe. The project initiated by German jazz critic Joachim-Ernst Berendt came to life thanks to Willie Dixon who recruited most of the musicians and mentored them for the first three

years. The tour was produced by two blues enthusiasts from Hamburg, Horst Lippman and Fritz Rau.

The show met with instant success, and in three years’ time the number of countries toured was extended to fifteen, from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to Sweden or Poland. Each tour lasted about twenty days, often including several concerts on the same day, sometimes in different locations. A variety of styles were presented, from country blues to the modern Chicago sound; guitar instrumentals, boogie-woogie piano, and performances by some urban pre–World War II celebrities such as Victoria Spivey or Lonnie Johnson were part of a ritual event that always ended in a jam session.

The AFBF opened the European scenes to blues performers. John Lee Hooker, Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Howlin’ Wolf became quite popular, and the new market for blues records stayed ahead of the American market for several years.

But criticism soon arose from the growing audience for blues. The shows were often improvised, country singers like Sleepy John Estes and Robert Pete Williams did not perform at their best in large concert halls, most musicians were disconcerted by the silent and respectful attitude of the audience, and a pedagogic purpose somewhat forced musicians like Hubert Sumlin and Muddy Waters into acoustic playing. Efforts were made to feature young artists such as Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, and Otis Rush in 1965 and 1966, efficient sidemen Jack Myers and Fred Below, and some of the greatest rediscoveries in 1967: Eddie “Son” House, Nehemiah “Skip” James, and Bukka White. Yet the heteroclit AFBF could not compete with new festivals that featured complete sets of blues musicians, or the historical B. B. King show in 1968.

Thanks to “The Original” Festival, Europe discovered that blues was more than a mythical source of jazz music. The most obvious impact was the birth of British Blues, and another unexpected result was encouragement for performers such as J. B. Lenoir to adopt acoustic styles. Both effects took the music out of its original context, but the artists themselves gained international recognition that helped the blues to revive in its own birthplace.

PATRICE CHAMPAROU

Bibliography

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Videography

American Folk Blues Festival 1962–1969. 2 vols. DVD. Santa Monica CA: Universal Music & VI, 2003–2004.

AMERICAN FOLK BLUES FESTIVAL (AFBF)

Discography

American Folk Blues Festival 1962–1965 (Evidence ECD 26100; 5 audio CDs, boxed set).

See also Sweden; United Kingdom and Ireland

AMERSON, RICHARD

b. ca. 1887; Livingston, AL

Harmonica, singer of blues, dances, and sacred material. Amerson recorded for the Library of Congress in the 1930s, and for the Folkways label in the early 1950s.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE

Bibliography

Harris; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

Gospel records, 1943–1969.

AMMONS, ALBERT

b. 23 September 1907; Chicago, IL

d. 2 or 3 December 1949; Chicago, IL

A pianist, Ammons was one of the major figures in the development and popularization of the piano style known as boogie-woogie. He drew on the example of slightly older players like Jimmy Yancey in developing his own approach. As a teenager, he practiced with his friend Meade “Lux” Lewis using a mechanical player piano for guidance, and developed a notably powerful tremolo as a result. He began to perform in Chicago and elsewhere during the mid-1920s.

He met Pine Top Smith in Chicago in 1927, and later recorded a version of Smith’s “Pine Top’s Boogie-Woogie” called “Boogie-Woogie Stomp” in 1936. He worked in a variety of settings in Chicago, from solo piano to his Rhythm Kings sextet, formed in 1934.

He made his New York debut in the “Spirituals to Swing” concert at Carnegie Hall on December 23, 1938, in which he accompanied Big Bill Broonzy and played in a boogie-woogie piano trio with Meade “Lux” Lewis and Pete Johnson.

His success led to a long-running engagement at Café Society, initially in a duo with Lewis, and subsequently with Johnson and singer Big Joe Turner added. He recorded for Vocalion and Blue Note in 1939, and later for Commodore, Victor, and Decca. The foursome was featured at the Sherman Hotel in

Chicago and became known nationally through broadcasts.

A hand problem left him unable to play for a period in the mid-1940s, but he recovered. He continued to perform throughout the decade, and was briefly a member of the Lionel Hampton Band in 1949. Jazz saxophonist Gene Ammons was his son.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

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See also Chicago; Decca; Hampton, Lionel; Lewis, Meade “Lux”; Piano; RCA/Victor/Bluebird/Camden/Groove/X/Vik; Smith, Clarence “Pine Top”; Vocalion; Yancey, James Edward “Jimmy”

ANDERSON, ALVIN “LITTLE PINK”

b. 13 July 1954; Spartanburg, NC

Guitarist and singer. Alvin “Little Pink” Anderson sees himself straddling two worlds: an older one of medicine shows versus a newer one of clubs and festivals. Combining older material, contemporary blues, and his own compositions, Alvin seeks to play for the same audience as his father, the legendary Pink Anderson, did during his six-decade career.

Little Pink, a big guy who plays solo, has released his own albums as well as recording a track on one of his father’s albums for the *Prestige* label. His electric guitar technique has been heavily influenced by Albert Collins. Other influences include B. B. King, Gary Moore, Cool John Ferguson, Bobby Gaines, Marshall Tucker, and Mark Ford of the Black Crows.

Acoustically, his style is similar to Pink’s, but with his own twist. Little Pink’s first teacher, Simmie Dooley, was his dad’s partner; he has known Roy Book Binder and Paul Geremia almost from birth. Nappy Brown was a mentor to him, as was the late Frank Edwards.

Little Pink typically opens shows acoustically and finishes electrically. He estimates that his shows are acoustic about thirty percent of the time, electric fifty percent. His performances, acoustic or electric, are usually comprised of about twenty percent of his own material. He has plenty to write about: He has been in jail and has had numerous family tragedies. But he is his own man now, and in the expression of his own history, he has found freedom.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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See also Anderson, Pinkney "Pink"; Collins, Albert

ANDERSON, BOB "LITTLE BOBBY"

b. 18 April 1934; Bolivar, TN
 d. 2 January 1985; Chicago, IL

Bassist who moved from Tennessee to Chicago in 1952. Performed with Howlin' Wolf, James Cotton, Koko Taylor, Eddy Clearwater, and Junior Wells. His bass playing may be heard to advantage on Cotton's 1960s Verve recordings and on Charlie Musselwhite's LP *Stand Back!* (Vanguard, 1967).

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

"Bob Anderson" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 64 (March/April 1985): 67.

ANDERSON, ELESTER

b. 25 October 1925; near Conetoe, NC
 d. 9 May 1980; Tarboro, NC

Guitarist. In 1973 he performed at the University of North Carolina Fine Arts Festival blues weekend. Recorded the LP *Carolina Country Blues* under the Flyright label.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE

Bibliography

"Elester Anderson" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 47 (Summer 1980): 33.

ANDERSON, JIMMY

b. 1934; Natchez, MS

Harmonica player and singer in the style of Jimmy Reed, active mostly in south Mississippi and Louisiana. His 1960s recordings were made with producer Jay Miller in Crowley, Louisiana, and were released on the Zynn and Excello labels. His subsequent activity is little documented, but it appears he recorded with the Mojo Blues Band in 1992 for the Austrian group's CD *Blues Roll On* (EMI Austria 830319 2/C7777035).

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: LSFP

See also Reed, Jimmy

ANDERSON, KIP

b. 24 January 1941; Anderson, SC

Vocalist in the "deep" soul style of the 1960s and 1970s. His birth year has also been cited as 1938. His better known performances are those recorded for Checker in the 1960s, including "Without a Woman" and "A Knife and a Fork." Two CDs for Ichiban Records in the 1990s revived his visibility with record buyers.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Mohr, Kurt. "Kip Anderson" [with discography]. *Soul Bag* no. 131 (Summer 1993): 9–10.

Discography: Larkin; LSFP

See also Soul

ANDERSON, "LITTLE" WILLIE

b. 21 May 1920; West Memphis, AR
 d. 20 June 1991; Chicago, IL

Harmonica player. He released an album in 1979 for the B.O.B. label. Anderson worked with Jimmy Johnson, Smokey Smothers, Johnny Young, and Muddy Waters.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE

Bibliography

AMG; Santelli

ANDERSON, PINKNEY "PINK"

b. 12 February 1900; Laurens, SC

d. 12 October 1974; Spartanburg, SC

Pink Anderson's family moved to Greenville, South Carolina, when he was one year old but the family eventually settled in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Anderson began his musical career in the first decade of the twentieth century by entertaining on the streets of Spartanburg. He learned the harmonica and, by the age of seventeen, he was on the road, performing with Dr. Frank "Smiley" Kerr's Medicine Show. Kerr sold "medicine" (better known as "snake oil") made by the Indian Remedy Company.

Pink buckdanced and performed on the streets and at parties and picnics in Spartanburg with other entertainers when he wasn't working for Dr. Kerr. Although he learned guitar basics from a neighbor as a child, Pink became much more proficient after he became the protégé of Georgia-born guitarist Simeon "Blind Simmie" Dooley. In April 1928, Columbia Records recorded four songs by the duo in Atlanta, Georgia.

Around the same time he met Dooley, Anderson also became acquainted with Arthur Jackson (later known as "Peg Pete" and "Peg Leg Sam") and they became lifelong friends. Eventually they worked together on the Kerr show. Both later worked on Leo Kahdot's shows. Kahdot, a Potawatomie Indian, was known as Chief Thundercloud and started his career as a musician in vaudeville.

Folklorist Paul Clayton recorded Anderson at the Virginia State Fair in May 1950. Samuel Charters began recording him at his home in Spartanburg in 1962. This eventually led to a short film called *The Bluesmen*, which also featured Charles "Baby" Tate, another close friend of Anderson's. The film featured Pink's young son, Alvin, known today as "Little Pink." Charters also recorded three albums of music by the elder Anderson.

Forced to stop playing due to a 1964 stroke, Anderson lived until 1974. He is buried at Lincoln Memorial Gardens in Spartanburg.

GAILE WELKER

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Discography: DGR; LSPF

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Carolina Blues Man, Vol. 1 (Prestige/Bluesville OBCCD-504-2).

Gospel, Blues and Street Songs (Original Blues Classics 524).

Medicine Show Man, Vol. 2. (Prestige/Bluesville OBCCD-587-2).

See also Anderson, Alvin "Little Pink"; Charters, Samuel Barclay; Dooley, Simmie; Peg Leg Sam

ANIMALS

British rhythm and blues band. Formed in 1962 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the Animals featured Eric Burdon as lead vocalist and Alan Price on organ. (Bass player Chas Chandler later managed Jimi Hendrix.) The Animals backed visiting blues artists in the northeast, including Sonny Boy Williamson. They had an international hit with their version of "House of the Rising Sun" in 1964. Several hit singles followed with producer Mickie Most, including a version of John Lee Hooker's "Boom Boom" (1964). The group became Eric Burdon and the Animals in 1966-1968 and the musical direction changed to rock. Occasional partial reunions occurred in later years. Burdon and Price went on to establish solo careers, often in blues contexts.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

Animals (1964, Columbia 33SX 1669).

Animal Tracks (1965, Columbia 33SX 1708).

Animalisms (1966, Decca LK4797).

ANTONE'S

Founded in 1987 in Austin, Texas. Austin businessman Clifford Antone already owned a legendary blues nightclub, as well as a record store dedicated to the blues (located across the street from each other), when he decided to also start a record label to capture some of the music heard in his club.

While the nightclub and label are based in Texas, much of the music heard from both is Chicago-style blues—Cliff Antone's personal favorite style of music. Chicago blues legends Jimmy Rogers, James Cotton, Eddie Taylor, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, and Snooky Pryor have all recorded albums for Antone's. At the same time, the label has also helped launch the careers of Canada's Sue Foley and San Diego's Candy Kane, while revitalizing the careers of Texans Angela Strehli and Lou Ann Barton.

The label suffered a setback in 2000, however, when Antone went to prison on a drug conviction; he was released in 2002. Antone's has survived, though, and is continuing to issue new albums in an arrangement with the Texas Music Group.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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APOLLO/LLOYDS/TIMELY

Founded in New York City in 1942 by husband and wife team Ike and Bess Berman and by Hy Siegel, Apollo Records' first releases ran the gamut from jazz and calypso to country music and gospel. In 1945 another partner, Sam Schneider, was taken on to oversee a new West Coast office, which was responsible for the recordings of Wynonie Harris, Duke Henderson, Jack McVea, and Dinah Washington, while back in New York the Bermans were recording blues artists such as Champion Jack Dupree, Jerome "Doc" Pomus, and Louis "Jelly Belly" Hayes's and Alec Seward's "The Back Porch Boys." Following a split with Ike in 1948, Bess Berman acquired the shares of the other partners. Hy Siegel went on to launch Timely Records in 1953 at the same time that Apollo launched its own short-lived R&B subsidiary, Lloyds Records. The company ceased business around 1962.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography

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ARC (AMERICAN RECORD CORPORATION)

Record company formed in August 1929 incorporating the labels of the Plaza Music Company (Jewel, Domino, Oriole, Banner, Regal), Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation (Pathé Actuelle, Perfect), and Cameo Record Corporation (Cameo, Romeo, Lincoln). All had been active in blues recording, though only Pathé had the Race series (the Pathé 7500 and Perfect 100 series, which had reached 7540/140 at the time of the merger). The Perfect series was continued and many issues, for example, 1930 sides by Big Bill Broonzy as Sammy Sampson, appeared also on Oriole and Romeo (sometimes also Banner and Jewel) for different markets.

ARC was acquired in October 1930 by Consolidated Film Industries, which in December 1931 also bought Brunswick from Warner Brothers. Though formally distinct, ARC and Brunswick/Vocalion became a single enterprise. In August 1934 the company acquired Columbia and Okeh, but soon discontinued these labels, terminating the Okeh 8000 Race series at 8966 in April 1935. Blues issues henceforth appeared mainly on Vocalion or on cheaper records on the so-called dime-store labels, Perfect, Oriole, Romeo, Banner, and Melotone, which used a coordinated system of issue numbers. The assumption often consequently made by discographers that all issues appeared on all of these labels throughout the period of issue may well be false. Some artists, such as Blind Boy Fuller and Robert Johnson, had records issued in both the Vocalion and dime-store series; others, such as Buddy Moss and Joshua White (Pinewood Tom), appeared only on the dime-store labels. ARC/Brunswick was purchased by the Columbia Broadcasting System in February 1938. CBS dropped the dime-store labels in April 1938 and in 1940 discontinued the Brunswick and Vocalion labels in favor of Columbia and Okeh. The ARC name itself appeared only on record labels in a few special series.

HOWARD RYE

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See also **Brunswick; Columbia; Melotone; Okeh; Vocalion**

ARCENAU, FERNEST

ARCENAU, FERNEST

b. 27 August 1940; Lafayette, LA

A versatile accordion player who first recorded with Fernest and the Thunders on the Blues Unlimited label in the 1970s. He has performed Louisiana dance music, New Orleans-style R&B, and blues.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

AMG; Larkin

ARCHIA, TOM

b. Ernest Alvin Archie, Jr., 26 November 1919; Groveton, TX

d. 16 January 1977; Houston, TX

Tenor sax jazz musician of the big band era who built a second career as a rhythm and blues session man after World War II. Archia moved from Texas to Chicago in 1942 as a member of the Milt Larkin Band (1940–1943), then served in Roy Eldridge's band and the Rhumboogie Club house band. In 1945, Archia moved to Los Angeles, working with Howard McGhee and recording with Illinois and Russell Jacquet and Helen Humes. Back in Chicago in 1946, he recorded with Eldridge's band, and then from 1947 to 1950 he led the house band at Leonard and Phil Chess's legendary Macomba Lounge. Chess put out eight sides on Archia on Aristocrat (which in 1950 would become Chess Records), and used Archia to back blues singer Andrew Tibbs. Archia's blowing was robust and suffused with blues feeling, which is why he was also used in 1947 to back such blues artists as Marion Abernathy, Big Maybelle, and Wynonie Harris for King Records. He did two sessions with Dinah Washington in 1952–1953. Archia returned to Houston in 1968.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

ARCHIBALD

b. Leon T. Gross, 14 September 1912; New Orleans, LA

d. 8 January 1973; New Orleans, LA

Sometimes a musician becomes permanently associated with a particular selection, and that alone certifies their longevity. In Archibald's case, that benchmark is the 1950 release "Stack-a-Lee." Most people associate the composition with Lloyd Price's 1958 release entitled "Stagger Lee." Archibald's version appeared on an Imperial single and reached the R&B top ten. Subsequently, the pianist, born Leon T. Gross, aka "Archie Boy," returned to national anonymity, although he continued to record for Imperial through 1958. He made his living through residences at New Orleans venues such as the Poodle Patio Club and the Court of Two Sisters, his recording career known only to the cognoscenti of the city's musical culture.

DAVID SANJEK

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Eder); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

ARCHIVE OF AMERICAN FOLK SONG

Founded by the Library of Congress in 1928. The first archivist, Robert W. Gordon, made cylinder recordings of African Americans. In 1933, John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax made the first of many trips covering most southern states during the next ten years. Their many discoveries included Huddie Ledbetter ("Leadbelly"), James "Iron Head" Baker, and Vera Hall. A 1938 trip to Detroit yielded important recordings by Calvin Frazier and Sampson Pittman. In the same year, W. C. Handy and Jelly Roll Morton made documentary recordings in Washington, D.C. In the late 1930s other collectors also worked for the archive, often under W.P.A. sponsorship. A trip to Mississippi in 1941–1942 jointly sponsored by Fisk University famously led to new recordings by Son House and the discovery of David "Honeyboy" Edwards and McKinley Morganfield ("Muddy Waters"). The library has issued records drawn from its holdings and there have been many other issues of important blues material.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

DGR

ARDOIN, ALPHONSE “BOIS SEC”

b. 16 November 1915; Duralde, LA

Alphonse “Bois Sec” Ardoin is the nephew of legendary Creole accordionist and singer Amédé Ardoin and the grandfather of zydeco performers Chris and Shawn Ardoin. He plays one-row button accordion in a style that is strongly traditional Creole with Cajun influence. For almost forty years he played duets with fiddler Canray Fontenot until Fontenot’s death in 1996.

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Ardoin, Amadie; Arhoolie/Blues Classics/Folk Lyric; Fontenot, Canray**

ARDOIN, AMÉDÉ

b. 11 March 1896; L’Anse Rougeau, LA
d. 9 November 1941, Alexandria, LA

First name sometimes shown as Amadie. Ardoin was an accordionist and one of the pioneers of black Cajun music on records. From 1921 on he often performed with white fiddler Denis McGee. In 1928 he signed with Columbia Records. Also recorded with Brunswick, Decca, and Bluebird, including the songs “La Valse De Gueydan,” “Les Blues De Voyages,” and “Oberlin.” From the late 1930s until his death, he was committed to the Louisiana State Institution for the Mentally Ill.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

See also **Louisiana**

ARHOOLIE/BLUES CLASSICS/FOLK LYRIC

Legendary record collector and producer Chris Strachwitz started Arhoolie in 1960 as a means of recording a session featuring the Texas blues singer and guitarist Mance Lipscomb. Strachwitz had long been a noted enthusiast and fan of every genre comprising American vernacular music. Traditional jazz, blues, R&B, Cajun, zydeco, Conjunto/Norteno,

gospel, bluegrass, and country acts are among the types of music that have made it into Arhoolie releases. Artists such as Clifton Chenier, Flaco Jimenez, Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins, “Mississippi” Fred McDowell, and Big Mama Thornton arguably made their greatest releases for Arhoolie.

Strachwitz is also noted for cutting many of the label’s best releases in live, regional settings. Arhoolie albums and CDs have also appeared in several movies, most notably Les Blank’s *Chulas Fronteras* and *Lone Star*. But Strachwitz’s tastes are not limited or restricted to domestic sounds. The company has issued several albums of traditional and popular Mexican music, Hawaiian sounds, and material from Africa, the Caribbean, Cuba, and Latin America.

Strachwitz began the Down Home Music Store in 1976. It soon expanded into the Down Home Music Mail Order service (later Roots & Rhythm), arguably the country’s finest mail-order service for roots music. Strachwitz has also enjoyed success as a song publisher, thanks to his Tradition Music Company, which has published material from Country Joe & the Fish, “Mississippi” Fred McDowell, and K. C. Douglas that has subsequently been rerecorded and turned into huge hits. The Rolling Stones and country star Alan Jackson are among artists utilizing songs through the Tradition Music Company.

Strachwitz even expanded into distribution in the 1980s as well, establishing Bay Side Record Distributors, which he later sold. Arhoolie’s vinyl catalog is increasingly being reissued on special two albums on one CD releases, but the company also sells some vinyl and recently expanded into vintage 78s. In addition, there are new Arhoolie reissues and recordings from such artists as Santiago Jimenez, Jr., Big Joe Williams, and Big Mama Thornton. Arhoolie imports releases from Document, an Austrian company that specializes in prewar blues and gospel recordings as well as early country. They also import world music releases from the Pan label, a Dutch company.

RON WYNN

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ARKANSAS

The role that Arkansas played in blues history has been obscured by the better-known contributions of its neighbors the Mississippi Delta and Memphis. But

ARKANSAS

the Arkansas Delta, a musically rich area that includes all or part of twenty-seven counties in the state's eastern region, has produced an incredible array of blues talent.

Helena

Located on a high bluff on the Mississippi River, Helena was the most important river port between Memphis and Vicksburg. A center for the local cotton trade and a key point for the distribution of goods into the surrounding countryside, Helena attracted thousands of black people to work on riverboats and on shore. In a region where money was scarce, these workers attracted many bluesmen to the juke joints along Elm and Walnut Streets. Nearby West Helena also overflowed with clubs. Barrelhouse pianists and itinerant blues musicians with guitars and harps filled Helena's joints with raucous music. Piano legend Roosevelt Sykes learned much of his technique as a teenager in the early 1920s by observing the piano players in Helena.

On November 19, 1941, radio station KFFA went on the air in Helena. A few days later, Sonny Boy Williamson II (Rice Miller) asked if he could perform on the station. The station's owners agreed that he could if he found his own sponsor. Sonny Boy quickly signed with the Interstate Grocer Company, whose owner, Max Moore, wanted to promote his local King Biscuit flour. Thus was born the King Biscuit Time radio show, featuring Sonny Boy's dynamic blues harp and sardonic singing, coupled with the innovative guitar playing of Robert Lockwood, Jr. Lockwood developed his skills under the tutelage of Delta blues legend Robert Johnson, who had been romantically involved with Lockwood's mother.

King Biscuit Time was an instant success and aired from 12:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. each weekday. The show also went on the road, airing live on Saturdays from many Delta towns in Arkansas and Mississippi. In 1947, Interstate Grocer Company introduced Sonny Boy Corn Meal—with a picture of Sonny Boy sitting on an ear of corn on the front of each sack—to further profit from the show's success.

Among the performers who appeared on King Biscuit Time were pianists Robert "Dudlow" Taylor, Willie Love, and Pinetop Perkins, guitarists Joe "Willie" Wilkins, Houston Stackhouse, Earl Hooker, and Sammy Lawhorn, and drummer Peck Curtis.

Lockwood left the show after two years because of a dispute with Max Moore. He soon had his own show on KFFA, sponsored by Mother's Best Flour Company, which lasted about a year. Delta bluesman

and Helena native Robert Nighthawk also had a show on KFFA, sponsored by Bright Star Flour. He also appeared on King Biscuit Time and replaced Sonny Boy as the show's regular star after Sonny Boy died in Helena in 1965. Nighthawk passed away in 1967 and is buried in Helena's Magnolia Cemetery.

Since 1968, King Biscuit Time has featured recorded music instead of a live band. Today the show is hosted by Sonny Payne, who has been with the program since the 1940s.

Helena blues has carried on in the juke-joint blues of harp player Frank Frost (who died in 1999) and drummer Sam Carr, the modern blues of west Helena native Lonnie Shields, and the creative down-home blues of John Weston. In 1986, Helena's Sonny Boy Blues Society put together a one-day blues festival to honor the city's rich blues heritage. The King Biscuit Blues Festival has since grown into one of the world's largest free blues festivals, attracting tens of thousands of fans annually.

West Memphis

West Memphis, located directly across the Mississippi River from Memphis, was by the late 1940s a more significant blues center than its larger neighbor. Founded in 1910 as a logging camp, West Memphis grew into a town known for its gambling, hot blues, and other vices. It had many jukeboxes and clubs, especially along 8th Street, which included a variety of venues, from country-style jukeboxes such as the Little Brown Jug to more substantial clubs like the Be-Bop Hall. Just fifteen miles to the west was the Top Hat club at Blackfish Lake, which held hundreds of people.

The most important blues musician on the West Memphis scene was Howlin' Wolf, who loomed large physically and musically. An energetic performer who sang with a voice that sounded like an earthquake feels and played raw, country-style blues harp, Wolf put together his first electric band in the late 1940s while living in West Memphis. Made up largely of musicians much younger than himself, Wolf's band featured many of the best players in the region, including harp players Little Junior Parker and James Cotton, pianist William "Destruction" Johnson, drummer Willie Steele, and guitarists Willie Lee Johnson, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, and Auburn "Pat" Hare. Johnson's guitar work, combining raw blues riffs with jazzy chord flourishes, in particular helped establish the signature sound of the band, which quickly established itself as the most popular in West Memphis and the surrounding Arkansas Delta.

In 1949, Wolf secured a radio show on West Memphis station KWEM, on which he advertised farm

supplies. Memphis record producer Sam Phillips heard Wolf on the show and, impressed by his raw talent, began recording him for Chess Records in Chicago. Wolf's success on KWEM opened the door for other blues artists on the station, including Sonny Boy II, who advertised the patent medicine Hadacol, piano player Willie Love, and drummer Willie Nix. Other blues musicians active in West Memphis at the time included B. B. King, Joe Hill Louis, Rosco Gordon, Jr., and Hubert Sumlin. In the 1970s, locally owned 8th Street Records recorded West Memphis blues veterans Sammy Lewis and Sonny Blake, though their records were poorly distributed. Little remains of the West Memphis blues scene today.

Other Parts of the State

Many other Arkansas towns had active blues scenes. In Brinkley, the White Swan club regularly featured Robert Nighthawk, Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, and others. In Osceola, M. C. Reeder owned the T-99 club, whose In the Groove Boys band included young guitarist Albert Nelson, who later became famous as Albert King. Another Osceola guitarist, Son Seals, learned the blues at his father's juke the Dipsy Doodle. Forrest City lent its name to harp player "Forrest City" Joe Pugh, who made a handful of recordings for Aristocrat (later Chess) Records. Little Rock's blues scene produced the woefully underrated Larry Davis, best known for his recording of "Texas Flood" for Duke Records, and Elmon "Driftin' Slim" Mickle, who later moved to Los Angeles and worked as a one-man band. Also associated with Little Rock was bluesman Calvin Leavy, who achieved a surprise R&B hit with the down-home blues tune "Cummins Prison Farm."

Most unusual of all Arkansas bluesman is Cedell Davis of Pine Bluff. Born in Helena in 1927, Davis contracted polio as a child, which crippled his right hand. He learned to play guitar upside-down, clutching a butter knife as a slide in his crippled hand. The result is a uniquely discordant but powerful and eerie blues sound. Recently, Michael Burks emerged from Arkansas with an outstanding guitar style (influenced by Albert King) and strong vocals that are quickly making him a star.

Other blues artists born in the cities and towns of Arkansas include Luther Allison (Widener), Little Willie Anderson (West Memphis), Buster Benton (Texarkana), Willie Cobbs (Smales), Detroit Junior (Haynes), Art and Roman Griswold (Tillar), "Shakey" Jake Harris (Earle), Floyd Jones (Marianna), Charley Jordan (Mabelville), Louis Jordan (Brinkley), Sammy

Lawhorn (Little Rock), Hosea Leavy (Altheimer), Larry McCray (Magnolia), George "Harmonica" Smith (Helena), Blue Smitty (Marianna), Johnnie Taylor (Crawfordsville), Washboard Sam (Walnut Ridge), Casey Bill Weldon (Pine Bluff), and Jimmy Witherspoon (Gurdon).

MARK HOFFMAN/JAMES SEGREST

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ARMSTRONG, HOWARD "LOUIE BLUIE"

b. 4 March 1909; LaFollette, TN
d. 30 July 2003; Boston, MA

Though he could play many instruments, Howard Armstrong's primary musical instruments were the fiddle and mandolin. He played with Carl Martin and Ted Bogan for much of his career. Their prewar era string band was known under names including the Four Keys and the Tennessee Chocolate Drops. Credited as the latter, Armstrong made his first recordings with Martin in 1930 for Vocalion. He also recorded with Bogan for Bluebird in 1934, this time credited as "Louie Bluiie." In the 1970s, the trio achieved fame touring and recording as Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong. In 1985, Armstrong was the main subject of the documentary film *Louie Bluiie*. He continued to perform until shortly before his death.

ANDREW LEACH

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Discography: DGR

Selected Recordings

- Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong* (1974, Flying Fish 003).
That Old Gang of Mine (1978, Flying Fish 056).
Louie Bluiie: Film Soundtrack Featuring Howard Armstrong (1985, Arhoolie 4700).
Louie Bluiie (1995, Blue Suit BS-106D).

See also Bogan, Ted; Martin, Carl

ARMSTRONG, JAMES

ARMSTRONG, JAMES

b. 22 April 1957; Los Angeles, CA

Singer, guitarist, and songwriter, whose influences include Jimi Hendrix, Albert King, Albert Collins, and Robert Cray. Since 1995 he has been a HighTone label recording artist. He wrote the songs for his second CD, *Dark Night*, while recovering from a 1996 stabbing.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Santelli

Discography: AMG

See also Collins, Albert; Cray, Robert; Hendrix, Jimi; HighTone; King, Albert

ARMSTRONG, LOUIS

b. Daniel Louis Armstrong, 4 August 1901; New Orleans, LA

d. 6 July 1971; New York, NY

Trumpeter, singer. Jazz innovator Armstrong was one of the most important musical figures of the twentieth century, both for his pioneering role in the evolution of instrumental soloing and as an enduring vocal influence who popularized horn-derived phrasing and scat singing. A young Armstrong replaced the legendary King Oliver in Kid Ory's band in 1919 in New Orleans. He moved to Chicago in 1922 to join Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and then to New York City in 1924 to work with Fletcher Henderson. He backed blues singers Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Sippie Wallace, and Alberta Hunter in recording sessions before revolutionizing ensemble play with his Hot Five and Hot Seven landmark recordings. He formed his own band in 1927 in Chicago and spent the next four decades as the most popular and widely known figure in jazz.

MICHAEL POINT

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Giddins, Gary. *Satchmo*. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Discography: Lord

ARMSTRONG, THOMAS LEE "TOM"

b. 22 October 1936; Sparta, TN

d. 14 December 1996; Chicago, IL

Tom Armstrong was the son of Howard Armstrong. He played bass with Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong (also known as Martin, Bogan, and the Armstrongs). He recorded and toured extensively with the group. He also played the trumpet and was a painter.

ANDREW LEACH

Discography

Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong (1974, Flying Fish 003).

That Old Gang of Mine (1978, Flying Fish 056).

Louie Bluie: Film Soundtrack Featuring Howard Armstrong (1985, Arhoolie 470).

See also Armstrong, Howard "Louie Bluie"; Bogan, Ted; Martin, Carl

ARNETT, AL

b. 8 February 1929; Colquitt, GA

Bass player. Grew up in Cleveland, Ohio; settled in Sacramento, California. Worked with bands in France, Vietnam, and Japan while in the armed services. Sat in with Tiny Grimes as a youngster and played with the Sensations in Japan. Arnett was a member of Soul of the Blues, a popular Sacramento-based blues band.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

Jung, Maureen. "Sacramento Blues: Part One." *Living Blues* no. 114 (March/April 1994): 58–65.

See also Grimes, Lloyd "Tiny"

ARNOLD, BILLY BOY

b. William Arnold; 16 September 1935; Chicago, IL

Harmonica player and vocalist. He took a few lessons with Sonny Boy (John Lee) Williamson in 1948 and was very influenced by his style. Made his recording debut for a small local label as a teenager in 1952, issued by the company under the name Billy Boy Arnold. Although not his own choice, he decided to retain the name. Arnold joined Bo Diddley's trio and played harmonica on the hit single "Hey Bo Diddley"/"I'm a Man" in 1955 and on other recordings with the singer. He used Bo Diddley's trademark rhythmic shuffle on many of his own recordings. Signed to Vee-Jay Records, where Arnold made his best recordings as a leader for the label in 1955–1957, including "I Wish You Would," "I Ain't Got You," "Don't

Stay Out All Night,” “Prisoner’s Plea,” “You’ve Got Me Wrong,” “I Was Fooled,” and “Rockinitis.”

He accompanied many Chicago luminaries in the 1950s, including Howlin’ Wolf and Muddy Waters, but was not on their level as an artist. Arnold participated in the Samuel Charters-produced *More Blues on the South Side* for Prestige in 1963. He later recorded for European labels while touring in blues packages in the 1970s and 1980s. During this time he appeared in the documentary film *The Devil’s Music* (BBC) in 1977. He returned to a more prominent profile with two albums for Alligator Records in 1993 and 1995, which critics have called his best studio work since the mid-1950s. *Boogie ‘N’ Shuffle* was released in 1999, with Duke Robillard playing and producing. A live album was issued on Catfish Records in 2000. Although at best an adequate vocalist, his harmonica playing merits attention.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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More Blues on the South Side (1963, Prestige 7389).
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Ten Million Dollars (1984, Blue Phoenix 337260).
Back Where I Belong (1993, Alligator 4815).
Eldorado Cadillac (1995, Alligator 4836).
Boogie ‘N’ Shuffle (1999, Stony Plain SPCD1266).
Live at the Venue (2000, Catfish 140).

See also Chicago; Diddley, Bo; Vee-Jay/Abner/Falcon; Williamson, Sonny Boy I (John Lee Williamson)

ARNOLD, JEROME

b. 26 November 1936; Chicago, IL

Jerome Arnold began playing electric bass guitar after his brother, Billy Boy Arnold, couldn’t find any good, steady bass players. After working with Billy Boy, Jerome went on to play bass with some of the biggest names in the business. He was a member of the Otis Rush, Howlin’ Wolf, Muddy Waters, Little Walter, and Paul Butterfield bands, and performed with many others. Jerome was a part of the 1968 American Folk Blues Festival.

GREG JOHNSON

Bibliography

Tillman, Keith. “Bringing It to Jerome.” *Blues Unlimited* 63 (June 1969): 12–14.

See also Bass

ARNOLD, KOKOMO

b. James Arnold, 15 February 1901; Lovejoys Station, GA

d. 8 November 1968; Chicago, IL

Kokomo Arnold was a left-handed bottleneck blues guitarist from Georgia. He was taught by his cousin John Wiggles. Another guitarist later taught him how to play the slide in the Hawaiian manner, with the guitar laid flat in his lap. In 1919 he left Georgia for Buffalo, New York. After a stint in Mississippi, Arnold finally settled in Chicago in 1929. In 1930 Kokomo made his first two recordings in Memphis as “Git-fiddle Jim.” As a bootlegger Arnold found a lucrative way of earning a living during the Prohibition era.

In 1934 he was discovered by “Kansas” Joe McCoy, who persuaded Mayo Williams to record him. His first Decca record proved to be a two-sided smash hit for Decca. “Milk Cow Blues” was later recorded by “Big” Bill Broonzy, Amos Easton, “Sleepy” John Estes, Freddie Spruell, and Josh White. Twenty years later Elvis Presley recorded it on his third single. The flip-side, “Old Original Kokomo Blues,” which Arnold may have learned from the 1928 recording by Scrapper Blackwell, was later recorded by Robert Johnson as “Sweet Home Chicago.” Under this title it became the national anthem of postwar Chicago blues. Arnold was to record a steady stream of songs for Decca from 1934 to 1938. In 1936 and 1937 Peetie Wheatstraw was his trusted recording partner. Besides recording under his own name, Kokomo also accompanied Mary Johnson, Alice Moore, Roosevelt Sykes, Sam Theard, and Peetie Wheatstraw.

After his recording career, Arnold kept playing in the Chicago clubs until at least 1946, after which date he drifted off into obscurity. In 1959, when he was a janitor at a steel mill, he was interviewed by Marcel Chauvard and Jacques Demetre, but embittered about his recording career he refused to enter a studio once more. In 1968 he died at home of a heart attack.

Three-quarters of his songs are in open D, one quarter in open G. Only “Shine on Moon” is in standard tuning. His bottleneck style is less precise than Tampa Red’s. Arnold’s style is less sophisticated and more emotional. His aggressive playing and his original song lyrics make him a compelling and influential artist.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

ARNOLD, KOKOMO

Bibliography

AMG; Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

See also Chicago; McCoy, “Kansas” Joe; Tampa Red; One Time Blues

ARRINGTON, MANUEL

b. 24 April 1944; Collins, MS

Chicago blues vocalist who has performed with the Manuel Arrington Blues Revue and New Orleans Beau group. A frequent performer in Chicago blues venues.

RYAN OLSEN

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Sharp, Steven. “Chicago Special.” *Living Blues* no. 115 (May/June 1994): 40–48.

See also Chicago

ASCH/DISC/FOLKWAYS/RBF

Moses Asch—founder of the Asch Recordings record label and its subsidiary divisions, Disc Records, Folkways Records, and RBF Records—began his musical career as a radio salesman and soundman for various left-wing assemblies in New York City in the 1930s. He eventually established his own recording studio in 1938 and began producing albums of Jewish music for a local radio station. In 1941 Asch expanded his repertoire to record an album of children’s songs entitled *Play Parties in Song and Dance* by the blues singer Huddie Ledbetter (“Leadbelly”). The recording proved popular in leftist political circles, and its sales helped to solidify the always precarious existence of Asch’s recording endeavors.

Because he was more interested in developing niche markets and the tastes of specialized audience groups, Asch’s recording companies were never far from bankruptcy, and he would frequently be forced to fold a company due to mounting debts, only to shortly resurface with a new name and new mandate. Asch’s namesake company, Asch Recordings (later Asch-Stinson), folded in 1941, and in January 1946 Asch reemerged with a new label, Disc Company of America, which focused less on folk music and more on jazz, including recordings by Mary Lou Williams. Asch was again declared bankrupt in 1949, but he had already begun negotiations with his secretary and partner, Marion Distler, to form a new company, Folkways

Records. Folkways and its offshoot RBF (for Records, Books, Films) avoided insolvency—and survived into the early 1970s—by operating under the distinct mandate of *avoiding* commercial success. After Moses Asch’s death in 1985 his entire catalogue was purchased by the Smithsonian Institution, where it continues to exist as an invaluable resource of traditional and indigenous music from America and around the world.

DONNA LOWE

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ASHFORD, R. T.

Talent scout for the Paramount label in the late 1920s and 1930s. Ashford was Paramount’s primary talent scout in the Southwest. One of his discoveries was guitarist Jesse “Babyface” Thomas.

RYAN OLSEN

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See also Paramount; Thomas, Jesse “Babyface”

ATLANTA

Atlanta originated as a small station named Terminus located on the Georgia state railroad in the mid-1830s. It was renamed Marthasville in 1843 and again renamed Atlanta in 1847. It soon became a growing commercial center in the South, because it was a major junction for the train lines running east of the Appalachian Mountains and west to the Mississippi Valley. Consequently, it proved to be a key military objective of the Union forces under the command of General William T. Sherman during the Civil War. It was set on fire and destroyed in 1864.

After the Civil War, a black middle class emerged in Atlanta. In the 1860s, the American Missionary Association founded Atlanta University, and the Methodist Episcopal Church founded Clark University. They later combined campuses and Clark Atlanta University became one of the largest collections of black colleges in the world. The race riot of 1906 defined a

biracial division in Atlanta that remained unchanged for many years as the black business community was driven away from the downtown center.

Social conditions challenged many blacks in the city during the early twentieth century. Blacks as young as twelve years of age and convicted of criminal offenses often found themselves chained with older adults and sentenced to work at gang labor in Atlanta. During the height of the Great Depression, the number of blacks who could not find regular jobs and qualified for federal relief climbed to more than sixty percent. During the late nineteenth century, Atlanta rebuilt itself and became a symbol of a new and revitalized South. Atlanta emerged in the early twentieth century as the South's leading commercial and industrial center. Convict leases and chain gang labor built much of the infrastructure serving this expansion. Following World War II, Atlanta's location again made it a major center for air and highway travel during the last half of the century.

Atlanta is recognized today as the civil rights center of the region and the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. During the 1960s, Atlanta's self-stated motto was "The city too busy to hate." It distinguished itself with its progressive political climate during this period. Since that time, a series of black mayors have guided the continued commercial growth and success of the city. Mayor Andrew Young played a significant role in securing the Olympic games for Atlanta in 1996. In spite of this success, a cycle of poverty still exists for many blacks.

Early in the twentieth century, Atlanta became a center for blues recordings and music scouts. The city's tradition of blues music began on the streets and in the barrelhouses where guitar players and piano players performed. Among the early blues artists who played and recorded in Atlanta were Lillian Glinn, Bert M. Mays, Barbecue Bob, Curley Weaver, and Buddy Moss. Best known of the Atlanta blues singers was "Blind" Willie McTell. He made a number of recordings with his wife, Kate McTell, who was also known as Ruby Glaze.

William Perryman, also known as Piano Red, and his older brother, Rufus Perryman, whose nickname was Speckled Red, grew up in Atlanta where they both played boogie-woogie piano. Speckled Red made a number of recordings before the second world war, whereas Piano Red began his recording career in the 1950s. After living in a variety of cities, Piano Red returned to Atlanta later in his life where he performed his music regularly in local bars.

Tinsley Ellis was born in Atlanta and grew up in south Florida. After returning to Atlanta to attend college, he played with a group, The Heartfixers. Ellis recorded a number of blues albums with this group

before going on to a solo career. Illinois born Francine Reed grew up in Arizona before she moved to Atlanta. She provided blues vocal accompaniment for Lyle Lovett before recording two blues albums of her own. Reed performs regularly at Blind Willie's, a venue that specializes in vintage local blues.

Julius "Lotsapoppa" High, Sandra Hall, and Luther "Houserocker" Johnson are other local blues performers that appear regularly at Blind Willie's. These blues artists originally played in clubs on Auburn Avenue up through the 1970s. Auburn Avenue was the center of local blues in Atlanta dating from the early 1950s. Major blues venues included the Royal Peacock, Poinciana, and the Elks Club.

Decatur Street established itself as the first center for both local and national blues artists dating from the early 1920s and continuing through the 1940s. Two vaudeville theaters on that street, known as the "81" and the "91," showcased the talents of Bessie Smith, "Butterbeans and Susie" (the stage names for Joe and Susie Edwards), and Willie McTell among others. A building of the Georgia State University campus stands on the location today.

BILL GRAVES

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ATLANTIC/ATCO/SPARK

Atlantic Records was formed in New York City in 1947 by Ahmet Ertegun and Herb Abramson. Both Ertegun and Abramson were avid record collectors specializing in jazz and rhythm and blues. In 1953 fellow R&B aficionado Jerry Wexler became a partner, with Abramson parting shortly thereafter. While never a blues label per se, from the late 1940s through the early 1970s, Atlantic recorded a startling array of blues talent in New York City, Chicago, and at various locations during Southern field recording trips. The net results manifest what Jim O'Neal has termed, in his liner notes for *Atlantic Blues: Piano*, "the founders' appreciation for roots coupled with an ear for commercial potential."

Atlantic's earliest blues recordings included two top five R&B singles by the New York-based guitarist/vocalist Sticks McGhee, "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee" (1949) and "Tennessee Waltz Blues" (1951),

as well as seminal sides by New Orleans pianist Professor Longhair, Chicago boogie-woogie pianists Jimmy Yancey and Meade “Lux” Lewis, Yancey’s wife, “Mama” Estelle Yancey, Atlanta twelve-string wizard “Blind” Willie McTell, West Coast guitarist “Texas” Johnny Brown (with Amos Milburn on piano), Chicago pianist Eurreal “Little Brother” Montgomery, and Vann “Piano Man” Walls (who also played on numerous Atlantic sessions as a sideman).

In the mid- and late 1950s Atlantic continued apace, cutting sides with the Kansas City team of vocalist Big Joe Turner and pianist Pete Johnson, New Orleans pianist “Champion” Jack Dupree, Crescent City guitarist Guitar Slim, the Los Angeles-based pianist and balladeer Floyd Dixon, West Coast guitarist T-Bone Walker, jump-blues singer Wynonie Harris, and, at the end of the decade, Mississippi bluesman Fred McDowell. In the early 1960s Atlantic issued a series of albums of field recordings done by folklorist Alan Lomax of both black and white Southern musicians that included substantial blues material.

While Atlantic issued few blues recordings in the mid-1960s, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the company devoted considerable resources to signing, recording, and marketing white rock groups. Among mainstream pop artists such as the Bee Gees and Iron Butterfly were an inordinate number of groups such as Cream, Led Zeppelin, the Allman Brothers Band, the Rolling Stones, and the J. Geils Band. These bands featured guitarists such as Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Duane Allman, and Keith Richards, who recorded covers of blues standards and wrote newer work that was manifestly rooted in the blues. Beginning in 1967 Atlantic also recorded the white acoustic blues guitarist John Hammond, Jr. Continuing to tap into the blues revival, in 1968 Atlantic activated its Cotillion subsidiary, recording albums by black blues artists Freddie King and Otis Rush, and in 1972 the company issued *Buddy Guy and Junior Wells Play the Blues* on Atco. In the late 1960s, Atlantic and its subsidiaries also issued singles by Johnny Copeland and Z. Z. Hill. New Orleans pianist Dr. John (aka Mac Rebennack) recorded a series of albums that, while marketed toward the white rock demographic, contained substantial R&B content.

Finally, in the 1970s and 1980s, Atlantic was assiduous in reissuing various of its blues recordings. Its *Blues Original* LP covering the Professor Longhair sessions from 1949 and 1953 helped spark a revival of Longhair’s career. At the same time, Atlantic issued a plethora of live albums documenting various festivals including Woodstock, Mar Y Sol, the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival, the Montreux Jazz Festival, and the Soul to Soul concert in Ghana. Each of these albums included performances by

blues artists ranging from B. B. King, Howlin’ Wolf, and J. B. Hutto to Stevie Ray Vaughan and the Butterfield Blues Band.

ROBERT BOWMAN

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ATLAS

Record label (California, 1944–1948). Owners: Robert Scherman (b. June 14, 1915; Brazil, IN; d. November 2, 2000; Sun City, CA) and Art Rupe (b. Arthur Newton Goldberg, September 5, 1917; Greensburg, PA). Based in Hollywood, California, the label was originally called Premier with recordings by the Nat King Cole Trio (“F. S. T.,” “Got a Penny”). The label was the first to record Frankie Laine (with Johnny Moore’s Three Blazers). Other artists include Johnny Alston (with George Vann), the Four Vagabonds, Walter Fuller, Luke Jones, Red Mack, and Oscar Moore.

ROBERT EAGLE

Bibliography

McGrath

AUDIOQUEST

Label active since the late 1980s. A division of Valley Entertainment, it is known for the audiophile quality of the “live-to-two-track” recordings produced by Joe Harley. Artists include “Mighty” Sam McClain, Joe Beard, Doug McLeod, Sherman Robertson, Bruce Katz, and Ronnie Earl.

EDWARD KOMARA

AUGUST, JOE “MR. GOOGLE EYES”

- b. Joseph Augustus, 13 September 1931; New Orleans, LA
 d. 9 October 1992; New Orleans, LA

R&B singer. August originally performed as a novelty act—The Nation’s Youngest Blues Singer—while in his teens. Recorded for Coleman and Columbia in the late 1940s and Dot and Instant in the 1950s. Continued performing into the early 1990s.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: LSPF

See also *Rhythm and Blues*

AUGUST, LYNN

b. Joseph Leonard, 7 August 1948; Lafayette, LA

Zydeco accordion player and singer. Although he went blind before he was a year old, August has had a long and versatile career. Influences include Ray Charles, Clifton Chenier, and Guitar Slim. Has recorded for Black Top.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

AMG; Santelli

Discography: AMG; Santelli

AUSTIN, CLAIRE

b. 21 November 1918; Yakima, WA

Blues vocalist who performed in the 1950s and 1960s with Kid Ory and Gene Mayl’s Dixieland Rhythm Kings. She recorded for GTJ, Contemporary, and Jazzology.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: Lord

AUSTIN, JESSE “WILD BILL”

b. 23 March 1930; New Rochelle, NY

d. 22 March 1996; Bridgeport, CT

Blues shouter, pianist, and organist. Jesse “Wild Bill” Austin developed a unique “hog calling” vocal style as a youngster. He first toured with Wynonie Harris at fourteen and would later perform with his groups Soul Plus, Different Approach, and the Jesse Austin Band.

RYAN OLSEN

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AUSTIN, LOVIE

b. Cora Calhoun, 19 September 1887; Chattanooga, TN

d. 10 July 1972; Chicago, IL

Pianist, arranger, and bandleader. Studied music at Knoxville College, Tennessee, and at Roger Williams College in Nashville, Tennessee. She toured widely, including on the TOBA theater circuit, before settling in Chicago. She recorded prolifically in the 1920s as a house pianist for Paramount records, providing band and solo accompaniments for many leading blues singers of the era, including Ida Cox and Ma Rainey.

PETER MUIR/EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

As Leader

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In the Alley Blues (1926, Pm 12391).

Jackass Blues (1926, Pm 12361).

As Sideman

Ida Cox: *Any Woman’s Blues* (1923, Pm 12053); *Bama Bound Blues* (1923, Pm 12045); *Graveyard Dream Blues/Weary Way Blues* (1923, Pm 12044); *Death Letter Blues/Kentucky Man Blues* (1924, Pm 12220); *Cold Black Ground Blues* (1925, Pm 12282); *Trouble Trouble Blues/I’m Leaving Here Blues* (1926, Pm 12344).

Ma Rainey: *Bad Luck Blues/Those All Night Long Blues* (1923, Pm 12081); *Barrel House Blues/Walking Blues* (1923, Pm 12082); *Bo-Weevil Blues/Last Minute Blues* (1923, Pm 12080); *Moonshine Blues/Southern Blues* (1923, Pm 12083); *Honey Where You Been So Long?/Ma Rainey’s Mystery Record* (1924, Pm 12200); *South Bound Blues/Lawd Send Me a Man Blues* (1924, Pm 12227); *Those Dogs of Mine/Lucky Rock Blues* (1924, Pm 12215); *Ya-Da-Do/Cell Bound Blues* (1924, Pm 12257).

B

BABY PLEASE DON'T GO/DON'T YOU LEAVE ME HERE

Big Joe Williams will forever be identified with “Baby Please Don’t Go,” his own composition and his unofficial theme song, but the melody actually emerged in 1925 beneath the bright lights of Tin Pan Alley as “Alabama Bound” by Ray Henderson, with lyrics by B. G. DeSylva and Bud Green.

It was immediately taken up by pop singers, jazz groups, and blues artists alike, with both Lucille Hegamin (Cameo 701) and Sara Martin (OKeh 8262) recording versions of the song in 1925. The song soon found its way into more rural and down-home repertoires, sometimes as “Alabama Bound” and sometimes as “Elder Greene.” Charlie Patton recorded “Elder Greene Blues” in 1929 on Paramount 12972, and Pete Harris recorded “Alabama Bound” for the Library of Congress in 1934 (on Document DOCD 5231). Harris’s version of “Alabama Bound” includes several lines about Elder Greene. Leadbelly also recorded “Alabama Bound” for the Library of Congress in 1935. The song lived on into postwar repertoires, being performed by Bea Booze (with Andy Kirk’s Orchestra, Decca 48073) in 1946, Ray Charles in 1960 (ABC Paramount, ABC 335), and Fats Domino in 1965 (in Las Vegas, unissued).

An intermediate step in the evolution of “Alabama Bound” into “Baby, Please Don’t Go” was its almost immediate transformation into “Don’t You Leave Me Here.” In this new guise, Thomas Morris was credited with writing the music, with Freddie Johnson composing the lyrics, first performed by Monette Moore,

vocalist for Charles Johnson’s Original Paradise Ten, in 1927 on Victor 20653. The song became quite popular with down-home singers as either “Don’t Leave Me Here” or “Don’t You Leave Me Here.” “Papa” Harvey Hull and Long “Cleve” Reed recorded a version on the very rare Black Patti label (BP 8002) the same year as Moore. Henry Thomas recorded it in 1929 on Vocalion 1443 and included a few lines from “Alabama Bound,” as if to remind us of its origin. Tampa Red recorded his version in 1932 (Banner 32799), Merline Johnson recorded hers in 1938 (Vocalion 04331), and Washboard Sam recorded a rewritten humorous version in 1937 (Bluebird 7501).

The most influential version, however, was Big Joe Williams’s 1935 recording of “Baby Please Don’t Go” on Bluebird 6200. The influence of the song grew exponentially as Williams rerecorded it in 1941 (Bluebird 8969) and 1947 (Columbia 37945), both times accompanied by Sonny Boy (John Lee) Williamson. Indeed, “Don’t You Leave Me Here” rarely appeared in postwar repertoires except as “Baby Please Don’t Go.”

The first two artists to record “Baby Please Don’t Go” after Big Joe Williams were Sam Montgomery, who recorded it in the spring of 1936 for the American Record Company group of labels (ARC 6-11-55), and the Tampa Red imitator, Tampa Kid, who recorded it in the fall of 1936 on Decca 7278. By the end of the Korean War, “Baby Please Don’t Go” had become a blues standard, and more than fifty versions were recorded for the independent labels that dominated the blues recording scene in the second half of the century. We can only touch on a few of them here.

Perhaps the best known is Muddy Waters's 1953 "Turn Your Light Down Low" on Chess 1542, but the song was recorded by Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry for World Pacific (WP1294), Fred McDowell for Capitol (LP 409) in 1969, and other singers as diverse as John Lee Hooker, Lightnin' Hopkins, Johnnie Shines, Clifton Chenier, and B. B. King.

PAUL GARON

BAILEY, DEFORD

b. 14 December 1899; near Bellwood, TN
d. 2 July 1982; Nashville, TN

Harmonica player DeFord Bailey was the first African American star of WSM's famous country music radio show, the Grand Ole Opry, and he was one of its most celebrated performers during his nearly fifteen years on the show. Though Bailey also played the guitar and banjo, it was his outstanding harmonica work that brought him fame. Dubbed the "Harmonica Wizard" by Opry creator George D. Hay, Bailey was especially renowned for his remarkable ability to imitate the sounds of trains and animals and to create the illusion of two harmonicas playing at once. Bailey gained a great deal of popularity among both black and white audiences, and although his repertoire was not strictly limited to the blues, he did perform a number of blues pieces.

Bailey was born and raised near the small town of Bellwood, Tennessee, in a musical family that was steeped in what he often called "black hillbilly music." He began playing the harmonica at the age of three, and by the time he was a teenager, he had already begun making a living playing the instrument. In 1918, he moved to Nashville and started performing around the city. Bailey joined the WSM Barn Dance radio show around June 1926, and on December 10, 1927, his performance of his best-known piece, "Pan American Blues," indirectly inspired the change of the show's name to the Grand Ole Opry. During his time on the show, Bailey toured extensively with the Opry's other stars, and he also made eighteen recordings (eleven of which were issued) in 1927 and 1928 for Columbia, Brunswick, and Victor.

In 1941, as a result of a conflict between radio networks and ASCAP, the performance rights licensing organization, WSM, and a number of other stations boycotted ASCAP songs and demanded that their artists develop new material. In May 1941, Bailey's refusal to stop performing his older pieces resulted in his dismissal from the show, an incident about which he remained bitter for the remainder of his life. He went to work full time at his shoe shine

parlor in Nashville and rarely performed publicly again until the mid-1970s, when he made a few radio and television appearances, including a handful of performances on the Opry.

ANDREW LEACH

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Discography: DGR

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BAILEY, KID

An elusive Mississippi blues vocalist and guitarist who flourished during the early 1920s through the 1950s, Kid Bailey is known to have recorded one record in 1929 which included "Rowdy Blues" and "M & O Blues." Bailey also is believed to have performed with Charlie Patton.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

BAILEY, MILDRED

b. Eleanor Rinker, 27 February 1907; Tekoa, WA
d. 12 December 1951; Poughkeepsie, NY

American jazz and pop singer of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Bailey was one of the first white singers to successfully incorporate blues and jazz phrasing, rhythm, and improvisation into her music. During her career Bailey scored a number of hits as a solo artist and as the singer for several dance orchestras and big bands. She is also credited with discovering famed jazz singer Billie Holiday.

Bailey began her musical career in her early teens, playing piano for silent movies and working in a music store as a demonstration singer. By 1925 Bailey

was the headlining act at a club in Hollywood, where she performed pop, jazz, and vaudeville standards of the day. She made her first recording “What Kind O’ Man Is You” (1929; with Eddie Lang) and secured a place in Paul Whiteman’s touring band shortly thereafter. She had her own radio program in the early 1930s and her single “Rockin’ Chair” (1932; written by Hoagy Carmichael) became her signature song. Bailey married xylophonist Red Norvo in 1933 and joined his band in 1936. The pair became known as “Mr. and Mrs. Swing” and a number of their musical collaborations reached the charts. Bailey became a regular on Benny Goodman’s Camel Caravan radio show and recorded several songs with him, including “Darn That Dream” (1939). She performed in clubs and recorded throughout the 1940s. She had her own radio program on CBS from 1944 to 1945, but her failing health halted her singing career shortly thereafter.

ERIN STAPLETON-CORCORAN

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Discography: Lord

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BAILEY, RAY

b. 1956; Los Angeles, CA

A well-known Los Angeles blues guitarist, Bailey has performed with Big Joe Turner, Freddy Walker, and Laverne Baker. Leads the Camarillo All-Stars, and released his first album, *Satan’s Horn*, in 1993.

RYAN OLSEN

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BAKER, ERNEST

(See *King Ernest*)

BAKER, ETTA

b. Etta Reid, 31 March 1913; Caldwell County, NC

Baker, considered a master guitarist of the Piedmont style, began playing guitar at age three. She was awarded the North Carolina Folk Heritage Award in 1982. Baker and her sister, Cora Phillips, won the North Carolina Folklore Society’s Brown-Hudson Award in 1982.

GAILE WELKER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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Railroad Bill (Music Maker CD MM 91006).

Selected Videos

The Fingerpicking Blues of Etta Baker (Homespun VDETTGT 01).

See also Piedmont (region)

BAKER, HOUSTON

b. 22 March 1943; Louisville, KY

Literary scholar Baker’s analysis of African American literature, using blues as an interpretive matrix, has provided an innovative vision for future students of blues and of literature.

PAUL GARON

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BAKER, LAVERN

b. Dolores Williams, 11 November 1929; Chicago, IL
 d. 10 March 1997; New York City, NY

Rhythm and blues singer. Born Dolores Williams, she sang in a Baptist church as a girl. Singer Memphis Minnie was her aunt. Her professional career began in Chicago in 1946 as Little Miss Sharecropper. Baker

BAKER, LAVERN

briefly performed as Bea Baker, then settled on LaVern Baker while with the Todd Rhodes band.

Baker signed with Atlantic in 1954 and had a successful run of eight top ten rhythm and blues singles for the label in the next decade, beginning with "Tweedle-Dee" in 1955, and ending with "See See Rider" in 1962. Pop chart hits included "Jim Dandy" and "I Cried a Tear" in 1958.

Baker's sassy, forthright approach established her as a major draw in the late 1950s, and she was regularly featured on disc jockey Alan Freed's popular Rock 'n' Roll Jubilee shows. She left Atlantic for Brunswick in 1963, had a modest hit with soul singer Jackie Wilson on "Think Twice" in 1966. She went to Vietnam as an entertainer, then settled in the Philippines, where she was entertainment director at the U.S. military base at Subic Bay. Baker returned to the United States in 1988 to perform in Atlantic Records' 40th anniversary celebrations. She made her Broadway debut in 1990 when she was chosen to replace Ruth Brown in the hit musical *Black and Blue* after the producers heard her *LaVern Baker Sings Bessie Smith* album.

Baker was elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1991. Her health suffered from complications of diabetes, including amputation of both legs below the knee in 1995. She performed until shortly before her death.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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See also **Memphis Minnie**

BAKER, MICKEY

b. McHouston Baker, 15 October 1925; Louisville, KY
Guitarist and vocalist. He took up guitar in the early 1940s after learning trumpet and double bass. In 1947–1948 he played jazz guitar with pianist Jimmy Neely. It was only in 1949, when he heard Pee Wee Crayton in California, that he turned to blues. He toured with Lester Young, Paul Williams, and Paul Quinichette before first recording with pianist Billy Valentine in 1951. A Savoy session in August 1952

(*Riverboat*, Savoy 867), split with Hal Singer, launched his career as a blues/R&B musician accompanying Ruth Brown, Big Joe Turner, Dinah Washington, Ray Charles, and LaVern Baker, among many others.

His session recordings included a highly regarded Sammy Price album (*Rock My Soul*, 1956, Savoy MG14004). The duo Mickey & Sylvia with Sylvia Vanderpool brought popular success. *Love Is Strange* (1956, Groove 0175) remains affecting, if only marginally blues, but commercial imperatives dominated their later output. He moved to France and made it his base for performance in both jazz and blues contexts, including work with expatriates Champion Jack Dupree and Memphis Slim. *The Blues and Me* (1973, Black & Blue 33.507) united him with visiting Chicago players Jimmy Rogers and Louis and Dave Myers to good effect. He has also been an active guitar teacher and published many tutorials. He has at various times used the names McHouston Baker and Big Red McHouston.

HOWARD RYE

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Perim, Jaques. "Mickey Baker: Life Is Strange." *Soul Bag* No. 90–91 (September–November 1982): 5–22.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Crayton, Curtis Connie "Pee Wee"**

BAKER, WILLIE

Dates and birthplace unknown

An enigma, possibly from southeast Georgia, who played in the banjo-influenced twelve-string slide-and-strum style associated with Savannah "Dip" Weaver, mother of Curley Weaver, who taught Robert and Charlie Hicks (Barbecue Bob and Charlie Lincoln). He recorded a number of sides for Gennett in 1929, possibly as covers of the Hicks brothers' hits. Other than that, he remains a mystery as does his place as either an originator or a copyist.

DAVID HARRISON

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Discography: DGR

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See also Weaver, James “Curley”

BALDRY, “LONG” JOHN

b. 12 January 1941; London, England

British singer who has resided in Canada from the mid-1970s onward. Nicknamed for his height, some sources give east Maddon-Doveshire as Baldry’s birthplace. A key figure in the early 1960s British blues scene, Baldry toured with Ramblin’ Jack Elliott from 1957 to 1961, then joined Alexis Korner’s Blues Incorporated (heard on seminal *R&B at the Marquee*, 1962). He worked with Cyril Davies in a Chicago-style blues band, then formed his own R&B-oriented Hoochie Coochie Men. He then worked briefly with Brian Auger, and later had several pop hits in dramatic ballad style as a solo artist. Baldry returned to blues-rock with *It Ain’t Easy* (1971). He moved to Canada, revived his career, and became a Canadian citizen.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

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It Ain’t Easy (1971, Warners WS 1921).
Good to Be Alive (1973, Casablanca 7012).
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Right to Sing the Blues (1997, Stony Plain SPCD1232).
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See also Korner, Alexis; United Kingdom and Ireland

BALL, MARCIA

b. 20 March 1949; Orange, TX

Pianist and singer, Ball grew up in Vinton, a small town in Louisiana, in a family whose female members all played piano. She took her first piano lessons when she was five, playing Tin Pan Alley tunes until she discovered Irma Thomas and the blues in 1962. In 1966, she attended Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge and played with Gum, a blues-based

rock band. After graduating, she moved to Austin in 1970 where she was a pioneer of the local R&B scene in the early 1970s, playing the city’s clubs with Freda and the Firedogs, a progressive country band and, at the same time, honing her own songwriting skills.

In 1974, she launched her solo career, influenced by Professor Longhair and Allen Toussain, releasing a first single the following year and a country-soul album for Capitol in 1978; she recorded a series of six dynamic and well-received albums for Rounder (1983–1998)—including a vocal trio with Irma Thomas and Tracy Nelson in 1998—and one for Antone’s (1990) with Lou Ann Barton and Angela Strehli. She was inducted into the Austin Music Hall of Fame in 1990, and she was featured on leading radio and television programs.

She joined Alligator Records in 2001 and cut two successful albums for them. In 2003, she appeared in “Piano Blues,” the film directed by Clint Eastwood in Martin Scorsese’s *The Blues Series*. As of 2004, she continued to deliver her popular mixture of Gulf Coast R&B, country swing, rock, and New Orleans-flavored music.

ROBERT SACRÉ

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BALLARD, HANK

b. 18 November 1927; Detroit, MI

d. 2 March 2003; Los Angeles, CA

Singer and songwriter who wrote the original version of “The Twist,” but saw Chubby Checker cash in on the big hit single with the song. Born in Detroit (some sources give 1936 as birth year) but raised in Alabama, his early influences included gospel, blues and, less obviously, singing cowboy Gene Autry.

He returned to Detroit in 1951 and joined the doo-wop group the Royals in 1953. He led the group away from their established smooth style into a harder, raunchier approach. They had a hit in the R&B charts with “Get It” on Federal, then changed their name to the Midnighters. Ballard spearheaded

BALLARD, HANK

their most successful era with his songs, which were often unusually frank on sexual matters for that period. Despite frequent radio bans, they had big hits with “Work with Me Annie,” “Annie Had a Baby,” and “Sexy Ways” in 1954, all written by Ballard.

His most successful song of all first appeared as the B-side of “Teardrops on Your Letter” in 1959. Dick Clark of *American Bandstand* passed “The Twist” to the unknown Chubby Checker, and the singer scored a massive hit, considerably outselling Ballard’s own version, also a top ten hit. The exposure also helped yield two more top ten hits in 1960, “Finger Poppin’ Time” and “Let’s Go, Let’s Go, Let’s Go.” Lesser hits led to a gradual fall from notice by the late 1960s, despite the support of soul singer James Brown. Ballard dropped out of music in the 1970s, then reformed the Midnighters in the mid-1980s. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990, and further albums appeared in 1993 and 1998.

KENNY MATHIESON

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BALLOU, CLASSIE

b. 21 August 1937; Elton, LA

Guitarist on Boozoo Chavis’s influential single “Paper in My Shoe,” which is considered to be one of the earliest known recordings of the zydeco style.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

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ROBERT EAGLE

Bibliography

McGrath

BANDS

The phrase “blues band” perhaps brings to mind for most people a well-rehearsed group of musicians performing emotionally frank songs of a familiar twelve-measure form. They are likely to use electric guitars, electric bass, harmonica, piano, and drums and be found performing in an extroverted, audience-pleasing manner at a crowded bar or nightclub.

This popular conception, though serviceable, draws from only a single genre of the blues band, the one most closely resembling the bands that developed in post-World War II Chicago. Blues band styles and instrumentation have been much less static and more various throughout the history of the blues.

A regional-historical look at the blues band reveals a diversity of styles and considers the influences—musical, social, and technological—that shaped them. To take such a look, one must reach back to the very beginnings of blues music, perhaps into the nineteenth-century American South. Anything but static, the blues band has reflected the influence of—and has itself influenced—all forms of popular music throughout its history.

In taking such a look, it is important to consider the effect of the commercial recording industry on the shape of the evolving blues band. Blues was readily professionalized and made a commodity early in its existence; musicians and producers wanted their records to sell, and often selected songs and approaches accordingly. Moreover, most blues musicians listened to and learned from records. (For instance, the early postwar Chicago bands would not have sounded as they did had not the young Little Walter, still in the Delta, bought records by Southwestern jump-blues artists to Chicago.) Often in the spotlight, a blues band might evolve as much for commercial and professional reasons as for artistic ones.

Black String Bands

What were the first blues bands like? Too little is known about the earliest expressions of blues music to answer this question exactly. However, there are clues and bits of evidence that give us a general picture. W. C. Handy's firsthand description of a lone guitarist playing at a Mississippi railroad station in 1900 serves as one of our earliest time markers for the existence of the blues. Handy also witnessed, a few years later, the same style of music performed by a group of musicians on guitar, mandolin, and string bass (see the *Early History* section in the *Historiography* entry). Surely, at the time the blues took form, musicians joined together to play it.

The first blues bands probably formed from black string bands, versatile groups that entertained at country dances, picnics, and more professionally on the minstrel stage or for medicine shows. Many such bands had become adept at playing in a wide variety of folk and popular styles by the last decades of the nineteenth century. Such a band at this time might include one or more guitars, a mandolin, a piano, and a string bass, in addition to the older core instrumentation of banjo and fiddle. Its repertoire might include ragtime, Tin Pan Alley songs, and marches, as well as the older country dance tunes and folk songs.

The adoption of blues by the string bands was accompanied by a process of change in instrumentation, perhaps in response to certain characteristics of this new—though in some ways more stylistically African—music. The most significant change was the gradual replacement of the traditional foundation instrument, the banjo, by the guitar. With a lower range and a greater ability to sustain the tonal micro-intervals achieved by bending strings, the guitar was better suited than the banjo to the slower tempos, deeper singing, and non-Western tonalities of the blues. The fiddle, on which it is easy to slur notes, never completely disappeared from the blues string band (but it did almost completely drop out when blues bands electrified later on). It has been suggested that the inexpensive and easily portable harmonica served to replace the violin in the itinerant bands. Various reports of blues playing well before the first sound recordings of rural blues styles in the mid-1920s indicate that the guitar, harmonica, mandolin, and piano were common blues instruments.

Through the first decades of the twentieth century, many black string bands kept a repertoire of older dance music in addition to blues, rags, and popular songs. Commercial recordings from the 1920s and 1930s of older-styled black string bands such as the Mississippi Sheiks, Peg Leg Howell and His Gang,

and Howard Armstrong's Tennessee Chocolate Drops—in addition to testimony from musicians of the time—suggest that such diverse repertoires were common among the black string bands.

Early Recorded Blues Ensembles

With the publication of W. C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" in 1911 and the recording of Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" nine years later, blues music received much commercial and popular attention. For the next few years, blues recordings almost exclusively featured female singers. While these women used African American singing styles more vernacular than ever before put on record, their musical backings suggested the more formal presentation of the vaudeville stage. Their accompaniment was often a small jazz ensemble consisting of piano, trumpet, and clarinet, or just piano. These records—of the style and period known as "classic blues"—widely spread and popularized blues music among listeners both black and white; however, the most vital black blues band styles to come, except for those most jazz-like, derive much more identifiably from the Southern regional blues music, also known as country blues or down-home blues, that would not make an impact on record until the first record by Blind Lemon Jefferson in 1925.

While the down-home blues recordings of the period from 1925 to 1932 are dominated by the solo guitarist/singer, a few ensemble types can be identified. One is the guitar duet, an arrangement often used by Memphis artists Frank Stokes, whose second guitarist was Dan Sane, and Memphis Minnie, who shared the guitar work with her husband Joe McCoy. The guitar duet was also common in other blues recordings of the period. In this style, the guitarists usually play different, complementary parts. They might use different positions (for example, one plays a G chord while the other plays in a D chord position while capoed on the fifth fret) or take different musical roles (for example, one finger picks chord-based phrases while the other flat picks bass runs) or use a combination of both techniques. Such strategies let the players exploit possibilities for tonal richness and rhythmic complexity. Such a role for twin guitars—simultaneously improvisational and part functional—would survive into the era of the earliest electrified urban blues bands almost twenty years later.

Another duet approach was that of guitar and piano, an arrangement that became particularly popular in the 1930s through the recordings of artists such as Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell. Similar in manner to the guitar duets, the piano and guitar

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would take different roles, usually the piano holding down the bass and middle figures, leaving the guitar, often played with a flat pick, free to improvise with single-string work up the neck. Rhythmic complexity was created when the guitarist played around and against the steadier beat of the pianist's blues patterns.

The Jug Bands

Perhaps the most distinctive and intriguing type of blues ensemble recorded in this period is the jug band (see figure). In their diverse repertoires, use of a broad range of stringed instruments, and popularity among audiences of different races and social strata, the jug bands continued the tradition of the black string band. However, the use in these bands of pseudo instruments such as the jug, washboard, and

kazoo—while no doubt intended partly for novelty appeal—point to a unique set of African American antecedents. Such instruments had an older tradition in the “spasm bands,” children’s groups who played on homemade instruments as they marched behind the legitimate jazz bands in New Orleans parades. There certainly is the element of novelty “imitation” in the jug band, where the jug, washboard, and kazoo might be seen as makeshift replacements for the jazz band’s tuba, drums, and trumpet, respectively. Further, in west Africa there are instruments similar to the jug and washtub bass, as well as a ritualistic use of various “voice disguisers”—paralleled in the jug bands by the kazoo—to evoke the voices of spirits or animals. Such African and African American antecedents, and many instances of a more purely musical, less self-referential use of such instruments by black musicians playing among themselves, suggest a legitimate, less novel sense of these instruments historically in African American music.



The Dixieland Jug Blowers, Louisville, Kentucky, 1928. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Commercial recordings tapped rich jug band scenes in Louisville, Cincinnati, and especially Memphis, the home of a group of musicians centering around guitarist and harmonica player Will Shade, known as the Memphis Jug Band, and the more stable Gus Cannon's Jug Stompers. While the three-member Jug Stompers used only guitar, banjo, harmonica, and jug, the Memphis Jug Band had five or six members at any given time and used various combinations of guitars, harmonica, piano, banjo-mandolin, mandolin, violin, string bass, washboard, and kazoo. Overall, the groups tended to carefully arrange their songs—a mark of professionalism—using such attention-getting devices as stop-time, which allowed the jug or other instruments to play brief solos. Harmony singing, another mark of professionalism, was used frequently.

In addition to dance tunes, rags, and popular or jazz songs, the jug bands recorded a lot of blues. These records provide us with a type of aural picture of group interaction in an early down-home blues band. The listener to a jug band blues performance is often aware of a groupwide atmosphere of rhythmic and harmonic improvisation. The guitarist, who would normally supply simple chord backing for a dance tune, juxtaposes single-string and chordal blues patterns in the manner of a solo guitarist. The fiddler or harmonica player might play backing notes while the singer sings, or, just as often, freely improvises bluesy phrases, as if a seconding voice. The mandolin player might alternate between straight-time chording and energetic, against-the-beat improvisations using tremolo or staccato noting. The jug player might break from his normal role of providing root bass notes to execute long runs, sometimes lasting more than a measure and reaching high up the scale; he will even occasionally break time like the others and play across the beat. Not least, the washboard player, peppering the music with an expressive dance-like mixture of taps and drags, clearly has a purpose beyond that of emphasizing a simple beat.

Such rich atmospheres of improvisation—both melodic and metric—are widely heard in early black blues ensemble playing and, in varying degrees, all African American-based vernacular music. In musical terms, such practices are identified as tendencies to polyphony (more than a single sound or melody line occurring at the same time) and polyrhythmy (different or contrasting rhythms occurring simultaneously). Such practices have clear antecedents in west African musical style. Heard in many jug band recordings of the late 1920s and 1930s—and in more recent recordings of bluesmen like Yank Rachell, “Sleepy” John Estes, and Big Joe Williams who often played in a jug band format—such practices began to give way to metrical regularization and more defined backing and lead roles

as blues bands formalized through amplification and the influence of other popular musical forms.

Recorded Ensemble Playing in the 1930s

During the Great Depression, many record companies folded their race labels and either stopped or dramatically curtailed regional race recording. Rich varieties of down-home blues, including freewheeling blues ensembles such as the jug bands, were neglected on record. The artists who did record, for example, Big Bill Broonzy, Tampa Red, Washboard Sam, and Memphis Minnie, were established hit-makers who could be counted on for smooth performances and tight songwriting. A part of the jug band tradition lived on in a genre known as hokum, which emphasized well-crafted novelty or sexually suggestive blues-based songs. Musical groups who recorded hokum material generally used conventional instrumentation, not the jug band's jug or kazoo, and often sang in harmony on the choruses to underscore a catch phrase. During this period of smoother recorded blues, it is doubtful that the backups to the main artist's guitar or piano, which might include a tenor saxophone, clarinet, or trumpet and a string bass, represented a type of blues band evolution. Rather, they seemed to be borrowing from established, popular genres for the purpose of lending a professionalism and strategic sound to sessions.

Some trends from the 1930s, however, pointed out new directions for blues ensembles. The sophisticated piano-guitar duets laid the groundwork for a smoother, urbane ensemble sound. The jazz-influenced single-string work of guitarist Lonnie Johnson, and that of jazz artist Charlie Christian, opened the way to a fluid voice for the guitar in a blues band.

Showing these influences, a young generation of Texas blues players developed a new type of blues ensemble playing, borrowing regionally as well from guitarist Blind Lemon Jefferson's arpeggio style, hillbilly-jazz hybrids that led to Western swing, and the jump style of territory jazz bands. Most singularly influential of this new generation was guitarist T-Bone Walker, whose adoption of newly available guitar amplification in the late 1930s paved the way for the guitar as an upfront instrument in a blues band and defined its role as a lead instrument.

Postwar Blues Bands in the Southwest

After World War II, key factors influenced a rapid development of blues ensemble playing into the blues

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band styles most familiar today. One factor was a great migration of southern blacks to northern urban centers, Chicago and other Great Lakes cities being the destination for those from the Delta, and San Francisco and Los Angeles for those from Texas. Independent record companies, filling a niche left by major labels who curtailed product during a wartime recording ban, provided musicians an outlet to develop new urban blues sounds for recently emigrated audiences. This, as well as the advent of black radio stations and the multiple-record jukebox, gave new birth to a recording industry that sought out and developed regional styles.

In the Southwest and West Coast, an enormously influential style developed from the amplified, single-string guitar work of T-Bone Walker and those who followed him, such as Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown and Pee Wee Crayton. Influenced as well by the then-popular jump bands—smaller, dance-related offshoots of big bands, bluesy territory jazz bands, and Western swing bands—Southwestern blues artists created a well-rehearsed ensemble style that utilized a tight rhythm section of piano, bass, chording guitar, and drums to set a foundation for a lead guitar and lead singer. Such artists had a major influence on the development of rhythm and blues and, later, soul music. The influence of this style extended beyond the Southwest, being widely adopted by younger performers like Delta-raised B. B. King and Bobby “Blue” Bland, who were to help bring it international attention.

Southwestern blues bands varied somewhat in size and instrumentation. The smaller size can be represented by guitarist Pee Wee Crayton’s band of 1948, which included, along with the singer’s guitar, tenor saxophone, piano, bass, and drums. An example of a larger size would be the band of Roy Milton, which added alto saxophone and trumpet; a style that found later expansion in the road bands of B. B. King, which typically included a saxophone section—tenor, alto, and baritone—trumpet, trombone, piano, bass, drums, and the singer’s guitar.

Blues styles varied among these bands. However, certain traits can be identified, such as the predominance of a singer who is often the guitarist as well. Band dynamics are controlled so that the singer can be easily heard, with the other instruments generally there to support his singing and lead guitar playing. Singing styles tend to be declarative, clearly articulated, and carefully phrased—in general, smoother and less raspy than those of Delta artists. Often, the singer fills the pauses between his vocal phrases with improvisations on the guitar—with its volume set so that the most subtle string work is easily heard over the band. Bass, drums, and piano

generally serve as rhythm section; however, the pianist may improvise softly on the high keys to create a backdrop during a singing verse. A single horn, usually a tenor saxophone, might play an instrumental break; when it does it can explore a range between mellowness to screeching ferocity, paralleling the emotional expressiveness of the singer and his guitar. Usually the horn section serves to play repetitive phrases that punctuate and delineate the song’s chord changes. By working together within carefully defined roles, the band members employ dynamics precisely orchestrated for maximum emotional effect.

Postwar Blues Bands in Chicago

The urban bands that developed in Chicago among Delta emigrants reflected more readily the rawness and older ways of the music from back home. At the same time, along with amplification they adopted much of the lead-rhythm sectioning and a lot of the rhythmic swing of the modern jump groups. Mixing these styles in a compact format that used down-home instrumentation centered on guitar and harmonica, musicians such as Muddy Waters, Little Walter, and Howlin’ Wolf—through continuous club work and in collaboration with independent record producers, notably Leonard Chess of Chicago’s Chess Records and songwriter and session man Willie Dixon—evolved the nascent Delta juke band styles into a form that has come to represent for many “the blues band.”

There are germs of this style in Big Boy Crudup’s 1946 Chicago recording of “That’s All Right, Mama,” which featured an amplified guitar with bass and drums, and in Delta bands like those of Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller). In Williamson’s bands, the traditional Delta blues, now played on electric guitar and harmonica and backed by drums and bass, adopt the swing of the jump bands. There is a new prominence for the harmonica, held close to the mike so as to alternate phrasing with the singer, a style pioneered in the 1937 Chicago recordings of the first Sonny Boy Williamson, John Lee Williamson. A little more than ten years later, another Delta emigrant, Marion Walter Jacobs, or “Little Walter,” used a technique of cupping the harmonica and microphone together with his hands while he played for a richer, more powerful sound. This innovation, joined with Little Walter’s improvisational brilliancy, brought the harmonica to an equal, if not sometimes upfront, role among the instruments in an electrified blues band.

For a composite example of the musical interplay among members of a postwar Chicago blues band, one might listen to several early 1950s Chess recordings of Muddy Waters. His recording band at that time typically consisted of himself on vocals and slide guitar, Jimmy Rogers on second guitar, Little Walter on harmonica, Otis Spann on piano, Willie Dixon on bass, and Fred Below on drums.

Though the focus is clearly on Waters's voice, which is recorded at the tape overload point for the highest presence, no single instrument seems ever to dominate. Rather, all merge into a pattern of voices and rhythms, an effect resulting from each player adhering to, but improvising freely within, a specific role. Though the second guitarist usually plays a bass pattern counterpoint to Waters's slide guitar, he might abruptly interject a jazz chord or play muted single-string improvisations during Waters's vocal. The harmonica player might paint a background during the vocal with drawn-out notes, or just as often improvise melodic phrases. The pianist mixes right-hand improvisations—sometimes wildly cross-rhythmic—with rolling basses, altogether rising and diminishing in emotional intensity with the singer and the other instruments. The drums embellish the backbeat with frequent rolls, flourishes, and crescendos—an orchestral approach that recalls the even more wildly broken-up playing of Sonny Boy Williamson's Delta drummer, Peck Curtis.

Recordings of Muddy Waters's band and those of other early postwar Chicago blues artists reveal an urban sound still close to its country roots. While the members of a Southwestern band controlled overall dynamics by adhering to defined roles and parts, the Chicago players improvised freely, achieving group dynamics by following a more organic ebb and flow. Preprofessional performance practices such as the addition or subtraction of measures were often retained in the playing of the early Chicago bands. The Southwestern bands, earlier on, had regularized their timing in accordance with more popular or formal musical expectations.

Such characteristics of the Chicago bands can be directly linked to similar patterns then current in Delta blues, and traceable back through the jug and juke bands and earlier folk styles to distinctive polyrhythmic and polytonal practices in west African music. One also hears a strong favoring of pentatonic scales and aeolian, or minor-like, modes; and retention of tonal expression foreign to, and so not regimented by, the Western system of note intervals, a practice often described as the use of microtones (see *Scales* entry). Such characteristics are never entirely absent from true blues style in any genre; they did, however, show most strongly in the Delta and persist long into the early postwar Chicago bands before

eventually beginning to fade at the hands of younger players with wider influences.

The next generation of Chicago blues players added practices of rhythm and blues and soul music to the Delta styles of their mentors. Key artists of the "West Side Sound," Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and Junior Wells, sometimes augmented their bands with horns and replaced the rippling piano with a gospel-influenced organ sound. Lead guitar work came to the front, influenced by the styles of B. B. King and other popular rhythm and blues guitarists, and a tightened rhythm section provided unambiguous support. True minor keys—rare in aeolian folk-blues styles but common in soul and gospel music—were sometimes used. Singers adopted the entreating, melismatic manner of gospel-influenced rhythm and blues.

While generally preserving a compact format, the newer Chicago bands adopted the regularizing devices of the smoother rhythm and blues and Southwestern blues bands such as tight arrangements—which might include dramatic stop-times and calculated rises and falls in dynamics—and a strong drum backbeat. Indeed, the replacement of the acoustic standup bass by the electric bass guitar in the early 1960s made possible a tighter rhythm foundation, because the more precise and louder electric bass could "lock in" on patterns more easily with the drums and take over the second guitar's practice of playing intricate bass figures, leaving the guitarist freer to augment the rhythm.

Through changes such as these—reflecting wider influences brought in through a vibrant market of blues records and radio—the subtleties of the older Delta band characteristics began to fade. The new blues bands were tighter and more modern, reflecting a broadening reach of the blues.

Band Formats of the 1960s: The Influence of a New Audience

By the mid-1960s, blues musicians had seen the beginning of a shift in their audience base. Around the time that young blacks turned to newer, socially relevant expression in soul music, a growing white audience, exposed to the blues through the folk music revival and the championing influence of blues-based English rock 'n' roll bands such as the Rolling Stones and Cream, embraced the form and its artists.

The white blues-influenced bands of this time tended to use instrumentation similar to that of most Chicago blues bands. Both the Rolling Stones and the more stylistically idiomatic Paul Butterfield Blues Band used a basic recording lineup of guitars, keyboard, harmonica, drums, and electric bass. They

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covered, more or less faithfully, key songs from the repertoires of their influences, which included Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Junior Wells, and Otis Rush.

In the latter part of the decade, a new type of blues band with an expanded style emerged from the British blues and rock world. This was the so-called power trio, a lineup of guitar, electric bass, and drums introduced by groups Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. Adopting practices of California-style psychedelia and avant-garde jazz, these blues-based bands often extended songs with long periods of improvisation in which all three instruments took part. Accordingly the electric bass and drums were amplified or miked at levels equal to the guitar. Songs were sometimes built on repetitive instrumental phrases abstracted from recordings of Chicago electric blues pioneers, such as Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, and exaggerated by high volume levels and enhanced guitar distortion. Eric Clapton of Cream and other guitarists who pioneered in this form favored and popularized a fluid, expressive single-string lead style in the manner of B. B. King and Albert King. The more singularly influential Jimi Hendrix greatly expanded the boundaries of blues-based guitar playing through seamless integration of blues, rock, and soul styles and an innovative musical use of controlled amplifier feedback. The power trio format influenced the emergence of heavy metal in rock, but it lay fallow as a blues band form until its adoption in the 1980s by guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan and his band Double Trouble.

In the early 1970s, a fuller ensemble approach was popularized by the Allman Brothers Band and other white American Southern blues-rock bands. The Allman Brothers had a lineup of two lead guitars, two drummers, a Hammond organ, and an electric bass. Influenced by Southern styles of soul music as well as blues—and showing the open, relaxed freedom of the youth counterculture—they used driving, extended grooves established by bass, drums, and percussion as a foundation for churning organ and soulful, hard-edged singing. Perhaps of widest influence would be the band's unique use of twin lead guitars—one played with a slide and one fretted conventionally—to play lead lines in tight harmony, a practice adopted into heavy metal music and occasionally reappearing in blues and country music.

The Blues Band in the 1970s and 1980s: Professionalism and Eclecticism

No significant new blues band forms arose in the 1970s and 1980s. However, an overall tightening of

the band sound, brought about through more precise recording techniques and the influence of rock, funk, and disco, affected younger urban musicians like Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, and James Cotton, and even the recordings of longtime players like B. B. King. As blues gained wider popularity, its players faced increasing commercial demands. A professional blues band was expected to give a polished, smooth performance and have a tight rhythm section.

The 1980s saw a revival of traditional, grittier blues styles. With a renewed interest in past styles came eclecticism as well. Historic styles had been codified, and blues musicians of the 1980s were free to pick and choose from which to express themselves. At one end might be the Fabulous Thunderbirds, who had a format of harmonica, guitar, electric bass, and drums; and guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, whose even leaner accompaniment of electric bass and drums and later keyboard served to support his guitar playing and singing. These bands, both from the Austin area, chose much of their material and playing style to reflect Texas and West Coast artists like Slim Harpo and Johnny "Guitar" Watson, yet their instrumentation was leaner and borrowed from other styles. One of the largest revival bands, Roomful of Blues, used guitar, piano, electric bass, baritone sax, alto sax, tenor sax, and trumpet—an instrumentation similar to that of the bigger Southwestern blues bands. This decade also found new popularity for the rough, "house-rocking" sound of recently passed artists like Hound Dog Taylor. Chicago's Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials featured searing bottleneck guitar, tough singing, and a punchy rhythm section of electric bass, rhythm guitar, and drums. In this type of band, a good "feel" for the type of music that is being played is deemed more important than virtuosity or stylistic versatility.

The Zydeco Band

A survey of blues band is not complete without a mention of perhaps the most distinctive of all regional blues styles, that of zydeco, a mixture of Cajun music with the blues. Created in the early years of the twentieth century by blacks who inhabited the bayou areas of southern Louisiana, the hybrid developed a solid base in the blues form, though it was, and continues to be, sung in black Creole patois or French (see *Louisiana* entry). The original zydeco instruments were those used in Cajun music: the fiddle, accordion, triangle, and rub board. Zydeco musicians eventually brought drums, electric guitar, and bass into the bands, paralleling similar developments in the blues

elsewhere. Clifton Chenier, who played a piano accordion instead of the more harmonically limited Cajun accordion, is credited with blending rhythm and blues with the Creole sound to create modern zydeco in the 1950s. A zydeco band today might include accordion, saxophone, trumpet, keyboard, electric guitar, electric bass, and rub board.

The Blues Band at One Hundred Years

Blues bands in the 1990s continued the eclectic trends of the previous decade, with contemporary additions. Some blues musicians, like guitarist Roy Rogers, were inclined to adopt unusual chord changes, instrument textures, and rhythms from modern roots-oriented or alternative rock bands. Forcing a rethinking of the concept of blues “band,” original recordings by blues musicians such as R. L. Burnside and Rick Holmstrom utilized synthesized instruments, drum machines, and sampled clips from vintage blues records—techniques borrowed from hip-hop and modern pop music.

Such readiness of integration was a positive sign that the blues, and the bands that played it, continued to evolve by influencing, and being influenced by, all the music around. At the same time, there surely existed a wider familiarity with the range of historic blues styles than at any previous time. As this music born in the American Deep South began its second century, bands could be found playing Chicago blues, or Southwest blues, or jug band music, or zydeco, in performance or just for fun, all over the world.

JOSEPH A. LAROSE

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BANJO

Technical Description

A plucked string instrument with a long guitar-like neck and a circular soundtable of tautly stretched vellum, skin, or plastic against which the bridge is pressed by the strings. Although unfretted instruments existed, the modern banjo is fitted with frets. Banjos were traditionally strung with gut strings and later nylon, though modern banjos make use of steel wire strings. The head tension is usually adjusted by means of twenty-four or more screw-tightening brackets attached to the outer side of a tambourine-like rim of laminated wood. A pan-shaped resonator is often attached to the lower side of the otherwise open-backed body and serves to reflect outward the sound emitted by the underside of the head. The resonators were originally made of gourd or wood; modern banjos use wood. Banjos can vary greatly with regard to shape, tuning, material, and virtually any other aspect. With the advent of industrial mass production in the late nineteenth century, standard modern banjo types evolved. They can roughly be classified as discussed next.

The *banjo* and its associates normally have five strings (tuned G, C, G, B, D), with the fifth string fixed to a peg on the neck, not extending the length of the fret board to the head. This fifth string is thin and is higher pitched than its companion strings. Because of its hoop construction, the banjo is often referred to as an “open-back” banjo. However, a resonator can

be (and often is) fitted to the instrument to increase its tonal volume; in particular, banjos used by bluegrass and country-and-western players are fitted with resonators. The diameter of the vellum is normally eleven inches. The “classic” banjo is played without plectrum or finger picks.

The *zither-banjo* is a constructional variation of the banjo and as such has five strings, tuned to the same pitch and notes. The vellum diameter of this closed-back banjo varies between seven and nine inches and it rests on a circular metal casting suspended in a wooden hoop with convex back, approximately nine to eleven inches in diameter. The octave string passes through a tube inserted under the fingerboard and emerges at the peghead.

The *banjeurine* was invented by the American S. S. Stewart in 1885 and evolved to take the lead in banjo orchestras of that period. Its five strings are in the same intervals as the banjo, but a fourth higher. The *piccolo-banjo* is virtually a half-size version of the banjo. The *plectrum-banjo* has the same characteristics and scale length as the banjo but with only four strings (C, G, B, D). This instrument is always fitted with a resonator.

The four strings of a *tenor-banjo* are tuned C, G, D, A, thus having the same relationship between the strings as a violin and a mandoline (the plectrum-banjo and the five-string banjo have different relationships between the strings, so “doubling” on them is not easy for a violin/mandoline instrumentalist). It has a shorter scale than the banjo, the plectrum-banjo, and the zither-banjo. It looks like a plectrum-banjo with a slightly shorter neck. Nearly all tenor-banjos are fitted with a resonator. The instrument is always played with a plectrum.

The *banjolin* has four single or eight double strings, tuned G, D, A, E. It looks like a stunted plectrum-banjo in its four-string form, for it has a full-size (eleven-inch) hoop but an arm only about half the length of the banjo. The instrument is always played with the plectrum and was evolved to enable mandolinists and violinists to look like “banjoists” when ragtime orchestras came into being.

The *mandolin-banjo* has four double strings tuned the same as the banjolin, but it looks like a miniature zither-banjo with a vellum of only four or five inches in diameter. The *ukulele-banjo* or banjo-ukulele combines a banjo body with a ukulele fingerboard, and it is strung and tuned like the Hawaiian ukulele. It appeared on the market under various trade names, such as Banjulele and Banjuke. The four strings of the *bass-banjo* are tuned to the same pitch as the violon cello, so its correct name should really be “cello-banjo.” The scale length of this instrument is twenty-seven inches and the vellum diameter is

usually thirteen to fourteen inches. It is played in the normal manner, but with a stout leather plectrum. The *contra-bass banjo* has three strings. It is about five feet in length from tailpiece to peghead, so the player stands behind it to play. The vellum diameter is usually eighteen inches. The contra-bass banjo is played with a large leather plectrum. The six strings of the *guitar-banjo* are tuned E, A, D, G, B, E. This instrument is virtually a six-string guitar with a banjo body.

The guitar-banjo, the banjo-mandoline, and the ukulele-banjo are instruments that appeared to be banjos but were strung and tuned as nonbanjo instruments, and they have a percussive banjo sound. Three types of banjo are common in blues and jazz: the five-string banjo in G or C, the four-string tenor banjo, and the six-string guitar-banjo.

African Antecedents

Long-necked instruments with skin soundtables are common in Europe, north Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Because instruments resembling banjos have been associated with African slaves in the Americas since the seventeenth century, a west African origin appears to be plausible. Some evidence points to the *halam* as played by the Senegambian Wolof as the closest match in terms of structure and performance style. Variants of the instrument are known throughout the region as *kotingo* (Mandinka), *nkoni* (Manianka), *hodu* (Fula), or *gambare* (Serahuli). One of the common Senegambian ensembles consisted of a plucked-lute (*halam*), a bowed-lute (*riti*, or *nyanyaur*), and a tapped calabash. There is an obvious similarity between this type of ensemble and the fiddle, banjo, and tambourine ensembles known in the United States since the late seventeenth century.

Like the banjo, the *halam* is a plucked lute of (four or) five strings, one of which vibrates openly as a drone string, and it is played in what American folk musicians call “frailing” or “claw-hammer” style, which the minstrel instruction books of the nineteenth century referred to as brushless, drop-thumb frailing. In frailing, the fingernail picks various strings in a rhythmic, fast-moving pattern while the ball of the thumb repeatedly strikes down at the drone string, providing an insistent ostinato. Both *halam* and banjo were found typically in trio ensembles, both were played almost exclusively by males, both employed a “stroke” playing technique, and both were fretless. In contrast to the banjo, however, the *halam* has a round neck.

Development of the Banjo by African Americans Up to the 1900s

The origin of the word is uncertain, but most probably derives from the Portuguese or Spanish *bandore*. Slave owners in the eighteenth-century Americas noted it under names such as *banza*, *banjer*, *bania*, or *banja*. The banjo’s flat fingerboard was possibly acquired after slaves became acquainted with European plucked string instruments, all of which have flat fingerboards. The first depiction of a *creole bania* appeared in J. Stedman’s book *Narrative of a Five-Year’s Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam from the Year 1772 to 1777*, published in 1796, and a specimen collected by this author is kept at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde at Leiden, the Netherlands. It features one short and three long strings and a skin-headed calabash body. Unlike drums, which were considered to be potentially dangerous transmitters of secret messages, banjos were allowed by slave owners. They were popular among slaves because they derived from African musical traditions and were relatively simple to construct and easy to carry, using gourds as the sounding body. Blackened-up white minstrel entertainers, notably Joel Sweeney and Dan Emmett, lived near and learned from black banjo players. They rapidly introduced “nigger song and dance” as well as banjo playing to white urban culture. At the same time, traditional white musicians of the rural south integrated the banjo in “old time string band music.”

No scholarly accounts or notations are known to exist of black banjo styles and the first tutorial books on minstrel banjo have certainly been “sanitized” to be acceptable to white tastes. Nevertheless, the “stroke” style they teach produces a sound similar to that described in many of the earlier accounts: patterns of upward strikes by the index or middle fingernail, combined with downward strokes of the thumb against the fifth string. More complex patterns can be produced by the thumb dropping further down to pick individual notes on the full-length strings. While the stroke style was, and still is, popular among rural performers, “finger-picking” must have developed at the same time, and it became the dominant technique employed on the minstrel, vaudeville, and urban concert stage. Finger-picking is the guitar-like way to accompany songs, which combines upward plucking by the first and sometimes second and third fingers, with downward plucks of the fifth string by the thumb. The Senegambian *halam* tradition includes a musical structure, *fodet*, that is remarkably similar to the blues. A repeated musical structure of a variable number of beats, an analysis

of the fodeet reveals similarities to the blues also in melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic characteristics. Finger technique (the right hand) changed, from the use of thumb and index finger in minstrel style, to using three or four fingers in guitar style, and was first codified in 1865. By this time the neck was shortened as the pitch rose from F or G to A. Such a pitch rise would demand a decrease in string length and thus the neck by two or four fret spaces (that is, approximately, $1\frac{1}{8}$ to $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches), because the same strings were used for the new pitch. At this time it became common to add frets, or to indicate finger positions by inlaid marks on the neck. Manufacturers responded by adding fully enclosed backs and holes in the front through which the sound projected to the audience.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain today the sound of the early black tradition, because the first recordings date only from the 1890s. The picture is further obscured by the fact that practically all recordings by African Americans prior to 1923 (for instance, Sylvester Weaver playing six-string guitar-banjo) were taken in urban environments, both in the United States and in Europe, with an urban white vaudeville audience in mind. Through much of the nineteenth-century minstrel tradition, the banjo was identified with black music, yet white banjo tunings may have reflected black influence. Urban minstrel shows as well as the Victorian parlor performers had usually tuned their banjos in a manner that made it necessary to finger chords by pressing the appropriate frets and leaving consonant strings open. The idea of tuning a banjo was to have as many open strings as possible. Banjos were found in municipal and college banjo clubs and orchestras that rivaled brass bands in popularity as they performed ever more demanding music.

The earliest sound documents by black banjoists appear to be duets by the African Canadian brothers Douglas and George Bohee (Edison cylinders taken at London, 1890–1892). The Bohees represent the “Coloured Minstrel” tradition, and their repertoire is known to have included antislavery protest material, but no copies of their recordings have surfaced to date. Slightly later, an 1892 advertisement by the Louisiana Phonograph Company Limited lists “Negro Sermons” by Louis Vasnier (“very popular and good for the blues”), accompanying himself on the banjo. Only one of at least a dozen cylinders is known to exist but nothing much other than background noise can be heard. The earliest surviving flat disk record is a single-sided Berliner, recorded by Cousins and Ed De Moss in New York in 1897: a vocal duet version of the religious song “Poor Mourner,” accompanied by their own banjos in “stroke” style. It is the same archaic song that was 30 years later recorded as “You Shall” by blues singer Frank Stokes, accompanying

himself on the guitar. Also in 1927, Texan Henry Thomas, believed to be one of the oldest rural black singers on record, performed his songs with guitar accompaniment, much resembling the rhythmic approach of banjoists. The staccato-sounding banjo was well suited for early ragtime recordings, but all the leading banjo soloists on record were white (notably Vess Ossman and Fred van Eps in the United States, and Olly Oakley and John Pidoux in the United Kingdom). Black banjo ragtime records were not waxed until the 1920s, an example being Gus Cannon’s “Madison Street Rag” (Victor, 1928), played in a percussive fashion that may well reflect the style of banjo rags from which the piano forms partly derived.

Banjo in Prewar Blues

With the advent of jazz during the 1920s, the popularity of the banjo declined. It was replaced by tenor-banjos and plectrum-banjos, and, with the advent of big band jazz, microphones, and pickups during the 1930s, by the guitar. The two principal blues banjoists to record, “Papa” Charlie Jackson from New Orleans and Gus Cannon from Mississippi, were bridging the gap between the nineteenth-century songsters tradition and the country blues. Both musicians used the “crossed notes” technique involving “returning to a chord,” to facilitate finger-picking patterns. In Jackson’s work (notably “Long Gone Lost John,” Paramount, 1928), especially in his links between choruses, some of the fingering patterns that later emerged in the jazz playing of Lonnie Johnson are identifiable. Jackson was the first commercially successful self-accompanied black artist, and one of the most proficient artists of his time, equally at home in blues, rags, and hokum (“Shake That Thing,” Paramount, 1925). Cannon can be heard exhorting the Jug Stompers to “Rag it!” in the instrumental choruses of “Money Never Runs Out” (Victor, 1930). Here and elsewhere (such as in his duets as “Banjo Joe” with the guitarist Blind Blake) Cannon uses the incisive banjo to play single-string ragtime-oriented phrases over guitar or banjo accompaniment. Even when he played guitar, Jackson used a style strongly reminiscent of the banjo, which he more usually played. Apart from Jackson and Cannon, the banjo never figured prominently in the blues. Some of the best jazz tenor-banjo solos on record were played by Banjo Ikey Robinson with Jabbo Smith’s Rhythm Aces, but he also did hokum and blues (for example, “Rock Pile Blues,” Brunswick, 1929; “Unlucky Blues,” Vocalion, 1933). The foremost white blues banjoist was Dock Boggs (Brunswick, 1927).

The decline of the five-string banjo by the early twentieth century in America must have left countless banjos and banjo-like instruments unused—a source of supply through junk and pawn shops for poor people who, for little cash investment, could experiment with such instruments and add them to their music-making traditions.

Banjo in Country Music and Bluegrass

Although the banjo styles were probably introduced into the Appalachians by blacks, bluegrass music has predominantly English, Irish, and Scottish origins, from the descendants of immigrants to the Appalachian area of the United States. The name, coined by mandolinist Bill Monroe when trying to describe his sound, refers to Monroe's home state of Kentucky, the Bluegrass State. The standard musical instrumental components of bluegrass include mandolin, banjo, violin (fiddle), upright string-bass, also the guitar or the dobro. Often fast paced, bluegrass allows its musicians to improvise, much like jazz. Its lyrical content varies greatly and can consist of many different things from gospel, traditional, and folk to country.

Among the pioneers, Uncle Dave Macon (1870–1952) played banjos with resonators for most of his career in the classic “claw-hammer” or “knocking” style. Guitarist DeWitt “Snuffy” Jenkins picked up the banjo in the late 1920s and further developed the three-finger style, which he passed on to Earl Scruggs, who in turn became a stalwart in Bill Monroe's band from 1944. Scruggs perfected the three-fingered guitar style, mostly using a pick, to the extent that it became known as the Scruggs style: He used his thumb and index and middle fingers, with picks on each of them. A melody note is followed by three fill-in notes and a roll pattern.

Postwar Revival of Banjo

While in North Carolina around 1936, Pete Seeger met local banjo players and folk song collectors, notably Bascom Lamar Lunsford, and consequently switched to five-string banjo himself on which he recorded extensively. In 1940 his travels in search of banjo ballads and different ways to play them began. In 1948 he published an influential instruction manual. During the late 1940s a new interest in folk music began that carried well into the early 1970s and was sparked by the civil rights movement in the South and the war in Vietnam. Lunsford (born in 1882) made his first recordings in 1922 and continued to record well

into the microgroove era (Riverside, 1956). Seeger and Scruggs both introduced technological changes to the banjo and reaffirmed the role of the banjo in traditional and folk music after World War II.

The tenor-banjo also reemerged during the 1940s with the revival of traditional jazz. The banjo continued to be an almost exclusively white instrument, a notable exception being jazz performer Elmer Snowden (Riverside, 1960). Professional black blues performers had switched to the guitar, although rural traditions of black old-time folk style still survive (“Black Banjo Songsters of North Carolina & Virginia,” Smithsonian, 1997; “Will Slayden: African-American Banjo Songs from West Tennessee,” TFS, 2003). Georges Guesnon is considered the typical representative of “Creole blues,” but on records at least he uses the tenor-banjo for songs, not blues (“I Can't Escape from You,” Icon, 1959). At the time of this writing, the most influential four-string banjoist worldwide appears to be American Bud Wachter (for example, consider his duets with German Peter Meyer, *Transatlantic Banjo*, 1987). His position today can be compared to that of Harry Reser (1896–1965) during the 1920s and 1930s.

RAINER E. LOTZ

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BANKHEAD, TOMMY

- b. 24 October 1931; Lake Cormorant, MS
d. 16 December 2000; St. Louis, MO

A St. Louis blues guitarist, Bankhead started out with Sonny Boy Williamson (Aleck Miller), and later recorded for the Fedora label.

RYAN OLSEN

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BANKS, CHICO

- b. 1962; Chicago, IL

Learned guitar from his father, gospel musician Jesse Banks, a member of the Mighty Clouds of Joy. By age sixteen, Banks was appearing in Chicago clubs with Little Johnny Christian. He has backed James Cotton and Junior Wells, among others.

RYAN OLSEN

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Discography: AMG

BANKS, JERRY

- b. Houston, TX

Sacramento blues drummer, active since 1964. Banks started out playing gospel and broke into the Sacramento blues scene with Al Arnett in the early 1970s.

RYAN OLSEN

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BANKS, L. V.

- b. 28 October 1932; near Stringtown, MS

Influenced by B. B. King, the blues guitarist moved to Chicago in 1965, meeting up with Junior Wells, McKinley Mitchell, and Lonnie Brooks. Banks has recorded for the Clicke label.

RYAN OLSEN

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BANKSTON, DICK

- b. 1899; Crystal Springs, MS

Birth year has also been given as 1897. Bankston, a blues guitarist and violinist, learned guitar from Willie Brown and Charley Patton as a youngster. Bankston formed a string band with his brother, Ben Bankston, that performed at dances in the 1950s. In the 1960s and 1970s he relayed informative details of pre-1942 Mississippi blues to such researchers as Gayle Wardlow and David Evans.

RYAN OLSEN/EDWARD KOMARA

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BANNER

Label of the Plaza Music Company, New York. Launched in 1921, the Banner label developed a modest blues catalog featuring vaudeville singers such as Viola McCoy and Rosa Henderson (under the pseudonym Sally Ritz). Continued after the merging of Plaza's labels with those of Cameo and Pathé in August 1929, it became one of the five "dime-store" labels of the American Record Corporation (ARC) with which it used common issue numbers after September 1935. The labels shared an important Race catalog, including Big Bill Broonzy, Sam Collins, "Georgia" Tom Dorsey, and Blind Boy Fuller. All the "dime-store" labels were withdrawn in April 1938.

HOWARD RYE

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BARAKA, AMIRI

b. Everett LeRoi Jones, 7 October 1934; Newark, NJ

A poet, playwright, and cultural critic, Baraka was initially a member of the Greenwich Village bohemian scene of the late 1950s. Increasingly disillusioned with the state of American race relations, he broke ties with the bohemians, moving first to Harlem and then back to Newark as he sought to articulate a uniquely African American aesthetic. His 1963 landmark study, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*, established his reputation as a music critic, which his follow-up, 1967's *Black Music*, later confirmed. Appointed poet laureate of the state of New Jersey in 2000, he remains active in the worlds of literature and music.

DEAN A. MASULLO

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BARBECUE BOB

b. Robert Hicks, 9 or 11 September 1902; Walnut Grove, GA
 d. 21 October 1931; Lithonia, GA

Blues singer and guitarist. Robert Hicks and his elder brother Charlie learned to play the guitar from Curley Weaver's mother. Charlie became the better singer and Bob the better guitarist. In the 1920s Bob served spare ribs at Tidwell's Barbecue Place in Buckhead near Atlanta. The patrons liked him, invited him to perform at parties, and the nickname Barbecue Bob arose. When Columbia's mobile unit reached Chicago in March 1927, Bob recorded his first songs with his resonant twelve-string guitar. The record sold well and Bob was soon in the studio again. He cut "Mississippi Heavy Water Blues" in March 1928. The topical song was a great success

and Bob became the best-selling blues singer in the Atlanta of the 1920s.

For the remainder of his life Bob was to record for Columbia at six-month intervals. In 1928 Bob joined a medicine show and toured southern Georgia. His final session was recorded together with Curley Weaver on guitar and Buddy Moss on harp. As the Georgia Cotton Pickers, they delivered four powerful blues songs in which Bob's rhythmic strumming and easily recognizable vocals stand out. He was so popular that his recordings continued into the Depression, only to be cut short by his death of pneumonia at the early age of twenty-nine. Robert Hicks's style is characterized by heavy bass licks and ringing twelve-string sounds underlined by the crying sound of the bottleneck. His wry and witty lyrics combine many traditional lines with original poetry. Dave Moore's eighty-page booklet *Brown Skin Gal: The Story of Barbecue Bob*, which also contains complete lyrics, became available in a boxed album (Agram Blues AB 2001).

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Discography: DGR**BARBEE, JOHN HENRY**

b. William George Tucker, 14 November 1905; Henning, TN
 d. 3 November 1964; Chicago, IL

Singer and guitarist. Had early associations with John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson and Sunnyland Slim. After moving to Chicago, he recorded with the Vocalion label in 1938. Upon rediscovery by white listeners, he recorded for the Spivey and the Storyville labels in 1964. His participation in that year's American Folk Blues Festival tour was cut short by illness, and he later died of a heart attack in a Chicago jail while being held for a car accident.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

BARKER, BLUE LU

BARKER, BLUE LU

b. Louise (or Louisa) Dupont, 13 November 1913; New Orleans, LA

d. 7 May 1998; New Orleans, LA

Singer; wife of Danny Barker. Her maiden name was Louise or Louisa Dupont. The stage name may have derived from her penchant for humorous double-entendre in her songs, delivered in straight-faced fashion. She was a dancer as a child, but turned to singing in her teens. After marrying Danny Barker in 1930, the couple relocated to New York. Her first recording was issued in 1938, and featured one of the songs most closely associated with her, "Don't You Make Me High."

Barker recorded twenty-one prewar sides for Decca, collected on the Classics CD, *1938–1939*, and another twenty-five for Apollo and Capitol after the war, also collected on Classics as *1946–1949*. She had a minor hit with "A Little Bird Told Me" in 1948, which she followed with "Here's a Little Girl." All of these recordings were made in association with her husband, but she also recorded with Erskine Hawkins as "Lu Blue" in 1938.

Barker returned to live in New Orleans in 1965. She was a powerful singer, but a reluctant and therefore only sporadic performer in public throughout her career. She began to be featured more regularly in festivals in the early 1980s, where she was regarded as a valued representative of a waning generation of New Orleans musicians. Ill health meant that she did not perform at all in the final decade of her life. Her last concert appearance with her husband was at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in 1989, and it is preserved on record.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

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Live at New Orleans Jazz Festival (1998, Orleans 2111).

1946–1949 (2001, Melodie Jazz Classics 1130).

BARKER, DANNY

b. Daniel Moses Barker, 13 January 1909; New Orleans, LA

d. 13 March 1994; New Orleans, LA

Singer, writer, and historian; married to Blue Lu Barker. Barker played banjo with Little Brother Montgomery in the early 1920s and rhythm guitar with Lucky Millinder, Cab Calloway, Billie Holiday, and others. He was central in the modern revival of New Orleans marching bands. In later life he was a valuable informant to historians of various periods of jazz and blues.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

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Save the Bones (1988, Orleans 10118).

BARKSDALE, EVERETT

b. 28 April 1910; Detroit, MI

d. 29 January 1986; Los Angeles, CA

Jazz and urban blues guitarist who also was proficient on other instruments. Played rhythm acoustic guitar for Erskine Tate, Eddie South, and Benny Carter. For the most part, he was based in Chicago in the 1930s, in New York City from the 1940s through the 1960s, and in California from the 1970s onward.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin

BARNER, WILEY

b. 1900; near Selma, AL

Big-voiced Alabama railroad worker who recorded two songs for Gennett in 1927 and performed with a local string band until the 1930s. Barner's singing was "untutored and relentless" wrote collector Don Kent, who reported that Barner was alive as of 1973.

DAVID HARRISON/EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

BARNES, GEORGE

b. 17 July 1921; Chicago Heights, IL
d. 5 September 1977; Concord, CA

Guitarist. After winning a Tommy Dorsey amateur swing contest in 1937, Barnes took several opportunities to back several Bluebird label musicians during recording sessions, including Big Bill Broonzy, Jazz Gillum, and Washboard Sam. From the 1940s until his death, he increasingly worked with jazz musicians, and in radio and television session work.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin

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**BARNES, ROOSEVELT MELVIN
“BOOBA”**

b. 25 September 1936; Longwood, MS
d. 3 April 1996; Chicago, IL

Roosevelt “Booba” Barnes learned harmonica as a child, having been inspired early on by Howlin’ Wolf. Barnes moved to Greenville, Mississippi, in his teens and developed his raw style in the tough juke joints on Nelson Street. By 1960, he taught himself guitar and spent years playing throughout the region. After several brief stints in Chicago, Barnes opened his *Playboy Club* back on Nelson Street in 1982 and established himself as the Delta’s most popular bluesman. His 1990 Rooster label debut launched his international career, and he appeared in the 1992 film *Deep Blues*. Barnes later relocated to Chicago, but his life was cut short by cancer in 1996.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

Roosevelt “Booba” Barnes & The Playboys, *The Heartbroken Man* (1990, Rooster CD R2623).

BARRELHOUSE

Record label (Illinois, 1974–1983). Owner: George Paulus (b. April 23, 1948; Chicago, IL). Chicago based, Barrelhouse issued albums by Joe Carter,

Easy Baby (Alex Randle), “Harmonica” Frank Floyd, Bob Hall, Blind Joe Hill, Robert Richards, Washboard Willie (Hensley), and Big John Wrencher. A few various artist collections were issued, including one from Ora Nelle acetates (Othum Brown, Sleepy John Estes, Little Walter, Jimmy Rogers, Johnny Young), and one with J-V-B acetates (Eddie Burns, L. C. Green, and others). The 1974 album *Bring Me Another Half-a-Pint* contained recordings by Billy Branch, Kansas City Red (Arthur Stevenson), Earl Payton, and others.

ROBERT EAGLE

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BARTHOLOMEW, DAVE

b. 24 December 1920; Edgard, LA

Born into a musical family, Bartholomew (aka The Pit Man) began his career as a trumpet player and joined a brass band after leaving school, then graduated to the better paid jazz bands popular in New Orleans in the late 1930s. He joined the army during World War II and learned composition and musical arrangement. Back in New Orleans in 1946, he formed his own jazz band and was soon broadcasting over radio station WMRY. He was signed by De Luxe Records in 1947, recording four singles, but following some dissensions with De Luxe’s management, he recorded also for Decca and King before joining Lew Chudd’s Imperial label in 1950 as an arranger, songwriter, and recording artist until he formed his own labels, Trumpet and Broadmoor, in the mid-1960s.

In 1952, Bartholomew and his band cut an incognito session for Specialty released as by “The Royal Kings.” He’s remembered largely today not only for being Fats Domino’s longtime bandleader, arranger, and trumpet player, with a dream team (Earl Palmer, Red Tyler, Herb Hardesty, and others) producing and writing most of Domino’s classic hits and chart toppers, but also for his major role in nearly all of the early New Orleans R&B sessions recorded in the 1950s and 1960s, while conducting his own recording career until 1967, even if he is credited with one hit only, “Country Boy” (1949).

Bartholomew was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1991. As an early influence of rock ’n’ roll, he can be found these days leading the Dixieland jazz band at Preservation Hall when not accompanying Fats Domino on tours.

ROBERT SACRÉ

BARTHOLOMEW, DAVE

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AMG (Al Campbell); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

New Orleans Big Beat (1998, Landslide LDCD-1022).
1947–50 (2001, Classics 5002; Fr.).
1950–52 (2003, Classics 5055; Fr.).

BARTON, LOU ANN

b. 17 February 1954; Fort Worth, TX

Singer. The quintessential Texas female blues vocalist, Barton combined a tough stage image with a sultry singing style delivered with a thick drawl and a no-nonsense attitude. Although musically involved with the leading Texas rocking blues acts of her time, Barton's most accomplished work was on swamp-flavored R&B from Louisiana, especially on the songs of Lazy Lester, Slim Harpo, and Irma Thomas.

Her debut album, *Old Enough*, was recorded at the Muscle Shoals studio in 1982 with rock star Glenn Frey and Atlantic Records president Jerry Wexler coproducing and guitarist Jimmie Vaughan providing a link to her Texas past and future. Barton did not record again until 1986 when *Forbidden Tones* was released.

The strong-willed Barton was destined to lead her own band but she first attempted to front other groups, beginning with the Austin all-star collaboration Triple Threat Revue with Stevie Ray Vaughan and W. C. Clark. Brief stints with fellow Austinites the Fabulous Thunderbirds and the Rhode Island big band Roomful of Blues followed before she finally began fronting her own groups.

Barton released *Read My Lips* in 1989 and a year later teamed up with Angela Strehli and Marcia Ball for the blues girls group project *Dreams Come True* produced by Dr. John for Antone's Records. Beginning in the late 1990s Barton recorded and performed with the Jimmie Vaughan Band. She released *Sugar Coated Love* in 1998 and in 2001 a bootleg quality import of her performing with Stevie Ray Vaughan in 1977 was released as *Thunderbroad*.

MICHAEL POINT

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Rolling Stone no. 367 (April 15, 1982): 74–75.

Discography: AMG

BASCOMB, PAUL

b. 12 February 1912; Birmingham, AL

d. December 1986; Chicago, IL

Saxophonist in early jazz and urban blues bands through 1944, including those led by Erskine Hawkins and by Count Basie. Afterward he led his own groups, or worked with his brother Dud Bascomb.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG; Larkin

Discography: Lord

BASIE, COUNT

b. William Basie, 21 August 1904; Red Bank, NJ

d. 26 April 1984; Hollywood, FL

Bandleader and pianist; led the "Band That Plays the Blues," one of the most popular big bands. Basie began his career working as accompanist to vaudeville blues singers and entertainers in traveling shows, including Katie Crippen and the Whitman Sisters. Worked primarily on the Southwest "territory band" circuit from 1927, chiefly in Kansas City; with bassist Walter Page's Blue Devils in 1928; then with Bennie Moten for most of 1929 through 1935.

Basie rose to prominence as a bandleader in 1936, gaining an audience via radio broadcasts from Kansas City. Residencies at Chicago's Grand Terrace and New York's Roseland followed. The band was rich in great bluesy soloists, including Lester Young on tenor saxophone and Buck Clayton on trumpet. The "All-American Rhythm Section" (Basie, bassist Page, guitarist Freddie Green, and drummer Jo Jones) anchored the band with a light, bluesy swing that was irresistible to dancers. Many of their pieces featured a blues-based four-beat walking bass pattern. Fronting the band were several fine jazz singers. Most important, from a blues perspective, was Jimmy Rushing, whose recordings with the band are among the greatest big band blues records. Among these are the immortal "Sent for You Yesterday" (1938).

Basie remained active through the 1970s. His 1950s–1960s band, which played in a harder edged style, never lost its bluesy swing. In the 1950s the band featured Joe Williams, with his signature song "Everyday I Have the Blues" (recorded 1955).

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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Discography: Lord

Selected Recordings

Of the many blues-based records the Count Basie Orchestra made in its early years the following are representative: "Swingin' at the Daisy Chain" (1937); "Blues in the Dark," "Sent for You Yesterday," "Every Tub," "How Long, How Long Blues," "The Dirty Dozens," "The Blues I Like to Hear" (1938); "Dupree Blues," "Red Wagon," "Goin' to Chicago Blues," "Dickie's Dream," "I Left My Baby" (1939); "Fiesta in Blue" (1941); and "Harvard Blues" (1942).

Among the collections readily available on compact disc as of 2005 were "Count Basie Story" (Properbox 19), "The Complete Decca Recordings" (Decca Jazz 3-611), and "Count Basie and His Orchestra: America's #1 Band: The Columbia Years" (Columbia/Legacy CAX 87110).

See also **Crippen, Katie; Rushing, James Andrew "Jimmy"; Williams, Joe**

BASS

(1) Any musical instrument or voice that plays or sings the lowest notes within a group; in blues, this refers primarily to either the upright string bass or to the electric bass guitar, though jugs, washtub basses, tubas, vocalists, and other instruments have all performed this role. (2) The lowest pitched musical line within a musical composition.

Musical Function

The bass line, whether played on string bass, electric bass, jug, or any other low-pitched instrument, serves several important functions within the context of blues music. The two major functions are rhythmic and harmonic in nature. By clearly outlining chord structures, mostly through broken arpeggios and scalar walking patterns, the bass forms a harmonic foundation for the rest of a blues ensemble (see examples 1 and 2). While outlining other notes within a chord, the bass mostly places primary emphasis on the root of a particular chord. This emphasis allows other band members to know exactly where they are in a harmonic progression and allows soloists more harmonic and melodic flexibility by freeing them

from being grounded to root-oriented playing. Aesthetically, the focus of the bass on playing chord roots combined with the instrument's low pitch creates a solid harmonic foundation that allows overtones from all other instruments to ring out, creating a fuller sound.

The other major function of the bass is to provide rhythmic stability. It is not just the drummer, but the drummer in conjunction with the bass player who serve as "time keepers" and drive the rhythm of a blues band. Blues drummers and bass players provide the steady beat to which the band must adhere. In many early blues and blues-related forms, bass lines would emphasize the two strong beats, first and third, in each measure. Most typical modern bass patterns, whether walking or arpeggiating, emphasize the downbeats of each measure while clearly sounding on all macro beats (see example 3). For most slow blues, bass lines almost always play four pulses per measure with occasional added notes (example 3). The same patterns often hold true for faster, more upbeat blues tunes, though a long-short pattern is often used in place of a single note played on each beat. To drive the beat forward, a typical blues shuffle pattern uses this method of replacing single notes with two eighth notes played in swing style: the close equivalent of a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note or even a triplet grouping of a quarter note followed by an eighth note (see example 4).

The bass rarely provides any melodic function in blues. Blues basses have typically remained background instruments, helping to hold bands together through harmonic and rhythmic stability. Unlike in jazz, bass solos in blues have always been quite rare. With few exceptions, and these fairly recently, blues bass solos typically consist of the band dropping out, while the bass player continues with a slightly more complex version of the same pattern that is used in the rest of the song.

African Instrumental Antecedents

The bass as used in blues has antecedents in African and European music. Many of the early string bands in America used an instrument known as a washtub or gutbucket bass. These instruments often consisted of an overturned tub (for washing clothes or gutting newly killed animals) to which an attached string connected with the end of a long stick such as a broom handle. The string could then be plucked to produce a tone, which could be raised or lowered by adjusting the tautness of the stick. The tub serves as a resonating chamber for this makeshift instrument.

BASS

Example 1: Arpeggiated bass pattern



Example 2: Walking bass pattern



Example 3: Slow blues pattern in compound



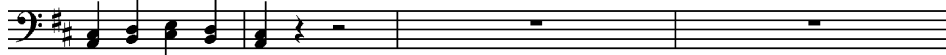
Example 4: One basic blues shuffle pattern



Example 5: Broken chord outline using octave leaps



Example 6: Walking bass pattern of two simultaneously sounding pitches in



The washtub bass seems to be a direct link from an African instrument known as the earth bow. The earth bow, found in both Africa and the West Indies, was basically a modified animal trap. A hole would be dug in the ground, covered over with wood or stretched hide, which was linked to a sapling with a rope or cord. Just like the washtub bass, the earth bow would be played by plucking the cord while bending the sapling to alter the pitches. The washtub bass is in many ways the bass equivalent to the diddley bow, or one-strand guitar, which also seems to have antecedents in African musical traditions.

European Instrumental Antecedents and String Bass

At the same time string bands were using washtub basses, the European double bass was being used by jazz musicians, wind ensembles, ragtime bands, minstrel groups, and other string bands. The double bass, known by many alternate names, including string bass, standup bass, upright bass, contrabass, bass fiddle, bass violin, and doghouse bass, has a long history in European music, dating back to the violone of the late fifteenth century. Long used in art music, the double bass was used in a number of popular

music traditions at the turn of the twentieth century, such as ragtime and string bands. While early decades of the twentieth century had three- and five-string double basses, the majority of those used in blues had four strings. These strings generally correspond to the standard tuning arrangement of the lowest pitched four strings on guitar (E, A, D, G), while sounding one octave lower. Sound can be produced through several methods: plucking, slapping, or bowing the strings. In blues, the first two methods have been used almost exclusively.

Recording technology, up until around the mid-1920s, could not pick up many of the lower bass frequencies. This fact, coupled with a need for the bass to project more in live performances, led to the technique of slapping the strings against the fingerboard, rather than plucking them. This “slap bass” technique, thought to have been originated by New Orleans jazz bassists, creates a percussive pop with each sounding of a pitch, which allows the bass to be better heard. Another projection technique used by some bassists was to stand the bass on top of a wooden box, which would act as a second resonating chamber and produce more volume. Advances in steel string production in the early 1950s allowed for far more volume than the previous gut strings. The added volume obtained through steel strings also allowed bassists to lower the bridge, relieving some

of the workload needed to pluck the highly placed strings. Despite these advancements in double bass design and its generally warmer tone, the instrument would soon be replaced for the most part by the electric bass guitar.

The most famous string bass player in blues is undoubtedly Willie Dixon, whose bass playing can be heard on hundreds of Chicago blues recordings. Dixon even occasionally played bass solos; consider, for example, “Shakin’ the Shack” on *What Happened to My Blues* (Prevue 18). Other notable blues string bass players include Ransom Knowling and Wendell Marshall.

Electric Bass

Although Paul Tutmarc, Sr., invented an electric bass guitar in 1935, it was not until Leo Fender created the popular Fender Precision Bass (P-Bass) in 1951 that the electric bass guitar began supplanting the double bass as the bass instrument of choice for blues musicians. Like the double bass, the electric bass guitar is generally a four-stringed instrument, whose string tunings are one octave below the four lowest strings of guitar. The lower string action, addition of a fret board, easy amplification through inclusion of a pickup, and increased portability, combined with the need to match the volume of the increasingly popular electric guitar, led to most blues bands favoring the electric bass guitar over the much larger and more difficult double bass. From the early 1950s until today, the electric bass guitar has been used in almost all electric blues bands.

Many blues musicians started playing electric bass guitar and either completely moved to another instrument, such as guitar, or learned to play multiple instruments. Musicians such as Carey Bell, Ted Bogan, Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, Peter Chatman (Memphis Slim), “Queen” Sylvia Embry, Big Mojo Elum, Luther “Georgia Boy” Johnson, Willie Kent, and J. W. Williams all play bass, but are far more well known as guitarists or singers. Other notable blues electric bassists include Jesse Knight, Jr.; David Myers, one of the first Chicago blues musicians to play electric bass; Mac Thompson; Jerry Jemmott; and Jeff Ganz, who, in addition to standard electric bass, plays fretless electric bass, eight-string bass, piccolo bass, and four- and five-string double basses.

Until the Motown stylings of James Jamerson and the R&B playing of Donald “Duck” Dunn and others came along in the 1960s and 1970s, blues bass playing was almost always simple and in the background, providing support for the band. While still mainly

providing a supporting harmonic and rhythmic role, bassists became free to be slightly more creative and occasionally take solos. This mainly applied to these emerging blues-related forms; traditional electric blues still mostly relegated the bass to a background roll. The funk and soul blues styles placed more emphasis on the bass not only by giving it a more prominent musical role, but also by mixing it with a higher presence on recordings. Extended techniques, such as slapping and popping, have become more prevalent in funk and soul blues. These techniques consist of slapping the strings with the side of the thumb knuckle to “slap” and quickly pulling the strings away from the fingerboard and allowing them to snap against the neck to “pop,” much like a Bartok pizzicato. These techniques can best be heard in the music of funk bands such as James Brown (bassist Bootsy Collins) or Parliament Funkadelic, but are occasionally used in the soul/funk blues of Bobby Rush and briefly appear on the Corey Harris album *Greens from the Garden*. In addition to some differences in playing technique from most standard blues, funk blues bass playing has incorporated a greater use of syncopation, placing more accents on offbeats and upbeats, but still clearly emphasizing the initial downbeat of each measure.

Although bass has gained more prominence since the beginnings of blues, it still serves primarily as a background instrument used to stabilize the rhythm and ground the harmony. With several notable exceptions in blues-related musical forms, blues bassists still rarely play solos; there is no strong tradition of bass soloing as there is in jazz. In fact, many blues musicians feel that the best bass player is one who stays in the background but holds the group together by establishing and maintaining a solid bass pattern throughout a song.

Alternate Bass Instruments

Although the string bass and electric bass have been the predominant bass instruments used in blues, a number of alternative instruments have filled these roles. Some of the earliest blues recordings have a tuba, trombone, or even bass saxophone playing the bass line. The large number of military brass bands at the turn of the twentieth century made tubas readily available and their capacity for loud volume made them ideal for the early days of mechanical sound recording. Many of the early classic blues singers performed with vaudevillian or even Dixieland style bands, which often included piano, clarinet, trumpet or trombone, and sometimes a tuba. Many of Bessie

Smith's recordings included a tuba until around 1933, when string bass began to be used in her band. Bass saxophone is used as the bass instrument on some early recordings by Mamie Smith (1921), Clara Smith (1925), and others.

In addition to the washtub bass mentioned earlier, string bands often employed the use of a jug (also known as a poor man's tuba) player, to produce bass tones. The mouth of a mostly empty jug of whiskey, or of other substance, would be held to the mouth and air would then be blown across the opening to produce a tone. Pitch could be slightly changed by altering the angle of the jug to the mouth and by varying the airstream. Adding or removing liquid to or from the jug or varying jug sizes could change the pitch center to match the rest of the band. Most jug bands used a single jug player, though some, such as the Dixieland Jug Blowers, used two for more pitch variety.

Since the early days of blues, piano players have often played harmony and/or melody with the right hand, while playing bass lines with the left. For musical acts using just a piano and vocalist, the piano player will often play the bass line, harmony, melody, and solos. Whenever a band lacks a bass player, the pianist often has to take over this role, in addition to playing harmony. Examples of bass lines being performed on piano can be heard in many ragtime, early jazz, and boogie-woogie bands. The barrelhouse style of piano playing often utilized several more complex bass patterns, such as outlining broken chords with octave leaps (see example 5) or playing walking patterns with harmonically sounding intervals (see example 6). In some funk/soul blues music, as heard in Bobby Rush's music, electronic synthesizer keyboards often enhance or occasionally replace an actual double or electric bass with a synthesized bass sound.

Just like pianists, many guitarists often play the bass line while simultaneously playing harmony and/or melody. Most acoustic country blues is played by a solo guitarist responsible for playing all of the parts, including the bass line, through a style of finger-picking, whereby the thumb plays the bass notes while the other fingers strum the harmony and/or melody. Many early blues bands employed a second guitarist for the purpose of playing bass lines. This player would tune his or her guitar strings down several steps to produce lower bass tones. Brewer Phillips, side guitarist with Hound Dog Taylor, often took the role of bassist by playing the bass lines on guitar.

Drums have even functioned as the bass line in some blues and blues-related forms. A small African American fife and drum tradition, closely related to the blues, has been in existence at least as far back as the American Revolutionary War. This style of

music consists mostly of a fife player, singer(s), and several percussionists, using a variety of drums. The bass and low tenor drums create a sort of bass line in this music, used to set the rhythm and occasionally even serve as a harmonic foundation. In string bands, instruments often served dual purposes; while the washtub bassist plucked the string, another player would use sticks on the washtub as a drum. Blues drummers playing trap set help emphasize the strong beats of the bass line by playing the bass or kick drum on the first and third beats of each measure.

Gospel and gospel blues music have long employed bass singers. The bass singer in gospel often serves the same function as the string or electric bass: to lay down a rhythmic pattern to keep the time and outline the harmonic progression. Several good examples of a vocalist singing a blues bass line can be heard on Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy" Williamson's recordings for Trumpet Records in 1951. Some of these recordings consist only of Sonny Boy Williamson on vocals and harmonica with Cliff Givens, bass vocalist from the Southern Sons vocal group, singing the bass line and playing the drum part with a broom.

GREG JOHNSON

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See also Dixon, Willie; Forms; Funk; Jug

BASS, FONTELLA

b. 3 July 1940; St. Louis, MO

Soul singer who achieved national fame recording for Chicago's Chess Records during the 1960s. She was the daughter of notable gospel singer Martha Bass (a member of the Clara Ward Singers and a soloist of some note). In 1961, Fontella was discovered by St. Louis bandleader Oliver Sain, who brought her into his organization to play piano. Little Milton was the band's initial vocalist, and Bass participated on several sides that Milton recorded for the local Bobbin label. She subsequently recorded four sides under her own name for Bobbin. In 1963, after Little Milton left the Sain band, Bass and singer Bernard Mosley became the featured vocalists. Mosley was soon replaced by Bobby McClure. The following year Chess Records signed Bass and McClure to record for its Checker subsidiary in Chicago. They debuted as a duet act, coming out with two hits, "Don't Mess Up a Good Thing" and "You'll Miss Me (When I'm Gone)" in 1965. Bass launched her solo career in 1965 with a huge hit, "Rescue Me." The flip featured an outstanding gospel-blues ballad, "The Soul of a Man." Bass's career at Chess was gradually dissipated by a series of undistinguished but three commercially successful follow-ups, "Recovery," "I Surrender," and "Safe and Sound."

Bass left Chess in 1967, and recorded for Jerry Butler's Fountain Productions, then moved to Stan Lewis's Paula label, recording under the production aegis of her old bandleader, Oliver Sain, and then for Epic. Bass never had another hit record. Occasionally she appeared as a vocalist on jazz albums recorded by her husband, Lester Bowie, trumpeter in the famed Art Ensemble of Chicago.

ROBERT PRUTER

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BASS, RALPH

b. Ralph Basso, 1 May 1911; New York City, NY
d. 5 March 1997; on a plane between Chicago, IL and Nassau, Bahamas

Record company executive and producer. Bass was one of the most significant producers of blues recordings in the postwar years, producing for Black & White, Federal, and Chess. During his long tenure in the business he produced such artists

as T-Bone Walker, Esther Phillips, James Brown, Etta James, the Dominoes, and Hank Ballard and the Midnighters.

While living in Los Angeles, Bass entered the music business during the early 1940s emceeding jazz concerts. He began producing for the Black & White label in 1945, notably T-Bone Walker and Jack McVea (who hit with "Open the Door Richard"). In 1948 Bass left Black & White and formed his own Bop and Portrait labels, recording mostly jazz, notably Wardell Gray and Dexter Gordon. He joined Savoy in 1948, and soon was producing a spate of hits on Johnny Otis, Little Esther, Mel Walker, and the Robins. In 1951 Bass was hired by King Records as a producer and A&R man and was given his own imprint, Federal. Among the acts on Federal he recorded were Little Esther, the Dominoes, Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, and James Brown.

In 1957, as the black music scene in Los Angeles appeared to go into decline, Bass moved his Federal operation to Chicago. He recorded a few local acts— notably Danny Overbea, Syl Johnson, and Tiny Topsy—but the hits were not forthcoming, and in 1959 he moved to Chess. Bass produced a number of hits on Etta James and the Vibrations, but after Billy Davis came on board to record Chess's burgeoning soul stable in 1962, Bass was moved over to recording blues and gospel acts. During 1964, while still working for Chess, Bass recorded soul acts for Roulette, notably Henry Ford and the Gifts.

Chess went into decline in the early 1970s, and Bass stayed with the company until its closing in 1975. Bass continued to produce blues recordings, notably a series of LPs for TK records under the collective title *I Didn't Give a Damn If Whites Bought It*. He also assisted his wife, Shirley Hall (a former black nightclub chorine), in the operation of a dance studio. He was elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Fleming, John. "A Life Recording." *Reader* (March 7, 1980): 1, 28–32.

BASSETT, JOHNNIE

b. 9 October 1935; Marianna, FL

Heard Tampa Red and Big Boy Crudup at house parties in his youth; family moved to Detroit in 1944. Bassett started playing guitar and harmonica

BASSETT, JOHNNIE

as a teen and studied clarinet in high school. His early experience was with John Lee Hooker. He spent two years in the U.S. Army from 1958 to 1960. Bassett was a member of Joe Weaver and his Blue Note Orchestra, the house band for Fortune records. Bassett played on many doo-wop and R&B sessions. Bassett's sound is reminiscent of T-Bone Walker, an early inspiration; he has a world-weary vocal style and sound.

JIM GALLERT

Bibliography

AMG

Sinclair, John. "Johnnie Bassett: Cadillac Bluesman from the Motor City." *Living Blues* no. 146 (July/August 1999): 20–27.

Discography

As Leader

Party My Blues Away (Cannonball CBD 29109).
I Gave My Life to the Blues (Black Magic CD 9034).

As Sideman

Five Dollars (Regency RR 114).

BASTIN, BRUCE

b. 1938; United Kingdom

British researcher and label owner Bruce Bastin began making regular research and recording trips through the southeastern United States in the late 1960s, often together with Peter Lowry. His findings were presented in *Blues Unlimited* magazine and *Crying for the Carolines* (London: Studio Vista Press, 1971), later expanded into the authoritative *Red River Blues: The Blues Tradition of the Southeast* (University of Illinois Press, 1986). In 1973 Bastin received a master's degree in folklore studies from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and staged the first blues festival in the region. Bastin joined Flyright Records in 1970—other partners were Robin Gosden and *Blues Unlimited* editors Mike Leadbitter, John Broven, and Simon Napier—and eventually became the managing director of Flyright's parent company, Interstate Music, Ltd. In 1978 Bastin wrote that Flyright's mission was to "rectify the imbalance shown by the undue concentration on Mississippi blues by previous writers and record reissuers. Flyright's general focus became directed toward a conscious regionalism in an attempt to offer evidence of a broader pattern of blues evolution." This focus

resulted in series on prewar and postwar East Coast blues, contemporary field recordings, the fifty-five-volume "legendary Jay Miller sessions" of previously unissued blues, cajun, and zydeco, and recordings made by independent record man Joe Davis, the subject of Bastin's book *Never Sell a Copyright* (Chigwell: Storyville, 1990). Other Interstate labels have concentrated on piano blues (Magpie), prewar field recordings/commercial blues (Travelin' Man), country/rockabilly (Krazy Kat, Country Routes), "world" music (Heritage), and jazz (Harlequin).

SCOTT BARRETTA

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Interstate Music website, <http://www.interstate-music.co.uk>.

BATES, LEFTY

b. William Bates, 9 March 1920; Leighton, AL

Chicago jazz and blues guitarist who worked both as a performer and a session man, largely during the 1940s and 1950s. Bates entered the music business in St. Louis, joining a string band/vocal group called the Hi-De-Ho Boys. The Hi-De-Ho Boys moved to Chicago in 1936, recorded on Decca, and became a semiregular act at the Club DeLisa from 1937 to 1950. After World War II, Bates recorded with the Aristokats on RCA-Victor. When the group broke up in 1948, Bates rejoined the Hi-De-Ho Boys. In 1952 Bates formed a trio with Quinn Wilson (bass) and Horace Palm (piano), and through much of the decade continued with this group. Bates recorded minimally under his own name, singles on Boxer, United, Apex, and Mad. None of the sides achieved any kind of traction, but it did not matter, Bates earned his money in club gigs and as the most in-demand guitar player for recording a host of blues and rhythm and blues sessions, especially for Vee-Jay, but also for such small labels as Club 51 and Mad.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Pruter, Robert, and Robert L. Campbell. "The Mad and M&M Labels." *Red Saunders Research Foundation* website, <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~campber/mad.html> (accessed June 12, 2003).

Discography: LSFP

BATTS, WILL

b. 24 January 1904; Michigan City, MS
d. 18 February 1956; Memphis, TN

Fiddler. Moved to Memphis in 1919, performing and later recording with Jack Kelly. He also recorded with Frank Stokes in 1929. From 1934, he led his own jug bands and other types of acoustic instrument groups in the Memphis area.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP**BATY, CHARLIE**

(*See Little Charlie*)

BAYOU

Record label (California, 1953). Owner: Franklin Kort (b. May 10, 1902, IL; d. February 25, 1956, San Gabriel, CA). Hollywood, California-based Bayou was formed in May 1953. Franklin was a former employee of Exclusive, Recorded in Hollywood, and Swing Time Records. Bayou issued recordings by Jesse Allen ("Dragnet"), Dave Bartholomew ("Snatchin' Back"), Red Callender, Goree Carter, Joe Houston, Allen "Fat Man" Matthews, Big Jay McNeely, Clarence Samuels, Big Joe Turner ("Blues Jumped the Rabbit"), Mercy Dee (Walton), L. C. Williams, and others. By June 1953, the label had folded and Imperial Records acquired the name. The label should not be confused with the 1965–1966 label that issued a series of Clifton Chenier that was recorded for Arhoolie Records.

ROBERT EAGLE

Bibliography

McGrath
Turner, Bez. "Colony, Bayou, Post." *Blues Unlimited* no. 130 (May/August 1978): 11–12.

BEA & BABY

Chicago blues label in operation from 1959 through 1961. The company was owned by Narvel Eatmon (1914–1991), who went by the name of Cadillac Baby. During the 1950s he operated Cadillac Baby's Club

at 4708 S. Dearborn in Chicago. Eatmon then established his Bea & Baby label, named after himself and his wife, Bea. Subsidiary labels were Key, Keyhole, and Miss. With Ted Daniels he also operated the Ronald label. The company focused on releasing singles to the working African American population, and thus most of Eatmon's releases were of blues artists, notably Eddie Boyd, L. C. McKinley, Hound Dog Taylor, Little Mac Simmons, Sunnyland Slim, Roosevelt Sykes, Detroit Junior, and Lee Jackson. His biggest record was Bobby Saxton's "Tryin' to Make a Livin'" (1960). Bea & Baby also recorded gospel groups and R&B vocal groups. In his later years Eatmon operated candy/variety stores until his death.

ROBERT PRUTER

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BEACON

Record label founded in late 1942 by music publisher Joe Davis, one of the earliest of the post-1940 "indies" that would revolutionize the record business. Boogie pianist Deryck Sampson was a major contributor to the catalog. The 5000 Race series launched in May 1943 most notably featured Gabriel Brown. Many Beacon masters were reissued using the same issue numbers on a revived Gennett label in 1944, which also included reissues from Gennett by Big Bill Broonzy among others, and then were reissued again in 1945, still using the same issue numbers, on the Joe Davis, later Davis, label, which Davis continued to operate for some years. In 1953, his new Jay-Dee label included a 1949 coupling by Gabriel Brown, and the label achieved its greatest success with Otis Blackwell.

HOWARD RYE

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Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

BEAMAN, LOTTIE

BEAMAN, LOTTIE

b. Lottie Kimbrough, 1900; Kansas City, MO (unconfirmed)

Sister of Sylvester Kimbrough. A singer during the "classic blues" era, Beaman was active mostly in local Kansas City clubs. She recorded with the Paramount label in 1924, the Merrit label in 1925, the Gennett label in 1928, and the Brunswick label in 1929.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

BEAR FAMILY

Record label founded in 1975. While the bulk of his catalog covers country, rockabilly, and pop, Richard Weize's Bear Family label ranks among the most impressive reissue companies in modern recording history. Their line of exhaustive, multiple-disc boxed sets is equaled only by Mosaic's astonishing jazz series, and these two companies share similar philosophies in terms of providing consumers with the complete works of notable artists. Bear Family releases are beautifully packaged with vivid, rare photographs and comprehensive and superbly penned liner notes. The exquisite sound results through the use of original masters from the copyright owners. Weize has also specialized in documenting music from artists who were neither particularly innovative or big sellers such as Charlie Adams and Jack Guthrie, while also reissuing classic material by Johnny Cash, Louis Jordan, Hank Snow, and Willie Nelson. Weize's tastes even extend into straight pop, with reissues devoted to Dean Martin, Pat Boone, and Petula Clark, plus spotlight label series on such companies as Sun and Sarg.

Some Bear Family specials include a ten-disc set devoted to the music of the American left, and four-disc sets covering the Depression and songs from the British Music Hall. The label has produced mammoth retrospective lines on such pivotal country performers as Hank Snow, Lefty Frizzell, Jim Reeves, and Ernest Tubb, along with specialty items devoted to cabaret and other idioms. Richard Weize abandoned earlier careers as a journalist and wine collector shortly after attending the First International Festival of Country Music at Wembley in 1966. The label's first release was *Goin' Back to Dixie* by Bill Clifton.

RON WYNN

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Bear Family website, <http://www.bear-family.de/> (accessed December 17, 2004).

BEARD, CHRIS

b. 29 August 1957; Rochester, NY

Beard learned guitar from his father Joe Beard, and in his teens played soul and rock in local bands, also filling in with the R&B group the New York Players. Later he played in R&B groups in the same Rochester venues where his father played blues. Sidetracked by personal difficulties in the 1980s, when Beard took up music again in 1991, it was blues. In 1998 he recorded *Barwalkin'* produced by Johnny Rawls, and followed in 2002 with *Born to Play the Blues. Live Wire* on his own label in 2004 marked a new departure for Beard, combining blues with rock and soul material. Beard tours the entire country, most often the East, Midwest, and South. Major influences (besides his father) are Albert King and Johnny "Guitar" Watson.

DANIEL BEAUMONT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Beaumont, Daniel. "Born in a House of Blues." *Living Blues* no. 169 (September/October 2003): 38-41.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

Barwalkin' (1998, JSP CD 288).

Born to Play the Blues (2002, JSP CD 2148).

Live Wire (2004, Destin 001).

BEARD, JOE

b. 4 February 1938, Ashland, MS

Beard grew up in Ashland, where Nathan Beauregard often lived with his family, and the Murphy brothers, Matt, Floyd, and Dan, were close friends. Beard's family moved to Memphis in the late 1940s, and Beard came to know many of the most important musicians then making music in that city: B. B. King, Howlin' Wolf, and others. In the late 1950s Beard moved to Rochester and began playing blues in local clubs. His neighbor in Rochester in the

mid-1960s was Son House. John Mooney got a start in Beard's band, and met House through Beard. Beard's work as an electrician has kept him from regular touring, but he has played all over the United States and Europe—first recording with Buster Benton in 1981 in France. In the 1990s he made three well-received CDs. Important influences are John Lee Hooker and Lightnin' Hopkins, but Beard's style also shows the influence of Mississippi legends like Nathan Beauregard.

DANIEL BEAUMONT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)
Beaumont, Daniel. "So Much Truth." *Living Blues* no. 169 (September/October 2003): 28–36.

Discography

No More Cherry Rose (1990, Kingsnake KIN-4040).
Blues Union (1995, Audioquest AQ 1039).
For Real (1998, Audioquest AQ 1049).
Dealin' (2000, Audioquest AQ 1055).

BEASLEY, JIMMY

b. 30 September 1929; Kansas City, MO

Vocalist and pianist in the urban jump style. Beasley made his classic records for the labels Modern and Crown in 1956 and 1957.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Cayer, R. C. "Jimmy's Back!" *Blues Unlimited* no. 95 (October 1972): 14–15.

Discography: LSFP

BEAUREGARD, NATHAN

b. ca.1869; Ashland, MS
d. ca. 1970; Memphis, TN

Singer of black folk music and blues, although his recorded blues tend to be similar to commercial blues of the 1930s. Guitarist Joe Beard recalls Beauregard in Ashland in the 1940s. Before his death, he was recorded by the Arhoolie and Adelphi labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Beaumont, Daniel. "So Much Truth (Joe Beard)." *Living Blues* no. 169 (September/October 1993): 28–37.

Discography: LSFP

BELFOUR, ROBERT

b. 11 September 1940; Hurdle Farm (near Holly Springs), MS

Born and raised in the north Mississippi hill country, singer/guitarist Robert Belfour began playing music as a boy, initially influenced by his musician father and later by childhood friend Junior Kimbrough. Belfour soaked up the region's unique blues tradition and developed his powerful, hypnotic style playing area juke joints. His first full-length album was released on Fat Possum in 2000.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Keith Brown)

Discography: AMG

Selected Recording

What's Wrong with You? (2000, Fat Possum CD 80336-2).

BELL, BRENDA

b. 30 October 1953; Newport News, VA
d. 17 September 1988; Staten Island, NY

New York–based blues vocalist of the late 1970s and 1980s. Bell launched her music career in 1976 by arranging a meeting with famed blues singer Victoria Spivey at her home studio in Brooklyn. After gaining admittance to Spivey's apartment through a friend living in the building, Bell—accompanied by Wade Hampton Green on piano—"auditioned" for Spivey by singing a few songs. As a result, Spivey took Bell under her wing by preparing her for her first live performance, giving her lessons to improve her vocal style and delivery and introducing her to blues musicians in the New York area. Spivey died only months after their first meeting but she forever altered Bell's musical career. Bell appeared at Spivey tribute concerts at the Dan Lynch Club in New York City and at the Chelsea House Folklore Center in West Brattleboro, Vermont, throughout the late 1970s and

BELL, BRENDA

1980s, continued to perform with musicians she had met through Spivey, and released all of her own recordings on the Spivey label.

In 1977 Bell began hosting blues recording parties at her own apartment. Bell regularly appeared in blues clubs throughout the New York area, performing with artists Memphis Slim, Louisiana Red, Bill Dacey, Uncle Boogie and the Holmes Brothers, and "Screamin'" Jay Hawkins. Bell also performed with Muddy Waters in Chicago and toured Europe in the late 1970s, performing with artists such as "Champion" Jack Dupree, Willie Mabon, Al Jones, Sonny Rhodes, Monte Sunshine, and Piano Red.

Bell first appeared on a recording as a supporting vocalist for Joe Turner's album *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter* (1978). She also appeared as a guest artist on the album *New York Really Has the "Blues Stars" Vol. 2* (1980), performed with Louisiana Red on the recording *The Imagery of Louisiana Red and Brenda Bell* (1980), and released *Brenda Bell and the 9th Street Stompers* (1980). Bell also produced two solo albums—*Brenda Bell Sings the Blues of Victoria Spivey* (1980) and *Brenda Bell: Ain't Nobody's Business What Brenda Bell May Do!* (1984)—but her career was cut short by her death of cancer at age thirty-four.

ERIN STAPLETON-CORCORAN

Bibliography

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BELL, CAREY

b. Carey Bell Harrington, 14 November 1936; Macon, MS

Considered one of the finest living exponents of the Southern-born, Chicago-schooled tradition of heavily amplified blues harmonica epitomized by Little Walter Jacobs and Big Walter Horton, both of whom Bell knew personally and learned from. Until moving to Chicago in 1956 or 1957, Bell lived in the Mississippi hill country, near the Alabama border, cutting his musical teeth in Meridian, Mississippi, under the nurturing eye of an older musician, pianist Lovie Lee, who became his surrogate father. In Chicago, harp gigs proved scarce, despite tutoring from the two Walters and musical partnerships with guitarists Honeyboy Edwards and Johnny Young, so he often played bass guitar behind Robert Night-hawk, Earl Hooker, Big Walter, and others, in clubs and on Maxwell Street.

In 1969, he came into his own with a debut LP on Delmark, followed by a session for ABC BluesWay. A brief early 1970s stint in the harp chair of the Muddy Waters band (appearing on Waters's *London Sessions*) was followed by a longer stretch with Willie Dixon's Blues All-Stars, introducing his diatonic and chromatic harp skills to a worldwide audience. Since then, Bell waxed numerous albums for Blind Pig, Rooster, JSP, and Alligator, some produced in a cranked-up contemporary blues style. From the 1980s onward, he worked primarily as frontman, often backed by Maryland-based guitarist Steve Jacobs. Bell's live performances are memorable not only for his thick-toned, room-filling harp but also for his extroverted manner and large, drooping eyes. Full name often cited as Carey Bell Harrington (after his mother); cousin of guitarist Eddie "Clearwater" Harrington. Son, guitarist Lurrie Bell, is active in blues; they have recorded together.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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BELL, EARL

b. 19 February 1914; Hernando, MS
d. July 1977, Memphis, TN

Guitarist. Worked very closely with Marshall "Memphis Sonny Boy" Jones.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE

Bibliography

LaVere, Steve. "Earl Bell." *Living Blues* no. 36 (January/February 1978): 31.

Discography: LSFP

BELL, ED

b. ca. 1905; Lowndes County, AL
d. Early 1960s; Greenville, AL

Singer and guitarist. Probably the same artist as Barefoot Bill and Sluefoot Joe who together recorded

thirty superb blues between 1927 and 1930. Gave up secular music to become a preacher in Greenville.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli
Olsson, Bengt. "Ed Bell." *Living Blues* no. 11 (Winter 1972/1973): 31.

Discography: DGR

Ed Bell—Complete Recorded Works (Document DOCD 5090; reissue).

BELL, JIMMIE

b. 29 August 1910; Peoria, IL
d. 31 December 1987; Peoria, IL

First name sometimes spelled "Jimmy." Pianist active in St. Louis in the 1930s, then around Illinois from the 1940s onward. He recorded in 1948 for Aristocrat. Later life was hampered by prison terms for various crimes, but his 1978 piano appearance at Illinois Central College was released in 1979 by JSP Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin
Wright, Jean Budd. "Jimmie Bell." *Living Blues* no. 79 (March/April 1988): 50–51.

Discography: LSPF

BELL, LURRIE

b. 13 December 1958; Chicago, IL

The son of Carey Bell, Lurrie Bell started playing guitar as a child, inspired by Eddie Taylor, B. B. King, and Magic Sam. Bell recorded behind artists such as his father and Eddie C. Campbell while in his teens, and formed the Sons of Blues in the late 1970s with Billy Branch. After a stint in Koko Taylor's band, he spent much of the 1980s recording and touring with his father. Despite personal problems, he recorded several critically acclaimed releases for Delmark in the mid- to late 1990s. With his highly original guitar playing and impassioned vocals, Bell established himself as one of the strongest talents on the Chicago blues scene.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG

700 Blues (1997, Delmark DE-700).

BELL, T. D.

b. Tyler Dee Bell, 22 or 26 December 1922; Lee County, TX
d. 9 January 1999; Austin, TX

Guitarist, singer. A T-Bone Walker disciple, Tyler Dee "T. D." Bell was a dominant figure in the post-World War II Austin blues scene. His band, the Cadillacs, featuring pianist Erbie Bowser, had its first success playing for west Texas oil field workers in the late 1940s. Bell brought the band back to Austin in the early 1950s. In 1992 Bell, with Bowser on piano and protégé W. C. Clark on bass, released his only album, *Its About Time*, on the Black Magic label. In the wake of the album Bell and Bowser had a late career resurgence, performing regularly in Austin as the Blues Specialists.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin
Baumgartner, Bruce. "Austin Blues: T. D. Bell and the Cadillacs Featuring Erbie Bowser." *Juke Blues* no. 24 (Autumn/Winter 1991): 13–16.

BELOW, FRED

b. 16 September 1926; Chicago, IL
d. 13 August 1988; Chicago, IL

Pioneering postwar Chicago blues drummer Fred Below developed an interest in music while attending Du Sable High, a school famous for the number of jazz musicians that it produced. Below joined the school band at age sixteen and, after a failed attempt with the trombone, took up the drums. Influenced by Gene Krupa, Chick Webb, and Buddy Rich, Below decided on a career as a jazz drummer. After graduation, he was drafted into the army and served two years overseas, where he met and played with jazz saxophonist Lester Young. Below was discharged in 1946 and he continued his musical education at Chicago's Roy C. Knapp School of Percussion, where he took an advanced drumming course. On graduation, he reenlisted

BELOW, FRED

in the army and played in a bebop band as well as with the 427th Army Band throughout Germany.

After being released from the military in 1951, he returned to Chicago only to find little work available in the declining local jazz scene. On the advice of blues drummer and friend Elgin Edmonds, Below accepted an offer to join the Aces (formerly the Three Aces), a young blues band consisting of guitarist brothers Louis and David Myers and harmonica player Junior Wells. Although he initially found it very difficult to adapt his studied jazz expertise to the rough, un-schooled sound of early 1950s Chicago blues, Below persisted with the band and rapidly developed a swinging, jazz-inflected drumming style that would soon help transform the very sound of postwar Chicago blues.

After the star-making success of his hit single "Juke" in 1952, Little Walter left his position as Muddy Waters's harmonica player to lead the Aces, and Wells replaced Walter in Waters's band. Below continued to tour nationally with Little Walter and to record for Chess Records (issued by Chess subsidiary Checker) during the next several years. Below's driving backbeat rhythms, inventive use of the ride cymbal, and creative punctuating fills elevated Little Walter's music to even higher levels and Below's refined style became *the* model for future blues drummers. His distinctive playing also established him as an in-demand session musician, and he appeared on hundreds of recordings throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including those by Muddy Waters, Elmore James, Otis Rush, Sonny Boy Williamson II, J. B. Lenoir, John Brim, Chuck Berry, and Bo Diddley. Classic recordings like Waters's "Hoochie Coochie Man," Williamson's "Don't Start Me Talkin'," and Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" all benefited from Below's signature drumming. In 1955, Below left Little Walter and spent the next decade playing with a variety of musicians, including Memphis Slim, Buddy Guy, Robert Jr. Lockwood, and John Lee Hooker. He was the house drummer for Chess Records for many years, and recorded for other labels throughout the next few decades including Vee-Jay, Cobra, Delmark, and Testament. He performed in Europe in 1965 as part of the American Folk Blues Festival and continued to tour and record worldwide, occasionally reuniting with the Aces. Fred Below died of a heart attack in Chicago at age sixty-one.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

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- O'Brien, Justin. "Fred Below." *Living Blues* 83 (November/December 1988): 43-44.

Discography

- Little Walter. *The Essential Little Walter* (1993, MCA/Chess CD CHD2-9342).
- Lockwood, Robert Jr. *Steady Rollin' Man* (1992, Delmark CD DD-630).

BELOW, LAMARR CHATMON

b. 11 December 1918; Birmingham, AL

d. 24 January 1993; Chicago, IL

LaMarr Chatmon Below came to Chicago at the age of eleven and early in life was drawn to the city's lively jazz and blues scene. She was married to Memphis Slim (Peter Chatman) for a time, and is said to have had a relationship with Little Walter Jacobs. Later in life she married drummer Fred Below, from whom she was widowed. An avid club-goer and bon vivant, LaMarr Below enjoyed giving encouragement to musicians and was an intelligent and wry commentator on the Chicago music scene with which she remained involved all her life.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

- "Other Deaths." *Living Blues* no. 110 (July/August 1993): 57.

BELVIN, JESSE

b. 15 December 1932; San Antonio, TX

d. 6 February 1960; Little Rock, AR

Singer, pianist, and composer. A prolific composer whose songs, covered by everyone from Dave Brubeck to Gladys Knight, transcended blues, Belvin had only a few years in the spotlight but he made the most of them. His fame, however, was not proportional to his musical creativity since he rarely received the recognition his songs' success deserved due to his practice of selling his compositions outright.

Belvin's family moved to Los Angeles when he was five and he was singing in church two years later. His professional career began in earnest when he joined Big Jay McNeely's backing vocal group, Three Dots and a Dash, in 1950. He formed a band, the Shields, with Johnny "Guitar" Watson but it did not meet with much success. A series of singles recorded with Marvin Phillips did better as "Dream Girl" reached #2 on the R&B charts in 1953. After Belvin was drafted he wrote "Earth Angel" on leave and it became a million-seller for the Penguins and one of the first racial crossover hits.

Belvin began recording for Modern Records in 1956 with some of his songs being credited to the Cliques.

“Goodnight My Love,” a top ten hit in 1956 recorded with eleven-year-old Barry White on keyboards, received the most exposure when it was used as rock deejay/promoter Alan Freed’s outro theme. He then signed to RCA, recording several hit singles and the *Just Jesse Belvin* album. He began work in 1959 on a project using West Coast jazz greats such as Art Pepper but never finished the album. Belvin and manager wife Jo Anne died in an auto collision after a concert tour date with Sam Cooke and Jackie Wilson.

MICHAEL POINT

Discography: Lord

Blues Ballader (1990, Specialty CD 7003; reissue).
Guess Who (2004, ACE [UK] CDCH2 1020; reissue of RCA Victor recordings).

BENDER, D. C.

b. D. C. Bendy, 19 June 1919; Arbala (or Arbana), TX

Singer and guitarist. Began performing in the mid-1930s, traveling around east Texas and Louisiana. In the 1940s he settled in Houston. Recorded with the Gold Star label in 1948, and with the Elko label in 1953. A trademark trick was to sing and drink beer at the same time. He reportedly died sometime in the 1980s.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

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 Leadbitter, Mike. “Beer Bottle Blues.” In *Nothing But the Blues*, edited by Mike Leadbitter, 194–195. London: Hanover, 1971.

Discography: LSPF

BENNETT, BOBBY “GUITAR”

b. Rayford, NC

Guitarist active in Philadelphia in the 1960s and 1970s, with recordings made between 1962 and 1965.

ROCHELLE MONTAGNE/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

McEwen, Joe. “Philadelphia Blues.” *Blues Unlimited* no. 92 (June 1972): 9.

Discography: LSPF

BENNETT, ANTHONY “DUSTER”

b. 23 September 1946; England

d. 26 March 1976; Warwickshire, England

A British singer and session harmonica musician, who also played guitar and drums. A member of John Mayall’s Bluesbreakers, he made several solo albums for the Blue Horizon label, including *Smiling Like I’m Happy* (1968) with members of Fleetwood Mac. His life was cut short by an auto accident.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG

Discography: AMG

BENNETT, WAYNE T.

b. 13 December 1933; Sulphur, OK

d. 28 November 1992; New Orleans, LA

Guitarist. A master of elegant, yet forceful, minimalism, Bennett was one of the most in-demand session guitarists of his time. He had a multitude of noteworthy recording credits but it was his work with Bobby “Blue” Bland in the 1960s that became his best-known and most enduring contributions to the blues. Bennett, who also played in Bland’s touring band, was heard to best advantage on the singer’s signature ballads, but he was equally adept on up-tempo tunes like “Turn on Your Love Light,” Bland’s biggest commercial success.

Bennett had established himself as a session star at Cobra Records in the late 1950s, working alongside Willie Dixon and playing with Otis Rush on “I Can’t Quit You Baby,” as well as backing Shakey Horton, Betty Everett, and others. Bennett began the 1960s with work on Bland’s classic singles, including “Cry, Cry, Cry,” “I Pity the Fool,” and “Don’t Cry No More.” Other highlights of his 1960s session contributions included work with Jimmy Reed and John Lee Hooker, in addition to two albums, one a live recording, with Buddy Guy in 1968.

The 1970s, which found him branching out with a soul/jazz session with organist Jimmy McGriff, were slower but Bennett recorded with New Orleans vocalist Johnny Adams and Texas guitarist Zuzu Bollin in the 1980s and also performed with Ron Levy’s Wild Kingdom and played on a live “Mighty” Sam McCain album in Japan in 1988. Bennett worked steadily until the end of his career, recording in New

BENNETT, WAYNE T.

Orleans with Champion Jack Dupree in 1990 and playing on sessions with James Cotton and Jimmy McCracklin just months before his death.

MICHAEL POINT

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Larkin; Santelli

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Discography: LSFP

BENOIT, TAB

b. 17 November 1967; Baton Rouge, LA

Louisiana-based guitarist and vocalist plays an accessible style of swamp blues with crossover appeal to rock audiences. Issued first national recordings in the early 1990s, and has stayed visible since with a heavy touring schedule and participation in recording collaborations with Kenny Neal, Debbie Davies, and Jimmy Thackery.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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Whiskey Store Live (2004, Telarc 83584; with Jimmy Thackery).

BENSON, AL

b. Arthur Leaner, 30 June 1908

d. 6 September 1978; Three Oaks, MI

Chicago radio disk jockey and record company owner. Benson dominated Chicago's black radio market as the principal black deejay at WGES from 1945 to 1962. He was the first deejay in Chicago to play the deep Southern-style blues, and built a huge audience, many of whom were migrants from the South. Benson

also operated several record labels. During 1949 to 1950, he headed A&R for Ole Swing-Master (a label named for Benson's moniker, but owned by Egmont Sonderling), releasing records on T. Bone Walker, Snooky and Moody, Floyd Jones, and on his own band. From 1953 to 1956, he operated the Parrot/Blue Lake complex, which recorded blues artists such as Willie Mabon, Curtis Jones, John Brim, J. B. Lenoir, Sunnyland Slim, and Joe Williams, as well as a plethora of vocal groups and jazz artists. From 1965 to 1968 he owned the Crash label (plus subsidiary imprints of Mica and Glowstar), notably recording bluesman Magic Sam and deep soul singer Jimmy Dobbins. During the 1960s Benson worked as a deejay on a variety of stations.

ROBERT PRUTER

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BENTLEY, GLADYS ALBERTA

b. 12 August 1907; Philadelphia, PA

d. 18 January 1960; Los Angeles, CA

Flamboyant blues singer and pianist most active in 1920s Harlem. Performed in tuxedo and top hat, accompanying herself on piano and alternating her powerful alto with trumpet-like scat singing. Recorded eight titles for OKeh Records in 1928, a side with the Washboard Serenaders for Victor, five discs for Excelsior in 1945, and a Flame label single in the 1950s. Appeared in Los Angeles and San Francisco after 1937. Mentioned by several Harlem Renaissance novelists including Langston Hughes. Recent attention to her career has come through rerelease of her recordings on various contemporary labels and writings by Eric Garber.

TINA SPENCER DREISBACH

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

BENTON, BROOK

b. Benjamin Franklin Peay, 19 September 1931; Camden, SC
d. 9 April 1988; New York, NY

Singer. The silky smooth-sounding Benton graduated from early gospel work to become a crossover R&B star via duets with Dinah Washington, including the 1960 hit “A Rockin Good Way,” as well as on his own with “Rainy Night in Georgia” and others.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: Larkin

BENTON, BUSTER

b. Ollie Benton, 19 July 1932; Texarkana, AR
d. 20 January 1996; Chicago, IL

Benton sang in a gospel choir as a youth and was an avid blues fan. Inspired by a B. B. King performance in the late 1940s, Benton purchased his first guitar at age twenty-three and taught himself to play. Instead of relying on music as a profession, Benton worked as an auto mechanic by day and played blues at night until an accident in 1983 took his left leg.

Benton moved from Arkansas to Toledo, Ohio, in 1952. During this time he worked with harmonica player Little Walter Mitchell. Benton’s first break came when he played with John Lee Hooker at the Hines Farm in Swanton, Ohio. Benton relocated to Chicago in 1959 and recorded singles with several record companies, including Sonic, Alteen, Twinnight, and Melloway. In 1971 Benton opened the Stardust Lounge on Chicago’s South Side. While performing in his club, Benton caught the ear of Muddy Waters, who then hired him to play lead guitar for Dixon’s Chicago Blues All-Stars. Benton remained with the group through 1975 and played on the album *The All Star Blues World of Maestro Willie Dixon* (Spivey).

Benton’s solo career began in 1979 with the release of the album *Spider in My Stew* (Ronn). Numerous albums followed on various labels, including the W. C. Handy Award winner *Blues at the Top* (1985, Blue Phoenix). Benton’s active performance schedule of the 1980s lessened in the 1990s due to health problems.

JOE C. CLARK

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Discography: AMG; LSF

See also Hooker, John Lee; Little Walter; Twinnight/
Twilight; Waters, Muddy

BERMAN, BESS

(See *Apollo/Lloyds/Timely*)

BERNHARDT, CLYDE (EDRIC BARRON)

b. 11 July 1905; Gold Hill, NC
d. 20 May 1986; Newark, NJ

Trombonist and singer. Changed surname from Barnhardt in 1930; also recorded under the name Ed Barron. Raised in Pennsylvania, Bernhardt began performing in 1923 and moved to New York in 1928. He toured with Joe “King” Oliver in 1931, the first band in which he featured as a blues singer as well as a trombone player. He played with a succession of band leaders in the 1930s, including Marion Hardy, Vernon Andrade, and Edgar Hayes, and toured Europe with the latter in 1938. He worked with Horace Henderson in 1941, then briefly with Fats Waller before joining Jay McShann in 1942–1943. He performed with Luis Russell in 1944, Cecil Scott in 1943–1944 and 1946, Claude Hopkins in 1944, and the Bascomb Brothers in 1945. In 1945 he formed his own Blue Blazers and made his debut recording as a leader for the Musicraft label with “Blues in the Red”/“Scandalmonger Mama.” Bernhardt returned to Luis Russell’s band in 1948–1951, then worked with Joe Garland’s Society Orchestra from 1952 to 1970. He was a custodian in a building in Newark from 1963 to 1972.

Renewed interest in Bernhardt’s work followed in the wake of a series of interviews in the British jazz magazine *Jazz Journal International* in 1967–1968. He worked briefly with Hayes Alvis, then formed the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band with Jacques Butler and Charlie Holmes in 1972. He led the band until 1979, including annual tours of Europe from 1976. He gave up that role because of ill health in 1979, but

BERNHARDT, CLYDE (EDRIC BARRON)

joined the Legends of Jazz that year and remained with them until his death in 1986.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: LSFP

Selected Recordings

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"Cracklin' Bread" (1951, Derby 780).

More Blues and Jazz from Harlem (1973, 400W150 400).

Sittin' on Top of the World! (1975, Barron 401).

Harlem Blues and Jazz Band 1973-80 (1980, Barron 403).

BERRY, CHUCK

b. Charles Edward Anderson Berry, 18 October 1926; St. Louis, MO

Birthplace also cited as San Jose, California. Chuck Berry grew up in St. Louis, where he was surrounded and influenced by the blues, R&B, country music, and church music. After careers as a factory worker at the St. Louis General Motors Plant and as a cosmetologist, Berry formed his first band in 1952. The trio featured Berry on guitar and vocals, Johnny Johnson on piano, and Ebby Harding on drums. Within a couple of years, the trio had become a regular in the St. Louis club scene. After meeting Berry, Muddy Waters encouraged him to audition for Chess Records.

In 1955 Chess Records produced Berry's first single, which was a version of the country song "Ida Red," popularized earlier by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. The song was modified by Leonard Chess, renamed "Maybeline," and coupled with the blues classic "Wee Wee Hours." Promoted by Alan Freed, who in return was listed as the coauthor, the song went to number five on the pop charts and number one on the R&B charts. The song illustrates Berry's amalgamated form of blues and country that served as a bridge between the blues and rock 'n' roll, and it exemplifies a guitar style that became a defining feature of rock 'n' roll. Following the success of "Maybeline," Berry continued to produce

chart-topping singles, including "School Days," "Roll Over Beethoven," and "Johnny B. Good," for the remainder of the decade.

In 1959, Berry was accused of violating the Mann Act for his association with and employment of a fourteen-year-old prostitute. After two trials, Berry was convicted in 1962 and spent the next two years in prison. By the end of the 1960s, Berry's popularity and record sales began to decline. Berry achieved a successful comeback in 1972 with the single "My Ding a Ling," a humorous song that was his first and only number one song on the pop charts. Berry's contribution to the development of rock 'n' roll is heard in his guitar technique and in his mixture of previous styles into a music that was appealing to all audiences. His influence on later musicians is evident from the many covers of his songs performed and recorded by bands including the Rolling Stones and the Beatles, and from the adoption of his guitar technique by many following guitarists.

Berry was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in January 1986. He was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the twenty-seventh annual Grammy Awards during the same year. In 2000, Berry was awarded the Kennedy Center Honors Award. Chuck Berry continues to play live concerts at venues around the world.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

Selected Recordings

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After School Session (1957, Chess).

One Dozen Berries (1958, Chess).

Rockin at the Hops (1960, Chess).

The London Chuck Berry Sessions (1972, Chess).

BERRY, RICHARD

b. 11 April 1935; Extension, LA

d. 23 January 1997; Los Angeles, CA

Richard Berry was the writer and original performer of "Louie Louie," as well as of the notable "Have

Love, Will Travel.” Born near New Orleans, Berry moved a year later to Los Angeles and began to engage in the city’s record business while still in high school. Along with a group of classmates, he constituted the vocal group the Flairs, which was signed to the Bihari Brothers’ Modern Records. In 1955, their single “She Wants to Rock,” written by Berry, scored on the rhythm and blues charts, and they are regarded by music historians as the first significant teenage vocal group of the time. A jack of all musical trades, prolific songwriter, and an adaptable vocalist, Berry quickly became a virtual utility man for the Modern label while still in his teens. Most notably, he appeared as the bass lead vocalist on the Robins’s “Riot in Cell Block #9” (1954) and the partner to Etta James on “The Wallflower (Dance with Me Henry)” (1955).

In 1956, while performing as Rocky Rillera with Bobby and Barry Rillera’s Rhythm Rockers, Berry heard the ensemble perform a now universally familiar riff taken from Rene Touzet’s “El Loco Cha Cha.” Berry employed this rhythmic fragment as the nucleus for “Louie Louie,” originally played as a mambo for its release as the B-side of Berry’s solo single on Max Feirtag’s Flip Records. The A-side of the 1957 release was a cover version of the hardy perennial “You Are My Sunshine.” Local Los Angeles disk jockey Hunter Hancock pushed the flipside, and the track became a regional hit up and down the West Coast.

Rockers in the burgeoning Seattle, Washington, scene discovered it, and Rockin’ Robin Roberts, backed by local legends the Wailers, covered “Louie Louie” in 1961. The record precipitated the universally familiar version by the Kingsmen, released in 1963. Its success and eventual emergence as a rock standard did not immediately benefit Berry, because he had sold his interest in the copyright to Feirtag for \$750 in the late 1950s. Thankfully, after many meager years as a struggling after-hours performer, Berry reclaimed his rights to the song in 1985 with the assistance of crusading lawyer Chuck Rubin. The fact that “Louie Louie” earned Berry nearly \$160,000 in 1989 alone indicates the fiscal transformation this legal intervention brought about.

DAVID SANJEK

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BIBB, ERIC

b. 16 August 1951; New York, NY

Born into a musical family, Bibb was influenced by a vast variety of genres including folk, blues, and jazz. Son of folk singer Leon Bibb; godson of Paul Robeson. Attended High School of Music and Art and Columbia University before moving to Europe. Released first album in 1997. Nominated for a Grammy Award in 1997.

GAILE WELKER

Bibliography

- AMG (Steve Huey)
Zabres, Jean-Luc. “Eric Bibb.” *Soul Bag* no. 151 (Summer 1998): 12.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

- Good Stuff* (Opus 3 CD-19603).
Natural Light (Earthbeat! CD-73830).
Painting Signs (Rhino CD-74382).

BIG BAD SMITTY

b. John Henry Smith, 11 February 1940; Vicksburg, MS

d. 3 April 2002; Jackson, MS

Born John Henry Smith, the singer/guitarist who would become known as Big Bad Smitty was raised on various farms outside of Vicksburg. He began teaching himself guitar by age eight and after the death of his father a few years later, he moved with his brother to Jackson, Mississippi. In 1958, he settled in Greenville, Mississippi, and began developing his raw and gritty guitar and vocal style while playing with local musicians Roosevelt “Booba” Barnes and L. V. Banks in the area’s tough juke joints. His early musical influences included Frankie Lee Sims, Lightnin’ Hopkins, and Howlin’ Wolf.

Working by day as a truck driver, Smith frequently traveled to St. Louis and eventually relocated there in 1966. He spent the next several years working with various local musicians, including Big George Brock and Robert Weaver. In 1976, he made his recording debut for Ace Records in Jackson. Smith went on to form his own band in St. Louis that featured guitarist Bennie Smith and harmonica player Arthur Williams. In 1991, the group recorded the critically acclaimed release *Mean Disposition* for Black Magic, which led to several tours of the United States and Europe.

BIG BAD SMITTY

Smith's haunting Howlin' Wolf-like vocals and raw Delta guitar rhythms were an exciting part of his appeal. Smith was plagued by health problems in the mid-1990s and was confined to a wheelchair after losing both legs to diabetes. He continued to perform sporadically and recorded for HMG in 1997 and Ampion in 2000 before succumbing to diabetes at age sixty-two.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

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Greensmith, Bill. "St. Louis on a High Hill: Big Bad Smitty." *Living Blues* no. 109 (May/June 1993): 26–31.

Discography: LSFP

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BIG BOSS MAN (HI-HEEL SNEAKERS)

The classic blues song "Big Boss Man" was first recorded by Jimmy Reed in 1960 and was written for the singer by his manager Al Smith and Luther Dixon. Released on Vee-Jay in May 1961, the song eventually peaked at #13 on the R&B charts and crossed over to the pop charts, where it reached #78. One of the most covered blues songs of the postwar era, "Big Boss Man" was subsequently recorded by dozens of blues, rock, and country artists, including Elvis Presley (whose version reached #38 on the pop charts in 1967), B. B. King, the Grateful Dead, and Charlie Rich.

The song's broad appeal was due in part to its lively shuffle beat and endearing, laid-back vocals, a signature of Reed's style, but also to its defiant, working class lyrics. The rebellious blue-collar sentiment was summed up in the chorus when the singer sarcastically remarks that his boss is not "big" in the sense of status or importance, but only in physical size. Its theme of questioning and confronting authority about being overworked resonated with both black and white listeners. The use of the term "boss man" undoubtedly invoked memories of many African Americans who had escaped the brutal life of working on a plantation. "Boss man" was a common name for a white authority figure in the Deep South, but was also used by African Americans to address white males in general. Such outright defiance in the Jim Crow South as depicted in the

song was surely a common dream. Like many great blues songs, there is also an undercurrent of optimism in the message. The final verse concludes with the hopeful declaration of finding a new boss that will offer fair treatment.

The popularity of "Big Boss Man" inspired several other blues songs that became classics in their own right, including Frank Frost's signature 1962 recording "Jelly Roll King." Undoubtedly the best known among these was Tommy Tucker's hit single "Hi-Heel Sneakers," which debuted on Checker in 1964 and eventually reached #11 on the R&B charts. Like Frost's "Jelly Roll King," Tucker's composition used a similar introduction and shuffle beat as "Big Boss Man" did, but the song was propelled by a prominent rhythm guitar (and at times Tucker's organ) which played strong staccato stabs of successive fifth, sixth, and seventh chords throughout. This now-familiar rhythmic chord progression of accenting the beat a la "Hi-Heel Sneakers" was in turn incorporated into many cover versions of "Big Boss Man," and ironically influenced how the Jimmy Reed standard is typically played today.

Lyrically, "Hi-Heel Sneakers" is simply a paean to going out and having a good time. Tucker instructs his female friend to get ready to paint the town by putting on her memorable outfit. He later explained that the song was written about a woman he knew who was fond of wearing a tight red dress, a wig, and high-heeled shoes that resembled sneakers. "Hi-Heel Sneakers" was covered by many diverse artists and was a charted hit for Stevie Wonder in 1965 and Jose Feliciano in 1968.

GENE TOMKO

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Whitburn, Joel. *Top R&B Singles: 1942–1999*. Wisconsin: Record Research, 2000.

BIG DOO WOPPER

b. Cornell H. Williams, 13 November 1953;
Grenada, MS

A blind keyboard player inspired by Ray Charles with strong doo-wop and gospel leanings, the Doo Wopper played for a time in Lucky Lopez's band and worked occasional club gigs, but for many years has primarily performed daily on an electronic keyboard

in Chicago's subway tunnels for tips. An exuberant musician with an emotional, hoarse shout, he issued idiosyncratic CDs on the Delmark imprint in 2000 and 2002 on which he played piano and organ and multi-tracked his own elaborate vocal harmonies on nearly all original compositions.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

AMG (Al Campbell)

Discography: AMG (Al Campbell)

All in the Joy (Delmark DE-742).

BIG LUCKY

b. Levester Carter, 10 February 1917; Weir, MS
d. 24 December 2002; Memphis, TN

Memphis-based guitarist and vocalist. Recorded for Savoy, Sun, and 606 while in the Rhythmaires. Released singles under his own name during the 1960s through 1980s. His first album, *Lucky 13* (1998, Blueside), garnered the Big Bill Broonzy prize for best blues CD from the French Academy of Jazz.

JOE C. CLARK

Bibliography

Larkin

Barretta, Scott. "Big Lucky Carter." *Living Blues* no. 169 (September/October 2003): 116–117.

Discography: LSFP

Selected Recordings

Lucky 13 (1998, Blueside #106).

See also Savoy/National/Regent/Acorn; Sun/Phillips International/Flip

BIG MACEO

b. Major Merriweather, 21 March 1905; between Newnan and Atlanta, GA
d. 26 February 1953; Chicago, IL

Major "Maceo" Merriweather was born in Coweta County, between Newnan and Atlanta, on March 31, 1905. The adjacent county is Meriweather (with one "r" in the first syllable) County, and some historians

have spelled Big Maceo's surname accordingly. One of eleven children, he was the youngest of five boys, and was raised on a farm until he was fifteen. In 1920 his father got a job in a bank and the family moved to College Park, nine miles from Atlanta. Here he was employed in a house run by a lady named Roxy and taught himself to play blues on her piano. In 1924 he joined a brother in Detroit, settling on the East Side. In the city he maintained a day job and played in the evenings and at weekends in clubs on Russell and Macomb Street and at house parties.

One of the houses where he played, at 980 Alfred Street, was owned by Rossell "Hattie Bell" Spruel who later became his wife. Hattie urged him to move to Chicago to further his career, and there in 1941 he met Tampa Red and Big Bill Broonzy, and was introduced to talent scout Lester Melrose. Melrose dominated the Chicago blues recording scene and speedily arranged a session for RCA Victor for Maceo with Tampa Red. This resulted in the hugely popular "Worried Life Blues," covered by many later artists including Ray Charles. Now an established recording artist, he continued to play in Detroit and Chicago with Big Bill and Tampa Red, and made occasional road trips to Tennessee and Georgia. Further sessions for RCA Victor followed, until the 1942 Petrillo ban effectively put a halt on Maceo's recording career for two years. He resumed in 1945, recording some of his best work, and also accompanying Tampa Red, Big Bill Broonzy, and Jazz Gillum. Sadly in mid-1946 he suffered a stroke that left him paralyzed down his right side. He continued to perform for several years, and even occasionally to record, with either Eddie Boyd or Johnnie Jones playing the right hand on the piano. He suffered a fatal heart attack in 1953.

Despite his short recording career, Big Maceo became one of the most respected pianists of his era, and a major influence on later postwar artists such as Johnnie Jones and Otis Spann. His forthright traditional blues approach contrasted strongly with the prevailing jazz-influenced accompaniments of contemporary pianists such as "Blind" John Davis, Sammy Price, and Horace Malcolm. His choice of material also placed reliance on traditional sources, as evidenced by "Can't You Read," a version of the "toast" the Monkey and the Baboon, and "32-20 Blues," a variant of the "44 blues" theme.

On a slow blues, Big Maceo was a moving, reflective singer with a soft, plaintive voice. Compositions such as "County Jail Blues" are accompanied by a four-to-the-bar chorded bass with a characteristic turnaround at the end of the sequence. By contrast, his up-tempo numbers invariably feature a driving walking bass line punctuated by short, complex

BIG MACEO

phrases and riffs. He recorded several outstanding instrumentals, and in his tour de force, “Chicago Breakdown,” his powerful left hand is especially prominent, including an ascending and descending semitone run that was something of a trademark. Big Maceo was perhaps the last of the Chicago pianists to employ this two-handed approach, as the rapidly increasing volume of the electric guitar eventually drowned the left hand of later exponents.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

BIG MAYBELLE

b. Maybel (Mabel) Louise Smith, 1 May 1924; Jackson, TN

d. 23 January 1972; Cleveland, OH

With a talent as large as her enormous voice, Big Maybelle was a seasoned professional in her teens and an enduring influence of female empowerment decades after her death. After singing with a Sanctified Church choir, she overwhelmed the judges to win a Memphis talent contest in 1932 and gain her first public recognition. Following a couple of years working with Memphis big bands, she joined the International Sweethearts of Rhythm and in 1936 began a five-year stint with the Christine Chatman Orchestra, where she made her recording debut.

Backed by the Hot Lips Page band, she recorded under her original Mabel Louise Smith name in 1947 in Cincinnati for her first session as a leader. When she signed with Okeh Records in 1952 she became Big Maybelle. She also became an immediate success with three hit singles, including “Way Back Home,” on the R&B charts in 1953. Two years later she released “Whole Lot of Shaking Goin’ On,” which Jerry Lee Lewis would take to the top of the pop charts in 1957. She changed record companies but continued to chalk up R&B hits until the sophisticated soul sensibilities of the 1960s made her roots-oriented approach sound dated to young fans.

She worked with the Quincy Jones Orchestra in the 1950s and made a historic appearance at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival that was captured in the award-winning documentary *Jazz on a Summer’s Day*. Her health destroyed by diabetes and heroin, Big Maybelle met an uncharacteristically quiet

demise, slipping into a coma and passing away in a Cleveland hospital.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli; Southern

Discography: AMG; LSFP

BIG MEMPHIS MA RAINEY

b. Lillie Mae Hardison Glover, 1906; Columbia, TN
d. 27 March 1985; Memphis, TN

Singer and dancer with medicine and minstrel shows. Rainey apprenticed with Ma Rainey and was a Beale Street personality and businesswoman who recorded for Sun (1953).

FRED J. HAY

Bibliography

Hay, Fred J. “Goin’ Back to Sweet Memphis”: *Conversations with the Blues*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001.

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Discography: LSFP

Memphis Belles: The Women of Sun Records (2002, Bear Family BCD 16609; reissue).

BIG THREE TRIO

Blues-influenced vocal-instrumental ensemble that emerged in Chicago after World War II. The Big Three Trio, named after the World War II’s “Big Three” of Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin, recorded together from 1946 to 1952 and continued performing together until 1956. The group was comprised of Willie “Big Jump” Dixon on upright bass (b. July 1, 1915, Vicksburg, MS; d. January 29, 1992, Burbank, CA), Leonard “Baby Doo” Caston on piano (b. June 2, 1917, Sumrall, MS; d. August 1967), and Bernardo Dennis on guitar. Dennis left the group in 1947 to be replaced by Ollie Crawford (b. December 1917, Mobile, AL; d. 1973). The Big Three Trio specialized in three-part harmonies, and all members of the group shared songwriting duties. Although the Big Three Trio was

a truly postwar music group, one could argue that the group conjures the aesthetics of the prewar blues sound more than the postwar sound. Additionally, the Big Three Trio defies stylistic categorization, as one cannot truly assess the Big Three as a vocal group or a straightforward blues ensemble, further complicating their stature and place within the history of blues artists.

Willie Dixon and Leonard Caston first performed together as the Five Breezes, releasing a record in 1940 on Bluebird Records. However, the group disbanded when Dixon was jailed for avoiding the war draft. After his release in 1944 Dixon joined a group called the Four Jumps of Jive with Bernardo Dennis, which recorded for Mercury Records. From these previous musical collaborations Caston, Dixon, and Dennis decided to form a new group called the Big Three Trio. The group recorded with Bullet Records in 1946, where they recorded four singles, including “Signifying Monkey,” which sold 40,000 records. After this success they signed with Columbia Records in 1947. The group rereleased a sanitized version of “Signifying Monkey” for Columbia in 1947 and produced a stream of singles for the label, including “I Keep on Worrying,” “Don’t Let That Music Die,” “If the Sea Was Whiskey,” “It Can’t Be Done,” “Where Shall I Go,” “Why Be So Blue,” “You Sure Look Good to Me,” “Big Three Stomp,” and “Hard Notch Boogie Beat.”

The Big Three Trio briefly recorded for OKeh, making their last recording in 1952, which included the single “Got You on My Mind,” but continued only as a live performance ensemble from 1952 to 1956. Caston drifted from the group in the early 1950s and Dixon began working full time for Chess Records as a session bass player, which drew his attention away from the group, and both of these factors ultimately caused the demise of the original Big Three Trio. Although Dixon attempted to resurrect the group—with Lafayette Leake replacing Caston—for a few sessions on Chess records in the 1960s, these recordings were essentially unreleased. Caston died of heart failure in 1967 and Willie Dixon signed full time with Chess Records, launching a successful career as a blues producer, arranger, and songwriter.

ERIN STAPLETON-CORCORAN

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 Whiteis, David. “Genius Tucked Safely in the Past: The Big Three Trio.” *Down Beat* (February 1991): 46.

Discography

- The Big Three Trio: I Feel Like Steppin’ Out*. Sweden: Dr. Horse, 1986.
Willie Dixon: The Big Three Trio (1990, Columbia).

BIG TIME SARAH

b. Sarah Streeter, 31 January 1953; Coldwater, MS

An energetic singer active in Chicago, who has recorded for Delmark Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn); Santelli

Discography: AMG

BIG TOWN

Record label (California, 1945–1955). Owner: Robert Lee Geddins (b. February 6, 1913, Hybank, TX; d. February 16, 1991, Oakland, CA). This Oakland, California–based label issued the first recordings of Kylo Turner & the Pilgrim Travelers, and Tommy Jenkins & the Rising Star Gospel Singers. It also reissued Swing Time recordings by Lowell Fulson, including “San Francisco Blues” and “You’re Gonna Miss Me.” By 1953, it was a subsidiary of 4 Star Records, and issued sides by former gospel singer Jimmy Wilson (“Tin Pan Alley”), Joe Hill Louis, Little Caesar, James Reed, and Lillian N. Claiborne produced recordings by Frank Motley. J. R. Fullbright also was involved as a producer. It should not be confused with the 1970s label by the same name.

ROBERT EAGLE

Bibliography

McGrath

BIG TWIST

b. Larry Nolan, 22 September 1937; Terre Haute, IN
 d. 14 March 1990; Broadview, IL

Singer. As the titular, oversized frontman for the horn-powered R&B band Big Twist and the Mellow Fellows, Nolan transformed the Midwest bar band into one of the hottest live acts on the Chicago scene of the 1980s. Big Twist and the Mellow Fellows, with

BIG TWIST

Nolan doubling on drums, began playing around Carbondale, Illinois, in the early 1970s. The band built up a considerable regional following before relocating to Chicago in 1978.

After establishing itself on the Windy City scene as a popular live act, the group made its recording debut in 1980 with an eponymous effort on the Flying Fish label. The release of *One Track Mind* in late 1981 raised the band's national profile considerably and a change of record labels for *Playing for Keeps*, produced by Little Milton saxist Gene Barge, made it a viable touring attraction outside its regional base. *Live from Chicago! Bigger Than Life!!*, which effectively captured Nolan's charisma as a live performer, finally gave fans a representative recording of the band at its best. Nolan died from kidney failure brought on by diabetes in 1990 but the band played on. Saxist Terry Ogolini and guitarist Pete Special, cofounders of the original group, recruited Nolan's friend Martin Allbritton to take over the Big Twist vocal role and the band recorded *Street Party* in 1990 in that configuration. When Special left, the group continued as the Chicago Rhythm & Blues Kings, performing regularly and recording for Blind Pig Records.

MICHAEL POINT

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin; Santelli
Woodmansee, Ken, and Jim Feeney. "Larry 'Big Twist' Nolan." *Living Blues* no. 92 (July/August 1990): 46.

Discography: AMG

BIGEOU, ESTHER

b. 1895; New Orleans, LA
d. 1936 (?)

A singer and dancer in the theater revues and on the TOBA circuit in the 1920s and early 1930s. Her OKeh label records included material written by W. C. Handy, Richard M. Jones, and Clarence Williams. Reports of her retirement to New Orleans, and of her death in the mid-1930s, remain unverified.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

BILLINGTON, JOHNNIE

b. 1935; Quitman County, MS

Guitarist and teacher. From the 1950s through the late 1970s, Billington was active as a performer in Chicago, associating with Muddy Waters, Earl Hooker, and Elmore James. Since the 1980s he has taught music to Mississippi children after school, initially in Clarksdale and currently in Lambert. His efforts are sponsored in part by the Delta Blues Education Program.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Watkins, Leonard. "Teachin' the Blues." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 108 (April 1996): 18.

BINDER, DENNIS "LONG MAN"

b. 18 November 1920; Rosedale, MS

Blues singer of the 1950s who specialized in comic monologue numbers. His best known song, "Long Man Blues," gave him his nickname. Binder began his career playing spirituals on piano. When he was young, his family moved to St. Louis and then in 1939 relocated to Chicago, where he got interested in the blues. During the 1950s Binder would regularly move back and forth between Chicago and the South, performing in blues clubs and recording. He first recorded for Sun Records in 1952, but the session went unreleased. He recorded a single under producer Ike Turner in Memphis in 1954 that got released on Modern. Returning to Chicago, Binder in 1955 finally recorded a session that produced "The Long Man" on the United imprint. Binder recorded one more session, in 1958, for the Cottonwood label. In the 1960s, Binder was playing soul music, and in the 1970s, country and western music.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Eagle, Bob. "The Long Man: Dennis Binder's Story." *Blues Unlimited* no. 105 (December 1973/January 1974): 15.

Discography: LSFP

BIOGRAPH

As with many other independent labels, Biograph Records represents first and foremost the artistic vision of its founder, Arnold S. Caplin. Caplin's interests covered many areas, among them rhythmic (as a percussionist) and historical (as a writer and researcher). He also rivaled the legendary John Hammond in his social activism and feeling that music and culture were inextricably linked with politics. Caplin started Biograph in 1967 as a place to reissue seminal American roots music, particularly ragtime as well as jazz and blues. Several albums of Scott Joplin rags were issued and are still available on the label, plus releases from other ragtime pianists, as well as titles from traditional blues performers like Skip James. Biograph issued a release of various performers doing vintage Cole Porter songs in 2003, and its back titles are still available online through several sources.

RON WYNN

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Biograph website, <http://www.biograph.com/> (accessed December 17, 2004).

BISHOP, ELVIN

b. 21 October 1942; Tulsa, OK

Guitarist. Glendale, California, has also been cited as his birthplace by writers. Bishop was captivated by blues on the radio as a child. He performed with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band from 1965 to 1968, where he struck up a creative twin lead guitar partnership with Mike Bloomfield. Bishop pursued a solo career from 1968 with his own group.

KENNY MATHIESON

Bibliography

AMG (Michael Erlewine); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG**Selected Recordings as Leader**

Let It Flow (1974, Capricorn 0134).

Big Fun (1988, Alligator 4767).

Don't Let the Bossman Get You Down (1991, Alligator AL 4791).

Ace in the Hole (1995, Alligator 4833).

That's My Partner (2000, Alligator 4874; with Little Smokey Smothers).

BIZOR, BILLY

b. 1917; Centerville TN

d. 4 April 1969; Houston, TX

Harpist, singer. Country blues harp traditionalist Bizer was unknown until the 1960s and he died before the decade concluded, but his work, both live and in the studio, with his cousin Lightnin' Hopkins secured his reputation. Bizer, a traveling companion of Hopkins before his move to Houston, backed the guitarist on albums such as *Smokes Like Lightning* and *Lightnin' & Co.* Bizer, who also accumulated a few songwriting credits along the way, finally recorded an album as a leader that showcased his singing when he finished *Blowing My Blues Away* in Houston shortly before his death in 1969.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG; LSFP**BLACK & BLUE/ISABEL/RIVERBOAT**

French record company established by Jean-Marie Monestier in 1966, initially mainly to issue material from earlier concerts and defunct labels, including concerts by Big Bill Broonzy and Memphis Slim. From 1967 visiting African American jazz and blues artists were recorded and, in partnership with Jean-Pierre Tahmazian, tours were arranged for this purpose, building into one of the most important catalogs of blues and swing in the world. Blues artists recorded included Gatemouth Brown, Jimmy Dawkins, Luther Johnson, Louis Jordan, Sammy Price, Jimmy Rogers, Willie Mabon, and French resident Mickey Baker. In 1977–1984, Isabel, a subsidiary label wholly devoted to blues, included albums by Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, Magic Slim, and Lucky Peterson. Albums by Dawkins and Peterson rank among their best work; many feel that some artists with lesser instrumental skills were hampered by lack of A&R direction. Some reissues from the R&B era by such performers as Cecil Gant and Cousin Joe appeared on the Riverboat label. Few new recordings were made after the mid-1980s but repackaging of the back catalog on CD has included much previously unissued material.

HOWARD RYE

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BLACK & WHITE

Record label (New York and California, 1942–1949). Owners: Paul Reiner (b. December 6, 1905, Hungary; d. February 1, 1982, Los Angeles, CA); Lillian Drosd Reiner (b. April 28, 1908, MA; d. September 4, 1982, Los Angeles, CA). Originally based in New York, Black & White's artists included Ernestine Anderson, Ivie Anderson, Wilbert Baranco, Red Callender, Maxwell Davis, (Miss) Jo Evans, Maggie Hathaway, Lena Horne, Helen Humes, Etta Jones, Al Killian, Jack McVea ("Open the Door, Richard"), Phil Moore, Alton Redd, Spirits of Rhythm (with Teddy Bunn, George Vann, Leo Watson), Ray Stokes, Roosevelt Sykes ("This Tavern Boogie," with saxophonist J. T. Brown), Rabon Tarrant, Aaron "T-Bone" Walker ("Call It Stormy Monday [But Tuesday Is Just As Bad]"). Ralph Bass, Jr. (b. May 1, 1910, New York City, NY; d. March 5, 1997, Bahamas) was their major producer.

ROBERT EAGLE

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Shaw, Arnold. "Two Other Family-Owned Record 'Indies.'" In Arnold Shaw: *Honkers and Shouters: The Golden Years of Rhythm and Blues*, edited by Arnold Shaw. 1978.

BLACK ACE

b. Babe Kyro (or Karo) Lemon Turner, 21 December 1905; Hughes Springs, TX
d. 7 November 1972, Fort Worth, TX

After playing local parties throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, lap steel guitarist B. K. Turner (aka Black Ace) moved to Shreveport, Louisiana. There he often formed a duo with Oscar "Buddy" Woods, who taught him Hawaiian guitar blues style. Strongly influenced by hillbilly and Western swing, in 1936 Turner cut two unissued sides for ARC. The following year Decca released six blues songs, from one of

which Black Ace got his pseudonym. Later rediscovered by Paul Oliver, Black Ace recorded two sessions for Chris Strachwitz's Arhoolie label in 1960 and appeared in Samuel Charters's film *The Blues*, but never retired from his job.

LUIGI MONGE

Bibliography

Oliver, Paul. *Notes for Black Ace: I Am the Boss Card in Your Hand* (1992, Arhoolie CD-374).

Discography: DGR; LSFP

See also Woods, Oscar "Buddy"

BLACK ANGEL BLUES (SWEET LITTLE ANGEL)

The song known today as either "Sweet Black Angel" or "Sweet Little Angel" is one of the most popular and frequently recorded songs in the blues. Although composer credits are often given to Tampa Red, whose "Black Angel Blues" appeared in March 1934 (Vocalion 02753), the first recorded version was Lucille Bogan's, whose "Black Angel Blues" (Brunswick 7186) was recorded ca. mid-December 1930. The two artists shared recording sessions in 1928 and 1929, and it is probably impossible at this late date to determine who originally created the song's melodic and poetic hooks. Although Bogan's recording (at least its Oriole 8121 issue) credits "Smith" as the composer, she wrote many of her own songs and "Black Angel Blues" certainly contains her earthy style of poetic imagery and straightforward melody. It wouldn't have been the only time a composer credit was assumed by a third party. Tampa Red's Vocalion release carried no composer credit, and apparently no other artist recorded this soon-to-be classic during the pre-World War II era.

During the early post-World War II era, the lyrics of the song began to change. In 1949, Robert Nighthawk had gone back to the song's prewar roots—and its original title—on Aristocrat 2301 (subtitled "Sweet Black Angel"), but in 1950 Tampa Red was the first to record it as "Sweet Little Angel" (Victor 22/50-0107). B. B. King did the same in 1956 (RPM 468); he also changed the song's final line from "... bought me a whiskey still" to "... gave me a Cadillac de Ville." King no doubt incorporated these lyric changes in an attempt to broaden his audience. Showing his masterful ability to read an

audience, however, King retains the “whiskey still” line when performing before a black night club audience in his legendary *Live at the Regal* (1964, ABC LP 509). Today’s revival blues performers frequently prefer the alcoholic approach.

Guitar legend Earl Hooker recorded two versions during his commercial recording career. 1953 saw him record “Sweet Angel (Original Sweet Black Angel)” (Rockin’ 513) and in 1962 he recorded a reworked version titled “Sweet Brown Angel” for Checker (Matrix 11789), which went unreleased at the time. Hooker utilized the slide guitar motifs first used by Tampa Red, and it was Nighthawk and Hooker’s renditions, inspired by the song’s leisurely pace and keening melody, that have made “Sweet Little Angel” a staple in the repertoire of many electric slide guitarists.

Although first recorded by a woman, “Black Angel Blues” has become a song largely performed by male blues artists. Like the rock classic “Hound Dog,” the song was originally one in which a woman talks about her man. In Lucille Bogan’s version, the traditional opening line, “I’ve got a sweet black angel, I like the way he spread his wings,” provokes the image of a man reaching to embrace his lover; the imagery is far more sexually graphic when later sung by a man of a woman.

PETER R. ASCHOFF

Discography

- Bogan, Lucille. “Black Angel Blues” (1930, Brunswick 7186).
 Tampa Red. “Black Angel Blues” (1934, Vocalion 02753).
 Nighthawk, Robert. “Black Angel Blues (Sweet Black Angel)” (1949, Aristocrat 2301).
 Hooker, Earl. “Sweet Angel (Original Sweet Black Angel)” (1953, Rockin’ 513).
 King, B. B. *Live at the Regal* (1964, ABC LP 509).

BLACK BOB

Flourished 1930s

Under the pseudonym of “Black Bob,” this unknown Chicago pianist recorded extensively on the Bluebird and Vocalion labels as a side accompanist to some of the leading blues artists of the day. He appears on a number of recordings by Big Bill Broonzy, Lil Johnson, Tampa Red, and Memphis Minnie, who refers to him by name on the recording “If You See My Rooster (Please Run Him Home).” (He was also given a publishing credit, along with Bill Settles, on Memphis Minnie’s recording, “Joe

Louis Strut.”) While various researchers have offered suggestions as to Black Bob’s possible identity (musicians Bob Hudson and Bob Robinson have been proposed, among others), no substantial evidence has been found. From what little is known, this much can be inferred: Black Bob was a blues pianist living in Chicago in the mid-1930s who was highly regarded as a player, given the demand for his services on the recordings of top blues artists. With its muscular runs and rippling fills, Black Bob’s blues piano style clearly marks him as an accomplished professional of his day. However, after a burst of session work between 1935 and 1938, Black Bob disappeared.

DAVID BEAUDOUIN

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Discography: DGR

BLACK MAGIC

Dutch record label established as Black Cat Records in Gouda in 1980 by Gerrit Robs, Marcel Vos, and Kees van Wijngaarden. After two reissues from English Decca, by Otis Spann and George Smith, the label name was changed because it was claimed by another company. Recording of original material began with a 1982 album by Andrew Brown, recorded in Chicago by Richard Shurman, who also recorded Lacy Gibson and Fenton Robinson for them. Eddie C. Campbell was recorded in the Netherlands. Marcel Vos left in 1985 to found Double Trouble Records. Albums by Lonnie Brooks and Hip Linkchain and reissues of James Cotton and Walter Horton preceded relocation to Amersfoort in 1987. CD issues began in 1989 with the reissue of the Fenton Robinson album and new recordings by him made on a Dutch tour. New artists recorded included Big Bad Smitty, recorded by Joel Slotnikoff, and Long John Hunter and other Texan artists recorded by Terry Owens. Smokey Smothers and Lee Shot Williams were recorded by Richard Shurman in 1993–1995. After 1998, Fred James produced albums by Johnny Jones, Joe Garner, and others, and also negotiated licenses for a series of reissues of Nashville R&B artists including Earl Gaines.

HOWARD RYE

BLACK NEWSPAPER PRESS

History

The first newspaper written by black reporters and editors for black readers was *Freedom's Journal*, first published in New York City on March 15, 1827, partly to provide news and information within the immediate community and partly to respond to harsh depictions of blacks in the prevailing white newspapers. *Freedom's Journal* continued to run for two and half years, renaming itself as *The Rights of All* in May 1829, then ceasing publication five months later. Other black papers were soon begun, including *The Mystery* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1837); *The Provincial Freeman* (published by Mary Ann Shadd Cary in Windsor, Ontario, 1852), which advocated the migration of blacks from the United States to Canada; *The Christian Recorder* (an organ of the A.M.E. Church, 1852); and *The North Star*, edited by Frederick Douglass (1847). It is estimated that some two dozen black newspapers were established before the Civil War. In July 1864, the *New Orleans Tribune* first appeared three times a week, then it became the first daily black paper that October.

Freedom from slavery, and with it, the freedom of literacy, came to the newly freed slaves upon the end of the Civil War in 1865. By 1900 there were some five hundred black newspapers, and in 1890 the Associated Correspondents of Race Newspapers was founded. The content of these publications continued to combine local black community news with the ongoing news of civil rights, from the initial flush of participation in government, to the withholding of those opportunities from blacks after the Reconstruction era, and the enactment of white segregationist laws across the southern United States in the 1880s and 1890s. One of the bravest reporters of the era was Ida B. Wells, who reported on lynchings in the *Memphis Free Speech* until the paper's forced closing in 1893.

During the first third of the twentieth century, some 2,600 black newspapers were active, and many of the major black newspapers were established during this time, including:

- *Atlanta Daily World*, Atlanta, Georgia, 1928
- *Baltimore Afro-American*, Baltimore, Maryland, 1892
- *California Eagle*, Los Angeles, California, 1878
- *Chicago Defender*, Chicago, Illinois, 1905
- *Jackson Advocate*, Jackson, Mississippi, 1938

- *Michigan Chronicle*, Detroit, Michigan, 1936
- *New Pittsburgh Courier*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1907
- *New York Amsterdam News*, New York City, New York, 1909
- *Norfolk Journal & Guide*, Norfolk, Virginia, 1900
- *St. Louis Argus*, St. Louis, Missouri, 1912
- *Tri-State Defender*, Memphis, Tennessee, 1905.

The importance of these publications grew as black laborers moved to the northern cities in the hopes of better jobs and fairer treatment, and as the middle and elite economic classes developed with black communities. The newspapers contained reports, editorials, advertisements, and announcements that appealed to many different readers, including announcements about jobs, society pages, and ads for a range of products from women's cosmetics to phonograph records. The Associated Negro Press was established by Claude Barnett in 1919, the same year of the "Red Summer" race riots in various cities including Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. The black press showed its power in 1929, when the *Chicago Whip* paper began its "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" crusade, a theme that was soon taken up by other papers. This action, known as a "Double V" campaign, was repeated in 1942 by the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

During and after World War II, black reporters began gaining access to federal government press conferences, including Harry S. Alpin of the *Atlanta Daily World*, who attended White House conferences in 1944, and Louis Lautier of the Negro Newspapers Publishers Association who sat in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives press galleries.

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, reporters covered the marches, the speeches, the riots, and the legislation. The larger, more established mainstream newspapers began hiring away black writers to report on these social changes, especially when the race riots of the mid- to late 1960s were occurring. This loss of staff, together with decreasing advertising revenues, and the move of readers from inner city to suburbs, led many black newspapers to decline or to close during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1973, the Association of Black Journalists was formed and became the National Association of Black Journalists two years later.

Some of the leading black papers, including the *Chicago Defender* and the *Philadelphia Tribune*, managed to survive the lean commercial and circulation years from the 1970s through the 1980s. Since 1990 there has been reported a rise in circulation of

black newspapers, especially among older, affluent readers. To retain those readers and win new ones, editors are realizing anew that they have to continue balancing community news, including those from black suburbs, with social activism, especially regarding education and health care.

EDWARD KOMARA

Commentary

The black press has dismissed the blues as an inferior form of expression, urged blacks to move beyond its rituals and “primitive emotion,” and, when not castigating the music, simply ignored it through much of the past century. Yet the influence of the black press on the blues has been so profound that at least one scholar believes it forever changed the music’s essential nature and sound. “Where the church left off in its polemical influence on the blues, the ‘new priest’ of the city picked up,” writes Jon Michael Spencer in his book, *Blues and Evil*. “The medium of this new Race leader (was) the printer’s ink and press and the editorial column.”

Spencer believes the *Chicago Defender* and other black-owned newspapers contributed immensely to the most profound change that ever took place in the blues—its evolution from a rural, religion-haunted folk music driven by the unique cosmology of the black experience in the South to an urban, secular, electrified commercial venture obsessed with sex, love, and money. The farther the blues traveled from its roots—a trip promoted and sponsored by the black press—the weaker and less significant became its message, Spencer says.

The black press played an important role in the black diaspora from the South in the early decades of the twentieth century. To Spencer, the press was the “Moses” that writers Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy claimed in their 1945 book *They Seek a City* was missing. The book urged its readers to seek “progress” and not to wallow in nostalgia for the countrified, race-obsessed South. These attitudes are reflected in a March 5, 1921, story in the *Chicago Defender* on a performance by blues pioneer Mamie Smith: “One would imagine from the records that she was of a rough, coarse shouter. To the contrary . . . she rendered her numbers clean and void of all foreign dancing, ‘slapping-the-finger’ acts.” In the same edition, columnist Tony Langston was as impressed with her dress as with her music: “She wears a flock of diamonds that has her lit up like a Polish church on Sunday night.”

Spencer offers *Defender* columnist Lucius C. Harper as typical of journalists’ attitudes: the blues, Harper wrote in 1938, “excite the primitive emotion in man and arouse his bestiality.”

Yet the advice and warnings were contradicted in the many advertisements for so-called “race records” and blues performances that framed the newspaper columns. The advertisements from Okeh, Paramount, Vocalion, and other companies featured blues performers like Charley Patton, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Ida Cox, Henry Thomas, and Blind Blake and included pictures of the musicians—in some cases the only known likenesses of them—as well as detailed cartoons and excerpts from the songs.

“‘Yellow Dog Blues!’ Hot mamma! How Bessie Smith sings them!” reads an advertisement for Bessie Smith’s latest record in the *Chicago Defender* on June 20, 1925. “If that jockey boy, standing there where the Yellow Dog meets the Southern, could hear her sing them—he’d hot foot it back to where his shoes feel at home.”

The *Chicago Defender*, founded in 1905 and arguably the most influential of all black newspapers, did acknowledge the blues in occasional reviews and articles such as W. C. Handy’s essay, “Blues,” which appeared in the August 30, 1919, edition. “I am a Southerner by birth and environment,” Handy wrote, “and it is from the levee camps, the mines, the plantations and other places where the laborer works that these snatches of melody originate.”

Recorded blues is said to have begun on August 10, 1920, with Mamie Smith’s rendition of Perry Bradford’s “Crazy Blues” for Okeh Records in New York. It became a major hit, and Bradford writes in his book, *Born with the Blues*, that Smith got coverage in the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, *St. Louis Argus*, and the *Chicago Defender*. Such coverage was the exception.

The record industry suffered during the Great Depression—Okeh Records, for example, went bankrupt—as the buying market dried up. The blues were ignored except for major events such as the death of blues diva Bessie Smith in an automobile accident near Clarksdale, Mississippi, on September 26, 1937. When a car wreck killed blues singer Peetie Wheatstraw in East St. Louis in 1941, however, the local black newspaper failed to cover it.

New blues-oriented record labels like Chess in Chicago and Atlantic in New York appeared after World War II, as did new black-owned magazines like *Ebony* and *Jet*, but the blues soon were to be

upstaged by rock 'n' roll in the 1950s and soul music in the 1960s.

"The blues artist was the most illiterate of the artists of the time," said Charles W. Tisdale, editor and publisher of Mississippi's largest black newspaper, the *Jackson Advocate*, in a November 2001 interview. "It's the kind of thing the black middle-class abhorred. Today still the blues are extremely neglected in the black press."

The blues today gets more coverage than in the past, but the coverage often is connected with a local concert by B. B. King or another major musician, or with a death, such as John Lee Hooker's, on June 21, 2001. An article in the black-owned *Pittsburgh Courier* on December 13, 1995, seemed to certify a final victory for the "progress" seekers of the 1920s and 1930s. "The blues is all white," Lauren Cummings wrote in the *Courier*. "The blues clubs are havens for whites, and the blues itself has become the music for whites."

The article goes on to quote an anonymous "old-timer" on Memphis's legendary Beale Street who laments how whites have taken over the once-famous blues street as well as the music that made it famous. "Years ago, the blues represented a kind of history book. It mimicked our condition, our despair, our joy and our hopes. . . . It was a music by blacks, for blacks and of blacks. But no longer."

If true, perhaps for the first time ever the black press's lack of attention to the blues could be understood.

JOE ATKINS

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BLACK PATTI

Record label of the Chicago Record Company, established around March 1927 by J. Mayo Williams, previously responsible for Paramount's Race series, with Edward Bennett and Fred Gennett as partners. It was named for concert artist Sissieretta Jones, whose sobriquet it was. The fifty-five issues were produced and most were recorded by Gennett. The initial release (8001-20) was advertised in May 1927 and trading apparently ceased in September. The catalog includes highly regarded issues by Long Cleve Reed and Papa Harvey Hull, Blind James Beck, Sam Collins, Jay Bird Coleman (as Rabbits Foot Williams), and a Clara Smith who recorded in St. Paul, Minnesota, who is not to be confused with the Columbia artist. Many Black Patti masters were later released, sometimes pseudonymously, on Gennett's own labels.

HOWARD RYE

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BLACK RIVER BLUES

(See *Straight Alky Blues*)

BLACK SACRED MUSIC

Sacred music, including Christian sacred music, has been a fundamental part of African American life. Its core function is the same as any other religious music,

celebration of faith in song. Black religious song has two strands. One is sung in church and on religious occasions. The other is performed, as entertainment in venues ranging from concert halls to sidewalks, where performers hope to get coins from passersby.

Both are uniquely African American. In the 1925 “American Negro Spirituals,” black poet and composer James Weldon Johnson said of black American singing: “. . . it is often tantalizing and even exciting to watch a minute fraction of a beat balancing for a slight instance on the bar between two measures and, when it seems almost too late, drop back into its own proper compartment In addition, there are the curious turns and twists and quavers and the intentional striking of notes just a shade off key with which the Negro loves to embellish his songs.” Johnson is talking about singing spirituals, but his description applies equally to blues. Singing and accompaniment techniques and instrumentations are shared in sacred music and blues, many aspects of which were brought to America by slaves, and hence similarities and correspondences between the two types of music are extensive.

Dr. Watts and the Spirituals

It was not until the start of the eighteenth century that churches and missionaries made any real attempt to bring Christianity to America’s growing slave population. Some slave owners opposed these attempts; others used Christianity to advance their own cause by giving their slaves religious instruction biased toward reinforcing their status as chattel. But the spread of Christianity and the concept of black religious music were enormously boosted by the “Great Awakening” religious revival of the 1730s, which spread the hymns of writers including Isaac Watts (1674–1748), an English cleric whose elegant and stirring hymns—“Am I a Soldier of the Cross?” “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” “That Awful Day Will Surely Come,” and many others—remain embedded in black church music.

Spirituals evolved as slaves sought their own version of Christianity from that of their owners, at times finding a parallel between the religion’s ultimate reward of Heaven and their desire for freedom. This led to the establishment of what has been called “the invisible church”—services held by slaves without the master’s knowledge. Associated with these were the Bible-based spirituals, which emphasized redemption and salvation. Many were sung in a call-and-response style mirroring African religious practices, and to a certain extent secular work songs. The origin

of spirituals is impossible to define, but whether they were created by individuals or honed by the “folk process,” they were the slaves’ creation. Passed down initially in oral tradition, they are a unique body of song—James Weldon Johnson says five to six hundred were created—and remain a core part of black sacred music. Songs such as “Swing Low Sweet Chariot,” “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child,” and “Give Me That Old-Time Religion” have passed beyond the black tradition to become universally known and performed.

University Groups

After the Civil War, spirituals played a new role and came to wider attention. The initial impetus for this was a financial crisis at the American Missionary Association’s Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Fisk opened in 1866, but by 1870 it was facing bankruptcy. Its white treasurer and choirmaster, George L. White, assembled a group of singers who toured to raise money for the college. Initially their concerts featured standard classical fare, but they soon developed a core repertory of spirituals when they saw audience interest in them. Between 1871 and 1878, the Jubilee Singers raised one hundred fifty thousand dollars for Fisk University by performing spirituals in the United States and subsequently in England, Scotland, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Their success spawned imitators. One of the first was the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute of Virginia, which had a troupe by 1873, raising seventy-five thousand dollars from performances in northern cities. From Mississippi, the Utica Normal and Industrial Institute sent fund-raising singers north in 1903. In Alabama, Hampton-educated Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute also used this fund-raising technique in the early years of the twentieth century, as did the Dinwiddie Colored Quartet from the John A. Dix Industrial School in Dinwiddie, Virginia. The Dinwiddie group was the first college group to record, when it sang six songs for the Victor company in 1902. A later touring Fisk group was recorded in 1909, and the Tuskegee Institute Singers made their first recordings in 1914. Although limited by the technology of acoustic sound recording, the performance style on these recordings suggests that the groups recognized their target audience was white. Songs were carefully arranged and sung in a restrained and formal way. But although the groups are sometimes criticized for over-Europeanizing their material, the style and sound of its African American origins were evident.

The Churches

The African American church was born from white Christians' refusal to integrate their congregations, and many churches remain as one of the most segregated parts of American life. This has been criticized as a barrier to racial integration, but participants see it as preserving a symbol of ethnic identity and as a refuge. The Baptists are the largest and oldest black denomination; their first congregation was founded by slave preacher George Liele (1752–1825) at Silver Bluff, South Carolina. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church was founded in 1794 in Philadelphia by Richard Allen (1760–1831) after an altercation over segregation at a white church. Other denominations and groups were established during the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. At what may be called the “formal” end of the black religious spectrum, church services and music were restrained and differed little from those of white congregations. But at the “informal,” perhaps ecstatic end, a distinctively African American style was created, a joyous and extroverted style that is worshipful and celebrates triumphs over adversity.

Singing is an important part of that style. The songs of the early black churches were a fusion of Western music—modified hymns or newly composed lyrics, including spirituals—and African influences, and that has remained the basic pattern. Call-and-response songs between a leader and the congregation were widely used. These included “lining hymns,” a distinctive style in which a leader sings a line and the congregation repeats it, singing slowly and powerfully with elaborate vocal ornamentation and harmonies; it evolved from the practice of proctor and congregation response in Colonial churches.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, church singing was unaccompanied or accompanied only by an organ. Other instruments were regarded as “worldly.” That changed when Charles Harrison Mason (1866–1961) started the Church of God in Christ, initially with Charles Price Jones (1865–1949), in Lexington, Mississippi, in 1897, then after a theological split with Jones, in 1907 in Memphis. Mason was one of a new wave of Pentecostals, believers in the doctrine of baptism with the Holy Ghost, as described in Acts 2:1-4. Their style of worship was extroverted and vigorous, and Mason wanted his church's music to be the same. To achieve this, he allowed in the church guitarists, brass players, harmonica players, and other instrumentalists frowned on by other denominations, opening and encouraging a common link between sacred music and the newly emerging blues.

Pioneer Gospel Composers

Composing songs to meld the elements of composition, performance, and entertainment that are “gospel” was pioneered by Charles Albert Tindley (ca. 1851–1933), pastor of what came to be known as Tindley Temple United Methodist Church in Philadelphia. From 1901, Tindley published more than forty-five songs, many of which have become gospel standards. Among the best known are “Go Wash in the Beautiful Stream” and “What Are They Doing in Heaven” (1901), “We'll Understand It Better By and By,” “Stand By Me,” “The Storm Is Passing Over” (1905), and “(Take Your Burden to the Lord and) Leave It There” (1916).

In Memphis, Lucie E. Campbell (1885–1963) wrote approximately one hundred songs. One of her first was “Something Within” (1919), which became a sacred standard. Campbell was appointed music director of the Baptist Training Union Congress in 1916, and her influence spread through her writing of a new song each year for the choir at the National Baptist Convention. These songs traveled from the convention to churches all over the United States. Among her compositions are “The King's Highway” (1923), “Is He Yours” (1933), “Touch Me Lord Jesus” (1941), and “Jesus Gave Me Water” (1946).

Thomas Andrew Dorsey (1899–1993), more than any other religious songwriter, narrowed the gap between sacred music and blues. Dorsey was raised in a religious home, but as his musical talent developed, he turned to blues and jazz. He moved from Atlanta to Chicago as a blues musician, but in 1920 became director of music at the New Hope Baptist Church and wrote his first sacred song, “If I Don't Get There.” Soon after, the prospect of steady-paying work brought him back into jazz and he remained a secular performer until 1928, when he rejoined the church.

During that period, Dorsey lived a double life until 1932, when he committed himself completely to religion. Until then, he was writing and trying to sell gospel songs; he was also “Georgia Tom,” a leader in the double entendre blues style later known as “hokum.” His gospel gift was his ability to transfer blues and secular techniques to religious song. He used eloquent but simple language, and his melodies were engaging. Many of the more than five hundred songs he wrote have become so well known that they are assumed to be “traditional.” Among them are “Precious Lord,” “Remember Me,” “The Old Ship of Zion,” “Peace in the Valley,” “If You See My Savior,” and “Live the Life I Sing About in My Song.”

The Gospel Evangelists

The affinity between blues and gospel is evident in the grassroots duo performers such as the “gospel (or guitar) evangelists.” Their songs were performance pieces, and their singing and playing was looser than formal church music, closer to blues in sound although not in lyric content. The playing of blind Texas pianist Arizona Dranes (1894–1963) appeared to owe much to barrelhouse styles, but she was a major force in Church of God in Christ music. Blind Willie Johnson (1897–1945), also from Texas, was a master of the slide or “bottleneck” guitar style he used to accompany his strong singing. From the Carolinas came Blind Gary Davis (1896–1972), a dazzling guitarist who was a blues player until his conversion in the mid-1930s. Reverend Edward W. Clayborn, a biographical blank but thought to be from Alabama, played a clear and agile steel guitar style while singing standards and self-composed homilies. Another Carolina artist was guitarist and singer Blind Joe (or Joel) Taggart, born probably in the 1890s; from Texas came Washington Phillips who accompanied his mainly homiletic songs on a zither-like instrument, either a dulcicola—a keyboard mounted on a zither-style body—or an instrument of his own making.

The most successful of the later guitar evangelists was Sister Rosetta Tharpe (1915–1973) whose full-throated singing and dexterous guitar playing fitted everywhere from solo performances to performances with Lucky Millinder and His Orchestra in the 1940s. Even more spectacular in guitar style was Reverend Utah Smith (dates unknown), a Church of God in Christ minister from Shreveport, Louisiana, who was active from the 1920s until the 1950s. In Los Angeles, Reverend Lonnie Farris (1924–1988) sang and played his electric steel guitar on idiosyncratic mid-1960s recordings, mainly self-issued. Sister Ola Mae (O. M.) Terrell (1911–?) from Georgia played a slashing slide guitar style behind her spirited singing. Elder Roma Wilson (b. 1910) recorded four songs around 1952 to the accompaniment of four harmonicas, played by him and three of his sons, then enjoyed a revival to his career nearly forty years later.

Closely aligned with these performers in musical style are the blues singers who also performed sacred material. Lemon Jefferson, Charley Patton, Skip James, John Hurt, Barbecue Bob, Willie McTell, Joshua White, Sam Collins, Blind Boy Fuller, and Brownie McGhee are among those in this category. Most came from the earlier blues years when religion was a more pervasive part of black life, but later singers such as T-Bone Walker, B. B. King, and Muddy Waters have acknowledged the influence of

church music. Some blues singers turned to religion; among them are Ishmon Bracey, Rubin Lacey, Robert Wilkins, Walter Davis, and Dwight “Gatemouth” Brown. Two of the greatest Mississippi singers, Son House and Charley Patton, had lifelong inner struggles between blues and religion, and both at times were preachers. In his 1960s concerts, House sometimes included a homily on the difficulty of “straddling the fence” between God and the Devil.

Quartets

Quartets are religious performing artists, and a core part of gospel music. Among the earliest formal quartets were those within university groups, such as the aforementioned Fisk Jubilee Singers and the Hampton University Quartet. The success of the university groups drew religious music to the attention of minstrel and vaudeville shows, and by the 1890s many featured black “jubilee” groups. Outside these extremes were amateur community quartets, which drew from the musical expertise of the university groups and the entertainment skills of the minstrel groups to produce the performance style that remains the template of gospel quartet.

Early quartets mixed sacred and secular, but in the 1920s sacred material came to the fore. Leading groups from the 1920s and 1930s included the Norfolk Jubilee Quartet (originally the Norfolk Jazz Quartet); the Heavenly Gospel Singers, formed in Detroit but based in South Carolina from 1936; and Mitchell’s Christian Singers from Kinston, North Carolina. These groups sang in “jubilee” style, with tight arrangements for lead, tenor, baritone, and bass voices. On stage, they sang “flat-footed,” with little movement or overt emotionalism. Their repertoire was a mix of spirituals, religious standards, and self-composed material, often based on Bible stories. The best-known jubilee group was the Golden Gate Quartet, formed in 1934 in Norfolk, Virginia, which brought a new level of secular professionalism to gospel, in dress and presentation as well as its intricate song arrangements.

From the late 1940s, the “hard” style of emotional and forceful singing and extravagant on-stage movement replaced the restraint of the jubilee singers. Groups used more than one lead singer, passing the lead from one to the other as the tempo and volume of a song intensified. This style was pioneered by Rebert H. Harris (1916–2000), lead singer of the Soul Stirrers, formed in Texas in 1934 and a leader in the new style, especially once the charismatic Sam Cooke (1931–1964) took over from Harris in 1951.

Other leading groups were the Blind Boys of Mississippi, whose lead singer, Archie Brownlee (1925–1960), was recognized as gospel’s most forceful lead singer, the Swan Silvertones, the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Pilgrim Travelers, the Spirit of Memphis and the Sensational Nightingales, whose lead, Julius “June” Cheeks (1929–1981) was considered as strong a lead singer as Brownlee.

Quartets of the 1920s and 1930s generally sang unaccompanied, but by the 1940s, groups started using a guitar to provide pitch and rhythm. By the mid-1960s, most had several instruments—one or two electric guitars, a bass, drums, and often an organ. New groups emerged, including the Supreme Angels, the Mighty Clouds of Joy, the Gospel Keynotes, the Gospelairees of Dayton, Ohio, the Jackson South-ernaires, and the Violinaires. The singing remained the focal point of the performance, but the expanded accompaniments changed the vocal dynamics, most significantly by replacing bass singers with a double bass or electric bass guitar. This innovation began in 1959 with the Pilgrim Jubilees of Chicago, who used blues doyen Willie Dixon on double bass to cover for their bass singer’s unexpected absence from a recording session.

The 1960s is also the time of gospel’s most overt influence on secular pop music. Soul music in particular owes its performance style and many of its top singers to quartets. The best-known defector from gospel to soul is Sam Cooke from the Soul Stirrers; others include Wilson Pickett from the Violinaires, Lou Rawls from the Pilgrim Travelers, O. V. Wright and Joe Hinton from the Spirit of Memphis, Roscoe Robinson from the Blind Boys of Mississippi, Otis Clay from the Gospel Songbirds, and James Carr from the Jubilee Hummingbirds. Other great singers who made this move include Aretha Franklin, Della Reese, Mavis Staples, Al Green, and Ray Charles.

Other Stylists

In its heyday, “quartet” was exclusively a male style. But several female groups performed in a style closely enough related to the male groups that in later years they would be retrospectively recognized as “quartet.” A few modeled themselves directly on quartets; others used a narrower three-part harmony range, but performed in the intense style of the male groups. A leader was the Caravans, from Chicago, formed in 1952. Led by Albertina Walker (b. 1930), the Caravans quickly became a force, especially when they were joined by Bessie Griffin (1927–1990), from

New Orleans, who later became a prominent soloist. Other ex-Caravan soloists include Dorothy Norwood (b. 1930), Shirley Caesar (b. 1938), and Inez Andrews (b. 1929). Other successful female groups were the Original Gospel Harmonettes from Alabama, led by Dorothy Love Coates (1928–2002), and from Philadelphia the hard-driving Davis Sisters and the Angelic Gospel Singers.

Also from Philadelphia was one of the most flamboyant groups, Clara Ward and the Ward Singers, known for the ostentation of their stage dress and presentation as much as for their singing. The group was led by Clara Ward (1924–1973), and organized by her mother, Gertrude (1901–1981). The Wards, too, attracted quality singers, including Marion Williams (1927–1994), who in 1958 formed the Stars of Faith from an exodus of Ward Singers upset at disparities between their income and that of the Wards. Williams later became one of gospel’s best-known soloists.

Gospel’s first and still biggest international star was Mahalia Jackson (1911–1972), whose early influences included blues singers Bessie Smith and Gertrude “Ma” Rainey. Jackson was born in New Orleans and went to Chicago in 1927. In 1930, she joined forces with Thomas A. Dorsey, promoting his songs by singing them at concerts. From the late 1940s, Jackson became a recording star, first for the Apollo label in New York, then for the mainstream giant Columbia.

From St. Louis, Missouri, came “Mother” Willie Mae Ford Smith (1904–1994), who started singing with her sisters in a quartet-styled group. She went to Chicago in 1932, also working with Dorsey. Smith made few recordings, but was influential through her singing and through her central role in the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Chorus, which Dorsey established in 1932. One singer heavily influenced by Smith and Mahalia Jackson was Brother Joe May (1912–1972), who toured and recorded as “the Thunderbolt of the Middle West.” May, in turn, influenced Reverence Cleophus Robinson (1932–1998).

Alex Bradford (1927–1978) was from Alabama, but entered professional gospel music in Chicago as secretary and occasional pianist to Mahalia Jackson. In 1953 he and his Bradford Specials recorded his best-known composition, “Too Close.” For nearly twenty years, Bradford was minister of music for the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey, which had one of the leading choirs, and in 1961, he and Marion Williams headed the cast of *Black Nativity*, a gospel musical which ran on Broadway and toured the United States and Europe.

Choirs

Every church has at least one choir, but their role in gospel music, outside the churches, was limited until the latter part of the twentieth century. Early exceptions were the Voices of Victory, organized in 1937 by Glen T. Settle (1895–1952) in Cleveland, Ohio; the choir of First Church of Deliverance in Chicago under director Ralph Goodpastor (1923–1996); and the St. Paul Baptist Church Choir of Los Angeles under director and soloist J. Earl Hines (1916–1960). The Voices of Victory and the St. Paul Choir were extensively recorded; the Chicago choir made some recordings, including an early 1960s album behind Nat “King” Cole, but was best known for its Sunday night radio broadcasts.

The real growth in choirs came after James Cleveland (1931–1991) organized the Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA). Cleveland, a pianist, singer, and composer, had one of the biggest choir hits in 1963, when he and the Angelic Choir of the First Baptist Church in Nutley, New Jersey, recorded W. Herbert Brewster’s 1949 composition “Peace Be Still.” In 1968, he organized the GMWA, which holds its convention in a different American city each year. The GMWA later added a quartet division, but its convention is effectively a gathering of choirs. One side effect was a proliferation of gospel choirs not necessarily affiliated with one church. The best of these “community” choirs—O’Landa Draper’s Associates from Memphis, the Georgia Mass Choir, the Mississippi Mass Choir, and a few others—were able to overcome the problems associated with organizing a large group of people and function as semicommercial enterprises, making recordings and concert tours.

Changing Times

In the late 1960s, gospel music began a shift that weakened its musical links with blues, but strengthened its similarities with mainstream popular music. Several factors contributed, from the use of electronic instruments that enabled lush but artificial brass-and-strings arrangements to the desire of artists to appeal beyond the black gospel market. One of the earliest manifestations of this was “Oh Happy Day” by the Edwin Hawkins Singers, originally the Northern California State Youth Choir of the Church of God in Christ, directed by Hawkins (b. 1943). The song, an up-tempo working of an old hymn, became a surprise international hit. The impact of the Hawkins Singers

on the wider market was fleeting, but they opened the way for a more modern choir style. Among the leading arrangers in this style was Andrae Crouch (b. 1942) who typified the new generation. He was firmly rooted in the Church of God in Christ, but he sang backup for pop stars, including Michael Jackson and Madonna.

Other popular choirs mixing gospel with secular approaches included John P. Kee’s New Life Community Choir, formed in 1981; the Thompson Community Singers, founded in 1948 but achieving their greatest popularity under Reverend Milton Brunson from the 1970s; and God’s Property, formed by Kirk Franklin in 1992. Where records by traditional gospel artists might sell in the tens of thousands, some of these groups achieved their “crossover” goal so successfully that they had sales of more than one million. To appeal to the wider audience, they and other artists used the rhythms and sounds of black popular music, embracing soul, disco and hip-hop/rap. They also often softened the religious message of their songs, using a style called “inspirational,” which avoids overt references to God and Jesus.

Soloists and other groups also followed this trend, led by the ten-child Winans Family of Detroit, which in various combinations had a substantial influence on crossover gospel in the 1980s. Their use of strong rhythms, soul vocal styles, and “inspirational” lyrics put gospel music on pop radio stations and led many other artists to follow their example. The use of more elaborate accompaniments also changed the nature of quartet singing. Traditionally, quartet accompaniments were secondary to the lyrics, but more elaborate instrumentations pushed the backings up closer to the vocals. Harmony ranges also changed, becoming higher, and the voices coming closer in pitch.

But as some artists performed before thousands in auditoriums, others continued to work the “gospel highway,” performing traditional gospel music in churches and school halls. Albertina Walker, Shirley Caesar, and Dorothy Norwood were still active after 2000, as were, among quartets, the Sensational Nightingales, the Pilgrim Jubilees and the Swanee Quintet. Two of the most popular quartets of the 1990s and beyond were the Canton Spirituals and Lee Williams and the Spiritual QCs. Although both updated their sound, the Canton Spirituals were formed in 1946, and the QCs in 1964.

A dramatic fusion of modern and traditional styles achieved some fame from the mid-1990s. “Sacred steel” came from two small House of God subdenominations in Florida that used the electric steel guitar as their main instrument in church. The original influence appears to have been Willie Eason (b. 1921), but



Mahalia Jackson, perhaps the preeminent gospel singer of the twentieth century. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

others quickly adapted it, and although House of God steel guitarists were not recorded until the 1990s, their line came from the 1930s. The interest

generated by the Arhoolie record label's "sacred steel" issues gave the style a secular prominence it does not have in the religious environment, but it is

a striking demonstration of the individualism of black sacred music.

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BLACK SWAN RECORDS

Record label founded by impresario Harry Pace, former business partner of W. C. Handy, early in 1921. Black Swan was the first successful record label owned and entirely staffed by African Americans. The company was located in Harlem, first at 257 W.

138th Street, then at 2289 7th Avenue. While the preponderance of the label's records featured classical music or pop fare performed exclusively by black artists, the company also released some important blues and jazz records. Its best seller was the Ethel Waters record of "Down Home Blues." Later recordings by Waters, Trixie Smith, Alberta Hunter, Katie Crippen, and other blues singers remained the label's biggest sellers throughout its existence. Pace leased the Black Swan masters to Paramount Records in 1924. Paramount rereleased the records on its Race series, and Pace left the music business.

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Hunter, Alberta

"How Long Sweet Daddy, How Long" and "Bring Back the Joys" (ca. May 1921, Black Swan 2008, New York); "He's a Darned Good Man (To Have Hanging Around)" and "Someday, Sweetheart" (ca. May 1921, Black Swan 2019, New York).

Smith, Trixie

"Desperate Blues" and "Trixie's Blues" (September 1921, Black Swan 2039, New York); "You Missed a Good Woman When You Picked All Over Me" and "Long Lost Weary Blues" (ca. November 1921, Black Swan 2044, New York); "He May Be Your Man (But He Comes to See Me Sometimes)" and "Pensacola Blues" (ca. April 1922, Black Swan 14144, Long Island City); "Give Me That Old Slow Drag" and "My Man Rocks Me (With One Steady Roll)" (ca. September 1922, Black Swan 14127, Long Island City); "I'm Through with You (As I Can Be)" and "Take It Daddy, It's All Yours" (ca. October 1922, Black Swan 14132, Long Island City); "Log Cabin Blues" and "Voodoo Blues" (ca. March 1923, Black Swan 14142, Long Island City); "Tired of Waitin' Blues" and "Triflin' Blues" (ca. March 1923, Black Swan 14149, Long Island City).

Waters, Ethel

"Oh Daddy" and "Down Home Blues" (April/May 1921, Black Swan 2010, New York); "One Man Nan" and "There'll Be Some Changes Made" (ca. August 1921, Black Swan 2021, New York); "Dying with the Blues"

BLACK SWAN RECORDS

(ca. August 1921, Black Swan 2038, New York); “Georgia Blues” (ca. May 1922, Black Swan 14120, Long Island City); “Memphis Man” and “Midnight Blues” (ca. March 1923, Black Swan 14146, Long Island City); “You Can’t Do What My Last Man Did” (ca. June 1923, Black Swan 14151, Long Island City).

See also **Delaney, Thomas Henry “Tom”**; **Down Home Blues**; **Handy, William Christopher “W. C.”**; **Hunter, Alberta**; **Smith, Trixie**; **Waters, Ethel**

BLACK TOP

Record label (New Orleans, founded 1981; out of business 2002). From the late 1980s through the mid- to late 1990s, Black Top Records was one of the very best blues labels going, with a broad artist roster that took in straight-ahead blues, soul, and R&B. Whether due to bad luck or simply a poor business climate, Black Top’s demise was a serious loss for blues listeners.

Founded by blues fans and brothers Hammond and Nauman Scott, the label’s first release was “Talk to You by Hand” by Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets. Funderburgh would remain a staple of the Black Top stable for the next sixteen years, releasing seven more albums on the label.

The label quickly began recording some of the brothers’ favorite musicians. Through the years, Black Top’s 360-plus title catalog has featured artists such as Snooks Eaglin, Mike Morgan, Rod Piazza, James Harman, Ronnie Earl, Grady Gaines, and Earl King, among many others.

In 1990, a contact of Hammond Scott rediscovered guitarist Robert Ward, who had played guitar behind Wilson Pickett and the Falcons on their huge 1962 hit, “I Found a Love.” Ward recorded a highly regarded (and nicely selling) comeback album for Black Top, *Fear No Evil*, which propelled him back to the top rank of the blues festival circuit.

By the early 1990s, Black Top had signed a national distribution deal with Rounder Records, which gave the label access to most retail outlets. In the late 1990s, a new distribution was struck with Alligator, giving Black Top similar reach.

Nauman Scott passed away on January 8, 2002, at the age of fifty-six. The label apparently went out of business the same year, and as of summer 2004, most of the Black Top catalog was apparently out of print.

JIM TRAGESER

Selected Recordings

Black Top Blues-A-Rama, Vol. 1 (1988, BT-1044; compilation); Robert Ward, *Fear No Evil* (1990, BT-1063);

Ronnie Earl, *Peace of Mind* (1990, BT-1060); Earl King, *Hard River to Cross* (1993, BT-1090).

BLACKWELL, OTIS

b. 2 February 1932; Brooklyn, NY
d. 6 May 2002; Nashville, TN

Pianist, singer, composer. Otis Blackwell grew up in Brooklyn during the 1930s and 1940s, learning the piano and listening to country and western and R&B records on the radio. After winning an amateur night competition at the Apollo Theatre as a teen, Blackwell met blues shouter and composer Doc Pomus and was encouraged to pursue his interest in writing songs. Blackwell went on to compose more than a thousand songs to be recorded by Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Ray Charles, Little Willie John, Peggy Lee, Dee Clark, Otis Redding, James Taylor, Billy Joel, The Who, and many others, notching sales of more than 185 million copies. Some were written under the pseudonym John Davenport.

Blackwell’s first big break came at the end of 1955 when he sold six songs to be considered for recording by Elvis Presley under his new association with RCA Victor. The songwriter was known for preparing meticulous demos of his tunes, and Presley carefully followed Blackwell’s template in recording smash hit versions of “Don’t Be Cruel” and “All Shook Up.” Blackwell’s contract with Presley’s publishers allowed Elvis to be credited as co-composer on the tunes he cut, but the arrangement awarded Blackwell with immediate access to an immense audience.

Otis Blackwell’s own recordings, starting with “Daddy Rollin’ Stone” in 1953, failed to move record buyers, but he continued to place his songs with popular artists and enjoyed big hits with “Fever” (Little Willie John, Peggy Lee), “Breathless,” and “Great Balls of Fire” (Jerry Lee Lewis), among many others.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

BLACKWELL, ROBERT “BUMPS”

b. Robert Blackwell, 23 May 1918; Seattle, WA
d. 9 March 1985; Hacienda Heights, CA

Bumps Blackwell led jazz and R&B bands in Seattle before moving to Los Angeles as head of A&R at Specialty Records, producing classic recordings by Little Richard, Lloyd Price, Guitar Slim, Clifton Chenier, and Sam Cooke.

He worked as composer, arranger, or producer with a number of artists, including Quincy Jones, Ray Charles, Herb Alpert, Lou Adler, Little Richard, Lloyd Price, Guitar Slim, Clifton Chenier, Sam Cooke, Art Neville, Ike and Tina Turner, Five Blind Boys of Alabama, and Bob Dylan.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography

“Tutti Frutti,” “Long Tall Sally,” “Rip It Up,” “Ready Teddy,” “Good Golly Miss Molly” (Little Richard); “You Send Me” (Sam Cooke); “Shot of Love” (Bob Dylan).

BLACKWELL, SCRAPPER

b. Francis Hillman Blackwell, 21 February 1903; Syracuse, SC

d. 7 October 1962; Indianapolis, IN

Blues singer and guitarist. Francis Hillman Blackwell was born in South Carolina in 1903 of Cherokee Indian descent. His grandmother nicknamed him “Scrapper.” His father played the fiddle and all sixteen children played music. When he was three the family moved to Indianapolis. He built himself a cigar-box guitar and he instinctively knew how to play it. Scrapper later made money selling moonshine, his homemade corn whiskey. In June 1928 Scrapper was enticed to make his very first recordings in a makeshift recording studio in Indianapolis. “Kokomo Blues,” his first recorded song, was later turned into Kokomo Arnold’s “Old Kokomo Blues” and Robert Johnson’s “Sweet Home Chicago.” With his newfound partner, blues pianist Leroy Carr, Scrapper recorded a million seller: “How Long How Long Blues.” The novel piano–guitar duet proved to be an instant success and it led the way for other famous duos like Georgia Tom–Tampa Red and Charlie Spand–Blind Blake. Scrapper earned so much money with his hit that he stopped his bootleg business. Blackwell made a great many recordings with Leroy Carr, for Vocalion from 1928 to 1934 and for Bluebird in 1935.

Carr’s very last recording was the prophetic “Six Cold Feet in the Ground.” Leroy Carr died on

April 29, 1935, of alcohol abuse. Blackwell was heartbroken and recorded a moving tribute entitled “My Old Pal,” with Dot Rice replacing Leroy on the piano stool. After 1935 Blackwell worked as a guitarist only occasionally. In 1958 he was rediscovered by Art Rosenbaum. He made some postwar recordings from 1958 to 1961 that were issued on the Flyright, Collector, Document, 77, and Bluesville labels. He also accompanied singer/guitarist Brooks Berry on her Bluesville album. In these last few years he played some concerts for the Indiana Jazz Club. In 1962 Francis Blackwell was shot in the chest by a man called Robert Beam and died the next day.

Blackwell was equally impressive in an accompanying role as well as in solo performances. Important blues guitarists like T-Bone Walker and Johnny Shines have given Scrapper due credit for the enormous influence he had on them. Blackwell’s innovative style formed a bridge between rural and urban blues.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

BLACKWELL, WILLIE “61”

b. 25 December 1905; TN

d. 1972; Detroit, MI (?)

As a singer and guitarist Blackwell was not in the same league as his friends Baby Boy Warren and Robert Jr. Lockwood, but the vivid, imaginative vocabulary of his blues compositions made them appealing to contemporaries like Jazz Gillum and Sunnyland Slim, who got “Johnson Machine Gun” from him.

TONY RUSSELL

Discography: DGR

See also Warren, Robert Henry “Baby Boy”

BLAKE, CICERO

b. 20 February 1938; Jackson, MS

Chicago hard soul and blues singer. Blake began his career in 1952 in a doo-wop group, the Goldentones

(who later became the Kool Gents), and from 1959 to 1962, he sang in the Sonny Thompson revue. During 1961–1967, Blake recorded many fine singles in the hard soul style for independent producer Leo Austell, on such labels as Renee, Success, Brainstorm, Tower, and Capitol. Two of his most notable were “Sad Feeling” (1964) and “Love Is Like a Boomerang” (1975). As classic soul music disappeared in the late 1970s, Blake began performing in the soul-blues style that was becoming popular in the South. Under the name Corey Blake, he achieved his first national hit with “Dip My Dipper” (1978), a blues song recorded in the South. During the 1980s Blake established himself on the blues club and festival circuit and in the Southern radio market. His albums have included *Too Hip to Be Happy* (1988, Valley Vue), *Just One of Those Things* (1993, Valley Vue), *Wives Night Out* (1996, Ace), and *Stand by Me* (1998, Ace).

ROBERT PRUTER

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BLAND, BOBBY “BLUE”

b. Robert Calvin Brooks, 27 January 1930; Rosemark, TN

A prolific and enduring R&B performer, Bobby “Blue” Bland’s style is of the urban Chicago school, with strong, clearly defined links to the delta. He was also influenced by the blues culture of Houston, Texas.

Bland grew up in rural Tennessee and his family moved to Memphis in 1947. He began his career as a local performer in Memphis gospel groups including the Miniatures, where he adapted some of his vocal stylings from Reverence C. L. Franklin, father of the R&B immortal, Aretha Franklin. Bland began his secular performances at the Palace Theater in Memphis by competing in talent contests hosted by blues great Rufus Thomas.

His career took a dramatic upturn when he became an early member of B. B. King and the Beale Street Boys, a seminal group that also included Johnny Ace on piano, Roscoe Gordon, Earl Forest on drums, Junior Parker, and Billy Duncan on saxophone. The Beale Streeters were often referred to as the best band in Memphis during that period.

In 1951, Bland recorded two numbers for Chess Records, produced by Sam Phillips. In 1952, Ike Turner

produced four more numbers for the Modern label. In late 1952, Bland signed with Don Robey’s Duke label. His old Beale Street colleagues, especially Johnny Ace, were enjoying local and regional success. In 1956, Bland toured with Little Junior Parker, where he often functioned as driver and valet, as well as performer. He gained valuable experience, honed his raw juke-joint style, and finally found individual success with “Farther Up the Road” in 1957 and “Little Boy Blue” in 1958, which cracked the U.S. R&B top ten charts.

By the early 1960s, Bland struck gold with back-to-back hits like, “Cry, Cry, Cry,” “I Pity the Fool,” and “Turn on Your Love Light.” The release of *Two Steps from the Blues* in 1961 brought Bland the fame and success he had long sought. The album went on to be one of the great R&B standards and remains in print today.

Several hit albums followed including his live *Here’s the Man!!* in 1962. His style changed during this period with an increased emphasis on the velvety smooth delivery of blues crooners like Jesse Belvin and Jimmie Witherspoon.

Bland toured almost constantly during the period from 1960 to 1968, often with his own band. He had an impressive forty-five charted R&B hits on the Duke label during that period and played to eager fans all over the world. However, his success took a downturn beginning in 1966.

In 1968, after constant cutbacks and losses in the preceding two years, Bland was forced to break up his touring band. When Bland decided to cut his losses, one of the unfortunate results was the loss of his relationship with the great Joe Scott, his bandleader and arranger since the early Duke days. Scott had penned many of Bland’s classic blues releases and had been a key contributor to Bland’s successes at Duke. Bland became depressed and, ultimately, alcohol dependent during these tough times.

He recovered and, in 1971, was able to jump-start his career when Duke was sold to ABC Records Group. His ABC releases of *His California Album* and *Dreamer* restored his confidence and sold moderately well. Bland attempted disco without much success, but his 1983 release of *Here We Go Again* put Bland back on the charts.

In 1985, Bland moved to Malaco Records, a more traditional southern label, and his career shifted into high gear. Seasoned by the struggles of life and the ups and downs of his career, Bland had matured into a veteran blues superstar. He was a performer who had lost little of the R&B excitement of his early days while adding the poise and delivery that come from an intimate understanding of the art form.



Bobby “Blue” Bland performs at the Sunflower Blues Festival, Clarksdale, Mississippi, August 2002. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

He dazzled audiences with the same electricity that drew them since the early 1950s.

He has received dozens of awards during his outstanding career including the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences Lifetime Achievement Award and the Blues Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

TOM FISHER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

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(1960, Duke DLP-72; with Junior Parker); *Two Steps
from the Blues* (1961, Duke DLPS-74); *Here’s the Man!!*
(1962, Duke DLPS-75); *Call on Me* (1963, Duke

- DLPS-77); *Spotlighting the Man* (1967, Duke DLPS-89);
His California Album (1973, Dunhill DSX-50163);
Dreamer (1974, Dunhill DSX-50169); *Together for the
First Time—Live* (1974, Dunhill DSX-50190; with B. B.
King); *Foolin’ with the Blues* (1983, Charly CRB-1049);
Members Only (1985, Malaco 7429); *After All* (1986,
Malaco 7439); *Midnight Run* (1989, Malaco 7450); *Sad
Street* (1995, Malaco 7478); *Live on Beale Street* (1998,
Malaco 7489).

BLANKS, BIRLEANNA

- b. 18 February 1889; IA
d. 12 August 1968; New York, NY

Singer who recorded two songs for Paramount in 1923 with Fletcher Henderson accompanying at piano. Her entertainment career was in singing and dancing in revues and theaters, usually with her sister Arsecola Blanks. She left show business around 1928, and worked outside of music in New York City.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

BLAYLOCK, TRAVIS “HARMONICA SLIM”

b. 21 December 1934; Douglassville, TX

Singer and harmonica player active in Los Angeles, California. His early career through the late 1940s was as part of the Sunny South Gospel Singers in Texarkana, Texas. Around 1949 he moved to Los Angeles, eventually working dates with Lowell Fulson, Percy Mayfield, T-Bone Walker, and others. In 1969 he recorded for Bluestime label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris

Discography: LSFP

BLIND BLAKE

Flourished 1926–1932

Blind Blake was the name used by Arthur Blake (or perhaps Arthur Phelps) to record eighty-four titles and numerous accompaniments for Paramount records between 1926 and 1932. He identifies himself as Arthur Blake in a 1929 duet with “Papa” Charlie Jackson, copyrighted nineteen songs under that name, and recorded two instrumentals as Blind Arthur.

Blake was an itinerant musician working throughout Georgia, Florida, and Ohio before settling in Chicago in the early 1920s. He recorded for Paramount in 1926 and soon became a rival to Blind Lemon Jefferson, Paramount’s best-selling country blues singer. He also acted as a house guitarist, providing accompaniments to artists ranging from Gus Cannon and Charlie Jackson to Ma Rainey and Irene Scruggs.

During his six years with Paramount, he recorded a wide range of material, from desolate blues to ragtime dances of unparalleled inventiveness and elegance to jolly hokum numbers, vaudeville, minstrel show material, and even a Victorian music hall favorite. But for modern listeners, it is his truly prodigious guitar technique that still thrills and amazes—the long fluid runs, the clever use of double and stop time, the ornate decoration, and the way he turned the most banal material into something worthwhile. Of all the really great blues guitarists—William Moore, Willie Walker, Gary Davis—it is Blake who

remains a major influence on modern musicians of all kinds.

Blake may have had some links with the Georgia Sea Islands, judging by the extraordinary “Southern Rag” (1927). It is a dazzling instrumental in its own right but Blake speaks effortlessly in the dialect of the islands and plays an African rhythm in a demonstration of what he calls “Geechie music.” He recorded one long, monotonous set of low-key, pessimistic songs in 1928, but a year later returned for some of his finest sides in duet with pianist Charlie Spand. The songs included “Hastings Street,” a commercial for the good times to be found in Detroit’s black areas, and the wonderfully played “Diddie Wa Diddie,” a sexy nonsense song that he reprised a year later. Blake also played a steel-bodied guitar on the amiable “Police Dog Blues,” a tuneful little song where he makes the guitar sound like a piano.

Perhaps his most unusual record was his last, a reworking of the Victorian music hall hit, “Champagne Charlie Is My Name.” There is some debate over whether he sings on this side, but as Paul Oliver points out in *Songsters and Saints*, music hall songs did register in the black American community and, in any event, the song is adapted for its audience.

Blake may have toured in a show called Happy Go Lucky in 1930–1931, but the Depression marked the end of his recorded career. He may have left a son, but the last days of one of Paramount’s biggest stars remain a mystery.

DAVID HARRISON

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AMG (Steve James); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

See also Cannon, Gus; Jackson, Charles “Papa Charlie”; Rainey, Gertrude “Ma”; Spand, Charlie

BLIND PIG

Founded 1975 in Ann Arbor, Michigan; presently located in San Francisco, California. As with many independent labels, Blind Pig was begun as an extension of the founders’ passion for music, and ended up documenting some of the very best blues music to be heard anywhere.

Jerry Delgiudice was a senior at Loyola University in Chicago when he and University of Michigan senior Tom Isaia founded a coffee house/nightclub called the Blind Pig Café in Ann Arbor,

Michigan, in 1971. Live music was a staple at the café, and while both Jimi Hendrix and John Lennon played there, blues was the mainstay of the club's schedule.

In 1975, Delgiudice recorded a local band, The Vipers, and issued a 45 under the Blind Pig label. An album by Boogie Woogie Red followed. After a two-year hiatus, Delgiudice reactivated the label with new partner Edward Chmielewski, and issued sides by Roosevelt Sykes and Walter Horton.

In 1981, Delgiudice and Chmielewski sold the club, with Delgiudice moving to Chicago, while Chmielewski relocated to San Francisco, where the label's headquarters is also now located.

The label's releases have been a mixture of traditional and contemporary blues, established stars and young up-and-comers. While Blind Pig has offered a home to West Coast artists—Coco Montoya, Tommy Castro, Rod Piazza, Norton Buffalo—it has also issued recordings by everyone from James Cotton (Mississippi) to Otis Rush (Chicago), Jimmy Thackery (Washington, D.C.) to Smokin' Joe Kubek (Texas).

Blind Pig was also one of the first blues labels to enthusiastically welcome women guitarists, helping to dispel an industry prejudice. Polished, professional releases by Joanna Connor, Debbie Davies, and Deborah Coleman helped propel the careers of all three women and open doors for others to follow.

JIM TRAGESER

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Blind Pig Records: 20th Anniversary Collection (1997, Blind Pig 2001).
Blind Pig Records: 25th Anniversary Collection (2001, Blind Pig 2002).

BLOCK, RORY

b. Aurora Block, 6 November 1949;
 New York, NY

Guitarist, singer, songwriter. Big city native Block, who began as a fourteen-year-old transcribing blues off the radio, became the best-known female country blues practitioner of the modern era, recording a succession of commercially successful

and critically acclaimed albums and winning numerous awards. Block, a two-time W. C. Handy Award winner in both acoustic album and traditional female artist categories, ran away from home in her midteens and tracked down country blues legends such as Son House for personal instruction. She put the lessons to good use, ultimately establishing herself as a live attraction while recording a series of albums including *High Heeled Blues*, *Rhinestones & Steel Strings*, *House of Hearts*, *Ain't I a Woman*, and *Angel of Mercy* featuring a feminine perspective. In 1991 she recorded *Mama's Blues*, with Jorma Kaukonen playing electric guitar on the title track, in a church as she explored new settings for her sound.

Block moved her music to a higher level in the mid-1990s, first with the Handy Award winner *When a Woman Gets the Blues* in 1996 and then with *Confessions of a Blues Singer*, another Handy winner, originally inspired by a dream of a Charlie Patton slide riff. The mixture of autobiographical originals and traditional material revealed the maturity of Block's songwriting in the idiom, and the appearance of Bonnie Raitt as a slide guitar guest on a track generated additional airplay and sales. Block secured her status with W. C. Handy Award wins as best traditional female artist in 1997 and 1998 and the release of the critically acclaimed *Last Fair Deal* in 2003.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Chris Nickson)

Discography: AMG (Chris Nickson)

BLOOMFIELD, MICHAEL

b. 28 July 1944; Chicago, IL
 d. 15 February 1981; San Francisco, CA

Mike Bloomfield began playing guitar at age thirteen, and later frequented the blues clubs on Chicago's South Side, befriending older blues musicians and sitting in wherever anyone would let him. He linked up with other young white musicians hanging around the predominantly black clubs, and played with singer Nick Gravenites and harmonica player Charley Musselwhite before joining the Paul Butterfield Blues Band (1965–1967). His distinctive and original lead guitar work was featured alongside Elvin Bishop on Butterfield's classic *East-West* album in 1966.

BLOOMFIELD, MICHAEL

He participated in the recording sessions for Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965), and performed with the singer at the infamous Newport Folk Festival appearance that year, when Dylan's new electric approach outraged the purists.

He formed Electric Flag with Gravenites in 1967, an influential but short-lived band that explored a progressive blues-rock direction, and incorporated a horn section. He recorded *Super Session* with Al Kooper and Stephen Stills in 1968, but the venture received a mixed reception.

He formed Triumvirate with Dr. John and John Hammond, Jr., in 1973, but without making the anticipated commercial or artistic impact. Electric Flag reformed briefly in 1974, and he made one record with KGB in 1976. His solo recordings of the late 1970s were issued on a smaller label, but he received a Grammy nomination for *If You Love These Blues, Play 'Em As You Please* in 1977.

Problems with drugs had hampered his career from the late 1960s onward, and he died of a drug overdose in 1981.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Selected Recordings

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Bloomfield and Al Kooper* (1969, PG6); *Live at Bill
Graham's Fillmore East* (1970, Columbia CS9893);
Triumvirate (1973, Columbia 32172); *If You Love These
Blues, Play 'Em as You Please* (1977, Sonet SNTF726);
Mike Bloomfield (1978, Takoma 1063); *Between the Hard
Place and the Ground* (1979, Takoma 7070); *Living in the
Fast Lane* (1982, Waterhouse DAMP 100).

BLUE HORIZON

Active 1965–1972

Record label founded in February 1965 by brothers Richard and Michael (Mike) Vernon. The first release was the single “Across the Board” by Hubert Sumlin (Blue Horizon BH 1000). Two subsidiaries were briefly started, Purdah and Outasite. In November 1966, CBS Records began distributing Blue Horizon LPs, which were of new blues-rock acts

like Fleetwood Mac and Duster Bennett, or of established African American blues musicians like Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and B. B. King. The label ceased in 1972, but it was revived in 1988 by Mike Vernon for Dana Gillespie, Lazy Lester, and others.

EDWARD KOMARA

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BLUE LAKE

Record Label (Illinois, 1954–1956). Owner: Al Benson (b. June 30, 1908, Jackson MS; d. September 6, 1978, Berrien Springs, MI); John Henry “Lawyer” Burton (b. September 14, 1916, IL; d. November 1985, Glencoe, IL). Chicago, Illinois-based, Blue Lake's artists included King Fleming, Little Willie Foster (“Falling Rain Blues”), Lou Mac, L. C. McKinley (“All Alone Blues”), Red Saunders, Sunnyland Slim (with Snooky Pryor, “Devil Is a Busy Man”), Walter Spriggs, Leon Tarver, Baby Boy Warren (with Sonny Boy Williamson #2, “Mattie Mae”/“Sante Fe”), and Jody Williams (as Little Papa Joe), Joe Williams (with Red Saunders, “In the Evening” and “Blow Mr. Low”). The label was acquired by John Henry “Lawyer” Burton in March 1956.

ROBERT EAGLE

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Journal* no. 3 (1983); no. 21 (1987).

BLUE, LITTLE JOE

b. Joseph Valery, Jr., 23 September 1934; Vicksburg,
MS
d. 22 April 1990; Reno, NV

Guitarist and vocalist influenced by B. B. King, Louis Jordan, and Joe Liggins. Recorded for several labels, including Kent, Checker, Jewel, Chess, and Space. His 1966 composition “Dirty Work Is Going On,”

released on Chess Records, was well received and became a blues standard. He toured until his death from cancer.

JOE C. CLARK

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Jordan, Louis; King, Riley B. "B. B."; Liggins, Joe

BLUE MOON (SPAIN)

Formed in Barcelona during the 1990s as a jazz reissue label, Blue Moon Records has also issued several dozen releases that will appeal to fans of blues and R&B. Issuing complete chronological compilations and sets of mainly single artists, Blue Moon has also been responsible for volumes on obscure blues shouters (Sonny Parker, Eddie Mack, etc.), jump bands (Paul Williams, Tiny Grimes, etc.), pianists (Cecil Gant, Sonny Thompson, etc.), and several various artist collections of R&B guitarists and R&B legends. A subsidiary label, called Opal Blues, deals with the more famous names of blues and R&B, such as Fats Domino, Howlin' Wolf, and Muddy Waters.

DAVID PENNY

Discography

Blues and R&B Legends #1 (Blue Moon BMCD 4003).
Blues and R&B Legends #2 (Blue Moon BMCD 4004).
R&B Guitars 1950–1954 (Blue Moon BMCD 6018).

BLUE SMITTY

b. Claude Smith, 6 November 1924; Marianna, AR

Born and raised in Arkansas, except in Chicago from 1928 to 1935. He learned to play guitar around 1938. Early blues influences were Arthur Crudup, Robert Lockwood, and Tampa Red and, through records, Robert Johnson and John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. From 1942 through 1946 he served in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Alexandria, Louisiana. During that time he began playing with jazz chords and single-note solos in the manner of Charlie Christian and Oscar Moore, and he learned to read music.

After his discharge from the army, he went to Memphis, then to Chicago in 1947. He soon met Muddy Waters, and he taught Waters how to play single-note solos without a bottleneck. Through 1947 Waters, Jimmy Rogers, and he performed in Chicago clubs. He moved to Harvey, Illinois, in late 1947 and devoted himself more to jazz, then moved to Robbins in 1949. He moved to Joliet, Illinois, in 1950 and began performing at Club 99, where he received the nickname Blue Smitty. In 1952 he recorded a Chess label session, from which "Crying"/"Sad Story" (Chess 1522) were initially released. Afterward he performed around Illinois, usually Joliet, Rock Island, Phoenix, and Kankakee. He was interviewed in 1974 and 1979 by Jim O'Neal with George Paulus, and since publication of the resulting two-part article in *Living Blues* magazine, he has been counted as a significant musician in early postwar Chicago blues.

He is not to be confused with Byther Smith or with Big Bad Smitty, both of whom have performed as "Blue Smitty."

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

BLUE SUIT

Record label (Ohio, 1987–). Owners: John Gibbs Rockwood (b. June 27, 1949; Cleveland, OH); Robert Richard Seeman (b. December 31, 1955; Toledo, OH). Toledo, Ohio–based, Blue Suit's artists include Howard ("Louie Blueie") Armstrong, Eddie ("Guitar") Burns, Little Junior Cannaday, Louis "Mr. Bo" Collins, Detroit Junior, Detroit Piano Fats (Eugene Foster), the Dynatones, Honeyboy Edwards, Art and Roman Griswold, Harmonica Shah, Eddie Kirkland, Big Jack Reynolds, Sir Mack Rice, Willie D. Warren, and Maurice John Vaughn. The *Hasting Street Grease* and *The Motor City R&B Pioneers* (with Kenny Martin, Stanley Mitchell, Joe Weaver) collections feature recent performances by Detroit musicians and singers. In 2001, Blue Suit issued two Blue Boot *Real, Raw & Blue* collections of mostly live recordings by some of these artists.

ROBERT EAGLE

BLUE SUIT

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BLUE THUMB

Record label (California, 1968–1974). Owners: Robert A. Krasnow (b. July 20, 1934); Thomas A. (“Tommy”) LiPuma (b. July 5, 1936; Cleveland, OH); Don Graham. A former executive with King Records and Kama Sutra Records, Bob Krasnow and partners recorded Arthur Adams, Clifton Chenier, Chicago Blue Stars (with Charlie Musselwhite), Albert Collins (reissue of TCF-Hall recordings), the Crusaders, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells (with Junior Mance), Jessie Hill, Earl Hooker, Sam Lay, John Mayall, Pointer Sisters, Ike and Tina Turner (with uncredited guest artist Albert Collins), and Phil Upchurch. The *Memphis Swamp Jam–Memphis Blues Festival* two-album set featured 1969 studio recordings by Chris Strachwitz (of Arhoolie Records) of Nathan Beauregard, “Sleepy” John Estes, Furry Lewis, Fred McDowell, Memphis Piano Red (John Williams), Napoleon Strickland, Otha Turner, Bukka White, Johnny Woods, and guitar duets by R. L. Watson and Josiah Jones (aka Bill Barth and John Fahey). The label was purchased by ABC Records in 1974.

ROBERT EAGLE

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Discography

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BLUEBIRD

Subsidiary record label of RCA Victor, first used in summer 1932 to issue eight-inch popular discs

sold in Woolworth stores. Ten-inch discs were issued from March 1933 for general sale. Its B5000 series became Victor’s Race label during the 1930s, its 35 issues superseding Victor’s own 75 23250 series after June 1933 when it ended at 23432. During the overlap period some performances were issued on both labels and some Bluebird issues were also duplicated on Sunrise. Initially other nonclassical material was mixed in but after B7950 in late 1938 this series was for Race and country issues only. It had reached B9042 by 1942. It featured significant performances by Big Bill (Broonzy), Big Maceo (Merriweather), Bo Carter (Chatman), Walter Davis, Jazz Gillum, Lonnie Johnson, Tommy McClennon, Robert Petway, Tampa Red, Washboard Sam, Big Joe Williams, Sonny Boy Williamson, and many others.

The label became particularly associated with the new urban sounds of late 1930s Chicago and with marathon sessions of eight to twelve titles. Field recording units in the South notably captured the Mississippi Sheiks (San Antonio, 1934, and New Orleans, 1935), Joe Pullum (San Antonio, 1935/1936), Little Brother (Montgomery) (New Orleans, 1936), Andy Boy and Big Boy Knox (San Antonio, 1937), Frank Tannehill (San Antonio, 1938, and Dallas, 1941). In 1943, the series was superseded by a Race-only 34-0700 series, which included work by Big Maceo, Big Boy Crudup, Jazz Gillum, Tommy McClennon, Lonnie Johnson, Yank Rachel, Roosevelt Sykes, Tampa Red, and Sonny Boy Williamson. Nothing recorded after February 1946 appeared on Bluebird, though some titles remained in the catalog until 1950 labeled as RCA-Victor’s “Bluebird Series.” The label name has been revived at intervals since 1976 for reissues of vintage blues both in the United States and France.

HOWARD RYE

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BLUES

Blues: A type of music that may be notated in eight-, twelve-, and sixteen-measure forms, using one of a select number of melodic scales and rhyme schemes, and sung and/or performed with musical instruments, with the melody as the primary component. Engendered in the late nineteenth century by southern rural African Americans in oral communities, the blues has come to be performed at the present time by American and English musicians of various races and economic classes, in settings ranging from ritual celebrations to formal concert halls.

This article aims to expand the preceding definition in order to present explanatory cross-references to other entries, provide a central narrative to which encyclopedia users may refer for context, record new observations about the craft on the lyrics and music, and discuss new and existing hypotheses about blues cultures and history.

The remainder of this entry will be of two essays: the features and techniques to listen for in blues lyrics and music, and a history of the blues using the features and techniques presented.

Part 1: Technical

A blues song consists of lyrics and music, and a performance of that song entails the selection of specific lyrics formulation techniques and of individual musical features, and the interplay of such lyrics and music. We will look at individual lyric techniques first, then at the musical features.

Blues Lyrics

The first characteristic about lyrics most listeners notice is their organization into rhyme schemes and stanza chorus forms. This observation is especially true for listeners from a literate writing-based culture, a few of whom have transcribed lyrics and presented them as poetic texts. Before considering rhyme schemes and chorus forms, we need to be aware of the various kinds of word play on blues lyrics by peoples of oral-based cultures, including those of illiterate and semiliterate skills. The “activity” of words exercised within each lyric stanza by the blues singer may be observed in the following techniques:

1. *Appropriation:* Also called “stealing” or “plagiarism.” This is the whole transfer of one or more lyric choruses from one song to another. This will occur most often in pre-1942 recordings. In recent decades federal copyright laws have

prohibited such appropriation, resulting in many new lyrics on blues records.

2. *Phrase-formulas and borrowings:* Improvised lyrics may sometimes seem like a mosaic or patchwork of incomplete phrases (or “catch-phrases”) and dependent clauses. Since the lyrics often have to fit within a rhythmic pattern and/or stay within a musical meter/time signature, short word phrases are developed into a formula.

Certain phrase-formulas are used over and over by one artist, irrespective of the melody to which the words may be sung: “Well well well ’m” was used often enough by Peetie Wheatstraw (William Bunch) in the 1930s to become a signature phrase.

Often, certain phrase-formulas are borrowed by other artists, sometimes to the same melody of the lyric source, as in these titular lyrics:

You’re a mean mistreatin’ mama (Leroy Carr)
You’re a cruel hearted woman (Bumble Bee Slim)

The adjective for a stern disposition may be counted as part of the phrase-formula. Mississippi Matilda in 1936 altered the phrase-formula by changing the adjective, yet still retaining the overall lyric and the source melody:

I’m a hard-working woman (Mississippi Matilda)

Robert Johnson altered the Bumble Bee Slim formula from “cruel” to “kind” in his “Kindhearted Woman Blues.”

Phrase-formulas are used even where the melodies are different:

She got Elgin movements and a twenty-year guarantee (Blind Blake, Panther Squall Blues, 1928)
She got Elgin movements, from her head down to her toes (Blind Lemon Jefferson, Change My Luck, 1928)

Robert Johnson would use Jefferson’s lyric in his “Walking Blues” (1936). Entire clauses may be used, even from sacred to secular use:

Dark was the night, cold was the ground, on which our saviour laid (spiritual)

John Hurt in his 1928 recording of “Frankie” would lead a lyric chorus with the same phrase.

3. *Phonetic imitation:* This is the aural similarity of a lyric phrase to a previously existing one. This technique is not heard often, but it may be detected when a blues song is compared to a melodic antecedent, when shared sounds occur at the same points in the common melody, as in these title statements in each of these songs:

You Gone Need Somebody [when you] Gone to Die (Charlie Patton, 1929)

The last, fair deal, gone down (Robert Johnson, "Last Fair Deal Gone Down," 1936)

4. *Paraphrase*: Paraphrasing is the restatement of conceptual subjects with different words. In the blues, this lyric technique will refer to a given name or noun previously used as a blues lyric subject, but without using derived phrase-formulas and borrowings, or sharing the original melody. For example, there are Son House's treatments of the "Death Letter" concept previously heard on Ida Cox's "Death Letter Blues" (1924), including "My Black Mama Part 2" (1930) and "Death Letter" (1965), among other House performances. Consider also the widely varying versions of "Stagger Lee" by Furry Lewis (1928) and by John Hurt (1928), which are quite unlike each other with regard to lyric phrases and melodies.

5. *Verbal and nonverbal substitutions*: Substitutions are adjustments to the lyric without sacrificing the literal meaning and content. Usually they are the result of mental slips, but sometimes they are consciously introduced if the melody is sung to a different scale, performed at a different tempo, or to a different instrumental accompaniment. Sometimes, to detect substitutions, a listener should compare two or more performances of a song by the same artist. An example of a verbal substitution is in Robert Johnson's "Kindhearted Woman Blues" (1936), where in one take he sings "woman" during the first line, while in another take he substitutes "mama."

As for nonverbal substitutions, in 1928 Scrapper Blackwell in "Kokomo Blues" sang to a minor-mode inflected melody "Mmm, baby don't you want to go." In 1936, Robert Johnson sang the lyric to a major-mode version of the melody, but to open up the bright sound he sings "ohh" instead of "mmm."

It should be acknowledged that vocal growls, moans, and other nonverbal utterances by a singer may be heard as an African retention and, as such, they may have a greater significance than as ornaments (which may be how they are interpreted by Western music listeners).

6. *Telescoping*: This is the adding or dropping of a word or words of an existing lyric phrase to fit an existing melody. Dropping words is the more common instance of this technique, although it runs the risk of rendering the lyric as nonsense. Compare, for example, the opening

lyrics of Charlie Patton's "Moon Going Down" (1930) with Howlin' Wolf's "Smokestack Lightning" (1956). To make Patton's lyric fit the new melody, Howlin' Wolf dropped the word "bell," yet changes the meaning of Patton's lyric to the railroad smokestack shining like gold, when it should be black.

Adding words occurs too, as with John Hurt's adding "on" to the spiritual "Dark was the night, cold was the ground" (see the phrase-formula entry above). Sometimes a word has to be repeated, such as Victoria Spivey repeating twice the word "sinking" in "I Can't Last Long" (1936).

7. *Rhythmic conversion*: Rhythmic conversion refers to the resetting of a set of lyrics to a new declamatory rhythm, often at odds with the customary spoken rhythm of the given words (long-stressed words are underlined, the remaining words are short-stressed).

Well I rolled and I tumbled and I (Willie Newburn, "Roll and Tumble Blues," 1929)

Well I rolled and I tumbled and I (Garfield Akers, "Dough Roller Blues," 1930)

8. *Adaptation of locale or gender*: Adaptation is not merely substitution. At times the introduction of alternate location or sex may force a change to the surrounding lyrics (especially a rural setting to a city one, or vice versa). Locale may be specific, even when the melody is the same and the lyrics may be similar:

"Original Old Kokomo Blues" (Kokomo Arnold, 1934)

"Sweet Home Chicago" (Robert Johnson, 1936)

"Baltimore Blues" (Charlie McCoy, 1934)

It may be generic:

"Black River Blues" (Roosevelt Sykes, 1930, riverside setting)

"Cross Road Blues" (Robert Johnson, 1936, highway intersection setting)

9. *Lists*: Blues and African American songs often take the form of lists, many of which are variations of word games and toasts. Two standard songs are "The Dirty Dozens" and "The Signifying Monkey." One of the most popular postwar blues songs, "Wang Dang Doodle" composed by Willie Dixon, is yet another example.

Other blues will proceed with alphabetical lists and numerical lists and sums. Occasionally white composers and performers devise such songs, for instance, "Rock Around the Clock" recorded by Bill Haley and the Comets in

1955, a twelve-measure blues song having lyrics that follow a clock face in numerical/chronological order. “My Daddy Rocks Me,” a song recorded by Trixie Smith in 1938, follows a similar plan for the lyrics about round-the-clock sex.

By means of such techniques, a vast body of lyrics can be generated, and lyrics may be chosen at any moment by the blues singer to suit a particular setting or occasion. The more lyrics a singer knows, the more valued he or she may be to their audience and cultural group. Yet such lyrics are not merely declaimed, but sung to a melody. To facilitate such singing, lyric chorus forms must be devised in accordance with the melody’s characteristics. So, before looking at the lyric chorus forms, we should acquaint ourselves with the blues’ musical characteristics.

Blues Music

The central component of a blues song is the melody, to which words may be sung, and instrumental accompaniment may be added. It is the melody that gets lifted from one blues song, then sung to new lyrics as a new blues song. In view of the importance of melody, certain aspects should be explained first, namely pitch and tone, rhythm, scale, meter, and tempo.

Pitch and tone. It is helpful to begin with two definitions from *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*:

Pitch: (1) The perceived quality of a sound that is chiefly a function of its fundamental frequency—the number of oscillations per second (Hertz) of the sounding object or of the particles of air excited by it (see Acoustics)

Tone: (1) a sound of definite pitch; a pitch. . . (3) The character of the sound achieved in performance on an instrument.

In many types of music, especially notated composed types including Western classical music, the notion of pitch may be separable from the notion of tone. Such separation may be enacted in the act of notating music on paper, which requires the notator (whether composer, arranger, or transcriber) to imagine and/or anticipate the sound of each individual musical note, even though a written note obviously does not sound.

In improvised types of music, however, the notion of pitch is not separable from the notion of tone. This is true for blues music developed within oral, nonwriting, non-notating cultures. Every blues song known to an oral culture is one that has been performed

at some time in the remembered past, however distantly or recently. Unlike classical music, there are no dead, long-unperformed pieces in improvised blues. Also, although improvised blues songs are conceived and performed without notated music, some observations about blues composition as well as improvisation can be made, and they are presented later in this section.

It follows, then, that the primary source of the blues is the performance, whether live in person or on sound recordings, and the secondary source is the transcription of the performance in words and music notation. The secondary source can never replace the primary source (unless the performance is totally forgotten, or the recording is lost or its playback sound irretrievable). Nonetheless, transcriptions serve as effective illustrations for demonstration and discussion.

Pitch and tone are inseparable in the blues and are dependent on the quality of sound. I will refer to both collectively as “tone.” The agents of tone are musical instruments. Instruments do not contain music in themselves: their strings must be plucked, strummed, or hammered; their surfaces tapped or patted; their columns blown with air while the appropriate tone-holes are blocked with fingers. Music is contained instead in the musicians who manipulate the instruments. For many years, at least in the published literature, there has been the myth associated with Tommy Johnson, then later with Robert Johnson, of the Mississippi Delta bluesman who sells his soul to the devil at a dusty crossroads in exchange for guitar skills; one such story has the devil simply retuning the bluesman’s guitar. Such a story fails to acknowledge a musician’s talent, and it also fails to appreciate the time, training, and hard work that goes into honing an attractive musical expression. It may also tell more about the teller than about the story’s subject.

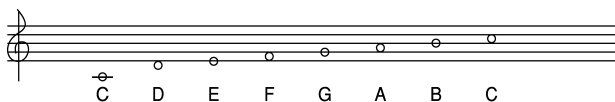
Important blues instruments have been the singing voice, the guitar (acoustic or electrically amplified), the piano, the harmonica, horns including the trumpet, the saxophone, the drums, and the bass. Other relevant instruments at various times in the history of the blues have been the accordion, the banjo, the diddley bow, the fiddle (violin), the fife with drums, the jug, the kazoo, the mandolin, the rub board, spoons, strings, and electronic synthesizers.

Rhythm. When two tones are played one after another in temporal succession, rhythm is created. *The New Harvard Dictionary* defines rhythm as “the pattern of movement in time.” Even a melody of tones, each of which is of equal duration to one another (for example, quarter notes in 4/4 time) still has rhythm. Moreover, in the oral dynamic of blues music, every rhythmic pattern has tone (since the two concepts may not be understood separately except

BLUES

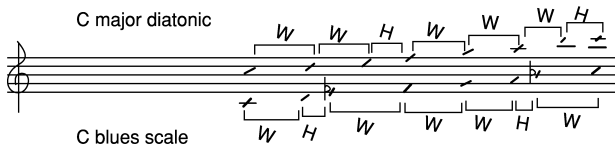
through music notation), and rhythm and melody are inseparable.

Scale, meter, and tempo. There are three quantitative means of measuring melody: scale, meter, and tempo. Scale measures the intervallic quality of melody; the intervals measure the differences in pitch registered among two or more tones, using increments termed half-steps and whole steps. For example, the “do-re-mi” scale commonly taught in elementary schools is known as the diatonic major scale. Setting the diatonic major on the tone C:



Music theory stipulates that the distances from C to D, D to E, F to G, G to A, and A to B are of a whole step each, and those from E to F and from B to C are of a half-step each. The pattern of whole steps and half-steps in a diatonic major scale is whole–whole–half–whole–whole–whole–half.

The most common blues scale is considerably different from the diatonic:

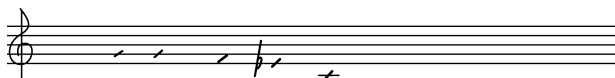


Here, the distances from C to D, E-flat to F, F to G, G to A, and B-flat to C are of a whole step, and those from D to E-flat and from A to B-flat are of a half-step and are called “blue notes.” The pattern of the common blues scale is thus whole–half–whole–whole–whole–half–whole. It should be acknowledged that the common blues scale may be heard as a combination of pentatonic scales (see entries Scales, Africa), not as a variant of the diatonic scale.

The difference between the diatonic major scale and the common blues scale is telling. A descending melody in diatonic scale is ordinary, bland, unremarkable:



Resetting the intervals according to the common blues scale results in this:



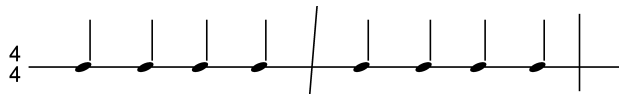
The adjustments are not ornamental musical spice. Rather, such adjustments are necessary to inflect and render a melody within the blues practice.

The common blues scale given above may be heard in most blues performances, but it is far from being

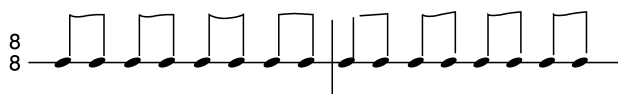
the only scale used in blues. The point should be made that the common blues scale was derived by music analysts from listening to hundreds of blues records and live performances, and that the singers and instrumentalists who were heard were performing not from a written scale-book, but from blues conventional practice. It should be added that the common blues scale tones, especially the specific “blue notes,” are not sung or played to equal inflection by every blues performer; rather they may vary according to local musical style or individual performance preference. But among the records that blues music analysts have set as exceptions to common blues practice may be found other scales of blues relevance, whether of modal scales in the rare examples of pre-blues (for example, Geechie Wiley’s “Last Kind Words Blues,” 1930), minor scales (for example, Skip James’s performances with a D minor tuned guitar), scales borrowed from gospel music (Ray Charles’s 1954–1962 performances), or the modal flights of Robert Pete Williams. An exploration of the various scales to be noted is given in the *Scales* entry. Throughout this encyclopedia, the “blues scale” is that given above, and “blue notes” are the inflections at the third and seventh scale degrees.

For the rhythmic quality of melody, meter is referred to. Notational practice of meter uses time signatures, a set of two numbers, the first to indicate the notated musical beat, the second to indicate the number of such beats to be used in a notated musical measure. This is usually an effort to convey the basic pulse of the melody. Musicians in an oral culture may not be familiar with such a notated visualization, but here are a few examples to show how some blues styles may appear in transcriptions:

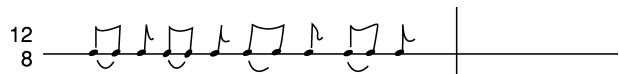
4/4 “Common” time—four beats per measure, the quarter note has the unit beat



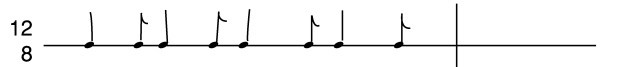
8/8 “Sanctified” time—eight beats per measure, the eighth note has the unit beat



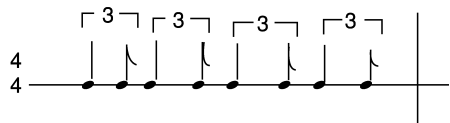
12/8 “Boogie” time—twelve beats per measure, the eighth note has the unit beat



or



Some transcribers will render “boogie” time in 4/4 time as:

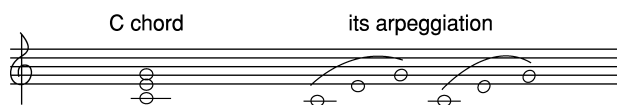


but it can be misleading and hard to read because the triplet brackets above the notes can clutter up the appearance.

Tempo refers to the performed rate of melody. To determine the tempo, the meter of the melody should be recognized, and the number of unit beats counted. Tempo is typically indicated as the number of beats per minute. Most blues performances usually fall between 88 to 120 beats per minute. By contrast, the slowest jazz ballads are performed at 60 beats per minute (1 beat per second), and frenetic bebop numbers may be 240 to 300 beats per minute. On this basis, it is understandable why the general public thinks of blues as a “slow” music (why it thinks of blues as “sad” is another interesting matter).

A sung or played tone has a sonic ripple effect that sounds other tones; such are called “overtones.” Western classical harmony is constructed in large part on overtone phenomena. The general concept of harmony is the means to assess the quality of two or more tones sounded at once. This is important for a soloing instrumentalist or one accompanying a singer.

Every melody is set in a key, or a precise tonality (centrality) within an aural spectrum of registers where all tones may be heard. The purpose of harmony in the blues is to give breadth to the melody by providing a sonic context. The means of harmony is the chord, a simultaneous, in-time presentation of two or more tones that have an upper tone and a lower tone as the harmonic limit (arpeggiation, shown below, is the temporal harmonic presentation of a chord).



Given a melody, it is the task of the blues accompanist to determine the melody’s key, then construct chords under the melody. Blues harmony for the most part uses the diatonic major (“do-re-mi”) scale. The chords are of triadic nature, that is, every other scale tone after the base tone is used:



If one starts on C, one should use E, G, and so forth. Every scale tone is capable of having a triadic chord

built on it. If triadic chords are built on each tone of a diatonic major scale, then those chords are numbered with Roman numerals (say, C = I, D = ii, E = iii).

After a melody has been fitted with chords, the resulting set of chords is called the harmonic progression. It is important, especially in an oral musical practice, to think of the harmonic progression as a succession of chords played over time to form a discrete unit or component. For a melody in the common blues scale, the blues harmonic progression uses the chords I, IV, and V; in the key of C, the respective chords would be C major, F major, and G major. This progression provides a basis for which melodic tones that sound “wrong,” or dissonant, should be judged.

Blues Form

We are ready now to consider blues forms. To hear blues musical forms as perceptible entities, we should recognize the three dimensions—melody, harmonic progression, and tone—provided by musical instruments and the singing voice, the latter also providing blues lyrics. Each dimension with regard to form will need to be considered in turn.

Melody may last as short or as long as the performer wishes. In blues practice, a typical phrase may last from nine to sixteen beats, which may be notated visually in four measures of four beats per measure. Four-measure phrases may be stacked to form eight-measure blues (4 + 4), twelve-measure blues (4 + 4 + 4), or sixteen-measure blues (4 + 4 + 4 + 4). Some bluesmen have sung to short phrases lasting only up to eight beats, which can be notated in two measures of four beats each. Such two-measure phrases can be stacked to form eight-measure blues (2 + 2 + 2 + 2), or to break in half the first four-measure phrase of a twelve-measure melodic form ([2 + 2] + 4 + 4).

Harmonic progressions can, with frequent playing and use in various songs, become formal entities in their own right. The most established harmonic progression in the blues is that for the twelve-measure form; some analysts have seemed to take this progression to define the blues. This progression follows the (4 + 4 + 4) three four-measure melodic phrase arrangement. For the first four-measure phrase, the tonic I chord is used; for the second four-measure phrase, the IV chord is used for the first two measures, then reverts to the I chord for two more measures; and for the third phrase the V chord is used for two measures, then the I chord returns to close the harmonic progression aspect of the form. Analysts call this the I–IV–V blues progression. It may be more faithful to the blues practice to think of it as the I/IV–I/V–I

three-phrase blues progression. The reason for this is that there is a frequently used eight-measure (2 + 2 + 2 + 2) harmonic progression (I/IV–I/I–V/I), as heard on Leroy Carr’s “How Long Blues” (1928), the Mississippi Sheiks’s “Sitting on Top of the World” (1930), and Robert Johnson’s “Come On in My Kitchen” (1936)—the same chord sequence, but serving a different melody or melodic variant.

The remaining dimension is tone, within which is the singing voice that conveys the lyric forms. Earlier, we noted various ways that lyric phrases can be improvised or altered. They may be compiled to form lyric choruses as stanzas by linking rhyming phrases. These rhyme schemes are so important to blues that analysts have given them a defining role. The most commonly cited lyric rhyme scheme is AAB, where a lyric is sung (A), then repeated (A), then a rhyming lyric is given (B). This AAB scheme is used most often in twelve-measure forms, though not in eight- and sixteen-measure forms. And there are other lyric forms for twelve-measure blues, such as those for the (2 + 2) verse and (4 + 4) refrain form, and the (4 + 4) verse and (4) refrain form used in ballads and the earliest datable blues.

Sixteen-measure blues have had distinctive lyric forms, such as the AABA scheme for sixteen-measure hokum blues (where a lyric is sung twice, then a second lyric, then the first lyric once more), and the AAAB form where the lyric is sung three times, then a second lyric closes the form. Eight-measure blues commonly have a 4 + 4 AB verse and refrain lyric form, or a 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 ABCD scheme.

To perform blues music, the musicians must be in agreement as to how to coordinate the melodic and harmonic aspects. One way is through polyphony, that is, a multilayered music where each musician contributes one’s own melody that retains its own identity in the ensemble sound. This manner prevailed in many types of pre-1942 southern music, including blues, hillbilly, and country music. Through the 1930s, most people in the United States, regardless of race, could listen to and follow several melodic layers at once. A second way is through homophony, in which melodic interest is concentrated in one voice that is provided with subordinate accompaniment. For a variety of melody-plus-accompaniment textures, as well as to the type of texture itself, the terms “homorhythmic” or “homophonic” may be used, which refers to all parts moving with the same or similar rhythm called “the big beat.” As far back as the late 1920s but especially since the 1940s, musical listeners began paying more attention to “the big” homophonic “beat” played by a rhythm section consisting of piano, rhythm guitar, bass, and drums, and less to the melody or melodies. In other words, around the

1930s habits of listening became more “vertical” than “horizontal.” (Musicians on records who led the transition in the late 1920s/mid-1930s from polyphonic to homophonic in jazz, blues, and country are Louis Armstrong [1923–1932], Count Basie [1932–1941], Robert Johnson [1936–1937], Muddy Waters [1941–1955], and Milton Brown and Bob Wills together and separately [1933–1941].)

When the formal choices are made regarding instruments, lyrics, melody, harmonic progression, and whether to use polyphony or homophony, we can say that blues composition takes place by “putting together” a blues song performance with these means and within their dimensions. Usually the word “composition” brings to mind written texts like essays and notated classical music scores. But *Webster’s* defines “composition” as “to form by putting together two or more things, elements, or parts” (definition 1a). I wish to add “to form *as fixed entities*.” Such entities are needed by listeners to identify the blues song and to follow the unity of a song performance. The most important entity in the blues is the melody, on which the other aspects like tone, harmonic chords, and lyrics are dependent. Throughout a song’s performance, the melody is retained whole, or has only minor variations, in which it is still recognizable. Also, when one blues song is used to construct another, it is the melody that is borrowed and remains intact in the new song.

When elements and entities in a blues song are fixed throughout its performance, they imply a composition governing the improvisation of lyrics and of music. “Improvisation” is much misunderstood. Usually it is characterized as “make it up as you go along,” “play or sing as you feel,” “select the best and put it all together,” or “take it out of the air.” *Webster’s* offers a practical definition of “improvise” (definition 2b): “to construct or fabricate out of what is conveniently at hand.” I wish to add the words “and in mind.”

The dimensions of blues composition serve also as the bases of improvisation:

1. *Tone and lyrics*: Tone and lyrics are enabled by musical instruments, from the singing voice to the grand piano, from a solo performer to a large orchestra. Improvisation of tone is to use any, some, or all instruments that are conveniently at hand. Improvisation of lyrics is the retention, omission, or altering of lyrics to suit the conditions at the performance setting.
2. *Melody*: Improvisation of melody is the use of available tones from voices and instruments to construct melodies over the length of time at hand. In the blues practice, the melody stays

intact, and such retention and repetition implies composition. However, the transposition of a given melody from one scale to another is one type of improvisation, if limited. Also, the devising of alternate melodies by the singer or the instrumentalist may be permitted, as long as it is understood to be secondary to the first, primary theme.

3. *Harmonic chords*: Improvisation of harmonic chords is the altering of the sequence of chords in a given harmonic progression, or the changing from one harmonic system (triadic, quartal) to another. Such improvisation is limited in the blues practice, as such chords and the resulting harmonic progressions are dependent on the melody, which in turn is kept intact throughout a song's performance. Nevertheless, some ornamental passing chords have been permitted in some performances.

Blues improvisation takes place on two levels, musical and verbal. The musical level involves the use of certain instruments available to the musician (usually voice, guitar, piano, harmonica), the melodic pitches usually drawn from the "blues scale" (diatonic major scale pitches with the third and seventh scale degrees flatted), and chords from triadic harmony. The verbal level involves words and lyric techniques. Both musical and verbal levels are bonded together (they should not be mistaken for layered components).

The dynamic quality of blues improvisation takes one melody as a constant factor and repeats it as a distinct chorus unit several times, with the selection and order of the lyrics as a changing aspect. The lyrics may tell a narrative story, relate rhymes on a broad topic, or have no relation to one another at all. In any case, the perceptible result of blues improvisation is a set of sound-chorus-beads strung together. Such "blues beads" may be preset by the musicians for a concert or a formal performance, or left open ended for a dance, ritual, or informal performance.

The length of a blues performance may vary. Sometimes it may last only one or two songs, especially if the performer is at a blues festival, a gala revue, or at a taping for a television show or a recording session. Or it may last for more than two hours, during which fifteen to twenty songs may be performed. During such a larger set, two or three songs may share the same melody yet have different sets of lyrics; or, in two or three songs, each with different melodies, the same lyric phrase may be heard in each. On some occasions, a blues artist may perform a blues song twice, with some changes in the lyrics during the second performance.

Note that other types of music improvisation will hold different formal dimensions constant, or use different types of such dimensions. Jazz, for example, will use many of the same instruments, melodic scales, and chord progressions as blues. But performances of a jazz piece will treat its chord progression and its lyrics as dynamic constant factors, and the melody as the changing factor. Yet, the jazz and blues practices are not wholly incompatible, and each has informed the other on several remarkable occasions.

The best blues performers, those who deserve the most attention from listeners, combine striking lyrics with a melody that allows all words to be heard and remembered vividly. They also can take a melody and punctuate its musical features with word tricks and gimmicks and instrumental ornaments. The history of blues music is a chronological record of musicians and songs, informed with the trends that shaped the creators and their creations.

Part 2: Historical

Blues Antecedents Through 1830

The first capture into slavery of an African, whether by a European or by another African for sale to a European, for work in North America set into motion a chain of events that lasted more than five hundred years to create the present spectrum of African American music, including the blues. As early as 1510, Spain was shipping Congo captives to its New World colony Hispaniola, because even then the colonists considered West Africans hardier mill and plantation workers than Native Americans. Christian justification was cited, if thinly, through the Genesis stories of Cain (Genesis 4:15), whose black mark was inflicted by God as punishment, and Noah (Genesis 9:25) who cursed his son Ham's descendants to become black and be deemed only as "servants of servants." By 1600, it was reported that the African west coastal population in Angola had declined to the extent that white slavers had to travel for three months into the continent's interior to find new slaves. At that time, British settlers were establishing their first stable colonies, starting with Jamestown in 1607; twelve years later they introduced African slaves to the colonies.

By 1700 the slave route itinerary resembled a triangle, from West Africa to the West Indies ports, and from thence to colonial North America. This route laid the seeds for the development of African Caribbean cultures that would migrate and instill aspects into North American blues cultures, including voodoo and hoodoo. Africans brought to North American

ports in the Gulf Coast and East Coast were purchased mostly by Anglo-born or -descended plantation owners. Some owners discouraged their slaves from continuing African musical and communicative traditions, especially those involving drums, encouraging them to instead adopt Anglo types of music such as hymns, ballads, and dances. Hymns were usually in sixteen-measure or thirty-two-measure forms, but some ballads and dances were twelve-measure three-phrase forms; some examples can be found that date to the early 1500s. The relative lack of musicians in eastern North America during the Colonial, Revolutionary War, and early Federal era, and the great need for them on the farms and plantations far removed from towns, resulted in African Americans being recruited to play European American instruments like the fiddle so they could play for white parties on occasion. The white esteem for talented black fiddle players may be seen on the surviving notices and posters about escaped slave musicians whose reward money was often higher than that offered for common laborers. White ownership of all slaves tightened after 1803, when Eli Whitney's invention, the cotton gin, eased cotton production for market and rejuvenated the cotton industry. At about the same time, first notice is seen in written accounts by whites of black sacred music, in the wake of the Great Awakening religious movement.

Some African lyric and music retentions were kept by the African captives and their African American descendants. Such retentions include singing and drumming, especially in 8/8 meter instead of the European 4/4 meter; instruments like the banjo, diddley bow, and an Africanized practice of the fife and drums; deployment lyrics in a call-and-response fashion between group leader and group, whether in a work field or in a religious setting; the practice of melody as the basis of an improvisation of a musical piece, around which the lyrics and musical accompaniment may change; and the use of one melody as the basis of several pieces during a performance, a practice that can still be heard today among West African griots.

Blues Antecedents, 1830–1865

Foundational U.S. government documents including the Constitution favored white landowning citizens, gave fewer rights to white citizens owning no land, and none to black slaves, who counted as less than one white citizen in early U.S. censuses. The slave question grew with the geographic boundaries as new states were founded and admitted from the Gulf Coast (Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas), on both sides of the Mississippi River (especially Arkansas,

Tennessee, and Missouri), the Northwest Territory (Michigan and Illinois), and even on the West Coast (California). Legislation such as the 1820 Missouri Compromise was meant to contain the controversy over slaves, especially from white abolitionists, but it merely delayed the inevitable Civil War between the slave-holding “Confederate” states and the “free” United States until 1861. Partly on moral principle, partly as a shrewd international diplomacy move, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln formulated the Emancipation Proclamation to free all slaves upon the defeat of the Confederate States of America; the proclamation was approved on January 1, 1863—an ironic date because January 1 was a customary day for major slave auctions and sales. After the 1865 readmittance of the defeated Confederate states to the U.S. government, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution were passed to make all blacks free, voting citizens.

The music relevant to blues would have been the styles performed by black slaves in the eastern and southern states. What survives are treatments of Anglo-American popular and folk songs and sacred hymns. Since sound recording would not be invented until 1877 and not refined until 1888, and African Americans were for the most part not taught to write and lived in oral cultures, the musical sources surviving today are from whites in the form of journals, letters, travel books, and the important 1867 publication *Slave Songs of the United States*. From such sources, it appears that black music of this era was in hymns and spirituals, dance, and popular songs and minstrelsy. The *Slave Songs* book pointed up the importance among blacks of the John Wesley Methodist hymn “Roll Jordan Roll,” in eight measures following an AABA lyric scheme. Spirituals were no less sacred but were more the result of African American tinkering, and their lyrics were more ironic and indicative of a culture alternative to the prevailing white dominance, especially so in “Go Down, Moses” and other spirituals with Exodus themes.

Dance as communal activity among slaves was widely noticed by whites, from the Congo Square Sundays in New Orleans to the innumerable plantation frolics across the South. Dance as virtuoso entertainment was established by William Henry “Juba” Lane (1825–1852) in the 1840s, an African American who established himself dancing Irish jigs but added African American rhythms, including likely the ‘juba’ rhythm (in 8/8 meter, 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8, with stress on the underlined beats). By the end of his short life Lane laid the foundational elements for what is now known as tap dancing. However, white appropriation of black solo dance occurred around 1828 when a white professional dancer, Thomas D.

Rice, learned a shuffling song and dance to the words “I jump Jim Crow” from a crippled black stableman; for the next 30 years Rice performed “Jim Crow” to wide popular acclaim especially among whites and the “Jim Crow” phrase was introduced in American vernacular language, although later in the nineteenth century it would be used as slang for racial segregation.

Rice’s success came during the initial appearance of the minstrel show craze in the 1830s and 1840s. The minstrel show consisted of white entertainers in black makeup imitating African Americans in coarse, stereotyped manners that were acceptable to white audiences. They used the same instruments—sheet music covers for the Virginia Minstrels and the Virginia Serenaders show members in blackface with tambourine, fiddle, banjo, and percussive bones. Later on, African American entertainers often performed in these minstrel shows, often in a sort of parody of a parody. Sometimes black performers would even put on blackface. Today’s audiences would find much objectionable and even politically incorrect in the minstrel show, but in their time the minstrels introduced many African Americanisms into mainstream culture—critical at a time when slavery was becoming a greater national concern—and their musical imitations, however coarse, of blacks became abiding musical repertory for a century, including “Old Dan Tucker,” “Zip Coon” (also known as “Turkey in the Straw”), and “Camptown Races.” Aspects of the latter two songs deserve comment. In the chorus of “Zip Coon,” the four lyric phrases begin respectively on chords I, IV, I, and V, a trend not seen in American popular music until the 1830s. The chorus of Stephen Collins Foster’s “Camptown Races” (1850) is a striking parody of the chorus of “Roll Jordan Roll” as it uses a hymn tune commonly sung by blacks as a basis of imitation for whites imitating blacks; that the musical basis of imitation is on the melody perhaps may be an imitation of the African American music-making process in the traditional manner.

Leading the second lyric phrase on the IV chord may also be noted in the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” sung by Union sympathizers and soldiers during the Civil War. By contrast, the Confederate army sang “Dixie,” which uses the IV chord only as a passing chord at the words “in Dixie land I take my stand.” Using the IV chord to begin second lyric phrases is a nineteenth-century trend that would later be used in the twelve-measure blues chorus.

Pre-Blues, 1865–1890

“Pre-blues” is a convenient term used by historians for the styles of music performed and the kinds of

spoken arts exercised by African Americans that preceded and informed the blues. By using this term, we are purposefully limiting our view for historical hindsight, and we should not mislead ourselves into thinking that the people of this time were conceiving of and rushing headlong into blues music as we now know it.

Immediately after the Civil War, the vast majority of blacks were still on the plantations where they had been slaves. The Union states’ victory and the military occupation of the South, the ensuing enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the writing and passing of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments made African Americans free and full citizens with the power to vote. Although some moved to nearby cities such as Nashville, New Orleans, and Atlanta, and others were landowning farmers, most continued working on farms and plantations as sharecroppers. The sharecropping arrangement held that the landowner would provide the land and seed to the sharecropping farmer, who in turn would give half the resulting crop to the landowner. It was devised to keep the farms and plantations operating after the Civil War, but through little tricks and turns by landowners, it was used to retain blacks in economic slavery.

Work-for-hire opportunities emerged, however hard the work. Along the Mississippi River, the Army Corps of Engineers was building levees to keep the river from overflowing its banks, and thus enabled the clearing of drained land for farming. Railroads were rapidly expanding during this time, and men were needed not only for the construction of new roads but also for the maintenance of existing ones. Work for women ranged from farm work to domestic service.

Education for blacks rose. During and after the Civil War, white missionaries taught reading skills. The partnership of religion and reading in formal education continued in the establishment of black colleges, especially Fisk University in Nashville, Morehouse College, and Mississippi Rust College and Alcorn College (now Alcorn State University).

The result of the rise in literacy was the increased appearance of printed publications of black music, including those prepared by blacks. While the 1867 *Slave Songs* anthology was collected and published by whites, the 1884 *Story of the Fisk Singers* presented a significant repertory of spirituals and other sacred music remembered by the ex-slave members of the singing group, published under the auspices of the still-young black Fisk institution. On the other hand, collections of black popular music abounded, often published as “songsters,” a term also applied to itinerant musicians capable of playing dances, ballads, and later the earliest blues.

Styles of music important to the later emergence of blues were dances, work songs of field hollers and gandy dancers, ballads, and spirituals. Spoken games and toasts like the Dirty Dozens and the Signifying Monkey were shared among African American men in cities, farms, levee crews, and lumber camps. For the kinds of work not done or done often previously, hollers and chants took new shape, especially the axe-song whose first beat was the axe-fall and subsequent beats were the chant line. Among ballads, “Poor Boy a Long Ways from Home” was a post-bellum tune by soldiers and drifters black and white, and the title and lyric components would evolve into early and pre-World War II (“prewar”) blues. The first significant narrative ballad devoted to a black American was “John Henry,” based on an actual 1870s contest between a railroad laborer and steam-powered drill. Its tune was tonal in a European manner, but the song’s wide oral circulation for many years should not blind us to the presence of any African-descended modal melodies. “John Henry” can also be sung and notated in eight measures in quarter notes in 4/4 meter, more in the manner of Anglo ballad models. Harmony in the performance of such songs would have been to enable the instrumental accompaniment. Sophisticated four-part harmony in the Western art music manner would have been heard mostly if not only in the spirituals performances of the Fisk Jubilee Singers and their imitators.

Earliest Blues, 1890–1920

The earliest titled “blues” sheet music publications appeared in 1912, W. C. Handy’s “Memphis Blues” and Hart Wand’s “Dallas Blues,” although a few prototypes can be found in publications like Ben Harney’s “Mr. Johnson” in 1896. The earliest blues sound recording by an African American is “Crazy Blues” sung by Mamie Smith on Okeh Records in 1920. The earliest written description of blues in Mississippi was written by white anthropologist Howard Odum in 1906. However, songs recorded by musicians aged forty or older through 1940 may be datable to earlier times and traceable to nonwriting oral communities, and those songs appear to follow out of the nineteenth-century music trends, in contrast to those in the first sheet music and commercial records, which appear as fully developed blues from the start (and it may have seemed so to most white Americans and others outside the oral cultures that developed the blues in the late nineteenth century).

The blues as described technically in the first section combines a form of twelve measures (or eight or

sixteen measures), a melodic diatonic scale inflected at the third and seventh scale degrees, and the AAB lyric rhyme scheme, and most important it uses the melody as the basis of imitation in the construction of new songs. Its direct prototypes—more immediate to the blues than antecedents, and the songs first adopted in the blues proper—can be found in ballads describing actual incidents from the 1890s, usually now called “blues ballads” or “bad man ballads,” such as “Frankie and Albert,” “Railroad Bill,” and “Stagger Lee.” Quite a few of these songs remained in oral music circulation to be recorded commercially by older songsters and bluesmen in the 1920s and early 1930s, and included a remarkable field recording in Sledge, Mississippi, from 1942 of Sid Hemphill of the ballad of “Jack the Roguish Man.”

“Frankie and Albert” merits a closer look. Its antecedents as “Frankie and Johnny” date far back in the nineteenth century, and there are unverified reports that it could have been sung by Union troops in 1863 during the siege of Vicksburg, but the earliest twelve-measure versions known for sure date from the 1870s through the 1900s. In 1899 in St. Louis, Frankie Baker shot her lover Allan Britt for visiting another woman, and hence became such a notorious story that the song was revised for this current event within the African American oral culture. The song is in twelve measures, three phrases to a I/IV–I/V–I harmonic chord progression, sung to a tempo of 160 beats per minute with the quarter note getting the beat, and the lyric scheme is ABC, with the B line rhyming with the A line, and the C line as a recurring refrain line.

The song was liable to imitation, and its melody to appropriation as the basis for a new song. In the 1890s and early 1900s, a St. Louis underworld figure named Bob McKinney was commemorated in a song apparently based on a variant version of “Frankie and Albert” which in 1927 was recorded for the Vocalion label by Texas songster Henry Thomas. From “Frankie and Johnny” through “Frankie and Albert” to “Bob McKinney,” a preexisting twelve-measure tune was used, with new lyrics substituted in place of the original words. The treatment as recorded by Thomas suggests that African American inflections were introduced in the 1890s to the twelve-measure form, namely the whole-note melodic alternation between the eighth (octave) and seventh scale tones of the prevailing chord, use of half-beats in melody and in syncopation, and microtonal slurs to and from the third scale step.

However unimpressive the process of adopting a preexisting melody in twelve measures and substituting the words may seem, it is the practical beginning of the blues as it was technically described in Part 1.

(It must be remembered that jazz began at the same time, but it adopted the harmonic progression of pre-existing songs and changed the melody as the basis for new jazz pieces.) Additional changes to the blues soon followed: a slowing of tempo from 160 beats per minute to 100 to 120 beats per minute; with the tempo reduced, there would be shorter note-values per word (in music transcription, from quarter note to eighth note); lyrics declaimed during the first two measures of a phrase instead of all four, as a call allowing for an instrumental response; singing in a field holler manner; the assertive emphasis of the first person “I” in lyrics instead of the impersonal “he” or “she” in ballads; and the AAA and AAB lyric schemes. These changes helped to make early blues songs identifiable from their prototypes.

The singing within oral African American communities of bad-man ballads and the development of blues from them took place across the American South, not just in one particular city or rural county. During the 1890s and 1900s, prototypical and early blues were being sung in St. Louis, Memphis, New Orleans, east Texas, the Carolinas, and likely any other place with an African American community. The political and social times were changing, even reversing, from the end of Reconstruction in 1877. Various Southern states passed new voting laws and/or redrew voting districts in effective attempts to strip blacks of their voting power and turned a blind eye to public mob lynchings of blacks. The 1896 *Plessey vs. Ferguson* U.S. Supreme Court decision prescribed “separate but equal” facilities for blacks apart from those for whites. It was a time then for African Americans to group together and affirm positively their identity among themselves. Singing about brothers and sisters “outside the law” was one means of affirmation; reviving what was remembered about West African ecstatic rituals and their accompanying music in the newly founded Church of God in Christ (COGIC) “Holiness” congregations was another.

With the formulation of blues having taken place in oral, mostly poor communities, it was a few years before it was noticed enough by composers to be notated and published as sheet music. The most remarkable of such composers was W. C. Handy, an African American musician who had first heard a slide guitarist around 1903 at a Tutwiler, Mississippi, train station, and a few years earlier saw a rudimentary blues group making much money in tips during a break in one of Handy’s dance band appearances. After having lived in Clarksdale, Mississippi, and Memphis, he moved to New York and founded Handy Brothers Music Company, through which he published his most famous compositions, including “St. Louis

Blues.” The visual look of his publications shaped for many how blues should be notated on paper.

Most of the first-generation bluesmen are unknown, and those few whose names are known (such as Henry Sloan and Earl Harris) are known as teachers of the second generation of bluesmen who would become the first generation on records. Only a handful of the first-generation blues musicians made records, at least Henry Thomas and Leadbelly of Texas, Furry Lewis and Gus Cannon of Memphis, Sid Hemphill of Mississippi, and arguments may be made to include Mance Lipscomb, Jelly Roll Morton, Geechie Wiley, Ma Rainey, and Reverend Gary Davis. Still, listening to their records and considering the scant written information leads to some conjecture. It appears in this 1890s–1920 era that the guitar and piano were replacing the banjo and the fiddle, and the harmonica replacing the push-button accordion. Bad-man ballads “Frankie and Albert,” “Stagger Lee,” and “Casey Jones” were still favorites, as were sacred themes like “Jesus Is a Dying Bed Maker” and “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean” (which shares its melody with “Careless Love”), and early but outright blues like “Don’t You Leave Me Here,” “C. C. Rider,” and “Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor.”

Prewar Era, 1920–1932: The “Classic” Years

“Prewar” refers to the time prior to World War II. Up until then, little appears to have changed for African Americans since 1890, although a significant migration for jobs north to St. Louis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Chicago would begin in the 1910s and continue for the another 40 years. White mainstream media would not notice most blues, not even the nascent jazz collector press in the early 1940s. Even black newspaper inclusion of blues would be limited for the most part to record company advertisements, especially for record labels like Paramount, Victor, Columbia, and Vocalion. Happily those labels and others recorded much blues of city and rural styles, including barely literate musicians who were performing mostly for close-knit oral communities.

The first blues artists sought by record labels in the wake of Mamie Smith’s 1920 OKeh label hit “Crazy Blues” were women singers active in cabarets, the TOBA circuit, and tent shows. Early on, Alberta Hunter was a star for Paramount, but later Ma Rainey began recording for the same label in 1923, and Bessie Smith for Columbia in 1924. But there were many others too, including Lucille Hegamin, Victoria Spivey, Clara Smith (no relation to Bessie Smith), Edith Wilson, and Rosa Henderson. On a few of these singers’ records there were a number of

young jazz musicians, including Willie “The Lion” Smith (for Mamie Smith) and Louis Armstrong (for Bessie Smith, Chippie Hill, Sippie Wallace, and many others). Sometimes the singers developed their own songs, but often they collaborated with songwriters and producers like Mayo Williams, Perry Bradford, and Clarence Williams, so the extent of lyric improvisation on these songs could be limited. All the same, these singers showed the viability of blues on record, and they sustained its appearance on records through the end of the 1920s.

In 1926, southern, male talent was tapped, beginning with Blind Lemon Jefferson of east Texas and Blind Blake of south Georgia/north Florida. Their early success paved the way to recorded posterity for their southern contemporaries, whether rivals or associates. From east Texas also came Blind Willie Johnson, a singer/guitarist of sacred music who was one of Columbia’s best-selling black artists with songs like “I Know His Blood Can Make Me Whole,” “Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning,” and a stark, gripping instrumental version of the crucifixion hymn “Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground.” Meanwhile Jefferson was recording hit after hit for Paramount until his death in the winter of 1929–1930, including “Matchbox Blues” and “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean.” Additional Texas talent was brought in by Will Ed Kemble, especially Elzadie Robinson, Will Ezell, and Rambling Willard Thomas.

In 1929, Mississippi Delta guitarist and singer Charlie Patton scored a major record hit with “Pony Blues” for Paramount. That he was not the earliest Mississippi bluesman to record—that was probably Freddie Spruell in 1926—or the first to have a hit record—Tommy Johnson and Ishmon Bracey’s releases for Victor in 1928 sold quite well—attests to the depth of blues talent and the competitiveness in the Delta. Cotton farming expanded to near-industrial proportions with the opening of plantations like Dockery’s in the 1890s, with many laborers and farmers arriving and with them musicians for weekend entertainment at plantation jukes and suppers. It has been said that the further north toward Memphis one proceeds in the Delta, the keener the musical competition, and it is no accident that Patton, Son House, Willie Brown, Memphis Minnie, and Robert Johnson, among others, lived near the Delta’s north tip, at least for a while. Jackson, the state capital, was where Tommy Johnson and Bracey were most active, along with Johnny Temple. Just northwest of Jackson was the cotton hamlet of Bentonia, where Henry Stuckey, Skip James, and Jack Owens performed minor-mode blues. West of Jackson was the Bolton/Edwards area, where Patton was born. It was also where the Chatmon family lived, whose brothers,

Walter Vincson and Lonnie Carter, formed the Mississippi Sheiks string band and had the influential hit “Sitting on Top of the World” in 1930. In the same area, Bo Carter had a stellar career with his entertaining and risqué series of records. South of Jackson is Hattiesburg, where the Graves brothers and the underrecorded pianist Cooney Vaughan performed. There were also a number of rootless musicians, including Little Brother Montgomery, whose “Vicksburg Blues” was widely heard and copied. Even so, when “prewar” Mississippi blues is mentioned, the Delta and the Patton–House–Robert Johnson lineage comes to many minds.

Scattered across the South were a number of intriguing personalities who had made evocative records. In Atlanta were Peg Leg Howell, who recorded most of his blues and songs for Columbia, and Barbecue Bob and Blind Willie McTell. In Alabama was Ed Bell, whose “Mamlish Blues” remains a puzzling title to scholars, Clifford Gibson, Jaybird Coleman, George “Bullet” Williams, Edward Thompson, and Marshall Owens. In Louisiana was accordionist Amadie Ardoin who established what was to become known as zydeco. Between Texas and Mississippi, Louisiana was also a tramping ground for blues musicians shuttling between the three states, and mixtures of Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi blues elements can be heard in the surviving recordings of journey people Sam Collins, Geechie Wiley, and King Solomon Hill (Joe Holmes). West Tennessee had Sleepy John Estes and Willie Newburn, who made the first recording of the blues standard “Roll and Tumble Blues” in 1929.

Jug bands had a considerable presence in the 1920s. Believed to have been active as early as the 1900s as part of the medicine shows and minstrel shows, the instrumentation was banjo, guitar, kazoo, spoons or bones, washtub basses, and the namesake jug as a functional tuba. Relatively few jug bands made it to records, but those who did were the Memphis-based groups Memphis Jug Band and Gus Cannon’s Jug Stompers, and Louisville, Kentucky–based groups including Whistler’s Jug Band. Later jug-band styles featured the harmonica, which Will Shade played in the Memphis Jug Band, and Noah Lewis for Gus Cannon.

In 1928 two widely influential records were issued. One was “Tight Like That” by guitarist Tampa Red and pianist and former Ma Rainey sideman Thomas A. Dorsey. Although it had been preceded by Charlie Jackson’s “Shake That Thing” (1925), “Tight Like That” was a massive hit, providing the single-entendre hokum style with one of its most adopted melodies, and the 4 + 8 lyric format. The other record was “How Long How Long Blues” by pianist and vocalist Leroy

Carr of Indianapolis, Indiana, with guitarist Scrapper Blackwell. The song also had its precedents, certainly back to 1925 with Ida Cox's "How Long Daddy How Long" (also with Charlie Jackson accompanying). But Carr brought two new characteristics: an easy, crooning vocal delivery into the microphone, whereas previous and contemporary blues singers had been projecting and bellowing as they would in a large club or an outdoor picnic; and an easy, four-to-the-bar bass pulse in common 4/4 meter. Carr's "How Long How Long" established him and Blackwell as a recording duo, and it spawned hundreds of imitations on records and off. It has been said it was the first song learned by Robert Johnson and by Muddy Waters.

One of the most important cities for the development of urban blues was St. Louis. St. Louis musicians were hugely influenced by Carr's style when it arrived. Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, Lonnie Johnson reigned supreme with his own brand of self-deprecating blues and virtuoso jazz guitar numbers. The leading pianists, Wesley Wallace, Romeo Nelson, and Edith North Johnson, continued to exercise their own impressive piano chops in instrumentals, but behind singers like Alice Moore they were playing the 4/4 bass pulse instead of the ornate accompaniments played by Will Ezell, Porter Grainger, and Clarence Williams behind the classic blueswomen. By the early 1930s, Roosevelt Sykes, Walter Davis, and Peetie Wheatstraw (William Bunch) were making piano and vocal records comparable to Carr's. A few St. Louis guitarists made it to records, notably Teddy Darby, Henry Townsend, Clifford Jordan, and J. D. Short.

"Boogie-woogie" pianism became more widely heard during the 1920s. This style usually employed bass runs up and down the scale in 8/8 meter, instead of the octave leaps in ragtime and stride piano then in practice. Key performances on records were "The Rocks" by George Thomas (as by Clay Custer, in 1923), "Cow Cow Blues" by Cow Cow Davenport (1925), "Honky Tonk Train Blues" by Meade Lux Lewis (1927), and "Pine Top Blues" and "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie" by Clarence "Pine Top" Smith (1928). The boogie bass runs formulated by these musicians were imitated by other pianists, orchestrated for big bands in the 1930s and 1940s, and adopted by the rhythm sections in electric blues bands and rock bands after World War II.

Prewar Era, 1930–1942: The Great Depression Years

In October 1929, the stock market crashed and from there the Great Depression began. With jobs becoming scarce, and the record industry falling in

1931 to six percent of what it had been in the late 1920s, many blues musicians found themselves losing record contracts, or simply falling out of music altogether. Even the biggest recording stars like Bessie Smith, Blind Willie Johnson, Charlie Patton, Leroy Carr, and Lonnie Johnson had to rely more on live appearances, which were becoming less lucrative as their audiences had less money to spend, whether in the cities or on the farms. For nearly two years, from Summer 1932 to Spring 1934, new recording including blues was nearly halted, effecting an economic blackout. Among the very few recording acts who did record in 1933 were Roosevelt Sykes, Josh White, the Sparks Brothers, and Lucille Bogan with Walter Roland. When the recording industry began to recover in 1934, the first records by Carr, Sykes, and Wheatstraw revealed considerable cross-influence during the fallow period. Other new artists emerged as well, notably Bumble Bee Slim and Georgia White, Big Joe Williams, and John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. By 1940 the record industry would return to its pre-Depression sales, although recordings of blues and of Mississippi blues in particular were considerably reduced.

In the early 1930s, north Alabama, including the mill towns of Birmingham and Huntsville, had a distinctive group of blues musicians. Pianist Jabo Williams made a series of rare yet pounding performances, including "Ko Ko Mo Blues" and "Fat Mamma Blues" for Paramount in 1932. His protégé Walter Roland would record his own version of "Fat Mamma Blues" as "Fat Lady Blues" in 1934, but his best performances were as piano sidekick to vocalist Lucille Bogan. Bogan was no newcomer, as she had been recording since 1923 and had scored an influential hit with "Black Angel Blues" in 1930. But the introduction of new melodies and new styles of piano accompaniment in the late 1920s led to new expressions for Bogan, Roland, and their guitar associate Sonny Scott, as they preserved them in 1933–1935 on records like "Red Cross Man" and the notorious racy version of "Shave 'Em Dry."

Kansas City was riding high in the 1920s and 1930s as a "wide open" city for drinking and gambling establishments in the era of the Thomas Pendergast political machine. That such establishments were flourishing meant high demands for music, which in the black clubs meant jazz/blues bands led by Bennie Moten, Count Basie (with tenor saxophonist Lester Young and singers Helen Humes and Jimmy Rushing), Harlan Leonard, and Andy Kirk (with pianist Mary Lou Williams). Blues shouting and boogie-woogie piano were provided by Big Joe Turner with pianist Pete Johnson. Even after the Pendergast era ended, one more notable group emerged, that led by

pianist Jay McShann, with alto saxophonist Charlie Parker and vocalist Walter Brown.

The Carolinas and Georgia Piedmont style of blues came to records in the mid- to late 1930s. During the previous decade a distinctive guitar style had formed out of dances, ragtime, and early blues. Blind Blake and Willie McTell were important in that formulation, but the core performances of 1930s Piedmont blues were those by Blind Boy Fuller and his teacher Reverend Gary Davis. Piedmont was (and still is) very much in the blues tradition—it made use of melodic themes like “Kokomo Blues,” but a comparison of McTell’s “Savannah Mama” (1934) to Robert Johnson’s “Sweet Home Chicago” (1936) will yield stylistic differences amid the traditional similarities. The Piedmont style continued with Brownie McGhee with Sonny Terry, followed by John Cephas with Phil Wiggins.

Recording opportunities for Mississippi musicians in the mid- to late 1930s were rare, but those who seized them were young musicians in the generation after Charlie Patton, such as Bukka White and Robert Johnson. White had recorded for Victor in 1930, but it was his 1937 Vocalion record “Shake ‘Em on Down” that gained him fame outside Mississippi. Unfortunately, a prison term for a shooting kept him from enjoying the immediate rewards, but the sales of his records were high and sustained enough as to lead to a session on his 1940 release from prison, when he recorded “Fixin’ to Die Blues” among other new classics. Johnson had begun by imitating Carr’s “How Long How Long Blues” and Son House’s “Walking Blues” (“My Black Mama”) and “Preaching the Blues,” but in the early 1930s he acquired a wide breadth of guitar technique whether by imitating Skip James through Johnnie Temple, or by adapting piano-based songs like Bumble Bee Slim’s “Cruel Hearted Woman” (1935) for his own “Kind Hearted Woman” (1936). His best-selling record was “Terraplane Blues,” a highway blues to a Peetie Wheatstraw-style melody with guitar fills including heavily plucked tonic and tonic-seventh chords. Johnson died in 1938 under mysterious circumstances, but the commercial records made in 1940 and 1941 by Robert Lockwood and Frank Edwards showed that Johnson exerted an influence at that time yet to be measured.

Migration to the northern cities was increasing into the 1930s. One group that is emblematic of that migration was the Harlem Hamfats, who were organized for Decca by black producer Mayo Williams. In truth, the Hamfats were not from Harlem; two of its members Charlie and Joe McCoy were from Mississippi, but its style was in city jazz, especially in the Louis Armstrong-influenced trumpet of Herb

Morand, who came from New Orleans. How the raw Delta sound of Patton and House would be assimilated when young Mississippi laborers came north became a matter for the 1940s.

Another Mississippi musician of the White-Johnson generation was Big Joe Williams. His first recordings in 1935 have a strong imprint of Charlie Patton, but it wasn’t long before he adapted his style to the RCA Bluebird label he was recording for. Lester Melrose was the main force behind the Bluebird blues sessions, acting as talent scout, publisher, and producer. His leading artists were Tampa Red, John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, Washboard Sam, Memphis Minnie, and Big Bill Broonzy. All of these artists were from the South, but Melrose set them in front of rhythm sections that gave a sleek, urbane sound—in fact, an intermediary stage in the transition from multilayered group to homophonic ensemble then unfolding.

From Players to Ensembles

A crucial transition in American vernacular music including the blues was from multilayered polyphonic approaches to music making with several players/singers performing individual, identifiable melodies simultaneously, to the homophonic approach with several players performing to a common beat or metric pulse with the singer and/or lead instrumentalist (saxophone, harmonica, guitar) performing in an ornamental if distinctive fashion. This transition occurred across American popular music but it especially affected jazz, blues, and country music, and it contributed to the massive cross-influence among those types of music in the 1940s and 1950s, culminating in rock ‘n’ roll. The homophonic approach demands the creation of a rhythm section, whether of one, two, three, or more musicians, to maintain a steady beat according to the meter (usually 4/4) and to coordinate it to the harmonic chord progression of the song being performed. The result of this combination of rhythm and harmony is the “big beat,” which when emphasized (especially amplified as in rock and rap) is attractive to listeners. Its prevalence in vernacular music practice since the 1930s helps to define what is “modern” in jazz, blues, and country music. Examples of this transition for jazz include the Louis Armstrong recordings with the Hot Five and Hot Seven and as a solo artist from 1925 through 1932, and the Bennie Moten and Count Basie Kansas City-style jazz of the 1930s; for country music, there are the 1930s recordings of early Western swing with Milton Brown and Bob Wills together and separately; and for blues there are the Leroy Carr 1928–1935 recordings

with Scrapper Blackwell functioning as ornament to Carr's piano bass; the St. Louis pianists including Roosevelt Sykes, Walter Davis, and Peetie Wheatstraw; and the prewar Mississippi case examples found in the commercial recordings of Robert Johnson, the Graves brothers and Cooney Vaughan as the Mississippi Jook Band, and the Library of Congress recordings of Muddy Waters. Also, the foundation function of the rhythm section and its need to keep it intact helped the phenomenon of long-lasting band lineups, including the Chicago blues bands from the 1950s onward. The adoption of the homophonic approach from those in the 1930s by the first rock musicians in the 1950s is the final stage of this transition, and it may be demonstrated by comparing "Brain Cloudy Blues" recorded by Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys with vocalist Tommy Duncan (1946, Columbia 37313) with "Milk Cow Blues Boogie" recorded by Elvis Presley (1954, Sun 215).

Postwar Blues, 1943–1954

Since co-writing and performing "Tight Like That" in 1928, Thomas A. Dorsey turned exclusively to gospel music, writing new standards like "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" and "Peace in the Valley" that would shape how many blacks would sing for many generations, not just sacred music but also the blues. Singers were stepping away from singing like field hands, and Dorsey's early singers, Sallie Martin, Roberta Martin, and Mahalia Jackson, set new ways of singing in general, especially Jackson's forceful manner of hammering a top note seemingly from above. Gospel quartets were another development. The Golden Gate Quartet was a 1930s favorite, succeeded by the Fairfield Four in the 1940s. By the 1950s, some quartets incorporated dramatic knee drops and scream ornaments into their frenzied music, including the Sensational Nightingales, the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Soul Stirrers, and the Harmonizing Four.

World War II shaped most American lives during the early 1940s. Many blacks served in the armed forces, although in units segregated from whites. Elmore James served in Guam; Howlin' Wolf was stationed in Seattle. For blues musicians not involved in the war, recording activity was limited by the two-year American Federation of Musicians union recording ban in 1942–1944, and the U.S. government's V-Disc program to the Armed Forces, which had some jazz but little blues. Also, the high numbers of young men drafted, and the continuing need for industrial supplies, resulted in large numbers of good

and immediate paying jobs becoming available, especially in northern cities.

The Great Migration of blacks moving from the south to the north and to the West Coast had been going on for several decades, and the wartime availability of industrial jobs in Detroit and Chicago beckoned black labor like never before. Along with better, more regular pay than could be had on southern plantations, there was a new opportunity for a better living style and less racial harassment from governing whites; for these reasons Chicago and other northern cities were regarded as the Promised Land, and the migration as an Exodus. Blues performers followed their audiences north, staying put with them or making return trips for gigs down-home.

Los Angeles and the Bay Area cities of Oakland and San Francisco were common destinations for blacks heading west. Jump blues, featuring raucous blues-shouting singers, raspy tenor saxes, and coordinated trumpet sections, had its antecedents in Kansas City and St. Louis, but its swing feel was in keeping with 1940s musicianship from the bands of Chick Webb, Lionel Hampton, Lucky Millinder, and Cab Calloway. A key figure was Louis Jordan, a first-rate bandleader, alto saxophonist, and singer who employed excellent rhythm section musicians in his Tympany Five to maintain the big beat, and prototype electric guitarists Carl Hogan and Carl Jennings who played single-note solos that would later influence Chuck Berry. The great singers in the jump band format were Wynonie Harris, Roy Brown, and Roy Milton, with Big Joe Turner moving from Kansas City to Los Angeles. Smoother-voiced singers were popular too, including Cecil Gant, who was dubbed "the sepia Sinatra." Charles Brown, the most popular blues performer of the immediate postwar era, and Jimmy Witherspoon were his successors in the 1950s. Nat "King" Cole was capable of an influential blues turn in "Route 66" in his Trio, and Ray Charles's first records reveal the influence of Cole and Brown. Other newcomers to the West Coast were Lowell Fulson, Percy Mayfield, Pee Wee Crayton, and Amos Milburn. Among women, Hadda Brooks stood out, her early hits helping to establish the Modern record label, and she even made a few appearances in Hollywood films.

Chicago was another destination in the migration; musicians often headed straight to Maxwell Street, where blues and gospel performers played for shoppers on Sundays. Key figures who moved from Mississippi to the Windy City were Muddy Waters in 1943, who soon afterwards adapted his slide guitar technique to his first electric guitar, then by the end of the 1940s had assembled with guitarist Jimmy Rogers one of the first electric Chicago blues groups of two guitars, harmonica, bass, piano, and drums; Howlin'

Wolf, a longtime mid-South favorite who came north in the early 1950s; Elmore James, whose Broomdusters were surpassed only by the Waters and Wolf bands. Also in Chicago were Aleck Miller, aka "Sonny Boy Williamson II," a harmonica giant who had made many popular and important records for Trumpet in Jackson, Mississippi, who came north to record for Chess Records with the assistance of guitarist Robert Lockwood; Bo Diddley from McComb, Mississippi, who chugged out "shave-and-a-haircut, two bits" rhythm patterns on his rectangular Gretsch guitars; and Willie Dixon and Jimmy Reed, who with Eddie Taylor turned out some of the signature tunes of the late 1950s including "Big Boss Man." Much of the music they recorded was similar to what they were playing in Mississippi during the 1930s, including songs first recorded by Charlie Patton, Son House, Robert Johnson, and Willie Newburn, but to a bigger homophonic beat that any of these predecessors (except Johnson) could have foreseen. Most of these groups recorded for Chess, although Reed recorded for Vee-Jay.

Detroit had a blues scene of its own, as far back as when Blind Blake recorded "Hastings Street" in 1929, through Calvin Frazier's arrival in 1937 from Arkansas. The most famous bluesman found there was John Lee Hooker, whose first record "Boogie Chillen'" presented the basic guitar style that he would improve on later songs like "Boom Boom." Also notable were Eddie Burns and Baby Boy Warren, and the JVB label which was operated locally with local talent.

The rise of Mississippi-émigré postwar blues coincided with the decline of Lester Melrose's roster of artists. John Lee Williamson "Sonny Boy I" was fatally stabbed with an ice pick in 1947. Broonzy, Tampa Red, and Memphis Minnie continued, but their careers were stopped before 1960 by, respectively, cancer, family tragedy, and stroke. Big Joe Williams journeyed back and forth between north and south. Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup was one of Melrose's last discoveries, enjoying several hits during the waning Bluebird era.

There was still some talent to be found in Mississippi and the mid-South, even after the leading bluesmen left. Ike Turner led a band with vocalist Jackie Brenston, and their record "Rocket 88" was a hit in 1952. Turner served as a talent scout for Modern and other labels, and it was he who alerted Modern to Howlin' Wolf, and to Houston Boines and Charley Booker of Greenville, Mississippi. Trumpet Records of Jackson, owned by Lillian McMurry, recorded not only Sonny Boy Williamson II and Elmore James, but also the Huff brothers, Willie Love, Big Joe Williams, and Willie Clayton, as well as a wide variety of country and gospel acts. Other great Mississippi bluesmen of

this time were Guitar Slim (Eddie Jones), who performed "The Things I Used to Do," and J. B. Lenoir, the great composer who wrote and performed topical songs on the Korean and Vietnam Wars and on the Civil Rights Movement, and who also wrote the post-war standard "Mama Talk to Your Daughter."

One of the greatest Mississippi talents, B. B. King, moved to Memphis in 1949. For several years King's base of operations was WDIA, a pioneering black radio station where his regular show was scheduled among those of Nat D. Williams and Rufus Thomas. Beale Street remained at the center of black Memphis nightlife as it always had since W. C. Handy's day, where on a typical night one would hear young up-and-coming musicians like Bobby Bland and Roscoe Gordon, and street regulars like Big Memphis Ma Rainey. Local whites in the music business paid attention to Beale Street, including Sam Phillips who recorded much of the Beale blues with options to sell to Modern and Chess, and, later, for his own Sun label, and Dewey Phillips (no relation) who mixed black and white styles on his evening WHBQ radio show. Radio presentation of blues was rapidly evolving, from fifteen-minute sponsored shows (although KFFA in Helena, Arkansas, had been broadcasting its legendary King Biscuit Time blues since 1940) to shifts of "disk jockeys" playing three-minute records. One of the most powerful radio stations in the mid-South was WLAC in Nashville, featuring "John R." Richbourg and Bill "Hoss" Allen.

East Texas entered postwar blues with guitarists. T-Bone Walker hailed from the Dallas region, but he made his long-standing mark when he moved to the West Coast and recorded "Stormy Monday." In 1947, filling in for an ill Walker, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown performed on guitar so impressively that the club owner Don Robey signed him to a management contract. Brown's "Okie Dokie Stomp" became a test piece for blues guitarists for many years. Robey moved into the record business initially with Peacock and then with Duke. Two of his later artists were Johnny Ace, legendary for his losing game of Russian roulette on New Year's Eve, 1952, and Bobby "Blue" Bland who after a stint in the army began recording for Duke a long string of hits with "I Pity the Fool." Some local musicians stayed outside Robey's growing music empire. One such artist was the prolific Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, who could improvise new lyrics to suit any topic or occasion and fit them to a tune new or old, some going back to Leroy Carr.

The Southeast was changing, with Atlanta emerging as a metropolitan center. Peg Leg Howell and Willie McTell were still playing, and each would have chances to record after World War II. In Atlanta the club owner Otis Ealey managed Elmore James in

1954. Frank Edwards and others were notable as local musicians for many years. Among the Carolinians, Blind Boy Fuller had died in 1941, and Reverend Gary Davis and Brownie McGhee had moved north, leaving Richard Trice and a few others.

Several different black styles were developing in Louisiana in the 1950s. Swamp blues was a laid-back style, with a slow tempo, reverberant beats, and high vocals; much of it was based around Baton Rouge and recorded by Excello Records, featuring Slim Harpo, Lightnin' Slim, Lazy Lester, Silas Hogan, and Lonesome Sundown. Zydeco was an eclectic combination of Louisiana folk and popular music, and it was formulated by such powerful musical personalities as Clifton Chenier, Boozoo Chavis, and Rockin' Dopsie. New Orleans remained a musical center for pianists especially local hero Professor Longhair, the renowned Fats Domino, and, late in his long life, Roosevelt Sykes.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, women singers appeared in front of jump bands and led the way to more sophisticated styles. Picking up where Helen Humes left off, singers like Ruth Brown, Big Maybelle Smith, LaVern Baker, and Esther Phillips were stand-out names, while others like Marie Adams remain cult favorites. Dinah Washington is perhaps now the most imitated singer in recent jump blues revival bands.

Postwar Blues Upheavals, 1954–1970

Two musical upheavals came in the mid-1950s, both brought about in part by the blues. Soul music is generally dated as beginning when the manners of gospel singing and piano playing in church were applied to blues and popular music. Ray Charles tried the combination in 1954 with “I Got a Woman” and “Hallelujah, I Love Her So,” to equal parts derision and applause from audiences. Nonetheless, he had tapped into a new expression, which he would explore further in “Drown in My Own Tears,” “Lonely Avenue,” “Leave My Woman Alone” (compare to Washington Phillips’ “I Was Born to Preach the Gospel”) and take to unparalleled heights in “What’d I Say.” Sam Cooke came from the opposite direction, from gospel quartet to pop, when he left the Soul Stirrers to become a solo pop artist. His early hits “You Send Me” and “Cupid” established his pop career, but the gospel tinge was still evident in songs like “Bring It on Home to Me” (with protégé Lou Rawls) and the civil rights anthem “A Change Is Gonna Come.” Cooke’s untimely death in 1964 by shooting left many “what if?” possibilities, some of which were fulfilled by Otis Redding, the singer at the Stax studio in Memphis who from 1964 to 1967

tapped deeply the sanctified feeling in many of his songs. Redding too died unexpectedly in a plane crash, but by then the broad characteristics of soul were identified and set for the blues to depart from and return to in later decades.

Rock 'n' roll made a bigger mainstream media splash because in large part it was attracting the ears of white teenagers. Regardless of what was the “first” rock 'n' roll record, whether the 1936 Mississippi Jook Band recordings or the 1936–1937 Robert Johnson sessions, the 1940s Decca sessions of Louis Jordan, the 1951 “Rocket 88” by Jackie Brenston with Ike Turner, or the 1953 “Rock This Joint” by Bill Haley, it can be safely be said that whites in the South became aware of rock through the Sun issues of Elvis Presley, and those in the north through Bill Haley’s “Rock Around the Clock,” especially when it was on the soundtrack in the film “Blackboard Jungle.” Exactly why the teenagers adopted these records and their blues antecedents behind them is open to debate, but several aspects should be noted. One was that the homophonic big beat played by the bass and drums could be felt from the bandstand via the floor to the listeners’ standing feet, providing a thrilling effect. Another was that many blues songs reflected the second-class status of blacks, a situation that many white teenagers identified with, at least temporarily until they became adults. A third aspect was that the blues musicians sang of sexuality, which led some listeners and dancers to question middle-class morality. The impact of rock 'n' roll was not merely musical, but also visual. Consider the infamous “waist-up” camerawork on Elvis Presley during a 1957 appearance on CBS-TV’s *Ed Sullivan Show* that excluded his gyrations, the very movements he picked up while watching blues entertainers and black (and white) gospel groups in his hometown of Memphis; it was too new and seemed to threaten mainstream America. But the uproar did not keep Presley and other early rockers from adapting or imitating blues artists or from resetting country music standards into rock versions, hence producing rockabilly on through the end of the 1950s. There are two views from black culture to be considered and researched: the extent to which black performing artists were ripped off for songs credited to others as composers (Big Mama Thornton’s version of Leiber and Stoller’s “Hound Dog” is a case in point), and the propriety of taking a manner of performance for black sacred spiritual ecstatic ritual and resetting it for white popular music tastes. It is questionable to progress from Hank Ballard’s “Work with Me, Annie” through Etta James’s “The Wallflower” to the modified 1955 version of James’s version as “Dance with Me Henry” by white singer Georgia Gibbs.

The Civil Rights Movement was a social upheaval that coincided with the musical ones. Blacks were uniting into political groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and religiously affiliated ones like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and, on the militant side, the Nation of Islam led by Elijah Muhammad with Malcolm X as a leading spokesman. Important victories were being won, starting with the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which overturned *Plessy vs. Ferguson*; the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which reaffirmed the rights for blacks to vote; and the first black enrollments at southern white universities like the University of Mississippi in 1962 and the University of Alabama in 1963. These events were commemorated in various blues and folk songs, none finer than those composed by J. B. Lenoir, who up until then was a Chicago club star best known for the West Side standard “Mama Talk to Your Daughter,” who was now composing “Down in Mississippi” and “Shot on James Meredith.” The civil rights march was perilous: NAACP officer Medger Evers was shot and killed in Jackson, Mississippi in 1963, and three civil rights workers were killed near Philadelphia, Mississippi, in June 1964.

That same weekend in June, two independently working teams of three white men each traveled to Mississippi, one looking for Son House, the other looking for Skip James. Each team was part of a blues rediscovery movement within the folk music revival begun the previous year with the location of John Hurt and Bukka White. Skip James was found quickly enough in a Tunica, Mississippi, hospital, but Son House turned out to be living in Rochester, New York, having traveled the same long road there like other Mississippians to northern opportunity, including his younger neighbor Joe Beard. House’s rediscovery was especially good news, because he was regarded as a teacher to Robert Johnson, whose recordings had lately been reissued in 1961 by Columbia Records to wide acclaim by jazz and folk music listeners. Through the 1960s, additional elder bluesmen were found and brought to folk festival and club stages including Reverend Robert Wilkins, Reverend Gary Davis, Sleepy John Estes with Yank Rachel and Hammie Nixon, Johnnie Temple, and Roosevelt Sykes.

Other blues figures were not disregarded, especially Muddy Waters with Otis Spann, Howlin’ Wolf with Hubert Sumlin, Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, Lightnin’ Hopkins, and Big Mama Thornton, all of them enjoying new exposure to white audiences in the 1960s. The question remained of who among active musicians, old and young, was waiting to be discovered

the first time around. Texas had Mance Lipscomb, old enough to have been of the songster era found. The northern Mississippi hills yielded Fred McDowell, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Othar Turner, and R. L. Burnside, while the Delta had Houston Stackhouse, James “Son” Thomas, and Wade Walton, and living in Bentonia were Henry Stuckey and Jack Owens with Bud Spires. Chicago had many older Mississippi transplants from the Robert Johnson era like Johnny Shines and David “Honeyboy” Edwards. White listeners new to the blues eventually realized what many black audiences north and south knew all along: that there was a younger generation playing blues in their own way. The Chicago West Side players were making their mark, reforming the tough electric Mississippi-transplant sound of Waters, Wolf, Elmore James, and Sonny Boy Williamson II with the single-note solos of B. B. King and the virtuosity of Little Walter; among them were Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, and Magic Sam, with saxophonists Eddie Shaw, A. C. Reed, and Buddy’s brother Phil Guy, and drummers Sam Lay and Odie Payne.

Meanwhile, these rediscoveries and new discoveries were being chronicled in blues magazines in Europe. *Blues Unlimited* and *Blues World* in 1963 were the earliest magazines to start up and to last through the 1960s. *Soul Bag* and *Jefferson* followed, and *Living Blues* in 1970 was the first white American-published magazine. Research and scholarship entered a new level in 1959 with publication of Samuel Charters’ *The Country Blues*, and the following year with Paul Oliver’s *Blues Fell This Morning*; these foundational texts inspired many young researchers.

There was a growing white involvement in the culture supporting blues. In Chicago were Ray Flerlage, a photographer on the South Side who took some of the most memorable photographs of postwar blues artists and their audiences; Bob Koester, the record dealer who had moved from St. Louis to Chicago and who sought and encouraged old and new talent from Roosevelt Sykes to Magic Sam; and Michael Bloomfield, who learned guitar from bluesmen such as Big Joe Williams and Muddy Waters, assisted in the film shooting of the Maxwell Street film *And This Is Free*, and was a cornerstone in the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, a great, racially mixed blues-rock group. Additional white contributions were made in folk and acoustic blues by guitarists Ry Cooder and by John Paul Hammond, the son of impresario and record producer John Hammond who had worked with Bessie Smith and Count Basie in the 1930s. Stefan Grossman had taken lessons as a teenager from Reverend Gary Davis, and later would become a teacher and transcriber of classic pre-World War II guitar blues performances.

The way blues records were being issued was changing. Through 1958 blues records were for the most part singles in 78-rpm or 45-rpm formats, and 33 1/3-rpm LPs were for the most part collections of 45-rpm singles. Blues rediscovery artists like John Hurt, Son House, and Bukka White were allowed a little flexibility in music presentation as part of the folk music LP recording and producing practices. But it is widely acknowledged that Delmark Records, run by Bob Koester in Chicago, showed how a working band could be presented on commercial records, especially with the 1965 album *Hoodoo Man Blues* by Junior Wells; its critical and commercial success was followed by Magic Sam's *West Side Soul* (1967). Since then, blues issues have been on LP and later CD formats, with singles being made for the jukebox market in black neighborhoods north and south.

Records were the main means of influence in the United Kingdom, not only on record collectors and critics, but also on young Anglo musicians as well. Exports and later European issues of blues recordings from the Chess, Vee-Jay, and Excello labels were played for study and imitation; Chess's license with Pye resulted in many blues records by Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, and Bo Diddley becoming widely available. Slim Harpo, Rufus Thomas, and Sonny Boy Williamson II also became significant there. The annual American Folk Blues Festival tours provided valuable opportunities for budding Anglo blues performers to see and hear how their favorite bluesmen sang and played in the ways they had previously heard only on records. And so it was that Alexis Korner, John Mayall, Cyril Davies, and Graham Bond, with the individual members of the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, and the Animals trained themselves in blues, and prepared themselves for their roles in the British Invasion of American popular music markets spearheaded by the Beatles in 1964.

It seemed ironic that British groups were coming to America to play to young white teenagers—a generation removed from those teenagers who had adopted black music in the 1950s—the very music to be found in the black ghettos and blue-collar neighborhoods. Even more, a few of these groups sought to record in the same studios as their blues heroes, like the Yardbirds in Sun Studios in Memphis in 1965, and the Rolling Stones in Chess Studios in Chicago in the same year. They were riding higher waves of visibility, promotion, and profit than their heroes, and it was uncommon but notable for a few of them to offer back some better-paying opportunities.

Cases may be made for each of the three Kings—B. B., Freddy, and Albert. B. B. King in the mid-1960s was the biggest star of the three, but even when his classic concert album *Live at the Regal* (1964) was

recorded and released, he was playing for modest fees to black audiences. His mainstream breakthrough was aided by his playing Las Vegas in 1968 and by the Rolling Stones' invitation to open for them on their 1969 tour, and secured with his 1970 hit "The Thrill Is Gone." Freddy King's classic "Hide Away" guitar solo, itself taken from Elmore James and Hound Dog Taylor, was copied by Eric Clapton on John Mayall's *Bluesbreakers* LP (1965), a classic blues-rock primer for white British and American guitarists, but like B. B., Freddy slugged it out on chitlin circuit gigs and the occasional British club tour until he too received offers to tours with the popular white rock groups. Albert King's 1960s work was appropriated as much as B. B.'s, whether when his song "Born Under a Bad Sign" was recorded by Cream in 1968, or his rendition of Fenton Robinson's "As the Years Go Passing By" became the model for "Since I've Been Loving You" by the group Led Zeppelin in 1970, or the vocal opening of the same performance for the signature guitar riff by Eric Clapton for "Layla" in 1972. The appropriations from Albert King were less obvious than those from B. B. and Freddy, and his due was to be less forthcoming through the end of the 1970s.

As 1970 dawned, an era in blues seemed to be closing. Among the rediscoveries, John Hurt died in 1966, Skip James in 1969, and Son House toured England for the last time in 1970. Talent that could have led the blues into the next decade died young—J. B. Lenoir in 1966 in a car crash, Magic Sam in 1969 from a heart attack, and Little Walter in 1967 from a savage beating. One of the most powerful figures in the Chicago music business, Leonard Chess, died suddenly of a heart attack, but it happened after he had sold Chess Records and its valuable postwar blues catalog to GRT Corporation. In Memphis, Sam Phillips sold his Sun catalog to Shelby Singleton in 1967. Uptown, Stax Records was as successful as ever, especially with the wide popularity of Johnnie Taylor, but the death of Otis Redding in 1967, and Booker T. Jones' move to California after several years of blues and soul instrumental hits, may seem in hindsight to have been omens or irreplaceable losses. The assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the protracted war in Vietnam had implications on individuals, both black and white, in blues audiences.

Jazz evolved rapidly from the late 1950s through the end of the 1960s. The initial growth came with the development of bebop in New York in the early and mid-1940s by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk, where the additional inflections were added to the jazz use of the blues scale, and in front of the 4/4 bass pulse, the solos were taking on

more of an 8/8 meter feel. By the late 1950s, Miles Davis and his regular tenor saxophonist John Coltrane were exploring the possibilities of improvising not according to the prevailing harmonic chord changes, but rather to the melodic scale, and using alternate scales to those used in standard blues or bebop. Musicians were having similar realizations of such possibilities; Charles Mingus through sanctified music (as on “Better Git It in Your Soul” on *Mingus Ah Um*, 1959) and Ornette Coleman with Don Cherry through field hollers and laments (*The Shape of Jazz to Come*, 1960). The flowering of melody-based jazz came through the so-called “free jazz” or “New Thing” styles through the 1960s, whether through the metrical shifts and stretches of Miles Davis, the modal explorations of John Coltrane with the polyrhythmic drumming of Elvin Jones, the collective improvisations and chants of Sun Ra, or the assertive, often mind-blowing solos of Pharoah Sanders and of Albert Ayler. The 1967 death of John Coltrane, the December 1969 discovery of Albert Ayler’s body in the East River, and the 1971 death of Louis Armstrong may have served as convenient endpoints for the intertwining of jazz and blues. Perhaps, but the deaths themselves are less significant than the efforts of the 1960s jazz generation (including Coltrane and Ayler, among many others) to free jazz melody from the harmonic chord progressions, including those of the blues.

1970–1990

The postwar era through 1970 was one of rapid musical development for the blues, and of great advancement and reaffirmation of civil rights for African Americans and disfranchised American peoples. The late 1960s were heady years for those blues artists most in demand. Their audiences were to be found nationwide, not just in local neighborhoods or home counties; and the attendees were as likely to be white as black, as likely to be literate students as semiliterate blue-collar day workers. African American performers like Richie Havens or Taj Mahal were as likely to be found performing at college concerts and festivals attended mostly by whites, as they were at black venues. Magazines like *Blues Unlimited* and *Living Blues* heightened that growing literacy while recording and spreading the latest news and career histories of various musicians. But in 1970 it had been sixty-seven years since W. C. Handy first heard that Delta slide guitarist, a length of time equal to a human life from birth to death. Deaths and retirements of important musicians and label owners opened vacancies for new figures.

Musical changes had been simmering for some years. In the 1950s younger gospel singers like Marion

Williams and Aretha Franklin (daughter of Detroit pastor Reverend C. L. Franklin) had lighter voices than Mahalia Jackson, and they tended to reach lightly for the high note from below, instead of forcefully from above like Jackson. Franklin signed as a Columbia Records artist in 1960, but she really found her style in 1967 for Atlantic Records in the lineage of Ray Charles and Otis Redding. In the meantime, in 1965 Fontella Bass recorded for Chess “Rescue Me,” in a manner that today leads new listeners to mistake her for Franklin. Thomas A. Dorsey’s influence was giving way to the new style of Reverend James Cleveland, who in turn would give way to Andrae Crouch in the 1970s. That evolution in male gospel singing would have its secular counterpart in Al Green, who didn’t belt or even croon his lyrics but breathed them softly and intimately. Even after he turned to religion in 1975, his songs have remained staples for many soul-blues singers including Otis Clay.

Meanwhile, funk was emerging. Three of its early proto-figures had been grounded in rhythm and blues. James Brown’s career went back to 1951, and by the time he recorded his famous 1962 Apollo Theater show, he was established with songs like “Please, Please, Please” and “Night Train.” He was known for using discipline with his bands to keep them in tight precision, which was needed as Brown departed from blues forms (“Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” in 1965) to open-ended riffs like “Hot Pants.” Jimi Hendrix was exploring funk elements in his 1968 guitar compendium *Electric Ladyland*, but he died in 1970 before completing an LP of new explorations that had been tentatives, titled *First Rays of the New Rising Sun*, but initially released as *The Cry of Love*. Providing a bridge was Curtis Mayfield, who had already written great songs like “People Get Ready” for the Impressions and “Rainbow” for Gene Chandler. Mayfield then developed funk with his soundtrack film music for *Superfly*. By then the important group Parliament Funkadelic was formed with George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, Catfish Collins, and Eddie Hazel. Other important artists from this time were the Isley Brothers (with the unheralded Ernie Isley on lead guitar), Isaac Hayes, the Meters (with singer Aaron Neville), and Earth, Wind, and Fire.

New instrumentation was being introduced. On B. B. King’s hit single “The Thrill Is Gone,” a synthesizer and string section were heard instead of a thumping blues and drums beat. Horn sections were retained by many studios, especially in Houston by Duke, and in Memphis by Stax and Hi. The Tower of Power gained its own career and its own fame. The new arrangements were not in the jump style; they were brighter and followed the singer more. Bobby Bland’s 1960s hits like “Ain’t Nothing You Can Do”

showed the way, but many more were to come in the 1970s like Little Milton's "Walkin' the Back Streets and Crying."

At the time, in the 1970s, it may have seemed that blues had been eclipsed by the new musical developments, but in hindsight it may be more that it had retrenched in the oral culture of its local audiences, especially black audiences, and soaked up new elements. When Robert Cray emerged from the blues club scene to mainstream notice in 1986 with the LP *Strong Persuader* and its hit "Smoking Gun," fan acceptance was divided, according to what each fan had been aware of in music since 1970. Fans of rock had little to go by, as rock musicians were still working with blues classics of the 1950s and 1960s, and by the late 1970s blues influence in rock was ebbing.

Despite the lower profile of the blues, its low costs of entering the market and the correspondingly low fees of musicians made it possible for new label owners to get started. Several of the labels formed since 1970 were founded by former employees of Bob Koester at the Jazz Record Mart, including Bruce Iglauer at Alligator and Bruce Kaplan at Flying Fish. Iglauer was to have a great impact (if not the greatest) on blues on record, starting with raw-sounding classic LPs by Hound Dog Taylor and Son Seals, continuing with the *Living Chicago Blues* series, and developing a professional sound quality that would be dubbed "the Alligator sound." His label was key to the later careers of Koko Taylor, Albert Collins, and Luther Allison, and his most recognized album, *Showdown!* featured Robert Cray, Johnny Copeland, and Albert Collins.

In Jackson, Mississippi, a new label, Malaco, was begun by two University of Mississippi graduates. It was to specialize in down-home soul and blues, starting with Dorothy Moore's "Misty Blue" in 1976. But it really hit its stride in the early 1980s with the leadership of owner Dave Clark, who helped assemble a roster of rhythm and blues veterans. New and influential classics followed, like "Down Home Blues" by Z. Z. Hill, "The Blues Is Alright" by Little Milton, and "For Members Only" by Bobby Bland.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Mississippi, Memphis, and the Arkansas Delta seemed to settle down in musical ways, if only because little of the music was getting recorded. Cedell Davis was becoming noticed for his eerie slide guitar inflections produced with tableware. Clarksdale's Jelly Roll Kings featuring Frank Frost, Sam Carr, and Big Jack Johnson were a favorite group in the 1960s and 1970s. Prewar musicians Sam Chatman and Eugene Powell kept alive the styles of the Mississippi Sheiks and of Bo Carter. After some years in Chicago, Willie Nix returned to Leland, Mississippi, where acoustic guitarists Son

Thomas and Eddie Cusic were very active. In Jackson, blues veteran Sam Myers was singing and playing harmonica in local clubs, and in 1986 he joined a band led by Anson Funderburgh. Joe Callcott had died in 1969 and Fred McDowell in 1972, but the north Mississippi hill country music was continued by Othar Turner, Junior Kimbrough, and R. L. Burnside. When commercial interest in blues turned to Mississippi after 1990, it found a lot of talent willing and ready to play for any audience.

In the 1970s, a new blues center was emerging in Austin, Texas. A state capital and a large university city, Austin nurtured an electric blues style that was part blues, part rock, with its best-known musicians being white. Antone's became and remains a famous showcase for blues, where notable performers like the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Marcia Ball, Keri Leigh, and Angela Strehli honed their styles. It also brought accomplished blues musicians such as Eddie Taylor, Hubert Sumlin, James Cotton, Sunnysland Slim, and Jimmy Rogers for weeklong stands at a time when they had difficulty booking gigs elsewhere in the country. Other Austin blues could be heard in the clubs on Sixth Street, and even in deli storefronts nearby. Many resident and visiting blues musicians have been taped in Austin for broadcast on the PBS television series *Austin City Limits*. The musician most synonymous with Austin blues is singer and guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, whose sound was indebted to Albert King, Albert Collins, and Jimi Hendrix. Even so, he carved out a dizzying national career in the 1980s, including national television appearances and a recording contract with Sony/Columbia Records. A 1989 helicopter accident snuffed out his promising new musical paths in blues and rock, but his records have remained as models of the Austin style.

Reissuing of the blues past was shouldered by many private collectors. Chief among them was Nick Perls, the son of Manhattan art dealers, who was among the three men who found Son House in 1964. He founded Belzona in 1968 and then renamed it Yazoo, and by his death in 1986 he had issued seventy-four (possibly eighty-six) LPs of vintage prewar blues. Other notable labels of the 1970s were Herwin, which was revived by Bernard Klatzko; Mamlish by Don Kent; and in the 1980s Document, which was established by Johnny Parth.

Several of the oldest active blues societies began at this time. Their membership consisted mostly of white fans in areas where blues was not indigenous, like Tucson, Ottawa, and Iowa; they lived in suburbs far removed from the inner cities where most blues musicians lived. Many efforts were made to group fans and gain organized attendance at rare blues music

appearances and thereby encourage club owners to bring more talent. Also, many societies began newsletters, and over time several of them printed local blues histories and interviews.

Blues festivals were popping up more often. The Ann Arbor Blues Festivals of 1969 and 1970 were justly legendary, but short lived. The Chicago Blues Festival began in 1985, the Mississippi Delta Blues Festival in Greenville in 1978, the San Francisco Blues Festival in 1977, and the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas, in 1986, among others. Many presented living legends from the 1930s, even from the late 1920s, while at the same time showcasing club talents who deserved wider fame.

Formal recognition of blues popularity and achievement was established by the Memphis Blues Foundation with its annual W. C. Handy Awards in 1982. An indication of national recognition was President Jimmy Carter's invitation to Muddy Waters to perform at the White House in 1978.

Television and movie depictions of blues were odd, but telling. On the popular sketch comedy series *Saturday Night Live*, cast members Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi dressed as bees and performed "I'm a King Bee." The next time the pair performed blues on the show, they dressed in suits and sunglasses as Jake and Elwood Blues, the Blues Brothers. This act became successful, resulting in outside concerts and a feature film, *The Blues Brothers* (1980), all the while performing 1950s Chicago Chess and 1960s Memphis Stax classics. In 1986, another feature film, *Crossroads*, was much circulated in theaters. In it, a young teenage white guitarist wishing to play the blues accompanies an older black man to Mississippi, and there the young guitarist does battle with Steve Vai in front of a juke band led by veteran Frank Frost. Much of the background for the story was the now-apocryphal story of Robert Johnson selling his soul to the devil to play guitar better. However much derision the film may have received from blues fans, it heralded a blues revival in 1990 that has not stopped since.

Blues Since 1990

In 1990, the Sony/Columbia/Legacy label released *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings*, a two-CD set selling for twenty dollars that placed in the palm of the buyer's hand the entire surviving recordings of a bluesman. Although more than fifty years old, Johnson's music remained compelling to hear, and it had the accessory legend that had been built up by white journalists since the 1960s that he had sold his soul to the devil, which was similar to recent rock stories of 1970s rock stars who were reputed to

have done the same thing. Sales had been expected to be moderate, perhaps thirty thousand to forty thousand copies over ten years, but instead it quickly sold ten times that amount. The sales numbers showed that record buyers were willing to buy blues, especially Mississippi and postwar Chicago blues, and the set's reviews in magazines and blues newsletters indicated an ever-present willingness to write about blues. The 1990s blues revival was on.

The blues audiences were now equal parts black and white, the latter predominantly so at new urban clubs like Buddy Guy's Legends in Chicago, and B. B. King's in Memphis, and at the various summer festivals. What's more, the audiences were not limited to the United States, but worldwide including England, continental Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, and Japan, with their own club and concert circuits and festivals. Travelers from those countries were making pilgrimages to Chicago, Memphis, Mississippi, and New Orleans. Magazines proliferated, rejuvenating the surviving standbys from the late 1960s/early 1970s like *Living Blues*, *Soul Bag*, *Jefferson*, and *Block*; increasing the numbers for more recent titles like *Blues and Rhythm* and *Juke*; and enabling new titles like *Blues Revue* and *Blues Access*. Book publishing went sharply up, reprinting classic and scarce titles including the early writings of Charters and Oliver, and recent books by Robert Palmer and Peter Guralnick, and issuing new books regardless of the writer's expertise (or lack thereof). Blues literacy was reaching new highs: Blues in the Schools programs were done to foster recognition of cultural diversity and to promote literacy, through the music that had begun within oral cultures.

A new technology aided the blues, the Internet. Introduced in the late 1980s and becoming widely available in the early 1990s, the Internet enabled listservs which carried ongoing discussions of topics posted by individual correspondents; today there are listservs for blues in general, traditional music in general, prewar blues, postwar blues, and so on. The World Wide Web brought websites of information and of retail sales—independent publishers and CD labels benefited especially from this.

The blues record industry adapted itself to the new compact disc format. The labels prevailing since 1970 such as Delmark, Alligator, Malaco, and Arhoolie transferred classic records and new issues alike. Rounder became visible to blues record collectors through distributing smaller labels like Bullseye, Tone-Cool, and Black Cat. Historical recordings reappeared due to several changes. Yazoo's founder Nick Perls died in 1986, but the label was acquired by Shanachie Records, and it was continued by Richard Nevins with the assistance of Don Kent. MCA

purchased the Chess catalog in the early 1980s, and it was mining the treasures through the efforts of Andy McKaie. The compact disc's ability to hold up to 75 minutes of music was ideal for extensive, even complete reissues of one artist's work, as the Sony Robert Johnson set proved, and so Johnny Parth began the Document CD catalog in an effort to reissue all prewar blues and black sacred music on CD, thereby bringing back into print the complete music of Charlie Patton, Leroy Carr, Roosevelt Sykes, and so many others whose music had been out of print for sixty years or more.

New portable digital recording technology and the cheap CD medium helped small labels record local and regional acts. Fat Possum of north Mississippi was based on then-underrecorded bluesmen R. L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough. Rooster presented Eddie "Bilbo" Walker, Willie Cobbs, and Lonnie Pitchford. West Coast and northern U.S. independent labels abounded, and the blues magazines teemed with ads and reviews of their new CDs.

In 2003, the centennial of Handy hearing the slide guitarist at Tutwiler was celebrated across the United States as the Year of the Blues (YOTB). It was declared as such by an act of the U.S. Congress, promoted in blues magazines and by organizations such as the Experience Music Project in Seattle and the Blues Foundation in Memphis. That September, the PBS television channel aired *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues*, a series of seven films celebrating facets of blues performance and history. Tie-in products to that series included DVDs of the films and CDs of music of the featured artists. Blues had been big business in CDs, films, and advertising since 1990, benefitting the living artists who broke into the mainstream, like B. B. King. Some wished that the YOTB could have helped those outside the mainstream, but they are at the local commercial levels, with few or no ties to the media powers that enabled the PBS series and the YOTB-related marketing. However one thinks of it, one has to acknowledge that the YOTB could not have been possible before 1990.

The big four artists for many blues newcomers have been Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, B. B. King, and Stevie Ray Vaughan, partly because of the ironies and accomplishments in their lives, because Johnson and Waters prefigured the rock that many white listeners came from, and because Vaughan had been very proficient in those rock styles as well. Also, thanks to rock's heavy borrowing of postwar Chicago blues and its Mississippi antecedents, the claim that Mississippi was "the land where the blues began" was all the more plausible. Living artists who had associations with Johnson, Waters, King, and Vaughan came to be of greater interest than those who

did not. As a result, the postwar electric blues band lineup continued to dominate.

There have been a few new trends. One was the revival of prewar blues guitar by educated young (under forty) black musicians, initially Keb' Mo', but joined later by Corey Harris, Alvin Youngblood Hart, and Chris Thomas King. All have performed widely and are among the more visible musicians at festivals, public radio, and television.

Another recent trend was white teenaged blues musicians from fairly well-to-do backgrounds. Teenagers in the blues has been nothing new, whether they were nineteen-year-old Roosevelt Graves in 1929 or seventeen-year-old Etta James in 1955. But these recent musicians, like Mike Welch, Jonny Lang, or Kenny Wayne Shepherd, whether or not they were consciously following Ralph Macchio's character in *Crossroads*, didn't have to start playing for a living like their African American forebears did. In the 1990s, whether whites could play the blues as music was a hotly debated topic, whether they could play them as a cultural function even more hotly debated, but the extent of suburban white teenagers could push the assumptions of that debate very far.

Two cultural trends in African American arts came to shape blues. Black sacred music has been a lifelong partner to blues, supplying it with new innovations and expressions. In the 1980s the new development was mass choirs that brought joyous bursts of sound, but were hardly adaptable to the blues. In 1995 though, a recent style was brought to wider notice, sacred steel, where musicians picked and drawled on pedal steel guitars in sacred repertory. Musicians such as Robert Randolph have been written about in leading blues magazines. The future exercise of sacred steel and its possible influence in the blues is something to be watched.

The other trend is rap. It was initially formulated in the mid-1970s in the housing projects on the Lower East Side of New York City and Brooklyn by artists like Fab Five Freddy and Grandmaster Flash. By 1990 it had several mainstream stars like Queen Latifah and Public Enemy (with members Chuck D. and Flava Flave). There have been assertions and artistic efforts to show that rap music comes from blues, especially from Chris Thomas King and Chuck D. That debate depends on where the speaker is coming from. Those who hold that rap is not related to blues likely pay attention to the musical characteristics of blues, especially its capacity for harmonic forms and models, melodies, and solo instrumental improvisations. Those who do say rap is related to blues pay more attention to the word play and lyric formulation and have great familiarity with the toasts and oral word games shared by their

fathers, uncles, and neighbors—they may even say that rap *is* the blues, or that blues has always been some form of *rap*, however and whatever it is called.

Looking at blues history since 1890, trends may be noted as going upward. The geographic spread went from pockets of segregated black neighborhoods to global interest and, hence, a greater racial diversity of performers and audiences. The discussion of blues in print became more literate, from print ads in newspapers to many periodicals and books devoted solely to blues. The money involved in the business of the blues has grown rapidly, even within the record industry alone. As for the music, there have been increasing degrees of musical improvisation to the point where some famous blues are solely instrumental (Freddie King's "Hideaway," Albert Collins's "Frosty"), and an increasing role of lyrics as fixed nonchangeable blues elements, especially in the performance of older prewar repertory by young revival musicians. These six vectors bloom out in widening directions, so that the blues development viewed today from prosperity and variety resembles an upright funnel.

Yet for those in oral cultures, those same six vectors may seem to bloom out in opposite directions, to create an overturned funnel as viewed from those in better economic or more informed cultures. Among the six vectors, instead of geographic spread, there would be local or regional identity, and instead of racial diversity, there would be racial celebration of African Americanness. Instead of literacy, there would be oral culture exercising word-of-mouth news/gossip and word games. There would be less individual wealth and hence more economic interdependence, which in practical terms means one person would play a blues CD for ten friends, instead of each of these friends having his or her own copy. There is less musical improvisation in oral blues; in fact the melody is more likely to remain fixed, even stripped down, but the variety and fluidity of lyric elements is to be increased.

These two funnels are not conflicting, but rather two parts of the blues spectrum that may be joined together. This definition of the blues in technical and historical terms has sought not merely to describe it, but to construct a faithful spectrum that may be extended in the future without breaks or cracks in continuity.

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BLUES AND RHYTHM

Label run from 1951 to 1952 by the Bihari brothers as part of their Modern labels group. Among its few known releases are sides by Gene Phillips, and by the Mississippi musicians Houston Boines and Charley Booker.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

BLUES BALLAD

Briefly, a “ballad” is a song that tells a story. “Narrative” or “sequential” ballads are highly structured, telling detailed stories ordered in time. “Blues,” “banjo,” or “nodal” ballads are fluid, offering sparse detail with little sense of sequence, emphasizing emotional high points, and tending to incorporate floating or foreign lines; as such, they share these features with blues. As Evans stated, “Blues ballads are narrative folksongs that tell a story in a very loose, subjective manner and tend to ‘celebrate’ events rather than relate them chronologically and objectively in the manner of other American folk ballads. Oliver prefers “nodal ballad” because “blues ballad” suggests a ballad in blues form.

Well-known blues ballads include “Casey Jones,” “John Henry,” “Frankie,” “Delia,” “Railroad Bill,” “Stack Lee,” “The Boll Weevil,” and “White House Blues.” The blues may have grown out of blues ballads and field hollers.

Blues ballads are found in both African American and Anglo American traditions. American production appears to have begun about the time of the Civil War and gone on into at least the 1920s. British Celtic examples can be traced to the late Middle Ages.

Do blues ballads arise as mutations of narrative ballads, or are they composed initially as blues ballads? While it is believed that both paths are taken, definitive evidence is often lacking—it may not be possible to demonstrate the absence of a narrative precursor. The question is answered most clearly when a body of tradition, such as ancient Irish language ballads, consists almost entirely of blues ballads.

Lack of narrative elements, presence of floating lines, and variations among performers (or even the renditions of one performer) complicate lyric folk song taxonomy. Blues ballads are similar, but subject, phraseology, and tune often allow reasonable delineations.

JOHN GARST

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BLUES BOY WILLIE

b. William D. McFalls, 28 November 1946; Memphis, TX

A singer in the soul blues mold influenced by his gospel roots and the recordings of Junior Parker, Blues Boy Willie also plays harmonica and sometimes the guitar. His songwriting abilities are very effective on gritty Southern pieces like “Be Who” (his biggest hit in 1990), “Injustice” or “The Fly.”

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography

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- Don't Look Down* (1993, Ichiban CD 1161).
- Back Again* (2002, Deep South CD 03).

BLUES BOY'S KINGDOM

Record label (Tennessee, 1956–1957). Owner: Riley B. “B. B.” King (b. September 16, 1925; Itta Bena,

BLUES BOY'S KINGDOM

MS). Memphis, Tennessee-based, the first issue was by singer-harmonica player Levi Seabury ("Boogie Beat"/"Motherless Child") who died shortly after its release. The other issues were by the Five Stars (with Al "TNT" Braggs, Cal Valentine), B. B. King's pianist Milliard Lee, Rosetta Perry, and Nat Sledge's Blue Jay Dance Band. Their subsidiary label, Kingdom, issued two gospel releases in 1957 (*The Five Voices* and *The Bells of Harmony*).

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

BLUES BROTHERS

Belushi, John "Jake Blues"

b. 24 January 1949; Chicago, IL
d. 5 March 1982; Hollywood, CA

Aykroyd, Dan "Elwood Blues"

b. 1 July 1952; Ottawa, Canada

Duo of singers and actors created by Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi. The Blues Brothers began in 1978 as a comedy sketch by Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi on the TV show *Saturday Night Live*. Dan Aykroyd played Elwood Blues and John Belushi Jake Blues.

The duo performed live with a tight backing group, in a parodic fashion, shouting R&B standards like Sam and Dave's classic "Soul Man," "I've Got Everything I Need (Almost)," or "B-Movie Boxcar Blues," both dressed in black suits, porkpie hats, and dark sunglasses. Both actors sang; Dan Aykroyd played harmonica while John Belushi performed outrageous and acrobatic dance routines. The Blues Brothers appeared from time to time on *Saturday Night Live*, first as fillers for the program, but soon as one of its most popular skits.

They are remembered as the exuberant stars of John Landis's *The Blues Brothers* (1980), which included short appearances by blues legends such as John Lee Hooker playing "Boom Boom" and Ray Charles. The comedy, set in Chicago's music scene, also featured soul artists like Aretha Franklin, James Brown (as a preacher), and the fine Stax musicians from Booker T and the MGs: guitarist Steve Cropper and bassist Donald Dunn. The film was an immense success worldwide and helped bolster the careers of many of the blues artists who appeared in it.

Between 1979 and 1982, the original Blues Brothers released three albums of covers of R&B and rock 'n'

roll standards, but their growing success was stopped by John Belushi's tragic death from a heroin overdose on March 5, 1982. In 1998, Dan Aykroyd rekindled the duo with a new partner, John Goodman. Together once again with John Landis, the Blues Brothers made a much publicized sequel to what had by then become a favorite cult movie. Aretha Franklin and James Brown appeared again in *The Blues Brothers 2000* (1998), along with B. B. King, Junior Wells, Jonny Lang, Eddie Floyd, and Eric Clapton.

YVES LABERGE

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See also Films; Stax/Volt; Television

BLUES CONNOISSEUR

Record label (California, 1972–1977). Owner: Donald Clark Lindenau (b. November 4, 1942; San Francisco, CA). Pleasant Hill, California-based label was the first to record Harmonica Slim (Richard Riggins) (with guitarist Ron Thompson). Other artists include Boogie Jake (Matthew Jacobs), Charles Conley, K. C. Douglas (with Harmonica Slim), (Cajun violinist) Ben Guillery, Little Willie Littlefield, Robert Lowery, Sonny Rhodes, and Schoolboy Cleve (White).

ROBERT EAGLE

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BLUES FOLKLORE

Fans and students of the blues have long recognized its importance as one of the great repositories of working class African American culture. Descended from the great verbal societies of West Africa, forbidden

access to the written word under slavery and further denied equal access under the “separate but equal” policies that followed the Supreme Court’s *Plessey vs. Ferguson* decision, working class African American culture has remained one that places far more emphasis on the spoken word than does the mass culture that surrounds it. Consequently, oral traditions such as the blues are the primary means for cultural transmission—from the parent’s lips to the baby’s ear—and as such they offer much to the listener seeking insight into the lives of people whose social and cultural history and values often differ widely from those of mainstream American culture.

Typically, the blues covers a broad range of African American folk culture. Although the majority of blues lyrics deal with the relationship between men and women, there are also lyrics about bad men (and women), food, transportation, intoxicants, work, religion, class and caste, and racism. One of blues poetry’s most powerful and overarching motifs is to use the images of travel—something a slave could never do—as symbols for freedom; freedom to travel then became a symbol for personhood itself. Taken as a whole, the poetry of the blues presents an integrated worldview that discusses the nature of manhood, womanhood, and personhood, a frank and unflinching view of the world and the place of African Americans in it. At its heart, the blues is about being black in the United States.

In 1911, Howard W. Odum observed that the music of laboring class black Southerners was “most valuable to the student of sociology and anthropology, as well as to the student of literature and the ballad.” Although few researchers heeded Odum’s advice at the time, that is exactly the perspective that many later students of the blues have come to take. Guy Johnson’s 1927 “Double Meaning in the Popular Negro Blues” was one of the few scholarly examinations of African American folk music and lore during the pre-World War II era, but the advent of portable recording equipment motivated a very few social scientists and ethnomusicologists to travel America collecting the folk music of African Americans. Among them, the leftist folklorist Lawrence Gellert visited America’s prisons gathering African American music, often of an overtly political nature rarely heard by white audiences. Similarly, a young and black anthropology student named Zora Neale Hurston—before her later success as a writer—accepted the suggestion of Franz Boas that she study the folkways of her southern homeland. The 1935 field work she conducted with Alan Lomax both contributed to her *Mules and Men*—a classic study of black southern folklore and one of the first conducted by a southern African American—and produced a series of valuable sound recordings which was supplemented during later field

trips. A collection of her work is maintained in the Library of Congress (LCFAFA No. 11).

Beyond a doubt, the most important force in documenting the blues—indeed, all American roots music—as folklore has been the Library of Congress, established in 1928. Preeminent among the legions of blues researchers whose work is curated by the Library of Congress is the massive archive of sound recordings and related materials made for the Library of Congress by the father/son team of John and Alan Lomax from the early 1930s into the 1950s. The library continues its efforts today, recently acquiring, for example, the massive catalog of Moe Asch’s Folkways label and commencing a large-scale CD reissue program.

The Lomaxes’ most famous early “discovery” (1933) was Huddie Ledbetter, aka “Leadbelly,” the Texas bluesman and songster who went on to become one of the stars of the nascent folk music revival until his death in 1949. After going out on his own, Alan Lomax continued to crisscross America in search of roots music and musicians. Among his most significant projects was a study conducted (in partnership with Fisk University) in Coahoma County, Mississippi, during 1941–1942. Among the scores of both sacred and secular recordings and interviews were the last recordings the great Delta bluesman Eddie “Son” House until the folk boom of the 1960s and the first recordings of the soon-to-be world famous Muddy Waters. Lomax’s first-person account of his Coahoma project forms the basis for his book *Land Where the Blues Began*.

Folkloric blues studies have grown dramatically in both number and methodological sophistication during the post-World War II era and have taken many different perspectives. Many non-American blues scholars were first introduced to the blues through recordings, and much fine writing has approached the form through its recorded legacy, Paul Oliver’s *Blues Fell This Morning* being a prime example. Especially valuable is Oliver’s second edition, which distinguishes between recordings made for a black audience and those made for the “revival” audience. Modern blues studies place great emphasis on context, and the audience for both recordings and live performance is recognized as a primary shaper of the music’s form. For example, in the Alan Lomax film *Land Where the Blues Began* (only tangentially related to his book of the same name), the barroom recitation of the class toast “The Lion and the Signifying Monkey” is clearly bowdlerized for the benefit of the camera. Similarly, Luke Jordan’s 1927 recording of the minstrel-flavored “Traveling Coon” demonstrates the complex relationship among blues artists, their performances, and their relationship with “insider” and “outsider” audiences.

Other researchers have chosen to specifically approach the blues as a performance art. David Evans's *Big Road Blues* discusses performance, community, and creativity within a Mississippi Delta blues community and Charles Keil's classic *Urban Blues* approaches the blues performance as social ritual. During the post-war period, field research and recordings remained an important tool; people such as Harry Oster, whose justly legendary work in Louisiana's Angola State Penitentiary produced the highly talented Robert Pete Williams, continued to document traditional African American folkways that seemed to be rapidly disappearing. Today many of these research veterans continue their work; also producing valuable contributions are younger researchers such as Kip Lornell, Barry Lee Pearson, and John Michael Spencer. Many of the classic works in blues folklore—both past and present—are anthologized in *Write Me a Few of Your Lines: A Blues Reader*, edited by Steven C. Tracy.

While the blues has, during the recent past, become a wildly successful international pop music form, it also remains an integral part of working class African American culture, particularly among those working class African Americans with Southern roots. For them, the blues is not just music, it is poetry set to music and as such it continues to be an important part of the African American oral tradition. The instruments and the beat may have changed, but the function of the music within the society that created it only a little more than a hundred years ago remains the same.

PETER R. ASCHOFF

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BLUES IN THE NIGHT

The music for "Blues in the Night" was written by Harold Arlen (1905–1986) and the lyrics by Johnny Mercer (1909–1976) for the 1941 Warner Brothers' film of the same title (Anatole Litvak, director)

about jazz musicians. The movie starred Lloyd Nolan, Richard Whorf, Rosemary Lane, and Elia Kazan. Also included in the film was William Gillespie and the Jimmie Lunceford (1902–1947) band. Gerald Wilson (1918–), scored the film. The assignment for Arlen and Mercer was to "write a score for a movie about an American jazz band and to include one hit song of a blues nature." It was Arlen's decision to write the song as a "traditional form of the early American blues—three sections of 12 bars each, rather than in the conventional 32-bar Tin Pan Alley shape." Arlen set about composing the melody for the song entitled "Blues in the Night." When he completed it, he gave it to Mercer to add lyrics. After Mercer wrote the lyrics, Arlen's only suggestion to him was "... take lines—beginning 'My mamma done tol' me when I was in knee pants'—and move them to the opening of the song." That stroke of genius was so successful that the proposed title for the movie—*Hot Nocturne* was changed to *Blues in the Night*. In the movie the song is sung by Jigger (William Gillespie), the leader of the jazz band, who has the miseries, that is, blues, over his "two-faced" woman.

Nominated for a 1941 academy award, "Blues in the Night" was recorded in 1941 by the Jimmie Lunceford band. The song appeared in another Warner Brothers' film, *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (1943). This time the mood is more comedy than tragedy, and John Garfield, playing a comic gangster/hood, sings it. John Tasker Howard writing about Harold Arlen and "Blues in the Night" (*Current Biography* 1955) states that "... 'Blues in the Night' made a contribution to American popular music that established him [Arlen] as one of our most gifted light composers." The song is considered to be "one of the best American songs..." and is a standard in repertoires from blues to light classical.

MONICA J. BURDEX

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BLUES INCORPORATED

Active 1962–1963

Core members were Alexis Korner (vocals, guitar), Cyril Davies (harmonica, vocals), Ken Scott (piano), and Dick Heckstall-Smith (saxophone). Occasional members included Jack Bruce (bass), Charlie Watts (drums), and Long John Baldry (vocals).

Recorded what is now considered the first British blues album, *R&B from the Marquee* (1962).

Individual members Korner and Davies would go on to significant solo careers, and the group inspired younger British musicians such as the Rolling Stones and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (under Korner)

Discography: AMG (under Korner)

BLUES PROJECT

Formed 1965; disbanded 1972

Conceived on the coffeehouse circuit of the mid-1960s and historically more notable for its concept than execution, the Blues Project created a distinct and briefly popular blues subgenre, a localized New York City fusion rooted in folk and jazz.

Acoustic guitarist Danny Kalb moved to Greenwich Village in 1962 and two years later was featured with John Sebastian on the Elektra folk-blues compilation *The Blues Project*. The next year Kalb went electric and the band began to coalesce around following a series of jams and loosely organized live dates. The original band consisted of guitarists Kalb and Steve Katz and a rhythm section of drummer Roy Blumenfeld and bassist Andy Kulberg, the latter of whom doubled on flute. Vocalist Tommy Flanders was in and out of the group and keyboardist Al Kooper, who would compose much of the band's material, joined after sitting in at a failed record company audition. Kooper, who left in 1967, would subsequently reunite with Katz, to form Blood, Sweat and Tears.

The success of its debut album *Live at the Au-Go-Go* in 1966 allowed the band to make a West Coast tour, leading to an appearance at the Monterey Pop Festival. Its catalog also included *Projections*, the only full-length studio album by the core members, and the falsely titled "Live at Town Hall," part of which was studio outtakes with overdubbed applause.

Kulberg and Blumenfeld guided the band through the 1971 trio album *Lazarus* and then on to the contractually obligated final release, *Planned Obsolescence*, with violinist Richard Greene adding a new element to the sound. Then they joined Greene to form the group Seatrain. A half-hearted reunion resulted in the 1973 *Reunion in Central Park* album with Kooper participating but the band and concept had clearly run its course.

MICHAEL POINT

BLUESBREAKERS

Also known as John Mayall's Blues Breakers. Band led by singer, guitarist, pianist, and harmonica player John Mayall from about 1963 to 1968 in its original incarnation. Made a hugely influential contribution to British blues. Debut album featured Eric Clapton, including famous solo on "Steppin' Out." Later versions had Peter Green and then Mick Taylor on lead guitar. Other members included John McVie and Mick Fleetwood, who formed Fleetwood Mac with Green. Mayall stopped using the name after Taylor joined the Rolling Stones in 1968, and moved to the United States in 1970. He continued to lead his own bands, and resumed use of the Bluesbreakers name in 1985.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

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A Hard Road (1967, Decca SLK 4853).

Crusade (1967, Decca SLK 4890).

Bare Wires (1968, Decca SLK 4945).

Blues from Laurel Canyon (1968, Decca SLK 4972).

Diary of a Band, Vols. One/Two (1968, Decca SLK 4918/4919).

BO, EDDIE

b. Edwin Joseph Bocage, 20 September 1930; New Orleans, LA

Pianist, singer, composer. Bo, whose mother was a popular Professor Longhair-style pianist, became a major influence on the modern evolution of the New Orleans nightclub sound through his prolific recording and pervasive live act. He first gained attention backing local legends like Smiley Lewis, Earl King, Ruth Brown, Lloyd Price, and Guitar Slim with the Spider Bocage Orchestra. He began his extensive recording career (as Little Bo) in 1955 for Ace and released a succession of regional hits that became New Orleans standards. Bo also produced hit recordings by Irma Thomas, Johnny Adams, and other Crescent City stars. He continued to perform in New Orleans into his seventies.

MICHAEL POINT

BO, EDDIE

Bibliography

AMG; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG

BOBBIN

Label owned by Bob Lyons and active in St. Louis from 1958 through 1962, with forty-three singles released. Chief among its artists were Albert King and Little Milton, with Clayton Love, Oliver Sain, and Fontella Bass.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: McGrath

BOGAN, LUCILLE

b. Lucille Anderson, 1 April 1897; Amory, MS
d. 10 August 1948; Los Angeles, CA

Also known as Bessie Jackson. This blues singer was born as Lucille Anderson in Monroe County, Mississippi. In about 1914 she married Nazareth Bogan, Sr., a blues singer who worked as a railroad man. The following year a son was born, Nazareth, Jr. In 1974 Lucille's son was interviewed by Bob Eagle so that we now know quite a lot about her.

Lucille Bogan was the first black blues artist to record on location, that is, outside Chicago or New York. On these 1923 recordings her voice was still immature in comparison with her later recordings. By her choice of songs it becomes clear that Viola McCoy was a major inspiration. In a unique move Lucille switched from classic blues to country blues for her next session. She had improved enormously in 1927. Bogan had a taste for fine piano accompaniment and with artists like Will Ezell, Walter Roland, and Charles Avery she could not go wrong. Bogan recorded for Okeh in 1923, for Paramount in 1927, and for Brunswick in 1928, 1929, and 1930.

Although she had an uncommonly large Depression era output, she made no recordings at all in 1931 and 1932. When she switched to ARC for the 1933, 1934, and 1935 sessions, she had to use the pseudonym Bessie Jackson for contractual reasons. Her most famous songs are "Sweet Patunia," "Sloppy Drunk

Blues," and especially "Black Angel Blues," which was later covered by B. B. King as "Sweet Little Angel." In 1937 she brought her son Nazareth's group to the Birmingham studio. A photo of this group identifies John Bell on piano, John Grimes on trumpet, and Nazareth himself on bass.

After the Second World War Lucille Bogan made some trial discs for a New York company. She was mad when the records were rejected and died shortly afterward. Lucille Bogan was one of the most distinguished of all the Alabama blues artists. She stayed a blues singer to the end, never yielding to commercialism.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Discography: DGR

BOGAN, TED

b. 10 May 1909; Spartanburg, SC
d. 29 January 1990; Detroit, MI

Birth year has also been given as 1910. Guitarist/singer Ted Bogan spent much of his career performing with Howard Armstrong and Carl Martin. He played with them in a prewar era string band known under various names including the Four Keys and the Tennessee Chocolate Drops. His first recordings were made for Bluebird in 1934 with Armstrong. In the 1970s, the trio achieved fame touring and recording as Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong.

ANDREW LEACH

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong (1974, Flying Fish 003).

That Old Gang of Mine (1978, Flying Fish 056).

Louie Bluiie: Film Soundtrack Featuring Howard Armstrong (1985, Arhoolie 470).

BOGART, DEANNA

b. 1960; Detroit, MI

Vocalist, pianist, and saxophonist who emerged from the Maryland club circuit. She is noted for her versatility in piano boogie, swing, rhythm and blues, soul and rock, and for her own compositions.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG

Discography: AMG**BOHEE BROTHERS****James Douglass Bohee**

b. 1 December 1844; Indiantown, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

d. 8 December 1897; Ebbw Vale, England

George B. Bohee

b. 25 March 1857; Indiantown, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada (1856 repeatedly cited in U.S. census data.)

d. After 1905

James Bohee, teamster, and his wife Isabella had seven or eight children, three of whom became entertainers: James Douglas Bohee (1844–1897), George Bohee (1856–after 1905) and sister Laura Bohee (1870–1890). Mayme Bohee may also have been a relative—known as “The Creole Nightingale,” she toured the United States as a member of troupes such as the Black Patti Troubadours and Sam T. Jack’s Creoles. St. John’s black population had its origins in the Caribbean and the United States, and the Bohee family had moved to Boston by 1959. (In 1860 James Bohee was listed as a sailor.) Boston was the center of banjo manufacturing and the brothers took up that instrument. Around 1876 the Bohee brothers started their own, racially mixed Bohee Minstrels, which also included James Bland. They toured the United States in early 1876, then later in 1876 with Callender’s Georgia Minstrels, and from 1878 as part of Jack Haverly’s Genuine Colored Minstrels. By May 1880 they had reached Canada, where James Bohee was reported to be the drum

major in the troupe’s street parades. They opened at Her Majesty’s Theatre, London, in July of that year. The troupe, with more than sixty performers, toured Britain and returned to America in 1882. James Bohee remained in Britain, owning a minstrel show (once again James Bland was hired) that toured theaters and halls for several months each year. He provided banjo lessons at his London studio. James and George Bohee also owned the Gardenia Club in Leicester Square from about 1882. By 1890 the brothers had become London institutions, and members of royalty were among the pupils. After James died of pneumonia, brother George first tried to continue the Bohee Operatic Minstrels but, by late 1898, was forced to disband. He consequently worked as a solo performer and toured the Empire Theatre circuit. His death has been variously dated from 1915 (in the United States) to the 1930s (in Britain).

As well as singing, tenor George Bohee danced to his brother’s banjo and played banjo duets with him. (George also played piano.) James provided banjo solos. They kept in contact with America, introducing songs and providing employment opportunities. Catering to a white European audience, “Home Sweet Home” and “A Boy’s Best Friend Is His Mother” are examples of the sentimental compositions that made them famous, but the Bohee brothers repertoire also included antislavery protest material, cakewalks, and minstrel songs. Sometime between 1890 and 1892 in London, the Bohee brothers recorded banjo duets on Edison wax cylinders, possibly making them the first African Americans to do so. These recordings are known only from a report of their being played in Australia and it is impossible to assess their musical character. George Bohee made at least another eleven banjo solos for the Edison Bell Supply Company in Liverpool in 1898, but the titles (including “Darky’s Dream” and “Darky’s Awakening”) are at present only known from catalogs.

James Bohee was a musical pioneer, an adept instrumentalist, and a successful promoter. With a background in U.S. minstrelsy he was active in many aspects of Britain’s entertainment world between 1880 and 1897. An obituary for James described the brothers as “the best banjoists in the world”; no doubt he was the most influential of all representatives of African American culture in Britain, influencing an entire generation of banjo players in that country. Their songs were widely copied and even arranged for barrel organ. George Bohee was the author of “George Bohee Medleys,” which comprised excerpts from “Manhattan Beach March,” “Washington Post,” and “Rastus on Parade.”

RAINER E. LOTZ

BOHEE BROTHERS

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Discography: DGR

BOINES, SYLVESTER

- b. 1931; Port Gibson, MS
d. 16 December 1992; Chicago, IL

Bassist active in Chicago from the late 1950s until his death. Raised in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, and worked there on farms and construction sites. Boines moved to Chicago in 1956 and began playing guitar under the influence of his brother Aaron Boines (d. 1971). Around 1961 he began playing electric bass around the Chicago West Side. In 1965 he began performing with Mighty Joe Young and was included on the latter's Delmark LP *Blues with a Touch of Soul*. From 1964 through the 1970s he was a locksmith. In later years he was bassist for Jimmy Dawkins.

EDWARD KOMARA

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BOLL WEAVIL BILL

According to the Dixon, Godrich, and Rye discography, this pseudonym was given to four unissued Vocalion recordings by Julius "Juke" Davis and Louis "Panella" Davis. The two were members of Mitchell's Christian Singers, and they made the sides during the Singers' first recording sessions in New York in August 1934.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: DGR

BOLLIN, ZUZU

- b. A. D. Bollin, 5 September 1922; Frisco, TX
d. 19 October 1990; Dallas, TX

An early and enduring influence on the modern Texas blues scene, Bollin, who had previously worked with Percy Mayfield, recorded four songs, including "Why Don't You Eat Where You Slept Last Night?" for the Torch label in Dallas in the early 1950s. Bollin's signature big sound, both as a vocalist and guitarist, was reinforced by future Ray Charles Orchestra saxists David "Fathead" Newman and Leroy Cooper on one of the sessions and by the Jimmy McCracklin band on the other.

After touring in various big bands, Bollin, like the songs he had recorded, disappeared from the scene in the early 1960s. It wasn't until 1983, when they were included on a small label's Texas blues compilation, that his career belatedly began its second and final phase.

A rediscovered Bollin returned to the recording studio in 1989 for *Texas Bluesman*, a star-studded effort produced by the Dallas Blues Society. The album, later reissued on Antone's Records, featured appearances by original recording colleague Newman, as well as guitarists Duke Robillard and Wayne Bennett and a large cast of Austin all-stars.

Austin club owner Clifford Antone championed Bollin's return, providing him with regular live dates and arranging for his return to recording activity. Bollin, who had already recorded two tracks with guitarists Wayne Bennett and Doug Sahm, was working on an album for Antone's at the time of his death.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

BOND, GRAHAM

- b. 28 October 1937; Romford, England
d. 8 May 1974; London, England

Jazz saxophonist, turned to rhythm and blues and Hammond organ with Alexis Korner, 1962. Bond led a trio with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker, known as the Graham Bond Organization. Bond came to America in late 1960s. He was gifted but unstable,

and never fulfilled his potential. He committed suicide on the London Underground.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

- The Sound of '65* (1965, Columbia SX1711).
There's a Bond Between Us (1966, Columbia SX1750).
Solid Bond (1970, Warners WS3001).
Two Heads Are Better Than One (1972, Chapter One CHSR 813).

BONDS, SON

- b. 16 March 1909; Brownsville, TN
 d. 31 August 1947; Dyersburg, TN

Born to Hattie Newbern and Aaron Bonds, Son Bonds was one of a number of singers to come from the Brownsville, Tennessee, area, and he grew up in that same region where he learned to play guitar and was soon working the streets with other regional musicians. He was a powerful singer/guitarist, who is heard to best advantage on his 1941 Bluebird sides with Sleepy John Estes. He began his recording career when he and his street-singing partner, harmonicist Hammie Nixon, recorded for Decca in 1934 as "Brownsville Son Bonds." He recorded four gospel sides as "Brother Son Bonds," and returned to the studio to cut two final 1934 sides for Decca as "Hammie and Son."

He recorded with Sleepy John Estes for Decca in 1938, but the 1941 sides for Bluebird like "80 Highway" and "A Hard Pill to Swallow" are exceptional for their growling tone and clearly articulated guitars. The sides made at the same session but released under Sleepy John Estes's name are also quite superior, owing in no small quantity to Bonds' fine guitar work. He and Estes also split the vocals on six exuberant sides made at the same Bluebird session, issued as by "The Delta Boys." Mistaken for someone else, he was shot and killed while sitting on a front porch in 1947.

PAUL GARON

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

"A Hard Pill to Swallow" (1941, Bluebird 8927).

BONNER, WELDON H. PHILLIP "JUKE BOY"

- b. 22 March 1932; Bellville, TX
 d. 29 June 1978; Houston, TX

Accompanying himself on both guitar and rack harmonica, Bonner sung highly personal tales typified in songs like "Life Gave Me a Dirty Deal" and "Struggle Here in Houston." He won a talent contest in 1947 in Houston that led to a radio spot. He cut his first sides for Irma in 1957 and next for Goldband in 1960.

Full-length albums came about due to the interest of Mike Leadbitter, coeditor of *Blues Unlimited*, who recorded Bonner in 1967, issuing his full-length debut on Flyright. He cut his best work between 1968 and 1969 for Arhoolie Records. A few European tours ensued, but by the 1970s he was working outside of music. He died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1978.

JEFF HARRIS

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 Strachwitz, Chris. Notes for *Juke Boy Bonner: Life Gave Me a Dirty Deal* (1993, Arhoolie CD 375).

Discography: AMG; LSPF

Selected Recordings

Life Gave Me a Dirty Deal (1993, Arhoolie CD 375).

See also Arhoolie/Blues Classics/Folk Lyric; Goldband Records; Irma

BOOGIE CHILLEN'

John Lee Hooker (1917–2001): vocal, guitar. Recorded November 3, 1948, in Detroit, Michigan (Modern 20-627; mx B 7006). "Boogie Chillen'" was Hooker's first hit record, selling a million copies and climbing to number one on the Race Records Juke Box Chart in February 1949. He recorded it several times during a long career as one of the greatest names in the blues (see the *Hooker, John Lee* entry). The recording, which was the B-side to "Sally May," was a surprise hit. It was produced by Bernie Besman (1912–2003) at United Sound Studios. Joe Siracuse was the engineer.

The song embodies many qualities that distinguish Hooker as a unique vocalist and guitarist. It is set in open A tuning (E–A–E–A–C#–E) with a capo on the second fret. Throughout his career, Hooker played primarily in standard tuning in E (or E minor), using open G and A tunings for his boogies.

The rhythm of the song has a rolling shuffle feeling, rather than the straight eighth note (duple) rhythm often found in Mississippi blues. Hooker had no training in or concern with form or harmony in the “school” sense. He rarely, if ever, used standard eight-, twelve- or sixteen-measure blues structures. For example, “Boogie Chillen’” begins with a vamp, a repeated pattern setting up the rhythm on A. There is a slurred ascending bass line played on the fifth string leading up to the E note played on the open fourth. The pattern is played, with slight variation, thirteen times. Such asymmetry heightens the tension of the performance, at the same time reducing the dependence on form as an organizing element in the music.

The verse begins with an immediate change to the IV7 (D7) chord on the downbeat of the first measure: “Well, my mama . . .” His voice is high, with a real edge. He spends approximately four bars on the IV, but after the initial striking of the chord, it functions as a substitute for the I chord, with the result that the moment of return to the tone I chord seems unclear, even ambiguous, to the listener. He uses the guitar percussively, with the chord components—and their harmonic functions—subordinate to the groove and the way he attacks the strings to achieve his very personal timbre.

After the second phrase (again asymmetrical) and an interspersed high I7 chord riff, Hooker resolves the verse by going again to the IV before returning to the I. In this song, he never goes to the V chord. (There are some songs in which Hooker never leaves the I chord.) Although he was one of the foremost modern blues performers, his style harks back to the early days, before radio and the record industry helped superimpose a certain uniformity of approach on what had been an idiosyncratic personal expression.

Also of interest in this performance are two lengthy spoken interludes, foot tapping on every quarter note and a lack of rhyming structure. Hooker used these or similar devices in many of his songs.

“Boogie Chillen’” remains *the* signature song of John Lee Hooker, a truly inimitable musician.

LENNY CARLSON

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Discography

John Lee Hooker. *Boogie Chillun* [note different spelling] (1972, Fantasy LP 24706); released on CD (1989, FCD-24706-2). The performance was recorded in 1962.

BOOGIE JAKE

b. Matthew Jacobs, ca. 1929; Marksville, LA

Singer and guitarist. Through 1960 he participated in Louisiana blues clubs and in Excello and Minit label recording sessions. From 1960 through 1974, after moving to Berkeley, California, he was retired from music. After his appearance at the 1974 San Francisco Blues Festival, he made a limited return to performing and recording, sometimes with “Schoolboy Cleve” White.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP (under Jacobs)

BOOGIE WOOGIE RED

b. Vernon Harrison, 18 October 1925; Rayville, LA
d. 2 July 1992; Detroit, MI

Boogie Woogie Red was active in Detroit’s blues piano scene by his teens. He accompanied John Lee Hooker from 1946 to 1960, left music for a decade, and came back in 1971 to enjoy great local popularity. While some sources state a death year of 1985, *Living Blues* published an obituary for July 2, 1992.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: LSFP

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Live at the Blind Pig (Blind Pig Records).

BOOK BINDER, ROY

b. 5 October 1941; New York, NY

Guitarist and singer. Folk blues virtuoso Book Binder became a literal musical disciple of the legendary Reverend Gary Davis, taking regular lessons from the blind guitar genius and even serving as his chauffeur. After establishing himself on the coffeehouse folk circuit, Book Binder went on to accompany Davis in his live shows.

Book Binder had picked up guitar in the Navy, and while attending college in Rhode Island and New York his interest went from casual to obsessive. He did some mid-1960s recording and dropped out of college in 1967 to work with Davis and tour England in 1969 with Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup. He formed a duo with fiddler Fats Kaplin in 1973 that lasted four years and produced two albums.

When the duo broke up, Book Binder bought an Airstream motor home and hit the road with a self-contained show that became one of the most pervasive aspects of the American folk blues scene for the next two decades. The success of his solo recording debut *Going Back to Tampa*, released in 1979, allowed Book Binder to take his live show to a national audience.

He did not record again until *Bookeroo!* was released on Rounder Records in 1988, by which time his identity as an itinerant folk bluesman was well established. He continued recording regularly and touring, putting on live performances that were equal parts entertainment and education. His personalized, but true to the source, renditions of the seminal songs and styles of the genre served as an entry point into the work of the classic folk blues figures, including mentor Davis, for his fans.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn and Stephen Thomas Erlewine); Larkin (as Bookbinder); Santelli

Discography: AMG

BOOKER, CHARLIE (CHARLEY)

b. 3 September 1925; Quiver River, MS
 d. 20 September 1989; South Bend, IN

Singer and guitarist in early postwar Mississippi blues. Learned guitar from his father and a maternal uncle, and studied the records of prewar artists including Charlie Patton. His reputation rests on a 1952 recording session for Modern Records, where he made four titles with harmonica player Houston Boines and pianist Ike Turner.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

LaVere, Steve. “Charlie Booker” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 89 (November/December 1989): 38–39.

Discography: LSFP

BOOKER, JAMES

b. 17 December 1939; New Orleans, LA
 d. 8 November 1983; New Orleans, LA

James Booker was one of the most flamboyant, and technically adept pianists to emerge from New Orleans. In his unpredictable sets he would play everything from jazz to classical to popular songs to gut-bucket blues, sometimes all during the course of one song and all delivered in a highly improvisational style.

James Carroll Booker III was born in New Orleans on December 17, 1939. In his early teens he began gaining local recognition on radio station WMRV. His debut was “Doing the Hambone” in 1953 and in 1960 he made the national charts with “Gonzo,” an organ instrumental. During the next few years he worked with famous New Orleans acts such as Huey “Piano” Smith, Earl King, and Shirley & Lee, and during the next two decades he played and recorded with artists such as Aretha Franklin, Ringo Starr, the Doobie Brothers, and B. B. King.

A 1967 conviction for possession of heroin curtailed his career. His profile began to rise during the 1970s as he held court at local clubs and played the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. Despite his reputation, his recorded output during his lifetime is slim and includes *Junco Partner* for Island in 1976, *New Orleans Piano Wizard: Live!* recorded in 1976, and *Classified!* for Rounder in 1982. Numerous posthumous recordings of Booker have surfaced including many live recordings that have only added to his legend. On November 8, 1983, James Booker died as the result of taking a deadly dose of low-grade cocaine.

JEFF HARRIS

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Boyd Raeburn); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

BOOKER, JAMES

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Classified! (1982, Rounder 2036).

Junco Partner (1993, Hannibal HNCD-1359).

See also King, Earl; Louisiana; Rounder; Smith, Huey “Piano”

BOOZE, BEATRICE “WEE BEA”

b. Muriel Nichols or Nicholls, 23 May 1920; Baltimore, MD

d. 1975 (?)

Singer most noted for her 1942 hit version of “See See Rider” (Decca 8633). A protégée of Sammy Price, Booze would go on to record topical songs during World War II, tour with the Andy Kirk band, and have additional recording sessions with Price. Activity after 1962 is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP

BORUM, “MEMPHIS” WILLIE

b. 4 November 1911; Memphis, TN

d. 5 October 1993; Memphis, TN

Active in Memphis in the early 1930s, Borum played guitar on 1934 recordings by Allen Shaw and Hattie Hart. After wartime service he worked outside music, playing only casually. Two 1961 Bluesville albums, where he accompanied himself on harmonica and guitar, revealed him as an unshowy but thoughtful performer.

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Larkin

Olsson, Bengt. *Memphis Blues*. London: Studio Vista, 1970.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

See also Doyle, Charlie “Little Buddy”; Shaw, Allen

BOSTIC, EARL

b. Eugene Earl Bostic, 25 April 1913; Tulsa, OK

d. 28 October 1965; Rochester, NY

Jazz saxophonist who recorded a number of R&B and jump blues in the late 1940s and 1950s, contributing to the emergence of the era’s characteristic R&B style, which relied largely on rousing saxophone solos to generate excitement. Best known as an alto saxophonist, Bostic also played tenor. He was a member of Lionel Hampton’s hard-driving big band in the early 1940s before forming his own combo. His huge hit, “Flamingo” (produced by Ralph Bass for King in 1951), spotlighted his ability to play in both a smooth, melodic style and an aggressive, raunchy, honking style. Although other jazzmen admired Bostic for his technical skills, his strong record sales and jukebox play owed more to his music’s simple melody lines, strong dance beats, and undeniably sensual feel.

STEVE HOFFMAN

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: AMG; Larkin; Lord

BOSTON BLACKIE

b. Bennie Joe Houston, 6 November 1943; Panola, AL

d. 11 July 1993; Chicago, IL

Born Bennie Joe Houston, the singer/guitarist dubbed Boston Blackie possessed a high, soulful singing voice and developed an aggressive electric guitar style performing throughout the 1960s on Chicago’s West Side, influenced by Magic Sam and Otis Rush. In 1993, he was fatally shot by singer James “Tail Dragger” Jones.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

Larson, JoAnne, and Richard Shavsin. “Boston Blackie (Bennie Joe Houston)” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 112 (November/December 1993): 43.

Discography

Boston Blackie & Smokey Smothers. *Chicago Blues Sessions, Vol. 1* (2001, Wolf 120.847 CD).

BOUCHILLON, CHRIS

b. 21 August 1893; Oconee County, SC
d. 1950s; FL

Bouchillon was the first to exploit, though he may not have invented, the “talking blues,” a rueful comic story recounted to a raggy guitar accompaniment, played on his 1926–1928 Columbia recordings initially by his brother Uris, later by himself. He was billed as “The Talking Comedian of the South.” The form attracted other hillbilly artists like Herschel Brown, Buddy Jones, and Robert Lunn. His 1927 coupling “Born in Hard Luck”/“The Medicine Show” appears to have been widely circulated, with elements reappearing in the work of Harmonica Frank Floyd. His approach finds a resonance, perhaps coincidental, in the work of Woody Guthrie.

TONY RUSSELL

Discography

Russell, Tony. *Country Music Records: A Discography, 1921–1942*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

See also Floyd, Frank “Harmonica”

BOWMAN, PRISCILLA

b. 1928; Kansas City, KS
d. 24 July 1988; Kansas City, KS

Blues singer who briefly achieved popularity in the 1950s. Her robust shouting blues style evoked the Kansas City blues tradition, but also signaled the emergence of rock ‘n’ roll. She joined the Jay McShann band in the early 1950s, and in 1955 the band was signed to Vee-Jay. Bowman recorded four sessions for Vee-Jay—two sessions with Jay McShann and the subsequent sessions as a solo act. Just about every number she waxed was top-notch, but only “Hands Off” from this first session made the charts—number one on the *Billboard* R&B chart in late 1955. As a solo artist, Bowman stayed on with Vee-Jay, recording with the company’s house band in 1957, 1958, and 1959; she enjoyed notable artistic success if not commercial success. After Vee-Jay, she never recorded again. In the 1980s Bowman experienced a revival, playing the Kansas City Blues Festival, Spirit Festival, and other venues.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Grendysa, Peter. “Priscilla Bowman Dies” [obituary]. *Goldmine* (October 7, 1988).

Discography: LSPF**BOWSER, ERBIE**

b. 5 May 1918; Davila, TX
d. 15 August 1995; Austin, TX

Pianist. A self-taught pianist from a musical family, Bowser was already touring as a teenager. He joined guitarist T. D. Bell’s band the Cadillacs in the late 1940s, playing for West Texas oil field workers before an extended residency at the Victory Grill in Austin. He recorded and performed again with Bell in the early 1990s, releasing *It’s About Time* for Spindletop Records and playing locally as the Blues Specialists.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin
“Ernie Bowser” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 123 (September/October 1995): 55.

Discography

It’s About Time (1992, Spindletop/Black Magic).

BOY BLUE

b. Roland Hayes, 18 August 1922; Laurel, MS
d. 20 May 1980; Memphis, TN

Raised in Hughes, Arkansas, Boy Blue was a multi-instrumentalist best known for harmonica. Recorded for Alan Lomax (1959) and with Joe Willie Wilkins (1973).

FRED J. HAY

Bibliography

Eagle, Bob. “Boy Blue.” *Living Blues* no. 50 (Spring 1981): 47–48.

Discography

The Blues Roll On (Southern Folk Heritage Series) (1961, Atlantic LP SD-B52).
Joe Willie Wilkins and His King Biscuit Boys (1977, Adamo LP 9507).

BOYACK, PAT

b. 26 June 1967; Helper, UT

Guitarist in Texas blues styles in practice since 1980. From 1993 through 1996 he performed and recorded with the Prowlers, including singer Jimmy Morello. From 1997 on he has performed under his own name.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG

Discography: AMG**BOYD, EDDIE**

b. November 25, 1914; Stovall (Coahoma County), MS

d. July 13, 1994; Helsinki, Finland

Edward Riley Boyd was a pianist and singer who recorded more than one hundred tunes for multiple U.S. labels between 1947 and 1965, and subsequently recorded ten or so albums for European labels, but is best known for three brooding blues hits from the early 1950s: “Third Degree,” “24 Hours,” and especially “Five Long Years.” He spent the first third of his life in the Mississippi Delta and Mid-South, the middle third in Chicago, and the last third in Europe.

Growing up in the Delta, Boyd determined early on to escape the plantation exploitation and racial oppression he experienced first-hand. He tried his hand at harp and guitar before settling on piano during his years in Memphis. He made his way to Chicago in 1941. There, he fell in with the “Bluebird beat” musicians who recorded for Lester Melrose, accompanying John Lee Williamson, Tampa Red, and Jazz Gillum on record and eventually cutting his own records for Melrose during 1947–1949. He then did one session each for Regal and Herald. In 1951, he did a session for Leonard Chess, who rejected the tracks.

Frustrated, he financed his next session by himself, using money from his factory job, and convinced J.O.B. to release his tune “Five Long Years,” which became a number one R&B hit in 1952. On that record’s strength, he quit his job and signed with Parrot, owned by Chicago DJ Al Benson. But Benson, without telling him, sold Boyd’s contract to Chess (reportedly to settle a personal debt). Having previously been snubbed by Chess, Boyd was unhappy with the arrangement, and although Chess benefited from Boyd’s two 1953 hits, the bad feelings were mutual, leading to a stormy relationship rooted in personality conflicts but also partly explainable by artistic differences. Boyd’s low-key, urbane piano blues—reminiscent of his greatest influences, Leroy Carr and Roosevelt Sykes—differed from the grittier, guitar- and harp-driven sides Chess favored. He toured actively until sidelined by injuries from a 1957 car accident, then after leaving Chess found his career stymied by Leonard Chess’s reputed efforts to quash airplay for his releases on other labels

(including some strong efforts on Bea & Baby with Robert Jr. Lockwood on guitar).

His career took turn for the better when Willie Dixon booked him on the 1965 American Folk Blues Festival package tour of Europe. Abroad, Boyd relished the enthusiasm of festival audiences and the absence of racist attitudes. During the next five years, he lived in France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and Denmark, and recorded two albums for Mike Vernon in England, backed by John Mayall’s Bluesbreakers and Peter Green’s Fleetwood Mac. Those albums boosted his visibility among college-age European blues fans. Performing in Finland in 1970, he met a local woman, moved in with her (they married in 1977), and called Helsinki his home up until his death. He recorded and performed extensively in Europe (including albums for Sonet and Storyville), making only occasional trips back to the United States, including a triumphant appearance at the 1986 Chicago Blues Festival.

Boyd was not an extraordinary pianist but he was a bluesman to the core, an artist who lived the blues life and imbued his music with feelings of desperation, sorrow, and loss. His three best-known songs have an almost funereal quality to them, melodically and lyrically. This is not to say that he couldn’t play upbeat, romping numbers—he could and he did—but he will always be remembered for those evocative, gloomy ones, and to this day probably not a night goes by without some bluesman somewhere singing his immortal lines “I’ve been mistreated/You know what I’m talking about/Worked five long years for one woman/She had the nerve to throw me out.”

STEVE HOFFMAN

Bibliography

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Sironen, Erkki. “Eddie Boyd” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 119 (January/February 1995): 65–67.

Discography: LSFP, AMG**BOYD, LOUIE**

b. 24 August 1924; Carthage, MS

d. 1978; Los Angeles, CA

Began playing harmonica in Mississippi, and continued after moving to California in the mid-1960s. Recorded under his own name, and with Smokey Smothers in the latter's 1962 Federal label session. He also had a reputation for colorful stories and high claims.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Eagle, Bob. "Off the Wall." *Blues Unlimited* no. 107 (April/May 1974): 9, 12.
 "Louie Boyd" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 45/46 (Spring 1980): 95.

BOYKIN, BRENDA

b. 30 March 1957; Oakland, CA

Big-voiced and versatile Bay Area singer, who was a jazz singer before she became the Johnny Nocturne Band's vocalist in 1991, appearing on three of the band's albums. Since then she has recorded two albums as vocalist with the group Home Cookin' and two with guitarist Eric Swinderman.

RAY ASTBURY

Selected Recordings

Home Cookin', *Afrobbilly Soul Stew* (Blue Dot BDR CD103).

See also **Johnny Nocturne Band**

BOYSON, CORNELIUS "BOYSAW"

b. 5 September 1936; Tunica, MS

d. 9 July 1994; Chicago, IL

Bassist who worked with Mighty Joe Young, Jimmy Dawkins, and other postwar Chicago bluesmen. Musicians gave him the nickname "Mule" for playing bass notes that could "kick like a mule."

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Steven Sharp, "Cornelius (Boysaw) Boyson," [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 118 (November/December 1994): 63.

BOZE, CALVIN B.

b. 15 October 1916; Trinity County, TX

d. 18 June 1970; West Los Angeles, CA

Vocalist in the jump blues style of Louis Jordan who first recorded for Aladdin Records. Despite strong material like "Safronia B," he never broke into the R&B charts. Also wrote material for Charles Brown.

TOM MORGAN

Discography: LSFP

Jumpin' Like Mad: Cool Cats & Hip Chicks (1997, Capitol CD 52051; reissue).

BRACEY, ISHMON

b. 9 January 1901; Byram, MS

d. 2 February 1970; Jackson, MS

A lugubrious singer-guitarist who first recorded for Victor with Rosie Mae Moore and Tommy Johnson in 1928 as Ishman Bracey. He learned guitar from Rube Lacey and was one of many said to have guided Blind Lemon Jefferson around. He toured frequently with Johnson and played at social events and for a medicine show, before settling in Jackson where he gave up blues and became a minister. He is known to have recorded an unissued tape of religious songs.

Bracey is usually associated with Tommy Johnson, sometimes to his own detriment. He had a hard, unyielding voice and uncompromising guitar style, but was capable of effective falsetto on songs like "Saturday Blues" (1928), which he claimed sold six thousand copies. Stephen Calt and Gayle Wardlow described him as incapable of tuning a guitar properly, repetitive and limited in *King of the Delta Blues* (Rock Chapel Press, 1988). Bracey was advised by Paramount recording director Art Laibley to vary his approach so he recorded for Paramount with the New Orleans Nehi Boys, a jazz group. Those sides that survive are not a success.

He and Johnson fell out over money, a rift that lasted until Johnson's death. Bracey never recorded commercially again. He was interviewed by Gayle Dean Wardlow in 1963, but remains a figure as remote as his recordings.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Wardlow, Gayle. "Got Four, Five Puppies, One Little Shaggy Hound." *Blues Unlimited* no. 142 (Summer 1982): 4-11.

Discography: DGR

BRACKEN, JAMES C.

BRACKEN, JAMES C.

b. 23 May 1908; OK
d. 20 February 1972; Chicago, IL,

Birth year sometimes given as 1909. A Chicago record company executive of the 1950s and 1960s. Bracken, with his wife Vivian Carter, founded and operated Chicago's famed Vee-Jay label from 1953 to 1966. Bracken was raised in Kansas City, Kansas. He was living in Chicago in 1944 when he met Vivian Carter. The couple became business partners in 1950, when they founded Vivian's Record Shop in Gary, Indiana; in 1953 they founded Vee-Jay Records ("Vee" standing for Vivian and "Jay" standing for James). They married in December 1953. Vee-Jay grew rapidly with its first two acts, bluesman Jimmy Reed and the doo-wop group, the Spaniels. In 1955 Ewart Abner became a third partner in Vee-Jay and general manager. Vee-Jay went bankrupt in 1966, and James and Vivian continued for a few more months putting out Vee-Jay product on the Exodus label. After that, Bracken struggled with various ventures in the record business, including a blues label, none of which got off the ground.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Pruter, Robert. *Chicago Soul*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

BRADFORD, PERRY

b. 14 February 1893; Montgomery, AL
d. 20 April 1970; Queens, NY

Beginning his career playing piano in tent shows, Bradford made his greatest contribution as a songwriter, convincing OKeh Records to record his composition "Crazy Blues" with African American singer Mamie Smith, the first blues recording.

JIM THOMAS

Bibliography

Santelli
Bradford, Perry. *Born with the Blues*. Oak Publications, 1965.

Discography: DGR

BRADSHAW, EVANS

b. 18 October 1912; Memphis, TN
d. 17 November 1978; Memphis, TN

Saxophonist and bandleader in Memphis. For some years he was assisted at piano by his son Evans Bradshaw Jr., who moved to Flint, Michigan, in 1953.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

"Obituaries." *Living Blues* no. 41 (November/December 1978): 40

BRADSHAW, MYRON "TINY"

b. 23 September 1905; Youngstown, OH
d. 26 November 1958; Cincinnati, OH

Guitarist, singer, bandleader. A jump blues original, best known for his propulsive 1951 hit, "The Train Kept a Rollin'," Bradshaw adeptly altered his musical style to extend and expand his career. He recorded with numerous jazz greats, including Sonny Stitt, Gigi Gryce, Charlie Shavers, and Sil Austin, but his music always remained blues based.

Bradshaw, a psychology major, was a singer at Wilberforce University and a drummer for Horace Henderson's Collegians. In 1932 he moved to New York City and quickly became an in-demand drummer, working with the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, the Savoy Bearcats, and other successful bands. Bradshaw soon formed his own group, modeled closely on that of former band mate Cab Calloway, a fellow alumnus of Marion Hardy's Alabamians, and was showcased at the Renaissance Ballroom in New York City. Bradshaw and band recorded in 1934 but it would be another decade before he would be back in the studio on a regular basis.

Bradshaw spent World War II in an Army big band and he returned to his peacetime profession with fresh energy and a new, upbeat, dance-friendly R&B approach that replaced his previous blues emphasis. He did the majority of his recording in the five year span of 1950 to 1954, amassing a handful of hits for the King label before being sidelined by a stroke.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Scott Yanow and Al Campbell); Larkin; New Grove Jazz; Santelli; Southern

Discography: AMG ; Lord; LSFP

BRAGGS, AL "TNT"

b. 23 May 1934; Dallas, TX
d. 5 December 2003; Dallas, TX

Last name sometimes shown as "Bragg." A master showman whose original live act featured almost exact impersonations of soul/blues greats, Braggs inadvertently acquired his stage name from a New Orleans promoter who didn't know who he was. Braggs went wild on stage to live up to it and a star and style were born. He was a country and gospel fan before he formed Al Braggs and the Organizers but his friendship with Bobby "Blue" Bland led him deeper into the blues. In 1959 Bland got him signed by Don Robey to Duke Records, where Willie Dixon produced his debut recording. Braggs toured with Bland until 1966 when he went solo.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Santelli

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Schuller, Tim. "The Al Braggs Story." *Juke Blues* no. 9 (Summer 1987): 22–25.

BRAINSTORM

Chicago blues and soul label of the late 1960s. Brainstorm was opened in 1966 by veteran record man Leo Austell with two young partners, Archie Russell and Hillary Johnson. Brainstorm and its subsidiary, Twin Stacks, never achieved more than regional success. As a production company, however, the operation had magnificent success with Betty Everett, getting several national hits with her, notably "There'll Come a Time" (1969), all which were leased to MCA's Uni label. The company's other acts—the Emotions, John Edwards, Cicero Blake, and Roy Hytower—did little to sustain the company commercially. The most blues-oriented recordings were those of hard soul singer Cicero Blake ("Loving You Woman Is Everything") and bluesman Roy Hytower ("You Pleases You"). The label closed in 1969.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

McGrath

Pruter, Robert. *Chicago Soul*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

BRAMHALL, DOYLE

b. 17 February 1949; Dallas, TX

Drummer, singer, songwriter. Best known as a long-time songwriter for Stevie Ray Vaughan, Bramhall

was also a mentor to the Texas rocking blues explosion of the 1980s through his work in early groups like the Chessmen, with Jimmie Vaughan, and Storm, featuring Vaughan and occasionally his brother Stevie Ray. He also performed with Marcia Ball, Rocky Hill, Anson Funderburgh, Lou Ann Barton, and Mason Ruffner. Bramhall's first album as a leader, *Birdnest on the Ground*, was released in 1994 with the sequel, *Fitchburg Street*, coming a decade later. Bramhall, father of guitarist Doyle Bramhall II, also worked as a producer for Indigenous and Chris Duarte and coproduced Marcia Ball's W. C. Handy Award-winning *Presumed Innocent*.

MICHAEL POINT

BRANCH, WILLIAM EARL "BILLY"

b. 3 October 1951; Great Lakes Naval Hospital (north of Chicago), IL

In spite of his continued importance on the Chicago blues scene, Branch was actually raised in Southern California, and only returned to Chicago in the late 1960s to attend the University of Illinois as a political science major.

Inspired by Willie Dixon, Junior Wells and other performers at the Grant Park blues festival in 1969, Branch soon abandoned political science in favor of blues harmonica studies in the clubs of Chicago. He first recorded, as a sideman, on a 1974 session for Willie Dixon, replacing an out-of-town Carey Bell. He continued to frequent the Chicago clubs, learning from Junior Wells, Big Walter Horton, and especially Carey Bell, who he eventually replaced in Willie Dixon's All Stars.

In 1977 Branch, Lurrie Bell, Freddie Dixon, and Garland Whiteside—the latter three all sons of noted blues artists—performed at the Berlin Jazz Festival as the Sons of Blues, and on their return, continued to perform as the SOBs. In Berlin, they represented a new generation of blues performers. Branch has emphasized the importance of each generation learning from the last by helping to found Chicago's Blues in the Schools program, for which he won W. C. Handy Awards in 1990 and 1994.

He has won the *Living Blues* Critics Award for Most Outstanding Blues Musician (harmonica) in 1993 and 1997, and he shared a Handy award for the album *Harp Attack* in 1991.

PAUL GARON

Bibliography

Sharp, Steven. "Don't Start Me to Talkin'." *Living Blues* no. 139 (May/June 1998): 14–25.

Discography: AMG

Harp Attack (1990, Alligator 4790).

BRANDON, SKEETER

b. Calvin Thomas Brandon, 22 April 1948; Halifax, VA

Blind vocalist and keyboardist. Played throughout the southern United States in various bands from 1966 to 1991. Brandon joined Highway 61 in 1991, recorded four albums, and toured extensively until the band's 2001 breakup. In 1994 he formed the Prime Rib Blues Band and released *Good to Go* (Rock House, 2002).

JOE C. CLARK

Bibliography

Tilling, Robert. “‘I’d Rather Sing Than Eat’: Skeeter Brandon and HWY 61.” *Blues and Rhythm* no. 85 (January 1994): 11.

Selected Recordings

Skeeter Brandon and Highway 61. *Man of My Word* (1999, New Moon 9922).

BRENSTON, JACKIE

b. 15 August 1930; Clarksdale, MS

d. 15 November 1979; Memphis, TN

Vocalist and saxophonist, best known for his recordings with Ike Turner, especially “Rocket 88,” which is considered by some to be the first rock ‘n’ roll record—if not that, then the first, at least, to come out of Sam Phillips’s studio in Memphis, where Elvis Presley got his start three years later. “Rocket 88” was, by Brenston’s own admission, nothing too original—it was based on a number he had been singing by Jimmy Liggins, “Cadillac Boogie.” But it became Chess Records’ first number one hit on the R&B charts.

Brenston learned sax from Jesse Flowers in Clarksdale before he joined Ike Turner’s Kings of Rhythm. When the band went to Memphis Recording Service to make its debut recordings for Phillips in 1951, Turner cut a single of his own, but Brenston got the hit (billed as Jackie Brenston and His Delta Cats) after Phillips sold the sides to Chess in Chicago. The resulting friction broke the Kings of Rhythm apart, with most of the musicians staying with saxophonist Raymond Hill in Clarksdale while Turner and Brenston went to Memphis. There they worked a short while with B. B. King, but as “Rocket 88”

climbed the charts, the young and headstrong Brenston split to launch what he thought would be a career as a national star.

Wild and inexperienced in the ways of the music business, Brenston lost all his money, his band, and his stardom over the next couple of years and despite more attempts at Chess, he never had another hit. He went back to work as a sideman, accompanying Dennis Binder, Amos Milburn, Lowell Fulson, Johnny Otis, Memphis Slim, and Joe Hinton, finally rejoining Ike Turner’s Kings of Rhythm in St. Louis from 1955 to 1962. During his second stint with Turner, Brenston recorded two singles with the band for Federal Records and another 45 for the Sue label. The Rockford, Illinois-based duo Birdlegs & Pauline hired him after he left Ike. A final Brenston single was recorded in Chicago for Mel London’s Mel-Lon label, backed by Ricky Allen’s band with Earl Hooker on guitar, in 1963. He continued to perform at times in later years, with Sid Wallace’s band in St. Louis and with local bands back home in Clarksdale, where he took a job as a truck driver. In Clarksdale in the 1970s, his claims of once having a number one record were often met with scoffs of disbelief. As he put it, “I had a hit record and no sense. . . . It all just drifted on away.”

JIM O’NEAL

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin; Santelli
O’Neal, Jim. “Jackie Brenston.” *Living Blues* no. 45/46 (Spring 1980): 18–20.

Discography: AMG: LSFP

BREWER, CLARENCE
“KING CLARENTZ”

b. 1950

Guitarist and vocalist, folk sculptor in the Ozark mountains. His blues in the John Lee Hooker manner are regarded as raw and exotic.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda)

Discography

Clarence Brewer. *King Clarentz*. (1999, HMG Record 1007).

BREWER, JIM “BLIND”

b. 3 October 1920; Brookhaven, MS
 d. 3 June 1988; Chicago, IL

Guitar/vocal/autoharp. With his blues-playing father and religious mother at odds over how best to help their blind son get along, Jim resolved the conflict, saying “No one was ever hurt by a song.” He played religious music, blues, and folk songs for more than fifty years, hopping freights and traveling around Mississippi, playing on Maxwell Street, around Chicago, and later, around the United States and Canada in the company of many different revival players, for whom he was a door between worlds. He died with gigs on his calendar.

ANDY COHEN

Bibliography

Harris, Larkin; Santelli
 Whiteis, David. “Jim Brewer” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 82 (September/October 1988): 37–38.

Discography: LSFP

Jim Brewer (1974, Philo PH 1003).
Tough Luck (Earwig Records).

**BREWSTER, REVEREND
WILLIAM HERBERT**

b. 2 July 1897; Somerville, TN
 d. 14 October 1987; Memphis, TN

Reverend W. Herbert Brewster combined a poet’s erudition and bluesman’s intensity while penning more than two hundred exceptional gospel tunes. Such giants as Mahalia Jackson and Clara Ward recorded Reverend Brewster’s masterful songs of salvation, especially “Move On Up a Little Higher” (1946). His dynamic oratorical skills were regularly displayed during a five-decade tenure as pastor of Memphis’s East Trigg Baptist Church.

RON WYNN

Bibliography

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BRIDGES, CURLEY

b. 7 February 1934; Fuquay-Varina, NC

Big-voiced vocalist, pianist, organist, and occasional drummer. Pianist and vocalist with Frank Motley and the Motley Crew from 1953 to 1966. Relocated from Washington to Toronto with the rest of the group in 1955. Featured vocalist on most Motley Crew records of the 1950s and early 1960s. Credited with the first rocking rearrangement of “Hound Dog,” which appeared as “New Hound Dog” in 1954, but he is probably best remembered from the Motley Crew days for his powerful ballads. His career as a bluesman was revived after decades of lounge work following a successful appearance at an R&B festival in Toronto in 1997. Bridges released new blues CDs in 1998 and 2001.

BILL MUNSON

BRIM, GRACE

b. 10 July 1923; Biscoe, AR
 d. 28 June 1999; Gary, IN

Drummer, harmonica player. Likely the first female drummer in Chicago blues, taking up the instrument as the suggestion of husband John Brim. Assisted Brim in the lyrics of and recording for “Ice Cream Man.” In later years she was devoted to several businesses and church.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Steven Sharp “Grace Brim” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 148 (November/December 1999): 57.

Discography: LSFP**BRIM, JOHN**

b. 10 April 1922; Hopkinsville, KY
 d. 1 October 2003; Gary, IN

Known for a handful of postwar Chicago recordings, some unreleased for decades, John Brim remains an important blues artist for the stunning integrity of those few sides. Brim’s earliest influences included Big Bill Broonzy, John Lee Williamson, and Tampa Red. In Indianapolis from 1941 to 1945, he sang with Harmon Ray, Scrapper Blackwell, and others, and learned guitar and the dry cleaning business, two skills on which he depended his entire life. In Chicago from 1945 until 1952, when he moved to neighboring Gary, Indiana, Brim befriended childhood heroes Tampa Red, Broonzy, Williamson, and Big Maceo

BRIM, JOHN

Merriweather, and perfected his playing with fellow newcomers Muddy Waters, Floyd Jones, Little Walter, Sunnyland Slim, Jimmy Reed, and others who would help define the new Chicago blues. He began performing around 1948 with his wife, Grace, who sang and played drums and harmonica. In 1950 Brim accompanied Merriweather on four issued titles for Fortune in Detroit, where he also recorded two numbers with Grace singing.

Between 1951 and 1956 Brim recorded several titles for Random, JOB, Parrot, and Checker-Chess, many issued only years later. Brim's best chances for success faded when Chess failed to either promote or release his output. In addition, Brim's fully realized "Rattlesnake," written at Leonard Chess's request in answer to Big Mama Thornton's hit "Hound Dog," was shelved when Don Robey threatened an injunction against Sun Records for the similar "Bear Cat."

"Ice Cream Man," backed by Little Walter, remains one of the most perfect examples of the post-war Chicago sound, a symbiosis of swing, menacing drive, and creative tension and release. "Tough Times" was a rare blues of social commentary characterized, as most of Brim's numbers, by the calm gravity of his baritone voice and his spare, electrified country guitar playing.

Brim saw significant royalties only after J. Geils covered "Be Careful" and Van Halen recorded "Ice Cream Man," of which Brim commented to writer Steven Sharp, "Van Halen did it . . . it stayed on the charts for 20 years. We did it, it stayed on the *shelf* 20 years."

In 1971 John, Grace, and their son John Jr. released a 45 on their own B&B label. In later years Brim appeared on CDs for Wolf, Anna Bea, Delmark, and Tone Cool, and made occasional club and festival appearances.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli Sharp, Steven. "The Ice Cream Man." *Living Blues* no. 118 (December 1994): 39.

Discography: AMG: LSFP

Selected Recordings

Ice Cream Man (Tone-Cool CDTC 1150).
Whose Muddy Shoes (MCA/Chess CD CHD-9114).

BRIM, JOHN JR.

b. 13 November 1951; Chicago, IL

Guitarist son of John Brim and drummer Grace Brim, John Jr. accompanied his father throughout the 1970s, frequently with Floyd Jones. Recorded with his parents, "You Put the Hurt on Me," backed with "Movin' Out" in 1971 as a 45 rpm single on their B&B label. Has made infrequent appearances since 1980s, working mainly outside music.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

BRITTON, JOE

b. 28 November 1903; Birmingham, AL

d. 12 August 1972; New York, NY

Jazz and blues trombonist who toured with Bessie Smith (1926–1928), then took various journeyman gigs until settling in New York in the 1930s. His contributions to blues sessions may be heard in the 1940s and 1950s recordings of Jelly Roll Morton, Wynonie Harris, and Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

BROADWAY

Record label operated from 1921 by the Bridgeport Die & Machine Company using material recorded by New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount), who took the label over in 1925 and issued the Broadway 5000 Race series, which ran to 112 issues mainly derived from Paramount, with a few from QRS, mostly under pseudonyms. Ma Rainey appears as Lila Patterson, Meade Lux Lewis as Hatch Seward, Blind Blake as Blind George Martin, Ida Cox as both Velma Bradley and Katie Lewis, Elzadie Robinson as Bernice Duke, Charlie Spand as Charlie Chapman. However, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Bill, and the Mississippi Sheiks appear under their own names. In 1932–1934, a Broadway label was produced by ARC and in 1934 another by Decca, which issued a 9000 Race series that includes sides by Bumble Bee Slim (as Leroy Carr's Buddy) and Georgia White (as Vergie Lee).

HOWARD RYE

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BROCKMAN, POLK

b 1898; GA
 d. 10 March 1985; Maitland, FL

OKeh label distributor based in Atlanta, Georgia. Scouted blues artists for OKeh, and conducted or assisted various remote commercial recording sessions, including a 1930 OKeh session in Jackson, Mississippi, with local scout H.C. Speir. Later, from 1934 through World War II, he scouted for Bluebird, working especially with the Mississippi Sheiks and Bo Carter. Also a key figure in country music for finding Fiddlin' John Carson for OKeh in 1923.

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 "Obituary." *Billboard* (March 23, 1985): 70.

BRONZE

Record label (California, 1939–1957). Owner: Leroy Edward Hurte (b. 2 May 1915; Muskogee, OK). Los Angeles, California–based, the Bronze label was the first to record Cecil Gant ("I Wonder"), Joe Liggins ("The Honeydrinker"), and the (Five) Soul Stirrers (featuring R. H. Harris, "I'll Never Turn Back," "Walk Around"). Other artists include the Colts, Gladys Bentley, Frank Haywood, Sallie Martin (and Kenneth Morris) Singers, and the Southern Gospel Singers (featuring Willmer "Little Axe" Broadnax). In 1940, Hurte acquired the label from John Levy.

ROBERT EAGLE

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BROOKS, "BIG" LEON

b. 19 November 1933; Sunflower, MS
 d. 22 January 1982; Chicago, IL

Harmonica player active in Chicago from the 1950s through his death in 1982. He took up the instrument

at age six. An early and abiding influence was Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller). After moving from Mississippi to Chicago in the 1940s, Brooks sought and regarded "Little Walter" Jacobs as his "coach." During the 1950s, Brooks led his own bands and worked often with Jimmy Rogers, Otis Rush, Robert Nighthawk, and Freddy King. In the 1982 *Living Blues* obituary, Rogers attested that Brooks's health and early success was hampered by drugs. By the end of the 1950s, he retired from performing.

Brooks returned to the stage in 1976, rebuilding a following in the Chicago North Side and West Side clubs. His health remained weak. Nonetheless he made a return trip to Mississippi with guitarist Eddie Taylor and vocalist Tail Dragger. Recording opportunities came his way, including individual songs for the Living Chicago Blues album series for Alligator, and a whole album for Bob Corriture's Blues Over Blues B.O.B. label. Shortly before his solo album was released, Brooks died of a heart attack.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography

Big Leon Brooks. *Let's Go to Town* (1982, Blues Over Blues B.O.B. 2702).

BROOKS, COLUMBUS

b. 16 November 1927; IN
 d. 4 February 1976; Jackson, MS

Slide guitarist in the manner of Elmore James. From 1968 through 1974 he worked with Sam Myers, mostly around Jackson, Mississippi. His day job was as a janitor. He did not have an opportunity to make studio recordings, but his slide playing remains legendary to those who did hear him live.

EDWARD KOMARA

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BROOKS, HADDA

b. Hadda Hopgood, 29 October 1916; Los Angeles, CA
 d. 21 November 2002; Los Angeles, CA

BROOKS, HADDA

She studied classical piano and graduated from Polytechnic High School before attending Northwestern University. After working as a rehearsal pianist in the early 1940s, she took up music professionally in 1945 under the guidance of Jules Bihari of Modern Music records, who recorded her extensively as a boogie pianist. She also accompanied Smokey Hogg. She first sang in 1946. She moved to London Records in March 1950, then to OKeh in 1952, concentrating increasingly on ballads aimed at the pop market. Her show on KLAC-TV (from December 1950) was one of the first regular shows hosted by an African American.

Her subsequent career was increasingly night club oriented and included a tour of Europe with the Harlem Globe Trotters basketball show as interval pianist, and residencies in Kansas City, Missouri (1956), Tucson, Arizona (1957), and Honolulu. In the 1960s she was in Australia with a daily TV show. She retired to Los Angeles in 1970, but made a comeback in 1986, now stressing jazz aspects of her style. Despite the vagaries of her later career, she is a significant blues and boogie pianist, as evidenced by “Swingin’ the Boogie” (1945, Modern Music 102), “Rockin’ the Boogie” (1945, Modern Music 113), “Bully Wully Boogie” (1946, Modern Music 1002), and many more records from this era.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: AMG; Lord

BROOKS, LONNIE

b. Lee Baker Jr., 18 December 1933; Dubuison, LA
Blues singer and guitarist. Lee Baker was born in Louisiana in 1933. His grandfather, a banjo player, got him interested in music. When he was nineteen he moved to Port Arthur, Texas. In 1955 he bought his first guitar. Brooks was influenced by T-Bone Walker and B. B. King. His first recordings were made for Goldband in 1957 and 1958. The best-known number from these sessions was “Family Rules.” Brooks could now leave his construction work behind and has been living from his music ever since. While in Louisiana he played in the bands of Clifton Chenier and Lonesome Sundown. In 1959 he moved to

Chicago and for security reasons he changed his name from Lee Baker to Lonnie Brooks. While in Chicago he recorded and toured with Jimmy Reed. In the 1960s he recorded for various labels, such as Midas, Palos, USA, Chirrup, and Chess. A fine live show in Pepper’s Lounge in Chicago from 1968 was taped by Georges Adins and later issued on Black Magic. In 1969 Brooks recorded an album for Capitol. In 1975 he visited Europe for the first time. Black & Blue recorded him in Paris and a first interview appeared in a European magazine. In 1978 Lonnie signed a contract with Alligator Records, for which he recorded many albums. Brooks continues to tour and record extensively, enjoying the success he deserves so much.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Discography: AMG

BROONZY, BIG BILL

b. William Lee Conley Broonzy, 26 June 1893 (?); Scott, MS
d. 15 August 1958; Chicago, IL

Few blues artists have been as versatile or influential as William Lee Conley “Big Bill” Broonzy (1893?–1958). His career as an acclaimed songwriter, singer, guitarist, and author began in the late 1920s in the early days of recorded blues and concluded in the late 1950s as the folk music revival began. While he is often cited as a key transitional link between rural Delta blues and urban Chicago musical styles, a distinguishing feature of Broonzy’s work was his ability to adapt successfully to changing musical and cultural tastes over nearly four decades.

His Years in the South

Broonzy was born in Scott, Mississippi, on June 26 of either 1893 (as he claimed throughout his lifetime) or 1898 (the year listed on his twin sister’s birth certificate). His parents, to whom twenty-one children were born, moved the family early in the first decade of the 1900s to Arkansas, where his father worked primarily as a sharecropping farmer. Broonzy’s first musical



Big Bill Broonzy in the 1940s. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

instrument was a homemade one-string fiddle, which he played at about age ten for what he described as “two-way picnics,” with whites in one area and blacks in a separate section. After the farm he was managing was crippled by the drought of 1916 he worked in mines, levee camps, and work gangs to support his family. After being drafted for service in World War I and serving in France in 1918, he returned to the South to find that he wanted more than the limited employment choices there offered, and headed north.

Chicago and New York, 1920–1950

Arriving in Chicago in 1920, Broonzy learned to play the guitar and, after an initial session likely held in 1925, recorded his first sides for producer J. Mayo Williams on Paramount in late 1927 and early 1928. Broonzy’s presence became easily identifiable: a limber, often jaunty guitar style with a strong ragtime feel, featuring clearly picked, single-string runs and emphasizing several musical phrases he commonly used. His voice expressed confidence and authority, and, as Samuel B. Charters observed, “. . . as a warm, entertaining blues singer he had no equal.”

Historian Paul Oliver has characterized Broonzy as “the most important single influence in Chicago blues of the 1930s,” and one measure of this judgment is the sheer volume of his output. Recording for numerous labels but primarily for Bluebird and the American Recording Corporation, his playing can be identified on more than 600 sides during the period 1930–1939 alone, the majority in the latter half of the decade when the record companies and the buying public emerged from the depths of the Depression. In addition to the groups he led under his own name, his services as a sideman were in constant demand. The list of his musical collaborators includes a significant number of the popular Chicago-based blues artists of this period: Memphis Minnie, John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, Washboard Sam, Bumble Bee Slim, Lil Johnson, and Bill “Jazz” Gillum. An added source of Broonzy’s clout was that producer Lester Melrose—arguably the most powerful decision maker in the Chicago recording industry in this period—used Broonzy as an unofficial talent scout.

The 1930s were also a period in which Broonzy demonstrated his protean ability to adopt differing musical styles successfully as a performer and songwriter. He recorded sexually suggestive hokum sides with Georgia Tom (who later became gospel pioneer Reverend Thomas A. Dorsey); blues in the style of Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell accompanied by a series of piano players including Black Bob, Josh

Altheimer, and Blind John Davis; and up-tempo, sometimes jazz-flavored songs with a series of combos featuring trumpet, clarinet, and electric guitar. Broonzy was a prolific and popular songwriter (he claimed to have written more than 360 songs), and his strengths as a lyricist included the skillful blending of rural and urban references, his astute observations of the relations between men and women, and his talent for a memorable phrase (such as “Looking Up at Down”). When he appeared at the December 1938 “From Spirituals to Swing,” concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City organized by record producer John Hammond, Broonzy won over the audience by playing his song of ironic social commentary, “Just a Dream.”

Broonzy’s popularity continued into the 1940s, as he collaborated with pianists Memphis Slim, Big Maceo Merriwether, and Roosevelt Sykes, wrote songs that became blues standards such as “I Feel So Good” and “Key to the Highway” (for which Gillum also claimed credit), and backed vocalist Lil Green. In 1947, folklorist Alan Lomax brought Broonzy, Memphis Slim, and John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson into a New York City studio and recorded a remarkable session of conversation and music, which, after inserting some additional material, he later released as the record titled “Blues in the Mississippi Night.” In discussing the origins of the blues, the three musicians drew on their own experiences to describe the often violent and degrading realities of Southern life in the first half of the twentieth century. The relaxed, matter-of-fact way in which they offered their recollections and observations underscored both the humor and the horror. The record was not issued until 1957 (and then on a British label), and Lomax did not identify the participants by name until after the death of Memphis Slim in 1988; the anonymity may have reflected either the volatility of the contents or the other contractual commitments of the musicians.

Europe, “Big Bill Blues,” and the Folk Revival

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, black popular musical tastes in the United States shifted away from Broonzy, first toward the R&B style of artists like Charles Brown, and then toward the electrified blues of the Chess Records stars such as Muddy Waters and Little Walter. Broonzy, who had started to perform in clubs and at colleges in the late 1940s in a revue of folk songs led by Chicago writer Studs Terkel titled “I Come for to Sing,” became a solo performer

accompanying himself on acoustic guitar. While Leadbelly and Josh White had each previously performed in Europe, Broonzy used his concert tour in the fall of 1951 to establish himself to audiences outside the United States as the leading representative of the American blues community. He combined his skills as a raconteur and performer with a repertoire to which he added spirituals and popular songs, and his several tours of Europe in the 1950s resulted in widespread international recognition, a number of records, and even a short film about him. It would be hard to overstate the impact on global popular culture of British artists such as the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton who were drawn to the excitement surrounding the blues that Broonzy played a large role in generating. In addition, many blues artists received exposure and acclaim in a series of successful European tours organized in the 1960s and 1970s by Willie Dixon; these tours were built on the successful foundation laid by Broonzy and others.

To create his 1955 autobiography, *Big Bill Blues*, Broonzy hand-wrote text, which Belgian writer Yannick Bruynoghe then edited into the final version. While some of the facts he presented have since turned out to be inaccurate, Broonzy was nonetheless able to bring the narrative power of his lyrics and his recorded commentaries to his writing. The book is the source of numerous often-told blues vignettes, including Memphis Minnie's victory over Broonzy in a guitar-playing contest, and also includes some of Broonzy's commentaries on racism ("...all over the USA it's the same soup, but it's just served in a different way."). It remains one of the very few extensive firsthand accounts of the life and views of a blues artist.

In his collaborations with Studs Terkel and Pete Seeger in the 1950s on the radio, on records, and in concerts, Broonzy played an active role in encouraging and shaping the emerging interest in acoustic music in the United States and Europe that by the 1960s became known as the folk revival. A vital element of this trend was a keen interest by its mostly white audiences in "authentic" songs and styles, and Broonzy provided legitimacy, although to accomplish this he had to revive songs he had not sung for decades and incorporate others he had to learn. In addition, by presenting songs such as "Black, Brown, and White" and "When Do I Get to Be Called a Man?," he brought his ironic but pointed perspectives on race to international audiences.

Broonzy died of cancer in Chicago on August 15, 1958, just over a year after he had lost the effective use of his voice in an operation. Muddy Waters, whom Broonzy had helped get his start in Chicago in the

mid-1940s and whom he recommended take his place on a tour of England later in 1958, was the lead pallbearer. In describing him some years later, Waters provided what might serve as a fitting tribute to Broonzy's role as friend and mentor to two generations of blues artists: "... Big Bill, he don't care where you from; he didn't look over you 'cause he been on records a long time. 'Do your thing, stay with it, man; if you stay with it, you goin' to make it.' That's what Big Bill told me. Mostly I try to be like him."

BOB RIESMAN

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings: Pre-1950

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Do That Guitar Rag (1991, Yazoo 1035).
The Young Big Bill Broonzy (1991, Yazoo CD 1011).
Where the Blues Began (2000, Snapper SMDCD 248).

Selected Recordings: Post-1950

- Big Bill Broonzy Interviewed by Studs Terkel* (1957, Folkways F-3586).
The Big Bill Broonzy Story (1999, Verve CD 314547555-2).
Trouble in Mind (2000, Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40131).

BROWN, ADA

- b. Ada Scott, 1 May 1890; Kansas City, KS
 d. 31 May 1950; Kansas City, KS

Vocalist. Worked and recorded with Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra, including "Evil Mama Blues"/"Break O'Day Blues" (1923, OKeh 8101). From the mid-1920s, she toured widely; continued to work as an actress, singer, and dancer until the mid-1940s, including in the film *Stormy Weather* (1943) from which "That Ain't Right" was issued (V-Disc 165).

HOWARD RYE

BROWN, ADA

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Harris

Discography: DGR

BROWN, ANDREW

b. 25 February 1937; Jackson, MS

d. 11 December 1985; Harvey, IL

Chicago blues singer and guitarist who emerged in the 1960s. In early adolescence Brown began playing guitar in blues bands in the south suburbs of Chicago. By the mid-1960s he was recording, coming out with a variety of hard soul and blues sides—on one release for USA (1964), three releases for Four Brothers (1965–1966), and one release for Brave (early 1970s), but garnered no commercial success. In the early 1980s, Brown revived his career, first coming out with three tracks on the Alligator *Living Chicago Blues* series (1980), and then two well-received albums with predominantly original material, produced by Dick Shurman for two Holland-based labels, namely *Big Brown's Chicago Blues* (1982, Black Magic), which won a W. C. Handy Award, and *On the Case* (1985, Double Trouble).

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP

BROWN, ARELEAN

b. 10 June 1924; Tchula, MS

d. 27 April, 1981; Chicago, IL

Blues singer and songwriter Arelean Brown started her career in Detroit in the late 1940s, cut unreleased sides in the 1950s, and enlivened the Chicago club scene in the 1970s, also recording an LP including her warhorse "I Am a Streaker, Baby."

LUIGI MONGE

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See also Simmons, Malcolm "Little Mack"; Smith, Bessie; Williams, Lee "Shot"

BROWN, BESSIE (OHIO)

b. 1895; Cleveland, OH

d. 1955; New York, NY

Vocalist. Billed as the Original Bessie Brown. Began career touring with musical reviews and performing on live radio broadcasts in Cleveland, Ohio. Her complete recordings date between 1925 and 1929. Pseudonyms: Caroline Lea and Sadie Green.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

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Discography: DGR

Selected Recordings

"Them Has Been Blues"/"Pappa De Da Da" (1925, Perfect 32156)

"Arkansas Blues"/"Sugar" (1928, Vocalion 1182).

"Smile"/"Blue Ridge" (1928, Brunswick 3922).

"Taint Nobody's Fault But My Own"/"The Blues Singer from Alabama" (1929, Brunswick 4346).

BROWN, BESSIE (TEXAS)

b. ca. 1895; TX

Teamed with in 1918 and later married George W. Williams, touring with him on the TOBA circuit. Recorded duets with Williams for Columbia in 1923–1926, and had a solo session for the same label in 1924. According to Sheldon Harris, she retired from performing in 1932, and was living in Cincinnati, Ohio, into the 1970s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

BROWN, BUSTER

b. 15 August 1911; Cordele, GA

d. 31 January 1976; Brooklyn, NY

Buster Brown recorded some tracks in a 1943 Library of Congress session that collected dust for more than

forty years. His first released recording was “Fannie Mae” for Fire Records in 1959. From this session, several R&B-charted songs made it to his only album of note, *The New King of the Blues*. Later, he covered Louis Jordan’s, “Is You Is or Is You Ain’t My Baby?” and a great version of “Lost in a Dream.” His final release was “Crawlin’ Kingsnake” in 1964.

Brown was influenced by many blues harmonica players including Sonny Terry and Sonny Boy Williamson and had a wild, earthy country style to his harmonica playing. The songs were always arranged in a more urban flavor, really more R&B than blues.

Brown was forty-eight at the time he recorded for Fire, and his success, however brief, was a real surprise. His talents were finally recognized by a wider audience, but subsequent releases of “Is You Is or Is You Ain’t My Baby?” in 1960 and 1962’s “Sugar Babe” were the only other charted hits for this dynamic artist.

TOM FISHER

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Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

The New King of the Blues (1960, Fire 101/102).

Slow Drag Blues (1962, Gwenn 600).

Trying to Learn to Love You (1962, Gwenn 602).

Good News (1996, Charly CRB-1209).

BROWN, CHARLES

b. 13 September 1922; Texas City, TX

d. 21 January 1999; Oakland, CA

Pianist, vocalist, and bandleader Charles Brown pioneered an alternate style of singing and playing that proved blues and R&B could be delivered in a sophisticated, elegant fashion without sacrificing either soul or intensity. His piano work also had the fluidity, expressiveness, and dexterity more often associated with jazz, though it wasn’t quite as harmonically elaborate as bop. The style reflected his early classical training, which he received as young man in Texas City, Texas. Brown’s direction and interests were permanently changed after he heard and became immersed in the music of jazz giant Art Tatum. Brown’s phrasing was elegant, his accompaniment crisp, and his solos clean and rhythmically delightful. He did not pound the keyboard or stomp out beats like such contemporaries as Amos Milburn, but he could generate equal excitement through his soothing,

inviting leads. Still, Charles Brown didn’t initially plan on a music career. He earned a chemistry degree and for a time was a high school teacher and government chemist in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and later in Berkeley, California, before moving to Los Angeles in the mid-1940s.

Brown became the pianist and lead singer in guitarist Johnny Moore’s (brother of Oscar Moore, a member of Nat “King” Cole’s threesome) trio, the Three Blazers, during the mid-1940s. The band featured Brown’s smooth, yet bluesy pianos contrasting Johnny Moore’s spicy guitar riffs, plus Brown’s sensual, smoky leads. Their recordings of “Merry Christmas Baby” and “Sunny Road” among many others influenced the early music of Ray Charles, and were later cited by both Sam Cooke and Bobby “Blue” Bland as helping to define and shape their approach to song structure and presentation. Much of the Three Blazers’ music had a joyous, swinging quality, though solo space was minimized and the trio’s collective sound was usually at the forefront during vocal breaks. In later interviews, Brown often spoke about the lack of individual space and personal publicity he endured during those times, though he spent nearly four years with the Blazers. During his Blazers tenure Brown’s “Drifting Blues” peaked at number two on the R&B charts. It was subsequently voted R&B Record of the Year by Cashbox, and would later be covered and turned into almost as big an R&B hit by Bland.

Though they were frequently compared to Nat King Cole’s trio, the two groups were actually quite different. Cole as a pianist could be traced directly back to Earl “Fatha” Hines in his solos and rhythmic flair. His singing was also even smoother and more polished than Brown’s, and he was predominantly an interpretative vocalist while Brown was also a fine songwriter. Although the Three Blazers recorded for several labels, Brown enjoyed even more success as a featured artist for Aladdin. Brown became a superstar as a solo performer after leaving the Blazers in 1948. He was a mainstay among R&B acts in the pre-rock ’n’ roll 1950s, headlining major tours and scoring numerous big hits with such songs as “Black Night,” “Hard Times,” and “Please Come Home for Christmas.” His first solo single, “Get Yourself Another Fool,” became Brown’s second R&B top ten hit (at number 4), while “Trouble Blues” topped the charts for fifteen weeks in 1949. That year Brown’s trio enjoyed another smash with “In the Evening When the Sun Goes Down.”

His dominance extended into 1951, when “Seven Long Days” hit the number two spot and “Black Night” gave him another number one R&B single. But Brown’s style was deemed dated by the advent of the backbeat-heavy sounds of rock ’n’ roll. Despite

being both a tremendous instrumentalist and gifted vocalist, Brown's approach wasn't considered bombastic enough for audiences enthralled by the likes of Elvis Presley, Little Richard, and Chuck Berry. His songs also were not lyrically rooted in the rebellious teen dynamic that increasingly fueled the late 1950s rock revolution.

Interestingly, Brown never stopped worked or recording, cutting dates for King, Jewel, and Imperial during the 1960s and 1970s. He enjoyed his last significant R&B hit in 1960 with "Please Come Home for Christmas," a sentimental ballad that remains a holiday staple in the twenty-first century. The Eagles cover version cracked the top twenty at number eighteen some eighteen years later. But it was the emergence of the reissue market that reinvigorated Brown's career during the 1980s, as his classic 1940s and 1950s sounds began resurfacing on imports labels, most notably the Swedish company Route 66. Brown also began doing club dates again, highlighted by a recurring set of appearances in New York City at Tramps. A marvelous 1986 album, *One More for the Road* on Blue Side (later reissued on Alligator with bonus cuts, remastered sound, and new packaging), turned Brown into a star once more. Despite some signs of aging in the voice, his playing was still inventive and his singing consistently engaging. Brown started making the rounds at various blues festivals and two years later would be featured on a Public Broadcasting special *That Rhythm Those Blues* with Ruth Brown. This show included performance footage, photos from Brown's earlier years, extensive interviews, and a strong duet with Brown.

His final decade began with the release of *All My Life*, another fine disc that included guest stints and collaborations by Dr. John, Ruth Brown, and Bonnie Raitt. Brown also enjoyed a stint as opening act on a national tour for Raitt, and made numerous club and festival appearances. He was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts at the White House in 1997, and issued the final studio release of his distinguished career *So Goes Love* (Verve) the following year. Brown was posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1999. Two years before that he was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Blues Hall of Fame. Though always a mellow, smooth singer and player, Charles Brown's music ultimately was always rooted in blues, never lacked swing, and was always far more soulful than laid-back.

RON WYNN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

BROWN, CLARENCE "GATEMOUTH"

b. 18 April 1924; Vinton, LA

Blues singer, guitarist, and violinist Clarence Brown was born in Vinton, Louisiana, the son of Clarence Brown Sr. and Virginia Franks, who had both come from Mississippi. When he was just three weeks old the family moved to Orange, Texas—thus, Clarence is actually a Texan. He began to play guitar at the age of five, inspired by his father, a multi-instrumentalist who could play violin, guitar, banjo, mandolin, and accordion. Following in his father's footsteps, Clarence mastered a violin at the age of ten, and later learned to play mandolin and harmonica. It is believed that he got the nickname "Gatemouth" from a high school teacher who thought his voice sounded like a gate. His main early influences were Count Basie, Louis Jordan, Peetie Wheatstraw, and T-Bone Walker, who got Clarence his first real job at a Galveston night spot.

Brown first recorded with Maxwell Davis & His Orchestra for Aladdin in 1947. In 1949 he switched to Peacock where he continued to record until 1961. The Peacock recordings are Gatemouth's classical heritage. Scorching boogie guitar is to be heard on titles like "Boogie Uproar" and "Okie Dokie Stomp" with wailing harp heard on "Gate's Salty Blues" and electrifying violin sounds on "Just Before Dawn." If he did not record with his own orchestra, the Al Grey All Stars or the Pluma Davis Orchestra helped him out. With Don Robey as his manager Gatemouth became extremely popular, playing at both white and black clubs. Due to "serious financial difficulties," Brown left Peacock in 1964. He then had abortive dealings with Cue (1964), Cinderella (1965), and Hermitage (1965).

In 1971 he visited Europe for the first time. The album he recorded with Mickey Baker and Jimmy Dawkins for Black & Blue in Paris was his first in six years. In 1972 he recorded a second album in France, this time for Barclay. It gave him a chance to express his views on economics, the environment, and politics. Black & Blue recorded him again in 1973 with Hal Singer on tenor sax. In 1973 Gatemouth also performed at the Montreux blues festival in Switzerland and two songs were issued by Black & Blue. Later that year Brown recorded an album with Louis Jordan songs for B&B with Arnett Cobb

and Milt Buckner. There was even a fourth 1973 album with Jay McShann. Both in 1974 and 1975 Barclay traveled to Bogalusa, Louisiana, to record Brown in his home country. The label Music is Medicine did the same in 1975 and 1976. In 1977 Gate-mouth was back in France again to record with Lloyd Glenn. MCA waxed him in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1978 and Charly recorded him live in 1980. That same year the Schweizerischer Bankverein recorded him live at the Internationale Jazz Festival in Bern. In 1981 Brown signed a contract with Rounder and for them he recorded albums in 1981, 1982, and 1985. In 1992 he recorded for Alligator. Next he signed a contract with Verve and recorded albums for them in 1994, 1995, and 1996. At the time of this writing Brown continues to tour and record extensively.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Obrecht, Jas. "Clarence Gatemouth Brown: 40 Years on the Road as Picker, Fiddler, Bluesman, Jazzer." *Guitar Player* 13, no. 5 (May 1979): 44–46, 90, 92, 96.

Discography: AMG; LSFP**BROWN, CLEO**

- b. 8 December 1909; DeKalb, MS
d. 15 April 1995; Denver, CO

Chicago boogie-woogie pianist and singer. Some sources cite 1904 as the birth year and Meridian, Mississippi, as the birthplace. Brown began her career in 1923 performing in Chicago clubs. Singing in a light but sly and insinuating voice and accompanying herself with driving keyboard work, Brown gained national fame as a boogie-woogie stylist during the 1930s and early 1940s. She recorded for Decca during 1935–1936, and built nationwide popularity for the boogie-woogie with her exhilarating variation of "Pinetop's Boogie Woogie" and her swinging version of "Lookie, Lookie, Here Comes Cookie." Brown subsequently recorded for Hollywood Hot Shots (1936), Capitol (1949), and Blue (1949). She retired in 1953, but was lured out of retirement by jazz

pianist Marian McPartland to record an LP in 1987 for Audiophile.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Pease, Sharon A. "Health Better, Cleo Brown Set for Comeback." *Down Beat* (July 1, 1945): 12.

Discography: AMG; Lord**BROWN, DUSTY**

- b. 11 March 1929; Tralake, MS

Singer and harmonica player Dusty Brown taught himself the instrument at age thirteen while growing up in rural Mississippi. He moved to Chicago in 1946 and within a few years began working local clubs, sometimes with Muddy Waters and Little Walter. Brown recorded for Parrot and Bandera in the 1950s, and worked sporadically in music throughout the next fifty years.

GENE TOMKO

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- Harris; Larkin
O'Neal, Jim. "Dusty Brown." *Blues Unlimited* no. 84 (September 1971): 7–8.

Discography: LSFP**BROWN, GABRIEL**

- b. 1910; Orlando, FL
d. 1960s (?)

A strangely anonymous artist with no real discernible roots and a sophisticated background that belies his concentration on slick country blues. Brown won first prize in the St. Louis National Folk Festival of 1934 and was recorded for the Library of Congress. He became an actor, working with Orson Welles among others, and was taken up by record company owner Joe Davis who recorded him extensively from 1943 to 1953 before he reportedly died in a boating accident.

DAVID HARRISON

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BROWN, GABRIEL

Discography: DGR; LSFP

Mean Old Blues (Flyright CD59).

BROWN, HASH

b. Brian Calway, 22 September 1955; Bristol, CT

Guitarist in postwar Texas styles including those of Goree Carter and of Gatemouth Brown. Moved to Dallas, Texas, in 1983 and backed U. P. Wilson and Zuzu Bollin in local performances. Formed the Hash Brown Band in 1993 with bassist Terry Graff-Montgomery and drummer Bobby Baranowski; their weekly blues jams are a hallmark of the contemporary Dallas blues scene.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Hash Brown Band website, <http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/2888/contents.html> (accessed January 7, 2005).

BROWN, HENRY “PAPA”

b. 1906; Troy, TN

d. 28 June 1981; St. Louis, MO

Moved to St. Louis around 1918 and by 1922 was playing piano at rent parties and bars. His prewar records show him as an able soloist and sensitive accompanist to singers. He was drafted into the army in World War II and stationed in England. His postwar recording career began with an excellent album for the 77 label. Not to be confused with guitarist “Hi” Henry Brown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

“Obituaries.” *Living Blues* no. 51 (Summer 1981): 52.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

BROWN, IDA G.

b. ca. 1900

Singer and actress on the TOBA circuit, revues, and theater through the mid-1930s. Recorded two blues sides with a small jazz group in 1924 for the Banner label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

BROWN, J. T.

b. John T. Brown, 2 April 1918; MS

d. 24 November 1969; Chicago, IL

Birth year sometimes cited as 1910. Tenor saxophone/vocals. Chicago style jump blues, classic Chicago blues. Known for his distinctive “nanny goat” vibrato on the sax. Moved to Chicago in 1945. First session as a leader was in 1950 for the Harlem label. In 1951 and 1952, Brown recorded for the Chicago-based labels United and JOB. Later recorded some sides for the Bihari Brothers’ Meteor label: “Round House Boogie”/“Kickin’ the Blues” (credited to Bep Brown Orchestra), and “Sax-ony Boogie” (credited as “Saxman Brown”)/“Dumb Woman Blues” (as J. T. [Big Boy] Brown). As a sideman he recorded with Roosevelt Sykes and Jimmy Oden, and also backed Eddie Boyd and Washboard Sam for RCA Victor. Brown played on Elmore James’s classics “It Hurts Me Too” and “Dust My Broom” and with pianist Little Johnny Jones. In January 1969, he recorded with Fleetwood Mac “Blues Jam at Chess.”

DENNIS TAYLOR

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AMG; Larkin
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Discography: AMG; LSFP

BROWN, JAMES

b. 3 May 1933; Barnwell, SC

Birth year sometimes cited as 1928. Vocalist, keyboardist, composer, arranger, bandleader, and producer. James Brown, the “Godfather of Soul,” fused his urgent gospel-inspired vocal delivery with a precision-tooled ensemble and spectacular stagecraft to become one of the most powerful and influential forces in twentieth-century popular music. From soul to funk to social consciousness to disco and beyond, “Soul Brother No. 1” changed the shape of music several times. Billed as the “Hardest Working

Man in Show Business,” Brown mounted his relentless stage show more than three hundred fifty nights a year and released an unbroken string of hit recordings stretching thirty years, from “Please Please Please” in 1956 to “Living in America” in 1986. His early styles were in rhythm and blues, developing into soul in the 1960s, and to the beginnings of funk style around 1969–1970, often employing and even extending blues forms as the basis of many songs.

Brown worked with the Famous Flames, Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley, Bootsie Collins, Bobby Byrd, Lynn Collins, Hank Ballard, the Blues Brothers, and Afrika Bambaataa.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Brown, James. *James Brown: The Godfather of Soul*. New York: Macmillan, 1986.

Discography: Lord

Selected Recordings

“Please Please Please” (1956, Federal), “Try Me” (1958, Federal), “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” (1965, King), “It’s a Man’s Man’s Man’s World” (1966, King), “Cold Sweat” (1967, King), “Say It Loud—I’m Black and I’m Proud” (1968, King), “Get Up—Feel Like a Sex Machine” (1970, King), “Living in America” (1986).

Selected Album

Live at the Apollo (recorded 1962, King).

BROWN, JOHN HENRY “BUBBA”

b. 5 December 1902; Brandon MS
d. 21 December 1985; Los Angeles CA

Learned guitar and violin from musician father. In the late 1920s and 1930s he performed with Jackson bluesmen Tommy Johnson, Johnny Temple, and various Chatmon brothers. Moved to Los Angeles and worked outside music. Among his three sons is jazz guitarist Mel Brown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Evans, David. “The Bubba Brown Story.” *Blues World* no. 21 (October 1968): 7–9.

Discography: LSFP

BROWN, LILLYN

b. Lillian Thomas, 24 April 1885; Atlanta, GA
d. 8 June 1969; New York, NY

Early singer on commercial records, making two sides on the Emerson label in 1921. Blues singing was a small part of a long career in black entertainment beginning in 1894. Coming out of a fifteen-year retirement in New York City in 1949, she appeared in local theater and taught acting and singing until her death.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR

BROWN, NAPPY

b. Napoleon Brown Goodson Culp, 12 October 1929; Charlotte, NC

Brown spent his formative years singing gospel. After winning a talent contest, he was asked to join the Golden Bells. From there he joined the Selah Jubilee Singers whom he recorded with, and eventually the Heavenly Lights, who were signed to the roster of Savoy Records. When owner Herman Lubinsky heard Brown he convinced him switch to R&B in the early 1950s.

Brown brought gospel fervor to his Savoy recordings, scoring a hit with “Don’t Be Angry” in 1955. Throughout the 1950s he scored with numbers such as “Pitter Patter” and the oft-covered “Little by Little.” He cut “The Right Time” in 1957, originally cut by Roosevelt Sykes as “Night Time Is the Right Time” in 1937 and subsequently covered by Ray Charles in 1958. Several of these songs crossed over to the pop charts. The hits had Brown touring constantly, as he hit the road with package tours that included Fats Domino, Little Richard, and Jackie Wilson. His last Savoy recordings were in the early 1960s. Shortly after, he went into virtual retirement and moved back to Charlotte to resume singing gospel music.

With renewed interest in his music, mainly from Europe, he began a comeback in the 1980s. He resurfaced in 1984 with an album for Landslide Records, *Tore Up*, which was eventually issued on Alligator Records. Strong follow-ups included *Something Gonna Jump Out the Bushes* with Anson Funderburgh, Ronnie Earl, and Earl King on Black Top, and in the 1990s he cut albums for Ichiban and New Moon.

JEFF HARRIS

BROWN, NAPPY

Bibliography

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McGarvey, Seamus, and Stuart Colman. "Nappy Brown:
That Man!" *Juke Blues* no. 9 (1987), 11–15.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Something Gonna Jump Out the Bushes (1990, Black Top
CD-BT-1039).

Night Time Is the Right Time (2000, Savoy Jazz 92908).

See also **Ichiban; Savoy/National/Regent/Acorn**

BROWN, OLIVE

b. Olive Jefferson, 30 August 1913; St. Louis, MO
d. 9 May 1982; St. Louis, MO

Moved to Detroit while an infant. Brown worked extensively in the early 1940s and starred in productions at Club Zombie. She worked with Detroit jump blues bands, including Todd Rhodes and T. J. Fowler (1940s), doing revues at Broad's Club Zombie (1942). Brown toured extensively, used horns rather than guitars as backup. Her major influence was Bessie Smith; her repertoire included numbers associated with Smith and also Ethel Waters.

JIM GALLERT

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: LSFP

BROWN, OSCAR III "BOBO"

b. 18 October 1956; Chicago, IL
d. 12 August 1996; Chicago, IL

Oscar Brown III was an electric and upright bass player, vocalist, poet, and songwriter. His musical interests were far ranging, including theater productions, world music, jazz, and blues. He worked with his father Oscar Brown, Jr., and other family members from the age of fifteen. Early in his career, he worked live with Chicago harp master Sugar Blue. At the time of his tragic death in 1996, his main musical interest was the merger of poetry with fusions of various genres of music. Along with poets Keith M. Kelley and Quraysh Ali, and Dennis "Nate" Williams, Jr., on sax, he was a founding member

of the Funky Wordsmyths, which produced a popular McDonald's commercial. Brown worked with Chicago percussionist Don Moye in his Sun Percussion Summit, was the musical director for the Jazz Buffet's production of "Back Down Memory Lane" in 1995, and performed with hard-bop ensemble One Family Band and the late avant-gardist Frank Lowe.

DEBORAH L. GILLASPIE

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Blak Poetry n' Muzik*. Blak Yang Music (privately pro-
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Moye, Famadou Don, and Enoch Williamson. *Afrikan
Song* (1996, AECO Records, Chicago, Illinois; distri-
buted by Southport Records, SSD3009).

BROWN, PETE

b. 9 November 1906; Baltimore, MD
d. 20 September 1963; New York City, NY

Saxophonist in jazz and jump blues styles in the 1930s and early 1940s, based in New York since 1927. Turned to bop jazz during its development in the early to mid-1940s. Recorded for the Bethlehem and Verve jazz labels in the 1950s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Penny, Dave. "Unlucky Blues." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 100
(1995): 10.

Discography: Lord

BROWN, RICHARD "RABBIT"

b. ca. 1880; New Orleans, LA
d. 1937; New Orleans, LA

A heavy-voiced singing boatman with a slight speech impediment who recorded long ballads (including one

about the *Titanic* sinking of 1912) and blues of startling imagery at one session in 1927.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Harris

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Discography: DGR

BROWN, ROY JAMES

b. 10 September 1925; New Orleans, LA

d. 25 May 1981; San Fernando, CA

A pioneer in rhythm and blues and a master of the "slow burn," Roy Brown effectively transferred the melismatic quaver of gospel to the twelve-bar blues. Born in New Orleans, he recorded his landmark song "Good Rockin' Tonight" for DeLuxe Records in 1947. An immediate regional hit, it emerged on the national charts the following year and led to other such popular songs as "Boogie at Midnight" (1949) and "Hard Luck Blues" (1940). King Records signed Brown from 1952 through 1957. His career, however, eroded, like that of many of his peers, with the emergence of rock 'n' roll. A cover of Buddy Knox's "Party Doll" for Imperial was his final hit in 1957, though the European reissue of his early sides in the late 1970s led to an otherwise unexpected twilight resurgence.

DAVID SANJEK

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Harris, Sheldon. "Roy Harris, 1925–1981" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 52 (Spring 1982): 54.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

BROWN, RUTH

b. Ruth Weston, 12 (or 30) January 1928; Portsmouth, VA

Singer. The personable Miss Rhythm was the single most important and influential female artist in the

development of modern R&B. Brown was originally a moody balladeer who modeled herself on Billie Holiday. But she soon became her own creation, the first true female R&B singer. In that persona she energized the rise of R&B, reshaping the sound of American music in the process, and made herself a multi-generational star, as well as the spokesperson for the seminal soul music survivors of the 1950s.

She ran away from home in 1945 and ultimately married trumpeter Jimmy Brown. She landed a few singing gigs and her bold and brassy stage presence soon caught the eyes and ears of those on the scene. Brown was signed to Atlantic Records in 1949 after Duke Ellington and radio legend Willis Conover acted as talent scouts and called the record company. Neither Atlantic Records nor the music world would ever be the same. Her rendition of "Teardrops from My Eyes" was the first 45-rpm single released by Atlantic and it became the fledgling label's first big hit.

The hits, more than two dozen in the next decade, just kept coming for Brown and their success laid the foundation of Atlantic Records, financing the label's growth and imbuing it with a public identity as the major source of the new R&B sound. Brown toured, including one historic series of one-nighters through the South with Ray Charles in 1954, and served as the role model for a new generation of aspiring R&B vocalists. After Atlantic dropped her from its recording roster in the early 1960s, Brown left the music business, driving a school bus to support her children despite the millions of dollars she had made for her record company. Brown's later campaign to collect her royalties from Atlantic was the catalyst for the formation of the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, an organization that ultimately procured partial payment for her fellow R&B veterans.

Brown returned to the music business in 1976 and then moved on to the theatrical stage in the 1980s, beginning with a role in Allen Toussaint's off-Broadway musical *Staggerlee*. She won a Tony Award in 1989 for "Black & Blue" and also appeared in the movies *Hairspray*, *Under the Rainbow*, and *True Identity*. In addition, she served as host for National Public Radio's popular *Blues Stage* program. Along the way she also was awarded a Grammy for *Blues on Broadway*, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and given a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Blues Foundation in 1999. To top it off, her conversational autobiography *Miss Rhythm* received the Ralph Gleason Award for Music Journalism in 1996.

After a series of albums, including *Fine and Mellow* and *Songs of My Life*, for the Fantasy label in the late 1980s and early 1990s, she released *R + B = Ruth Brown*, a star-studded session featuring Bonnie Raitt,

BROWN, RUTH

Johnny Adams, and Duke Robillard. *A Good Day for the Blues* followed in 1999.

MICHAEL POINT

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Brown, Ruth. *Miss Rhythm: The Autobiography of Ruth Brown, Rhythm and Blues Legend*. New York: Donald I. Fine/Dutton, 1996.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

BROWN, "TEXAS" JOHNNY

b. 22 February 1928; Ackerman, MS

Guitarist and composer. While growing up in Mississippi, Brown assisted his blind guitarist father in playing for change on street corners. After moving to Houston in 1946, he became associated with Amos Milburn and, later, Joe Scott. In 1961 he wrote "Two Steps from the Blues" for Bobby Bland. After thirty years of working day jobs in Houston, he returned to performing full time in 1992.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

BROWN, WALTER

b. 17 August 1917; Dallas, TX
d. June 1956; Lawton, OK

Singer. Big-voiced Texas blues shouter Brown proved himself capable of holding his own in front of one of the most high-powered big bands ever, serving a five-year stint with the classic edition of the Jay McShann Orchestra featuring saxist Charlie Parker. After joining the McShann band in 1941 Brown was showcased on a series of seminal Kansas City classics, including "Confessin' the Blues" and "Hootie Blues." Brown left the band for a short solo career with mixed results, the high point probably being a recording session reunion with McShann in 1949 on a collection of jump blues tunes.

MICHAEL POINT

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Burke, Tony, and Dave Penny. "Walter 'Confessin' the Blues' Brown." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 17 (March 1986): 6–12.

Discography: AMG; DGR (under McShann); LSFP; Lord (under McShann)

BROWN, WILLIE LEE

b. 6 August 1900; Cleveland, MS
d. 30 December 1952; Tunica, MS

In his teens Brown learned to play guitar from Charley Patton on Dockery's. At sixteen, Brown, now adept on guitar, moved north to the Tunica area. There in the 1920s he often performed with Kid Bailey and a young Memphis Minnie.

Brown went to the 1930 Grafton session with Patton and Son House and recorded four sides; the two surviving songs, "M & O Blues" and "Future Blues," based respectively on Patton's "Pony Blues" and "Maggie," show Patton's enduring influence on Brown. He probably plays on Patton's "Dry Well Blues" from the same session.

After Grafton, Brown and House became fast friends, frequently performing together in the 1930s, with Brown usually leaving the vocals to House. But Brown only other recorded once more, accompanying House on three of the 1941 Library of Congress recordings, and one of his own, a version of "Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor." Brown joined House briefly in Rochester, New York, in 1952, but soon returned to Tunica where he died that same year.

Brown taught House key Patton songs, and influenced Robert Johnson, who mentions him in "Crossroad Blues," later covered by Cream. Due to that well-known song, the mythic Willie Brown looms over the real man, the accomplished guitarist and formative influence on the Delta blues.

DANIEL BEAUMONT

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Discography: DGR

BROZMAN, BOB

b. 8 March 1954; New York, NY

Guitarist, singer, ethnomusicologist. Brozman began playing guitar at age six and discovered the National steel guitar at thirteen. He studied music and ethnomusicology at Washington University, specializing in early Delta blues. Heavily influenced by early blues masters like Bukka White, Charley Patton, and Robert Johnson, Brozman developed a unique personal style that remained firmly rooted in blues and jazz, but blossomed outward to encompass myriad world music influences, notably Hawaiian, Caribbean, African, Indian, Asian, Japanese, and South Pacific music. He wrote the definitive book on National steel guitars. A virtuoso performer, Brozman developed many extended techniques in finger-picking, slide, and percussive styles. He is an adjunct professor of ethnomusicology at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

Hello Central, Give Me Dr. Jazz (1985, Rounder 3086); *Devil's Slide* (1988, Rounder 3112); *A Truckload of Blues* (1992, Rounder 3119); *Blues 'Round the Bend* (1995, Sky Ranch); *Golden Slide* (1997, Sky Ranch); *Kosmic Blues & Groove* (1998, RDS Music); *Live Now* (2001, own label); *Blue Hula Stomp* (Kicking Mule 3905).

BRUNSWICK

Record label of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company of Dubuque, Iowa, first issued in 1920. About November 1924 the Vocalion label was acquired from the Aeolian Company. The two labels operated independently, but masters recorded for one were sometimes released on the other, for which purpose transfer numbers were allocated in the ordinary matrix series of the other label, creating confusions that scholars have had difficulty resolving. Brunswick issued vaudeville blues by such artists as Rosa Henderson, Viola McCoy, Lizzie Miles, and Lena Wilson in 1923–1924, but launched a dedicated Race series (the Brunswick 7000s) only in March 1927. Initially directed by Jack Kapp, the series expanded at the end of the decade under the direction of J. Mayo Williams, when significant field recording was undertaken, notably in Knoxville, Memphis, and Dallas in 1929–1930. The 234 issues included performances by Mozelle Alderson, Lucille Bogan, Gene Campbell, and Charlie McCoy.

Warner Brothers bought Brunswick in April 1930 but sold it again in December 1931 to Consolidated Film Industries, which already owned the American Record Corporation (ARC). Though formally separate, Brunswick and ARC functioned as a single operation. The 7000 series was discontinued in July 1932 and blues issues were thereafter concentrated on Vocalion and the ARC labels. CBS bought the group in February 1938 and discontinued the Brunswick label altogether in 1940, prior to selling the trademark to Decca, which had already acquired in 1942 the rights to Brunswick's pre-1932 catalog.

The Brunswick label was used by Decca from 1944 for its 80000 series of reissues, mainly of early jazz, but a Furry Lewis recording was included and many titles by boogie-woogie pianists. LPs based on this series bore Decca labels in the United States, but the Brunswick label was extensively used in Europe for reissues. These had earlier included a Sleepy John Estes coupling on British Brunswick, which was one of the earliest country blues issues directed at the collector market. German Brunswick had issued records by Virginia Liston and Luella Miller as early as 1927.

HOWARD RYE

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BRUYNOGHE, YANNICK

b. 1924; Leuven, Belgium

d. 30 March 1984; Uccle, Brussels, Belgium

Yannick Bruynoghe devoted much of his life to examining and supporting blues and jazz music and musicians. After studying law, he worked with Radio Television Belge (RTB), the Belgian broadcasting system, in 1954. Two years later, he headed the "Midnight Movie Club" in Brussels. An extremely learned man, he was quite knowledgeable about surrealism in paintings, film, literature, and music.

BRUYNOGHE, YANNICK

He befriended many jazz and blues musicians, often entertaining them in his home. Bruynoghe is probably best known for compiling Big Bill Broonzy's words into the book *Big Bill Blues*, though this relationship also produced a short art film and sound recording. His photographs of 1950s Chicago musicians have been often reproduced, and those of Elmore James have attained iconic status among blues fans. Bruynoghe also directed movies on Roosevelt Sykes, Coleman Hawkins, and more.

GREG JOHNSON

Bibliography

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- Sacré, Robert. "Yannick Bruynoghe." *Living Blues* nos. 60/61 (Summer/Fall 1984): 71–72.

BRYANT, BEULAH

- b. Blooma Walton, 20 February 1918; Dayton, AL
- d. 31 January 1988; New York City (Roosevelt Island), NY

As a child in Birmingham, Bryant began singing in church groups. Then, as a teenager in California, she won a 1937 talent contest on KFRC San Francisco radio. In her professional career she sang in the Ella Fitzgerald style, which gave versatility to her blues and jazz singing. She worked often in radio, films, and television through the 1970s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- Harris; Larkin
- "Obituary." *New York Times* (February 6, 1988).

Discography: LSFP

BRYANT, PRECIOUS

- b. 4 January 1942; Talbot County, GA

A lifelong resident of Georgia, Precious Bryant began teaching herself to play songs on her uncle's guitar at age nine. Her first public performances were in church, where she accompanied her sisters in their gospel singing group. Bryant developed an early interest in the blues and was influenced by the recordings of Muddy Waters, Elmore James, and Jimmy Reed, as well as the complex finger-picking style of area musicians. In the late 1960s, she was recorded by

blues researcher George Mitchell. Bryant's 2002 full-length album debut *Fool Me Good* featured her superb vocals and intricate guitar playing on both strong originals and blues and gospel standards.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

- Nelson, David. "Music Maker: It's the Spirit Behind the Gift." *Living Blues* no. 137 (January/February 1998): 21.

Discography: LSFP

- Fool Me Good* (2002, Terminus Records CD 0201-2).

BRYANT, RUSTY

- b. Royal G. Bryant, 25 November 1929; Huntington, WV
- d. 25 March 1991; Columbus, OH

Tenor and alto saxophonist. Funky, soul-jazz style. One of the first bar-walking saxophonists. Played with Tiny Grimes and Stomp Gordon before striking out on his own in 1951. Toured with organist Hank Marr during the 1960s. Recorded eight albums for Prestige from 1969 to 1974. Bryant's two biggest hits were 1956's "All Night Long" (based on the classic tune "Night Train") and 1970s soul-jazz classic "Soul Liberation."

DENNIS TAYLOR

Bibliography

- Burke, Tony. "Rusty Bryant." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 62 (July 1991): 17.

BUCHANAN, ROY

- b. 23 September 1939; Ozark, TN
- d. 14 August 1988; Fairfax, VA

Guitarist. Hugely influential in blues-rock guitar. Raised in California from age two, Buchanan's father was a farm laborer, not a preacher as Buchanan later claimed. He learned on lap steel guitar, then moved to electric. Buchanan toured with Dale Hawkins and Ronnie Hawkins as a teenager, but spent much of the 1960s playing bars or with obscure bands, and session work.

Buchanan established a formidable reputation among guitar players, and was said to have declined a place in the Rolling Stones, an unsubstantiated claim. He favored a battered 1953 Fender Telecaster

and developed an expressive signature sound on the instrument, with innovative use of harmonics.

Buchanan formed his band the Snakestretchers in 1970 and released a self-made live record that was sold in burlap bag at gigs and is now a sought-after artefact. He was brought to wider attention by favorable press and a U.S. television documentary, *The Best Unknown Guitarist in the World*, in 1971. He recorded a number of albums for Polydor (*Second Album* included “Tribute to Elmore James”) and then Atlantic in 1972–1981. These albums featured a wide range of styles, including blues, gospel, country, and rock ‘n’ roll.

Buchanan never broke out of cult “musician’s musician” status with a wider public, and his career faltered in early 1980s. Alligator Records brought him back to the studio in 1985 for a slick blues outing on *When a Guitar Plays the Blues*. Further Alligator releases followed, confirming his standing as an instrumentalist, but the breakthrough continued to elude him. His life came to a tragic conclusion when he was arrested for drunkenness in Fairfax, Virginia and allegedly hanged himself in the holding cell of local jail.

KENNY MATHIESON

Bibliography

Carson, Phil. *Roy Buchanan: American Axe*. London: Backbeat, 2001.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

Roy Buchanan (1972, Polydor 5033); *Second Album* (1973, Polydor 5046); *In the Beginning* (1974, Polydor 6035); *That’s What I’m Here For* (1974, Polydor 6020); *Live Stock* (1975, Polydor 6048); *A Street Called Straight* (1976, Atlantic 18170); *Loading Zone* (1977, Atlantic 19138); *You’re Not Alone* (1978, Atlantic 19170); *When a Guitar Plays the Blues* (1985, Alligator 4741); *Dancing On the Edge* (1986, Alligator 4747); *Hot Wires* (1987, Alligator 4756).

BUCKNER, WILLIE (WILLA) MAE

b. 15 June 1922; Augusta, GA

d. 8 January 2000; Winston Salem, NC

Buckner began her career in minstrel shows at the age of fourteen. A singer of risqué and blues songs, she also played guitar, piano, and upright bass. Buckner joined the Music Maker Relief Foundation roster in 1992.

GAILE WELKER

Bibliography

Welker, Gaile. “Willie Mae Buckner” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 150 (April/May 2000): 116–117.

Discography

A Living Past (Music Maker MMCD 9401).

Blues Came to Georgia (Music Maker MMCD 23).

Expressin’ The Blues (Cello/Music Maker MMKCD 701).

BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO

b. Stanley Dural, 14 November 1947; Lafayette, LA

Accordion, vocals, organ, piano. A veteran of the Louisiana zydeco music scene, Stanley Dural, better known as Buckwheat Zydeco (a nickname given to him in childhood), is a top-notch zydeco musician. His work in zydeco popularized what the seminal performers, such as Clifton Chenier and Boozoo Chavis, created: a “creole” (combination) of blues and Cajun-oriented folk music.

Dural, however, did not start out playing zydeco. His interest and work in R&B brought him into contact with a different group of entertainers such as Lynn August and Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown during the mid- to late 1960s. In 1971, Dural formed his own band, a large, sixteen-piece funk band, which he led until 1976 when zydeco took center stage in his musical career. Dural’s father was friends with Chenier, who recruited Dural as an organist for his band. During this time Dural learned the accordion under the tutelage of Chenier and then started his own band in 1979—the Ils Sont Partis Band (meaning “they’re off!” in Louisiana racetrack terminology).

Dural also began to call himself “Buckwheat Zydeco” around this time. Dural’s group, also usually referred to as “Buckwheat Zydeco,” was signed to Blues Unlimited in 1979 and released *One for the Road*, followed up by *Take It Easy, Baby* in 1980. Shortly after their 1983 record *100% Fortified Zydeco*, the group signed on with Rounder Records. Their first two efforts in the studio for Rounder, *Turning Point* (1983) and *Waitin’ for My Ya Ya* (1985), were both nominated for Grammys and feature songs such as “Turning Point,” “Someone Else Is Steppin’ In,” and “Your Man Is Home Tonight.” Then, in 1986, the group was offered a major label contract at Island Records; their debut record on this label, *On a Night Like This*, was also nominated for a Grammy in 1987 and is full of songs that are representative of the group’s zydeco fast and slow-tempo songs. Later that year the group appeared

BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO

in the popular movie *The Big Easy*, increasing their visibility among the general populace outside of Louisiana and Texas.

The band recorded two more CD's for Island—*Taking It Home* in 1988 and *Where There's Smoke There's Fire* in 1990—before moving to four other major labels: Charisma, Warner, Polygram, and Atlantic. These efforts produced songs that demonstrate the band's mix of zydeco boogie and slow Cajun waltzes and, in the case of the Warner CD, *Choo-Choo Boogaloo*, a children's album—Cajun/zydeco renditions of traditional children's songs. Although the group's commercial success has waned in recent years, their live performances are still in high demand. The band released a CD of live material in 2001, *Down Home Live*.

JUSTIN WERT

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli
Wentz, Brooke. "Buckwheat Zydeco: Reclaiming His Roots." *Down Beat* 57, no. 8 (August 1990), 29.

Discography

100 % Fortified Zydeco (1983, Black Top CD BT-1024).
Turning Point (1983, Rounder CD 2045).
Waitin' for My Ya Ya (1985, Rounder CD 2051).
Five Card Stud (1994, Polygram 524018).
On a Night Like This (Island 422-842739-2).

BUFORD, GEORGE "MOJO"

b. 10 November 1929; Hernando, MS

Harmonica player associated with Muddy Waters. His father introduced him to the basics of harmonica playing; the boy took to the instrument, spending his youth in Memphis picking up harmonica tips as he went. He formed his first combo, the Savage Boys, upon moving to Chicago in 1952, playing the area clubs and earning a reputation as a standout act in a competitive music scene. At the height of their popularity, the Savage Boys settled into a series of gigs as a stand-in for Muddy Waters when the latter was on the road, becoming known as the Muddy Waters Jr. Band.

Occasional gigs with Waters himself led to Buford's entry into the former's band as James Cotton's replacement in 1959. The coveted position was not enough to curb Buford's restlessness, however. He moved to Minneapolis in 1962 where he formed the Chi-Fours. The group played the clubs and cut two obscure LPs for Vernon and Folk Art labels

before Buford returned to Waters in 1967. By the 1970s Buford remained a semipermanent fixture in the Waters's band, dividing his time between that and his own recording and performing opportunities. He went full time with Waters again in 1971 after Jerry Portnoy's departure, staying this time until 1974. He continues to work as a bandleader, recording for Red Rooster and JSP labels.

JOHN OTIS

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl), Harris; Larkin; Santelli
Wisner, Steve. "Chicago Blues: Yesterday and Today: Mojo Buford." *Living Blues* no. 42 (January/February 1979): 22–26.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

BULL CITY RED

b. George Washington, date unknown; flourished 1935–1939, Durham, NC
d. Unknown

Singer and washboard player. Bull City Red was red-complected from being a partial albino and he lived in Durham, North Carolina, which was known as "Bull City" for producing its Blackwell's Genuine Durham Smoking Tobacco, hence the name. He was associated with Blind Boy Fuller, and with Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry. His recordings are of sacred material and of Fuller-style blues.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Oliver, Paul. "Bull City Red." *Blues Unlimited* no. 1 (April 1963): 5–7.

Discography: DGR

BULLET

Record label (Tennessee, 1946–1953). Owners: James Albert Bulleit (b. November 4, 1908, Corydon, IN; d. December 12, 1988, Nashville, TN); Conrad V. (C. V.) Hitchcock (b. February 9, 1897; d. May 1976, Brentwood, TN); Wally Fowler (b. John Wallace Fowler, February 15, 1917, Adairsville, GA; d. June 3, 1994, TN); Overton Ganong (b. April 24, 1909, Leland, MS; d. February 8, 2001, Columbia, SC); Wilbur Clarence "Red" Wortham (b. September

6, 1902, Stewart County, TN; d. December 31, 2002, Nashville, TN). Nashville, Tennessee-based, this important label (and its short-lived subsidiary label DELTA, 1949) recorded many artists (some for the first time), including Max Bailey, Big Three Trio (“Signifying Monkey” with Willie Dixon and Leonard Caston), Lucius “Dusty” Brooks, Red Calhoun, Walter Davis (“You’ve Gotta Reap What You Sow”), Shy Guy Douglas, (Miss) Jo Evans, Fairfield Four Ernie Fields, Cecil Gant (“Nashville Jump” and “This Train”), Richard “Tuff” Green, Ruby Green(e) (“Buzzard Pie”), Wynonie Harris (“Dig This Boogie” with pianist Sun Ra), Smokey Hogg, B. B. King (“Miss Martha King” and “Got the Blues”), Little Eddie Lang (Eddie Langlois), Red Miller (“Bewildered”), Don Q. Pullen, Roosevelt Sykes, St. Louis Jimmy (Oden), Rufus Thomas (as Mr. Swing with the Bobby Platers’s Orchestra), Doc Wiley, Big Joe Williams (“Jivin’ Woman”), and Sherman Williams. In February 1949, Jim Bulleit sold his interest to C. V. Hitchcock, and he was replaced by Overton Ganong. The label was reactivated in the 1960s by “Red” Wortham issuing sides by Shy Guy Douglas.

ROBERT EAGLE

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McGrath

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BUMBLE BEE SLIM

(See Easton, Amos)

BUNN, TEDDY

b. Theodore Leroy Bunn, 7 May 1909; Rockville Center, NY
d. 20 July 1978; Lancaster, CA

Early jazz guitarist who led his own groups and also freelanced in blues. Birthplace listed as Rockville Center on his social security application; listed elsewhere as Freeport, New York. Recorded with Lizzie Miles, Fat Hayden and Walter Pichon, and Trixie Smith. Bunn was also a member of the influential vocal group Spirits of Rhythm. Later played in rhythm and blues groups with Louis Jordan and Jack McVea.

TOM MORGAN

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz (Johnny Simmen, Howard Rye, Barry Kernfeld)

Discography: DGR; Lord

BURKS, EDDIE

b. 17 September 1931; Rising Sun Plantation, MS
d. 27 January 2005

A harmonica player and singer of great emotional intensity. During Burks’s childhood in the Mississippi Delta, he worked in cotton fields, and he saw his brother murdered by the Ku Klux Klan. He found solace in the harmonica, and he was inspired and influenced by the playing of Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II.” Burke had been playing the instrument since age three, receiving a new one every Christmas. Although his mother, a devout Baptist, forbade the playing of that “devil music” in their home, his guitarist stepfather encouraged his interest. Burke left for Chicago at age fifteen as part of the Great Migration, finding work in the steel mills. He began singing gospel with a local church choir, an experience that he later attributed for his powerful baritone singing.

His recording output before 1992 consisted of a handful of singles. He occasionally performed in clubs, but more often he would be heard onweekends on Maxwell Street. For some while he was known by the street’s nickname “Jewtown,” but he later dropped it after some hassles with music publishers and recording labels. In 1992 he and his second wife launched Rising Sun Records, featuring himself and a small roster of regional blues artists.

JOHN OTIS

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Larkin

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Discography: Larkin

BURLEY, DAN

b. 7 November 1906; Lexington, KY
d. 29 October 1962; Chicago, IL

BURLEY, DAN

Vocalist and pianist whose music combined elements of 1940s Chicago and Harlem blues and jazz. He was also notable as a lexicographer of black slang and “jive.”

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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New York, 1944.

Discography: Lord

Dan Burley. *South Side Shake* (Wolf WBJ 008; notes).

BURNETT, CHESTER

(*See Howlin' Wolf*)

BURNS, EDDIE

b. 8 February 1928; Belzoni, MS

Guitarist and harmonica player who flourished in the Detroit postwar blues scene; also known as Little Eddie “Guitar” Burns. Burns was initially influenced by recordings of John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson and Tommy McClennan. He played harmonica as a sideman to Aleck Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson II) and Pinetop Perkins from 1943 through 1947 in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Moving to Detroit in 1948, he was taken under the wing of John Lee Hooker, with whom he recorded in 1949 through 1952 for the Sensation label and for Chess Records in 1965. A series of singles under his own name on various labels throughout the 1950s and steady club work in and around Detroit sustained but a part-time musical career, supplemented by day work as a mechanic. The 1970s brought wider recognition with appearances at the Detroit and Ann Arbor blues festivals and on tours in Europe. Solo releases in 1993 and 2002 update a recorded output that, while slim, is well regarded.

JOSEPH A. LAROSE

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli Obrecht, Jas. “Eddie ‘Guitar’ Burns: Inside Detroit Blues.” *Living Blues* no. 156 (March/April 2001): 28–39.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Detroit**

BURNS, JIMMY

b. 27 February 1943; Dublin, MS

Chicago-based guitarist and vocalist. Recorded several singles in the late 1960s and early 1970s before reducing musical activity to raise his family. Burns returned to music full time in the early 1990s, and released his debut album, *Leaving Here Walking*, in 1996.

JOE C. CLARK

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)
Sharp, Steven. “Jimmy Burns: I’m Back in Music to Stay.” *Living Blues* no. 156 (March/April 2001): 40–45.

Discography: AMG

BURNSIDE, R. L.

b. 23 November 1926; Harmontown, Lafayette County, MS

From beginnings as a popular local performer in the north Mississippi house party milieu, guitarist and vocalist Burnside became known internationally as both a traditional blues stylist on the festival circuit and for cutting-edge recordings that fused his music with punk rock, rap, and electronic effects. Burnside was influenced as a youngster by guitarists Fred McDowell and Ranie Burnette; he mastered their modal, hypnotic style of blues while also incorporating popular blues songs from Muddy Waters and Lightnin’ Hopkins into his repertoire.

After a brief sojourn in Chicago in the late 1940s, he settled in Mississippi permanently, working mostly as a sharecropper and performing at weekend parties and juke joints. Burnside was first recorded in the late 1960s by George Mitchell for the Arhoolie label and began touring occasionally; he subsequently recorded three albums for the Dutch label Swingmaster. In the late 1970s he began performing regularly in local venues with a family band, the Sound Machine, collaborating with his musically talented sons and incorporating elements of funk and R&B into his sound. He recorded with the Sound Machine for Swingmaster and High Water, and continued to feature his sons and grandchildren on later albums. Burnside became more widely known and began touring extensively through his association with Fat Possum Records, for which he has recorded a series of albums since 1993. He has appeared in five films, including the blues documentaries *The Land Where*

the Blues Began and *Deep Blues* and the feature film *Big Bad Love*.

DAVID NELSON

Bibliography

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Pettengell, Michael. "R.L. Burnside: 'Well Well Well!'"
Living Blues no. 117 (September/October 1994): 10–23.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

BURNSIDE RECORDS

Label active in Portland, Oregon, recording blues artists active in the Pacific Northwest. Artists include Back Porch Blues, Big Dave and the Ultrasonics, Kelly Joe Phelps, and Duffy Bishop. Subsidiary is Sideburn Records, specializing in "roots and rock" music.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Burnside Records website with catalog, <http://www.burnsiderecords.com/index.html> (accessed September 27, 2004).

BURRAGE, HAROLD

b. 30 March 1931; Chicago, IL
d. 26 November 1966; Chicago, IL

A Chicago R&B singer who helped make Chicago a center for hard soul during the 1960s. Burrage began his recording career in the late 1940s as a standup blues singer on the city's West Side. In 1950 he recorded a session with the Horace Henderson band for Decca, which yielded a moderately successful record, "Hi Yo Silver." Less successful sessions followed with the Los Angeles-based Aladdin (1951) and Chicago-based States labels (1954). In 1956 Burrage joined Cobra, for which he recorded rock 'n' roll with a blues feel, notably "Betty Jean" in the Little Richard vein. Burrage moved to Vee-Jay in 1959, and got a solid local hit with the soulful "Crying for You Baby."

In 1962, he joined the fledgling One-derful operation, recording for their M-Pac imprint. With his experience in the music business, label owner George Leaner gave Burrage staff duties as well as a recording contract. In his position he helped mentor the careers of fellow One-derful artist Otis Clay and

Four Brothers recording artist Tyrone Davis. Burrage's first recordings for the firm made little impression, but with the driving "Got to Find a Way" in 1965 Burrage experienced his first national hit, going to number ten on the *Cashbox* R&B chart. One-derful failed to sustain Burrage's success, by recording weak sound-alikes. The artist had no other opportunities, dying the following year in Tyrone Davis's backyard.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Pruter, Robert. "Harold Burrage: Pioneer of Chicago Soul." *Juke Blues* no. 8 (Spring 1987): 22–25.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

BURRIS, J. C.

b. 15 February 1928; Kings Mountain, NC
d. 15 May 1988; San Francisco, CA

A nephew of Sonny Terry, harmonica and bones player Burris helped keep African American folk traditions alive by doing the "hand jive" (body slapping) and "Mister Jack" (dancing dolls). He accompanied his uncle in sessions for Folkways and Bluesville, and cut a solo album for Arhoolie.

LUIGI MONGE

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli
Mazzolini, Tom, and Chris Strachwitz. Notes accompanying *J. C. Burris: Blues Professor* (2001, Arhoolie CD 497).

See also Fuller, Blind Boy; Terry, Sonny

BURROW, CASSELL

b. 8 March 1914; Galloway, TN
d. 2 May 1980; Chicago, IL

Drummer. Around 1953, Burrow arrived to Chicago as a vocalist and emcee. Sometime around 1954, he received his first set of drums from Snooky Pryor. He then assisted the rhythm sections of Eddie Taylor, Eddie Boyd, Howlin' Wolf, Homesick James, and Elmore James live and on records. His own solo session in 1962 for the LaSalle label is unissued.

EDWARD KOMARA

BURROW, CASSELL

Bibliography

O'Neal, Jim. "Obituaries: Cassell Burrow," *Living Blues* no. 47 (Summer 1980): 33.

Discography: LSFP

BURSE, CHARLIE

b. 25 August 1901; Decatur, AL
d. 20 December 1965; Memphis, TN

Singer and ukulele player long associated with Will Shade of the Memphis Jug Band. Among his various recordings is a 1939 Vocalion session in Memphis when he recorded "Oil It Up and Go," a significant rendition of the "Bottle It Up and Go" song group.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris, Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

BURTON, ARON

b. 15 June 1938; Thyatira, MS

Chicago bassist, songwriter, and vocalist, Burton was sent from the Mississippi hills to Chicago in 1955 by his mother, fearful that more black youths would be slain in Mississippi following the murder of Emmett Till that year. In Chicago, he sang on the West Side around 1957–1958 with Freddy King, who bought Burton his first bass. After serving in a U.S. Army band in Germany, Burton returned to Chicago and began to find steady work playing rock 'n' roll, R&B, and jazz before finding a niche in the blues as a member of Junior Wells' band. In the 1960s and 1970s he also performed or recorded with Billy Wade in the Third Degree Band, Baby Huey & the Babysitters, Wild Child Butler, Fenton Robinson, Carey Bell, Fontella Bass, Jackie Ross, Sugar Pie DeSanto, and Willie Mabon, before Albert Collins hired him to play in his Chicago-based touring and recording group, the Icebreakers, during Collins's early years with Alligator Records.

Keeping a day job as a landscaper with the Chicago Park District, Burton continued to record with James Cotton, Valerie Wellington, Johnny

Littlejohn, Fenton Robinson, and others, and cut his first single for Eddy Clearwater's Cleartone label in 1980. His debut LP, on his own Avaron label, was recorded in Europe in 1986. Burton began staying in Europe for extended periods, doing gigs on his own as well as with Jack Dupree, Louisiana Red, and others. On sojourns back to Chicago, he has worked the clubs and recorded with Big Jack Johnson, Honeyboy Edwards, and others. His Avaron sides were incorporated into his first CD for Earwig Music. A live album followed on Earwig, and in 1999 Burton did a third CD for Delmark Records in Chicago. Burton enjoyed a long association through the years with drummer Robert Plunkett, and often teamed up with younger brother Larry Burton for many jobs on their own or behind other artists. In recent years he has lived and performed primarily in Europe.

JIM O'NEAL

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)
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Discography: AMG

BUTLER, GEORGE "WILD CHILD"

b. 1 October 1936; Autaugaville, AL
d. 1 March 2005; Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Although his gutbucket style is sometimes likened to swamp blues, George Butler grew up in the cotton plantation country of central Alabama, not the bayous of Louisiana. He acquired his nickname as an unruly toddler at home, where he took up guitar and harmonica as a youngster. Inspired by Sonny Boy Williamson II, Butler began performing locally around Montgomery and then took to the road. Butler cut his first record for Sharp Records, an obscure local label from Montgomery, in 1964. Sharp dealt Butler's contract to Jewel Records, and after landing in Chicago, Butler began recording under the aegis of Willie Dixon, with more 45s resulting on the Jewel label. A rambler during the 1960s, Butler hooked up with Lightnin' Hopkins in Houston and would later return to play on some of Hopkins' recordings and make an appearance in the film *The Blues Accordin' to Lightnin' Hopkins*. At other points he teamed with Roosevelt Sykes or Cousin Joe in New Orleans and played with Yank Rachell's Indianapolis-based band.

In Chicago, Butler did police work and was never a regular on the city's blues club circuit, but continued to record, cutting albums for Mercury in 1969 and a self-produced session for Roots in 1976. Tapes from the Roots album were later reworked for a new release on Rooster Blues and, subsequently, on M.C. Records. Milwaukee was a frequent performing base during Butler's later Chicago years. He did most of his playing as a touring artist, with his own band or in a package with other Chicago artists such as Jimmy Rogers and Sam Lay, although in later years he performed more extensively around Ontario, Canada, which was his home since the 1980s. Veteran producer Mike Vernon of the British Blue Horizon label recorded two albums by Butler in England that were issued in the United States by Bullseye Blues in the 1990s, and in 2000 Butler cut a CD for the APO label in Salina, Kansas. Insistent on originality in his own idiosyncratic style, Butler maintained a heartfelt, hard blues edge in his music throughout his career.

JIM O'NEAL

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O'Neal, Jim. Liner notes for *Lickin' Gravy* (1989, Rooster Blues R7611).

Discography: AMG; LSFP

BUTLER, HENRY

b. 21 September 1948; New Orleans, LA

New Orleans-based singer, composer, and pianist. Birth year sometimes cited as 1949. Blind since birth, Butler studied piano with Alvin Batiste, Harold Mabern, and Professor Longhair, among others, and received a master's degree in voice. His piano and vocal style is heavily blues influenced, but also owes much to the varied musical traditions of his home town.

RICK ANDERSON

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); New Grove Jazz; Santelli

Discography: AMG

BUTLER, JERRY

b. 8 December 1939; Sunflower, MS

Chicago-based soul balladeer of the 1960s and 1970s. Butler launched his career as lead singer of the Impressions, whose gospelized hit, "For Your Precious Love" (1958, Abner), is considered by many observers to be Chicago's first soul-style record. In 1959 Butler began a solo career, and while at Vee-Jay, he hit with a spate of Curtis Mayfield ballads, notably "He Will Break Your Heart" (1960), "Find Another Girl" (1961), and "Need to Belong" (1963), and also scoring with such hits as "Make It Easy on Yourself" (1962) and "Giving Up on Love" (1964). Duetting with Betty Everett, he also had a hit with "Let It Be Me" (1964). Among his many LPs was *Folk Songs* (1963), which featured Butler on some folk blues.

In 1966 Butler joined Mercury, where he experienced major pop success, recording in Philadelphia under the production aegis of Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. Notable hits with this team included "Never Give You Up" (1968), "Only the Strong Survive" (1969), and "Moody Woman" (1969). After leaving Mercury in 1974, he recorded with diminished success for Motown, Philadelphia International, Fountain, Ichiban, and Valley Vue.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Butler, Jerry, with Earl Smith. *Only the Strong Survive: Memoirs of a Soul Survivor*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
Pruter, Robert. "Only the Strong Survive: The Jerry Butler Story." *Goldmine* (March 1, 1996): 40ff.

BUTLER TWINS

Clarence Butler (Harmonica, Vocals)

b. 21 January 1942; Florence, AL
d. 22 December 2003; Detroit, MI

Curtis Butler (Guitar)

b. 21 January 1942; Florence, AL

The Butler Twins learned the blues from their father and were touring the South by their teens. They came to Detroit for factory work and returned to music with their raw blues sound in the 1970s.

JOHN SINCLAIR/EDWARD KOMARA

BUTLER TWINS

Bibliography

“Clarence Butler” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 174 (September/October 2004): 94.

Discography: AMG

BUTTERBEANS AND SUSIE

Joe “Jody” Edwards (Butterbeans)

b. 19 July 1895; GA
d. 28 October 1967; Dolton IL

Susan Hawthorn (Susie)

b. 1896; Pensacola, FL
d. 5 December 1963; Chicago, IL

Susie Hawthorn began her career when she joined a circus in her midteens. She married Jody in Philadelphia when she was nineteen; they teamed in 1917 and traveled with Ma Rainey’s Rabbit Foot Minstrels before graduating to the TOBA circuit and becoming a popular vaudeville duo in the 1920s, specialized in satirical male–female relationships, domestic disharmony and infidelity, love, sex, and money—or lack thereof.

They toured the south and the north extensively with boogie-woogie pianist Clarence “Pinetop” Smith, sharing the bill with Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, the Memphis Jug Band, and others. Starting in 1924, they made a lot of recordings for OKeh Records with Clarence Williams, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five, and Eddie Heywood and continued to do so until the late 1920s. They had developed an act, the Butterbeans & Susie Revue, that appealed to large audiences, both rural and urban. Vocally each possessed a rather narrow range but because they were comics and comedians rather than singers, such limitations allowed them to perfect a conversational style, delivered with the rhythmic punctuations of a jazz performer and it worked perfectly.

In the 1930s, despite the stagnation and decline of the recording industry and the loss of popularity of the classic blues singers, they went on working in a small vaudeville circuit until the early 1940s, in association with the black theaters circuit and, in the early 1950s, with Harlem’s Apollo Theatre. The couple recorded again in 1960 for the Festival label but had to retire around 1965 because of Joe’s poor health.

ROBERT SACRÉ

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Eder); Harris; Larkin; Santelli; Southern

Discography: AMG; DGR; Lord; LSFP

Elevator Papa, Switchboard Mama (1991, JSP Records CD329, United Kingdom; reissue).

BUTTERFIELD, PAUL

b. 17 December 1942; Chicago, IL
d. 4 May 1987; Los Angeles, CA

Harmonica player, singer. Studied classical flute as a child, then turned to blues and harmonica; became a virtuoso on that instrument. Butterfield jammed in South Side clubs with Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Otis Rush, and his main influence, Little Walter. He formed the racially integrated Paul Butterfield Blues Band in 1963 with Elvin Bishop (guitar), Jerome Arnold (bass, brother of Billy Boy Arnold), Sammy Lay (drums, replaced by Billy Davenport, 1965). He added Mike Bloomfield (guitar) and Mark Naftalin (organ) for the group’s groundbreaking eponymous debut album, which included Nick Gravenites’ “Born in Chicago” (earlier version of album later released as *Lost Sessions*).

Butterfield combined blues virtuosity with rock amplification levels. He backed Bob Dylan in his first electric outing at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965. The classic *East–West* (1966) included a masterly slow blues, “I Got a Mind to Give Up Living,” and a long, Indian-influenced title track. The group enjoyed immense popularity with rock audiences and exerted massive influence on both rock and blues artists in the mid-1960s. They did a great deal to push their influences into the spotlight, including B. B. King and Muddy Waters. Bloomfield departed to form the rock band Electric Flag, and Butterfield recruited a horn section for the next album.

The band performed at the Woodstock festival in 1969, but was no longer a major force. Butterfield broke up the band in 1972, but continued to perform and record with his own band, Better Days, and with members of The Band (including an appearance in *The Last Waltz* film). He sidelined the harmonica in favor of keyboards. He struggled with alcohol and drug dependency, and died from a drug-induced heart attack.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

Paul Butterfield Blues Band (1965, Elektra 7294); *East–West* (1966, Elektra 7315); *In My Own Dream* (1968, Elektra 74025); *The Resurrection of Pigboy Crabshaw* (1968, Elektra 74015); *Keep on Moving* (1969, 74053); *Sometimes I Feel Like Smilin'* (1971, Elektra 75013); *Better Days* (1972, Bearsville 2119); *It All Comes Back* (1973, Bearsville 2170); *Put It In Your Ear* (1974, Bearsville 6960); *North–South* (1981, Bearsville 6995); *East–West Live 1966–67* (1996, Winner 447).

BYRD, JOHN

b. ca. 1896; possibly Huntington, WV
d. Unknown

Long supposed a Mississippian, singer and twelve-string guitarist John Byrd probably came from eastern

Kentucky or western West Virginia. In Huntington, he met the singer Mae Glover, whom he accompanied at a 1929 Gennett session where he also recorded sermons as "Reverend George Jones." In 1930 he partnered with the Kentuckian singer and washboard-player Walter Taylor on disc in buoyant blues and hokum songs, and then, recording solo and (for once) in his own name, coupled the comic "Billy Goat Blues" with "Old Timbrook Blues," a unique composition about the horse race more famous from the bluegrass song "Molly and Tenbrooks."

TONY RUSSELL

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AMG (Bruce Eder)
Wardlow, Gayle Dean. "Six Who Made Recorded History (1926–1935)." *78 Quarterly* no. 5 (Autumn 1990): 93–96.

Discography: DGR

BYRD, HENRY ROELAND

(*See Professor Longhair*)

C

CADET

(*Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet*)

CADILLAC BABY

b. Narvel Eatmon, 8 October 1912; Cayuga, MS
d. 18 March 1991; Chicago, IL

Born Narvel Eatmon near Vicksburg, Mississippi, the flamboyant nightclub and record label owner, radio broadcaster, and entrepreneur who came to be known as Cadillac Baby was first exposed to the blues as a boy hearing local performances by the Mississippi Sheiks. Eatmon moved to Chicago as a young man and in the mid-1930s he started the first of many small storefront business ventures on the city's South Side. He owned and operated a number of successful South Side blues clubs from the 1940s through the 1960s, including Cadillac Baby's Club and Cadillac Baby's Show Lounge, which featured many popular artists of the time such as Little Mack Simmons, Detroit Jr., Eddie Boyd, Sunnyland Slim, Earl Hooker, and Hound Dog Taylor.

In 1959, Eatmon started his own record label, Bea & Baby, to record many of the musicians who were appearing at his club. Bea & Baby, along with Eatmon's other imprints (Key, Key Hole, Miss, and Ronald), issued dozens of Chicago blues sides throughout the 1960s, including the recording debuts of Taylor and Detroit Jr. Bea & Baby's best-selling release came in 1960 with Bobby Saxton's "Trying to

Make a Living," which was cowritten by Eatmon and was subsequently leased to Chess Records.

Bea & Baby dissolved in the early 1970s and Eatmon coproduced his last recordings in 1974 on a session with Sunnyland Slim, Byther Smith, and Bonnie Lee. Largely retired from music, Narvel "Cadillac Baby" Eatmon quietly spent the remainder of his life operating a couple of small shops on Chicago's South Side.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography

- Various artists. *Meat & Gravy from Bea & Baby* (2003, Castle Music CD 06076 81269-2).

CAESAR, HARRY "LITTLE"

b. Horace Caesar, 18 February 1928; Pittsburgh, PA
d. 12 or 14 June 1994; Los Angeles, CA

Singer and actor. During his recording career he was based in Oakland, California. He sounded enough like Percy Mayfield that the Modern label withheld his 1951 session from release. He enjoyed one hit in 1952, "Goodbye Baby" (recorded in Hollywood 235). In the

CAESAR, HARRY “LITTLE”

1960s he turned to acting, and through the 1980s he appeared in numerous films and television shows.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Bonner, Brett. “Little Caesar” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 117 (September/October 1994): 62.

Discography: LSFP

Little Caesar. *Lying Woman... Goodbye Baby* (1983, Route 66 KIX-24).

CAGE, JAMES “BUTCH”

b. 16 March 1894; Hamburg, MS

d. ca. 1975, Zachary, LA

Fiddler and occasional guitarist. Recordings by folklorist Harry Oster released on the Folk-Lyric label led to performances outside Louisiana, including the 1960 Newport Folk Festival. His fiddle playing is regarded to have retentions of African fiddle styles.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli

CAIN, CHRIS

b. 19 November 1955; San Jose, CA

Guitarist, pianist, singer, songwriter. After playing clubs in San Jose and Monterey in the mid-1980s, Cain moved to the Bay Area and attracted a following with his uncanny ability to recapture the sound of early B. B. King. In 1987 Cain made his recording debut on the small Blue Rock’it Records label in impressive fashion with *Late Night City Blues*; the album generated four W. C. Handy Award nominations, including best band and best guitarist. Cain moved to Blind Pig in 1990 for *Cuttin’ Loose*, which established him as a national artist. A series of albums, including the concert recording *Chris Cain Live at the Rep* and a Christmas album in 1999, followed. Cain began the twenty-first century with *Cain Does King*, wherein he acknowledged and embraced his B. B. affinity, and *Hall of Shame* in 2003.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl and Stephen Thomas Erlewine)

Discography: AMG (Bill Dahl and Stephen Thomas Erlewine)

CAIN, PERRY

b. 1929; New Waverly, TX

d. 24 April 1975; Houston, TX

Houston guitarist active in the 1940s and early 1950s, performing and recording locally. Through the 1960s, Cain was the radio disk jockey known as “Daddy Deep Throat” on KCOH Houston.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: LSFP

CALLENDER, RED

b. George Sylvester Callender, 6 March 1916; Haynesville, VA

d. 8 March 1992; Saugus, CA

Bassist, tuba player, composer. Callender began his career in New York, settled in Los Angeles in 1936, and became a leading jazz and blues bassist on the West Coast. His recording debut was with Louis Armstrong in 1937. He recorded with Charlie Parker on classic “Cool Blues” for Dial (1945); also with Lester Young, Dexter Gordon, Errol Garner, Art Tatum, Jimmy Witherspoon, Billie Holiday, Charles Mingus, B. B. King, and many others. He did occasional recordings as leader for small labels during 1944–1946 and 1951–1954. Callender was equally comfortable in blues, traditional, swing, and modern jazz settings (pioneered tuba in latter context) and also with a symphony orchestra. Callender was a busy commercial studio player. He toured in the 1980s with Jeannie and Jimmy Cheatham’s Sweet Baby Blues Band.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

Selected Recordings as Leader

Speaks Low (1957, Crown 5012).

Swingin’ Suite (1957, Crown 5025).

The Lowest (1958, MGM 1007).

Basin Street Brass (1973, Legend 1003).
Red Callender-Gerald Wiggins (1983, Hemisphere 1002).

CALLICOTT, JOE

b. 11 October 1900; Nesbit, MS
 d. 1969; Nesbit, MS

Also known as “Calico Joe” and “Mississippi Joe.” Birth year cited as 1899 (gravestone), 1900, or 1901. Farm worker who played with Garfield Akers and worked in Memphis clubs and bars with Frank Stokes. Callicott recorded three sides (two issued) for Brunswick in 1930 and also backed Akers on highly regarded duets in the Stokes–Sain tightly meshed guitars style. The pair rival such close-knit teams as Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe or Willie McTell and Curley Weaver. Callicott retired but recorded again in the 1960s.

DAVID HARRISON

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Wardlow, Gayle Dean. “Garfield Akers and Mississippi Joe Callicott: From the Hernando Cottonfields.” *Living Blues* no. 50 (Spring 1981): 26–27. Reprinted in Wardlow, Gayle Dean. *Chasin’ That Devil’s Music*. San Francisco: Miller Freeman, 1998.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Reissue

Mississippi Delta Blues, Vol. 2 (Arhoolie CD1042).

CALLOWAY, CAB

b. Cabell Calloway III, 25 December 1907; Rochester, NY
 d. 18 November 1994; Hockessin, DE

Singer, dancer, songwriter, bandleader. Began in Chicago, then became bandleader in New York. Led orchestra at Cotton Club, Harlem, in succession to Duke Ellington from 1932 to 1940; featured in many important jazz instrumentalists; sang jazz, blues, and novelty songs. He broke up the band in 1948, and led a small group briefly in 1951–1952, then concentrated mainly on stage and film roles, including Sportin’ Life (said to be modeled on him) in *Porgy and Bess* and the Harlem Globetrotters touring show in the 1960s. He revived the band for tours and festivals. Calloway was a charismatic, flamboyant showman, famous for the “Hi-De-Hi-De-Hi” chorus on “Minnie the Moocher” (1931). Compiled dictionaries of jive language.

KENNY MATHIESON

Bibliography

Calloway, Cab, and Bryant Rollins. *Of Minnie the Moocher and Me*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976.

Discography: Lord

Selected Recordings

The Chronological Cab Calloway (1930–1942, Classics 516, 526, 537, 544, 554, 568, 576, 595, 614, 625, 996).

CALLOWAY, HARRISON

b. 6 November 1940; Chattanooga, TN

Band arranger best known for his R&B and soul record session work. Studied trumpet in high school in Chattanooga, then attended Tennessee State University, Nashville (1959–1963). From the late 1960s through 1974 he led the Muscle Shoals horn section for Rick Hall at Fame Records, then for Malaco (1976–early 1990s) and for Ace (US) (1990s–present).

EDWARD KOMARA

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CAMEO

The principal label of the Cameo Record Corporation of New York, introduced in February 1922 and mainly sold in Macy’s stores. Cameo had signed Lucille Hegamin to an exclusive contract in October 1921. Her twenty-three issues, released every two months until 1926, accounted for all but three of the label’s blues issues in these years. Some of them appeared also on the company’s Muse and Lincoln labels. In 1926–1927, Viola McCoy had six releases, some under a pseudonym, which also appeared on the company’s Romeo and variety labels under other pseudonyms. Cameo merged with Pathé in October 1927 and the resulting combination merged with the Plaza labels in August 1929, forming the American Record Corporation (ARC). The label was dropped in 1931.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

DGR; Sutton
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CAMEO

Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

CAMPBELL, “BLIND” JAMES

b. 17 September 1906; Nashville, TN
d. 22 January 1981; Nashville, TN

Blinded at age thirty by a fertilizer plant accident, Campbell turned to playing guitar for tips, eventually gathering a somewhat regular Nashville street group that included mandolin, tub bass, and washboard. Recordings of him were made by Chris Strachwitz and released on Arhoolie Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Harris

Discography: AMG; LSFP

CAMPBELL, CARL

b. 20 March 1933; TX
d. 4 July 1993; Houston, TX

Pianist, vocalist, and club owner. Began career in Houston, Texas, in 1948 and made records for Freedom (1949), Peacock (1950), and Sittin' in With (1950). For many years he owned Carl's Blues Club in Houston.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Burke, Tony. “Carl Campbell” [obituary]. *Blues and Rhythm* no. 84 (November 1993): 17.

Discography: LSFP

CAMPBELL, EDDIE C.

b. 6 May 1939; Duncan, MS

Moving from Mississippi to Chicago as a boy, singer/guitarist Eddie C. Campbell grew up on the city's West Side, but not far from Maxwell Street. Campbell's mother bought him his first guitar at age nine, and by age twelve he was good enough to sit in with

idol Muddy Waters at a neighborhood gig. The young guitarist was also inspired by Howlin' Wolf, Jimmy Reed, and fellow West Side guitarist and mentor Magic Sam, who lived nearby. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Campbell developed his stinging, reverb-heavy guitar sound and flamboyant playing style by working as a sideman, and performed regularly with Reed, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, and Otis Rush. On a recommendation from Koko Taylor, he joined Willie Dixon's band in 1976 and spent the next four years as a member of Dixon's All Stars.

In 1977, Campbell recorded his impressive debut album for the Mr. Blues label, *King of the Jungle*, which was eventually reissued in the United States on Rooster Blues. After touring Europe in the late 1970s, he moved overseas in 1984 and spent the next eight years working abroad, with recordings on Black Magic, JSP, and Double Trouble. Campbell returned to Chicago in 1992 and released the critically acclaimed *That's When I Know* on Blind Pig two years later. The recording featured his introspective songwriting skills and signature West Side sound. Campbell continued to perform in clubs and festivals into the next century, being regarded as one of the original exponents of the fabled West Side Chicago blues style.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

That's When I Know (1994, Blind Pig BPCD 5014).
King of the Jungle (1996, Rooster Blues R2602; reissue).

CAMPBELL, JOHN

b. 20 January 1952; Shreveport, LA
d. 13 June 1993; New York, NY

Singer, guitarist. Using only an amplified acoustic guitar and a haunted voice, Campbell infused a streak of deep spiritualism into his signature voodoo blues stylings. Campbell grew up in Center, Texas, and began playing professionally at age thirteen. But he was more interested in drag racing until an accident cost him his right eye. During recovery he got deep into blues, particularly the work of Lightnin' Hopkins, and ultimately hit the road in the 1970s, playing small clubs and working as an opening act. He moved

to New York City in 1985 and it was there he caught the attention of guitarist Ronnie Earl, who was instrumental in getting Campbell his recording debut in 1988 with *A Man and His Blues* on the German Crosscut label. After signing with Elektra he released *One Believer* in 1991 and *Howlin' Mercy* in 1993 before his death on the eve of an European tour.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

CANNED HEAT

Death-haunted blues and boogie band formed by Bob Hite (1943–1981) and Al Wilson (1943–1970) in California, with Henry Vestine (1944–1997) on guitar. The contrast between Hite's gruff vocals and Wilson's shrill falsetto was central to their sound. Reached musical peak in late 1960s; had chart hits with "On the Road Again," "Going Up the Country" (both 1968), and "Let's Work Together" (1970). Wilson died of a drug overdose in 1970. Released collaboration with their musical model, John Lee Hooker (1971). Hite died of a heart attack in 1981. Drummer Fito (Adolpho) de la Parra continued to lead the group through many personnel changes, but the distinctive sound of Canned Heat did not survive the passing of its founders. Vestine died while touring with the band in 1997.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

Canned Heat (1967, Liberty 7526).
Boogie with Canned Heat (1968, Liberty 7541).
Livin' the Blues (1968, Liberty 27200).
Future Blues (1970, Liberty 11002).
Hooker 'n' Heat (1971, Liberty 35002).
Historical Figures & Ancient Heads (1972, United Artists 5557).
The New Age (1973, United Artists 049F).
One More River to Cross (1974, Atlantic 7289).

CANNON, GUS

b. 12 September 1883; Red Banks, MS

d. 15 October 1979; Memphis, TN

Gus "Banjo Joe" Cannon will be remembered both for creating the finest of the Memphis jug bands and for writing the original version of "Walk Right In," an international pop hit in 1963 for the Rooftop Singers.

He was the son of a slave and some of his records retain archaic overtones from the years before the blues. His first instrument was home-made but he soon ran away from home and played banjo around work camps. He teamed up with harmonica player Noah Lewis in around 1910 and the pair worked with Jim Jackson and others in dives, street parties, and social events through Arkansas, Illinois, and Tennessee. Gus was billed as Banjo Joe, a name he used for his first recording session for Paramount with Blind Blake in 1927.

A year later, Cannon was asked to form a group to compete with the Memphis Jug Band and set up his Jug Stompers, which recorded some twenty-nine titles from 1928 to 1930. The band included Cannon on banjo, jug, and vocals, the remarkable Noah Lewis on harmonica, and guitarists Elijah Avery, Hosea Woods, and Ashley Thompson at various times.

The strength of the Jug Stompers was the variety of their material. Cannon's first solo recordings for Paramount had been a mix of blues, rags, and political commentaries (the cynical "Can You Blame the Colored Man?") and a unique demonstration of banjo played with a knife on "Poor Boy, Long Ways from Home." The Stompers expanded on this material with the extra instruments available, and produced a stunning set of records that covers nearly the whole gamut of black American music of the time. "Feather Bed," for instance, is an ancient shared tradition song popular with blacks and whites (it was later recorded as "Over the Road I'm Bound to Go" by white singer Uncle Dave Macon). A number of songs serenaded local places, while "Walk Right In" was a Cannon-Thompson song written before the blues coalesced in 1910.

The band's major musician was Noah Lewis who demonstrated remarkable breath control, inventiveness, and mastery of his instrument. In 1929, he recorded solo, and in 1930 had his own jug band featuring Sleepy John Estes, Yank Rachel, and Ham Lewis from the Memphis Jug Band. He lived in dire poverty after 1930, dying from gangrene in 1961.

The band's recording contract ended in 1930 with the Depression, although it continued to work throughout the following decade. Cannon himself returned to playing for tips and working outside

CANNON, GUS

music. He recorded for Folkways in 1956 and appeared in a documentary film called *The Blues* in 1963. But the success of the Rooftop Singers reawakened interest in the old man and he made an album for Memphis soul label Stax. He was also featured in *The Devil's Music—A History of the Blues* on BBC TV in 1976. Obituaries, including that published in *Living Blues* magazine, gave his age as ninety-six, although some reference sources give a birth year of 1885.

DAVID HARRISON/EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG; Harris
O'Neal, Jim. "Gus Cannon" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 44 (Autumn 1979): 57.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Gus Cannon and Noah Lewis. *Complete Recorded Works 1927–1930* (Document DOCD 5032-33).
Walk Right In (Stax SCD 8603).

CANNONBALL RECORDS

Founded circa 1997 in Chanhassen, Minnesota. Offshoot of a music distribution company of the same name, Cannonball Records has issued a handful of regional blues compilations, and a handful more by blues artists such as James Harman, Johnnie Bassett, and Bernard Allison.

JIM TRAGESER

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<http://www.cannonballrecords.com/> (accessed December 17, 2004).

Selected Recordings

Various artists. *Blues Across America: The Dallas Scene* (1997, Cannonball 29203).
Various artists. *Blues Across America: The Detroit Scene* (1997, Cannonball 29201).
James Harman. *Takin' Chances* (1998, Cannonball 29107).

CAPITOL

Founded in Hollywood, California, in 1942 by music industry veterans Glenn Wallichs, Buddy DeSylva, and Johnny Mercer, Capitol Records' early success was based on pop chart hits by artists such as Nat

"King" Cole and Ella Mae Morse. Although black music—particularly jazz—was represented in the main catalog, it was not until 1949 that a short-lived R&B series was launched with the 70000 sequence to promote black artists as diverse as Nellie Lutcher, Scatman Crothers, Blue Lu Barker, Betty Hall Jones, Walter Brown, Duke Henderson, and Sammy Davis, Jr. (under his R&B pseudonyms "Charlie Green" and "Shorty Muggins"). The series, managed by veteran A&R man Dave Dexter, was discontinued by the end of the same year, despite enjoying hits by Julia Lee and Sugar Chile Robinson and reissuing the best of the classic Black & White masters of T-Bone Walker, purchased in April of that year.

In January 1950, all artists were transferred to the main pop series and Capitol continued to produce the odd blues and R&B session, although the majority of the label's output remained the fine pop and country issues that had earned it its reputation. During the early 1950s, artists such as Big Dave Cavanaugh, Paul Williams, Billy Valentine, Anita Tucker, and The Cues helped ease Capitol into the rock 'n' roll era. The label was bought by EMI in Britain in 1956.

DAVE PENNY

Bibliography

Daniels, Bill, and Galen Gart. "Capitol." *Whiskey, Women, And...* 14 (June 1984): 37.

Discography

Capitol from the Vaults #5: The Roots of Rock 'n' Roll (2001, Capitol CD 28292).

CARBO, HAYWARD "CHUCK"

b. 11 January 1926; Houma, LA

Former lead singer of the popular 1950s New Orleans rhythm and blues vocal group the Spiders. Originally formed in the mid-1940s as a gospel group built around Carbo and his brother, Leonard "Chick" Carbo, the Spiders began recording secular rhythm and blues in 1953. During the next two years, the band scored a string of top ten hits, including "I Didn't Want to Do It," "You're the One" and "I'm Slippin' In." In 1956, Chuck began recording as a solo artist for Imperial. He never found the success he'd had with the Spiders and was often forced to take day jobs. In the early 1990s, Chuck recorded two well-received albums for Rounder.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

Warner, Jay. *The DaCapo Book of American Singing Groups: A History, 1940–1990*. New York: DaCapo Press, 2000.

Discography: AMG**Selected Recordings and Reissues**

Drawers Trouble (1993, Rounder 2123).
The Imperial Sessions (1993, Bear Family Records 15673; with the Spiders).
The Barber's Blues (1996, Rounder 2140).

CARBO, LEONARD “CHICK”

b. 28 December 1927; Houma, LA
 d. 18 August 1998; New Orleans, LA

Along with his brother, Hayward “Chuck” Carbo, was co-lead singer of the popular 1950s New Orleans rhythm and blues vocal group the Spiders. The band was active from 1953 to 1955, scoring a string of top ten hits. Chick Carbo left for a solo career with Atlantic Records in 1956 and continued performing regionally for many years.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG (for brother Hayward “Chuck” Carbo)**Selected Recordings**

The Imperial Sessions (1993, Bear Family Records 15673; with the Spiders; reissue).

CARELESS LOVE

One of the most important and frequently recorded of American folk songs. It is not strictly a blues song—in fact, it predates blues probably by some decades—though it has important blues characteristics and has long been a favorite of blues singers. Its roots are obscure, though it is usually thought to have developed out of an Anglo-American Southern mountain melody some time in the second half of the nineteenth century. Though W. C. Handy stated his band played it as early as 1892, apart from a 1911 transcription of the text by Howard Odum (titled

“Kelly’s Love”), the song leaves little trace until 1921 when Handy published an updated version entitled “Loveless Love.” The more familiar folk version of the song did not emerge into the mainstream until the second half of the 1920s through recordings, which became increasingly common toward the end of the decade, and through appearances in printed collections of folk music such as those of Handy and Sandburg (see Bibliography).

“Careless Love” has a symmetrical sixteen-bar, four-line structure. There is little to connect the melody of the song with later blues, for its phrasing and shape seem to more closely correspond to white than black folk influences. There is, however, a blues connection in the harmony of the second half of the song (measures 9 through 16). Its standard form (one chord/measure) is: I–I7–IV–IVmin–I–V–I–I. This distinctive sequence, taken in isolation, is the harmonic foundation of numerous eight-bar blues, notably Leroy Carr’s “How Long Blues” (1928), as well as the important proto-blues “Fare Thee, Honey, Fare Thee Well” (aka “Dink’s Song”) found in various manifestations in folk and mainstream culture from 1901. The connection between “Fare Thee” and “Careless Love” is reinforced by the text of certain stanzas being commonly found in both songs.

The text of “Careless Love” also shows a blues influence in its subject of abandonment in love and the AAAB or AABC structure of the text of many versions (relating it to the characteristic AAB form of the twelve-bar blues).

Partly because of its racially mixed identity, “Careless Love” has, quite exceptionally for a folk song, been equally associated with three different genres: blues, hillbilly/bluegrass, and jazz. Thirty hillbilly recordings of the song are known of by 1938 and there have been many more since, while Tom Lord’s *Jazz Discography* lists nearly five hundred jazz recordings of the song up to the present.

The first recording by a black artist was that of vaudevillian Noble Sissle (“Loveless Love,” 1921, PA 020493; the titles “Loveless Love” and “Careless Love” are used interchangeably in recorded versions before the 1930s). The earliest blues versions of the song were made by Katharine Handy (1922, Pm 12011) and Alberta Hunter (1923, Pm 12013). Bessie Smith’s 1925 recording (“Careless Love Blues,” Col 14083-D), which included Louis Armstrong on cornet, was particularly important in establishing the significance of the song. Other major recordings from the prewar period include those by Lonnie Johnson (1928, OK 8635), Bo Chatman (1931, OK 8888), Blind Boy Fuller (1937, ARC 8-02-66), and Joe Turner (1940, De 7827). Important postwar blues recordings of the song include version by Fats Domino (1951, Imp 5145),

CARELESS LOVE

Billie and Dede Pierce (Riverside RLP 370), and Skip James (1968, Vanguard VSD 79273).

PETER MUIR

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CARMICHAEL, JAMES "LUCKY"

b. 12 October 1902; Harrodsburg, KY
d. 6 October 1982; Cincinnati, OH

Blues singer and guitarist in the post–World War II era. He began his blues career in Chicago, where during the early 1960s he played the local clubs, often in the Lefty Bates Band. While there he recorded three blues singles, for Dillie (1960), Shar (1961), and Pam (1962), the latter rereleased on Loma in 1964. He never recorded again. By the 1970s, Carmichael was working in Cincinnati, and performed there until his death.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP

CAROLINA SLIM

b. Edward P. Harris, 22 August 1923; Leasburg, NC
d. 22 October 1953; Newark, NJ

Little is known about Carolina Slim. His real name was Edward P. Harris and most of his early life seems to be unknown. Apparently, Harris played the guitar for several small clubs while growing up. Around 1950, Harris moved to Newark, New Jersey, where he made his first recording for Herman Lubinsky's Savoy label as Carolina Slim, a name probably chosen for Harris's tall frame. Because of his North Carolina upbringing, Slim developed a sound that was distinctly a Piedmont blues style. Under the influence of Lightnin' Hopkins, Slim structured a majority of his songs to resemble Hopkins's blues style. Occasionally, he recorded with a drummer or a washboard player. He also recorded

under various nicknames such as Country Paul, Georgia Pine, Jammin' Jim, and Lazy Slim Jim.

His down-home combination of Texas blues, Piedmont blues, and Lightnin' Hopkins kept him returning to the Savoy, and he acknowledged his roots with songs like "Carolina Boogie" and a cover of Blind Boy Fuller's "Rag Mama Rag." Slim's albums are unusual for their time because, although they are skillful and convincing performances, many of them feature solo country blues, either in the Carolina style of Blind Boy Fuller, or blatant copies of Lightnin' Hopkins. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to develop a real style of his own. In 1953, Harris entered the hospital in Newark, New Jersey, for back surgery but died during the operation from a heart attack. He was only thirty years old.

HEATHER PINSON

Bibliography

AMG (Charlotte Dillon)

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

- Blues Go Away from Me* (1964, Savoy SJL 1153).
Carolina Blues and Boogie (1985, Traveling Man TM 805).
Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order, 1950–1952 (1994, Document BDCD-6043).

CARON, DANNY

b. 2 November 1955; Washington, DC

Danny Caron earned his place in blues lore as the guitarist and musical director for pianist/singer Charles Brown during that legend's remarkable career comeback in the 1980s and 1990s.

Caron's roots in the blues extend further than that one remarkable relationship, however—he backed Marcia Ball shortly after moving to Austin, Texas, in the late 1970s, and then joined Clifton Chenier and was in his band in 1980 when they recorded "I'm Here," which won a Grammy.

His relationship with Brown began in 1987, shortly after Brown's career had been revived under the prodding and sponsorship of Bonnie Raitt. Playing with a lithe, jazz-oriented touch on a hollow-body electric guitar, Caron's guitar work re-created the feeling of a 1950s jazz club that served as the foundation for Brown's own singing and playing. A near-perfect complement to Brown's after-hours brand of sophisticated blues, Caron's playing with Brown embodied elements of T-Bone Walker and jazzster Herb Ellis to create a sense of warmth and relaxation every

bit as hip as that of Brown's legendary recordings from the 1950s with Johnny Moore's Three Blazers (which featured Moore on guitar).

Caron has also played on sessions with John Lee Hooker, Little Milton, Katie Webster, Ruth Brown, Dr. John, and John Hammond, Jr. With Brown's passing in 1999, Caron has taken on recording as a leader and teaching at a music school.

JIM TRAGESER

Discography

All My Life (1990, Bullseye Blues 9501; with Charles Brown).

These Blues (1995, Polygram 523022; with Charles Brown).

Good Hands (2003, Danny Caron Music).

CARR, BARBARA

b. 9 January 1941; St. Louis, MO

Soul-blues singer based in St. Louis. From 1965 through the 1970s her career was guided by Oliver Sain, who assisted in several recording sessions, including some for Chess in 1966. Long a St. Louis favorite, she became better known nationally through her self-produced 1989 CD *Good Woman Go Bad* (Bar-Car label) and her festival performances. Her recent work has been recorded for Ecko, including the risqué *Bone Me Like You Own Me* (1998).

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Bill Dahl)

Aldin, Mary Katherine. "Next Generation: Barbara Carr."

Living Blues no. 90 (March/April 1990): 49.

Discography: AMG

CARR, LEROY

b. 27 March 1905; Nashville, TN

d. 29 April 1935; Indianapolis, IN

The son of John Carr and Katie Dozier, Leroy Carr moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and then settled in Indianapolis. He taught himself piano and worked with a traveling circus (an event later serenaded in "Carried Water for the Elephant") before joining the Army. Throughout the 1920s, he was a regular accompanist to other singers at dance halls and house parties. In 1928, he teamed with the brilliant guitarist Scrapper Blackwell and the two became one of the most durable partnerships in the blues for the rest of Carr's short life.

Their first record for Vocalion included "How Long—How Long Blues," a sad and wistful number based on the tune of the standard "Crow Jane." It was a huge hit by the standards of the time, and Carr went on to record new versions throughout his career. For the next year the pair recorded regularly but as many titles were rejected as issued. And it is not difficult to see a portent of the future in "Straight Alky Blues" (1929), a two-part lament for a young man addicted to the kind of heavy drinking that killed Carr at the age of thirty.

Carr was seen by contemporaries as mild mannered, especially compared with the aggressive Blackwell who felt, understandably, that his own career was being overshadowed by Carr's popularity. It is possible some of the many unissued sides from this time were rejected because this resentment overflowed into the music. From August 1929, matters seemed to settle down and virtually everything from long regular sessions through to 1934 was put on the market. Overall, the Carr-Blackwell partnership made more than one hundred thirty records together, mostly of the highest quality.

Their importance in the history of the music was in the new sophistication they added to a rough, rural music, which appealed to country buyers who had moved into the cities. Carr's cleverly understated piano perfectly complemented Blackwell's imaginative guitar runs and the mix was completed by Carr's plaintive, nostalgic voice. It was a recipe that spawned countless imitators and admirers.

The range of material was impressive too, from maudlin ballads through personal prison blues to knockabout comedy. But Carr was drinking ever more heavily, helped by the income from his record sales, and the Depression was biting. Due to the economic collapse of the recording industry in the early 1930s, Carr and Blackwell did not record for two years, a break framed by two of his most exquisite songs: "Midnight Hour Blues" (1932) and the beautiful "Blues Before Sunrise" of 1934, both of which show the pair at their finest.

But Carr's drinking had led to kidney failure, and entire recording sessions were again scrapped, although those sides issued were well up to standard. He moved to Bluebird for one last session, ending prophetically with "Six Cold Feet in the Ground." Three months later, he was dead from nephritis.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

AMG (Jim O'Neal and Stephen Thomas Erlewine); Harris; Larkin; Santelli; Southern

CARR, LEROY

Discography: DGR

Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order, Vols. 1–6
(Document DOCD 5134-5139; reissue).

CARR, SAM

b. 17 April 1926; near Marianna, AR

Blues drummer Sam Carr was born in the north Mississippi Delta, the son of slide guitarist Robert Nighthawk. Adopted and raised as a baby by the Carr family, he left home at sixteen and joined his father in Helena, Arkansas. Carr started out as Nighthawk's chauffeur/doorman, but soon was playing upright bass with him. In 1946, he moved to St. Louis to form his own band, but within a few years was working again with Nighthawk. Now a guitarist, Carr soon switched to drums after failing to find a drummer to his liking when one was needed. In 1954, he formed what would become a forty-five-year partnership when he hired guitarist and harmonica player Frank Frost. From 1956 to 1959, the two would frequently play with Sonny Boy Williamson II. Carr and Frost moved from St. Louis to Lula, Mississippi, in 1959, and continued to play throughout the region, often with Carr's wife Doris singing.

Clarksdale guitarist Jack Johnson joined the group in 1962 and the trio, billed as Frank Frost and the Nighthawks, recorded the album *Hey Boss Man!* for Phillips International. In 1966, Carr and Frost recorded for Jewel Records with guest harmonica player Arthur Williams. Carr, Frost, and Johnson, now known as The Jelly Roll Kings, recorded *Rockin' the Juke Joint Down* for Earwig in 1978. Carr played and recorded with Frost until Frost's death in 1999, and his exemplary drumming style became the model for future Delta musicians. He continued on to become an in-demand session musician and remained a popular festival draw.

GENE TOMKO

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Johnson, Matthew. "Doing Terrible Things with the Sticks." *Living Blues* 96 (March/April 1991): 32–35.

Discography

The Jelly Roll Kings. *Rockin' the Juke Joint Down* (1993, Earwig 4901CD).

CARRADINE, WILLIAM "CAT-IRON"

b. ca. 1896; Garden City, LA

d. ca. 1958; Natchez, MS

Little known singer-guitarist whose 1958 backwoods recordings of blues and religious songs was issued on LP by Folkways. It remains his sole legacy.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

Selected Recording

Cat Iron Sings Blues and Hymns (Folkways LP FA2389. No CD).

CARRIER, ROY JR. "CHUBBY"

b. 1 July 1967; Lafayette LA

Singer and accordionist in zydeco. He was taught accordion by his zydeco musician father Roy Carrier, Sr.; his cousins perform as the Carrier Brothers. Early influence was Clifton Chenier. From 1987 through 1989 he was drummer for Terrance Simien to gain experience in a touring band. In 1989 he went on his own, recording initially for Flying Fish and Blind Pig labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Rotenstein, David S. "Chubby Carrier: Don't Forget Where You Come From." *Living Blues* no. 98 (July/August 1991): 20–22.

Discography: AMG

CARSON, NELSON

b. 18 September 1917; New Boston, TX

d. 31 January 2003; Ashdown, AR

Aka Nelson Carter. Learned guitar after moving to Houston, Texas, in 1924. After serving in World War II, he lived in Ashdown, Arkansas. He shuttled between Arkansas and Texas, working often with Jay Franks and occasionally with Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller). Activity after the 1970s is undocumented.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: LSFP**CARTER, BETTY**

b. Lillie Mae Jones, 16 May 1929; Flint, MI
d. 26 September 1998; New York, NY

Singer. Studied piano and voice at Detroit Conservatory, sang with visiting bebop musicians (including Charlie Parker), then joined Lionel Hampton in 1948 under name of Lorraine Carter. He nicknamed her “Betty Bebop” and she thereafter used the name Betty Carter. In New York from 1951, she often worked at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem; collaborated with Ray Charles in 1960–1963 and again in 1989. Founded Bet-Car (record company) in 1970. Unique stylist with an uncompromising improvisational approach to jazz standards and popular songs. She earned a reputation as a nurturer of talented young instrumentalists in her trio. Founded Jazz Ahead education program in 1993.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord**Selected Recordings**

Meet Betty Carter and Ray Bryant (1955, Epic 3202).
The Modern Sound of Betty Carter (1960, ABC-Paramount 363).
Ray Charles and Betty Carter (1961, ABC-Paramount 385).
Finally Betty Carter (1969, Roulette 5000).
Betty Carter (1970, Bet-Car 1001).
The Audience with Betty Carter (1979, Bet-Car 1003).
Carmen McRae–Betty Carter Duets (1987, Great American Music Hall 2706).
It’s Not About the Melody (1992, Verve 314-513970).
Feed the Fire (1993, Verve 314-523600).

CARTER, BO

b. Armenter Chatmon, 21 March 1893; Bolton, MS
d. 21 September 1964; Memphis, TN

Bo Carter was born near Bolton, Mississippi. His twelve siblings were all musical, including Sam,

Harry, and Lonnie Chatmon, who became recording artists. Carter played clarinet and tenor banjo as well as the instruments he used in his recordings—guitar and, occasionally, fiddle. Besides music and farming, Carter worked in chauffeuring, carpentry, and phonograph repair.

Carter played with his brothers in a string band that took the name Mississippi Sheiks when it began to record in 1930. Although he played on only a few of that group’s recordings, he played with it regularly in live appearances and acted as the group’s manager. Carter also acted as an agent to other artists, including Eugene “Sonny Boy Nelson” Powell.

Carter made his recording debut in 1928, backing singer Alec Johnson. He also recorded that year as Bo Chatman; behind singer Mary Butler; and with Charlie McCoy and Walter Vincson as the Jackson Blue Boys. He recorded with the Sheiks on several occasions, including their 1930 session backing Texas Alexander; and in 1931 with Charlie McCoy and possibly Sam Chatmon as the Mississippi Blacksnakes.

As Bo Carter, he began recording on December 15, 1930, and continued through February 12, 1940, cutting one hundred ten sides in nine sessions for OKeh and Bluebird. Carter was one of the blues stars of the 1930s. His only peers, in terms of numbers of sides issued, were Tampa Red, Memphis Minnie, Big Bill Broonzy, Bumble Bee Slim, Sleepy John Estes, and Blind Boy Fuller.

Carter went blind sometime in the 1930s, but continued to farm and play music. In the early 1950s, Sonny Boy Williamson brought Carter to audition several times for Lillian McMurry of Trumpet Records in Jackson, Mississippi. McMurry turned him down because of the condition of his voice, she said.

Carter was living in Memphis in 1960 when British blues researcher Paul Oliver happened to meet him, and interviewed and photographed him for Oliver’s book *Conversation with the Blues*. Carter suffered strokes and died of a cerebral hemorrhage at Shelby County Hospital, Memphis. He is buried in an unmarked grave in Nitta Yuma, Mississippi.

Although current blues fans often regard Carter as a smutty lyricist, only about a third of his songs have erotic themes. But those do show a flair for original erotic metaphors, often food related: “Let me put my banana in your fruit basket,” “She may be your cook but she burns my bread some times,” and “Let me squeeze and roll your lemon” are classic Carter lines.

Beyond his prolific recording career and his interesting lyrics, Carter is notable for the sophisticated technique with which he played his metal National guitar. He used flashy runs, unusual chords, and several keys and tunings. Some of his songs have thirty-two-bar, AABA structures—common in pop

CARTER, BO

tunes but rare in the down-home blues. Carter's 1928 recording of "Corrine, Corrina" is the earliest known version of that song, which has become a standard of American music.

STEVE CHESEBOROUGH

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Discography: DGR

Bo Carter Greatest Hits 1930–1940 (1970, Yazoo; reissue).

Twist It Babe (1970, Yazoo; reissue).

Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order, Vols. 1–5 (1991, Document Records; reissue).

CARTER, GOREE

b. 31 December 1930; Houston, TX

d. 29 December 1990; Houston, TX

Texas singer/guitarist Goree Carter was heavily influenced by T-Bone Walker as a teenager, and at age nineteen was signed to Freedom Records. Carter recorded for the label throughout the next two years, and had a minor hit with the scorching single "Rock Awhile." He recorded for several labels throughout the 1950s, including Coral, Imperial, and Modern, with limited success, and eventually retired from music altogether.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

The Complete Recordings, Vol. 1, 1949–1951 (2001, Blue Moon CD 6027).

CARTER, JOE

b. 6 November 1927; Midland, GA

d. 5 June 2001; Chicago, IL

Georgia-born musician Joe Carter moved to Chicago in 1952 and developed his style directly from Elmore James and Muddy Waters. An engaging singer and

slide guitarist in the classic postwar Chicago blues vein, he reportedly turned down a recording offer from Cobra in the late 1950s. Carter recorded for Barrelhouse in 1976 and retired from music in the 1980s due to illness.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

CARTER, LEVESTER "BIG LUCKY"

b. 1917; Weir, MS

d. 24 December 2002; Memphis, TN

Raised in Mississippi, singer/songwriter/guitarist "Big Lucky" Carter moved to Memphis after serving in World War II. He recorded for several labels throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including Sun and Savoy. In 1969, he recorded for Hi Records, which produced the classic "Goofer Dust." A staple of the Memphis blues scene for more than fifty years, Carter recorded the critically acclaimed CD *Lucky 13* at age eighty-one.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: LSFP

Lucky 13 (1998, Blueside CD WESF 106).

CARTER, VIVIAN

b. 25 March 1921; Tunica, MS

d. 12 June 1989; Gary, IN

Gary, Indiana, record store owner and consultant for Chess Records. In 1953 Carter founded the first large independent black-owned music company, Vee-Jay Records in Chicago, with her husband James Bracken. Until 1966, Vee-Jay released a wide variety of successful recordings including John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Reed, R&B, doo-wop, and early Beatles. Multiple reissues.

TINA SPENCER DREIBACH

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Discography

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See also **Vee-Jay/Abner/Falcon**

CASEY JONES

"Greatest Comedy Hit in Years"—"The Only Comedy Railroad Song"—so reads the cover of "Casey Jones: The Brave Engineer" (T. Lawrence Seibert and Eddie Newton, 1909). To a catchy, syncopated tune, it tells how Jones died when his "western mail" rammed "number four" near "Reno hill," on its way to "Frisco."

In fact, engineer John Luther "Cayce" Jones died when Illinois Central No. 1, with passenger and mail service from Chicago, Illinois, to New Orleans, Louisiana, rammed the rear of a freight train at Vaughn, Mississippi, at 3:52 A.M., April 30, 1900. According to Simeon Webb, Jones's fireman, they left Memphis ninety minutes late. As they approached Vaughn, 174 miles south, they were on time. Rounding a curve there, they saw two red lights of another train standing on the main line. Jones, the only casualty, threw on the brakes while Webb jumped.

The Illinois Central's official report accepts witness statements that safety regulations had been followed. "Engineer Jones was solely responsible for the collision by reason of having disregarded the signals given by Flagman [John] Newberry." After he left railroad work, Webb maintained that there was no warning.

To some Jones was a hero for having stuck to his engine and slowed it enough to avoid serious passenger injuries. To others he was a villain, having recklessly endangered passengers and crew. Both opinions are reflected in "Casey Jones" texts—he is praised and ridiculed. A version recovered from Jim Holbert is unusually accurate and particularly acidic. Elements of ridicule may have prompted Seibert and Newton to see the ballad as "comedy."

The original is said to have been the work of Wallace Saunders, a black roundhouse worker in Canton, Mississippi, who "rendered [it] in a singsong" according to Freeman Hubbard. The tune used by Memphis songster Furry Lewis ("Kassie Jones," 1928, Victor 21664) shares a chant quality with a few others, suggesting that it may be close to Saunders's original. Newton's familiar tune is very different.

One of Lewis's verses begins, "Lord, some people said Mister Casey couldn't run / Let me tell you what Mister Casey done." Similarities of text and tune suggest that "Some people say that a preacher won't steal / But I caught two in my cornfield" was a model for this verse. Songs about magnates, other engineers, hoboes, porters, etc., if they are older, are other possible models, for example, "Old Jay Gould"/"Jay Gould's Daughter," "James A. Michaels," "Charlie Snyder," "Joseph Mica," and "Jimmie Jones."

Lewis's song is a blues ballad. Norm Cohen recognizes an additional thread of tradition, that of the Anglo-American vulgar ballad ("Come all you," linear form, moralizing). Perhaps early blues ballads inspired rewrites for white audiences.

"Casey Jones" parodies proclaim the views of several groups. In 1912 Joe Hill made Jones a "scab" (strike breaker). In Robert Hunter's Grateful Dead song, Jones is a cocaine user. Bessie Smith's "J. C. Holmes Blues" (1925, Columbia 14095-D) is racy; other parodies are bawdy.

JOHN GARST

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Discography

Webb, Sim T. "The Story of Casey Jones' Last Trip" (1952, Davidson Clay Co., Memphis; 78-rpm recording on four sides).

CASEY, SMITH

b. Perhaps 1900 in east Texas

d. 11 September 1950; Tyler, TX

Singer and guitarist of ballads, blues, and spirituals. Discovered and recorded by John and Alan Lomax at

CASEY, SMITH

the Texas Department of Corrections at Brazoria. He was released in 1945, and died five years later in a tuberculosis hospital. His performances were released after his death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

CASTON, LEONARD "BABY DOO"

b. 2 June 1917; Sumrall, MS

d. 22 August 1987; Minneapolis, MN

Versatile pianist/guitarist chiefly known for his work in several Chicago-based bands throughout the 1940s, chiefly in the legendary Big Three Trio. After learning guitar at an early age, Caston switched to piano, which was to be his chief instrument as a young man in Natchez, Mississippi. Caston moved from Mississippi to Chicago in 1939, where he met a young ex-boxer, Willie Dixon. In 1940, Caston and Dixon formed their first band, the Five Breezes, which recorded on the Bluebird label. During this period, Caston cut his only solo hit, "Death of Walter Barnes" b/w "Baby Please Don't Go" on Decca.

In 1941, after Dixon was arrested for refusing to serve in the military, Caston formed his own band, the Rhythm Rascals, which joined Alberta Hunter's USO tour for performances in Europe, Africa, India, and China. At the close of World War II, Caston reunited with Dixon, and with Ollie Crawford formed the Big Three Trio, which toured nationally and recorded for Columbia, OKeh, and Bullet. After the band broke up in 1952, Caston continued to perform in other groups or solo in clubs and music festivals until his death. He often cited Leroy Carr as his idol and chief influence. Caston is remembered for his eclectic, improvisational piano parts in recordings with the Big Three Trio, which blended blues with boogie-woogie, pop, and other styles, filtered through smooth, three-part vocal harmonies.

DAVID BEAUDOUIN

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Discography: AMG (as The Big Three Trio); DGR (under The Five Breezes); LSFP

CASTRO, TOMMY

b. 15 April 1955; San Jose, CA

Longtime Bay Area favorite Tommy Castro plays a bright, upbeat West Coast style of blues with elements of pop and rock, bringing him a broad crossover audience. The guitarist and vocalist recorded a series of well-received albums for Blind Pig in the mid- to late 1990s; he continues to record and tour extensively.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda)

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

Exception to the Rule (1995, Blind Pig 5029).
Can't Keep a Good Man Down (1997, Blind Pig 5041).

CATFISH

British record label established in 1998 in Guildford, England, by Russell Beecher and Khaled Abdullah. Its catalog of blues reissues extended to more than eighty CDs with prewar issues programmed by Paul Swinton and postwar issues programmed by Mike Rowe, including both compilations and single-artist issues.

HOWARD RYE

CATFISH BLUES

First recorded on March 28, 1941, by Mississippi bluesman Robert Petway for RCA Bluebird, and subsequently released on Bluebird B8838. Another version, titled "Deep Sea Blues," was made by Petway's contemporary Tommy McClennan on September 15, 1941, also for RCA Bluebird (Bluebird B9005).

Melodic and lyric antecedents can be traced at least back to the 1920s. The melody may be sacred in origin, because it may be heard to the words "I Know His Blood Will Make Me Whole" as recorded by Texas sacred musician Blind Willie Johnson in 1927 (Columbia 14276-D). The lyric distribution over the eight-measure melody in the sacred song is AABA (2 + 2 + 2 + 2). For "Catfish Blues," the lyrics are of two sentences or independent phrases, each sung over four measures (4 + 4). Lyric antecedents can be found on Jim Jackson's "Kansas City Blues Part 3" (1928,

Vocalion 1155). Individual phrases turn up in passing on various recordings in the early 1930s, such as “deep blue sea” in Leroy Carr’s “Blues Before Sunrise” (1934, Vocalion 02657). It is surprising that the tune and words do not appear together on records before 1941.

After the Petway and McClennan versions were released in 1941 and 1942, respectively, and after the 1942–1944 American Federation of Musicians union ban on new recording, other treatments of “Catfish Blues” appeared on 78s. Notable ones were made by John Lee Hooker (1951, Gotham 515) and, a bit later, by B. B. King (as “Fishin’ After Me (Catfish Blues),” 1959–1960, Kent 351).

Two distinctive recordings were made by Muddy Waters for Chess Records in the early 1950s. The first was “Rollin’ Stone” (1950, Chess 1426), which was simply a retitling of the standard “Catfish” tune and lyrics. Nonetheless, the title would be adopted in 1962 by the Rolling Stones in London, and in 1968 for the rock publication *Rolling Stone*. The second was “Still a Fool” (1951, Chess 1480), featuring a two-electric guitar accompaniment by Waters and “Little Walter” Jacobs, and lyrics relating a situation of adulterous love in urban Chicago. The uses of single-string licks on the guitars, and the lyrics reflecting an urban sensibility, show the extent to which “Catfish Blues” had evolved from its prewar rural origins.

Rock musicians in the 1960s tried their hands on “Catfish Blues.” Cream with Jack Bruce and guitarist Eric Clapton recorded an instrumental treatment on Doctor Ross’s song “Cat’s Squirrel,” with the Catfish Blues theme played on harmonica, on the LP *Fresh Cream* (1966, Atco). The American guitarist Johnny Winter used the melody for “I Love Everybody” on *Second Winter* (1969, Columbia). A related lyric paraphrase (without reference to the original melody) on the “Catfish” concept of escaping and living in water may be found on Jimi Hendrix’s “1983 (A Merman I’d Like to Be)” from *Electric Ladyland* (1968, Polydor/Reprise).

The “Catfish Blues” melody can still be heard in the blues, sung to the lyrics popularized by Petway and Waters, such as T-Model Ford’s “The Old Number” (1998, *You Better Keep Still*, Fat Possum 80318-2).

EDWARD KOMARA

CATFISH KEITH

b. Keith Daniel Kozachik, 9 February 1962; East Chicago, IL

Singer and acoustic guitarist specializing in pre–World War II blues styles.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Larry Belanger)

Discography: AMG

CAVA-TONE RECORDING

Record label (California, 1948–1949). Owner: Robert Lee Geddins (b. February 6, 1913, Highbank, TX; d. February 15, 1991, Oakland, CA). Oakland, California–based, the label issued sides by Lowell Fulson (“Prison Bound”), Bob Geddins’ Cavaliers, Roy Hawkins, Ulysses James, Saunders King, Jimmy McCracklin, Rising Star Gospel Singers, Jimmy Wilson, and others. Some of these were reissued on Aladdin, Gilt-Edge, and Modern.

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

See also **Big Town**

C. C. RIDER

The history of “C. C. Rider” could potentially be viewed as a history of the folk process itself. Since its original recording under the title “See See Rider” on October 15, 1924, in New York by Gertrude “Ma” Rainey for Paramount Records, it has undergone several transformations which have incorporated the various styles of blues, jazz, folk, and rock ‘n’ roll. It has been included on the studio and live efforts of so many musicians that it has become canonized in American popular music.

Along with “C. C. Rider” and “See See Rider,” this song has also been presented as “Easy Rider” possibly due to vernacular interpretations and/or the use of oral tradition in the passing of this song from performer to performer. Traveling blues musicians would often refer to their instruments, usually guitars or harmonicas, as “easy riders” due to their ease as traveling “companions.” This term was also used in the same respect as a double entendre for a female companion with whom these musicians could expect sexual preferences. Ma Rainey’s version is the first known recording of “See See Rider.” However, there is a written account of this song by Alan Lomax, derived from an interview with Big Bill Broonzy, which places its existence as early as the turn of the twentieth century.

As this song has evolved, most versions have discarded the first two verses sung in the initial recording by Ma Rainey. Conversely, many have added traditional blues verses that do not appear in the original,

again all part of the folk process. Blind Lemon Jefferson used what has become the standard first verse of “C. C. Rider” as the first verse of his “Corrina Blues,” which he recorded for Paramount in April 1926 less than two years after Ma Rainey’s original recording. The changes in the growth of this song have not all been lyrical, however. It has not only been played as a blues standard by artists such as Big Bill Broonzy, John Lee Hooker, Mississippi John Hurt, Lightnin’ Hopkins, and Leadbelly but it has also been approached from a jazz perspective by Jelly Roll Morton and Jimmy Witherspoon among others, and it was a 1942 hit for singer Bea Booze.

The folk/blues revival of the 1960s placed “C. C. Rider” as a recurring presence in the set lists of many mainstream artists of the day. Folk revivalist Dave Van Ronk’s version closely imitates Ma Rainey’s original version, whereas Eric Burdon and the Animals’ electric version shares a recurring phrase on the keyboard similar to the guitar phrasings used by Blind Lemon Jefferson in his “Corrina Blues” as well as his “Easy Rider.” Of the versions to come out of this era, the ubiquitous nature of this song in the live sets of the Grateful Dead throughout their career will ensure its continued appreciation. The broad appeal of the Grateful Dead as a popular musical group that consistently explores different genres of music will no doubt guarantee further interpretations of “C. C. Rider” by countless musicians of all styles in the future.

BRYAN GROVE

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Lomax, Alan. *The Land Where the Blues Began*. New York: Delta, 1995.

Discography

- Gertrude “Ma” Rainey. *Red Hot Musicians (1895–1930)*.
<http://www.redhotjazz.com/rainey.html>

CEE-JAY

Record label (New York, 1960–1961). Owners: Clarence Edward Johnson (“Jack Raggs”) (b. July 12, 1910, Baltimore, MD; d. October 26, 1961, Bronx, NY); Joe Evans. Artists recorded include Betty James (“I’m a Little Mixed Up,” covered by Sue Foley, Koko Taylor), Jimmy Spruill, and Sherman Williams. Clarence Edward Johnson was a musician and songwriter and had worked with Tiny Bradshaw (cowriting “Jerry Bounce” and “Salt Lake City

Bounce”) and with Danny Robinson’s Everlast and Holiday labels.

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

CELESTE

Record label (California, 1963–1965). Owners: Sherman Leo Coleman (b. November 6, 1916, MO; d. April 4, 1987, Alameda County, CA); Anne Coleman, Ezekiel “Zeke” Strong (b. October 19, 1921, Isabella, OK; d. May 8, 2003, Phoenix, AZ). This Los Angeles, California–based label’s artists include Ray Agee, Ronnie Brown, Carter Brothers (“Just Consider Yourself Baby”), Perry Dancy, Mary Ann Miles, Carl Underwood, and Zeke Strong. Based on Bob Eagle’s interviews with Ray Agee, the label was a successor of Kick Off Records, and saxophonist Zeke Strong may have only been a producer (of Ray Agee). During the same time, Agee issued many of his own records on his Krafton label. The Carter Brothers single was leased from Morris Lee “Duke” Coleman’s Coleman Label.

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

CEPHAS, JOHN

b. 4 September 1930; Washington, DC

Guitarist proficient in Piedmont and Bentonia, Mississippi, styles. Since 1977 he has performed with harmonica player Phil Wiggins.

EDWARD KOMARA

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- AMG (Richard Skelly); Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli Pearson, Barry Lee. “Bowling Green John Cephas and Harmonica Phil Wiggins: D.C. Country Blues.” *Living Blues* no. 63 (January/February 1985): 14–20.

Discography: AMG

CHAMBLEE, EDWARD LEON “EDDIE”

b. 24 February 1920; Atlanta, GA
d. 1 May 1999; New York, NY

Tenor saxophonist Eddie Chamblee shared a barrack with Jimmy Cheatham and Chico Hamilton during

World War II service in a segregated Army band. After the war, Chamblee played with Lionel Hampton's band, and in the late 1950s backed and was married to singer Dinah Washington. Until his death, he most often led his own small combos featuring his impassioned jump-blues playing.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn); Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: AMG; Lord

Selected Recordings

As bandleader: *Dinah Washington Sings Bessie Smith* (1958, EmArcy MG 36130).
Chamblee Music (1960, Mercury 60127).

CHAMPION (INDIANA)

Record label introduced in September 1925 by the Starr Piano Company of Richmond, Indiana, as a lower-priced alternative to its Gennett label, costing thirty-five cents rather than seventy-five cents. Most of the catalog comprised pseudonymous issues of recordings also available on Gennett, with many Race items, including performances by Lottie Beaman (as Lottie Everson), Jay Bird Coleman (as Rabbits Foot Williams), Sam Collins (as Jim Foster), Cow Cow Davenport (as George Hamilton), and Georgia Tom (as Smokehouse Charley). Champion records remained in production after issue of Gennett ceased in December 1930, and subsequent records by such artists as Scrapper Blackwell, Georgia Tom, and Irene Scruggs used their real names. Only a few sessions were held after mid-1932 and operations ceased in December 1934.

On June 28, 1935, the Champion name was sold to Decca with rights to some Gennett recordings, resulting in a Champion 50000 Race series, which ran to seventy-eight issues, including some newly recorded material, notably by Scrapper Blackwell, as well as reissues from both Gennett and Paramount, the latter including 1932 recordings by the Mississippi Sheiks. Bumble Bee Slim had both new recordings and reissues from Paramount in the series under the pseudonym Shelley Armstrong. This venture lasted only until April 1936.

HOWARD RYE

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Wyler, Michael. "A Glimpse of the Past, 11: Champion." *Storyville* no. 20 (1968), 69.

CHAMPION (TENNESSEE)

Record label (Tennessee, 1958–1959). Owners: Alan Bubis (b. 1910; IL); Reynold Bubis (b. December 5, 1918, TN; d. January 13, 1996, Pompano Beach, FL); Theodore (Ted) Jarrett (b. October 17, 1925; Nashville, TN). Nashville, Tennessee-based, one of the Bubis cousins (Alan) and African American musician, singer, and songwriter Ted Jarrett had worked together at Tennessee Records. Artists included Gene Allison, Jimmy Beck, Larry Birdsong, Fairfield Four, Earl Gaines, Al Garner (aka Murfreesboro), and Christine Kittrell.

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

CHANCE

Chicago rhythm and blues label of the early 1950s. Chance was one of the pioneer independent labels to record the new African American sounds that swept the city in the postwar years, namely, the electrified Mississippi blues and the doo-wop harmony groups. The label also recorded a little jazz, gospel, and pop. Chance was begun in 1950, and a subsidiary, Sabre, was added in 1952. The company was owned by Art Sheridan, who was the principal producer and A&R person. An associate, Ewart Abner Jr., was originally the company's administrator, but gradually became involved in working with the artists.

The company released records on a plethora of blues artists, prominently John Lee Hooker, Home-sick James, J. B. Hutto, Lazy Bill Lucas, and Big Boy Spires on Chance, and Tampa Red (recording as the Jimmy Eager Trio) and Willie Nix on Sabre. Some blues artists were recorded independently by producer Joe Brown, who also owned the JOB label. Chance also recorded such famed doo-wop groups as the Flamingos, Moonglows, Five Echoes, Five Chances, and Five Blue Notes. After Sheridan closed down Chance in late 1954, Abner joined Vee-Jay Records as general manager.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath**CHANDLER, GENE**

b. Eugene Dixon, 6 July 1937; Chicago, IL

Chicago soul singer of the 1960s and 1970s. Chandler rarely recorded any songs approaching blues, but his 1964 hit, "Soul Hootenanny," was a derivation of Jimmy Reed's "Big Boss Man." Plus, the aching intensity he gave such songs as "Rainbow" reached the emotional depths of blues. Chandler made his first recordings as the lead singer of a doo-wop group, the Dukays of "Nite Owl" fame. The Dukays recorded the million-selling "Duke of Earl," which was picked up by Vee-Jay, who released the record under the name "Gene Chandler," thus launching the singer's solo career. His glorious voice was subsequently put to terrific use on a host of great ballads, most of which were written by Curtis Mayfield and produced by Carl Davis, notably "Rainbow" (1962, Vee-Jay), "Man's Temptation" (1963, Vee-Jay), "Just Be True" (1964, Constellation), "Nothing Can Stop Me" (1965, Constellation), and "Girl Don't Care" (1967, Brunswick), among many others. In 1970, Chandler hit with the million-selling "Groovy Situation" (Mercury). During the disco era, he hit with "Get Down" (1978, Chi-Sound). His last chart record was in 1986. Chandler operated his own label, Mr. Chand, from 1969 to 1973. The singer performed at the 1994 Chicago Blues Festival.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

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CHARITY, PERNELL

b. 20 November 1920; Waverley, VA

d. 12 April 1979; Waverley, VA

Essentially a local musician, guitarist Charity blended diverse influences from phonograph records into a personal style of Piedmont blues. His eclectic and entertaining approach can be appreciated in his 1972 and 1975 recordings for Trix, which include the original composition "War Blues."

LUIGI MONGE

Bibliography

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———. "Down in Virginia: Sam Jones & Pernell Charity." *Living Blues* no. 13 (Summer 1973): 25–27.

See also Fuller, Blind Boy; Hopkins, Sam "Lightnin'"

CHARLES FORD BAND, THE

From Ukiah, California, the all-white Charles Ford Band played together for only one year, recording one album before their breakup in 1972. Three members were brothers: Robben (b. 1951; guitar, vocals, sax), Patrick (b. 1949; drums), and Mark (b. 1953; harp, vocals). Their bassist was Stan Poplin (b. 1952). The band was named to honor the brothers' father, Charles Ford, an amateur country musician. Pat and Robben had played for harpist Charlie Musselwhite in the San Francisco electric blues scene until 1971 when they left to form their own band.

Their album, *The Charles Ford Band*, was actually recorded at the request of Arhoolie after the group disbanded. It showcases Robben and Mark, revealing the influence of Paul Butterfield in its use of harmonica. Two songs are Robben originals, and the band honors predecessors such as Albert King, covering his "Wild Woman." The album is also characterized by Robben's clear, tenor vocals and relatively clean guitar style.

In 1982, the group reunited for a new album. Subsequent versions of the band (with variations in line-up) have recorded under several names: the Ford Blues Band, Robben Ford and the Ford Blues Band, and Mark Ford and the Robben Ford Band. Mark and Robben went on to play for musicians such as Muddy Waters, Miles Davis, Albert King, John Lee Hooker, Joni Mitchell, and George Harrison. Patrick founded Blue Rock'it Records in the early 1980s and has released work by Charlie Musselwhite, Brownie McGhee, and various incarnations of the Charles Ford Band.

OLIVIA CARTER MATHER

Discography

The Charles Ford Band (1972, Arhoolie LP 4005).

A Reunion Live (Blue Rock'it 101).

As Real as it Gets (Blue Rock'it 124).

CHARLES, RAY

b. Ray Charles Robinson, 23 September 1930; Albany, GA

d. 10 June 2004; Beverly Hills, CA

Singer and pianist. Charles grew up in Florida and went blind at age seven from untreated glaucoma. He absorbed a wide range of music as a child, including blues, jazz, “Race music” (rhythm and blues), country and western, and gospel in church. All played an important role in his development and mature music.

Charles began playing piano at three, took lessons in clarinet and piano, and learned to read and write music in Braille at St. Augustine School for the Blind. He formed his first group in 1945, adopted the stage name of Ray Charles, played in jazz trios, and met Quincy Jones in Seattle. He recorded for Swingtime (1950–1952), Atlantic (1952–1959), then ABC-Paramount. He toured with Lowell Fulson and worked with Guitar Slim. Hits from 1954 were in the rhythm and blues style; his first LP release was in 1956. Charles recruited the vocal group the Raelettes in 1957, and they became a signature part of his sound as rhythm and blues transmuted into soul.

Charles made important jazz recordings with Milt Jackson on *Soul Brothers* (1958) and *Soul Meeting* (1959), and *The Genius of Ray Charles*, with arrangements by Quincy Jones. Major charts hits included “Georgia on My Mind” (1959) and “What’d I Say?” (1959). He began touring Europe in 1960, and became established as an international pop star. Charles kicked a career-threatening drug addiction in the mid-1960s.

His major influence in popular music lay in the development of soul, a style Charles saw as rooted in a combination of gospel and blues, but he continued to record often uneven albums in many styles, including blues, jazz, country, and pop. A passionate singer and gifted pianist, he also composed and arranged using Braille.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

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The Genius After Hours (1957, Atlantic 1369).

Ray Charles at Newport (1958, Atlantic 1289).

The Genius of Ray Charles (1959, Atlantic 1312).

The Genius Sings the Blues (1961, Atlantic 8052).

Genius + Soul = Jazz (1961, Impulse! AS-2).

Ingredients in a Recipe for Soul (1963, ABC 465).

CHARLES, ROCKIE

b. Charles Merick, 14 November 1942; Boothville, LA

Singer, songwriter, guitarist, bassist, producer. Rockie Charles, “The President of Soul,” introduced his deeply personal sound on his own Soulgate label in the 1960s, worked as a tugboat captain, then returned in the 1990s as an avatar of Southern Soul. Charles worked with Little Johnny Taylor, Percy Sledge, O. V. Wright, and Otis Redding.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Rockie Charles website, <http://home.att.net/~jlroberts/rc/rhome.html> (accessed November 11, 2004).

Discography: AMG

CHARLY

Record label founded in 1977 in London to reissue American blues, R&B, and rockabilly records, and its first releases focused on the recordings of Sun Records. During the next two decades, Charly would release hundreds of compilation LPs and CDs on the main label as well as on the Charly R&B, Classics, Gospel, and Lejazz specialty labels. Among blues performers, Charly released dozens of well-packaged compilations for John Lee Hooker, the Yardbirds, Albert King, Jimmy Reed, and Sonny Boy Williamson (II). In 1986, MCA bought the Chess Records catalog from Sugar Hill Records. Because Charly believed that MCA did not hold the legal rights to the Chess masters in Great Britain, they continued to reissue Chess recordings, and MCA brought suit in 1993. In April 1996, MCA won their suit in the British courts, as they would in the U.S. courts one year later, and the fines incurred by Charly effectively bankrupted the label.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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Pride, Dominic. “MCA Scores Victory in U.K. Case over Rights to Chess Masters.” *Billboard* no. 108 (May 4, 1996): 8, 93.

CHART

Record label (Florida, 1955–1957). Owner: Henry David Stone (b. June 3, 1921; Bronx, NY). Artists

include Rufus Beacham, Elder Beck (“Rock and Roll Sermon”), David Brooks, Roy Gaines (“Loud Mouth Lucy”), Wilbert Harrison, John Lee Hooker (“Wobbling Baby”), Lightnin’ Hopkins (“Walkin’ the Streets,”), Sonny Thompson (“Juke Joint”), TNT Tribble (“T. N. T.”), and Jimmy Wilson (“Alley Blues”).

ROBERT EAGLE

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- Topping, Ray. “Henry Stone: The Rockin’ and Chart Story.” *Juke Blues* no. 33 (1995): 27.

Discography: McGrath

CHARTERS, SAMUEL BARCLAY

b. 1 August 1929; Pittsburgh, PA

The 1959 publication of Samuel Barclay Charters’ book *The Country Blues* is widely viewed as marking the beginning of the “blues revival”; it brought mainstream attention to older blues traditions and inspired many future researchers.

Charters, a musician, poet, novelist, filmmaker, and record producer, was born in Pittsburgh in 1929 and was introduced to jazz and blues as a child through musicians in his family. In 1945 the family moved to Sacramento, California, and in 1948 he began performing in Bay Area traditional jazz groups.

In 1950 Charters first visited New Orleans to study with George Lewis, and returned to the city in 1953 following service in the Army. Encouraged by veteran jazz researcher Frederic Ramsey, Charters began recording jazz and blues artists in 1955. The following year Folkways Records began issuing his recordings, including the five-volume jazz series *Music of New Orleans*. His first book was *Jazz, New Orleans, 1885–1863* (Belleville, NJ: Walter C. Allen, 1958). He later wrote, together with Leonard Kunstadt, *Jazz: A History of the New York Scene* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1962).

Charters’ first blues productions were the 1957 Folkways albums *Blind Willie Johnson: His Story Told* and *American Skiffle Bands*, which featured the Mobile Strugglers, Gus Cannon, Will Shade, and Charlie Burse. In 1958 Charters and his future wife Ann (Danberg) discovered the Bahamian guitarist Joseph Spence on Andros Island; the trip is documented in his book *The Day Is So Long and the Wages*

So Small: Music on a Summer Island (New York: Marion Boyars Publishers, 2002).

A companion LP to *The Country Blues* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1959) was issued on Folkways’ RBF reissue label, for which Charters produced about twenty albums; he also recorded new Folkways albums by Lightnin’ Hopkins, Furry Lewis, and others. The 1964 anthology *One String Blues* was first issued on his own Portents label.

Poetry of the Blues (New York: Oak Publications, 1963) is an anthology of blues lyrics, while *The Bluesmen: The Story and the Music of the Men Who Made the Blues* (New York: Music Sales, 1967) examines traditions in Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas. It was complemented by *Sweet As the Showers of Rain: The Bluesmen Part II* (New York: Oak Publications, 1977), which addresses Memphis, Atlanta, and the East Coast; the books were reissued together as *The Blues Makers* (New York: DaCapo, 1991).

A 1961 recording trip for Prestige Records yielded albums by Furry Lewis, Memphis Willie B. (Borum), Baby Tate, and Pink Anderson. On a separate trip the following year he documented these artists for his film *The Blues* (1962). In 1963 he was hired by Prestige as an A&R representative, and oversaw the Bluesville and Folklore series. He recorded for the label as part of the True Endeavor Jug Band and (with Artie Traum) the duet The New Strangers.

Charters’ Prestige recordings of Homesick James, Billy Boy Arnold, and Otis Spann were some of the first electric blues releases aimed at the revival market. He continued in this vein as an independent producer for Vanguard with the influential three-volume anthology *Chicago: The Blues Today* as well as solo albums by Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, James Cotton, and Charlie Musselwhite. He also produced rock albums for Vanguard, notably by Country Joe and the Fish.

In the early 1970s Charters moved to Sweden, where he worked as a producer for Sonet. The twelve-volume series “Legacy of Blues” resulted in a similarly titled book (London: Calder & Boyars Ltd., 1975) and Charters’ other productions included a series of Cajun and zydeco albums, including seven by Rockin’ Dopsie and Clifton Chenier’s Grammy Award winner *I’m Here*. In the 1980s Charters returned to Folkways Records as a producer, and cofounded the Gazell label, which he still runs.

Robert Johnson (New York: Music Sales Corporation, 1972) is a songbook with an essay that extends Charters’ writings on Johnson from *The Country Blues* and *The Bluesmen*, while *The Roots of the Blues: An African Search* (New York: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1981) draws on Charters’ visits to West Africa in the mid-1970s; in 1983 it received the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award.

Blues Faces: A Portrait of the Blues (New York: Marion Boyars Publishers, 2000) collects photos by Charters and his wife Ann and recollections about his musical career, while *Walking a Blues Road* (New York: Marion Boyars Publishers, 2004) collects his blues writing over fifty years. He continues to supervise and annotate many CD reissues of his previous productions.

In 2000 he and his wife, a noted literary scholar, established The Samuel and Ann Charters Archives of Blues and Vernacular African American Music at the University of Connecticut's Thomas J. Dodd Research Center.

SCOTT BARRETTA

CHATMAN, PETER

(See *Memphis Slim*)

CHATMON, SAM

b. 10 January 1899; Bolton, MS

d. 2 February 1983; Hollandale, MS

Birth year also given as 1897. Sam Chatmon was a member of the celebrated Chatmon family, who lived just outside the small town of Bolton, Mississippi. His parents, Henderson and Eliza Chatmon, reportedly had thirteen children together, eleven of whom were sons who all played musical instruments. Around 1910, seven of them formed a family string band that would later develop into the Mississippi Sheiks. From an early age, Sam played with the band, primarily on the bass (though he mainly played the guitar later in his career). In 1928, after the seven-piece band had broken up, Sam and some of his brothers relocated to the Delta town of Hollandale, Mississippi.

Sam's first recordings were made on June 9, 1930, as an accompanist for "Texas" Alexander. The following day, he recorded with the Mississippi Sheiks at the group's second session for OKeh Records. As a recording group between 1930 and 1935, the Sheiks chiefly consisted of Sam's brother Lonnie Chatmon and Walter Vinson, though Sam and his brother Armenter "Bo" Chatmon (who also had a successful solo career as Bo Carter) occasionally joined them on their recording dates. The group's personnel for live performances was more loose knit, however, and it is likely that Sam frequently joined the group at their appearances at picnics, dances, and parties. In 1936, Sam and Lonnie made twelve recordings (ten of which were issued) for Bluebird as the Chatman [sic] Brothers. Soon thereafter, the family band dissolved, and Sam did not record again for twenty-four years.

During that time, he mostly worked outside music—reportedly as a farmer, a night watchman, and a plantation supervisor—and lived in Hollandale and Arcola, Mississippi.

In 1960, Chris Strachwitz rediscovered Sam in Hollandale and recorded him, and four of the songs recorded were included on the Arhoolie LP *I Have to Paint My Face*. In 1966, he was rediscovered again by blues enthusiast Ken Swerilas, who persuaded Sam to travel with him to San Diego. There, Sam began playing in clubs and became a local favorite. He soon began performing around the country at various folk festivals and clubs and achieved considerable fame as one of the few surviving first-generation Mississippi bluesmen. Sam's newly found popularity led to his recording a few LPs in the 1960s and 1970s. His wide-ranging repertoire on these recordings included blues, rags, minstrel tunes, and popular songs. Until the end of his life, Sam divided his time between touring and living in Hollandale, where he still worked odd jobs from time to time. He made his last professional appearance at the 1982 Mississippi Delta Blues Festival.

ANDREW LEACH

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 Obrecht, Jas. "Sam Chatmon: The Last of the Mississippi Sheiks." *Blues Revue* no. 15 (Winter 1994/1995): 35–39.
 O'Neal, Jim. "Sam Chatmon." *Living Blues* no. 56 (Spring 1983): 38.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

- The Mississippi Sheik* (1972, Blue Goose BG 2600).
The New Mississippi Sheiks (1972, Rounder 2004).
Sam Chatmon's Advice (1979, Rounder 2018).
Sam Chatmon & His Barbecue Boys (1981, Flying Fish 202).

CHAVIS, BOOZOO

b. Wilson Anthony Chavis, 23 October 1930; Church Point, LA

d. 5 May 2001; Austin, TX

Zydeco king Boozoo Chavis learned accordion from his father, who along with Joe Jackson, Potato Sam, and Henry Martin, played the Creole dance halls in the Lake Charles area of Louisiana. He recorded the single "Paper in My Shoe," an update of a two-centuries-old New Orleans standard, in 1954. It became the first zydeco song to become a regional hit. The single fared well nationwide, but Chavis was paid little for his work, which led to a bad opinion of the record

CHAVIS, BOOZOO

business. He recorded sporadically after that, and left playing music professionally to breed and race quarter horses. In 1984 he staged a comeback with his three sons comprising the Majic [sic] Sounds as his backing band. Their sound in comparison to the more polished zydeco of the period is raw and primitive. He recorded four albums through the 1980s on various labels, all available through Rounder.

JOHN OTIS

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Discography: LSFP

CHEATHAM, JIMMY AND JEANNIE

Jeannie Cheatham (née Jean Evans; pianist, vocalist)

b. 14 August 1927; Akron, OH

James R. "Jimmy" Cheatham (trombonist, bass-trombonist)

b. 18 June 1924; Birmingham, AL

Married in late 1950s. Jean Evans had worked with Jimmy Colvin and Jimmy Cheatham with many jazz ensembles. In 1972, both took academic posts at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where they hosted a weekly jam session. Jeannie Cheatham worked occasionally as an accompanist to Big Mama Thornton. They moved to San Diego in 1977, continuing the jam sessions, which in 1983 spawned their Sweet Baby Blues Band, featuring Jeannie's blues singing alongside elements of jump/R&B, blues, swing, and traditional jazz. Contributors to their records from *Sweet Baby Blues* (1984, Concord Jazz CJ258) to *Gud Nuz Blues* (1995, Concord Jazz CCD4690) included Gatemouth Brown, Papa John Creech Curtis Peagler, Ricky Woodard, Hank Crawford, Plas Johnson, Jimmie Noone, Jr., and Clora Bryant.

HOWARD RYE

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Trageser, Jim. "Sweet Baby Blues: Jeannie and Jimmy Cheatham." *Living Blues* no. 93 (September/October 1990): 11.

CHECKER

(See *Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet*)

CHEEKS, REVEREND JULIUS

b. 7 August 1929; Spartanburg, SC

d. 27 January 1981; Miami, FL

The definitive "hard gospel" singer, roaring baritone Cheeks went briefly with the Soul Stirrers before rejoining the Sensational Nightingales in the early 1950s to reel off a string of gospel classics on the Peacock label.

JIM THOMAS

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG (Jason Ankeny)

CHENIER, C. J.

b. 28 September 1957; Port Arthur, TX

Accordionist, singer. After playing piano, saxophone, and flute at Texas Southern University and working in an R&B cover band, dynastic zydeco star Chenier got the call in 1978 to replace saxophonist John Hart in his father's classic group, The Red Hot Louisiana Band. Once Chenier served his apprenticeship he moved to accordion and ultimately inherited his father's band in 1987, enlarging its audience and appeal from its zydeco purist base with roots-oriented pop and blues material. Clifton Chenier may have invented the music, but his son, who also recorded with Paul Simon on "Rhythm of the Saints," contributed to its evolution by significantly modernizing zydeco without sacrificing its basic sensibilities.

MICHAEL POINT

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CHENIER, CLEVELAND

b. 16 May 1921; Opelousas, LA

d. 7 May 1991; Lafayette, LA

Performing R&B with his younger brother, Clifton, the Cheniers switched to zydeco in the early 1960s. Acknowledged as the King of the Rub Board, he is

considered to be the first to strap the instrument on his chest as is common practice today.

JIM THOMAS

CHENIER, CLIFTON

b. 25 June 1925; near Opelousas, LA

d. 12 December 1987; Lafayette, LA

One of the innovative and best-known zydeco musicians. Born the son of sharecroppers in Acadiana, Chenier learned to play the accordion from his father, Joseph. The Chenier family included many musicians who regularly played at local dance halls, but Clifton also drew inspiration from the recordings of Amadie Ardoin, the pioneer Creole blues accordionist, and jump-blues master Louis Jordan. Chenier's brother Cleveland learned to play the froittoir, a washboard played to provide a rhythmic accompaniment. The brothers began playing dances in southwestern Louisiana during the 1940s. By the early 1950s his reputation had spread into southeast Texas, and Chenier began the process of transforming the older accordion-based Creole music into a driving, bluesy style that would be christened zydeco. The word itself derives from the title of one of Chenier's most popular pieces "Les Haricots Sont Pas Sale," meaning "the beans aren't salty."

Through the efforts of Clarence "Bon Ton" Garlow, Chenier came to the attention of the Los Angeles-based producer J. R. Fulbright. In 1954 Chenier recorded his first session at a radio station in Lake Charles. The titles were released on the Elko and Post labels. Fulbright eventually got Chenier's records to Specialty and with that label he had his first substantial hit, "Ay Tete Fee," in 1955. Chenier's newfound popularity took him to the rhythm and blues circuit where he performed with such artists as B. B. King, Ray Charles, and Big Joe Turner. After two sessions with Specialty, Chenier moved to the Chess label. During this period his music took a decided rhythm and blues feel, perhaps the result of his touring experience. This fusion of the Creole accordion style with rhythm and blues helped define the burgeoning zydeco sound. Chenier also adopted the piano accordion as his primary instrument as opposed to the smaller diatonic (or 'tit noir) accordion favored among rural Creole and Cajun artists. The music was both bluesy and propulsive, with an intensity accentuated by the power of the piano accordion. Chenier developed a national popularity and toured extensively. In 1955 he toured with a very young Etta James and served as her legal guardian on the road. During the 1950s he released singles on the Argo and Checker labels.

The emergence of rock 'n' roll dimmed Chenier's national career and by 1960 he was firmly back in Louisiana. He recorded for J. D. Miller's Crowley-based Zynn label in the late 1950s, but produced no significant hits. His career stalled until Lightnin' Hopkins (who had married Chenier's cousin) introduced Chris Strachwitz to the zydeco master. Strachwitz offered Chenier a recording contract with Arhoolie, thus beginning one of the most productive and rewarding careers in zydeco music. In 1964 Chenier cut his first record for Arhoolie. The resulting single, "Ay Ai Ai," restarted his career. Chenier deeply appreciated Strachwitz's unfailing promotion of his career.

Chenier began to tour Europe in the late 1960s and in 1969 performed at the American Folk Blues Festival in Germany. During the 1970s he kept up a hectic touring and recording schedule. Chenier became a popular regular at such festivals as the Montreaux Jazz and Pop Festival, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and the Berkeley Folk Festival. He released albums on the Arhoolie, Bayou, Jin, Maison de Soul, and other labels. He recorded several live performances that come close to capturing the intensity of a live Chenier show. Chenier was equally at home playing traditional Creole tune and blues, but he developed a strong affinity for R&B-tinged dance music. He took to wearing a crown on stage and proclaimed himself to be the "King of Zydeco." In 1983 Chenier won a Grammy for his *I'm Here* album (Alligator 4729), and the following year he played for President Reagan at the White House. He also received a National Heritage Fellowship, awarded by the National Endowment of the Arts.

His last years found Chenier plagued by numerous health problems. His kidneys weakened, he developed diabetes, and then lost part of a foot. Still the "King of Zydeco" insisted on performing, though his touring was hampered by his need for dialysis. On December 12, 1987, Chenier died at Lafayette Memorial Hospital.

There would be little exaggeration in the statement that Clifton Chenier transformed the Creole music of southwest Louisiana. He found it a decidedly rural sound rooted in the house party music (called "la la") of the late nineteenth century and infused it with a propulsive rhythm and blues power. His music reflected a period of growing contact with the world outside of Acadiana and the old Creole ability to adapt to changes and still retain basic elements of the culture. He also brought a sense of outrageous style to the scene, a strutting confidence, and a deep, beautiful musical spirit.

KEVIN S. FONTENOT

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Discography: LSFP

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CHENIER, MORRIS “BIG”

- b. 1929; Opelousas, LA
- d. 1978; perhaps Lake Charles, LA

Morris was the uncle of late Zydeco King Clifton Chenier. He played guitar on Clifton’s first recordings in 1954 and on his own Goldband recordings from 1957 to 1960, including “Let Me Hold Your Hand.” Although mainly a guitar player, he was most well known for his bluesy fiddle playing on Clifton’s “Black Gal,” a massive regional hit from 1966 to 1967 and other songs recorded at the same sessions for Arhoolie Records.

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: LSFP

See also Arhoolie/Blues Classics/Folk Lyric; Chenier, Clifton; Goldband Records

CHENIER, ROSCOE

- b. 6 November 1941; Notleyville, LA

Second cousin of Clifton Chenier. Singer and guitarist in R&B and soul, active mostly in southern Louisiana. Recorded a single with guitarist Lonesome Sundown for the Reynard label in 1963, and made his first album in 1993.

EDWARD KOMARA

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- AMG (Alex Henderson)

Discography: AMG; LSFP

**CHESS/ARISTOCRAT/CHECKER/
ARGO/CADET**

Leonard and Phil Chess, two Polish immigrants to America, were an unlikely duo to run a successful record company. In the right place at the right time—postwar Chicago—it nonetheless took the right stuff to turn Chess Records into a blues powerhouse: instinct, determination, and a common touch.

Chess was the successor to Aristocrat Records, a small independent formed in 1947 by Evelyn and Charles Aron. Aristocrat’s first records featured a white band led by Sherman Hayes doing such novelty tunes as “Get on the Ball Paul.” It was moving into the “race” market—recording black artists for a black audience—when it came to Leonard’s attention. He was operating a popular after-hours club on bustling Cottage Grove Avenue, the Macomba Lounge, whose mainstay was saxophonist Tom Archia. Leonard got interested in making records when a producer wanted to record Andrew Tibbs, who occasionally sang at the club. Leonard got in touch with the Arons and helped make Tibbs’s first record, “Bilbo is Dead”/“Union Man Blues.” In October 1947 Leonard became an Aristocrat salesman and assumed more responsibility after the Arons divorced. Used to Archia’s jump-blues, Leonard did not understand the spare, intense music made by Muddy Waters, a talented guitar player brought to Aristocrat by piano player Sunnyland Slim. But as soon as she heard “I Can’t Be Satisfied,” Evelyn appreciated its power. When Aristocrat finally released it, “I Can’t Be Satisfied” was a success, and Leonard realized there was a market for this new kind of music.

By the end of 1949 Leonard had bought out Evelyn. Muddy Waters continued to record tunes in the mold of his first hit, such as “Rollin’ Stone,” which inspired the Rolling Stones, but he chafed to record with a bigger band. Leonard finally relented and let him bring harmonica wizard Little Walter and a drummer into the studio. He had also moved the tiny Aristocrat office to larger quarters, and Phil officially joined the enterprise early in 1950. The brothers closed the Macomba later in the year after a fire.

In the meantime, Leonard’s friend, Buster Williams, a record presser in Memphis, suggested that Aristocrat be renamed after the family. The first Chess record was released in June 1950, not Muddy Waters but the saxophonist Gene Ammons doing “My

Foolish Heart.” It was Chess 1425 for the family’s first American address, 1425 South Karlov in Chicago.

Sam Philips, an independent producer and another Memphian, gave Chess its first national hit when he sent “Rocket 88,” a fast-paced tune about the pleasures of a new car, to Chess. Philips also sent the Chess brothers another bluesman, “Howlin’ Wolf,” whose real name was Chester Burnett. His “Moanin’ at Midnight” and “How Many More Years” were immediate classics.

Leonard and Phil moved again in 1951 to larger quarters on Cottage Grove and created a new subsidiary, Checker Records. Their first Checker hit was Little Walter’s “Juke,” which was the break tune for Muddy Waters’s band. Leonard also found his right-hand man for blues, bass player Willie Dixon, who wrote songs and ran sessions. His most successful collaboration came in 1954 with Muddy Waters and “Hoochie Coochie Man.” It was a good omen for the brothers, who moved again, to 4750 South Cottage Grove.

Though neither Chess brother had any musical training, their regular sales trips to the South and East gave them a feel for the music and an appreciation for the next new thing. When Ellas McDaniel—soon rechristened Bo Diddley—walked into 4750 with his high-energy demo tape, Phil knew it was special. The next day Leonard listened, and within two months Bo Diddley and his song “Bo Diddley” were national hits.

A few months later, Chuck Berry, a guitar player from St. Louis, came to see Leonard at Waters’s suggestion. His demo tape, renamed “Maybellene,” was sent to influential disc jockey Alan Freed, and by September 1955 the record topped the R&B charts.

Fueled by their continuing success, the Chess brothers bought the building at 2120 South Michigan in 1957 and turned it into the Chess Producing Corporation. During the next nine years, it was home to legends: Waters, Wolf, Walter, Bo Diddley, Berry, Etta James (the label’s major female star whose hits included “At Last” and “Something’s Got a Hold On Me”), Little Milton, Fontella Bass (who sang “Rescue Me”), and Koko Taylor and her classic “Wang Dang Doodle.” Though synonymous with blues, the label branched out to jazz; Ahmad Jamal and Ramsey Lewis recorded their hits for the Argo subsidiary in the storied second-floor studio.

In 1963 Leonard and Phil bought a local radio station, renamed it WVON—Voice of the Negro—and turned it into the first station to broadcast news to and for Chicago’s black community twenty-four hours a day. When he sensed the product was lagging, Leonard made a deal with producers in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Among the hits to emerge were James’s “I’d Rather Go Blind” and “Tell Mama.”

Musicians said they loved the freewheeling atmosphere at Chess. “We was all right—like family,”

James said. But Leonard and Phil were not immune to charges that they cheated their artists. Phil and Marshall Chess, Leonard’s son, disputed those claims. Howlin’ Wolf, Muddy Waters, and Willie Dixon all sued Arc Music, the publishing arm, alleging they were defrauded of royalties. Confidential settlements were reached. The publishing rights to Wolf’s music stayed with Arc; as copyright renewals for Waters and Dixon came up, Arc returned their songs to them.

Leonard died unexpectedly in 1969, two years after moving into a big new studio on east 21st Street and just after he sold the company to General Recorded Tape. GRT ran the company poorly, and by the mid-1970s, the label, which had changed hands again, was barely in existence. The music experienced a resurgence after 1987, when Universal Music, which gained control of the catalogue, began reissuing the Chess canon.

NADINE COHODAS

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CHICAGO

While Chicago is commonly known—especially among hometown blues fans—as “The Blues Capitol of the World,” it’s no secret that the music for which the city is famous has usually been imported fresh from the rural South. In the early years of the twentieth century, as blacks from throughout the southern states attempted to escape the oppressive conditions that still resonated with the not-so-distant echoes of slavery, many looked directly north. The urban centers of the north offered the promise of relatively lucrative industrial jobs as a respite from the back-breaking field labor of the agricultural South, as well as access to better educational and housing opportunities, and at least a marginal escape from the institutionalized

racism that was then still rampant in the former Confederacy. For most, the quickest and easiest route was straight north; consequently, many thousands of those leaving the Mississippi Delta region ended up in Chicago, just as those leaving the southeastern states migrated directly north to New York, Washington, Philadelphia, and so forth.

However, the history of African Americans in Chicago goes back to the city's very earliest roots, to a time before Chicago existed. In the late 1700s, the very first permanent settler in what would later become a sprawling city of some six million inhabitants was a black man from Haiti named Jean-Baptiste DuSable. The enterprising and successful DuSable set up the area's first trading post, and his importance in the region is commemorated by a large high school and an African American history museum on Chicago's South Side.

By Civil War times Chicago had a small black population, primarily former slaves who had moved north. After the war the city's black population slowly but steadily grew; as the biggest city in the home state of the "great emancipator" Abraham Lincoln, Chicago was a not-impossibly-distant beacon of hope for blacks looking northward. Chicago's 1893 "Columbian Exposition" World's Fair served as a forum for pioneering civil rights addresses and activities by the great black orator Frederick Douglass and activist Ida Wells, among others. By 1902 there were enough black musicians working in Chicago that the very first black musicians union in the nation, Local 208 of the American Federation of Musicians, was organized. The *Chicago Defender*, for many years the nation's largest and most widely distributed black-owned newspaper, began publishing in 1905. Widely distributed in the South, the *Defender* as much as any other source helped popularize Chicago as a desirable northern destination for African Americans in the South. The years between 1910 and 1920 have been referred to as the era of "The Great Migration," as Southern blacks moved northward by the thousands to escape the oppressive conditions of the South. Between the Civil War and the dawn of the "Chicago Blues" era in the early 1920s, these events helped spread the word throughout the rural South that Chicago was a desirable destination for southern blacks seeking something better.

By the late 1920s, Chicago hosted a large enough black population to support a vibrant black "downtown" on Chicago's South Side, boasting most of the same types of businesses and amenities found in Chicago's white business districts. While the promise of a better life went unfulfilled in many ways—poverty, deplorable housing conditions, and all of the associated problems were rampant—for many it was still

at least a marginal improvement over the grinding hopelessness left behind.

One of the by-products of the newly acquired relative affluence was a bustling music scene, and for a large number of these newcomers, the music of choice was the blues. Many musicians who found themselves in Chicago picked up just where they'd left off—solo guitar pickers plied the streets for tips, piano players worked taverns and house-rent parties, and other more ambitious musicians put together small bands and sought work in local nightclubs. Before long a great cross-pollination of styles and repertoires was taking place, as musicians who had been widely dispersed throughout Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana were suddenly concentrated together in the same general neighborhoods, living within walking distance of each other and vying for the same gigs. Not only were musicians now exposed to regional blues styles to which they may have had at most limited access while down south, but they were also being influenced by other, more urbane genres of music—jazz, dance bands, and pop balladeers. Thanks to the sheer concentration of people, a musical osmosis was taking place at an accelerated pace, and the wide and varied sounds of what became known as "Chicago Blues" began to be heard. But rather than any single style or sound, Chicago Blues might be likened to a pool of sounds, into which various tributaries, many of which originated in the Mississippi Delta region, have continually emptied, year after year, musical trend after musical trend.

One consequence of the convergence of the various musicians and styles was the standardization of musical structures and timing. A bedrock element of the blues has always been the vocals, and stylistically there may have been little difference between those singing blues in Chicago and their peers down south. But musicians who were accustomed to working solo—backing their singing with only their own instrumental accompaniment—had often followed their own irregular patterns when it came to bar lengths, chord changes, and song structure. Being exposed to and playing with a wide variety of other musicians forced many of the idiosyncrasies to be smoothed out for the sake of more cohesive ensemble playing. Blues ensembles developed wherein instrumentalists found their own space within increasingly elaborate—if often improvisational—song arrangements. Although in the early years some artists continued to perform solo, the developing Chicago Blues sound was based on an ensemble sound, and the increasingly sophisticated use of instruments that had been (and continued to be) played by blues artists in the Mississippi Delta region. But whether used in an ensemble setting or solo, the primary instruments to be heard were piano

and guitar, although it wasn't long before harmonicas, washboards, and even horns were heard both live and on record.

One of the early southern blues artists to make a large if short-lived impact on the burgeoning Chicago blues scene was, oddly enough, not a guitarist or pianist, but a banjo player, Papa Charlie Jackson, whose 1925 recording, "Maxwell Street Blues," sounded a call to action for many southern blacks who were considering the move north. (For most of the twentieth century, Maxwell Street was a bustling neighborhood bazaar, and the first stop for immigrants to Chicago from all over the world, providing a place for newly arrived musicians of all types to earn a little spending money by busking on the streets, and also an opportunity to hook up with other like-minded individuals. Many generations of blues musicians first played in Chicago on Maxwell Street, until the city closed the market down in 1994.) Jackson was also an early mentor to guitarist Big Bill Broonzy; after arriving in Chicago in the 1920s, Broonzy quickly established himself as not only a hugely talented and prolific artist, but also a patriarch

over the Chicago Blues scene for next three decades. Guitarist and New Orleans native Lonnie Johnson was not far behind chronologically or musically; with his sophisticated and complex single-string flat picking, he went on to establish a standard for both blues and jazz guitarists that has seldom been equaled. Guitarist Tampa Red (Hudson Whittaker) was a prolific and influential recording artist beginning in the late 1920s, and introduced not only several standards to the Chicago blues lexicon ("It Hurts Me Too," "Black Angel Blues," aka "Sweet Black Angel," "Don't You Lie to Me," and "Love Her with a Feeling," among others), but also inspired countless blues guitarists with his beautifully fluid slide guitar style. Memphis Minnie Douglas (later Lawlers), despite her name, made Chicago her home beginning in the early 1930s; widely recognized as the equal of any of the men just mentioned in both musicianship and popularity, her rhythmically swinging guitar work, often backed by one of her series of guitar-playing husbands, provided a clear blueprint to succeeding generations of Chicago blues guitarists.



Maxwell Street, Chicago, in June 2001. Whether in chic clubs, on festival stages, in local taverns, or on sidewalks, the blues still thrives in Chicago. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

Early important pianists on the Chicago scene included much-traveled Clarence “Pine Top” Smith, whose “Pine Top’s Boogie Woogie” has been covered countless times down through the years, including Tommy Dorsey’s massive hit with a big band arrangement of it in the late 1930s. (Unfortunately Smith did not live to reap any of the rewards of his influence—he died after being hit by a stray bullet in a Chicago dance hall in 1929, after making only a handful of recordings.) Not to be confused with the white bandleader just mentioned, pianist “Georgia Tom” Dorsey teamed up with the aforementioned Tampa Red, and enjoyed great commercial success in the late 1920s and early 1930s with a series of mildly ribald recordings such as “It’s Tight Like That” and “Let Me Play with Your Poodle,” establishing what became known as the “hokum” blues style. While not extensively recorded, in the 1940s Big Maceo Merriwether’s powerful piano style established him as one of the cornerstones of the scene until ill health took its toll in the late 1940s; his influence was to be felt for years afterward through his disciples Johnny Jones and Otis Spann. Mention must also be made of Sunnyland Slim (Albert Luandrew); although he didn’t arrive in Chicago until the early 1940s, and may not have left much of a stylistic imprint on piano players who followed, he recorded prolifically as a leader and a sideman in Chicago for half a century, and also helped to facilitate some very important musical events, among them the first professional sessions by future blues icon Muddy Waters. In spite of the economic depression of the 1930s, blues as a business was slowly but steadily developing. With a wealth of talent available, and more arriving every day to both make and buy records, a few large record companies were regularly recording in Chicago. Brunswick, RCA Victor/Bluebird, Columbia, and others set up offices and studios, and with the influence of professional A&R men and producers (such as Lester Melrose at Bluebird), certain subcategories and signature sounds began emerging. Particularly notable was the “Bluebird sound,” typified by tight, smooth, small band arrangements that often included piano, bass, drums, and often clarinet or saxophone. Depending on the situation, to this basic backing mix was added a guitarist/singer such as Broonzy or Tampa Red, a harmonica player/singer such as John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson or Jazz Gillum, or even washboard player/singer Washboard Sam (Robert Brown). While the general sameness of the backing sound would eventually wear thin with blues fans, it remained one of the most popular sounds in Chicago Blues for the better part of a decade, until what came to be known as the “Post-War” sound exploded onto the scene.

World War II had brought an influx of industrial jobs, and the blues migration from the South to Chicago continued at a rapid pace. After the war, but before integration, there existed large segments of Chicago’s south and west sides that supported bustling and vibrant entertainment strips catering almost exclusively to Chicago’s newly prosperous black population. Also added to the mix was new technology; although electronic amplifiers for music and voice had existed for at least a decade before the war broke out, industrial advances brought about by the war put these amplifiers within the reach of even semi-pro musicians, and this new equipment was quickly seized on by those who sought to create a new, “modern” sound. As the decade of the 1940s waned, the acoustic guitars and pianos of the prewar years were being cast aside, and electronically amplified guitars (and before long, amplified harmonicas) began dominating the center of the Chicago blues stage. Harmonica pioneer John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson had dominated the blues harmonica genre for a decade, but his violent death in 1948, as much as any other event, signaled the end of the “old” styles of blues and the coming of a new era in Chicago. The somewhat polite “Bluebird sound” was replaced by a louder and more raucous blues sound utilizing electronic amplification, which allowed a three- or four-piece combo to shake the back walls of the club in a way that only a big band with a large horn section could have a few years earlier.

Muddy Waters (McKinley Morganfield), a Mississippi native who had migrated to Chicago in the mid-1940s, was one of the first to break through commercially with the new sound. Essentially rooted in the solo singer/guitarist style of influential fellow Mississippian Robert Johnson (who had died in 1938), Muddy’s keening, whining slide guitar took on a quality when amplified that struck a chord with homesick southern transplants; it was a familiar sound, but also new and different, to suit the modern times and faster pace of the big city lifestyle. Muddy’s recordings of “I Can’t Be Satisfied,” “I Feel Like Going Home,” “Mean Red Spider,” and others from 1948 and 1949 broke ground for his long reign at the pinnacle of the Chicago blues scene, and also helped to establish the label for which he recorded, Chess Records (formerly Aristocrat), as the preeminent Chicago Blues label. Although his early recording success was with stripped-down guitar-and-vocals arrangements, soon Muddy had surrounded himself with the very best accompanists available—the fiery, swinging Little Walter Jacobs on harmonica, Jimmy Rogers on second guitar, and Otis Spann on piano, all of whom would go on to their own successful solo careers (as would many others who would populate Muddy’s

bands in the years that followed). In the wake of Muddy's success, gravel-voiced bluesman Howlin' Wolf (Chester Burnett) eventually made the move north from Memphis, where he'd already begun a successful recording career. Wolf's unique sound was a combination of feral intensity and pounding musical arrangements, melded with the relatively sophisticated guitar work of Willie Johnson and, later, Hubert Sumlin. Wolf and Muddy recorded for the same label, and throughout their careers cultivated the same audience, ultimately (if somewhat uneasily) sharing the crown of King of Chicago Blues for the rest of their careers.

Although the migration of southern blacks seeking industrial jobs may have slowed somewhat in the postwar years, the musical migration continued unabated, as blues musicians were drawn to Chicago by the vibrant live music scene and the many independent record companies, led by Chess. Countless labels sprang up to dip into the brimming talent pool, some existing only long enough to issue a handful of sides by neighborhood talent, others like United and States, JOB, Cobra and Abco, and the mighty Vee-Jay sticking it out long enough to make inroads into the national music charts, and capture some of the most vibrant music of the era. Vee-Jay in particular enjoyed a long and successful run after establishing itself with a string of hits by Mississippi transplant Jimmy Reed. Cobra was only in business for a handful of years in the late 1950s, but somehow found a way to change the sound of modern blues by recording a triumvirate of future guitar legends at the very beginnings of their careers. Otis Rush, Magic Sam (Samuel Maghett), and George "Buddy" Guy came to personify what would become known as the "West Side sound"—although in reality this appellation had more to do with the location of the record company than where the artists lived or performed. These three young bluesmen shared a modern, forward-thinking approach to the music—and their instruments—that put the guitar front and center once and for all in modern blues. Influenced as much by Memphis-based B. B. King and Los Angeles resident-by-way-of-Texas T-Bone Walker as they were by the big names in Chicago, these three took the energy level and emotional expressiveness of their instruments to the next level. For the first time, the guitar solo was becoming as important as the vocals in communicating the blues, a development that continues to reverberate in the music to this day.

By the early 1960s musical tastes among urban blacks—many of whom now had no personal connection to the South—were evolving away from blues played by people who had made the migration to Chicago in the immediate postwar years. This development paralleled an increasing interest among young white music fans for something earthier and more

emotionally direct than what the radio Top 40 was offering them. Not only did rebellious young white fans start actively seeking out blues music in Chicago's black communities, but before long some of these fans actually started performing it, sitting in with the veterans who were playing in local clubs, and in some instances even forming their own bands. One of the earliest and most notable of these was harmonica player and singer Paul Butterfield, whose recordings would influence and empower generations of like-minded blues fans and musicians who followed. Butterfield's blues was essentially a revved-up version of the music that had dominated Chicago's blues clubs a generation earlier—music that was by then passé for many young black fans, but exciting and new to their white counterparts. The rock 'n' roll dynamics added to the blues mix by Butterfield and those of his ilk created just the sound to draw in a new generation of blues fans, and for the first time the music moved out of the ghetto and into rock clubs and college auditoriums.

At the same time, large numbers of journeyman black blues players continued to work mainly in their own neighborhoods in Chicago. Some of them retained small but loyal local followings there, while others—guitarists Buddy Guy and Otis Rush, and harp players Junior Wells and James Cotton among them—were able to follow Muddy and Wolf across the racial divide and find considerable success playing colleges, rock clubs, and concert halls both across the United States and abroad. However, the 1960s and 1970s were slow times for blues in general, as all but a handful of "name" acts gradually faded from the spotlight, and retreated either to the neighborhood clubs on the south and west sides of the city or retired from performing altogether. The veteran acts that continued to work locally into the 1970s found themselves incorporating more R&B, soul, and even disco elements into their music in efforts to reach a younger black audience, and the few new artists to come on the scene were influenced as much by Motown and Stax as they were by the now-defunct Chess and Vee-Jay.

By the end of the 1970s a modest Chicago Blues revival was beginning to gather momentum, supported mainly by the younger white fans. Several blues clubs catering to this audience had opened on the north side of city, far from the south and west side ghettos, and those old-timers who were still willing and able began performing the old songs for a new audience. These clubs created opportunities for many of the younger blues acts as well, and local blues record labels like Delmark and Alligator were providing recordings of young acts and veterans alike to the growing fan base. In 1983 the city of Chicago put its official stamp of approval on the burgeoning blues revival by organizing the first annual Chicago

Blues Festival. Sadly, many of the icons from the heyday of Chicago Blues in the 1950s were gone—Little Walter had died in 1968, Jimmy Reed and Howlin' Wolf both died in the mid-1970s, and Muddy passed away just weeks before the first festival—but there was still plenty of local talent left to spotlight in front of the large festival audience. This annual festival has grown into the largest blues festival and, in fact, the largest free music festival of any kind, in the world, providing much needed exposure for obscure local talent as well as showcasing the biggest names in blues, drawing annual audiences in the hundreds of thousands from around the world.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Chicago Blues Festival, along with non-Chicago occurrences such as the huge crossover success of Robert Cray and the ascendancy to superstar status of blues-rock guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, combined to help draw attention to Chicago's importance as a center of the blues universe, in the process giving the local scene a shot in the arm and bringing the music closer to the mainstream. Blues was still being played in a few south and west side clubs, but as these neighborhoods became more dangerous and the local blues fans who inhabited them grew older, fewer were willing to venture out for a night of live music. Consequently, there were fewer venues for live blues, fewer local acts to play them, and fewer reasons for young African Americans interested in music to even consider playing any form of blues. At the same time the number of blues venues outside the traditional south and west side homes of the music continued to increase, providing opportunities for those few Chicago blues artists who chose to follow their predecessors down the traditional path. Consequently, many of the blues artists who live and learned their craft on Chicago's south and west sides no longer actually play there—their professional musical activities are confined to the north side “tourist clubs” and work on the road.

The days of blues “hit records” ended by the late 1960s, and consequently the big labels long ago abandoned the Chicago Blues scene. But into the 1990s, locals like Delmark and Alligator continued a regular schedule of releases, Delmark in particular scouring the Chicago scene for new and unrecorded blues talent. And much like the “Bluebird sound” of fifty years earlier, an “Alligator sound” became an influential cornerstone of the Chicago Blues sound—hard-driving beats, searing guitar work, and high energy being the order of the day, both on records and in clubs, although by the 1980s an increasing percentage of Alligator artists were not actually Chicago based.

The current Chicago Blues scene may be seen as being polarized into two segments: the larger tourist blues scene, with almost a dozen clubs in the

downtown and near-north side tourist areas offering live blues full time, featuring the best full-time local talent the city has to offer, such as Magic Slim and the Teardrops, Son Seals, Koko Taylor, and others mixed in with national touring acts; and the small, almost off-the-radar local blues scene in the ghetto clubs of the south and west sides. This handful of small clubs and taverns features almost exclusively neighborhood, part-time performers, who seldom venture into the north side and downtown tourist clubs. Even though the music played by these last local holdouts may at times sound only loosely related to that of their musical forebears, in many ways it is closer in spirit—and certainly closer in lineage—than the music played to large audiences just a few miles away. It's in the small handful of south and west side venues that the blues of Chicago is still a vehicle for dialogue between the blues player and his immediate audience, as it has been since the music first arrived in Chicago. In the early years of the twenty-first century, Chicago Blues in all its various forms and fashions continues to be heard in clubs and concert halls across the city and around the world. Both as a reminiscence of days and styles gone by, and as a living, breathing tradition, Chicago Blues continues to offer musical and personal inspiration for music fans around the world.

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CHIEF/PROFILE/AGE

Series of related Chicago blues labels of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Their owner, Mel London (1932–1975), began in the business as a songwriter and an owner of a music publishing company (Melva), which provided an entrée into the operation of record labels. In its years of operation—from 1957 to 1960—Chief put out nearly forty releases, producing some of the best blues artists that Chicago had to offer: Elmore James, Junior Wells, G. L. Crockett (as Davey Crockett), Magic Sam, Otis Rush, Earl Hooker, and Lillian Offitt. The label also issued a few vocal

groups and a rock 'n' roll artist, Tobin Matthews (who hit with "Ruby Duby Du"). Profile, in its much shorter history from 1960 to 1961, released fifteen records, notably records by Junior Wells, the imprint's only blues artist (his "Little By Little" was a national hit in 1960). Profile is better appreciated by followers of country and rockabilly for its output by Mickey Hawks, Bobby Dean, and Hayden Thompson. Age, with about twenty-five releases from 1961 to 1963, was notable for its output by Ricky Allen, A. C. Reed, Big Moose Walker, and Earl Hooker. London achieved a national hit on Age with Allen's "Cut You A-Loose" (1963). After Age collapsed, London remained in the record business producing and releasing records on Paul Glass's USA label. In the 1970s, there were a handful of releases on his All Points, Mel, and Mel-Lon imprints, but most were reissues of Chief/Profile/Age recordings.

London was a songwriter of some note, having written "Cut You A-Loose," "Messing with the Kid," and "Little by Little" (for Junior Wells), "The Twelve Year Old Boy" (for Elmore James), and "Will My Man Be Home Tonight" (for Lillian Offitt). After the collapse of his record business, London worked as a clerk and driver for United Record Distributors.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

CHITLIN CIRCUIT

Chitterling, chitling, chitlin—small intestines of pigs trimmed of fat, scrupulously cleaned, and either boiled or fried—the most distinctive and classic example of Southern African American soul cooking—was also the name for the circuit of small venues in the postwar era South that featured live R&B music. While today "Chitlin circuit" is used to describe a variety of locations (biker bars, comedy clubs, and small theaters dedicated to African American productions), the original usage referred specifically to small southern clubs, night spots, cafes, resorts, warehouses, dance halls, and roadside joints.

For a decade after World War II (until the mid-1950s), American popular music was almost as segregated as southern lunch counters. Black performers singing in black styles for a black audience were not played on white radio stations and did not appear on television. But there was, especially in the Deep South,

a lively African American, self-contained rhythm and blues culture. The social system of segregation in the South generated opportunities for African Americans engaged in the business of black music, enabling, Nelson George says, "blacks to form businesses and profit from a product their own people created."

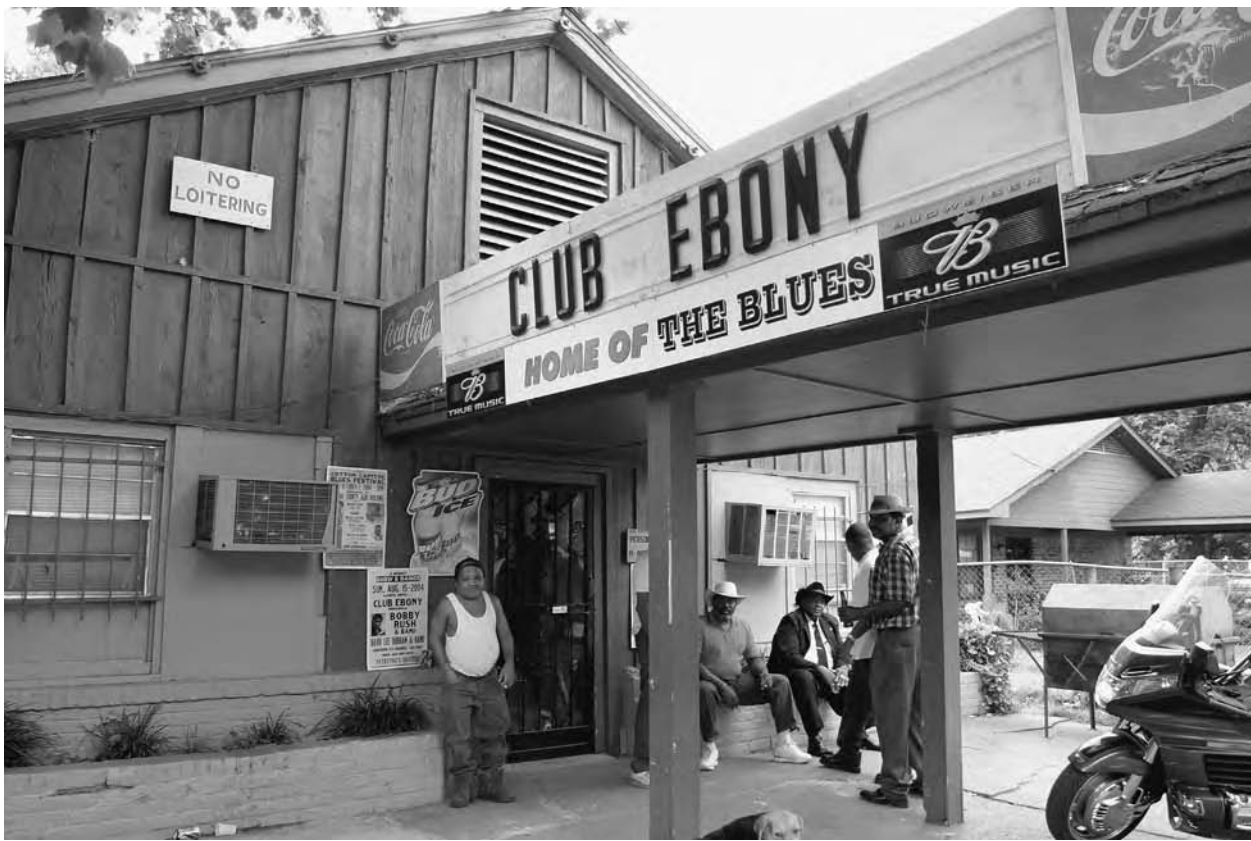
Legendary Birmingham, Alabama, radio personality Shelley "The Playboy" Stewart remembers that chitlin circuit venues were black owned and often managed by a man and wife. There was always a shot-house near by, he says, always a hotel or rooming place. Food was served, and on one special day of the week—usually Friday, Saturday, or Sunday—chitlins.

Venues like the Night Life Club, Stardust, Elk's Rest Club, Grand Terrace Ballroom, and Madison Night Spot provided the opportunity for local residents to see and hear, in the only available manner, African American performers who were national celebrities in black America. In addition, by all accounts the musical culture of the period was always more integrated than the existing laws permitted. White adults sneaked into the clubs, and white teens set up listening posts outside.

Charles Sawyer suggests that a "self-sustaining career" for a black musician performing black music for a black audience during this period required personal appearances to give the artist "long-term exposure to audiences who dependably patronized his music." The fact that the careers of R&B performers of the period were constricted by a "built-in ceiling" that was, at the time, "beamed at the lower economic strata of black American society" made personal appearances for blacks even more important than for white performers, who could be heard on the radio and seen on television.

Evelyn Johnson, who established the Buffalo Booking Agency in Houston in association with Don D. Robey's Peacock Records, believes the term "chitlin circuit" was coined by "the Eastern establishment" to describe *her* operation—a circuit of small clubs, dance halls, and juke joints designed to get Peacock acts personal appearances before a wider audience and create a demand for Peacock Records in a wider market.

Eventually, Buffalo Booking put together as many as three hundred forty one-nighters a year for popular performers (Johnny Ace in 1954 and B. B. King in 1956). The chitlin circuit was "a ruthless pacemaker," Sawyer says. "Successive one-night stands were often eight hundred miles apart. Days might pass before the pace allowed a night's rest in a hotel: play five hours, dismantle the bandstand, load the bus, ride fifteen hours on the nod, set up the bandstand, play five hours, dismantle the bandstand, and so on." B. B. King remembers Johnson describing these long drives



Club Ebony, Indianola, Mississippi. This blues club was a famed stop on the chitlin circuit. Pictured here in 2004, the club dates back to the mid-1940s. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

as “just right up the street.” The pace of road performances was driven by venue requirements, as Johnson recalls. “You could only get Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in the small towns.”

The humiliation and inconvenience of Jim Crow segregation laws and practices were hard on black musicians traveling as a group through the postwar Deep South. Overnight accommodations were limited, and laws regulating food service and bathroom facilities wore people down on a daily basis. (King learned to negotiate for food before filling the 150-gallon gas tank on his bus.) The occasional booking at the Apollo, Regal, and Howard theaters in the urban northeast or Billy Berg’s 5-4 Ballroom in Los Angeles were a heavenly reprieve for the musicians, making those accommodations different enough to be outside of what was commonly called the chitlin circuit.

JAMES M. SALEM

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CHRISTIAN, CHARLIE

b. 29 July 1916; Dallas, TX

d. 2 March 1942; New York, NY

Guitarist. One of the twentieth century’s most enduring and influential guitar innovators, Christian died of tuberculosis at age twenty-five, having created a quantum leap in sonic sensibilities in his short and seminal career. The original icon of the electric guitar began his career as a pianist in Oklahoma before becoming a student in 1937 of amplified guitar inventor Eddie Durham. Christian was discovered by talent scout John Hammond and joined the Benny Goodman Sextet in 1939 where he introduced an exciting new role and sound for jazz guitar. Christian experimented with even more adventurous jazz giants, such as Thelonious Monk and Dizzy Gillespie, in jam

sessions, but his death prevented the potential of those collaborations from being fully explored.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

CHRISTIAN, JOHNNY “LITTLE”

b. 19 August 1936; Cleveland, MS

d. 27 January 1993; Chicago, IL

Christian arrived in Chicago in 1951 as a gospel singer, and had a term with the Highway QCs from 1957 to 1961. He then learned bass guitar, and through the 1960s he played behind Otis Rush and Jimmy Dawkins. From the 1970s until his death, he led his own bands, recording several small-label singles and two CDs for the Big Boy label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: Larkin

CHUDD, LEWIS ROBERT “LEW”

b. 1 July 1911; Toronto, Canada

d. 15 June 1998; Los Angeles, CA

Chudd founded Imperial Records in 1946 in Los Angeles, California. Initially, the label concentrated on local Spanish-language artists but soon expanded into country and western and rhythm and blues. In 1949, Chudd hired bandleader Dave Bartholomew as a talent scout and producer. Bartholomew focused on the growing rhythm and blues scene in New Orleans and recorded a local pianist, Fats Domino. Domino was the most important artist on Imperial and had an impressive string of hits that appeared on both the pop and rhythm and blues charts from 1950 until 1963. Domino's band, led by Bartholomew, featured many musicians who would also back up other artists such as Little Richard who came to New Orleans to record. The band at one time or another consisted of bassist Frank Fields, drummer Earl Palmer, and saxophonists Clarence Ford, Lee Allen, and Alvin “Red” Tyler.

Other R&B and blues artists who recorded for Imperial were T-Bone Walker, Smiley Lewis, Lil' Son Jackson, Slim Harpo, Roy Brown, Earl King,

Snooks Eaglin, Tommy Ridgley, Bobby Mitchell, Sugarboy Crawford, Big Jay McNeely, Joe Turner, Archibald, Jewel King, and Chuck and Chick Carbo, who were members of the Spiders. In 1958, Imperial was one of the first labels to issue stereo albums. Some of the most popular songs in the Imperial catalogue were “The Fat Man,” “Ain't That a Shame,” and “I Hear You Knockin'.” In 1961, Lew Chudd bought the Aladdin Records catalog and reissued many of the Aladdin masters on Imperial. In 1963, Chudd purchased the Minit label of New Orleans. In 1964, he sold Imperial to Liberty Records.

TOM MORGAN

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CHURCH, EUGENE

b. 23 January 1938; St. Louis, MO

d. 16 April 1993; Los Angeles, CA

R&B vocalist. Recorded with Jesse Belvin as the Cliques for Modern, then solo for Specialty, Class (hits with “Pretty Girls Everywhere” and “Miami”), Rendezvous, King (hit with “Mind Your Own Business”), and Liberty. Church retired from music but returned in 1985, recording for his own Church and Slick labels.

RAY ASTBURY

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See also Belvin, Jesse

CINCINNATI

While the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, does not have an indigenous blues style, it is notable for a large degree of blues activity since the 1920s. Cincinnati likely does not possess its own particular blues style because, being neither a southern city where African American slaves were originally transplanted from Africa nor an urban area where migrants from one particular section of the South relocated (as with the Mississippi to Chicago migration), it did not draw on one particular blues style and transform it in the urban setting. Nonetheless, Ohio River traffic as well as the B&O, C&O, and Cincinnati Southern railroads brought African Americans, including slaves seeking to escape

from slave states like neighboring Kentucky to a free state, into the community in abundance.

The major African American community where blues was performed in the 1920s was the West End, where individual blues performers, jug bands, and larger units played on streets such as Court, Cutter, George, or Sixth, or at joints and clubs such as Mom's, the Bucket of Blood, or, later, the Cotton Club. The patriarch of the scene was Sam Jones, "Stovepipe No. 1," a songster whose recordings from 1924 to 1930 include folk songs, spirituals, blues, and hokum in solo and jug and string band group settings. Those recordings include a variety of references to Cincinnati landmarks, as do the recordings of Bob Coleman and Walter Coleman. Those two were likely brothers who recorded under various pseudonyms—Kid Cole, Sweet Papa Tadpole, Walter Cole, and Kid Coley among them, as well as with the Cincinnati Jug Band—between the years 1928 and 1936. Their recordings reflect at times a Memphis jug band-type sensibility and, especially in the Walter Coleman recordings, a lilting, southeastern blues ragtime influence. Particularly Walter's "Going to Cincinnati" paints a picture of a raucous community, one that also was purportedly the birthplace of Mamie Smith, hosted performers such as Walter Davis, Jesse James, Clara Burston, and Leroy Carr, and was mentioned in songs such as Ivy Smith's "Cincinnati Southern Blues."

While a number of these performers, and other unrecorded artists such as "Baby Ruth," continued performing on the streets as late as the 1960s, by August 1944, when Syd Nathan's King Records incorporated the brash new rhythm and blues of the coming postwar era, major and soon-to-be-major artists such as Lonnie Johnson, Wynonie Harris, Roy Brown, Tiny Bradshaw, and Freddy King were being drawn to the city to record for what would become the major independent R&B label in the country, backed by such local session men as Philip Paul, Ed Conley, and Ray Felder. H-Bomb Ferguson, who had recorded earlier for such labels as Derby and Savoy, eventually moved to Cincinnati and recorded for King, remaining in the city and recording and performing to this day.

Other longtime residents who have been on the scene since the 1920s and 1930s, such as James Mays, Pigeon Jarrett, and Big Joe Duskin, were "rediscovered" in the 1970s and have had successful performance and/or recording careers. The major contemporary blues performer was Albert Washington, whose blues, gospel, and soul recordings for Fraternity, Jewel, Eastbound, and other labels marked him as a major talent. Today the Cincinnati scene is still active, with a Greater Cincinnati Blues Society that assists in promoting the interests of Cincinnati blues and its performers.

STEVEN C. TRACY

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Albert Washington. *Blues and Soul Man* (1999, Ace 727).
Cincinnati Blues (2001, Catfish 186).
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C.J.

Record label (Chicago, Illinois, 1956–1985). C.J. Records was owned by Carl Jones (1913–1985) and was essentially a boutique operation run from his home. He was a musician (banjo and trumpet) in the 1930s, and in 1945 he recorded two sides for Mercury. In 1956 Jones founded the C.J. label, eventually followed by subsidiary imprints Colt and Firma. Although he recorded some country and some gospel, the bulk of his output was in the blues field, having recorded Earl Hooker, Mack Simmons, Hound Dog Taylor, Homesick James, Betty Everett, and Detroit Junior. Jones's record company had no distribution during its last two decades of existence. His nine-to-five job was in the liquor distribution business and Sundays he worked as a bartender at the famed South Side blues bar, Theresa's.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

CLAPTON, ERIC

b. 30 March 1945; Ripley, Surrey, United Kingdom

Aka Eric Patrick Clapp. Clapton was born to Patricia Molly Clapton and Edward Fryer and raised by Patricia's mother and stepfather, Jack and Rose Clapp. At age sixteen he enrolled at the Kingston College of Art where he was dismissed after one year. His 1979 marriage to Pattie Boyd Harrison ended in divorce in 1988; in 2002 he married Melia McEnery. Clapton's children include three daughters, Ruth Patricia (b. January 1985), Julie Rose (b. June 2001), and Ella Mae (Born January 2003), and a son, Conor (deceased—b. August 1986).

Clapton's career has taken many directions, yet he never forgets the blues, the music that inspired him in his youth. He has recorded many traditional blues songs and written his own as well. He offers an intense, yet fluid guitar style, which originated as he emulated the works of his heroes Robert Johnson, Freddie King, and others. Today, Clapton inspires younger generations, serving as a connection between traditional blues and people who have not been exposed to it.

Introduced to rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s, Clapton soon discovered and became obsessed with the blues. The year 1963 brought his first band, the Roosters, and they covered songs by Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and others. After their breakup and a brief stint with another band, he joined the Yardbirds, whose manager nicknamed Clapton "Slowhand," in tribute to his lightning speed solos. By May 1964, his reputation brought him work as a session musician on recordings by blues pianist Otis Spann. Soon the Yardbirds shifted from traditional blues-based songs toward a pop sound, something the soon departing Clapton disagreed with intensely.

In 1965 John Mayall asked Clapton to join the Bluesbreakers and soon the phrase "Clapton is God" began appearing on London's subway walls. When recording, Clapton insisted on turning his amplifier up to its maximum volume to retain the distortion and sustain of live performances. The resulting album, *John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton*, remains a classic, with Clapton's confident, fat-toned guitar jumping out at the listener. He left the band, becoming part of Cream before the album was released. Cream recorded several blues songs, including Robert Johnson's "Cross Road Blues," which Clapton renamed "Crossroads." Strong personalities and the stress of constant work doomed Cream. Blind Faith was his next band, formed in 1969 with Steve Winwood; they broke up after one album and tour.

After touring with Delaney and Bonnie and Friends, he recorded *Eric Clapton*, his first solo album. A departure from his previous work, he was now writing and singing his own songs, including "Blues Power." While working on this project he contributed his guitar playing to *The London Howling Wolf Sessions*. Clapton's next band, Derek and the Dominos, was joined in the studio by Duane Allman of the Allman Brothers Band. *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* was a statement of Clapton's love for George Harrison's wife Pattie. The album included Clapton's "Bell Bottom Blues," and a cover of "Key to the Highway." In 1971 the group disbanded while recording their second album, with drug use rumored to be a factor.

After struggling with heroin addiction for nearly three years, Clapton reappeared in 1974, releasing several albums over the next decade or so. While each contained some blues, he explored other musical styles, downplaying his role as guitar deity. After recovering from alcohol addiction in the early 1980s, a strong appearance at Live Aid in 1985 signaled a return to form. In 1987 Clapton began a series of annual concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, including nights of blues-only performances. Album highlights of the 1980s included his career-spanning *Crossroads* and *Journeyman*, which included a collaboration with Robert Cray.

The deaths of Stevie Ray Vaughn and then of his son just months afterward in 1991 were tragic for Clapton. He resumed his career with the *Rush* soundtrack, which included a ballad written for his son, "Tears in Heaven," a song that was also featured in his MTV Unplugged appearance and the subsequent album that won six Grammy Awards. *From The Cradle* (1994) consisted of blues covers, recorded live in the studio, with minimal overdubs. The album won a Grammy in 1995 for Best Traditional Blues Album. *Riding with the King* (2000), recorded with B. B. King, covered four of King's songs, as well as songs by Big Bill Broonzy and Maceo Merriweather.

By recording and performing the blues, and by discussing the importance of the blues and its original performers, Clapton keeps the music in the public eye, helping to create new generations of blues fans.

JOHN J. THOMAS

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Discography

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CLARK, "BIG" SAM

CLARK, "BIG" SAM

b. 1 July 1916; Glover, MS

d. 6 August 1981; Little Rock, AR

Memphis pianist remembered in part for his persistence in securing club performances. In addition to a contribution to the 1971 Adelphi LP anthology *Memphis Blues Again*, he released several singles and albums on his Big Sam label for sale in the United States and Europe.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

CLARK, DAVE

b. 6 March 1909; Jackson, TN

d. 22 July 1995; Madison, MS

Songwriter, musician, and pioneering record promoter. Clark is considered the first African American record promoter and one of the earliest American record promoters of any race. His methods and philosophies for getting records on the radio, which included clever strategies, endless travel to radio stations throughout the United States, and relationships with small record stores and secondary radio markets, all continue to serve as the model for record promotion of undiscovered musicians today. Clark also composed more than sixty songs and cowrote "Why I Sing the Blues" (1969) and "Chains and Things" (1970) with B. B. King.

Clark grew up primarily in Chicago, where he studied violin and piano as a child and performed with traveling minstrel shows. Clark graduated from Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, in 1934 and the Julliard Conservatory of Music in 1939. Between his studies at Lane and Julliard, Clark began writing a jazz column for *Downbeat* magazine called "Swing Row Is My Beat" and worked as a song plugger, selling sheet music—including his own compositions—to local bands.

In the 1930s Clark served as an advance man, traveling to cities before bands performed in an effort to get records on local jukeboxes and to place press releases in black newspapers—the primary methods of promoting black artists at that time—for artists such as Billie Holiday, Lionel Hampton, and Louis

Armstrong. Clark was hired as a record promotion consultant for Decca in 1938, a time when very few radio stations were willing to play music by black artists or even to allow entry of a black artist or record promoter into a radio station. Clark went to great lengths to get his first assignment from Decca on the air, Jimmie Lunceford's single "St. Paul's Walking Through Heaven with You," ultimately charading as a chauffeur to get past security at WNEW, a New York radio station. Clark's scheme was successful because the single was played on air that evening, and Clark's career as a radio promoter was launched.

Clark worked as a freelance record promoter for Chess, Aladdin, Apollo, and United before securing a series of permanent promotion positions. Clark served as promotion director at Duke/Peacock (1954–1971), where he is largely responsible for the career launches of Bobby Bland, Junior Parker, O. V. Wright, the Original Five Blind Boys, and the Dixie Hummingbirds. Clark moved to Stax Records (1971–1975) to act as national promotion manager, and there he represented such artists as Little Milton and the Staple Singers before transferring to TK (1976–1980), where he promoted Betty Wright and KC and the Sunshine Band among many others. In 1980 Clark transferred to Malaco Records, where he served as senior vice president up until his death. There he represented such artists as Johnnie Taylor, Bobby Bland, Denise LaSalle, and Z. Z. Hill, whose 1982 blues album, *Down Home*, was a major success. Throughout his career Clark also promoted African American musicians Duke Ellington, Dinah Washington, Nat King Cole, Cab Calloway, B. B. King, T-Bone Walker, Junior Parker, Sam Cooke, Aretha Franklin, Quincy Jones, Stevie Wonder, Mahalia Jackson, Inez Andrew, the Sensational Nightingales, and the Mighty Clouds of Joy. Clark served as music consultant for several movies, including *The Color Purple*, also making a cameo appearance in the film. Clark was inducted into the Chicago Music Hall of Fame in 1981 and also received a Living Legend Award in 1982.

ERIN STAPLETON-CORCORAN

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CLARK, DEE

b. Delecta Clark, 7 November 1938; Blytheville, AR
d. 7 December 1990; Toccoa, GA

Chicago R&B singer popular in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Clark had a wonderfully impassioned tenor voice that got him a spate of rock 'n' roll hits in the late 1950s and a lesser body of soul work in the 1960s. Clark first recorded as one of the Hambone Kids in 1952, recording "Hambone," and then waxed some classic doo-wop with the Kool Gents vocal group for Vee-Jay. He went solo in 1958, scoring for Vee-Jay such hits as "Nobody But You" "Just Keep It Up," "Hey Little Girl" (which employed the "Bo Diddley" beat), and "Raindrops." He also occasionally recorded blues, notably "Blues Get Off of My Shoulder," although his high tenor voice was less than suitable for the idiom. After 1963, Clark continued on Chicago-based Constellation with a spate of moderate R&B hits, namely, "Crossfire Time," "Heartbreak," and "TCB." His career essentially died after Constellation closed shop in 1966. In the United Kingdom he got a sizable hit in 1975 with "Ride a Wild Horse." In the United States, the record failed to chart.

ROBERT PRUTER

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CLARK, W. C.

b. Wesley Curley Clark, 16 November 1939;
Austin, TX

Guitarist, singer. "The Godfather of the Austin Scene" played behind touring R&B stars in his early teens as a member of Blues Boy Hubbard and the Jets and also toured with soul man Joe Tex at an early age. When Clark's group Southern Feeling, featuring singer Angela Strehli, dissolved he entered semi-retirement and took a job as a mechanic. But he was recruited by Stevie Ray Vaughan for the short-lived Triple Threat Revue, which also included vocalist Lou Ann Barton. Clark formed his own band in the aftermath of the demise of the Triple Threat Revue and began to tour steadily, releasing three albums, including the W. C. Handy Award winner *Texas Soul* on Black Top Records, after his 1986 self-released solo debut *Something for Everybody*.

Clark was honored in 1989 by his peers, including the Vaughan brothers, Barton, Strehli, Kim Wilson,

and others, with a special program on the *Austin City Limits* television series that celebrated his fiftieth birthday. In 1997 Clark was involved in a tragic accident when his tour van was returning from a series of Midwest dates and crashed near Dallas, killing his fiancée and drummer. Clark, who won another W. C. Handy Award, this time for Artist Most Deserving of Wider Recognition, in 1998, regrouped and began work on his breakthrough recording, "From Austin with Soul." The 2001 release of the soul-drenched album, produced by fellow Austinite Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff, received five W. C. Handy Award nominations in 2003 with "Let It Rain" winning the Song of the Year category.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)**CLARKE, WILLIAM**

b. 29 March 1951; Inglewood, CA
d. 3 November 1996; Los Angeles, CA

Singer, harpist, songwriter. Clarke coaxed a gargantuan sound, at once swinging and intense, from his chromatic harp, becoming one of the key figures in modern West Coast blues while achieving an international reputation. And he did it in his own way and without much outside assistance. He was hanging out in Watts blues clubs when he met and befriended Chicago harmonica exiles Shakey Jake Harris and George "Harmonica" Smith. Their influence and encouragement put him on the path to a blues career but for the first twenty years he worked full time as a machinist to support his family, playing music only on weekends.

Clarke released three self-financed albums, *Hittin' Heavy* in 1978, *Blues from Los Angeles County* in 1980, and *Can't You Hear Me Calling* in 1983 before *Tip of the Top*, a 1987 tribute to Smith on the small Satch Records label got him a W. C. Handy nomination. Clarke finally quit his day job, released the live *Rockin' the Boat* in 1988, and signed with Alligator Records.

Clarke retained his do-it-yourself approach with Alligator, producing the recording sessions himself in California and composing almost all of the material for the albums *Blowin' Like Hell*, *Serious Intentions*, and *Groove Time*. Clarke's songwriting was

CLARKE, WILLIAM

twice rewarded with W. C. Handy awards in the Best Song category, in 1991 for “Must Be Jelly” and in 1997 for “Fishing Blues.” He collapsed on stage from congestive heart failure in the spring of 1996 and died six months later. He received three posthumous W. C. Handy Awards, adding Best Contemporary Album, for the jazz-inflected “The Hard Way,” and an instrumental award to his Best Song win.

MICHAEL POINT

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Aldin, Mary Katherine. “William Clarke” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 131 (January/February 1997): 64.

Discography: AMG

CLASS

Record label (California, 1951–1964). Owners: Leon T. Rene (b. February 6, 1902, Covington, LA; d. May 30, 1982, Los Angeles, CA), Googie Rene (b. Raphael Rene, March 30, 1927; Los Angeles, CA). This Los Angeles, California–based label’s artists include Jesse Belvin, Bob & Earl (Bobby Day and Earl Nelson) (“Chains of Love,” cover of the Big Joe Turner original), Eugene Church (“Pretty Girls Everywhere” with the Fellows), Paul Clifton, Bobby Day (“Little Bitty Pretty One,” “Over and Over,” “Rockin’ Robin”), Jimmy Grissom, Adolph Jacobs, Oscar McLollie (“Hey Girl, Hey Boy” with Jeanette Baker, and “The Honey Jump”), Googie Rene, and Johnny “Guitar” Watson.

ROBERT EAGLE

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Dawson, Jim. CD notes for *The Class & Rendezvous Story* (1993, ACE [UK] CDCHD 461).

Discography: McGrath

CLASSICS

French CD label established in 1990 by Gilles Petard to reissue systematically classic jazz performances whose European copyrights had expired. Artists overlapping jazz and blues were generally left to Document but the main series has included complete chronological reissues of Ethel Waters, Charles Brown, and Wynonie Harris. In 2001 a parallel 5000

series was launched to apply the same approach to artists loosely categorizable under rhythm and blues and not already started in the main series. Featured artists have included Marion Abernathy, Buster Bennett, Roy Brown, Ruth Brown, Muddy Waters, Johnny Otis, Sunnyland Slim, and Andrew Tibbs, as well as many jump band and other instrumental performances. The catalog includes much material never previously reissued.

HOWARD RYE

CLAY, FRANCIS

b. 15 November 1923; Rock Island, IL

Francis Clay was an accomplished jazz drummer before joining Muddy Waters’s band and becoming a popular blues drummer. He had played in church and at circuses, behind vaudeville and with country and western groups, and could do bird and animal imitations, but he couldn’t immediately grasp the straight blues beat. At his first gig with Waters, Muddy took the sticks and demonstrated. It was the only lesson Clay needed. He stayed with Muddy well into the 1960s, sometimes alternating the position with drummer Willie Smith. In 1967, he helped found the James Cotton band, and remained associated with Cotton for several years.

Prior to playing with Waters, Clay had been living in New York and touring with former Chicago jazz saxophonist Gene Ammons, and also with organist Jack McDuff. After joining Muddy around 1957, Clay learned quickly, accompanying Waters on the classics “She’s Nineteen Years Old” and “Tiger in Your Tank.” Clay pushed the envelope for blues drumming at Muddy’s first Newport Festival appearance in 1960, drawing on his jazz background for a strong driving rhythm. Soon after, when English musicians visited Muddy in Chicago, Clay taught drummer Graham Burbridge to play triplets, knowledge which helped push the British musicians from skiffle into rock ’n’ roll. Clay created a distinctly modern blues beat that did not conflict with the genre’s classic root. He ultimately resided in San Francisco, where he worked some with Mark Naftalin, of the Butterfield Blues Band, and also composed scores for large combos that included horns, violin, and cello.

ROBERT GORDON

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Discography: AMG

Muddy Waters Live at Newport (1960, Chess).
Mark Naftalin's Blue Monday Party, Vol. 1 (1981, Winner Video 112).

CLAY, OTIS

b. 11 February 1942; Waxhaw, MS

A Chicago hard-soul singer who achieved his greatest popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, Clay began his singing career in the church, and served fifteen years in gospel groups, most notably with the Pilgrim Harmonizers (1962), the Gospel Songbirds (1963), and the Sensational Nightingales (1964–1965). In 1965, Clay left the gospel field to join George Leaner's One-derful label, coming out with such heavily gospelized soul hits as “I'm Satisfied,” “I Testify,” and “That's How It Is,” all of which had great appeal for the African American blues audience.

When Leaner closed One-derful in 1968, Clay moved to Atlantic Record's Cotillion subsidiary, getting a national hit with a remake of the Sir Douglas Quintet's “She's About a Mover” (1968). From 1971 to 1974, Clay recorded in Memphis with Willie Mitchell's Hi label, and that fruitful collaboration produced two albums and such notable hits as “Trying to Live My Life Without You” and “If I Could Reach Out.” In the late 1970s he recorded with lesser success on a variety of small labels, as soul music went into decline. At the same time, however, Clay redirected his career to the international market and to the blues audience and was soon playing blues festivals across the United States, in Europe, and Japan. In Japan, he recorded two of his most notable albums, *Live!* (1978) and *Live Again* (1984). Clay recorded a hard-soul album and a gospel album for Bullseye in the early 1990s.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

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CLAYTON, PETER JOE “DOCTOR”

b. 19 April 1898; GA

d. 7 January 1947; Chicago, IL

Peter Joe Clayton was born April 19, 1898, in Georgia, by most reports, moving to St. Louis with

his parents. His last name is sometimes shown as “Cleighton.” In St. Louis he married and had four children, was employed as a factory worker, and started his singing career. In 1937 tragedy struck when a fire burned down his house, killing his wife and children. He began drinking and living recklessly, a pattern that continued throughout his life. He moved to Chicago with partner Robert Lockwood to pursue his musical career.

He first recorded for Bluebird in 1935. Clayton worked strictly as a vocalist; his initial recordings show him employing a distinctive falsetto technique, later refined into a powerful, swooping style. He was an unparalleled songwriter, writing mostly original material with a rare wit, intelligence, and social awareness.

Between 1941 and 1942 he recorded four sessions for Bluebird and Decca. This period included many of his most memorable sides, including “Pearl Harbor Blues” (cut three months after the attack) and some that have become blues classics like “Hold That Train Conductor” and “Gotta Find My Baby.”

He cut two more sessions in 1946. These sessions included the original versions of oft-covered songs such as “Root Doctor,” “Angels in Harlem,” and “I Need My Baby.” Clayton's records were steady sellers and he regularly appeared at Chicago clubs and toured in a bus with his likeness on the side. Attesting to this popularity was Sunnyland Slim who recorded as “Doctor Clayton's Buddy” on his debut 1947 sessions and Willie Long Time Smith who in 1947 recorded the tribute, “My Buddy Doctor Clayton.” Clayton died on January 7, 1947, in Chicago, of pulmonary tuberculosis.

JEFF HARRIS

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP**Selected Recordings in Reissue**

Doctor Clayton & His Buddies: Complete Recorded Works—1946–47 (1994, Old Tramp OTCD-005).

Doctor Clayton: Complete Recorded Works 1935–42 (1994, Document DOCD-5179).

See also Bluebird; Chicago; Decca; Lockwood, Robert Jr.; St. Louis, MO

CLAYTON, WILLIE

CLAYTON, WILLIE

b. 29 March 1955; Indianola, MS

Specializes in piercing ballads and gritty narratives. His most acclaimed releases were issued on Johnny Vincent's Ace label in the 1990s. Clayton's 2002 *Last Man Standing* emphatically proved the one-time Hi artist could still wail, moan, and soar with flair, while bridging the gap between blues and soul.

RON WYNN

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AMG (Bill Dahl)
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Discography: AMG

CLEARWATER, EDDY

b. Edward Harrington, 10 January 1935; Macon, MS

Blues guitarist, singer, songwriter, a flamboyant performer who describes his own music as "rock-a-blues"—a mixture of basic rock with West Side blues. Among his influences are Magic Sam, Luther Allison, Freddy King, Otis Rush, and Buddy Guy, as well as Chuck Berry and even Jimi Hendrix. Raised in Mississippi, Eddy Clearwater is among the very few blues artists to have ancestors who were of both African American and (his grandmother) Cherokee descent; he sometimes appeared on stage wearing a full traditional Indian headdress and was nicknamed "The Chief."

At age thirteen, the young Eddy Harrington moved with his family to Birmingham, Alabama, and with the blessings of his uncle Reverend Houston H. Harrington, Eddy learned to play guitar. A left-handed musician, Eddy Clearwater nonetheless plays on a normal right-handed electric guitar turned upside down on the left side, without changing the strings around.

At only fifteen, he began playing guitar with various formations around Chicago, sometimes under the name "Guitar Eddy" or "Clear Waters and His Orchestra" (as a reference to Muddy Waters, whom he admired). From 1958 until 1969, Eddy Clearwater occasionally recorded for independent labels and under various pseudonyms (sometimes as a sideman) some eighteen singles. In the early 1970s, Eddy Clearwater temporarily abandoned music for a job at the Harmony guitar factory, where he assembled guitar

bodies; but he soon returned to the stage, since he could offer different kinds of shows: Chicago blues, rockabilly, and even country.

After more than twenty years of performing in nightclubs and a successful European tour with Buddy Guy and Junior Wells in the mid-1970s, Eddy Clearwater's fame really began from 1977 with the release of his first LP, *Black Night*, recorded in Chicago but appearing on a French label, MCM. Some of his most highly acclaimed albums appeared on independent, European labels; his *Blues Hang Out* (1989) was recorded in a Paris studio in 1989. Recognition really came in the 1980s; he toured all over the world, including West Africa in 1987. After a half-century career and almost twenty albums, the flamboyant Eddy Clearwater is still performing.

YVES LABERGE

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Moon, D. Thomas. "Eddy Clearwater: It's a Hard Way to Make an Easy Living." *Living Blues* no. 127 (May/June 1996): 14–27.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

From 1958 to 1969, about eighteen singles on 45-rpm records, on various independent labels: Atomic-H, Coed, Lucky Four, Lasalle, Federal, and USA. From 1977, many LPs on various labels: MCM (France), Rooster Blues, Red Lightnin', Blind Pig, Delmark, Bullseye Blues, Fan Club, New Rose Blues, Black & Blue (France), Evidence, and other labels.

Eddie [sic] *Clearwater*. (The most complete discography, including singles, LPs and imports, <http://koti.mbnet.fi/wdd/clearwater.htm>).

See also **Bell, Carey; Blind Pig; Robillard, Duke**

CLEVELAND, REVEREND JAMES

b. 5 December 1931; Chicago, IL

d. 9 February 1991; Culver City, CA

Gospel composer and singer. Began under the guidance of Thomas A. Dorsey, and then worked as Minister of Music for Reverend C. L. Franklin. For most of his career, his home base was the Cornerstone Baptist Church in Los Angeles, California. His compositions

and singing have had a large influence on contemporary blues and soul musicians. The Reverend James Cleveland Singers were featured on the *Blues Brothers* soundtrack and sang with Ray Charles on his 1976 *Porgy & Bess* album.

EDWARD KOMARA/MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

AMG; Larkin

Discography: AMG; Larkin

CLOVERS, THE

A pioneering rhythm and blues vocal group of the 1950s. The Clovers formed in Washington, D.C., in 1946, and signed with Atlantic Records in 1950. The group became one of the company's biggest hit makers by initially recording bluesy ballads (notably "Don't You Know I Love You" and "Fool Fool Fool") and blues jumps (notably "One Mint Julep" and "Good Lovin'"), and subsequently recording more pop-type ballads (such as "Devil or Angel" and "Blue Velvet"). The original members on Atlantic were John "Buddy" Bailey (lead), Matthew McQuater (tenor), Harold Lucas (baritone), and Harold Winley (bass). The group experienced many personnel changes but the group's sound remained consistent. The Clovers' last major hit was "Love Potion No. 9" (1959, United Artists).

ROBERT PRUTER

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CLUB 51

Chicago rhythm and blues label of the 1950s. The label was a side business for local roller-skating impresario and record storeowner Jimmie Davis, who founded the label in March 1955. Club 51 was operated as part of the Davis's Savoy Record Mart at 527 East 63rd. It was not his main business enterprise; two blocks west was his principal interest, the Park City Bowl skating rink. Club 51 put out just seven known releases, by two doo-wop groups (the Five Buddies and the Kings Men), guitarist and singer Rudy Greene, blues singer Honey Brown, R&B singer Bobbie James, jazz pianist and King Cole emulator Robert "Prince" Cooper, and veteran piano bluesman

Sunnyland Slim. Quality accompaniment was provided by combos led by saxophonist Eddie Chamblee and guitarist Lefty Bates. After scoring no hits, Davis shut down Club 51 in 1957.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

COASTERS, THE

Originally named the Robins, this R&B group enjoyed success with "Riot in Cell Block No. 9," produced by Leiber and Stoller (1954). Renamed the Coasters, they became famous for witty depictions of adolescence ("Charlie Brown" and "Yakety Yak"). The Monkees and the Rolling Stones recorded versions of their hits.

STEPHANIE POXON

Bibliography

Millar, Bill. *The Coasters*. London: Star Books, 1975.

Discography

Millar, Bill. *The Coasters*. London: Star Books, 1975, pp. 189–204.

See also Leiber and Stoller

COBB, ARNETT

b. Arnette Cleophus Cobb, 10 August 1918; Houston, TX

d. 24 March 1989; Houston, TX

Saxophonist. In a lengthy, productive, and courageous career, unfortunately hampered by illness and injury, Cobb utilized his blues-drenched "Texas tenor" sound to create an expressive and extroverted musical personality. His formative years, 1934–1942, were spent in the territorial groups of Texas big band leaders Chester Boone and Milt Larkin. Cobb moved to the international stage when he replaced fellow Larkin alumnus Illinois Jacquet in the Lionel Hampton Orchestra from 1942 to 1947. Cobb's solo career was sidetracked by a spinal operation and a subsequent automobile accident that put him on crutches for the

COBB, ARNETT

remainder of his life but he was back on the bandstand in a few years and continued to perform and record until his death.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: Lord

COBBS, WILLIE

b. 15 July 1932; Smale, AR

Arkansas-raised singer, songwriter, and harmonica player Willie Cobbs spent much of his childhood singing in his family's gospel group and catching local performances by Sonny Boy Williamson II and Robert Lockwood, Jr. In 1948, he moved to Chicago and performed regularly on Maxwell Street, often with Little Walter. Cobbs, who was greatly influenced by Jimmy Reed, formed his own band in Chicago in the late 1950s. He recorded for several small labels before hitting it big in 1961 with "You Don't Love Me," a blues classic released on Vee-Jay that was subsequently covered by dozens of blues and rock artists. Cobbs returned to Arkansas and continued to perform and record sporadically, with notable releases on Rooster and Bullseye.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

Willie Cobbs: Down to Earth (1994, Rooster Blues CD 2628).

COBRA/ARTISTIC

A label started in the golden age of blues in Chicago by a half Mexican, half Italian former GI from Texas named Eli Toscano in 1956. Toscano quickly recruited Willie Dixon away from Chess Records to produce and play bass and the label soon recorded Otis Rush singing "I Can't Quit You Baby." Only lasting a few years, the label and its offshoot, Artistic,

was the first to showcase the new breed of young guitar players moving away from postwar electric to a modern blues sound with Rush, Buddy Guy, and Magic Sam. Several histories and blues legends say Toscano was murdered in the late 1950s or perhaps faked his own death to escape a gambling debt. One of his artists, Shakey Jake, was known to get his session pay and more by beating Toscano in dice games. However, in reality, Toscano drowned in a boating accident on September 21, 1967. He was killed while trying to start an outboard motor.

ACE ATKINS

Discography: McGrath

Selected Recording

The Cobra Records Story: Chicago Rock and Blues, 1956–1958 (1993, Capricorn 9 42012-2, 2 CD set).

COHN, LARRY

Born in Pennsylvania, Lawrence "Larry" Cohn was raised in Brooklyn. He began collecting records at an early age, eventually becoming a member of the "78 mafia" of New York City record collectors; others included Pete Whelan, Bernard Klatzko, Nick Perls, Dave Freeland, and Samuel Charters. Cohn began writing about blues in the 1950s, and from 1960 to 1968 was a regular reviewer of blues in the *Saturday Review*. During this time he coordinated blues sessions and wrote liner notes for a variety of labels, and produced for Elektra Records a three-LP set of Leadbelly's recordings for the Library of Congress.

In 1968 Cohn, trained as a lawyer, left his job as a federal agent to be vice president of A&R for CBS; artists he signed included Fleetwood Mac, Johnny Otis, and Shuggie Otis. From 1972 to 1974 Cohn headed Playboy Records, where he produced albums by Phillip Walker and Leadbelly (live recordings from Texas). Cohn worked in music production and publishing through the 1970s and 1980s, and in 1990 returned to CBS (now Sony); he received a Grammy for his first production, the boxed set *The Complete Robert Johnson*. As staff producer of Sony's Legacy division, Cohn produced many CD reissues of blues, gospel, country, and Cajun music in the Roots & Blues series. He edited the anthology *Nothing But the Blues* (Abbeville Press, 1993), which received the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award and the Ralph J. Gleason Book Award. In 2003 Cohn left Sony to start his own label, Cohn-DeSilva Entertainment (<http://www.cohndesilva.com>).

SCOTT BARRETTA

COLE, ANN

b. Cynthia Coleman, 24 January 1934; Newark, NJ

R&B and gospel singer who was the first artist to ever perform "Got My Mojo Working" in 1956. She began her career in her teens with a family vocal group, the Colemanaires. Her first recording on her own was "Are You Satisfied" in 1956. She recorded "Got My Mojo Working" in 1957 for Baton Records in New York City, but it was simultaneously covered and recorded by Muddy Waters, who claimed to have composed it, for Chess. However, a lawsuit ruled that Preston Foster was the sole composer of "Got My Mojo Working."

Backed by the Suburbans vocal group, Ann Cole released a follow-up, "I've Got Nothing Working Now," and had a hit with "Easy Easy Baby," later covered by Magic Sam. Ann Cole's best songs remain "Each Day," featuring her very deep voice, and two versions of "In the Chapel" (different from "Crying in the Chapel"). An accident stopped her career; she has been confined to a wheelchair since the early 1960s.

YVES LABERGE

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"She's Got Her Mo-Jo Working... ANN COLE." *Rhythm and Blues* (July 1957), <http://www.daremusic.com/ann.htm>.

Selected Recordings

Ann Cole recorded mainly for Baton Records in New York City, but also for Timely, Sir Records, MGM, Roulette.

Got My Mojo Working (1984, Krazy Cat KK782). Contains fourteen songs recorded for the Baton label, between 1956 and 1959.

See also Waters, Muddy

COLE, NAT KING

b. Nathaniel Adams Coles, 17 March 1917; Montgomery, AL

d. 15 February 1965; Santa Monica, CA

An African American pianist and smooth blues balladeer, Cole's early record hits with the King Cole

Trio were "Straighten Up and Fly Right" (1943, Capitol) and "Route 66" (1946, Capitol). He would go on to mainstream popular music success, including his own radio series (1948–1949), his own television show (1956–1957), and appearances in several films, but regardless was not immune to racist attacks both subtle and overt.

DONNA LOWE/EDWARD KOMARA

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Epstein, Daniel Mark. *Nat King Cole*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999.

Discography: Lord

The Best of the Nat "King" Cole Trio: The Vocal Classics, Vol.1 (1942–1946) (1995, EMD/Blue Note; reissue).

COLEMAN, DEBORAH

b. 3 October 1956; Portsmouth, VA

Singer, guitarist, songwriter of contemporary electric blues. Coleman has recorded six CDs many of which have garnered high praise. She has also been nominated for six W. C. Handy Awards, including Guitarist of the Year in 2001.

JUSTIN WERT

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Discography: AMG**Selected Recordings**

I Can't Lose (1997, Blind Pig 5038).

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Livin' on Love (2001, Blind Pig 5070).

COLEMAN, GARY "B. B."

b. 1 January 1947; Paris, TX

d. 21 February 1994; Shreveport, LA

Texas guitarist Gary "B. B." Coleman made his mark as the man who shaped the blues sounds at Ichiban Records in Atlanta, where he recorded six albums of his own (plus a best-of compilation) and produced more than thirty others, including Chick Willis, Little

Johnny Taylor, Jerry McCain, Buster Benton, Trudy Lynn, and his childhood friend, Blues Boy Willie (William McFalls). Coleman and McFalls performed together in the 1950s when they were known as "Little Chuck Berry" and "Little Ray Charles."

Coleman, later nicknamed B. B. after another influence, B. B. King, also accompanied Lightnin' Hopkins and worked in Freddie King's band for five years in addition to fronting his own group, Gary and the Charmers. He began promoting shows by various blues artists, including many whom he would soon bring into the Ichiban fold, beginning in 1987 when the company picked up his first LP, *Nothing But the Blues*, which he had released on his own Mr. B's label. The album hit the *Billboard* charts as Ichiban's first blues release. After Coleman's prolific five-year stint at Ichiban, he again went back into business for himself, releasing a final album, *Cocaine Annie*, on his Boola Boo imprint (rereleased in 1994 by Icehouse). He was working to make a bigger name for himself on the performing circuit when he died of a heart attack at the age of forty-seven.

JIM O'NEAL

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Discography: AMG

COLEMAN, JAYBIRD

b. 20 May 1896; Gainesville, AL
d. 26 or 28 June 1950; Tuskegee, AL

A virtuoso and original harmonica player, Burl C. "Jaybird" Coleman played in an Army band in Europe in 1917–1918, in different medicine shows, and possibly in the famed Birmingham Jug Band. His falsetto singing adorns "Man Trouble Blues," his best-known title, recorded twice in 1927 and 1930.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

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Discography: DGR

Jaybird Coleman & The Birmingham Jug Band (1992, Document CD 5140; complete reissue).

COLEMAN, MICHAEL

b. 24 June 1956; Chicago, IL

Michael Coleman's hot guitar licks came to prominence during the ten years he played with the James Cotton Band, a group that epitomized high-energy blues in the 1980s and early 1990s. Coleman grew up with the blues as the son of Chicago drummer Bald Head Pete (Cleo Williams), but split his time between Top 40 R&B gigs and blues club work with West Side singer Little Johnny Christian, Johnny Dollar, Aron Burton, and others. Over the years he has also worked with Eddy Clearwater, Professor Eddie Lusk, Junior Wells, Buster Benton, Jimmy Dawkins, and Syl Johnson. Coleman's own recordings have mostly been for European labels: a live album by Coleman and Eddie Lusk on Black & Blue, and some Chicago sessions for Wolf Records of Austria. His American CD debut came with *Do Your Thing!* for Delmark in 2000.

JIM O'NEAL

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Sharp, Steven. "Michael Coleman." *Living Blues* no. 120 (March/April 1995): 64–65.

Discography: AMG

COLEMAN, WALLACE

b. 10 February 1936; Morristown, TN

Cleveland-based blues harpist and vocalist. After Coleman's retirement in 1987 from a Cleveland bakery, he joined Robert Jr. Lockwood's band. In 1997 Coleman left Lockwood's band and recorded his debut album *Wallace Coleman* on Fishhead records. He released *Stretch My Money* in 2000 on his own Pinto Blue Music label.

JOE C. CLARK

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AMG (Andrew Hamilton)

Discography: AMG

See also Lockwood, Robert Jr.

COLLECTABLES

The nation's largest independently owned reissue label, Collectables has blossomed from a small operation

to a huge company whose current roster includes more than twenty-five hundred vintage titles, and whose operation encompasses a huge mail-order service that also deals in classic film and music video and DVD titles. Their current reissue line includes releases from the catalogs of Columbia, Atlantic, Vee-Jay, RCA, and Capitol. Their sonic quality has also improved greatly over the years, with current Collectable reissues on par with those of any major label, something that couldn't always be said of the early doo-wop, blues, and jazz titles. An extensive list of current and past Collectables titles is available online at <http://www.oldies.com>, and their monthly updated listings cover every genre from alternative rock through early jazz and blues. Regular customers receive monthly supplements and catalogs. The business's other end is under the jurisdiction of Alpha Video.

RON WYNN

COLLINS, ALBERT

b. 1 or 3 October 1932; Leona, TX
d. 24 November 1993; Las Vegas, NV

Known by three separate monikers—"The Ice Man," "The Master of the Telecaster," and "The Razor," Collins had a readily identifiable series of song and album titles designed to represent the "ice cold" approach of the guitar style that was his legacy.

Life

Collins was raised by two farming parents in Leona, Texas, a small town located approximately one hundred miles north of Houston. At age seven his family moved to Marquez, and to the Third Ward district at age nine where he spent most of his childhood. Collins began his musical career studying piano as a primary instrument, but by the age of eighteen, he redirected his efforts to the guitar and began performing with his own band, the Rhythm Rockers, by the late 1940s.

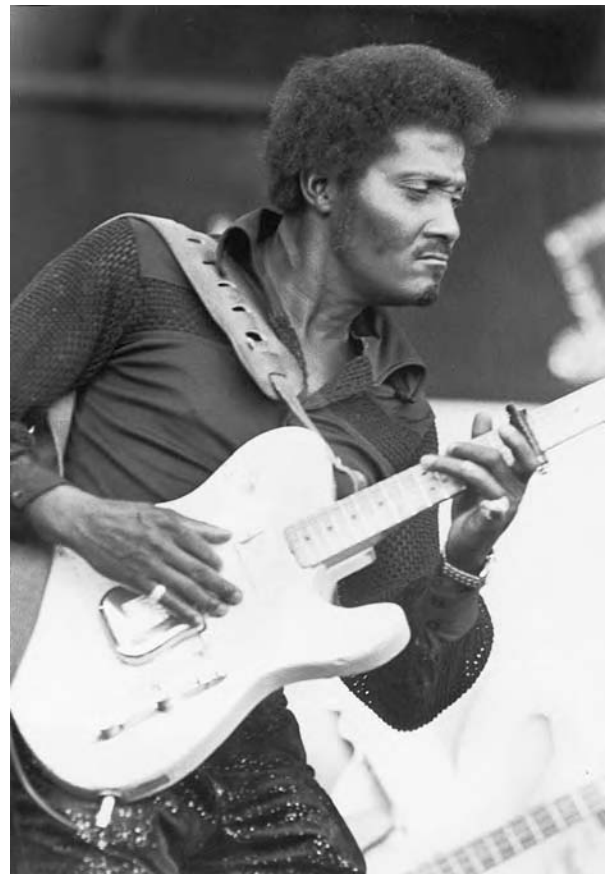
Music

Collins's earliest recordings included instrumental material that consisted of mostly blues shuffles and were recorded primarily on various local labels such as Kangaroo, Hall, Hallway, TFC, 20th Century, and Great Scott. With Kangaroo, he obtained his first recording

contract and released his first single "The Freeze" in 1958. During this period, his song titles were uniquely associated with freezing temperatures. "The Freeze," "Defrost," "Thaw Out," "Sno-Cone," "Icy Blue," and "Frosty" created a trademark that Collins retained for the remainder of his career. In 1962 his first major hit, "Frosty," was a million-selling single.

The West Coast Years

It was Bob Hite of the legendary San Francisco band, Canned Heat, who was instrumental in getting Collins signed with the Imperial Records label in 1968, and Collins moved to Los Angeles to record for his first major label. The three Imperial albums, *Love Can Be Found Anywhere, Even in a Guitar*, *Trash Talkin'*, and *The Compleat Albert Collins* produced a funkier and jazzier style than what was to come in later years. For nearly ten years, his live shows were well received throughout the psychedelic blues circuit, and he performed regularly to enthusiastic crowds at the Fillmore West, Seattle Pop Festival, and other venues.



Albert Collins. (Photo by Tom Copi, © Frank Driggs Collection)

After three albums, Collins was dropped from Imperial in 1972 and was the first artist signed by Eagles producer Bill Szymczyk's Tumbleweed Records. Collins recorded *There's Gotta Be a Change*, but unfortunately the company folded less than two years later. After a short stint with Chicago-based Blue Thumb Records, Collins became quite despondent and went into retirement from the West Coast music scene, which included a complete retreat from playing guitar altogether. During this period he struggled financially and held odd jobs such as truck driving and construction work, which included a remodeling job for pop star Neil Diamond.

The Alligator Years

It was only after a considerable amount of cajoling from his wife Gwen that Collins emerged from retirement. This period in Collins's career would prove to be pivotal, as he would embark on a phase of recording that would spawn his greatest successes. In 1977, he was offered a record deal from Bruce Iglauer of Alligator Records in Chicago, who signed Collins as the first non-Chicago-based artist. His first album, *Ice Pickin'*, was released in 1978 to raving reviews, won the Best Blues Album of the Year award at the Montreaux Jazz Festival, and was nominated for a Grammy.

With his signature backup band, the Ice Breakers, the majority of Collins's most worthy material was produced on these six Alligator records: *Ice Pickin'* (AL4713) in 1978, *Frostbite* (AL4719) in 1980, *Frozen Alive!* (AL4725) in 1981, *Don't Lose Your Cool* (AL4730) in 1983, *Live in Japan* (AL4733) in 1984, *Showdown!* (AL4743) in 1985, and *Cold Snap* (AL4752) in 1986.

His awards include W. C. Handy Awards for both *Don't Lose Your Cool* and *Cold Snap*. In 1987 he won his first Grammy Award for *Showdown*, an impressive three-way guitar duel with Johnny Copeland and newcomer Robert Cray.

Influences

Collins's main musical influences were fellow guitarists T-Bone Walker, Lowell Fulson, B. B. King, Freddie King, John Lee Hooker, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, and his older cousin, the legendary Lightnin' Hopkins. Also, Frankie Lee Sims and his cousin Willow Young (who taught him the unorthodox, open minor key tuning used throughout his career) were two of his earliest influences.

Style and Technique

Albert Collins's overall approach to guitar playing can be somewhat described as an "attack" on the instrument. The notes seem to burst forth with a piercing tone quality. His approach has had a direct influence on such foremost guitarists as Stevie Ray Vaughan, Robert Cray, Eric Clapton, and Jimi Hendrix.

The quintessential Texas guitarist, he played without the use of a guitar pick, preferring the flesh and nails of his thumb, forefinger, and middle finger. His mainstay instrument was a blonde maple-neck 1966 Fender Telecaster with humbucking pickups. Combined with his legendary 1970 Fender Quad Reverb 100-watt tube amplifier (which contained four 12-inch speakers, usually turned up full blast), this combination created the biting treble tone that was his signature sound. Collins played in an unusual minor-key open tuning in the key of F, combined with the use of a capo that allowed him to play in his favorite key of D minor.

Although his recorded output is significant, it was Collins's stage presence that was most legendary among fellow musicians, critics, and fans. It was not unusual for Albert to conclude his concerts with a grandiose exit from the stage by walking through the middle of the crowd and out the front door of the venue, with the use of his legendary 150-foot guitar cord that allowed him to stand in the middle of the street wailing on his guitar, while fans watched as Collins brought the city traffic to a halt in mid-solo. The two albums that best capture his typical electrifying performances can be heard on *Frozen Alive* and *Live in Japan*, both recorded at the pinnacle of his career. His last two albums, *Ice Man* (1991) and *Molten Ice* (1992), were released on the Pointblank label, a subsidiary of Virgin Records. At the age of 61 Albert Collins died of lung cancer on November 24, 1993, in Las Vegas. A posthumous album, *Albert Collins Live 92-93*, captures Collins in rare form and at the top of his musical prowess.

WAYNE E. GOINS

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

COLLINS, LITTLE MAC

b. McKinley C. Collins, 6 June 1929; Indianola, MS
d. 4 February 1997; Detroit, MI

Guitarist, bassist, vocalist, bandleader. Little Mac Collins and his brother Louis ("Mr. Bo") moved to Detroit in the early 1950s, where Mac enjoyed a long career as a popular local sideman and leader of nightclub favorites, The Partymakers Inc. Collins worked with Mr. Bo, Little Junior Cannady, Joe L., Baby Boy Warren, and Eddie "Guitar" Burns.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Selected Recordings

Motor City Blues: "Live" at the 1973 Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival (Alive/Total Energy).

COLLINS, LOUIS "MR. BO"

b. 7 April 1932; Indianola, MS
d. 19 September 1995; Detroit, MI

Guitarist, singer. Louis ("Mr. Bo") Collins settled in Detroit in the early 1950s, worked with Washboard Willie, John Lee Hooker, and Little Sonny, and established his solo career with "If Trouble Was Money" and other local hits. Collins worked with Washboard Willie, John Lee Hooker, Eddie Burns, Little Sonny, and Little Mac Collins.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Varjabedian, Jonathan. "Louis 'Mr. Bo' Collins: 'I've Got to Play What I Feel.'" *Juke Blues* no. 30 (Spring 1994): 10-12.

Discography: LSPF

If Trouble Was Money (1995, Blue Suit Records).

COLLINS, SAM

b. 11 August 1887; LA
d. 20 October 1949; Chicago, IL

Aka "Cryin' Sam," "Salty Dog Sam," and Jim Foster. Collins was raised in the McComb area of Mississippi and became a wandering musician playing at local barrelhouses. He traveled with King Solomon Hill and recorded for Gennett in 1927 and ARC in 1931, playing a badly tuned guitar with a knife, which

forms a surprisingly effective accompaniment to his eerie falsetto singing on spirituals, hokum numbers, and deep blues. He died from heart disease and is buried in Worth, Illinois.

DAVID HARRISON

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AMG (Jim O'Neal); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR**COLUMBIA**

Record company and label that began issuing cylinders in 1889. Blues issues began with Mary Stafford and Edith Wilson in 1921. Columbia developed into a major Race label after signing Bessie Smith and Clara Smith in 1923, initially issued in the general popular series. To mollify triskaidekaphobics, the 13000-D Race series, started in November 1923, was discontinued after eight issues, four by Bessie Smith, and restarted in December at 14000-D. Vaudeville blues recordings by Bessie and Clara, Martha Copeland, Maggie Jones, Ethel Waters, and George Williams and Bessie Brown dominated the early catalog.

Country blues issues began with Peg Leg Howell (14194-D), recorded in Atlanta in November 1926. Many significant artists were discovered on field trips. Atlanta also yielded Barbecue Bob (Robert Hicks) and Charlie Lincoln. Coley Jones and Hattie Hudson were recorded in Dallas, Lillian Glinn at both. Columbia was in receivership from late 1922; in March 1925 British Columbia bought its American parent, reorganizing the group as Columbia International, Ltd., which from November 1926 also controlled Okeh, which was maintained as a separate company with its own Race series. Only after October 1929 were joint field trips undertaken but with recordings for the two labels kept distinct. In March 1931 Columbia International merged with the Gramophone Company, Ltd., to form Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI). Because Victor was part owner of the Gramophone Company and thus became, through EMI, part owner of its U.S. competitor Columbia, Okeh and Columbia were transferred to trustees to avoid anti-trust action, and in May 1931 sold to Grigsby-Grunow, makers of Majestic Radios. A final field session in Atlanta in October 1931 recorded Blind Willie McTell for issue as Blind Sammie on Columbia and Georgia Bill on Okeh. The 14000-D series ended at 14680-D in April 1933.

COLUMBIA

The labels were bought by the American Record Corporation (ARC) in August 1934 following Grigsby-Grunow's November 1933 bankruptcy. ARC discontinued the Columbia label in the United States, but it was maintained in other territories by EMI. In February 1938 the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) bought ARC and revived Columbia the next year, although blues issues were mostly on OKeh, the successor to ARC's Vocalion label. A new Columbia Race series, the 30000s, was started in October 1945, with reissues of ARC recordings by such artists as Big Bill (Broonzy), Blind Boy Fuller, Curtis Jones, and Memphis Minnie, alongside new recordings by Minnie, Big Joe Williams, and others, and a major documentation of emerging R&B styles in Chicago with many disks by Buster Bennett, the Big Three Trio, and others. The series lasted into the 1950s.

HOWARD RYE

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Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

COMBO

Record label (California, 1951–1961). Owner: Vernon Haven (Jake) Porter (b. August 3, 1916, Oakland, CA; d. March 25, 1993, Culver City, CA). Porter was a respected trumpeter, and under his direction recorded many of the Central Avenue sounds, from jump-blues to honkers to doo-wop vocal groups. The recordings include the original version of "Ko Ko Mo" (by Gene & Eunice), and "Chop Chop Boom" (Jack McVea with Al Smith [aka Al King] and the Savoy). He also recorded saxophonist Chuck Higgins, issuing "Motor Head Baby," with Johnny "Guitar" Watson, and the very influential instrumental "Pachuko Hop." Other artists include Jesse Belvin, Tal Carter, T. L. Clemons (aka C. T. Clemons), Ernie Fields, Frankie Ervin, Great Gates (Edward White), Peppermint Harris, Smokey Hogg, Joe Houston, Gus Jenkins, Betty Hall Jones, Johnny Moore's Three Blazers, Native Boys, Gene Phillips, Sharps (with vocalist Carl White), Lou "Freddie" Simon, Buell Thomas,

Floyd Turnham (with Cledus Harrison), William "Brother" Woodman, and many others.

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

CONLEY, CHARLES

b. 1 July 1928; Curtain Bottom, TX

Learned guitar at age eighteen in east Texas. Lowell Fulson and Li'l Son Jackson were his formative influences. He moved to California in 1950, initially to Los Angeles. He was convicted of manslaughter in 1957, initially released in 1963, then returned to prison on a parole violation to be rereleased in 1973. Afterward, he moved to Richmond, California, where he resumed public performance. Believed to have died in 1989.

EDWARD KOMARA

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CONNOR, JOANNA

b. 31 August 1962; Brooklyn, NY

Joanna Connor began playing the guitar as a child and soon became a young professional by performing with bands from her mid-teens throughout New England. In 1984, she moved to Chicago, and by 1985 at the age of twenty-three, she joined Dion Payton's popular 43rd Street Blues Band. By 1987 her talents as a slide guitarist and as a songwriter had become so well recognized that she was able to form her own band to perform in Chicago bar circuits, college campuses, and music festivals.

By 1989, she signed her first recording contract with Blind Pig Records, and her debut record *Believe It* was so successful that it enabled her to tour the United States, Japan, South America, and Europe where she released a live CD. When her second Blind Pig recording called *Flight* was released three years later in 1982, she was able to change her style from hard blues to exploring combinations of rhythm and blues. Since then she has changed to M. C. Records.

Her blend of blues, jazz, funk, and pop style has been called "quick, aggressive," "raw blues," and "a new sound" and she attributes her influence to the

likes of Duane Altman, Ry Cooder, James Cotton, Freddie King, Buddy Guy, A. C. Reed, Otis Rush, and Luther Allison, who even made a special trip to sit in on one of her shows. Connor's talents as a musician continue through recordings and performances on her slide guitar.

HEATHER PINSON

Bibliography

AMG; Santelli

Discography

Believe It! (1989, Blind Pig CD BP-73289); *Fight* (1992, Blind Pig CD 5002); *Living on the Road* (1993, Inak 1727); *Rock & Roll Gypsy* (1995, Ruf CD 1003); *Big Girl Blues* (1996, Blind Pig CD 5037); *Slidetime* (1998, Blind Pig CD 5047); *Nothing But the Blues* (2001, Inakustik CD 9060); *The Joanna Connor Band* (2002, M.C. 46).

CONQUEROR

Record label of Sears Roebuck & Company, sold through their mail-order catalog. Launched in 1928, it drew its material from the Plaza labels and after they were merged in the new American Record Corporation (ARC) developed a substantial Race catalog including issues by Big Bill (Broonzy), Lucille Bogan, Bumble Bee Slim, Lil Johnson, and Memphis Minnie. CBS continued to supply the label after taking over ARC until it was discontinued in spring 1942.

HOWARD RYE

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CONVICT LABOR

Convict labor appeared in the South during Reconstruction and continued into the twentieth century. Blacks in the region comprised the vast majority of convicts that worked as lessees during the late nineteenth century and then as members of chain gangs and work farms during the next century. The experience of many blacks working at convict labor informed the lyrical content and musical forms found in blues music.

Convict labor originated in 1798 in Massachusetts where leased convicts worked for private business. Early nineteenth-century reforms introduced the institution of the penitentiary where inmates made commercial items ranging from shoes to railroad cars. The South practiced limited forms of these punishments before the Civil War.

During Reconstruction, southern states expanded the role of convict leasing as a form of involuntary servitude to rescue the region's failed economy. The South needed to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed during the war, and bankrupt southern businesses had nothing to pay for the labor needed to complete this task. They turned to convict leasing in state after state to supply the labor for building levees, rebuilding railroads, draining swamps, mining, farming, cutting and milling timber, collecting turpentine, and making bricks.

The deplorable and inhumane working conditions of convict leasing attracted social critics from the start. Convicts lived in tents or wagons, dressed in tattered uniforms, ate meagerly, suffered whippings, and worked at gunpoint from sunrise to sunset. Leasing companies worked many convicts until they died. State politicians in the South often dealt themselves lucrative contracts under the convict leasing system that many outside observers saw as worse than slavery.

The rise of organized labor, the good roads movement, and social reform combined to transform convict labor at the beginning of the twentieth century. One by one, states abolished the privately controlled convict leasing system and replaced it with one of state and local control. Louisiana transferred Angola farm from private ownership to the state in 1901. Mississippi established a prison farm at Parchman in 1904, and Georgia instituted chain gangs in 1908. State-controlled labor for the construction of highways and as a form of punishment continued well into the twentieth century. The federal government allowed convict labor for the construction of U.S. highways until 1935. Road construction and repair by convicts continued at a state and local level after 1936.

Courts of law unjustly sentenced blacks to several years for crimes as petty as the theft of food. Whites, by contrast, received much lighter sentences for comparable crimes. Convicts included men, women, and adolescents. They labored under a system known as "gang and task," the same system that drove the slaves on plantations. Gangs, also called squads, worked with specific goals assigned by drivers. If the squad failed to meet those goals, its members suffered beatings.

Gangs often designated a caller who led the group in chanting work songs. The caller set the pace of the

CONVICT LABOR

work song for completing each assigned task. The members of the gang responded in chorus. Often the callers gave instruction of specific details in the work required and many times the response alerted the caller as to how well the work was going. Work songs also diverted the attention of the convicts from their intolerable situation and made the end of the day seem to arrive faster.

The rhythmic form and lyrical content of the work song influenced blues music. Convict labor provided the crossover experience for the transformation of work songs into blues. Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter is perhaps the best example of this crossover because he worked at convict labor in Sugerland, Texas, and later at Angola, Louisiana. Ledbetter’s singing ability led to his release from both criminal sentences. The first time, the governor of Texas pardoned Ledbetter and invited him to sing and play his guitar in the governor’s mansion. This experience informed his song, “Midnight Special” recorded in 1934 by John and Alan Lomax. They discovered Ledbetter laboring in Angola under a later conviction while they were recording prison songs. They also recorded Ledbetter’s “Angola Blues” in 1933. The prison experience informed a number of other blues songs. Blues singer Bukka White served time working at Parchman and recorded “Parchman Farm Blues” in 1940 after his release.

BILL GRAVES

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COODER, RY

b. Ryland Peter Cooder, 15 March 1947; Los Angeles, CA

Eclectic guitarist and composer whose work has taken in everything from country/western to Cuban and

Hawaiian slack key to Hollywood soundtracks, Ry Cooder’s music is grounded in the blues, a music to which he regularly returns. In the mid-1960s, he was briefly in a band called the Rising Sons with Taj Mahal. His first two solo albums, in 1970 and 1971, featured covers of songs by Leadbelly, Blind Willie Johnson, Sleepy John Estes, and Washington Phillips, among others. In the late 1970s, he issued a series of R&B-flavored albums with vocalists Bobby King and Terry Evans. 1986 brought the soundtrack for the film *Crossroads*.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin

Discography: AMG

COOK, ANN

b. 10 May 1903; St. Francisville, LA

d. 29 September 1962; New Orleans, LA

Believed by jazz historian Al Rose to be the only woman blues singer from the Storyville red-light district of New Orleans to have made records. She recorded with the Louis Dumaine Jazzola Eight for Victor in 1928, then with the Wooden Joe Nicholas Band for American Music in 1949. In later life, she was devoted to church, and did not discuss her early years.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris

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Discography: DGR

COOKE, SAM

b. Samuel Cook, 22 January 1931; Clarksdale, MS

d. 11 December 1964; Los Angeles, CA

There were at least three Sam Cookes: one, a gifted young gospel performer who sang lead in the Soul Stirrers; the second, a blues performer with an extraordinary blending of blues and gospel voices; and, finally, a pop star music attraction with dozens of Top 40 hits in the early days of rock ‘n’ roll.

Samuel Cook was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi; the son of Reverend Charles Cook. He grew up in Chicago, Illinois, where his father was minister of Christ Holiness Church. He learned his craft at various churches in the Chicago area and performed with the Pilgrim Travelers and the famous Highway QCs. In 1950, at the age of nineteen, Cooke replaced R. H. Harris in the legendary Soul Stirrers. The Soul Stirrers group was formed in Texas in 1935 and was recorded extensively by Alan Lomax. Its first commercial recordings on the Aladdin label were released in the late 1940s.

The first Soul Stirrers releases with Cooke as lead were released in 1951 and the group prospered with the dynamic young lead singer, reaching the upper “rooms” of gospel popularity. Cooke was able to master the Soul Stirrers classic soloist arrangement—two lead singers; one silky, smooth and eloquent higher voice and one impassioned, hoarse, and bluesy voice to “stir” the audiences. His work on the Soul Stirrers was truly inspirational. In 1956, Cooke left the Soul Stirrers and was replaced by Johnnie Taylor.

Cooke’s first secular release in 1957 was “Lovable,” a reworking of a Soul Stirrer’s gospel hit, “Wonderful,” on Specialty Records. On this recording, Cooke used another name (Dale Cooke) to avoid offending his loyal gospel fans. Later that year, Cooke cut the classic “For Sentimental Reasons,” using his new stage name, Sam Cooke. His first number one hit was his third release with Specialty, “You Send Me.”

Cooke’s first album, under the Specialty sublabel Keen, was released in 1958 and topped the Billboard album chart at #16. Cooke broke the R&B charts again in 1959 with “Young Blood.” The song also ranked number eight on the pop charts.

Cooke signed with RCA in 1960 and recorded the famous “Chain Gang,” which hit number two on both pop and R&B charts. He followed with several other hits on RCA and, in 1961, formed an independent label, SAR, with his manager, J. W. Alexander. After several classic “almost hits,” Cooke’s release of “Twistin’ the Night Away” jumped to number one on R&B charts and number nine on pop charts in 1962.

Cooke continued to release minor hits on the R&B and pop charts and worked with dozens of both young and established artists, including Jimi Hendrix, the Isley Brothers, and Little Richard. During that period, Cooke was a prolific songwriter and recorded dozens of tracks that would appear during the next decade. Cooke became a pop sensation during that period and his career paralleled other notable crossover artists such as Jackie Wilson.

Cooke’s life was cut tragically short when he was shot to death in the parking lot of a South Los Angeles motel in 1964. The details of the incident made tabloid front pages for months and, for a time, threatened to outshine his magnificent career in media limelight. But Cooke’s contribution to music would never be forgotten. During subsequent years, some of his best secular works were released, including, *Live at the Harlem Square Club*, which he recorded in early 1963.

In 1986, Sam Cooke’s place in rock ‘n’ roll was validated when he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at its first induction celebration in New York City. Cooke left a legacy of dynamic recordings that changed R&B music and blended gospel, R&B, and pop into a new kind of soul that is reflected in the works of literally dozens of later artists. The Soul Stirrers were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1989.

TOM FISHER

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Discography

Selected Recordings

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COOPER, JACK L.

b. 18 September 1888; Memphis, TN

d. 12 January 1970; Chicago, IL

Pioneering black radio disk jockey from Chicago. Cooper began in radio in Washington, D.C., on WCAP doing comedy. In 1926 he moved to Chicago, and started a program on WWAE. He moved to WSBC in 1929 and began his “All Negro Radio Hour.” In 1931 he became the nation’s first black disk jockey when he began playing phonograph records on his show. By the late 1940s, Cooper was

presiding over a huge radio empire, using a number of radio personalities (including his wife Trudi Cooper) who broadcasted a variety of music, news, quiz programs, and religious shows seven days a week on six stations—WSBC, WEDC, WHFC, WAAF, WJJD, and WXRT. Cooper's music programming was more refined than some of his later counterparts, refusing to play what was called gutbucket blues. As younger deejays and WGES took over the Chicago African American radio market during the 1950s, playing the blues music that the new black migrants from the South wanted to hear, Cooper's operation went into decline. Cooper went blind in 1959 and ended his radio career in 1961.

ROBERT PRUTER

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COPELAND, JOHNNY "CLYDE"

b. 27 March 1937; Haynesville, LA
d. 3 July 1997; New York City, NY

Johnny "Clyde" Copeland, the son of sharecroppers Blanton and Ruthie Copeland, was born outside of Haynesville in northwestern Louisiana. By his first birthday, his parents had separated and Copeland moved with his mother to Magnolia, Arkansas. At age eight, he returned to Haynesville to visit his blues-singing father, who aroused the young Copeland's interest in the music and gave him his first guitar lessons. After his father's death a few years later, Copeland inherited his guitar and started practicing on his own. The family moved to Houston when he was thirteen, and he immediately began immersing himself in its vibrant blues scene. He soon befriended fellow fourteen-year-old guitarist Joe Hughes, who gave him lessons.

Influenced by T-Bone Walker and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Copeland and Hughes formed the Dukes of Rhythm and played around Houston's Third Ward as well as nearby Galveston. He left the band in 1955 and, after gigging in west Texas for a few months, recorded for the first time on Clarence Samuels' "Chicken Hearted Woman" for Excello later that year. In 1957, after Johnny "Guitar" Watson's urging, Copeland signed with Don Robey's Duke Records. Although he never recorded for Robey, his contribution to the label came from a song he and Joe

Medwick cowrote. Titled "Further Up the Road" and originally written for Copeland, Robey instead gave the song to Bobby Bland, whose recording of it reached number one on *Billboard's* R&B charts. Copeland's involvement remained uncredited.

Copeland finally got a chance to record as a leader in 1958 for Mercury, of which his recordings included "Rock 'n' Roll Lily." In 1963, after a couple of singles on the small All Boy label, he achieved his first regional success when he recorded "Down on Bending Knees" for Houston's Golden Eagle label. The record's popularity launched Copeland on a large tour of the Southern states.

Copeland worked with producer Huey Meaux throughout much of the 1960s, and recorded his soul-infused blues for several labels, including Wand and Atlantic. This association also led to a recording session with idol T-Bone Walker in the late 1960s. Copeland's music began drifting toward the increasingly popular soul sound and he was part of several soul package tours that performed throughout the country in the late 1960s. By the early 1970s, after a few singles on the Kent label, Copeland became frustrated by the declining Houston blues scene. Prompted by a friend's assurance that he could make a living playing blues in the North, he relocated to Harlem in 1975 and began gigging throughout the region. His constant performing paid off in 1979 when he signed with Rounder Records, with *Copeland Special* being released in 1981. His contemporary Texas sound, coupled with his strong songwriting, would be featured on seven releases for the label throughout the 1980s. He toured Africa in 1982, and returned in 1984 to become the first blues musician to record on the continent with *Bringing It All Back Home*, an album in which he incorporated both African music and musicians.

Copeland's greatest success came in 1985 with *Showdown!*, the Grammy Award-winning collaboration with Albert Collins and Robert Cray on Alligator Records. The popularity of this album catapulted his reputation as one of the country's top blues artists. In 1992, he signed a major-label contract with Polygram/Verve. Copeland produced three releases for the label and enjoyed worldwide touring on the club and festival circuit. His commanding, preacher-like vocal style and stinging, Texas guitar playing dominated his live performances.

In late March of 1995, his life changed drastically as his previously diagnosed congenital heart condition became critical when he suffered a heart attack after a show in Colorado. During the next two years, he would undergo eight open-heart surgeries and survived with the aid of the, at that time, new heart implant L-VAD (left ventricular assist device) while

awaiting a heart transplant. Copeland made several public service appearances on several national television programs in 1995 about the new L-VAD technology that was keeping him alive. Throughout his serious condition, he continued to perform with the help of his teenaged blues-singing daughter Shemekia, who opened and sometimes closed the shows for her ailing father. Though in a weakened state, Copeland, aided on the road by wife Sandra, nevertheless gave strong performances both vocally and instrumentally. On New Years Day in 1997, he successfully received a new heart and his condition improved dramatically. Copeland returned to performing within a few months but was back in the hospital by the end of June to repair a leaky valve. Johnny Copeland died a few days later of complications from the surgery.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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COPELAND, SHEMEKIA

b. 10 April 1979; New York, NY

The daughter of Texas guitarist Johnny Copeland, Shemekia Copeland made her singing debut at Harlem's Cotton Club at age nine. Influenced by Koko Taylor and Etta James, Copeland also drew inspiration from male artists O. V. Wright and Muddy Waters. In 1995, her father's heart condition became serious and she spent the following two years opening his shows—giving her both national exposure and experience. Under her father's guidance, her powerful voice and charismatic stage presence developed quickly. After her father's death in 1997, Copeland signed with Alligator Records and continued to record and tour worldwide. In 2001, she was nominated for a Grammy.

GENE TOMKO

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AMG (Steve Huey); Santelli

Discography: AMG

Wicked (2000, Alligator ALCD 4875).

COPLEY, AL

b. 1952; Buffalo, NY

Pianist cofounded Roomful of Blues with guitarist Duke Robillard in 1967. Left the band in 1984 to pursue a solo career, which has spanned jazz, blues, and R&B. Generally based out of Europe since leaving Roomful of Blues.

JIM TRAGESER

Discography

- Roomful of Blues* (1979, Island Records 9474).
Automatic Overdrive (1989, Black Top Records 1047).
Royal Blue (1990, Black Top Records 1054; with Hal Singer).

See also Robillard, Duke; Roomful of Blues

CORLEY, DEWEY

b. 18 June 1898; Halley, AR

d. 15 April 1974; Memphis, TN

Jug band musician of harmonica, kazoo, and washtub bass. Played frequently in the jug bands of Will Shade and Jack Kelly, then led his Beale Street Jug Band. Performed widely at festivals in the 1960s and 1970s.

EDWARD KOMARA

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LaVere, Stephen. "Dewey Corley" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 18 (Autumn 1974): 7.

Discography: LSFP

COSSE, IKE

b. 1955

Singer and guitarist in the San Francisco Bay area. Initially playing blues-rock and jazz fusion styles, in

COSSE, IKE

1983 he began a four-year apprenticeship under saxophonist Joe Cuttley. Since then, he has led his own blues group and released three CDs, two of them through JSP Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelley)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelley)

COSTELLO, SEAN

b. 16 April 1979; Philadelphia, PA

He won the 1994 Memphis Beale Street Blues Society talent contest. Additional exposure was gained by guesting on the Susan Tedeschi CD *Just Won't Burn* (released 1998) and through his own releases on Landslide. His influences range from T-Bone Walker through postwar Chicago guitarists and Robert Lockwood to Stevie Ray Vaughan.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

COTILLION

(See *Atlantic/Atco/Spark*)

COTTEN, ELIZABETH

b. 5 January 1895; near Chapel Hill, NC

d. 29 June 1987; Syracuse, NY

Elizabeth "Libba" Cotten told interviewers that she had music in her from the beginning, often repeating the familiar story of sneaking her brother's banjo out from under the bed. As an eleven-year-old, she did housework for a white woman at the rate of seventy-five cents per month to make enough money to buy a Stella guitar. She was already playing, but since she was not comfortable restringing her borrowed guitar, her extreme left-handedness led her to learn the instrument upside down and backward.

She will always be associated with the songs "Freight Train," "Babe It Ain't No Lie." and "Shake Sugaree," all of which she wrote. Nearer to blues ballads than blues, they are prime examples of Piedmont-style guitar playing and simple enough to serve as examples for beginning guitarists. Since the late 1950s, untold thousands of young folkies have used them precisely that way. Pressure from church authorities caused her to give up playing, and she continued to labor variously as a charwoman or a store clerk. A chance encounter with Ruth Crawford Seeger ("American Folk Songs for Children") led to a job in the Seeger household, where she surprised them one day by playing the family guitar. She apologized for playing when she should have been working, but the family encouraged her to pick up the guitar again. Libba's first recording, produced by Mike Seeger, was issued in 1957. Because it was one of very few recordings of an authentic black folk song, it became one of the most influential, especially in college communities. Libba spent the rest of her life playing coffeehouses, schools, festivals, and concerts, at an accelerating pace, until she passed away quietly in Syracuse at the age of ninety-two. By the time she died, she had been given a Grammy, been awarded a National Heritage Fellowship, and was included (with Rosa Parks, among others) in Brian Lanker and Barbara Summer's book, *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America* (New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang, 1989).

ANDREW M. COHEN

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AMG (Jason Ankeny); Harris; Larkin; Santelli; Southern Gerrard, Alice. "Elizabeth Cotten." *Old-Time Herald* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1987/1988): 11–13.
Seeger, Mike. "Elizabeth Seeger." *Sing Out!* 33, no. 1 (1987): 48–49.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Elizabeth Cotten: Negro Folk Songs and Tunes (1957, Folkways).
Elizabeth Cotten: Shake Sugaree (1967, Folkways).
When I'm Gone (1979, Folkways).
Elizabeth Cotten Live (ca. 1980, Arhoolie).

COTTON, JAMES

b. 1 July 1935; near Tunica, MS

James Cotton became one of the most popular post-war harmonica players. Over his career, he performed

with Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller), Howlin' Wolf, and Muddy Waters, and he became one of the biggest blues acts of the 1970s, working with the Grateful Dead, Santana, Steve Miller, Freddie King, and B. B. King, among others.

Cotton first learned to imitate a train and a hen cackle from his mother's harmonica playing, and thought that was the extent of the toy's possibilities—until he heard King Biscuit Time on the radio with Sonny Boy Williamson II. At age nine, orphaned, an uncle took Cotton to Helena to meet Williamson, who was impressed. Cotton began to perform with Williamson, which usually meant he collected money at the door while Sonny Boy performed, then performed while Sonny Boy gambled away the money.

Around 1950, Cotton moved to West Memphis with Sonny Boy, which is where Howlin' Wolf heard him. Wolf enlisted Cotton, using him on gigs and on recordings at Sun Studio. At Sun, Cotton was invited to cut his own sides, resulting in 1954's "Cotton Crop Blues," a reworking of Roosevelt Sykes's 1932 "Cotton Seed Blues." ("Raising a good cotton crop is just like a lucky man shooting dice" was one of the lyrics bemoaning the farmer's fate.) In West Memphis, Cotton played with guitarists Hubert Sumlin and Auburn "Pat" Hare, who favored a crunching, distorted sound years ahead of its time. Hare recorded with Cotton at Sun.

Not long after the record's release, Cotton was working as a gravel truck driver in West Memphis, Arkansas, finishing a Friday's work hauling gravel when a man approached, saying, "I'm Muddy Waters." Cotton had never seen a picture of Muddy Waters and had no expectations of meeting him. He looked at the stranger, tapped the vanishing half-pint of Echo Springs in his back pocket, said, "That's nice. I'm Jesus Christ." But it was Muddy Waters, whose band was short one harmonica player after Junior Wells had abandoned him in mid-tour, AWOL from the military. Cotton finished out the tour, then rented a room in Muddy's Chicago home. Otis Spann, also living at Muddy's, worked Cotton into the band. Cotton's former guitar mate, Pat Hare, soon followed him to Muddy's band.

Cotton was always a lively performer, and with Muddy he found a large audience for his antics. The band often warmed up the crowd for Muddy, and Cotton favored popular hits. He'd use a long microphone cord and work his way through the crowd; he'd spin, roll, and dance, even hang upside down from the rafters, sweat pouring from his brow, dripping from his garments. Audiences stuffed his clothes with money (all tips were shared by the band).

Cotton's first session with Muddy was for the tune "All Aboard." Leonard Chess was still using Little

Walter on recordings, but this song called for two harmonicas, and Cotton played the train sounds. Within short order, Cotton was a regular on Muddy's sessions, playing on tunes such as "I Live the Life I Love," "Evil," and the classic performance at Newport in 1960. Cotton stayed with Muddy until 1966 (though he also dropped out for a spell around 1961), during which time he became Muddy's bandleader. Cotton also served as a bridge to the burgeoning folk crowd, making himself available to the young white kids who were increasingly showing up at Muddy's shows. Cotton befriended Paul Butterfield, Charlie Musselwhite, Mike Bloomfield, and Peter Wolf, making them comfortable at gigs.

In 1966, Cotton set out on his own with the James Cotton Blues Band (sometimes billed as the Jimmy Cotton Blues Quartet), hitting the road. The first gig from the first tour was recorded, and released in 1998 as *Late Night Blues* (Justin Time Records). He recorded for Sam Charters on Vanguard's *Chicago/The Blues/Today* series, and released four albums under his own name before the decade was out. His high-energy performance landed him an opening slot on not one but two Janis Joplin tours. In the 1970s, Cotton was signed to Albert Grossman as manager; Grossman managed Bob Dylan among others. Cotton's albums were produced by Todd Rundgren, Mike Bloomfield, and Allen Toussaint. He was a successful crossover artist, his shows and recordings keeping him in front of the large rock 'n' roll audience.

In 1977, he rejoined Muddy Waters for the recording of *Hard Again*, Muddy's comeback album produced by Johnny Winter. The reunion was a success (the album won a Grammy), and Cotton joined Muddy and Johnny on tour, the three drawing big crowds around the world.

In 1984, he signed with Alligator Records, his second release there, *Live from Chicago: Mr. Superharp Himself*, earning him his first solo Grammy nomination. His 1987 album for Blind Pig Records, *Take Me Back*, also earned a Grammy nomination, as did *James Cotton Live* for the Antone's label in 1988. A bout with throat cancer in 1994 seemed not to slow him; he won his first Grammy in 1996 for *Deep in the Blues*.

ROBERT GORDON

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 Tooze, Sandra. *Muddy Waters: The Mojo Man*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1997.

Discography: LSFP, AMG

Selected Recordings

100% Cotton (1974, Buddah Records).
Live from Chicago: Mr. Superharp Himself (1986, Alligator).
Live (1988, Antone's).
Deep in the Blues (1996, Verve).
Seems Like Yesterday (1998, Justin Time).

COUNCIL, FLOYD "DIPPER BOY"

b. 2 September 1911; Chapel Hill, NC
d. June 1976; Sanford, NC

Coached by friend Tom Strowd, Council was highly rated by his peers, including the Trice Brothers. He was the only guitarist other than Gary Davis that Blind Boy Fuller let "second" him on record. On his own and with Sonny Terry, he made eight sides, two still unsued. Though active through the 1940s and 1950s, his playing diminished in the early 1960s as the result of an unknown illness. He had a debilitating stroke shortly before Pete Lowry and Bruce Bastin located him. He is the "Floyd" in the rock band name "Pink Floyd."

ANDY COHEN

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Harris; Larkin; Santelli
Bastin, Bruce. *Red River Blues*, pp. 172, 224. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

COUN-TREE

Label active in 1964 in St. Louis, Missouri. Among its few known releases are two singles by Albert King: 1006, "Worsome [sic] Baby"/"COD," and 1007, "Threw Your Love on Me Too Strong"/"Lonesome."

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

COUNTRY MUSIC

Country Music Up to 1960

Black and white music styles and songs have merged, diverged, and remerged since Colonial times. Black

musicians brought the banjo from Africa and learned European reels and waltzes on the fiddle. The southern plantation experience produced hymns, secular songs, and dance music that would influence music throughout the American South. By the 1820s, white entertainers had mastered the art of performing in blackface, and playing the fiddle and banjo in something like black style. The minstrel shows they developed remained popular through the nineteenth century, producing many popular songs. Even religious music found a place in minstrelsy, as "Hear Dem Bells," "Golden Slippers," and other black hymns were adapted for the popular stage.

After the Civil War, black entertainers formed successful troupes on their own, trading in part on their enhanced authenticity as "real coons." Though minstrelsy was on the wane by the 1890s, early records featured banjo-playing singers and soloists, so-called "coon shout" songs, and occasional examples of an emerging genre called "ragtime." Alongside these developments, white musicians maintained separate traditions and styles, from ancient narrative ballads to sentimental and comic songs, a variety of dance tunes, and hymns. Nevertheless, white and black music had many points of convergence. Many religious and secular songs enjoyed interracial appeal, and the fiddle and banjo became as essential to white southerners in the nineteenth century as they had been to early black plantation music. Those instruments have become passé in most country music since the 1940s, but they have persisted as basic elements of bluegrass.

"Country music" was a term created by the record industry in the 1950s. It is said to have begun in June 1923 (the exact date is unknown), when the popular entertainer Fiddlin John Carson made a record for the Okeh label in Atlanta. He sang in a raw, rural voice, accompanying himself on the fiddle, and Okeh was quite surprised when repeat orders for the record began to appear. Carson was quickly invited to record again, and other southern musicians soon followed his example. At first they traveled to New York, but gradually major labels began to carry recording equipment to southern cities, capturing a broad variety of regional blues and country talent.

The racial divide in the Old South was still firmly in place in the 1920s, but it nevertheless still permitted the cross-fertilization of white and black repertoire and style. Blues formed an important element of country music from the first, as Carson, Riley Puckett, Gid Tanner, Samantha Bumgarner, Henry Whitter, and Uncle Dave Macon all logged blues titles on record in 1923–1924. Macon's work was especially interesting, since he continued the performance practices, and sang many of the songs of the nineteenth-century minstrel stage.

By 1927, southern black blues performers, notably Blind Blake and Blind Lemon Jefferson, were producing records that would have immediate and long-term effects on white country music. In their wake came Jimmie Rodgers, a Mississippi-born brakeman who sang and yodeled the blues while playing his own rudimentary guitar accompaniments. His records sold well and influenced other performers, black and white. Some, including Mae Glover, Tommy Johnson, Gene Autry, and Cliff Carlisle, copied Rodgers closely on records of their own. Cajun French-language Rodgers-style pieces were made by Roy Gonzales and Sydney Landry in 1929.

In Rodgers' wake came a pair of Georgia natives, Tom Darby and Jimmie Tarlton, whose 1927 coupling "Columbus Stockade Blues"/"Birmingham Jail" became a hit at the same time as Rodgers' first "Blue Yodel." Buoyed by Tarlton's primitive slide guitar, the pair recorded many blues-oriented songs between 1927 and 1933. They were followed by the Allen Brothers (Lee and Austin) from Chattanooga, whose rowdy deliveries enhanced their popular cover versions of Charlie Jackson's "Salty Dog Blues" and a number of original blues that became their hallmark. Like Darby and Tarlton, their popularity waned during the Great Depression, but the Allens were the forerunners of many 1930s brother duets. A number of them leaned heavily on the blues.

Cliff and Bill Carlisle from Wakefield, Kentucky, both worked in the Jimmie Rodgers orbit during the early 1930s. Cliff and his Hawaiian guitar were featured on radio and records in 1930. He backed Rodgers on some 1931 records and formed a duet with his younger brother Bill in 1933. Bill was an impressive flat-picking guitarist whose country music career continues to this day, with regular appearances on the Grand Ole Opry. Together they evolved away from the Rodgers style, though they retained an affinity for the blues, especially in a number of good-naturedly outrageous songs that dealt with sexual bragging and domestic strife.

In 1934 the Callahan Brothers (Walter and Homer) from Asheville, North Carolina, recorded "St. Louis Blues," a cover of minstrel show veteran Emmett Miller's 1928 version. They duplicated Miller's distinctive yodel in duet harmony and had a hit. Many blues-oriented pieces followed during their 1934–1939 stay with the American Record Corporation. Their cover of Bill Carlisle's 1933 "Rattlesnake Daddy" inspired a related song by Blind Boy Fuller in 1935, and 1940s versions by the Bailey Brothers and Hawkshaw Hawkins.

The Delmore Brothers (Alton and Rabon) from northern Alabama did more than anyone except Bob Wills to plant the blues firmly into the country

music agenda. A 1931 record, "Got the Kansas City Blues," heralded their new style, though the Depression precluded significant sales. In 1933 they landed on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, and recorded their signature piece for Bluebird, "Brown's Ferry Blues." The Depression notwithstanding, it became a major seller, inspiring Alton Delmore to write many more like it. In the 1940s, they recorded numerous blues and boogie-based tunes for King Records, scoring hits with "Freight Train Boogie" and "Blues, Stay Away from Me," among others.

White musicians in areas with large black populations were particularly vulnerable to the blues. In Texas, the young fiddler Bob Wills toasted Bessie Smith with a version of "Gulf Coast Blues" in 1929 on a trial recording that went unissued and has been lost. When he joined forces with singer Milton Brown to form the Light Crust Doughboys band, they adapted Georgia Tom Dorsey's "Eagle Ridin' Papa" as the band's radio theme song, and recorded Dorsey's "Nancy Jane" on their first release in 1932. When Brown formed his own Musical Brownies, his repertoire featured blues along with country and pop tunes. Wills then built his Texas Playboys band on an even broader blues foundation, recycling the compositions of Bessie Smith, Lucille Hegamin, W. C. Handy, Memphis Minnie, Big Bill Broonzy, and Tampa Red, among others, and fashioned new blues on his own. Wills's longtime vocalist Tommy Duncan paid an impressive tribute to Blind Lemon Jefferson in 1941 with "Honey, What You Gonna Do."

The broad influence of Bob Wills and Milton Brown inspired many more Texas string bands, most of whom also relied on the blues. Among them were Bob's younger brothers Johnnie Lee, Billy Jack, and Luther (Luke) Wills, who formed fine Western swing bands of their own. Johnnie Lee's first records in 1941 included Tampa Red's "Too Long" and Kokomo Arnold's "Milk Cow Blues." The latter became a hit and remained identified with Johnnie Lee throughout a long career. Billy Jack led an accomplished band in Sacramento, California, during the 1950s that played a lot of blues, stylishly embellished with bop and proto-rock licks.

The Maddox Brothers and Rose was a family band that fled Alabama for California in 1933. Its members were still adolescents when they sang Memphis Minnie's "I'm Talking About You" on a surviving 1940 Sacramento broadcast. They recorded a few more blues during their salad years from 1947 to 1957 and made cover versions of several bluesy Hank Williams hits.

Bill Monroe learned music in his youth from the legendary black Kentucky fiddler and guitarist Arnold Shultz, who died in 1931. Shultz never

recorded, though his name was associated with the influential Kentucky bluesmen John Byrd and Walter Taylor, who did. When he was young, Monroe recalled playing guitar behind Shultz's fiddling and learning from it. Shultz also pioneered finger-style guitar playing, teaching a young white student, Kennedy Jones, who passed the style to Mose Rager, who in turn instructed Ike Everly (father of the Everly Brothers) and Merle Travis. Travis himself became a model for a young Chet Atkins, who taught himself to play from listening to early 1940s Travis broadcasts. Travis's affection for a blues repertoire is evident from surviving live recordings, and his guitar playing was always blues informed. Bill Monroe created a new musical genre called "bluegrass," symbolically resuscitating the fiddle and banjo from plantation minstrelsy. Blues and other bluegrass songs about loneliness and alienation combined with hoedowns, waltzes, and hymns were fundamental to Monroe's aesthetic. His sensibilities influenced generations as bluegrass became an enduring music.

King Records in Cincinnati played a major role in injecting blues and R&B into country music in the 1940s, mainly through efforts of the creative black producer Henry Glover, who routinely cross-fertilized the company's country and Race catalogs, in part to increase royalties to King's publishing arm, Lois Music. Thus King's staple country artists, including Moon Mullican, Clyde Moody, the Delmore Brothers, the York Brothers, and Hank Penny, all helped to put blues and songs from the emerging R&B genre on country radio and jukeboxes in the 1940s and early 1950s. They also became forerunners of 1950s rockabilly, a genre created when Memphis producer Sam Phillips encouraged Elvis Presley to sing the blues in the same fashion as the black performers who recorded for Phillips's Sun label. Blues weren't Elvis's first choice, but he did them superbly, redirecting Sun toward other white southerners who performed blues-informed music. These included Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, and Jerry Lee Lewis who, with Presley, quickly superseded Sun's black performers.

Country Music Since 1960

The 1940s saw the wide popularization of two styles. One was "Western music," cowboy and cowboy-themed songs sung by Gene Autry (who was doing so in Republic film westerns in the 1930s), Roy Rogers (sometimes with the Sons of the Pioneers), Tex Ritter, and, a little later, Marty Robbins. The other was "honky tonk," preceded in the 1930s and

early 1940s by fiddler Cliff Bruner (formerly with Milton Brown), Floyd Tillman, and Buddy Jones. The great honky-tonk figure was Hank Williams, born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, and taught some guitar rudiments by a local black musician, Rufe "Teetot" Payne. His first hits were "Lovesick Blues," a reworking of the 1928 Emmett Miller record, and "Move It on Over," a twelve-measure (4 + 8) verse and refrain blues. His blues-injected music proved popular through his MGM Records releases and his Grand Ole Opry appearances, and he has been influential to singers, who have imitated Williams's singing and rerecorded his songs through the present day. Other "honky tonk" musicians through the 1950s include Ernest Tubb, Lefty Frizzell, Webb Pierce, and Hank Snow.

In 1952 Kitty Wells recorded the country chart number one hit "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," and into the following decade a number of women followed her success, including Jean Shepherd, Patsy Cline, and Loretta Lynn. The same period also heralded the arrivals of Porter Wagoner, the Louvin Brothers, Conway Twitty, and George Jones. Jim Reeves was a popular artist in the United States, and an influential one in Ireland. As the 1960s continued, Johnny Cash outgrew his rockabilly beginnings, Merle Haggard came forth, Buck Owens with the guitarist Don Rich established "the Bakersfield Sound" with Fender Telecaster guitars, and Charlie Pride of Sledge, Mississippi, became one of the first black stars of country and western.

Television and country went back together as far as Tennessee Ernie Ford's program in the 1950s, and by the early 1970s the annual Country Music Association awards show aired regularly, several syndicated shows, including *Hee Haw*, were introduced, and Glen Campbell was a media personality as well as a country singer. Singer/songwriters such as Kris Kristofferson, Tom T. Hall, and Willie Nelson were each recognized in his own right. Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and Tompall Glaser spearheaded "the Outlaws" trend in the mid-1970s to counter the trend of Nashville country music records to sound more like mainstream popular music. One singer who went in the commercial direction was Dolly Parton, who began the 1970s as a member of the Porter Wagoner troupe and ended the decade as a solo country/pop star on all the record charts. Other notable women recognizable to the general public were Tammy Wynette and Tanya Tucker, with Loretta Lynn recording a successful series of duets with Conway Twitty.

Meanwhile, an "alternative country" was developing, initially with Bob Dylan and the Byrds in the late 1960s, continuing with The Band, John Prine,

and Jimmie Dale Gilmore in the next decade. Other artists who began on this fringe but are now established show headliners are J. J. Cale, Lucinda Williams, Joe Ely, Nanci Griffith, and Steve Earle. Within the last twenty years, mainstream country music has seemed more like popular music. Still, some top acts have taken much from previous styles, such as Emmylou Harris, Ricky Skaggs, and more recently the Dixie Chicks. New male voices have been heard, like Dwight Yoakam, Randy Travis, George Strait, Travis Tritt, Vince Gill, and Garth Brooks, along with the women Reba McEntire, Mary Chapin Carpenter, and Trisha Yearwood. Alabama and the Judds proved to be among the most popular recording acts of the 1980s. Dave Grisman and Bela Fleck, two artists trained in older music, have pushed various musical boundaries for guitar and banjo, respectively. Yet the biggest recent phenomenon appears to be the soundtrack music CD to the 2000 film *O Brother Where Art Thou*, whose high sales indicate wide interest in the country music before 1935.

DICK SPOTTSWOOD (TO 1960)
EDWARD KOMARA (SINCE 1960)

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COURTNEY, TOM “TOMCAT”

b. 22 or 23 January 1929; Marlin or Waco, TX

Longtime San Diego, California, blues mainstay, singer-guitarist Tomcat Courtney first cut his teeth as opening act/backup guitarist for Guitar Slim. He moved to San Diego in 1971, and spent two decades leading the house band at the Texas Teahouse in hippie enclave Ocean Beach. During the 1980s, Courtney often shared a bill with popular San Diego roots rockers the Beat Farmers and Mojo Nixon. He has recorded several self-released CDs, and remains a popular draw in southern California.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography: Harris

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COUSIN JOE

b. Pleasant Joseph, 20 December 1907; Wallace, LA
d. 2 October 1989; New Orleans, LA

Singer, pianist, guitarist, composer. Cousin Joe’s fluent piano, insouciant singing, and inventive compositions such as “Box Car Shorty and Peter Blue” made him a popular New Orleans entertainer and prolific recording artist whose career spanned four decades from the mid-1940s. He worked with A. J. Piron, Harold DeJean, Joseph Robichaux, Mezz Mezzrow, Dizzy Gillespie, Sidney Bechet, Charlie Parker, and Billie Holiday.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: LSPF

COVINGTON, ROBERT

b. Robert Lee Travis, 13 December 1941; Yazoo City, MS
d. 17 January 1996; Elk Grove Village, IL

Robert Covington learned drums as a boy and played in the St. Francis High drum and bugle corps and also in the R&B band Melvin and the Downbeats. He left Alcorn College (now Alcorn State) when Big Joe Turner, in town on tour, needed a drummer for several months. A fine singer as well as a drummer, he fronted the Lee Covington Revue, with whom he had the regional hit, “I Know,” in 1962, and toured with Ernie K-Doe and Ted Taylor.

After arriving in Chicago in 1965 Covington worked with Little Walter Jacobs, and later found regular work with Bob Stroger, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Lonnie Brooks, Fenton Robinson, and Aron Burton, who introduced him to the North Side club scene. In 1983 he landed a ten-year stint with Sunnyland Slim’s band, working alongside Bob Stroger, Steve Freund, and Sam Burckhardt, a well-balanced

unit that made good use of his professional metrical skills and accommodated his soulful balladry. His steady backbeat and warm baritone vocals were featured on two numbers on the ensemble's only full-length recording, *Chicago Jump*, issued in 1985 by Red Beans (reissued on Evidence).

Following Sunnyland's retirement, Covington sang at Chicago's Kingston Mines club and continued to work with Stroger as a founding member of Mississippi Heat, appearing on their *Singing Straight from the Heart* album in 1992. His only solo collection is *The Golden Voice of Robert Covington*, recorded for Red Beans in 1988 (reissued on Evidence), on which he sang six original compositions, including "I Want to Thank Ya," "Better Watch Your Step," "I Don't Care," and the subtle and seductively soulful lead track "Trust in Me." He also recorded with Johnny Littlejohn, James Cotton, Lacy Gibson, Casey Jones, and Aron Burton.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

AMG (Michael Erlewine)

Discography: AMG

The Golden Voice of Robert Covington (Evidence 26074-2; reissue).

COW COW BLUES

Charles "Cow Cow" Davenport was born in 1894 in Anniston, Alabama, into a religious family. He attended Alabama Theological Seminary, but was expelled and gravitated to working as a pianist in honky tonks in Birmingham, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia. In his teens he worked in various traveling minstrel shows and carnivals, and also had a spell as a brothel pianist in the Storyville district of New Orleans. He had his greatest success in vaudeville, first appearing as Davenport & Co, partnered by singer Dora Carr, and then as the Chicago Steppers, with Ivy Smith, both on the TOBA circuit. In 1929 he became staff arranger/composer for Vocalion, but later returned to the stage with his Chicago Steppers revue. The venture failed and, burdened with debts, he spent a short time in prison, which affected his health. Despite sporadic comeback attempts, he never achieved his former popularity again. A stroke in the late 1930s affected his playing but in the early 1940s he was back, touring with his wife, Peggy, a snake dancer. Now restricted to singing, he performed only sporadically, eventually retiring to Cleveland where he died, almost forgotten, in 1955.

His most famous composition is "Cow Cow Blues." "Cow cow" refers to the so-called cow catcher on a train, not to Davenport himself; it was only after he began performing the song, which proved immensely popular, that he acquired the nickname "Cow Cow." "Cow Cow Blues" is a classic, its complicated bass patterns heavy, yet with an inexorable pulse. The way in which the melody line switches from bass to treble is particularly notable. Davenport, with Dora Carr, first recorded it for Gennett on October 1, 1925. The record sold well and other versions followed for Brunswick, Vocalion, and Paramount. The composition was also available in sheet music and as a piano roll on Vocal Style.

A tough, uncompromising pianist, Davenport's varied recorded work ranges from "Alabama Strut," a two-handed barrelhouse composition exhibiting Davenport's characteristic version of the walking octaves bass, with the accent on the first note of each couplet, to "Atlanta Rag," a version of Scott Joplin's "Pineapple Rag." Other fine recordings include "Slum Gullion Stomp," which uses a walking octave boogie-woogie bass, sometimes carrying the melody in the left hand; "Mama Don't Allow No Easy Riders," with a bass in tenths and a catchy melody similar to the New Orleans song "Winin' Boy," with detectable marching band influences; "Back in the Alley," taken at a fast tempo and containing many of his most typical flourishes; and "Mooch Piddle," which was unusual for Davenport in that it had a predominantly four-to-the-bar chorded bass.

It has been alleged that at least some of the riffs of "Cow Cow Blues" are derived from earlier pieces, such as "Trilby Rag" (1915, Carey Morgan). Henry Callen's accompaniment to Lucille Bogan's "Lonesome Daddy Blues" (1923) also uses similar phrases. Although the generic theme may have been around for some time, Davenport's version, in which the left-hand melody begins on the fourth beat of the bar, is quite distinctive. Other pianists who adapted the "Cow Cow Blues" melody to their own compositions were Mississippian Louise Johnson, in "On the Wall" (1930), and Chicago-based Clarence Lofton in "Streamline Train" (1936), accompanying Red Nelson. There is also a mandolin version by Charlie McCoy entitled "That Lonesome Train Took My Baby Away" (1930) and a harmonica version by DeFord Bailey, "Davidson County Blues" (1928).

In the postwar period, the popular song "Cow Cow Boogie" is a completely different composition. The "Cow Cow Blues" theme did, however, reappear as "Mess Around" by Ray Charles (1953) and Roy Byrd (Professor Longhair) (1978).

BOB HALL

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COX, IDA

b. Ida Prather, 25 February 1896; Toccoa, GA

d. 10 November 1967; Knoxville, TN

Blues singer. Long regarded as one of the finest of female blues singers, her reputation rests on her Paramount recordings made in the 1920s and, to a lesser extent, a number of later recordings.

Life

Cox was born Ida Prather and grew up in Cedartown, Georgia. She showed an early interest in music, singing in the local church choir. Her professional career began in her early teens when she ran away with White & Clark Black & Tan Minstrels around 1910, debuting with the popular hit "Put Your Arms Around Me, Honey." She then toured extensively with other minstrel companies, including the Rabbit Foot Minstrels and Pete Werley's Florida Cotton Blossom Minstrels, where she met her first husband, Adler Cox. The couple briefly managed the Douglass Hotel in Macon, Georgia. However, in about 1920, she returned to show business, touring on the TOBA circuit. During this period, she worked with the seminal jazz pianist Jelly Roll Morton (Atlanta, 1920).

She began working for Paramount in 1923. Billed as "The Uncrowned Queen of the Blues," her records sold well from the first and she recorded regularly for the company until the beginning of the Depression. Her status with Paramount is shown in her being featured in the *Paramount Book of Blues* (ca. 1927), a publication celebrating the company's most popular race artists.

As well as making records, she continued to work as a top-line entertainer in black vaudeville throughout the 1920s, touring widely along the East Coast and in the South. An important musical association at this time was the pianist Jesse Crump whom she married sometime around 1927. He had first joined her show in 1923 and thereafter became her principal accompanist. Cox also associated with major jazz musicians like the cornetist King Oliver with whom she frequently performed in Chicago at the Plantation Club and elsewhere.

In about 1929, she organized her own company titled *Raisin' Cain*, which became the first TOBA show to open at Apollo Theater in Harlem. The company was commercially successful and toured widely during the Depression. During the 1930s, Cox performed both in her own revues and with musicians such as Bessie Smith (*Fan Waves* revue, Apollo Theater, 1934) and Billie and Dede Pierce (Florida, ca. 1935).

In 1939, her career revived under the auspices of promoter John Hammond who booked her for the second of his From Spirituals to Swing concerts in Carnegie Hall. This led to her first recordings in ten years, for Vocalion and OKeh. She continued to be booked for theater and club dates during the 1940s, but after suffering a stroke around 1945, she only worked sporadically. She settled in Buffalo, New York, from 1945 to 1949 and then moved to her daughter's home in Knoxville, Tennessee, where she remained for the rest of her life, living in semi-retirement. A final recording session for the Riverside label took place in New York in 1961 with the Coleman Hawkins Quintet. She died in 1967 of cancer.

Cox was unusually level-headed for a blues performer. As her colleague, the pianist Lovie Austin noted, "She never led the wild life the rest of us did." She had an excellent business sense and it was this, as well as her musical talent, that enabled her to survive as a theatrical producer and performer in the cut-throat world of black theater for more than three decades.

Music

Cox's recorded legacy falls into three periods: the Paramount era of 1923–1929, the 1939–1940 recordings instigated by Hammond, and the 1961 Riverside LP. Of these, the Paramount sessions are by far the most important, not only because of the quantity of records they produced (eighty-seven different tracks along with a number of alternate takes), but also because of their consistently high level of musical excellence. She is in fact regarded as one of the consummate female blues vocalists of the 1920s. While her voice is not as intense as that of her two main rivals, Bessie Smith and "Ma" Rainey, it is nevertheless remarkably strong, capable of charging even a second-rate lyric with a highly wrought emotionalism. Like most other vaudeville blues artists, her diction is always clear.

An example of her artistry, taken almost at random from her extensive output, is the 1925 recording

“Coffin Blues.” The theme is that of the singer lamenting at the wake of her lover (this composition is one of a series of blues recorded by Cox based on the death of a lover, the most famous example being “Graveyard Dream Blues” from 1923). Cox’s singing is filled with pathos and is of the utmost sincerity. Its power is greatly enhanced by the use of harmonium, suggestive of a church organ, and cornet as accompaniment. This unusual combination was undoubtedly influenced by Bessie Smith’s famous recording of “St. Louis Blues,” issued a few months earlier. Here, however, the particular aptness of the harmonium to the funereal theme gives an extra dimension.

Cox’s recorded repertoire revolved almost exclusively around blues. (How accurately this reflects her stage repertoire is not altogether clear, though it is probable that her live performances incorporated a wider variety of material.) Almost three-quarters of her Paramount recordings are classic blues (that is, using twelve-bar stanzas and AAB texts). Nearly all the remaining numbers are blues of one type or another. Two exceptions are her cover of the 1916 pop standard “I Ain’t Got Nobody” and the novelty song “Scootle De Doo.”

Cox is important as a composer as well as a vocalist and up to half her Paramount recordings may have been either self- or co-composed. Although she often incorporated traditional folk strains in her lyrics, many use original themes in a most effective way. For example, “Wild Women Don’t Have the Blues” (1924) advises the listener to get “real wild” as “You never get nothing by being an angel child” (here, as in many of her recordings, the listener is assumed to be female). Structurally this number is also unusual, with each twelve-bar stanza consisting of a two-line verse and a one-line refrain. (Cox also successfully experimented with this form in 1928’s “Worn Down Daddy.”)

The Paramount sides are noted for their accompaniments. Until 1926, Cox’s recordings are dominated by the Paramount house pianist Lovie Austin who accompanied her either solo or with a band that included top jazz musicians of the day such as cornetist Tommy Ladnier, clarinetist Johnny Dodds, and trombonist Kid Ory. From 1927, her husband, Jesse Crump, was her main pianist on record. His accompaniments, whether solo or with a band, are also of remarkably high standard.

The 1939–1940 sessions produced six sides that are hardly musically inferior to the earlier recordings and benefit from superior sound quality. Again, the accompaniments—including clarinetist Edmond Hall and guitarist Charlie Christian—are exemplary. This is also true of the 1961 LP, though, almost inevitably, Cox’s voice had somewhat deteriorated by this time.

PETER MUIR

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

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CRAFTON, HARRY “FATS”

Flourished 1940s–1960s

Singer, guitarist, songwriter in the jump-blues style. Emerged from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, after World War II with releases on small labels. His important work was done in the early 1950s for the Gotham and Jarman labels with various musicians, including bandleader Doc Bagby and young organist Jimmy Smith. Little is known about him after he left the Nite Rider Orchestra in the early 1960s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Eder)

Discography: AMG (Bruce Eder)

CRAIG, “LEFT HAND” FRANK

(*See Left Hand Frank*)

CRAWFORD, JAMES “SUGAR BOY”

b. 12 October 1934; New Orleans, LA

Recorded one of New Orleans’s most famous Carnival songs, “Jock-A-Mo.” Crawford was one of the finest

rhythm and blues vocalists produced by the active New Orleans scene of the 1950s. At an early age, he learned the piano and while attending Booker T. Washington High School formed his own band, in which he played trombone. The band was later christened the “Chapake Shawee,” based on an instrumental the group performed. A chance break came in 1952 when Crawford performed over Doctor Daddy-O’s local radio program. The exposure led to a recording contract with Aladdin Records and regular club work in New Orleans. The Chapake Shawee recorded one session for Aladdin, but failed to produce a hit. Nevertheless, Crawford’s local popularity grew and he played regularly in such local clubs as the Dew Drop Inn, the Tijuana, and the Joy Lounge.

In 1953 Crawford and his group the Cane Cutters moved to the Chess label and in 1954 recorded his most significant hit, “Jock-A-Mo,” a tune based on a Mardi Gras Indian chant. The Mardi Gras Indians are African American carnival organizations who mask as Indians and wear intricately designed beadwork costumes. Each “tribe” maintains a varied repertoire of songs performed in a patois unique to the Indians. The song later became a hit for the Dixie Cups under the title “Iko Iko.” The Cane Cutters, which included such New Orleans talent as Ernest Holland, Smokey Johnson, David Lastie, “Big Boy” Myles, Batman Rankin, and Billy Tate, took a long-term gig as the house band at the Carousel Club in Baton Rouge. By 1956 the group was back in New Orleans. Crawford then joined the Imperial Records roster and produced some fine titles that enjoyed success in the South. Some of his better Imperial titles were “Morning Star,” “She’s Gotta Wobble (When She Walks),” and “I Don’t Know What I’ll Do.” Crawford’s mastery of the ballad shows in these recordings, cementing his reputation as one of the finest singers to emerge from New Orleans.

He later recorded for the Motel and Ace labels, having a local hit with “Danny Boy” on the former. Crawford’s career was very successful regionally, and he kept an extensive touring schedule. But the tense racial environment of the early 1960s violently halted his career. In 1963 outside of Monroe, Louisiana, police stopped Crawford for allegedly speeding and driving under the influence. He was pistol whipped by the police, developed paralysis, and remained incapacitated for almost two years. A brief comeback failed to revive his career, and Crawford has since dedicated his singing to church performances. Crawford works today as a locksmith. His legacy stills exerts an influence through his recordings and the career of his grandson Davell Crawford.

KEVIN S. FONTENOT

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Discography: LSFP

Sugarboy Crawford (Chess -2-9215).

CRAY, ROBERT

b. 1 August 1953; Columbus, GA

Guitarist, singer, songwriter. One of the most popular artists during the 1980s blues revival, Robert Cray has proven that a bluesman can still achieve popular recognition and remain true to his influences. Early in his life, Cray’s family moved around the country and overseas because his father was in the U.S. Army, but Cray’s family eventually settled in Tacoma, Washington. Cray learned to play the guitar, formed the Robert Cray Band in 1974, and toured around the Northwest, playing at various colleges and in small clubs. In 1978 the band released its first album, *Who’s Been Talkin’*, on the Tomato label, which then folded. The band did not release another album until 1983: the long-awaited *Bad Influence*, which features Cray originals such as “Phone Booth,” “Bad Influence,” and “Where Do I Go from Here?” This album also highlights one of the seminal influences on Cray’s vocals/guitar work—Magic Sam.

Not long after the next album, *False Accusations* (1985), was released, Cray teamed up with Albert Collins and Johnny Copeland on *Showdown!* (1985), a super blues guitarist collaboration that earned Cray and his veteran collaborators a Grammy Award for Best Traditional Blues album. Even this successful recording venture could not have prepared Cray for the monumental success of his next album, *Strong Persuader* (1986). Three singles—“Smokin’ Gun,” “Right Next Door (Because of Me),” and “Guess I Showed Her”—all made the *Billboard* rock Top Forty with “Smokin’ Gun” reaching as high as #2. The album also charted high, reaching #13. After this widespread success, Cray’s touring proved far more lucrative and helped, along with the growing popularity of Stevie Ray Vaughan and others, to create a late 1980s blues revival in the United States.

The follow-up album to *Strong Persuader, Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, also produced a hit tune—the title track. While Cray didn't buckle or change under this newfound fame, the line-up of his band did change, as longtime bass player Richard Cousins and drummer Dave Olson departed. His next album, *Midnight Stroll* (1990), took on a Stax-soul groove with the Memphis horns backing all the tracks. Besides a 1990 reissue of his first album *Who's Been Talkin'*, entitled *Too Many Cooks*, Cray spent some time reinventing his blues sound, which hit full stride again on 1993's *Shame + a Sin* backed by the solid rhythm section of Kevin Hayes on drums and Karl Sevareid on bass, accompanied by Jim Pugh on organ/piano and Albert Collins on guitar/harmonica. With blues and soul still at the forefront of this “new” Robert Cray Band's repertoire, recent albums have been particularly well received by critics. The band's last two efforts *Take Your Shoes Off* (1999) and *Shoulda Been Home* (2001) are excellent CDs: the former featuring a Memphis soul-blues tune, “Love Gone to Waste,” and numerous other soul-based songs such as “That Wasn't Me” and “24-7 Man”; and the latter featuring the rocking blues songs “Baby's Arms” and “Love Sickness” along with the slow soulful tunes “Already Gone,” “Anytime,” and “No One Special.”

JUSTIN WERT

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Discography: AMG

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Take Your Shoes Off (1999, Rykodisc 10479).

Shoulda Been Home (2001, Rykodisc 10611).

CRAYTON, CONNIE CURTIS “PEE WEE”

b. 18 December 1914; Liberty Hill, TX

d. 25 June 1985; Los Angeles, CA

Connie Curtis Crayton was born on December 18, 1914, in Liberty Hill, a small community near Rockdale, Texas, sixty miles outside of the state capital of Austin, where the family soon moved. His nickname came from his father who named him after

a favorite piano player. He relocated to Los Angeles in 1935, later moving north to Oakland. Crayton was inspired to pick up guitar after witnessing T-Bone Walker at a local club and enlisted Walker to teach him the rudiments of the instrument. Another major influence during this period was John Collins, a guitarist who had played with Nat King Cole. Crayton started playing in the local clubs and eventually joined Ivory Joe Hunter's band. With Hunter he made his 1946 debut on the Pacific label with “Seventh Street Boogie” and appeared on several other Hunter records over the succeeding year. Shortly after, he cut his first single under his own name for the Gru-V-Tone imprint.

He signed with the Los Angeles-based Modern label in 1948, hitting big with the instrumental “Blues After Hours” which scaled to number one on the R&B charts at year's end. “Texas Hop” hit number five on the charts the same year, followed the next year by “I Love You So,” which reached number six. Crayton cut prolifically for the label until 1951 but subsequent records failed to chart. Crayton moved briefly to Aladdin and, in 1954, Imperial. Under Dave Bartholomew's production, Crayton made many notable sides in New Orleans, including “Every Dog Has His Day,” “Do Unto Others,” and “Runnin' Wild.”

From there, Crayton landed at Vee-Jay in the late 1950s, and during the early 1960s cut singles for Jamie, Guyden, Edco, and Smash. Crayton cut album sessions for Vanguard and Blue Horizon with a final album for the Murray Brothers label in 1983. By the 1980s he was playing regularly at blues festivals both domestically and in Europe. Pee Wee Crayton died of a heart attack at his Los Angeles home June 25, 1985.

JEFF HARRIS

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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See also Aladdin/Score; Hunter, Ivory Joe; Imperial; Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM; Walker, T-Bone

CRAZY CAJUN RECORDS

The Crazy Cajun record label is synonymous with legendary record producer Huey P. Meaux. One of the label's biggest hits was Barbara Lynn's "You'll Lose a Good Thing" (1962), but most of the label's successes lay outside of the R&B and blues realm. Still Meaux recorded a number of blues performers, including Johnny Copeland and Lowell Fulson.

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: AMG; McGrath

See also Copeland, Johnny "Clyde"; Fulson, Lowell; Lynn, Barbara; Meaux, Huey P.

CREACH, PAPA JOHN

b. 28 May 1917; Beaver Falls, PA
d. 22 February 1994; Los Angeles, CA

Johnny "Papa John" Creach was an electric violinist and vocalist whose career spanned lounge music, jazz, country, blues, and rock. He moved to Chicago at the age of about eighteen and led the Chocolate Drops and Chocolate Music Bars. By the mid-1940s he was based in Los Angeles, recording for Excelsior as Johnny Creach's Majors and Minors. In the early 1950s the Johnny Creach Trio recorded popular material for Dootone. He recorded five blues titles with Roy Milton in 1960–1961. Shortly afterward he followed violinist Ginger Smock for a residency on the *SS Catalina* before settling at the Parisian Room in Los Angeles.

He remerged in 1970 as Papa John Creach with the rock groups Jefferson Airplane, Jefferson Starship, and Hot Tuna. Throughout the 1970s he also recorded eponymous blues rock albums. His lyrics for "Hezekiah" on the 1978 album *Inphasion* are almost certainly in tribute to Hezekiah Stuff Smith, with whom he recorded privately in 1964 in a violin trio including Ginger Smock. In 1992 Creach recorded his only CD, a blues album with the Bernie Pearl Blues Band. Creach's playing, like his singing, was hip and funky. While his ballad work exhibited instability and the limits of his technique, he dug deep with bent horn-like notes on the blues. Fast fiddle lines were characterized by a trademark combination of tremolo with flurries of descending arpeggios. The

video documentary *Papa John Creach: Setting the Record Straight* (1987) teams him with Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson. Creach also acted in movies: Jacob in *A Gathering of Old Men* (1987) and John Devil in *Revolving Doors* (1988).

ANTHONY BARNETT

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CREAM

British power trio, more influential on heavy rock scene than blues. Ginger Baker (drums) formed band with Eric Clapton (guitar) and Jack Bruce (bass) in 1966. Debut album featured distinctive reworkings of blues staples like "I'm So Glad," "Spoonful," "Rollin' and Tumblin'." *Disraeli Gears* was more psychedelic in approach and established the band as a major commercial success in United States, especially the single "Sunshine of Your Love." Live concerts featured extended improvisations on both original material (mainly by Bruce and poet Pete Brown) and blues songs. *Wheels of Fire* contained studio and live recordings, including their hit "White Room," and their famous rendition of Robert Johnson's "Cross Road Blues" ("Crossroads"). Increasingly strained personal relationships and an incessant touring schedule broke up the band at the peak of its popularity in 1969.

KENNY MATHIESON

CREAM

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CRIPPEN, KATIE

b. 17 November 1895; Philadelphia PA
d. 25 November 1929; New York, NY

Singer who had two short recording sessions with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra for the Black Swan label in 1921. She had been singing in small clubs and cafes, and after 1921 she worked her way up to revues and the Keith-Albee-Orpheum and RKO theater circuits. She died of cancer.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

CROCHET, CLEVELAND

b. 6 June 1921; Hathaway, LA

Fiddler and singer in Cajun style. Worked as a farmer in the Lake Charles, Louisiana, area, playing weekends with local musicians. Best known for his 1960 regional hit "Sugar Bee" (Goldband 1106) with singer/steel guitarist Jay Stutes.

EDWARD KOMARA

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CROCKETT, G. L.

b. George L. Crockett, ca. 1929; Carrollton, MS
d. 15 February 1967; Chicago, IL

Chicago blues singer of the 1950s and 1960s. Crockett began his career singing in Chicago performing stand-up blues in West Side clubs under the name of George Crockett. He first recorded in 1957 for Mel London's Chief label, producing the single "Look Out Mabel," an up-tempo blues that sounded like a rock 'n' roll record. As a result it became a collectible in rockabilly circles. Crockett's next recording opportunity only came in 1965, when he recorded for Willie Barney's Four Brothers label, getting a national hit with "It's a Man Down There." It was sung in a Jimmy Reed drawl style but was based on Sonny Boy Williamson's "One Way Out." Crockett followed with another Jimmy Reed soundalike, "Every Goodbye Ain't Gone," that sold well. Before he died, Crockett recorded a third, but unsuccessful, single for Four Brothers.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP

CROSS ROAD BLUES

(*See Straight Alky Blues*)

CROTHERS, BENJAMIN "SCATMAN"

b. 23 May 1910; Terre Haute, IN
d. 22 November 1986; Van Nuys, CA

Popular entertainer "Scatman" Crothers is best remembered for his roles as a film and television actor. But his career began in music, and he was one of the first musicians of the big band era to embrace rhythm and blues.

Crothers began earning money as a teenager by playing drums in the local speakeasies around his hometown of Terre Haute, Indiana. After dropping out of high school, he moved to Chicago and got work in the bigger speakeasies singing for mobsters like Al Capone. It was also in Chicago that he first formed his own band. Crothers apparently picked up the stage name of Scatman (sometimes spelled "Scat Man") in the 1930s for his ability to improvise vocally, or scat. There are reports that he played with Louis Armstrong and T-Bone Walker, and his own local band at one point featured future Count Basie sideman and Tonight Show band member Snooky Young on trumpet.

Crothers moved with his band to Los Angeles in the late 1940s seeking better opportunities. The 1950s found him among the first rhythm and blues artists—mining a musical style similar to what the much younger Ray Charles and Charles Brown were doing. However, as acting work became more regular, his involvement with music lessened to the point that the latter half of his career was focused primarily on acting. However, he did continue recording intermittently, and he wrote and sang a song on an album Young did with fellow Basie alumni Marshal Royal in 1978.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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Big Ben Sings (1973, Motown 777).

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Meet Me at the Fair (1953, Universal Pictures).

CROWN

Record label, based in New York City and managed by Eli Oberstein; operated from 1930 to 1933. It reissued blues records originally on Paramount by such artists as the Mississippi Sheiks and Blind Blake. Oberstein subsequently reissued some of these again on his later Varsity label, which also used material from Gennett and Paramount that Crown had apparently acquired and not itself issued.

HOWARD RYE

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CRUDUP, ARTHUR WILLIAM “BIG BOY”

b. 24 August 1905; Forest, MS

d. 28 March 1974; Nassawadox, VA

The life story of Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup is, in many unfortunate ways, a fairly typical one. Born shortly after the turn of the century in southern Mississippi and raised in poverty, he was forced from an early age to focus more on the pressing concerns of immediate survival than on the development and expression of his significant talent. Even after he became a professional musician, his career was hampered by simple bad timing and, later, by the exploitation of an unscrupulous manager; Crudup abandoned music entirely for a significant period and only found a modicum of commercial success and popularity late in life. He was the composer of Elvis Presley’s breakout hit “That’s All Right, Mama,” and largely for that reason Crudup is one of several black musicians to have been called the “Father of Rock ‘n’ Roll”—yet it took the intervention of third parties many years later to ensure that he would reap even a small amount of financial benefit from his tremendously popular songs.

Early Life and Musical Development

Arthur Crudup was born to a poor rural family in southern Mississippi in 1905. He showed musical promise early on, and like many of his contemporaries, he seemed to have had his first significant musical experiences in church, where he performed as a singer beginning around age ten. He acquired the nickname “Big Boy” as a child, working primarily as a manual laborer during his youth and early adulthood. Crudup developed a serious interest in the blues during his twenties, but did not begin to learn the guitar until age thirty-two, at which point he took lessons from a local bluesman known as Papa Harvey. While Crudup’s guitar technique would never develop beyond a fairly rudimentary level, his sweet-toned but chesty tenor voice and his skill as a songwriter were enough to secure him irregular spots at juke joints and parties in the area. These jobs eventually dried up, however, as the regional economy declined and musical tastes shifted, and by the late 1930s Crudup was reduced to playing on street corners for change.

Crudup’s fortunes began to improve around 1940, when he joined a gospel quartet called the Harmonizing Four. He moved with that group to Chicago in 1941, but soon turned away from gospel music and resumed playing the blues, though he found little more commercial success in the big city than he had in the Delta. He was living in a crate under an elevated train track and playing once again for spare change on street corners when Lester Melrose, a local agent



Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

and talent scout for the RCA Victor company and its Bluebird imprint, heard him and invited him to play at a house party that evening to be hosted by Hudson “Tampa Red” Whittaker. Crudup arrived to find that he would be playing for the likes of Big Bill Broonzy and Lonnie Johnson, who were also attending the party. His performance there made a strong impression on all present, convincing Melrose to sign Crudup to a contract with RCA.

The Father of Rock ‘n’ Roll

Between 1941 and 1956, Crudup recorded more than eighty sides for Melrose and RCA, among them such popular songs as “Rock Me, Mama,” “Mean Old Frisco Blues,” and “Shout Sister Shout.” But it was “That’s All Right, Mama” that would bring him the greatest notoriety. The young Elvis Presley heard Crudup’s recording of that song and adapted it to his own R&B-rockabilly style; it was one of three songs he recorded at the beginning of his relationship

with Sam Phillips’s Sun Records label, and was released as his first single in the summer of 1954. The local response to Presley’s recording of Crudup’s song was tremendous, and suddenly Presley was on his way to becoming not only the avatar of a new and wildly popular style of music, but one of the central icons of American pop culture.

Meanwhile, Crudup continued to struggle financially. He was recording regularly and achieving significant success with his songs, and others were having even greater success with their own versions of his compositions. Yet it was his label and manager who reaped the benefits; royalty payments never reached Crudup himself. Also, his spare and sometimes rough Delta style was out of fashion in Chicago, where a louder and more richly orchestrated approach (often involving a horn section, electric guitars, and piano) had already become popular. Crudup continued to make ends meet by playing in small clubs and recording pseudonymously for other labels, sometimes using the name Elmer James, and sometimes borrowing the name of his son, Percy Lee. In the late 1940s he gave up on Chicago and returned to southern Mississippi and the juke joint circuit.

Withdrawal and Return

By the mid-1950s Crudup's enduring influence was assured; his music was being recorded by respected black bluesmen as well as white musicians, and his songs had entered the rock 'n' roll canon. But his own financial situation continued to deteriorate, and at this point he began to fully realize the extent to which he had been swindled earlier in his career. He finally left the music business around 1956, returning to farmwork. He played and recorded sporadically around the Delta for the next ten years, until blues promoter Dick Waterman found him and encouraged him to take advantage of the folk music craze and the new interest it had generated in rural blues music among white urban audiences. Waterman worked to recover some of the back royalties that were due to Crudup (eventually securing sixty thousand dollars on his behalf) and helped him join the East Coast touring circuit. For the next few years Crudup played various folk and blues venues and even made television and film appearances in Europe and the United Kingdom. Near the end of his life, he toured the United States in support of Bonnie Raitt. Crudup continued working until his death by stroke in 1974.

RICK ANDERSON

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSPF

Selected Recordings

- Mean Ol' Frisco* (1960, Fire LP 103).
Crudup's Mood (1969, Delmark LP 621).
Look on Yonder's Wall (1969, Delmark LP 614).
Roebuck Man (1974, Sequel LP 210).

CRUMP, JESSE "TINY"

- b. 15 January 1897; Paris, TX
d. 21 April 1974; San Francisco area, CA

Pianist and organist. A birth year of 1906 has been frequently cited. Echoes of his experience in

vaudeville and the TOBA circuit may be heard in his 1929 recordings with Billy McKenzie. He also accompanied his then-wife, Ida Cox, on Paramount recordings. He spent his later life in California, including the San Francisco bay area.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR

CUBY AND THE BLIZZARDS

Formed in 1965. Original members were Harry "Cuby" Muskee (vocals, harmonica), Eelco Gelling (lead guitar), Hans Kinds (guitar), Willy Middel (bass), and Dick Beekman (drums). Regarded as the leading blues band in the Netherlands in the 1960s. Its early singles like "Stumble and Fall" had a rock edge, but it earned its blues credentials partly through recording with Eddie Boyd on its second album *Praise the Blues*. It also backed singer Van Morrison on an early tour following his departure from the group Them. In the 1970s, it drifted more into progressive rock, and charter member Eelco Gelling left to join the rock group Golden Earring.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richie Unterberger); Larkin

Discography: AMG (Richie Unterberger); Larkin

CURTIS, JAMES "PECK"

- b. 7 March 1912; Benoit MS
d. 1 November 1970; Helena AR

Peck Curtis was best known as the drummer with Sonny Boy Williamson in the King Biscuit Boys from Helena, Arkansas. Peck performed with a changing assortment of musicians who played with the band on KFFA radio's King Biscuit Time show for about twenty-five years in Helena, and it was he who in fact acted as de facto bandleader, holding things together during the long periods when Williamson was not around, and for a few years after Sonny Boy's death in 1965. Peck would often sing the

CURTIS, JAMES “PECK”

theme song and sometimes tap danced on a plywood board placed in front of the microphone.

King Biscuit guitarist Robert Jr. Lockwood claims to have bought Peck his first set of drums shortly after Lockwood and Williamson hired him, in early 1942. Although KFFA has been reputed to be the first station in the region to broadcast the blues, Curtis had played in a band with guitarist Calvin Frazier on KLCN radio from Blytheville, Arkansas, in the 1930s.

Curtis started out playing washboard and fashioned his first homemade drum kit out of a washboard, wash tub, and door hinge. He began following carnivals and minstrel shows, danced on stage, and for a while played jug with the South Memphis Jug Band. In the 1930s he worked with Robert Johnson, among others. During his tenure on King Biscuit Time, Peck also played juke joints and nightclubs with Houston Stackhouse, Joe Willie Wilkins, Driftin' Slim, and others in Arkansas and Mississippi.

Curtis and fellow King Biscuit entertainer Robert “Dudlow” Taylor recorded in Helena for the Modern label in 1952, but the sides remained unissued until Kent Records released a few on a vintage blues LP series in 1970. Folklorist George Mitchell also recorded Peck reciting the story of “The Death of Sonny Boy Williamson” and singing a few more songs with Houston Stackhouse and

Robert Nighthawk in 1967, with tracks ending up on Arhoolie and Testament.

JIM O'NEAL

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- O'Neal, Jim. “Houston Stackhouse.” In *The Voice of the Blues*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

Discography: LSFP

CUSIC, EDDIE

b. 4 January 1926; Wilmot, MS

An acoustic guitarist, singer, and songwriter, Cusic's roots are firmly set in the Mississippi Delta, as one can hear on such notable tracks as “Catfish Blues” and “Ludella” on his recording *I Want to Boogie*.

JUSTIN WERT

Discography

- I Want to Boogie* (1998, HMG 1005).

D

DALE, LARRY

b. Ennis Lowery, 7 January 1923; Wharton, TX

Guitarist Larry Dale was born Ennis Lowery in Wharton, Texas, in 1923. Dale moved to New York City in 1949 and became an active session guitarist. His first recordings, in 1954, were on the Groove and Herald labels. His recording credits are wide ranging, including sessions with the Cleftones, Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers, and most notably with Champion Jack Dupree, including the 1958 album, *Blues from the Gutter*. Dale, along with pianist Bob Gaddy, formed the Houserockers in 1953, one of the top R&B groups of the New York/New Jersey area. In 1956 Dale joined the jazz band of Cootie Williams with whom he remained for many years. In 1960 Dale recorded "Let the Doorbell Ring," one of his most effective covers, for the Glover label.

As the blues revival of the 1960s waned during the 1970s, Dale supported himself playing in various wedding and cover bands. In 1987 both Larry Dale and pianist Bob Gaddy were reintroduced to blues audiences when they were featured at the Blues Estafette in Utrecht, Holland. During that time, Dale recorded for the Juke Blues label, and both he and Bob Gaddy played with the New York-based group Killing Floor. They were featured (along with Roscoe Gordon) in a concert presented by the World Music Institute. Dale's Texas-style guitar playing is sparse and direct. It has often been described as biting, but his razor sharp solo lines are underpinned by a cool

textured guitar sound that adds a sense of urgency to his playing.

GEORGE BOZIWICK

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Juke Blues no. 9 (Summer 1987): 4–8.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

DALLAS

(*See Texas*)

DALLAS, LEROY

b. 12 December 1920; Mobile, AL

Traveled the South with Frank Edwards during the years immediately before World War II. After a brief stay in Chicago, Dallas arrived in New York City in 1943. His 1949 *Sittin' In With* label session with Brownie McGhee and Big Chief Ellis showed that city living had not affected his rural style of blues. In 1962 he recorded two tracks for the Storyville/Milestone labels. His activity since then is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

DALLAS STRING BAND

Flourished 1920s

The Dallas String Band, whose core members were Coley Jones, Marco Washington, and probably Sam Harris, were a trio or quartet of mandolin(s), guitar, and string bass, with vocal refrains by Jones and often other bandsmen. Their antique style, with its harmonized choruses in the manner of a glee club, and their repertoire of composed blues and popular songs seem to identify them as one of those string groups, described in some jazz memoirs, that played on the streets and in bars at night in cities like New Orleans. The instrumental “Dallas Rag” has been much reissued.

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

Discography: DGR

DANCE: ARTISTIC

Finding a cohesive definition of the term “blues” is very difficult. Generally the themes deal with death, love, or poverty, but they can also be joyful or satirical. The origins of the blues lie in black American slave work songs, spirituals, and sorrow songs from the southern plantations of the United States. These sorrow/work songs—that is, blues—aided the slaves in surviving the inhumane and unusual circumstances of their lives. The blues acknowledge the ups and downs of life, with the hope of moving onward and upward. This survival instinct of the blues has manifested itself in works of dance created by many choreographers and dancers.

Choreographers and dancers such as Fred Astaire, Paul Taylor, Alvin Ailey, Talley Beatty, Donald McKayle, and John Butler have been influenced by the blues. The squalor of London’s notorious East End district, Limehouse, is aptly depicted by Fred Astaire and Lucille Bremer in MGM’s *Ziegfeld Follies* (1943) in the “Limehouse Blues” number. In 1956 Paul Taylor used the blues to mount his “3 Epitaphs.” The dancers were dressed in matte black and did a slow drag, bumping and grinding for the entire number, with seemingly no hope of ever changing their lives for the better.

The life and work of the choreographer Alvin Ailey (1931–1989) were influenced by the blues. Born in Rogers, Texas, but raised in Navasota, Texas, by a single mother, he was stigmatized by the poverty and racism of the times. However, he found enjoyment in the town’s nightclubs, where he heard the blues, and in the Baptist churches, where he heard spirituals. When Ailey was eleven years old, he and his mother left Texas for Los Angeles. He began studying dance in 1949, and by 1954 had departed for New York. Both his dancing and choreography were critically well received. He formed his own dance troupe—Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater—in 1958. At the company’s first performance that same year, he premiered “Blues Suite.” The choreography of “Blues Suite” is a cycle, with ups and downs during the day. It ends with the indication that everything will start over again the next day. “Blues Suite” was a resounding hit. The dance piece “Cry,” which paid respect to the resilience of black women and especially to Ailey’s mother, was another hit for the company, and was also strongly influenced by the blues.

The blues themes of love and death were to be found in choreographer Talley Beatty’s (1918?–1995) 1959 work, “Road of the Phoebe Snow.” The work tells of an interracial love affair and resulting death along the Erie Lackawanna railroad tracks.

Donald McKayle’s “Rainbow Round My Shoulder” (1959) portrays the murder of a prisoner on a chain gang. The other members of the chain gang feel sorrow for the murder, but are not surprised at the occurrence and are powerless to make right the injustice.

Singer Billie Holiday’s troubled life was certainly fodder for the blues, and “Portrait of Billie” (1960) was John Butler’s (1920–1994?) paean to this gifted singer. Other singers whose lives inspired dance pieces by Alvin Ailey were rock stars Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison.

The blues themes of love and love lost continue to permeate the dance world. In November and December 2000, at the fortieth anniversary celebration of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at the City Center in New York, former Ailey dancer Carmen de Lavallade choreographed a pas de deux, “Sweet Bitter Love,” to the songs of Donny Hathaway and Roberta Flack.

The blues has now become a fine art. It permeates the culture from motion pictures and Broadway to opera.

MONICA J. BURDEX

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DANCE: AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The core aesthetics features of traditional black performance style—dance, body movement, audience participation, and call and response—are integral to the blues, gospel, and other traditional African American musical genres. In the African American tradition, total involvement of all—performers and audience—is expected. There is not a clear line between performers and audience, and in some sense all are performers. Total involvement means giving one hundred percent and involving your entire body in the process. It also means engaging your audience and compelling them to respond. Through melodic and textual repetition and embellishment, rhythmic and timbral contrast, and call and response, the audience is drawn in and expressive intensity is built.

Dance and audience participation have been integral to the blues from the beginning. A great deal of blues music and many popular black dance styles originated in juke joints—the so-called “bawdy” or “pleasure” houses of music, dancing, drinking, and gambling in the South. These music and dance styles migrated north with African Americans to Chicago and Harlem where they were introduced to a wider audience via black musicals. In addition, new dances were invented in the big ballrooms of Harlem and Chicago.

Dancing was integral to the vaudeville performances of the women who first recorded the blues starting in 1920. These traveling shows featured chorus lines of dancing women along with blues divas who used their bodies—hands, face, feet—as well as their voices to engage and involve their audiences. In “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom” (1927), the “Mother of the Blues” sings about learning and teaching the then-popular dance that folklorist/fiction writer Zora Neale Hurston says originated in the “black bottom” area of Nashville, Tennessee, which was introduced to the stage in *Dinah* (1924). A second popular dance of the period is celebrated in the vaudeville song “I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate,” and a third dance was popularized through James P. Johnson’s stride piano piece, “The Charleston,” featured in *Running Wild* (1923).

Many black dances, from the cakewalk to Ballin’ the Jack and the Big Apple, show a clear resemblance to the ring shout, a sacred tradition from the antebellum period in which music and dance were integrally connected and which Samuel Floyd posits as the ancestor of all modern black music and dance. “I must note here the near-inseparability of Afro-American music and dance in black culture, both in the ring and outside it. The shuffling, angular, off-beat, additive, repetitive, and intensive unflagging rhythms of shout and jubilee spirituals, ragtime, and rhythm and

blues; the less vigorous but equally insistent and characteristic rhythms of the slower ‘sorrow songs’ and the blues, and the descendants and derivatives of all these genres have been shaped and defined by black dance” (p. 138). Like the ring shout, many black dances involve counterclockwise circular motion, a shuffling step in which the feet stay close to the ground, hand clapping, and rotating or undulating hip movements.

Boogie-woogie began as an upbeat style of piano blues designed to accompany the dance. In the inspired classic “Honky Tonk Train,” first recorded in 1927, Meade Lux Lewis captures the sounds and rhythms of the crowded, seat-less express trains furnished only with an upright piano that carried blacks to visit family members in the South. In “Pinetop’s Boogie Woogie” (1928) Clarence “Pinetop” Smith talks to the dancing crowd, directing them when to stop and when to “boogie.” The style migrated after World War I from the lumber and turpentine camps of the deep South and Texas to Chicago and New York where it became an institution at Depression Era rent parties, and to Kansas City where it was incorporated into riff jazz. The performance by Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis, and Pete Johnson at the “Spirituals to Swing” concert in Carnegie Hall (1938) led to the commercialization of boogie-woogie in mainstream swing music and also to its integration into early rhythm and blues music, especially in the jump blues of Louis Jordan.

As in earlier styles and eras, the beat and popularity of rhythm and blues music in the 1940s were closely tied to the slick dances of that period. It was the dancing along with the energy of the performers and audience that appealed to young whites and led to the birth of rock ‘n’ roll. “The great artists of the era, showstoppers or housewreckers like [Wynonie] Harris, utilized whatever choreography or instrumental highjinx it took to work their audience. . . . Blow-top sax players fell out, lying on their backs kicking at the air. T-bone Walker and Guitar Slim played their guitars behind their backs or leaped in the air and landed in splits. Vocal groups and small jump bands put together frantic stage routines with all manner of synchronized moves, fancy footwork, dramatic stops, and extended grooves. Like athletes, rhythm and blues artists gave their all. . . . In turn the audiences appreciated the effort, responding in kind, feeding energy back to the on-stage stars” (Pearson, p. 327).

In the 1950s when R&B transitioned to rock ‘n’ roll, multiple-performer concerts in big cities replaced the intimate dance-oriented shows on makeshift stages in the black section of small towns, and the music began to be separated from the dance. This

DANCE: AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

trend continued in the 1960s as the face of the blues began to change with more whites becoming involved and many blacks gravitating to soul, funk, disco, and rap.

Dance and audience participation are integral to the meaning and function of the blues in African American culture. In Albert Murray's words: "The people for whom blues music was created are dance-beat-oriented people" (p. 189). "Music which is not sufficiently dance-beat oriented is not likely to be received with very much enthusiasm by the patrons of downhome honkytonks, uptown cabarets, and ballrooms. . . . Music can be sweet (and low and ever so slow), or it can be hot (and also fortissimo and up-tempo) so long as it has the idiomatic rhythmic emphasis that generates the dance step response . . . the incantation must be so percussion oriented that it disposes the listeners to bump and bounce, to slow-drag and steady shuffle, to grind, hop, jump, kick, rock, roll, shout, stomp, and otherwise swing the blues away" (p. 144).

MARIA V. JOHNSON

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DANCELAND

Label run in Detroit from 1948 through 1951 by Morry Kaplan (1910–). Named for the Danceland dance hall located in the west side of Detroit. Candy Johnson's "Stampin'" (Danceland 399) was the

label's hit. Other important artists were John Lee Hooker (recording as Little Pork Chops) and Tony "Blues" Lewis.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography and Discography

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DANE, BARBARA

b. Barbara Jean Spillman, 12 May 1927; Detroit, MI

Barbara Dane has combined scholarship and the pursuit of social justice with her love of blues, jazz, old time Americana, union songs, protest songs, Nueva Trova, and many other genres. In her sixty-year career, she has broken down numerous cultural barriers and collaborated with other artists from an enormous variety of backgrounds and walks of life. She has shared stages, recording studios, and TV spotlights with performers as diverse as Louis Armstrong, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Mikis Theodorakis, the Chambers Brothers, Lightnin' Hopkins, Muddy Waters, Memphis Slim, Little Brother Montgomery, Ray Skjelbred, Reverend Gary Davis, Pablo Menendez and Mezcla, Silvio Rodriguez, Joseito Fernandez, and Carlos Puebla.

Through her travels and collaborations, Dane created an informal network of activist artists from every continent. Out of this network she founded Paredon Records, producing nearly fifty albums of their work out of her back bedroom and kitchen table. She later donated the catalog to Smithsonian/Folkways. Notable albums are her first, *Trouble in Mind*, and latest, *What Are You Gonna Do When There Ain't No Jazz?*

ANDY COHEN

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- Harris; Larkin
Barbara Dane website, <http://www.barbaradane.net>.

Discography: Lord

DANIELS, JACK

b. 23 December 1936; Crossett, AR

Chicago record company executive and producer active in the 1960s and 1970s. Daniels moved up from the South to Chicago in 1954, but did not become involved in the music business until 1965, when he

recorded “It’s a Man Down There” on G. L. Crockett for Willie Barney’s Four Brothers label. At the company, Daniels handled administration, A&R, production, and promotion. Other artists recorded by Daniels included Johnny Moore, Junior Wells, Ricky Allen, and Tyrone Davis. During 1968–1969, Daniels worked for Mercury, getting hits on such blues and soul acts as Johnny Moore, Junior Parker, and Junior Wells, after which he went into independent production. Daniels also collaborated with Johnny Moore on many hit records, notably “Turn Back the Hands of Time” for Tyrone Davis. Daniels went into the liquor distribution business in 1972.

ROBERT PRUTER

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DANIELS, JULIUS

b. 20 November 1901; Denmark, SC

d. 18 October 1947; Charlotte, NC

A warm singer and an elegant player of the twelve-string guitar, Daniels made a handful of finely conceived recordings in 1927, some in collaboration with guitarists Bubba Lee Torrence or Wilbert Andrews. They embrace reels, gospel songs, and blues, including the first recording of the very widespread “Crow Jane.”

TONY RUSSELL

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AMG (John Bush); Larkin
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Discography: DGR

DARBY, IKE “BIG IKE”

b. 7 December 1933; Philadelphia, MS

d. 6 September 1988; Mobile, AL

Born and raised on a farm in Neshoba County, Mississippi, Darby moved to New Orleans in 1949. He served in the U.S. Army during 1951–1953, after which he settled in Mobile, Alabama. From 1963 he performed as a singer of blues and soul and worked as a radio deejay. He also owned a record store in Mobile.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

DARBY, TEDDY

b. Theodore Roosevelt Darby, 2 March 1906; Henderson, KY

d. Unknown, East St. Louis, IL

Aka “Blind Teddy” and “Blind Squire Turner.” Theodore Roosevelt Darby worked in a barrel factory until glaucoma blinded him around 1926. Known as a violent man, he was taught guitar in prison. Entrepreneur Jesse Johnson took him to Paramount in 1929 with Roosevelt Sykes, Lee Green, Ike Rodgers, and others where he recorded four charming country blues. The rest of his recording career with Vocalion, Victor, and Decca saw him concentrating on standard 1930s blues. He became a church deacon in 1954 and recorded again for Testament in 1960.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP

DARNELL, LARRY

b. Leo Edward Donald Jr., 17 December 1928; Columbus, OH

d. 3 July 1983; Cleveland, OH

An early R&B superstar, singer Larry Darnell could rock and croon with equal effect. He hit the charts in 1950 with the smash Paul Gayten–produced singles “I’ll Get Along Somehow” and “For You My Love.” He retired from popular music in 1969, singing afterward for church and for benefit concerts.

JOHN SINCLAIR/EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

DAVENPORT, COW-COW

b. 23 April 1894; Anniston, AL
d. 3 December 1955; Cleveland, OH

Charles Edward “Cow-Cow” Davenport is best remembered for his song “Cow Cow Blues,” one of the earliest recorded examples of boogie-woogie piano playing. Davenport grew up as the son of a minister, Clement Davenport, and learned to play the piano from his mother, Queen Victoria Jacobs, a church organist. Originally destined for the ministry, like his father, Charles was expelled from the Alabama Theological Seminary in 1911 for playing ragtime at a church function. He worked as a pianist in the Birmingham, Alabama, area until around 1914, when he joined the medicine show Barkoot’s Traveling Carnival, which performed throughout the southeastern United States.

According to some sources, Davenport’s ragtime piano playing was influenced at this time by Bob Davis, and the result was his distinctive “boogie-woogie” or “barrelhouse” style of piano playing. This distinctive rolling bass piano playing had a different name in every part of the country, and its players were the stars of backwoods joints where the walls were lined with barrels of beer and whisky, hence the name “barrelhouse.”

In 1917 Davenport worked as a brothel pianist in the Storyville section of New Orleans. He then toured the TOBA circuit with many of the classic blues singers, including Bessie Smith, Dora Carr, and Ivy Smith. He and Carr were known as Davenport and Company. After Carr married in 1926, Davenport migrated to Chicago where he toured with Ivy Smith in the Davenport and Smith’s Chicago Steppers Revue. Davenport recorded solo and with Smith under his own name. Davenport also recorded as George Hamilton, the Georgia Grinder, and Bat the Hummingbird. Recording labels included Gennett, Paramount, Decca, Brunswick, and Vocalion.

“Cow Cow Blues” was released in 1927 on the Vocalion and Brunswick labels, and was titled after the railroad part that was Davenport’s childhood nickname. The song’s train imitation is a distinctive boogie-woogie theme, and has been called one of the most popular boogie-woogie piano tunes ever recorded. Though the style of playing was not original, many believe Davenport was the first to coin the term “boogie-woogie.” Other compositions by Davenport include “Jim Crow Blues,” the traditional standard “Mama Don’t Allow,” and “(I’ll be Glad When You’re Dead) You Rascal You.”

In the 1930s Davenport tried working as a record shop owner and as the proprietor of his own café. In 1938 had a stroke that adversely affected his piano

playing. He continued to sing but eventually moved to New York where he worked as a dishwasher for the Onyx Club.

Pianist Art Hodes helped Davenport to record again as a pianist for the Comet and Circle labels in 1945 and 1946. Davenport continued to perform and tried to make a comeback in the 1940s and 1950s. These attempts were plagued by illness, and Davenport died in Cleveland, Ohio, in December 1955.

DEBBIE BOND

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP; Lord

DAVENPORT, JED

Birth and death dates unknown

A raucous harmonica player and singer who recorded with the Beale Street Jug Band in 1929–1930 and accompanied records by Memphis Minnie, Arthur Pettis, Too Tight Henry, and one of the three different Joe Williams.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Harris; Santelli

Discography: DGR

DAVENPORT, LESTER “MAD DOG”

b. 16 January 1932; Tchula, MS

Harmonica player. Davenport moved to Chicago in 1946. He played on Bo Diddley’s “Pretty Thing” Chess session in 1955 and was a member of the Kinsey Report in the 1980s. Recorded as a solo artist for Earwig Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

DAVIES, CYRIL

b. 1932; Denham, Buckinghamshire, England
 d. 7 January 1964; Eel Pie Island, England

Vocalist, guitarist, harmonica player, and seminal figure in British blues. Teamed with Alexis Korner in 1957. Their performances as a duo and as the nucleus of Blues Incorporated inspired younger British musicians in blues and blues-rock. In 1963 Davies formed the Cyril Davies All-Stars and recorded several singles of musical promise. When Davies died of leukemia in 1964, the All-Stars were retained by Long John Baldry.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Eder); Larkin

Discography: AMG (Bruce Eder); Larkin**DAVIES, DEBBIE**

b. 22 August 1952; Los Angeles, CA

Guitarist, singer. Davies, whose father was an arranger for Ray Charles, broke into the blues in 1986 when guitarist Coco Montoya referred her for a job in the all-female band, Maggie Mayall and the Cadillacs, led by the wife of the British bandleader John Mayall.

Davies was hired by Albert Collins in 1988 and spent the next three years as a member of his band, the Icebreakers. Nightly guitar duels pitting her Stratocaster skills against the "Master of the Telecaster" sharpened her playing and she also appeared on her first major recording, Collins's 1991 Grammy nominee *Iceman*. She also did a guest spot on John Mayall's 1990 comeback album *A Sense of Place*.

After working with Fingers Taylor and the Ladyfinger Revue in 1991 Davies made her recording debut as a leader in 1993 with *Picture This*, which included a cameo from Collins, who would die later that year. *Loose Tonight*, produced by Tab Benoit, followed in 1994, solidly establishing Davies on the contemporary blues scene.

Davies, building on the success of her 1996 album, *I Got That Feeling*, which featured duets with Montoya and Benoit, won the 1997 W. C. Handy Award for Best Contemporary Female Artist. Davies paid tribute to two influences with special recordings, traveling to Texas in 1999 to work with Stevie Ray Vaughan's Double Trouble rhythm section on *Tales from the Austin Motel* and then releasing *Key to*

Love, an album of John Mayall material featuring appearances by James Cotton and former Mayall guitarists Mick Taylor and Peter Green, in 2003. Davies also recorded on albums by Montoya, Benoit, Otis Grand, and Duke Robillard, the last of whom produced her 2001 album, *Love the Game*.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Cianci, B. "Debbie Davies." *Blues Access* no. 41 (Spring 2000): 22–24.

Discography: AMG**DAVIS, "BLIND" JOHN**

b. 7 December 1913; Hattiesburg, MS
 d. 12 October 1985; Chicago, IL

Blues singer and pianist. When John Davis was three years old his parents moved the family from Mississippi to Chicago. When he was nine a tetanus infection caused by stepping on a rusty nail was incorrectly treated and resulted in blindness. In the 1920s, Davis learned to play the piano in his father's speakeasies. His recording career started in 1937 when he became the staff pianist for producer Lester Melrose. Davis also made six recordings as name artist for Vocalion in 1938. Davis often explained that he did not have any particular affinity for the blues. Some blues purists have denounced his playing as "cocktail" blues. Nevertheless, John's style is sophisticated, with a great many subtle surprises for the attentive listener, with strong boogie rhythms.

In 1948 and 1951 Davis made ten recordings for MGM in Chicago. As early as 1951 and 1952 John Davis traveled to Europe in the company of Big Bill Broonzy. In Paris he made nineteen recordings for Vogue. In 1955 his Chicago house burned down, killing his wife of seventeen years. The fire also destroyed his unique collection of 1,700 78-rpm recordings. John's collection had been even bigger than Tampa Red's.

In 1969 Karl Gert zur Heide found Davis alive and well in Chicago. Four years later Martin van Olderen persuaded him to travel to Europe again and in the next ten years he made a number of successful European tours. After his "rediscovery" he recorded five albums and contributed to two others.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

DAVIS, "BLIND" JOHN

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

DAVIS, CARL

b. Carl Adams, 4 April 1934; Chicago, IL

Chicago rhythm and blues record company executive and producer. Davis was the prime mover in developing Chicago as a flourishing soul music center during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1961, Davis, while moonlighting from his Columbia Records promotion job, partnered with Bill "Bunky" Sheppard in establishing the Nat/Pam/Wes label complex. Shortly afterward he produced Gene Chandler's million-selling "Duke of Earl." Columbia, seeing his talents were misplaced, hired him as a producer in 1962. Within a year Davis had Okeh (Columbia's R&B imprint) thriving, producing hits with the help of Curtis Mayfield compositions and Johnny Pate arrangements. These Okeh artists included Ted Taylor, Major Lance, Walter Jackson, and the Artistics.

In 1966 Davis moved to the Brunswick label and began recording hits by Jackie Wilson, Gene Chandler, Barbara Acklin, Tyrone Davis, and the Chi-lites, but failed to get hits by veteran LaVern Baker. In 1967 Davis started his Dakar label, but merged it with Brunswick in 1970. Davis left Brunswick in 1976 and established his own Chi-Sound label, and recorded with some success the Dells and Gene Chandler. After closing Chi-Sound in 1984, Davis attempted several times to resurrect a company without success.

ROBERT PRUTER

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DAVIS, CEDELL

b. 9 June 1927; Helena, AR

Cedell Davis learned guitar and harmonica as a child growing up in Helena. Stricken with polio at age nine, Davis adapted his guitar playing to his limitations, and developed a hauntingly raw slide

style (using a knife) playing juke joints throughout the area, often with Robert Nighthawk. Several excellent recordings for Fat Possum in the 1990s launched his international career.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (John Bush); Larkin
Palmer, Robert. Liner notes to *Feel Like Doing Something Wrong* (1995, Fat Possum).

Discography: AMG

DAVIS, EDDIE "LOCKJAW"

b. 2 March 1922; New York, NY

d. 3 November 1986; Culver City, CA

Tenor saxophone. Hard-hitting stylist who started out with swing, but was equally at home with sophisticated bop harmony or driving rhythm and blues. In fact, he was always deeply rooted in blues, a major element of his style and repertoire. He took his nickname (sometimes reduced to "Jaws") from one of his own compositions. David played with big bands in the 1940s, including Cootie Williams, Andy Kirk, and Lucky Millinder, and later several times with Count Basie. He co-led the Tough Tenors band with Johnny Griffin in the early 1960s, and later collaborated with trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison. Davis was a prolific recording artist in the hard bop and soul jazz era who possessed a very personal sound with a caustic, hard-edged, vocalized cry.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

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Afro-Jaws (1961, Riverside 373).

The Heavy Hitter (1979, Muse 5202).

With Johnny Griffin

Tough Tenors (1960, Jazzland 931).

Blues Up and Down (1961, Jazzland 960).

Live At Minton's (1961, Prestige 7309, 7330, 7357, 7407).

The Tenor Scene (1961, Prestige 7191).

Tough Tenor Favourites (1962, Jazzland 976).

DAVIS, GEATER

b. Vernon Davis, 29 January 1946; Kountze, TX
 d. 28 September 1984; Dallas, TX

Birth year also given as 1942. One of the notable soul-blues singers of the 1970s. He had a few hits, including “Sweet Woman’s Love” (1970, House of Orange label) and “Your Heart Is So Cold (1973, Seventy 7). He was active across the South, including eastern Texas, Nashville, Tennessee, and Jackson, Mississippi.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Kuhn, Jeff. “The Great Unknown: The Geater Davis Story.” *Juke Blues* no. 37 (1997): 18–27.

Discography: Larkin**DAVIS, GUY**

b. 12 May 1952; New York, NY

Vocalist, guitarist, actor. Son of actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. His albums for Folkways and Red House contain many new blues accompanied with acoustic guitar. His stage credentials include productions of *Mulebone* (Broadway, 1991) and *Robert Johnson: Trick the Devil* (off-Broadway, 1993). For television he has acted and has scored soundtracks, including the music for the 1995 PBS series *The American Promise*.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG (Jason Ankeny)**DAVIS, JAMES “THUNDERBIRD”**

b. 10 November 1938; Mobile, AL
 d. 24 January 1992; St. Paul, MN

Singer. Davis’s R&B-trained vocals so impressed a touring Guitar Slim at a show in Pritchard, Alabama, that he got hired as the opening act for his revue, ultimately moving to Thibodaux, Louisiana, where Slim lived. He picked up his nickname there from a drinking contest with Slim when he was forced to match his boss’s shots of high-priced whiskey with more affordable Thunderbird wine.

Davis recorded several singles, including the semi-hit, “What Else Is There to Do,” for Duke Records in

the early 1960s and subsequently relocated to the label’s base in Houston. But instead of being put on the fast track to a successful solo career, the label, which also employed him to do yard work and shipping duties around the studio, had him do demos for Bobby “Blue” Bland. Davis, usually recording after Bland and the other label stars had concluded for the day, did come up with a few hits, most notably “Blue Monday,” a 1963 southern hit successfully covered by Z. Z. Hill, Little Milton, and Albert Collins.

Davis finally left Duke in 1966 and worked in the Joe Tex Revue and toured with O. V. Wright in the 1970s. But he abandoned his secular career for church singing by the late 1970s and worked as a manual laborer. His inactivity was so complete that he was presumed dead before being tracked down by Black Top Records, which put him in the studio in 1988, backed by the dual guitars of Clarence Hollimon and Anson Funderburgh and a horn section led by Grady Gaines, who he had worked with decades before, for his comeback album *Check Out Time*. Davis resumed performing and it was on stage, in the middle of a set, when he died from a heart attack.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG; LSFP**DAVIS, KATHERINE**

b. 25 February 1953; Chicago, IL

Raised in Chicago’s Cabrini-Green projects and trained as a classical singer, Davis has built a successful career singing gospel, standards, jazz and blues, and has portrayed Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey in professional theatrical productions. Her 1999 recording *Dream Shoes* artfully melded traditional jazz and blues. She has also recorded with frequent accompanist Erwin Helfer for Red Beans, and with the Dixie Stompers for Delmark, and has appeared on blues and gospel compilations here and abroad. Davis has been an artist-in-residence in blues in the schools programs in Chicago and South Carolina.

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

Bibliography

AMG (Dave Nathan)

Discography: AMG, including *Dream Shoes* (Southport/Katy D Records S-SSD-0071)

DAVIS, LARRY

DAVIS, LARRY

b. 4 December 1936; Kansas City, MO
d. 19 April 1994; Los Angeles, CA

Raised in England, Arkansas, singer/guitarist Larry Davis started playing professionally at age fourteen as a drummer and then bassist for harmonica player Sunny Blair in nearby Little Rock. In the mid-1950s, Davis teamed up with guitarist Fenton Robinson and, on a recommendation from Bobby Bland to Don Robey of Duke Records, the pair recorded several sides for the label in 1958. The session produced Davis's best-known song, "Texas Flood," which would become a classic of electric blues and eventually help launch the career of guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan. Davis eventually settled in St. Louis and throughout much of the 1960s played bass in Albert King's band. Davis recorded for the Virgo label in 1968, and by 1970 had decided to switch to guitar as his main instrument, modeling his playing after Albert King and B. B. King's popular single-string style.

A motorcycle accident in the early 1970s temporarily postponed his musical career, but he slowly made a comeback with singles on several tiny labels by the end of the decade. In 1981, Davis recorded for Jim O'Neal's Rooster label with St. Louis musician Oliver Sain. The resulting album, *Funny Stuff*, showcased Davis's soulful vocals and rousing guitar playing, and garnered him both national recognition and two W. C. Handy Awards. He went on to record critically acclaimed albums for Pulsar, Black And Blue, and Bullseye, and toured Europe several times. Davis was stricken with cancer in the early 1990s and succumbed to the disease at his home in Los Angeles at the age of fifty-seven.

GENE TOMKO

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Living Blues (September/October 1994): 60–61.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Sooner or Later (1992, Bullseye CD 9511).
Funny Stuff (2001, Rooster CD 2616).

DAVIS, "LITTLE" SAMMY

b. 28 November 1928; Winona, MS

Harmonica player. Met and recorded with Earl Hooker in Miami, Florida, in 1952. After some journeyman work, he settled in Poughkeepsie, New York. In 1995 he revived his performing career, playing with

guitarist Fred Scribner. He became well known through his Delmark CD and his guest appearances on the syndicated Don Imus radio program, "Imus in the Morning."

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG; LSFP

DAVIS, MAMIE "GALORE"

b. 24 September 1940; Erwin, MS
d. 6 October 2001; Jackson, MS

Deep soul and blues singer who briefly achieved fame in the soul market during the 1960s. She first began performing in rhythm and blues bands around Greenville, Mississippi. During 1961 she performed in the Ike and Tina Turner Revue, and from 1962 to 1965 she toured with the Little Milton Band. During 1965–1966, Davis, under the name of Mamie Galore, recorded in Chicago for the St. Lawrence/Satellite label complex under producer Monk Higgins, getting soul-style minor hits with "Special Agent 34-24-38," "I Wanna Be Your Radio," and "It Ain't Necessary." During 1968–1969, she recorded three Higgins-produced singles for Imperial in California. Davis moved back to Greenville in 1972, and continued the remainder of her career as a blues singer.

ROBERT PRUTER

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"Obituaries." *Living Blues* no. 160 (November/December 2001): 87.

DAVIS, MAXWELL

b. Thomas Maxwell Davis, 14 January 1916; Independence, KS
d. 18 September 1970; Los Angeles, CA

Davis was a tenor sax player influenced by Coleman Hawkins, he moved to Los Angeles in 1937 and became a band leader and one of the most important songwriters, arrangers, and producers working on the West Coast in the 1940–1960 era. He helped to build the R&B sound of his time and influenced musicians

like T-Bone Walker, Jimmy Witherspoon, and Floyd Dixon; as a top studio artist, he worked with B. B. King, Etta James, Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, and many other important blues and R&B artists. The rock ‘n’ roll craze hit him badly but he continued to release records for a small R&B market and to work with orchestras and studios until his death in 1970.

ROBERT SACRÉ

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Santelli

Discography: Lord

DAVIS, “MAXWELL STREET” JIMMY

b. Charles W. Thompson, 2 March 1925; Tippoo [Vance?], MS

d. 28 December 1995; Chicago, IL

Long-time singer/guitarist and street musician in Chicago. He gave conflicting reports on the place of his birth. He first learned guitar as a teenager from John Lee Hooker, who was dating one of his aunts; like Hooker, Davis held onto a single-chord, modal guitar style throughout his life. Also while in his teens, he worked as a buck dancer and novelty entertainer for traveling shows such as F. S. Wolcott’s Rabbit Foot Minstrels and Silas Green From New Orleans; his act included a routine that involved walking barefoot on broken glass. In the 1940s, he moved to Detroit where he reestablished his relationship with Hooker and performed locally. He returned South to Memphis, probably in the early 1950s; there he recorded a session (unissued) at Sun Studios. Within a few years he migrated back north, this time to Chicago, where he soon began to perform in the open-air Maxwell Street Market. He remained a Maxwell Street mainstay for the rest of his life.

In about 1964, he and his wife opened a restaurant, the Knotty Pine Grill, in the Maxwell Street neighborhood. By this time, he had probably begun to call himself “Maxwell Street Jimmy Davis.” (He sometimes claimed he took the name as early as the mid-1940s, to avoid conscription; other accounts suggest he received the moniker from an admirer—perhaps the late historian, producer, and documentarian Pete Welding—who saw him perform in the market.) He often performed in front of the restaurant to attract customers.

An eponymously titled 1965 LP on Elektra, followed by appearances on the Testament, Takoma, Roots, Sonnet, and Flyright labels, expanded his

reputation among aficionados, but he never managed to channel his talents into a viable performing career outside Chicago. A few years after the Elektra sessions he returned to Memphis, where he and two accompanists, billed as “The Three Tuffs,” cut a primitively styled 45 that was issued locally. He came back to Chicago, probably in the early 1970s, and resumed his street singing along with occasional appearances in neighborhood clubs.

For a time in the early 1980s, Davis renounced the blues and became a lay preacher; but within a few years he returned to secular music. With the assistance of young admirers such as percussionist Kenny Tams and mandolinist Dave Andersen, he refocused his skills and played (often acoustic) on the street, in local folk venues, and at festivals like the Chicago Blues Festival (1990) and the Sunflower River Festival in Clarksdale, Mississippi (1994). He also recorded a full-length CD on the Wolf label, released in 1989.

Despite the relative paucity of his recorded legacy, Maxwell Street Jimmy Davis was a lifetime professional musician who performed for thousands of people over the course of his career. He was an important link between modern Chicago blues and the earlier southern traditions from which the music arose. (*Note:* Not to be confused with jump-blues saxophonist and arranger Maxwell Davis.)

DAVID WHITEIS

Bibliography

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Whiteis, David. “Obituary: Maxwell Street Jimmy Davis.” *Living Blues* no. 126 (1996): 56–58.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

See also Chicago

DAVIS, QUINT

b. Arthur Quentin Davis, Jr., 5 November 1947; New Orleans, LA

Festival, concert, and record producer, artists’ manager. Quint Davis teamed with George Wein in 1970 to establish the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and continues to serve as its director. Davis resuscitated the career of Professor Longhair and launched the Wild Magnolias. He has also worked with the Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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As Producer

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- Professor Longhair. *House Party New Orleans Style* (Rounder).
- Professor Longhair. *Mardi Gras in Baton Rouge* (RykoDisc).
- Wild Magnolias. *Handa Wanda* (Parts 1 and 2) (1970, Treehouse Records).

DAVIS, REVEREND GARY

- b. 30 April 1896; Laurens, SC
d. 5 May 1972; Hammonton, NJ

Reverend Gary Davis's importance is manifold. He was an astounding musician who could effortlessly blend all the major concepts underlying both black and white music into a single coherent alloy. Choked strings, major, modal, and minor scales, advanced harmonies, ancient tunes, popular music, sacred music, blues and jazz, and old-time music all found expression through the man. And while the guitar (both six- and twelve-string) was his obvious forte, he was also adept on piano, harmonica, and the five-string banjo.

He was either blind from birth, or became so shortly thereafter. A likely diagnosis, "buphophthalmus" (congenital glaucoma), was made in 1937, when Davis applied to the state of North Carolina for aid. Davis was able to distinguish light and dark, however, as well as color and vague shape, all of which aided him in getting around.

Laurens, Davis's birthplace, was seriously divided racially. As recently as 1996, a museum dedicated to the Ku Klux Klan was erected in an old movie theater. Not surprisingly, around 1904, Davis's grandmother, Evalina Cheek, moved with Davis and his brother Buddy to Gray Court, a few miles outside of Greenville. By the time Davis was sixteen, he was playing in a Greenville string band that included another young blind man, the famous "Willie Walker."

Davis's half brother, Buddy Pinson, who lived until 1930, also played "but not like Gary," according to bluesman Walter Phelps, who had grown up near them. Phelps, whose age was almost identical to Davis's, moved to Asheville in 1904 to work as a

water boy on the Beaucatcher Tunnel project. He said that Davis turned up in Asheville, playing in Pack Square, early in the 1920s. Another guitar player, Aaron Washington, has Davis living in Asheville at that time as well, and the chapter on Davis in Bruce Bastin's *Red River Blues* documents him leaving some time after 1926. In any case, he was there long enough to make a cameo appearance in Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel*, as "the black boy who played in Pack Square," and may have been living there when Jimmy Rodgers came to town in 1927.

Davis is known to have been busking for a living in Durham in 1931, and to have lived there with his mother until after she died (1934). While there, he became acquainted with the Trice Brothers (Willie and Richard), Blind Boy Fuller, Sonny Terry, Bull City Red, Brownie McGhee, and Buddy Moss for a surety. He probably knew Floyd Council, Vernon Jordan, and Mitchell's Christian Singers as well, and possibly Pegleg Sam Jackson.

He first recorded in 1935, traveling to New York City with dry goods merchant and ARC scout J. B. Long. There he backed up Blind Boy Fuller on several blues numbers and laid down twelve sides of his own, two blues and ten gospel songs. He did not record again until 1949, but from then until his death in 1972, he recorded often. Previously unissued material continues to make its way to the public, most recently in the form of two remarkable CDs culled from tapes made privately in the fifties: *The Sun of Our Lives* (2002, World Arbiter Records), recorded 1955–1957, includes twenty minutes of Davis preaching; and *If I Had My Way* (2002, Smithsonian-Folkways) was recorded in 1953 by John Cohen, at Davis's house.

Davis moved from Durham, first to Mamaroneck and then to Harlem with Annie Bell Wright, whom he married in 1937. Reports differ and are vague as to the exact date: He said 1940, but he was still playing at the barbershop on Pettigrew Street (in Durham) as of 1943. The Durham welfare office reported that he had gone to New York as of January 1944.

Once in New York, he fell in with the some old cronies from Durham, notably Alec Seward, Sonny, and Brownie, who had allied with the New York Folk Music crowd. He became friends with Leadbelly, and would give guitar lessons at Leadbelly's apartment in Harlem, reaching a host of young white musicians and some black ones, many of whom achieved some degree of success on their own.

His teaching, explicit and self-conscious, may turn out to be his greatest contribution, as shown by the very partial list of his associates and students at the bottom of this article. He may be the only guitar evangelist/bluesman to develop significant teaching skills at all. His first teaching experience, aside from

showing his brother Buddy how to play, came when he attended the Blind and Deaf School at Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he learned to read Braille. He also taught at Brownie McGhee's Home of the Blues from 1948 to 1950. Further, the lessons he gave at his home, Leadbelly's home, and Tiny Robinson's home, to the likes of Stefan Grossman, John Gibbon, Ian Buchanan, Roy Book Binder, and Ernie Hawkins, have achieved the status of legend by now, as have the lessons he gave to young guitar players he encountered wherever he went in his later years.

From 1945 until 1957, Martha Ledbetter's niece, Tiny Robinson, and her husband Jim looked after his interests. Davis played on the streets of Harlem, and preached in storefront churches. As a result of a Town Hall Memorial Concert for Leadbelly in 1950, Davis gained some exposure in the nascent folk revival, and he began to be featured along with Sonny and Brownie at club dates and in concerts. Having resumed recording in 1949, by 1957 he was busy enough that concert promoter Manny Greenhill took over the management of his career from Mrs. Robinson.

From 1957 until 1962, Greenhill promoted Davis as the instrumental genius, gospel singer, and all-around entertainer that he was, with the result that Davis and his wife started to become more comfortable. When Peter, Paul, and Mary released a version of "Samson and Delilah" in 1962, they ascribed their version to Davis. Manny arranged for an advance royalty payment of sufficient size to install the Davises in a tidy little house in Jamaica, Queens. From that point until he died about ten years later, Davis's living was assured. He recorded and toured consistently until his death and, in fact, was on his way to a gig in New Jersey when he was taken by his final heart attack.

Elements of Davis's Style

Reverend Davis, like almost all southern guitar players, used only his thumb and index finger to pick the strings. If queried why he didn't use more fingers, he would reply, "It wasn't necessary!" One student, Ernie Hawkins, maintained that he did ninety percent of his playing with just his thumb, and while that may be an exaggeration, his right thumb certainly seemed to have a mind of its own. He could "roll" it, inserting bass grace notes at will (à la Blind Blake, whom he much admired); play countermelodies to his treble line, sometimes in contrary motion, which involved picking backward with his thumb; alternate his thumb with his index finger for lightning fast runs; or just "boom-chang" with it.

His left-hand technique was equally extraordinary. Because he was not well sighted enough to pick up on how others played, he had to make up his own way of getting around the neck. Owing to a broken left wrist that had set medially deviated, he could drop difficult-to-impossible chord forms anywhere he wanted on the fingerboard. He knew those chords by name, shape, and position, easily playing the "hard chords" avoided by most guitarists.

He had large hands, and could use his left thumb to cover three bass strings. Another of his tricks was to divide his left hand up into two sets of two fingers each, usually paired 12, 34. He could play runs in harmony this way, against an alternating thumb accenting the off-beat, pinching off sequences of parallel sixths or thirds, one or the other pair acting as if it were a single finger.

He learned to play scales and arpeggios in a fashion similar to classical guitar players, and used a technique called "cross-stringing" (moving the arm while playing an open string) to move runs and chord positions around the neck. Obviously this implies a thorough knowledge of every note on the neck, and where the crossover points are.

Reverend Davis had substantial influence on many people, some well known, others not. Some of these were his contemporaries, some were students, and some are "grandstudents," not yet born when he died. Nevertheless, all, to a greater or lesser degree, incorporated recognizable elements of his style and repertoire into theirs. The list includes, but is certainly not limited to, Walt Phelps (Laurens, Asheville), Craig Fowler (unknown) (Laurens), Will Bonds (Candy Man) (Laurens), Willie Walker (Greenville), Sam Moore (Greenville), Aaron Washington (Asheville), Bull City Red (Durham), Willie Trice (Durham), Richard Trice (Durham), Brownie McGhee (Durham), Blind Boy Fuller (Durham), Buddy Moss (Durham), and Kinney Peebles ("Sweet Papa Stovepipe").

In the 1950s: Jack Elliott, John Cohen, John Gibbon, Fred Gerlach, Alex McEwen, Rory McEwen, Frank Hamilton, Dave van Ronk, Robert Meeropol, Mitch Greenhill.

In the early 1960s: Ian Buchanan, Marty Brennan, Marc Silber, Perry Lederman, Danny Kalb, Rory Block, Steve Katz, Stefan Grossman, North Peterson, Eric Kaz, Steve Mann, Jadurani (Hare Krishna), Ernie Hawkins, Jerry Garcia, Ry Cooder, Bob Dylan, John Fahey, Linda Kalver, Dave Bromberg, Bessie Jones & Georgia Sea Island Singers, Dan Smith, Pops Staples, Jerry Ricks, Larry Johnson, Taj Mahal, John Cephas, Alan Smithline, Dave Feretta, Loring Janes, Jorma Kaukonen, Donovan (Leitch), Rick Ruskin, Ken Whiteley, Woody Mann, Bob Weir, Mark Greenberg,

DAVIS, REVEREND GARY

Danny Birch, Maria Muldaur, John Pearse (string-maker), Bo Basiuk, Eric Schoenberg, Alex Shoumatoff.

In the mid-1960s: Robert Tilling, John Townley, Roy Book Binder, “Barbecue Bob” (Bob Johnson), Spencer Bohren, Rolly Brown, Jackson Browne, Joan Fenton, Andy Cohen, Catfish Keith, George Gritzbach, Brother Tom Winslow.

“*Grandstudents*”: Pat Conte, Bill Ellis, Eric Noden, Dr. Michael Taub, Colin Linden, Frank Basile, Ken Edwards.

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSF

Selected Recordings

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Harlem Streetsinger: Original Blues Classics (OBCCD 547-2 CD, Prestige BV 1015 LP).
If I Had My Way (Smithsonian-Folkways).
Reverend Gary Davis 1935–49 (Yazoo 2011, Document 5060).

DAVIS, TINY

b. Ernestine Carroll, 5 August 1909 or 1910; Memphis, TN
d. 30 January 1994; Chicago, IL

Trumpeter/vocalist. After working with the Harlem Play-Girls (1935–1936) and the International Sweethearts of Rhythm (early 1940s), she formed her own Hell Divers (1947–1952). In 1949 she recorded *Race*

Horse/Bug Juice (Decca 48220) and ran a Chicago club from the late 1950s.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: LSF

DAVIS, TYRONE

b. 4 May 1938; Greenville, MS
d. 9 February 2005, Chicago IL

Soul singer who has a significant following of blues fans and critics. He first became popular with “Can I Change My Mind” in 1968, and his “Turn Back the Hands of Time” (1970) is today played often on “oldies” radio stations. Through the years he has held on and added to his audiences, usually women, with his sexy stage persona and medium-tempo songs.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG Soul; Larkin

DAVIS, WALTER

b. 1 March 1912; Grenada, MS
d. 22 October 1963; St. Louis, MO

Walter Davis moved to St. Louis at the age of thirteen. Spotted by Roosevelt Sykes, he began recording in 1930, but did not play his own piano on record until 1935. His career lasted until 1952 and at the height of his popularity he had a new record issued every few weeks. A temperate man, he had a fine, expressive voice and accompanied himself in an idiosyncratic piano style with hollow, modal chords. He joined the church in 1952 and was a well-known preacher in St. Louis until his death in October 1963.

BOB HALL

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Rye, Howard. “Walter Davis.” *Collectors Items* no. 47 (December 1988): 6–9.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSF

DAWKINS, JAMES HENRY “JIMMY”

b. 24 October 1936; Tchula, MS

Born in 1936 in Tchula, Mississippi, James Henry Dawkins's first musical influences reflected his southern upbringing. Fats Domino, Smiley Lewis, and Guitar Slim, to name a few, inspired a young Dawkins to pick up the guitar and teach himself to play. However it would be in Chicago that Dawkins would make his mark by helping to define the West Chicago Blues scene for the next several decades. After a brief time working in a box factory in the mid-1950s, Dawkins began to play Chicago clubs with artists such as Lester Hinton, Eddie King, and Willie Black. A peer of other important Chicago-based artists like Magic Sam, Dawkins released his first solo effort in 1969 entitled *Fast Fingers* (which was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque from the Hot Club of France for best album).

Dawkins has since amalgamated an extensive catalog and tour schedule. The last three-plus decades have seen Dawkins record for such labels as Earwig, Black & Blue, JSP, and Delmark, to name a few. Although never achieving widespread commercial success, Dawkins has gained a significant amount of respect as an earnest and powerful guitar player and singer, highlighted on such critically acclaimed efforts as *Fast Fingers*, *All for Business*, and *Kant Sheck Dees Bluze*. In addition to being a mainstay in the blues club and festival circuits, Dawkins has also been a contributing writer to blues publications including *Blues Revue*. He also began Leric Records, recording such acts as Nora Jean Wallace and Little Johnny Christian.

MATHEW J. BARTKOWIAK

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Discography: AMG; LSPF**Selected Recordings**

Fast Fingers (1969, Delmark); *All for Business* (1971, Delmark); *Tribute to Orange* (1971, Black & Blue); *Transatlantic 770* (1973, Excello); *Blisterstring* (1977, Delmark); *Hot Wire 81* (1981, Evidence); *Feel The Blues* (1985, JSP); *All Blues* (1986, JSP); *Kant Sheck Dees Bluze* (1992, Earwig); *Blues & Pain* (1994, Wild Dog); *B Phur Real* (1995, Ichiban); *Blues from Iceland* (1995, Evidence); *Come Back Baby* (1995, Storyville Records); *Me, My Gitar & the Blues* (1997, Ichiban);

I Want to Know, Vol. 2 (1999, Storyville); *American Roots: Blues* (2002, Ichiban); *Born In Poverty* (2002, Black & Blue); *Tell Me Baby* (2004, Fedora); *West Side Guitar Hero* (2002, Fedora).

DAY, BOBBY

b. Robert James Byrd, 1 July 1930; Fort Worth, TX
 d. 27 July 1990; Los Angeles, CA

R&B vocalist. Day worked with a vocal group called the Flames from 1948 before going out as a solo singer in 1956. He recorded for Class (for whom he had a number one hit with “Rockin’ Robin”), Rendezvous, and RCA. He recorded little thereafter but continued to perform and tour.

RAY ASTBURY

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Now Dig This no. 83 (February 1990): 23–25.

Selected Recording

Bobby Day—The Original Rockin’ Robin (Ace CDCH 200).

See also Class; RCA/Victor/Bluebird/Camden/Groove/X/Vik

DE LUXE/REGAL

Founded by the Braun family in Linden, New Jersey, in 1944, the first artists to appear on the De Luxe label were jazz performers such as Billy Eckstine and Benny Carter, but in late 1946 the Brauns made the first of their trips to New Orleans where they signed local R&B artists such as Paul Gayten, Pleasant “Cousin Joe” Joseph, Dave Bartholomew, Roy Brown, and Smiley Lewis. Commercial success was instantaneous and then crushed in November 1947 when a fire destroyed the label’s recording plant and warehouse, prompting King Records to buy a fifty-one percent share in the ailing company. In August 1949, Dave and Jules Braun launched a new label, Regal Records, with their new partner Fred Mendelsohn, continuing to release records by Paul Gayten and Larry Darnell. Regal lasted just two years when Mendelsohn left to form Herald Records.

DAVE PENNY

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Discography

Jump 'n' Shout! New Orleans Blues & Rhythm (2000, Delmark CD DE-715).

DEAN, JOE “JOE DEAN FROM BOWLING GREEN”

- b. 1908; St. Louis, MO
d. 24 June 1981; St. Louis, MO

Raised by his widowed mother, Dean began by playing house parties and small clubs. In 1930 he recorded the rocking *I'm So Glad I'm Twenty-One Years Old Today*, and *Mexico Bound Blues* for Paramount, who dubbed him “Joe Dean from Bowling Green.” Subsequently Dean worked in a steel mill, playing intermittently, until the 1950s when he became a pastor.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

“Joe Dean” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 53 (Summer/Autumn 1982): 48.

Discography: DGR

DECCA

Record company and label founded in Britain in 1929 by Edward Lewis; it also owned the Brunswick and Vocalion trademarks in Britain. An American Decca label was inaugurated in August 1934 by Jack Kapp, who had previously been director of Brunswick's Race series. Another former director of that series, J. Mayo Williams, was brought in to supervise the Decca 7000 Race series. In June 1935 the new company launched a second Race series, the Champion 50000 series, using mainly reissues from Gennett and Paramount, but this ran to only seventy-eight issues. A Broadway 9000 Race series was equally short lived. The 7000 series continued until 1944 and included many of the most important blues artists of the era, including Kokomo Arnold, Blue Lu Barker, Bumble Bee Slim (Amos Easton), Sleepy John Estes, Bill Gaither (Leroy's Buddy), Jimmie Gordon, Rosetta Howard, Alberta Hunter, Lonnie Johnson, Joe McCoy,

Memphis Minnie, Ollie Shepard, Roosevelt Sykes, Johnny Temple, Joe Turner, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Georgia White. However, only four of Blind Boy Fuller's Decca recordings were issued in his lifetime because he proved to be under exclusive contract to ARC.

The catalog had a definite bias toward urban artists, often accompanied by small jazz groups. Decca generally brought artists to Chicago or New York City to record, but a significant documentation was undertaken in Dallas in February 1937, when Black Ace (B. K. Turner), Alex Moore, and Andrew (later Smokey) Hogg were among those recorded. Jazz artists featured in the 7000 series included some whose music would be regarded later as “rhythm and blues,” such as the Harlem Hamfats, Louis Jordan, Buddy Johnson, “Hot Lips” Page, and Sam Price. After 1940 this genre was transferred to the new 8500 Sepia Series, which also included some blues singers such as Bea Booze (Muriel Nicholls). The 8500s were more widely advertised than the ethnically restricted Race series and possibly represent the first more than casual attempt to sell any blues other than boogie pianists into the wider market. In 1944, both series were superseded by a new 48000 series, launched with reissues from the 7000 series by Kokomo Arnold, Georgia White, and others. Jazz and R&B artists, including Buddy Johnson and Sam Price, and gospel music initially dominated new issues.

After 1947, sides by Sticks McGhee, Harmon “Peetie Wheatstraw” Ray, Grant Jones (Mr. Blues), and a 1950–1951 series by Cecil Gant (initially credited as Gunter Lee Carr) are noteworthy. Stomp (Archie) Gordon, Lightnin' Hopkins, and Little Esther (Phillips) were also featured before the series ended in 1954. Buddy Johnson and Louis Jordan, whose issues had long been transferred to the general popular series, ceased to be Decca artists in 1952 and 1954, respectively. British Decca had been forced to dispose of its American interests to obtain dollars for Britain's war effort and the American company was thereafter independent until 1962, when it was bought by MCA (Music Corporation of America), which at first continued to use the Decca label but from 1973 used its own MCA label.

HOWARD RYE

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Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

DECCA/CORAL/MCA

Decca Records was founded in London, England, by Edward Lewis in 1929, who acquired the rights to the recordings of the American Record Company (ARC), which were reissued in the United Kingdom on the Decca subsidiary, Brunswick Records. In August 1934, British Decca opened a U.S. office under the leadership of Jack Kapp, a former employee of U.S. Brunswick, and the new label, U.S. Decca, became involved in recording blues, jazz, and country music at an early stage, employing talent scouts such as J. Mayo Williams. Within a year of its inception, with much foresight U.S. Decca began purchasing important blues and jazz labels such as Gennett and Champion, and before the decade was out, had reclaimed the rights to the pre-1932 catalogs of Brunswick and Vocalion that had been lost to U.S. Columbia in 1938.

A serious rival to RCA's Bluebird subsidiary, U.S. Decca's budget 7000 series became home to best-selling blues artists like Joe Turner, Roosevelt Sykes, Kokomo Arnold, Sleepy John Estes, Johnnie Temple, Peetie Wheatstraw, Frankie "Half-Pint" Jaxon, Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie, Georgia White, Ollie Shepard, Bill Gaither, Lee Brown, Jimmie Gordon, Blue Lu Barker, Rosetta Howard, and the Harlem Hamfats. During the Second World War, British Decca was forced to dispose of its U.S. assets, whereupon Jack Kapp purchased the company outright. The subsidiary Coral was founded in 1949, primarily as a vehicle for the productions of jazz A&R man Bob Thiele, but the label soon expanded to feature much pop, R&B, and even country content. The old Brunswick imprint was revived in 1957, yet in 1959, U.S. Decca was purchased by MCA (Music Corporation of America) who continued to use the established Decca label until the late 1960s. Since the 1960s, MCA and, more recently, parent company Universal International have continued to acquire important black music labels. The catalog currently includes MGM, Mercury, Duke/Peacock, Chess, Excello, Dot,

Motown, and ABC Paramount, in addition to both U.S. and U.K. Decca and their various subsidiaries.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography

Jumpin' the Blues (1990, Ace CDCHD 941).

Blues Classics (1996, MCA CD 11441).

DEE, DAVID

b. David Eckford, 24 March 1938; Greenwood, MS

Birth year has also been given as 1942. His early musical experiences were in gospel, pop vocal groups, and bass playing. He began playing guitar in the 1970s. Living in St. Louis, he had a local hit with "Gone Fishing" in 1982. Since then, releases on the Edge and Ichiban labels have brought his music to larger audiences.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin

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Selected Discography: Larkin

DELAFOSE, GENO

b. 6 February 1971; Eunice, LA

Accordianist and zydeco performer, Delafosse merges traditional styles of Louisiana music with country music, rock, and blues, and is progressive yet in line with tradition. At age eight he began playing washboard in his father John Delafosse's Eunice Playboys. Today a multi-instrumentalist, he had learned drums and accordion in his teens. He took an increasingly more prominent role in the group as his father approached retirement, and by the time of John Delafosse's death in 1994, Geno was leader of the Eunice Playboys. He has made it a point to interpret traditional Louisiana, while performing with younger musicians. Currently he performs with his French Rockin' Boogie Band, with recordings for Rounder and Times Square labels.

JOHN OTIS

DELAFOSE, GENO

Bibliography

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Stambler, Irwin, and Lydon Stambler. *Folk and Blues: The Encyclopedia*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001.

Discography: AMG

DELAFOSE, JOHN

- b. 16 April 1939; Duralde, LA
- d. 17 September 1994; Lawtell, LA

John Delafosse, master accordionist and founder of the Eunice Playboys, was one of the first performers to fuse traditional zydeco material with contemporary treatments. He developed his skills in a variety of local zydeco bands in the Eunice, Louisiana, area. He was proficient on a variety of instruments and often performed with several during the same set. He formed the Playboys in the mid-1970s with the Slim and Charles Prudhomme.

By the late 1980s, the Eunice Playboys had expanded to include other members of the Delafosse family. John's son, Geno, played accordion and sang until John's poor health forced him to retire shortly after the release of his last album, *Blues Stay Away from Me*, released a year before his death. Geno became the leader of the Playboys following his father's death.

TOM FISHER

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Stambler

Discography: AMG

Zydeco Man (1980, Arhoolie 1083).
Heartaches & Hot Steps (1984, Maison De Soul LP-1015).
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Zydeco Live! (1989, Rounder 2070).
Pere Et Garcon Zydeco (1992, Rounder 2116).
Blues Stay Away from Me (1993, Rounder 2121).

DELANEY, MATTIE

- b. Mattie Doyle (?), ca. 1904–1905; near Tchula, MS

Mississippi Delta singer and guitarist. Born and raised in a devout Baptist household, she sang in Sunday choirs. According to a cousin, Delaney began playing guitar in 1927; by 1930 she was performing in the styles of Charlie Patton and Memphis guitarists. In February 1930 she recorded two titles for Vocalion Records, one of them the notable flood blues "Tallahatchie River Blues." Activity since 1930 unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Calt, Stephen, and Gayle Dean Wardlow. *King of the Delta Blues: The Life and Music of Charlie Patton*, pp. 197–198. Newton, NJ: Rock Chapel Press, 1988.

Discography: DGR

DELANEY, THOMAS HENRY "TOM"

- b. 14 or 15 September 1889; Charleston, SC
- d. 16 December 1963; Baltimore, MD

Blues songwriter and entertainer. Delaney's "Jazz Me Blues," recorded by Lucille Hegamin in 1921, quickly became a jazz standard. His "Down Home Blues" became Ethel Waters's first hit in 1921. Among his other blues to be recorded by important blues artists were "Southbound Blues" (Ma Rainey), "Troublesome Blues" (Clara Smith), and "Log Cabin Blues" (both Trixie Smith and Blind Boy Fuller).

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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Rust, Brian. *Jazz Records 1897–1942*, 4th ed. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1978.

Discography: DGR

Complete Recordings (Delaney, vocal; Fred Longshaw, piano)

"I'm Leavin' Just to Ease My Worried Mind"/"Georgia Stockade Blues" (Columbia 14082); "Bow-Legged Mama"/"Parson Jones (You Ain't Livin' Right)" (Columbia 14122-D). Recorded New York, June 18, 1922; all four songs by Delaney.

See also **Down Home Blues; Hegamin, Lucille; Rainey, Gertrude "Ma"; Smith, Trixie; Waters, Ethel**

DELAY, PAUL

- b. 31 January 1952; Portland, OR

Influenced by his parents' collection of jazz and swing, deLay pursued a musical career from his adolescence. George "Harmonica" Smith and Charlie Musselwhite were early influences—Musselwhite gave deLay his first bullet microphone. In 1970 deLay, with Lloyd Jones and Jim Mesi, formed

“Brown Sugar” with deLay singing and playing harp. After 1978 deLay led a series of bands known as “The Paul deLay Band,” always with Mesi on guitar. That band issued three albums in the 1980s on its own label, Criminal Records.

In 1988, guitarist Peter Damman replaced Mesi; in 1990 organist Louis Pain and saxophonist Dan Fincher joined to form a stable core that has played on all of deLay’s recordings since then except for *DeLay Does Chicago*, on which deLay was joined by the Rockin Johnny Band, Jimmy Dawkins, and Zora Young. DeLay’s drug problems eventually led to a jail term in 1992. Released in 1995, deLay resumed his career. New songs written in prison led to more well-received albums.

DeLay has toured with Sunnyland Slim, Hubert Sumlin, Johnny Otis, and played major blues festivals in the United States and Europe. A sophisticated composer and accomplished vocalist, deLay is especially noted for his mastery of the chromatic harp.

DANIEL BEAUMONT

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Discography: AMG

The Other One (1990, Criminal); *Paulzilla* (1992, Criminal); *Ocean of Tears* (1996, Evidence); *Take It from the Turn-around* (1996, Evidence); *Nice & Strong* (1998, Evidence); *deLay Does Chicago* (1999, Evidence); *Heavy Rotation* (2001, Evidence); *The Paul deLay Band* (Criminal); *Teasin’* (Criminal).

DELMARK

Record label. Founded in 1953 in St. Louis, Missouri; presently located in Chicago, Illinois. Along with, and long before, Alligator Records, Delmark has been the prototypical independent Chicago blues label, issuing dozens, perhaps hundreds, of releases by Chicago (and other midwestern) blues artists who lacked the national recognition to land recording contracts with the major labels. More so than Alligator or Chess Records, which was also based out of Chicago before being sold to MCA, Delmark has focused on Chicago-area musicians.

Delmark founder and owner Bob Koester started the business in St. Louis as a record shop specializing in the jazz and blues he loved. In 1953, he recorded and issued his first record—by the Windy City Six, a St. Louis-based jazz combo. He continued recording local jazz acts for the next few years, and also began

acquiring the rights to recordings that had either not been released or had gone out of print—a practice of reissuing older recordings that continues to this day.

In 1958, Koester moved the business from St. Louis to Chicago—and picked up where he left off in St. Louis, finding local blues and jazz artists to record. Blues artists that Delmark has recorded and/or released through the years include Carey Bell, Big Time Sarah, Sleepy John Estes, Jimmy Dawkins, Magic Sam, Roosevelt Sykes, and Junior Wells. Delmark has also issued records by such blues-tinged jazz artists as Dinah Washington and Coleman Hawkins.

Bruce Iglauer worked at Delmark for about a year before setting off to found Alligator Records in 1971; *Living Blues* founders Jim O’Neal and Amy Van Singel were also employees at Delmark before starting the magazine.

JIM TRAGESER

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Delmark label website, <http://www.delmark.com/>.
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Discography

45 Years of Jazz & Blues (1998, Delmark DD-903; two-disc sampler).
50 Years of Jazz & Blues (2003, Delmark DX-50; five-disc box set).

DERBY (NEW YORK)

Founded in New York City in July 1949 by Larry Newton in partnership with Eddie Heller, the distinctive Derby label was specifically an R&B company for only the first two or three years of its existence. Between its launch and late 1951, the label’s staff band was fronted by wild tenor saxophonist Freddie Mitchell, but following Mitchell’s departure and the company’s chart success with the saccharine “Wheel of Fortune” by Sunny Gale, the hot R&B backings of Mitchell’s band swiftly gave way to cool pop arrangements of Eddie Wilcox and his orchestra. Newton’s responsibilities became divided in late 1953 when he formed a new label, Central Records, with Lee Magid, allowing Derby to drift into debt and, finally, bankruptcy. The label’s masters were acquired by Eli Oberstein’s Record Corporation of America in 1954 and some of the sides were reissued on the budget Allegro label for the burgeoning rock ’n’ roll market.

DAVE PENNY

DERBY (NEW YORK)

Bibliography

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Discography: McGrath

Cootie Williams & Jimmy Preston: Rock 'n' Roll (1954, Allegro-Elite LP 4109).
The Chronological Freddie Mitchell 1949–1950 (2002, Classics CD 5034).

DESANTO, SUGAR PIE

b. Umpeylia Morsema Balinton, 16 October 1935; Brooklyn, NY

Singer and songwriter. Grew up in San Francisco, California. DeSanto was discovered at an Ellis Theater talent contest by Johnny Otis in the early 1950s, who nicknamed her "Little Miss Sugar Pie." Her persona of a tough woman with a tougher voice emerged with her first hit, "I Want to Know," for Veltone Records in 1960, made with the assistance of producer Bob Geddins. In the early 1960s she toured with James Brown. In 1961 she joined the roster of Chess/Checker as singer and songwriter. She wrote songs for Little Milton and Fontella Bass. As singer she recorded one LP and several singles, among which are the duets with her cousin Etta James, including "In the Basement," Parts 1 and 2, and "Do I Make Myself Clear." In 1964 she toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival. After the end of her Chess contract, she returned to San Francisco, where she began working with her manager Jim Moore in 1971. In recent decades she has been recording on the Jasman label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Stolder, S. "From the Vaults: Sugar Pie DeSanto Interview." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 178 (April 2003): 4–7.

DESHAY, JAMES

b. 16 May 1919; Benoit, MS

d. 12 November 1998; St. Louis, MO

Singer and guitarist in southern style. Moved to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1939–1940. Musical associations

included Little Walter Jacobs (1943–1947) and guitarist Charles Hollinshead. In 1965 he began owning a series of bars, initially the Blue Stallion Lounge, then the Santa Fe, and DeShay's and Whisper's. He was filmed by the BBC for the documentary *The Devil's Music*.

EDWARD KOMARA

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DeShay James, with Mike Rowe. "They Know I'm Not Playing Anything But the Blues." *Blues Unlimited* no. 143 (Autumn/Winter 1982): 32–36.

DETROIT

Early blues in Detroit established itself in the predominantly African American neighborhoods that sprang up as a result of the migration that became possible after World War I. A census of Detroit in 1910 recorded only 5,741 African Americans in the city but by 1920 this figure had grown to more than 40,000. The majority of new arrivals took up residence in Black Bottom replacing the Jewish immigrants who had preceded them. By 1937, Paradise Valley, as it had become known, was firmly established as the center of the African American community in Detroit. Some of the earliest known examples of the blues in Detroit took place in the bars, brothels, and house parties that were plentiful in Paradise Valley.

Several early blues artists who were known to have been active in Detroit include piano players Rufus Perryman, also known as Speckled Red and Big Maceo Merriweather. Speckled Red was known to have played house parties in Detroit from 1924 through 1928 and Big Maceo Merriweather lived and worked in Detroit from 1924 through 1941 (and again from 1951 until his death in 1953). Big Maceo was a direct influence on another Detroit player called "Boogie Woogie Red" (Vernon Harrison). Another early Detroit blues artist was guitarist Calvin Frazier. Calvin Frazier moved to Detroit in the mid-1930s and was recorded (accompanied by Sampson Pittman) by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress (1938). Frazier continued to perform in Detroit through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.

In the 1940s Detroit's Paradise Valley showcased a vibrant mix of blues and jazz in the many clubs that were located on Hastings Street and the surrounding area. The Paradise Theater (for which Paradise Valley was originally named) featured many nationally known artists from that period, including Duke

Ellington, T-Bone Walker, and Billie Holliday. Other popular clubs in and around Hastings Street included The Flame, The Palms, and Club Three Sixes. Detroit Queen of the Blues Alberta Adams began her career at the Paradise Theater.

During and after World War II a second wave of migration took place with many people leaving the South to work in the industrial North, and Detroit became the home to many fine blues artists. An important development in the growth of Detroit blues became the establishment of record labels anxious to take advantage of these artists. While earlier artists such as Big Maceo Merriweather had to travel to Chicago to record, new record companies such as Sensation, Holiday, JVB, and Fortune had established themselves in Detroit. They became important by recording Detroit blues artists but often leased material to other labels in order to gain distribution. Detroit blues artists such as John Lee Hooker, Eddie Kirkland, and Eddie Burns were the first to record on these labels. Other notable Detroit artists to have recorded in the late 1940s/early 1950s period include Baby Boy Warren and Bobo Jenkins. Blues artists not specifically known as Detroit artists were on the Detroit blues scene for periods of time. When Big Maceo Merriweather returned from Chicago to Detroit in 1951 he brought with him John and Grace Brim, with whom he played until his death in 1954. Sonny Boy Williamson II also lived and worked in Detroit recording with Baby Boy Warren and influencing Little Sonny. Louisiana Red (Iverson Minter) also was a Detroit resident in the late 1950s working by day and playing the blues in Clubs like the Harlem Inn (with John Lee Hooker) and Ethel's (with Eddie Burns) by night. Big John Wrencher (One-Armed John) also lived and worked in Detroit (with Baby Boy Warren) for several years. Other important Blues artists in Detroit in the 1950s included Mr. Bo (Louis Collins) and Little Sonny (Aaron Willis).

The blues scene in Detroit received several blows in the early 1960s that were to bring an end to the once vibrant blues scene that existed around Hastings Street. The first and most critical was the demolition of Hastings Street from 1951 through 1961 (when Interstate 75 replaced it). After the destruction of Hastings Street, blues artists found few venues in which to ply their trade. The second was the ascendance of Berry Gordy's Motown records as one of the most powerful recording labels in the country. With the popularity of Motown records, Detroit's blues were overshadowed.

The 1960s saw a period where few Detroit blues musicians prospered. Some musicians (Eddie Burns and John Lee Hooker) were able to sustain themselves through regional touring. These artists were also able

to tour Europe as part of the American Folk/Blues Series.

In 1973 the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival showcased Detroit blues during its program "Music of Detroit," which was the seminal presentation of Detroit blues artists. Artists to appear at the festival included John Lee Hooker, Little Junior Cannaday, Baby Boy Warren, Johnnie Mae Matthews, One String Sam, Eddie Burns, Bobo Jenkins, Mr. Bo, Boogie Woogie Red, and Washboard Willie. The festival was able to show the depth of Detroit blues and its importance in relation to the national blues scene.

Several blues musicians, who were to become important to Detroit blues, relocated to Detroit in the 1970s. Willie D. Warren (1924–2000) moved to Detroit in 1975 after working on the South Side of Chicago with artists Willie Dixon and Muddy Waters. After moving to Detroit he quickly became a Detroit favorite with his "less is more" approach to guitar. Another artist to relocate from Chicago was Johnny "Yard Dog" Jones (guitar/harmonica/vocals). Jones would later win the W. C Handy Award as Best New Artist in 1998.

The blues of Detroit have never fully recovered from the destruction of Hastings Street; however, the Detroit blues scene continues to show surprising durability in the work of both the older artists who are still active on the scene and from the younger artists who work with them. Johnnie Bassett and Alberta Adams are both artists with a long and storied history in Detroit. Both began careers in the 1940s or 1950s and continue to be active today. The Butler Twins (active in Detroit from the 1950s) were a staple on the Detroit blues scene until Clarence's passing. Uncle Jessie White (whose home became a gathering place for Detroit blues musicians after the destruction of Hastings Street) is still performing.

ED SCHENK

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See also Burns, Eddie; Hooker, John Lee; Kirkland, Eddie

DETROIT JUNIOR

b. Emery H. Williams, Jr., 26 October 1931; Haynes, AR

d. 9 August 2005; Chicago, IL

Detroit Junior worked in Flint, Michigan, auto plants and played piano on the side before moving to Chicago in 1955. There he became a solo artist with a jukebox repertoire as well as an ensemble player, notably with Howlin' Wolf's last band. "Money Tree," his first recording, was credited to "Detroit Jr." by Cadillac Baby, who coined the name.

Though known for such humorous, self-deprecating compositions as "If I Hadna Been High" and "Call My Job," his recorded work is slim with a handful of singles and one featured set, *Turn Up the Heat* (1995, Blue Suit). He also appeared on *Chicago Urban Blues* (1972, Blues on Blues) and Alligator's *Living Chicago Blues, Vol. 4.*, and shared billing with Barrelhouse Chuck, Erwin Helfer, and Pinetop Perkins on *8 Hands on 88 Keys* (2002, Sirens).

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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Discography: LSFP

Turn Up the Heat (1995, Blue Suit BS105C).

DIAL

Record label (Tennessee, 1961–1974). Owner: William D. (Buddy) Killen (b. November 13, 1932; Lexington, AL). Nashville, Tennessee-based, the artists include Clarence "Frogman" Henry, King Floyd, Chris Harris, Jimmy Holiday, Paul Kelly ("Chills and Fever"), Frederick Knight, Jean Knight, Little Archie (Archie Himons) ("I Need You") Bobby Marchan ("Get Down With It," covered by Little Richard), Clarence Reid (aka Blowfly), Annette Snell ("You Oughta' Be Here With Me," "Footprints on My Mind"), Joe Tex ("Hold What You've Got," "I Gotcha," "I Want To [Do Everything for You]," "The Love You Save [May Be Your Own]," "Skinny Legs And All," "A Sweet Woman Like You"), and Len Wade. Recordings were also leased to Atlantic, Cameo, Epic, Mercury, Philips, and Wand Records.

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DIAMOND TEETH MARY

(See McClain, Mary "Diamond Teeth")

DICKERSON, "BIG" JOHN

b. Ohio; active since 1960s

Session drummer at Motown Records in Detroit in the 1960s. He also fronted local bands as singer of 1960s blues, including those of Albert King and B. B. King, especially since moving to Minneapolis.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

DIDDLEY, BO

b. Otha Ellas Bates McDaniel, 30 December 1928; McComb, MS

Background

Bo Diddley, born Otha Ellas Bates McDaniel, was raised by his mother's cousin Gussie McDaniel, and moved to Chicago at an early age. Bo actually began his music career studying classical violin for twelve years and taught himself how to play a guitar, drums, and trombone. After hearing John Lee Hooker and his hit song "Boogie Chillen'" on the radio, Bo quickly turned to the blues as his favorite sound. Although he abandoned the violin, he incorporated his church music roots into his sound, giving him the pulsing rhythmic drive often found in his later songs.

In his early teens, he formed his first group, the Hipsters, which included maraca player and percussionist Jerome Green, who became Diddley's regular sidekick throughout his musical career. Also to join the Hipsters was blues harmonica player Billy Boy Arnold, soon after which Diddley changed the name of the band to the Langley Avenue Jive Cats after the avenue that he and bass player Roosevelt Jackson lived on. After graduation, Diddley took on several jobs, including amateur boxing, truck driving, and playing electric blues and R&B on the street corners and clubs of Chicago to supplement his income. At this time, he married his first wife, Louise Woolingham, which lasted for one year, after which Diddley married his second wife, Ethel Smith.

Chess Records

In the spring of 1955, Diddley took a demo of two songs he had written and recorded, "I'm a Man" and "Uncle John," to the Chicago blues label, Chess records. Leonard and Phil Chess suggested that he change the title and the lyrics of "Uncle John" and, later that same year, "Bo Diddley" and "I'm a Man" were released, launching Bo Diddley's musical career. The single "Bo Diddley" went to the top of the R&B charts and created the signature rhythm that was to make him famous. The syncopated rhythm once known as "shave and a haircut/two bits" was now known as the Bo Diddley beat. Diddley's popularization of the rhythm left its mark on numerous pop songs down the road. Other hit songs followed and climbed onto the R&B charts: "Diddley Daddy," "You Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover," "Say Man," "Who Do You Love?," "Walkin and Talkin," and "Road Runner." His first American pop hit was "Say Man," which made the top forty list for popular music in 1959.

Diddley soon left Chicago and moved to Washington, D.C., where he met and married his third wife, Kay Reynolds. In the 1960s, Diddley created albums to fit the rock 'n' roll style with such titles as *Bo Diddley Is a Gunslinger*, *Bo Diddley Is a Lover*, and *Bo Diddley Is a Twister*. With the surfing and beach boy faze of the mid-1960s, Diddley also met the challenge with albums such as *Surfin with Bo Diddley* and *Bo Diddley's Beach Party*. Diddley's association with Checker and Chess labels lasted for twenty-one years, ending in 1971. In 1974, he was appointed deputy sheriff for the New Mexico police force,

moved to Florida in 1987, and married his fourth and current wife, Sylvia, in 1992.

Contribution to Rock 'n' Roll

Diddley's music seems to fall under the rock 'n' roll and R&B label rather than the blues, but his contribution to the blues remains strong through his adaptation of blues themes, his funky guitar riffs, his infectious rhythm extended from blues influences, and his incorporation of blues musicians into his recordings especially during his time at Chess records. Diddley helped to establish the rock 'n' roll sound that was gaining in popularity in the 1950s. At this time, famous rock 'n' roll legends were being produced through the recording industry such as Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel," Chuck Berry's "Maybellene," Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti," and Bill Haley and the Comets' "Rock Around the Clock."

Diddley's musical style fell into the rock 'n' roll legacy while leaning heavily on his R&B and blues influences. He was even recording along with fellow Chicago musician, Chuck Berry. While Berry quickly



Bo Diddley performs at the Chicago Blues Festival in May 2002. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

earned a pop career, Diddley's style of music kept him from the mainstream although both artists proved influential, especially overseas. Diddley had a huge following in the United Kingdom where his rock 'n' roll singles went to the top of the charts. This channeled his influence to several British rock 'n' roll artists such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, and the Who.

The Name and the Guitar

Around Christmas of 1940, he began to acquire the name of Bo Diddley. There is much speculation behind the meaning of his name: It may refer to a mischievous or bullyboy, or it might be a nickname describing his brief boxing career, or it may be attributed to the southern folk instrument the diddly bow. In any case, Diddley himself is not sure where he got his name, but he has made the name famous by integrating it into his lyrics.

Around 1958, Diddley took the neck and the electrical wiring off of a Gretsch guitar and put them onto a home-made square body, making Big B the world's first square guitar. Diddley's next square guitar was made by Chris Kinman and was called "The Mean Machine."

Awards

Throughout his life, Bo Diddley toured all over the world, including the United Kingdom and Australia, and won countless awards and honors for his contribution to rock 'n' roll, including induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Instantly recognizable as much for his physical presence as for the distinctive rectangular guitar, Bo Diddley projects an identity, a sense of humor, including shameless self-promotion and raw musical talent that has stood the test of time.

HEATHER PINSON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Bo Diddley (1957, Checker LP 1431); *Go Bo Diddley* (1959, Chess, CS CHC-9196); *Bo Diddley in the Spotlight* (1960, Chess LP CH-9264); *Bo Diddley's Beach Party* (1963, Checker LP P-2988); *500% More Man* (1965, Checker LP 2996); *The Originator* (1966, Checker LP P-3001); *Super Blues* (1967, Chess CD CHD-9168); *Rare and Well Done* (1991, Chess CD CHD-9331); *Who Do You Love* (1992, Sound Solutions CD 400902).

DIDDLEY BOW

Also called "didley bow," "bo diddley," "jitterbug," "di'di' bahg" [Gullah], and "diddy bowl." The diddley bow is a one-stringed instrument used primarily in Mississippi Delta blues. The forerunner of the slide guitar, its antecedents are African. Over the years there has been significant controversy in the scholarly community about the likely evolution of the instrument. Researchers in the 1970s thought the diddley bow was a direct descendent of the ancient mouth bow, also played in twentieth-century Mississippi. By the late 1990s, the general consensus seemed to be that the form of the instrument used in Delta blues is more directly derived from the monochord zithers of central Africa.

The monochord zither is a popular children's instrument in central Africa. It is typically constructed from a string of palm fiber, a stick, and a stalk of raffia, and is played by two children. The stick is used to hold the string up and away from the stalk so it can vibrate freely. One child keeps the string vibrating, while the other runs a knife or other edge along the string to change the pitch.

The diddley bows popular in the Delta are of two types: wall mounted and free standing. Big Joe Williams, who played slide guitar, described the diddley bows of his childhood as made of cotton bailing wire, thread spools, and a bottle. The bailing wire was mounted on the wall of a house or barn with staples, the spools were bridges, and the bottle was the slider. Other sliders commonly used on wire were nails, knives, and other metal and glass objects, which resonated well on the bailing wire. Alan Lomax describes sitting in Napoleon Strickland's kitchen, watching him make a free-standing diddley bow by wrapping a broom wire around two brads on a board, bridged with snuff bottles. While the principles of construction remain constant, field-work interviews with musicians indicate that there are an unlimited number of found objects that can be used to make and play a diddley bow. The interviews

also mention the popularity of the instrument with both children and adults, and its important role as a transition instrument to the slide guitar.

Although the diddley bow started as an acoustic instrument, it has successfully made the transition to the amplified urban blues setting. Electric diddley bows typically resemble tiny electric guitars in the body, with a guitar-like tunable string. Probably the best known electric diddley bow maker and musician was Lonnie Pitchford, who can be seen on film with both kinds of diddley bow. Pitchford demonstrates the wall-mounted diddley bow at the end of the film *Deep Blues*, and plays an electric diddley bow of his own design in the film *The Land Where Blues Began*.

The sound of a diddley bow can be described as a moan, a twang, a scream, a human voice, a glissando—it slides from one note to another in melodic and rhythmic accompaniment to the singer. Once heard, the sound is never forgotten. Blues artists who started on the diddley bow include Luther Allison, Ranie Burnett, Lewis Dotson, Elmore James, Eddie “One String” Jones, Lonnie McDonald, Napoleon Strickland, Big Joe Williams, and Jo Jo Williams. Diddley bow artists include Jessie Mae Hemphill and Lonnie Pitchford. Despite his stage name, guitarist Elias McDaniel, aka Bo Diddley, did not play the instrument.

DEBORAH L. GILLASPIE

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DIG/ULTRA

Founded by bandleader Johnny Otis in 1955 in Los Angeles, the first five issues of this new record company were issued on the Ultra label, in partnership with Aladdin Records, before breaking away to become

Dig Records. The label recorded many local blues/R&B acts as well as the Otis band and its alumni. Otis discontinued the label in 1957 when he signed to Capitol.

DAVE PENNY

Discography

- Dapper Cats, Groovy Tunes & Hot Guitars* (1992, Ace CDCHD 351).
- Dig These Blues* (1992, Ace CDCHD 334).

DILLARD, VARETTA

- b. 3 February 1933; New York City (Harlem), NY
d. 4 October 1993; Brooklyn, NY

Postwar-era R&B vocalist who recorded a handful of hits for Savoy Records in the early 1950s. Born with a rare bone disease of the legs that required numerous operations, Dillard spent much of her childhood in hospitals, and there she developed her singing talents by performing for the hospital staff and other patients. After competing in a variety of amateur singing contests throughout New York, Dillard performed successfully at the prestigious Apollo Theater in 1948, 1949, and 1950—taking top prize twice—and was signed to Savoy Records in 1951 as a result. She recorded twelve sessions for Savoy and three of her singles with the label reached the R&B charts: “Easy Easy Baby” (1952), “Mercy Mr. Percy,” (1953), and “Johnny Has Gone” (1955), a song memorializing the late vocalist Johnny Ace.

Dillard quit the Savoy label in 1955, and signed with RCA Victor subsidiary label Groove in 1956. There she recorded “I Miss You Jimmy,” about the late actor James Dean. Dillard remained under contract with Groove until 1958, after which time she recorded for the Triumph and MGM Cub label, but these sessions met with little commercial success. Dillard ended her solo recording career in 1961 and joined her husband’s gospel group, the Tri-Odds, a group that was politically active in the Civil Rights Movement. After the Tri-Odds disbanded, Dillard quit her professional career as a singer and worked a variety of jobs outside the music business until her death.

ERIN STAPLETON-CORCORAN

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Penny, Dave. “Varetta Dillard.” *Blues and Rhythm* no. 86 (February 1994): 8.

Discography: AMG**Selected Recordings**

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Varettia Dillard: *The Lovin' Bird. Complete Recordings 1956–1961, Vol. 2* (1989, Bear Family).

DIRTY DOZENS

A family of bawdy blues songs characterized by insulting language. The term is derived from the African American folk practice of “playing” or “putting in” the dozens (also known as sounding, joning, woofing, or cracking) in which two or more participants trade insults about each other’s relatives, especially their mothers. The insults are typically delivered in a rhythmic fashion, often with improvised rhymes, each side aiming to outdo the other in verbal dexterity and scatological abuse. The intent could be friendly or otherwise, and there are many reports of the game ending in violence. McCormick has suggested that the practice evolved during the nineteenth century as a parody of a set of twelve verses describing certain Biblical facts learned by children as a standard part of their religious education.

It is unknown when the dozens evolved into a musical form, though it probably did so at an early stage, given the natural transition between rhythmic speech and singing in African American culture (as found, for example, in certain black southern preaching styles). The classic version of the song was first recorded by piano-vocalist Speckled Red (Rufus Perryman) in 1929. It was an immediate hit on the Race record market and its popularity resulted in numerous versions of the songs being recorded during the 1930s by important Race artists such as Kokomo Arnold, Leroy Carr, Ben Curry, Jed Davenport, Frankie “Half-Pint” Jaxon, Lonnie Johnson, Memphis Minnie, and Victoria Spivey.

All of these versions use a variant of the standard three-line, twelve-bar blues stanza. The first line acts as a verse. It is typically sung (or half-sung) rhythmically on a monotone, just as in the original folk game; is generally unaccompanied except for rhythmic chordal punctuations (stop-time) on a tonic (I) chord; and is of variable length, most commonly eight measures (instead of the four of a standard blues), although it is at times extended to twenty-four measures or even more. The last two lines of each stanza act as a refrain, repeated with only minor differences between each stanza. They conform to the twelve-bar blues stereotype in terms of both harmony and length (each four measures). This

one-line verse, two-line refrain form shows the connection between “The Dirty Dozens” and contemporary hokum blues songs such as “Tight Like That,” which share a similar structure and risqué subject matter.

There is a particular association with “The Dirty Dozens” and boogie-woogie piano style. Speckled Red’s version, for example, uses split octaves in the accompaniment as does Will Ezell’s instrumental “Playing the Dozens,” recorded seven months earlier. Interestingly, boogie-woogie is also hinted at in the earliest known example of the song, a printed version from 1917 by black composer-pianist Clarence M. Jones and white lyricist Jack Frost.

While prewar commercial versions of the song were considerably toned down from the folk originals, certain later recordings were more explicit, particularly those of Eddie Jones, Lightnin’ Hopkins, and Speckled Red (1996). Although versions of the latter type have been generally valued for their directness, the toned-down versions also have considerable merit through the subtle use of *double entendre* as well as their musical excellence.

PETER MUIR

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Selected Recordings

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- Chatman, Sam. “God Don’t Like Ugly” (1960, Arhoolie F1006).
- Curry, Ben. “The New Dirty Dozen” (1932, Pm 13140).
- Davenport, Jed. “The Dirty Dozen” (1930, Vo 1478).
- Ezell, Will. “Playing the Dozen” (1929, Pm 12773).
- Hopkins, Lightnin’. “Dirty Dozens” (1959, Raglan LP 51).
- Jaxon, Frankie. “Half-Pint”/“The Dirty Dozen” (1937, De 7304).
- Johnson, Lonnie. “The Dirty Dozen” (1930, OK 8775).
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 Price, Sam. "The Dirty Dozens" (1940, De 7811).
 Smith, Chris. "Don't Slip Me in the Dozen" (1924, Ajax 17004).
 Speckled Red. "The Dirty Dozen" (1929, Br 7116).
 ———. "The Dirty Dozen—No. 2" (1930, Br 7151).
 ———. "The Dirty Dozens" (1996, Delmark CD 601).
 Spivey, Sweet Pease. "Double Dozens (You Dirty No Gooder)" (1936, De 7204).
 Spivey, Victoria. "From 1 to 12 (Dirty Dozen)" (1937, Vo 03639).

Sheet Music and Transcriptions

- Jones, Clarence M., and Jack Frost. "The Dirty Dozen." Chicago: Frank K. Root, 1917.
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DISCOGRAPHY

A discography documents sound recordings in much the same fashion that a bibliography does for printed materials. A primary difference is that a discography cites performances created in real time, as opposed to printed works that are rarely completed at a single session. Despite its name, a discography documents soundprints in all formats—cylinder, wire, tape, and other recordings, along with conventional disc media. Normally, discographic documentation for popular or vernacular music performances will include some or all of the following information:

- Performer name(s)
- Performer name(s) as identified on published recordings, including pseudonyms
- Participating performers, with instrumental or other roles
- Song title(s)
- Composer credit (few discographies actually include this)
- Matrix number (identifying the actual metal master disc)
- Take letter or number (identifying one of potentially multiple performances)
- Date and place of recording
- For published recordings, original release information, usually record label and catalog number
- For unpublished recordings, label or record company name, or (with field recordings) archival identification data
- Details of rereleases and reissues, including formats that vary from the original
- Supplementary notes as required

Recordings are normally grouped by session. A sample entry from *Blues & Gospel Records* (Robert M. W. Dixon, John Godrich, and Howard W. Rye, eds., Oxford, 1997, p. 739) looks like this:

"Ma" Rainey vocal acc. Her Georgia Jazz Band: Louis Armstrong, cornet; Charlie Green, trombone; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Fletcher Henderson, piano; Charlie Dixon, banjo; unknown, percussion effects—1

New York City	ca. 16 October 1924
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1925-1, -2	See See Rider Blues	Paramount 12252, <i>United Hot Clubs of America 85, Jazz Information 9, Jazz Collector L20, Ampersand R101</i>
1926-2	Jelly Bean Blues	Paramount 12238, 14016, <i>United Hot Clubs of America 84, Jazz Information 8, Jazz Collector L10</i>
1927-2, -3	Countin' the Blues-1	Paramount 12238, 14016, <i>United Hot Clubs of America 83, Jazz Information 8, Jazz Collector 10</i>

Numbers at the left indicate metal matrices from which pressings were made. Single digits following each dash indicate a "take" or unique performance. In this instance, two takes of two of these three songs were published. The second column shows titles as they appeared on the original Paramount record labels. The right-hand column shows 78-rpm issues for each title. All but the first Paramount releases were dubbed from pressings, and these numbers are shown in italics. Normally, pressings made from original matrices yield the best sound and are more desirable to collectors. Discographies use abbreviated forms of most record label names, for instance, Pm for Paramount, UHCA for United Hot Clubs of America; however, those names are spelled out in this particular example. This "Ma" Rainey session appears in both blues and jazz discographies.

Discographies normally focus on particular genres, performers, or eras. The first important generic work was Charles Delaunay's *Hot Discography*, published in Paris in 1936. Other jazz discographies followed, most notably Brian Rust's *Jazz Records*, appearing in several editions between 1961 and 1982. These works chronicled certain blues records from the pre-World War II era, though only those of interest to jazz historians and collectors. This policy dictated the inclusion of singers like Bessie Smith and "Ma"

DISCOGRAPHY

Rainey (who recorded with jazz musicians) and the omission of Leroy Carr, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Lucille Bogan (who didn't).

The Rust discographic model was useful, inspiring Robert M. W. Dixon and John Godrich to compile and publish the first edition of *Blues & Gospel Records* in 1964. At the time, they felt constrained to identify and include only material with sufficient "Negroid content" (their phrase), omitting material by the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, Bert Williams, and others whose style was deemed overpolished. Nevertheless, Dixon and Godrich documented a large universe of African American recordings made before 1942 that had previously been unchronicled. Their important work has appeared in four editions, each adding and updating information to the previous one. The fourth edition (1997) includes entries on Williams, the Fisks, and other performers excluded earlier. Material captured on radio transcriptions and film sound tracks is cited, most of it for the first time.

The first jazz and blues discographies focused on material made before July 31, 1942, when an extended ban on recording was enforced by the American Federation of Musicians. The strike, coupled with war-time conditions, put an almost complete halt to record making through most of 1943. The largest companies, Victor and Columbia, failed to come to terms with the union until the fall of 1944. Meanwhile, a number of small record companies sprang up with the goal of filling the void left by the major labels. By the end of the war, many radio stations had acquired recording equipment, as had numerous small independent studios throughout the country. Independent record publishers sprang up in abundance everywhere, and many of them focused on African American entertainers. Most new record labels didn't last long. Many had limited distribution, and accounts of their activities have tended not to survive, making the task of documentation difficult for discographers. The late 1940s saw the gradual substitution of magnetic tape for acetate-coated discs in the recording process, making it less expensive and more widespread. By the early 1950s, every major American town and many smaller ones featured recording studios, homegrown labels, or both.

The effect of the recording diaspora was to create thousands of new operations. Some (like King, Atlantic, and Mercury) were national in scope, and created catalogs that encompassed multiple music genres. Others focused on fewer areas and local performers. Labels like Harlem, Chess, Jackson, Down Town, Gotham, and JOB concentrated on blues, gospel, and R&B. As technology and the music business evolved in the 1950s and thereafter, 45-rpm, 33 1/3-rpm, and stereophonic recordings were introduced,

with each advance marking the demise of some producers and the introduction of new ones. Thorough documentation is often not possible with small, fleeting record operations. Nevertheless, collector journals and fan magazines like *Blues Unlimited*, *Living Blues*, *DisCollector*, and *Goldmine* have published articles about individual performers that include discographies. Two comprehensive discographic works survey blues and gospel music through the 1960s: *Blues Records, 1943 to 1970* (1987), and a companion volume, *Gospel Records, 1943–1969* (1992). *The R&B Indies* (2000), though not a discography, is a comprehensive collection of postwar record lists, covering the mid-1940s through the early 1970s.

Comprehensive discographies covering the period from 1970 to the present remain to be published. One presumption that will require reexamination is the exclusion of white blues performers from existing discographies. The racial distinction is appropriate to earlier eras, when white performers rarely produced blues records aimed at the African American market. As the white audience for the blues expanded in the 1960s, white and interracial recorded performances did as well, becoming the norm by the end of the decade. As the blues on record is further documented, generic definitions and boundaries will need to be revisited if discographies are to accurately reflect social and musical developments.

RICHARD SPOTTSWOOD

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DIXIE HUMMINGBIRDS

Founded 1927. Gospel singing ensemble, pioneers of on-stage theatrics and flash among gospel acts. The original group began as teens in 1927, consisting of founding tenor James Davis, lead vocalist Barney Gipson, baritone singer Barney Parks, and bass voice J. B. Matterson. Fred Owens replaced Matterson quite early, and they initially billed themselves as the Sterling High School Quartet, before Davis tabbed

them the Dixie Hummingbirds. Jimmy Bryant from the Heavenly Gospel Singers and Tucker from the Gospel Carriers joined the group in 1939, followed shortly after by the addition of thundering bass vocalist Willie Bobo. During the 1940s came recording sessions for Apollo and Gotham, plus more changes with Beachy Thompson from the Five Gospel Singers.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Dixie Hummingbirds were superstars, making several now-classic recordings on Peacock and also adding another masterful lead singer in James Walker. They made a highly praised appearance at the 1966 Newport Folk Festival. Later came rock/pop exposure thanks to a collaboration with Paul Simon on the 1973 song "Loves Me Like a Rock." They later cut their own version of that tune. Despite Bobo's death in 1976 and Davis's retirement in 1984, the Hummingbirds are still performing and touring. They issued the landmark recording *Diamond Jubilation* in 2003.

RON WYNN

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Discography: AMG; Gospel Records 1943–1966

DIXIELAND JUG BLOWERS

Jazz-oriented jug bands led by Clifford Hayes and featuring jug blower Earl McDonald, which recorded with Johnny Dodds and various blues vocalists in 1926–1927. An important part of the thriving Louisville musical scene that inspired the Memphis jug bands.

DAVID HARRISON

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Discography: DGR; Lord

DIXON, FLOYD

b. 8 February 1929; Marshall, TX

Singer, pianist, songwriter. A pianist with impressive technique and impeccable timing, Dixon was instrumental in the evolution of jump-blues into R&B, both as a mentor to Ray Charles and as a successful singer in his own right. Dixon, who wrote "Homesick Blues" while still a teenager, idolized fellow Texan Charles Brown, who he met at talent contest at which Brown's group, the Three Blazers, was headlining.

Dixon moved to Los Angeles as a teenager and won several talent contests in the mid-1940s. He performed in cocktail blues combos, ultimately including Johnny Moore's Three Blazers, where he replaced Brown for a year. Johnny Otis encouraged Dixon to record and he came up with a hit in 1948 with his Swing Time debut "Houston Jump." He also released a succession of singles in 1949 while in the Brown Buddies quartet. The Modern Records hit "Dallas Blues," released in 1949 while Dixon was holding down a day job in a drugstore, was followed by "Broken Hearted," but it was "Telephone Blues," recorded with the Three Blazers in 1951, that gained Dixon his greatest early acclaim. He successfully mined the same vein with "Call Operator 210" before recording his signature song and biggest hit, "Hey, Bartender," in 1954.

Dixon returned to Paris, Texas, and semi-retirement in the early 1970s. A tour of Sweden in 1975 presaged a return to full-time action in the early 1980s when he joined the touring European Blues Caravan, which included R&B legend Ruth Brown and Dixon's former idol Charles Brown. Dixon played regularly on the West Coast in the 1980s, touring with a young Robert Cray for part of the time. His career was further revitalized in the early 1990s when he played a series of major festivals. He won the 1997 W. C. Handy award for best comeback album with *Wake Up and Live*.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

DIXON, WILLIE JAMES

b. 1 July 1915; Vicksburg, MS
d. 29 January 1992; Pasadena, CA

A composer, arranger, producer, singer, and upright bassist, Dixon was, in one way or another, responsible for many of the blues' seminal postwar recordings.



Willie Dixon with blues artist Koko Taylor. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

His autobiographical claim—*I Am the Blues*—is neither bravado nor hyperbole, for his career decisively shaped the development of the urban blues in all its various forms, and his ability to adapt to changes in America’s cultural climate from the Great Depression to the late twentieth century ensures him a unique and lasting place in the annals of American music history.

Early Career

Dixon’s upbringing lent itself to his later vocation as a songwriter. His mother, Daisy Dixon, was poorly educated but instilled in her children a respect for reading and a love of poetry—a rarity in the Jim Crow South, where African American literacy rates were generally low. His understanding of the power of language was fostered by his increasing facility at word play and in his early poems such as “The Signifying Monkey.” The industrious Dixon wrote this mildly salacious ditty as a fourth grader, had it printed, and subsequently sold tens of thousands of copies on the street, first as a boy in Vicksburg and later as a young man in Chicago. Indeed, this early

effort was an indication of things to come, for Dixon later rewrote “The Signifying Monkey” to appeal to a more genteel sensibility and recorded it as a member of the Big Three vocal group. Released on Nashville’s Bullet label in 1946, the song became a hit on the national race record charts.

While Dixon spent much of his adolescence traveling across the Depression Era South in search of work and getting into and out of trouble, the fledgling songwriter found his first musical situation close to home and in respectable company singing bass with the Union Jubilee Singers, a local gospel quartet of some renown. It was around this same time that he also established himself as an able boxer; sensing the limitations of a pugilist’s life in the South he left for Chicago in 1936.

Chicago, the Chess Years, and Beyond

In Chicago Dixon fought successfully, even winning his weight division in the Golden Gloves tournament of 1937. At the same time he sang in a number of vocal groups and met Leonard “Baby Doo” Caston,

who eventually persuaded Dixon to trade in his boxing gloves for a washtub bass. The two worked the Chicago streets for pocket money—enough, apparently, for Dixon to upgrade from washtub to double bass—and formed a group called the Five Breezes; in November 1940 the quintet cut eight sides for the Bluebird label, the Race record subsidiary of RCA. In late 1941 Dixon spent ten months in prison for draft evasion; after his release he formed another group, the Four Jumps of Jive, which cut four sides for Mercury in 1945. Dixon then rejoined Caston to form the pop-oriented Big Three trio with Bernardo Dennis and later Ollie Crawford on guitar; between 1946 and 1954 the trio would make a number of recordings on the Okeh, Delta, and Columbia imprints. The earliest of these earned Dixon the attention of Leonard and Phil Chess, who, beginning in 1948, enlisted Dixon to do session work for Aristocrat, a newly formed subsidiary of the Chess label.

Dixon's tenure at Chess was fateful. Although they were quick to capitalize on Dixon's playing, arranging, writing, and producing skills from the start, the Chess brothers did not hire him full time until 1951. His first session for the parent company came in 1952, but it was only in 1954, when Muddy Waters recorded Dixon's "Hoochie Coochie Man," that the commercial potential of Dixon's songwriting became apparent. After the initial success of that recording, Dixon penned a number of other hits, including Waters' follow-up, "I Just Want to Make Love to You," Howlin' Wolf's "Evil," and two by Little Walter Jacobs, "Mellow Down Easy" and the R&B classic "My Babe." At the same time, Dixon played bass with Waters, Jacobs, and other Chess artists such as Sonny Boy Williamson II, Jimmy Witherspoon, and Bo Diddley, as well as with Chuck Berry on early rock 'n' roll compositions such as "Maybellene," "Sweet Little Sixteen," "Rock and Roll Music," and "Johnny B. Goode." Nevertheless, by late 1956 the Chess brothers' notoriously manipulative business practices encouraged Dixon to move to the Cobra label while he continued to play sessions for Chess. At Cobra Dixon wrote songs for pioneers of the "West Side" sound such as Magic Sam, Buddy Guy, and Otis Rush; Rush's version of "I Can't Quit You Babe" was the label's first single and a top ten R&B hit. Nevertheless, Cobra folded in 1958 and Dixon returned to Chess full time.

Meanwhile, changes in American culture were afoot. The electric bass guitar, introduced by Leo Fender in 1951, increasingly supplanted the upright bass on many recordings, diminishing Dixon's demand as a session player. The emergence of rock 'n' roll took its toll on Chicago's live blues scene; with the

number of hometown gigs dwindling, Dixon joined Memphis Slim for a series of eastern tours that included stops at the Newport Folk Festival in 1957 and 1958 as well as recording sessions for the Prestige, Verve, and Folkways labels. At the same time, the folk and blues revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s led Germans Horst Lippmann and Fritz Rau to stage the first of several highly successful American Folk Blues Festivals across Europe, with which Dixon was closely involved.

If any of this affected Dixon's songwriting for Chess, it was only for the better. Indeed, during this period Dixon wrote many of his most influential songs, including "Spoonful," "Back Door Man," "I Ain't Superstitious," "Little Red Rooster," "Shake for Me," "Wang Dang Doodle," and "You Shook Me" for Howlin' Wolf as well as "Bring it on Home" and "Help Me" for Sonny Boy Williamson and "I'm Ready" for Muddy Waters. And even as Chess's star began to descend—its last blues hit was, fittingly, Koko Taylor's 1966 version of "Wang Dang Doodle"—Dixon had the attention of a whole legion of English, and subsequently American, rock bands eager to plunder his songwriting catalog, at times without acknowledgment or consent. Dixon's efforts to recoup lost songwriting revenues in the 1970s were largely successful, and his experience led him to found the Blues Heaven Foundation, a benevolent organization dedicated to the financial well-being of aging blues artists. He died in his sleep at the age of seventy-six.

DEAN A. MASULLO

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

Selected Recordings

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DIXON, WILLIE JAMES

2385); *Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon: At the Village Gate* (Folkways FA 2386); *Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon: Live at the Trois Mailletz* (Polydor 65f8.148); *What Happened to My Blues?* (Ovation OV-1705); *Willie Dixon: I Am the Blues* (Columbia PC 9987); *Willie Dixon: Mighty Earthquake and Hurricane* (Pausa PR 7157); *Willie Dixon: The Chess Box* (MCA/Chess CH3-16500); *Willie's Blues* (Prestige/Bluesville BV-1003).

DIZZ, LEFTY

b. Walter Williams, 29 April 1937; Osceola, AL
d. 7 September 1993; Chicago, IL

Born Walter Williams in Osceola, Alabama, the flamboyant singer, guitarist, and songwriter dubbed Lefty Dizz moved to Chicago with his family when he was a baby. Although he learned piano as a boy, Dizz gravitated to the guitar while in his teens, inspired by the recordings of Elmore James and T-Bone Walker. After serving in the Air Force, the left-handed guitarist started gigging around Chicago in the early 1960s as a bass player with Earl Hooker. Hooker's brilliant guitar work had a tremendous impact on Dizz's own playing style. Dizz joined Junior Wells's band in the mid-1960s and spent the next several years recording and touring with the harmonica player, performing as far away as Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia. He also worked regularly in Chicago with Hound Dog Taylor, J. B. Lenoir, and Big Moose Walker. In the 1970s, Dizz recorded a single with brother Woody Williams for C.J. Records and formed his own band, Shock Treatment. Dizz's wild acrobatic stage antics, raw South Side Chicago guitar style, and charismatic personality made him a very popular act on the Chicago blues scene throughout the 1970s and 1980s with both fans and musicians alike. He recorded three studio albums during his lifetime, including two for French labels in 1979 and a third for England's JSP in the late 1980s. In 1992, after returning from a tour in Europe, Dizz was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus. Performing almost right up until the end, Lefty Dizz succumbed to the disease at age fifty-six.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

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DOCUMENT

Record company established in Vienna, Austria, in the mid-1980s by Johnny Parth, one of the former proprietors of Roots, seeking initially to reissue pre-1942 blues and gospel recordings of which reissues were not currently available. These appeared both on their own Document, Earl Archives, Eden, HK, and Limited Edition labels and also on other Austrian labels, RST Blues Documents, Fantasy by Selmerphone, Wolf, Best Of Blues, and on the German Story Of Blues, Dutch Old Tramp, and British Matchbox labels. When LPs were superseded by CDs, the opportunity was taken to consolidate the catalog into a series of complete chronological reissues intended as far as possible to reissue the entire contents of *Blues & Gospel Records, 1890–1943*, along with much closely related jazz. At first some of the previous associated labels continued to be used but the catalog was progressively concentrated under the Document label. By the time the label was taken over by Gary Atkinson and moved to Newton Stewart, Scotland, in March 2000 more than eight hundred CDs had been issued. Such a vast output was inevitably dependent on using what material collectors were able to supply in the condition in which it was supplied and some of the output fell short of the highest sonic standards that might have been achieved under ideal conditions. With the original task near to completion, the new owners have undertaken some remastering and repackaging and have also indicated an intention to issue post-1943 recordings.

HOWARD RYE

DOGGETT, BILL

b. 16 February 1916; Philadelphia, PA
d. 13 November 1996; New York, NY

William Ballard "Bill" Doggett took up piano at the age of nine. His mother, Wynona, was a church pianist. He formed his first group at fifteen, and worked in a theater orchestra while still attending high school. He led his own big band for a time in 1938–1939, but became disillusioned with the financial responsibilities of leadership, and handed the band over to Lucky Millinder, staying on as pianist and arranger.

He worked with Jimmy Mundy (1939) and Millinder (1940–1942), and wrote "Shout Sister Shout" for Sister Rosetta Tharpe while with the latter band. He became pianist and arranger for the popular vocal group the Ink Spots (1942–1944). He recorded with Jimmy Rushing, Helen Humes, and Johnny Otis in 1945, and worked with saxophonist Illinois Jacquet (1945–1946) and others before joining Louis Jordan.

He was featured on many of Jordan's most successful recordings during his tenure in the band, which ended in 1951. He recorded with Ella Fitzgerald after leaving the saxophonist, and led his own very successful rhythm and blues bands. He had replaced Wild Bill Davis in Jordan's band, and was inspired to take up organ by Davis's example, despite some initial reservations about using an instrument so closely associated with the church in a secular context.

The jump-blues instrumental "Honky-Tonk" in 1956 was the biggest of his popular but rather formulaic hit records in that decade. He responded to changing musical fashions by returning to his jazz roots from the mid-1960s. He appeared regularly in jazz clubs and the European festival circuit into the 1990s.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: AMG; Lord

Selected Recordings

"Big Dog Blues" (1952, King 4530); *Hot Doggett* (1954, King 514); *Everybody Dance to the Honky Tonk* (1956, King 531); *The Doggett Beat for Dancing Feet* (1957, King 557); *Back Again with More Bill Doggett* (1960, King 723); *Focus on Bill Doggett* (1960, Warner Bros 36009); *Prelude to Blues* (1962, Columbia CL1942); *Bill Doggett* (1971, Black and Blue 33029); *The Right Choice* (1991, After Hours 4112).

DOLLAR, JOHNNY

b. Johnny Williams, 22 November 1941; Greenville, MS

Brother of Lefty Dizz (Walter Williams). Moved with his family to Chicago as an infant. Dollar matured on the West Side, performing guitar with Magic Sam and others. Served in the Marines during the Vietnam War, then on the Chicago Police. Performs mostly around Chicago, with an occasional tour of Europe.

EDWARD KOMARA

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DOLPHIN, JOHN

d. 1 February 1958; Los Angeles, CA

The unscrupulous exploitation of musicians by money-grubbing entrepreneurs acknowledges no racial boundaries. Los Angeles-based African American businessman John Dolphin trawled the city's precincts for talent and played a role in the careers of balladeer Jesse Belvin and saxophonist Joe Houston, among others. Dolphin operated the Money, Lucky, and Cash labels from his record store at the heart of the city's Central Avenue district, the regional equivalent of New York City's Harlem. He kept a disk jockey broadcasting from the window of his establishment to attract customers. Dolpin's incessant machinations eventually led to his violent and sudden death in 1958 when a disgruntled client fatally shot him over a financial dispute.

DAVID SANJEK

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DOMINO, FATS

b. Antoine Domino, Jr., 26 February 1928; New Orleans, LA

Rhythm and blues pianist and singer. In the early 1950s he emerged as a major R&B star performing his New Orleans-style boogies and blues, but by the middle of the decade, Domino exploded as a rock 'n' roll star second in popularity only to Elvis Presley. With his crack New Orleans band accompaniment and his appealing Creole-accented vocals, Domino reached all audiences with his easygoing rocking songs. From 1950 to 1963, he scored with thirty-eight top ten R&B hits and thirty-five top forty pop hits, among them were such million-sellers as "Ain't It a Shame" (1955), "I'm in Love Again" (1956), "Blueberry Hill" (1956), "I'm Walkin'" (1957), "Whole Lotta Loving" (1958), and "I Want to Walk You Home" (1959). Domino was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988.

Domino grew up in a musical family and a musical environment, and by the age of sixteen, in 1944, he was appearing in New Orleans nightclubs. His biggest musical influences were boogie-woogie masters Pete Johnson and Meade Lux Lewis, and jump-blues artist Louis Jordan. In 1946, he joined the Billy Diamond Band, where he got his "Fats" nickname. In 1949, Domino formed his own band and began playing

DOMINO, FATS

regularly at the Hideaway. There he was discovered by band leader Dave Bartholomew, who got him signed with Los Angeles-based Imperial Records. Bartholomew recorded Domino with some of the most exciting New Orleans musicians in the business, notably Herb Hardesty, Lee Allen, and Red Tyler on saxes, Frank Fields on bass, and Earl Palmer on drums. Domino's first release, "The Fat Man," was a fast boogie based on Jack DuPree's "Junker's Blues." It reportedly sold a million copies. Blues were a sizable part of Domino's early repertoire, with such R&B charters as "Every Night About This Time" (1950), "Going Home" (1952), "Going to the River" (1953), "Please Don't Leave Me" (1953), and "What a Price" (1961). Two outstanding blues numbers that did not make the charts were the Domino's versions of the standard "Careless Love" and "Don't You Lie to Me."

What made Domino a rock 'n' roll star were his jump tunes and ballads, and they made up the bulk of his hits. Domino's biggest successes included many gently rocking versions of old standards, such as "My Blue Heaven" (1956), "When My Dreamboat Comes Home" (1956), and "Red Sails in the Sunset" (1963), the latter his last top forty hit. In the late 1950s, Domino toured the rock 'n' roll circuit, appeared on the biggest television variety shows, and was a featured performer in such movies as *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956) and *The Big Beat* (1958). During much of the 1960s and 1970s Domino performed in Las Vegas.

After Domino left Imperial in 1963, he recorded with diminished success with ABC-Paramount (1963–1965), Mercury (1965), Broadmoor (1967–1968), and Reprise (1968–70). His version of the Beatles' "Lady Madonna" (1968) was his last chart record. By the 1990s, Domino was mostly retired from the music business.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

DONEGAN, DOROTHY

b. 26 April 1922; Chicago, IL
d. 19 May 1998; Los Angeles, CA

Death date sometimes shown as June 16, 1998. Pianist and delightful entertainer equally skilled in the blues, boogie-woogie, gospel, even classical. An accomplished actress who also appeared in the film *Sensations of 1945* and the Broadway play *Star Time*, Donegan earned an American Jazz Masters fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1992.

RON WYNN

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

DOOLEY, SIMMIE

b. Simeon Dooley 5 July 1881; Hartwell, GA
d. 27 January 1961; Spartanburg, SC

Singer and guitarist who performed and recorded with Pink Anderson. It is believed he was not active in music after the 1930s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Santelli

Discography: DGR (under Pink Anderson)

DOOTONE/DOOTO/AUTHENTIC

Owned by Walter "Dootsie" Williams, Los Angeles-based Dootone Records began operations in December 1951 and its main 300 series had reached 480 by 1973 (though only a handful of singles came out after 1963). There were also short-lived 600, 700, and 1200 series. Owing to a complaint by needle manufacturer Duotone, the name of the label became Dooto early in 1957. The 700 series also appeared on the Authentic label, as did a small number of the Dooto(ne) 300 series. Williams was also one of the earliest "indie" label owners to venture into the EP and LP field. By 1954 vocal groups dominated the roster of artists and later still comedy albums by the likes of Redd Foxx were heavily featured. Most of the blues artists on the label (such as Big Duke, Big Joe Turner, Helen Humes, Mickey Champion, Peppy Prince, and Joe Houston) had only a single issue; for Johnnie Two-Voice (Morissette) and Filmore Slim

their careers began with recordings for Dootone. Fats Gaines had two issues, while Chuck Higgins and Roy Milton notched up five; but by far the most prolific of Dootone's blues artists was Willie Headen with ten issues.

RAY ASTBURY

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See also **Henderson, Duke "Big"; Higgins, Charles William "Chuck"; Houston, Joe (Joseph Abraham); Humes, Helen; Milton, Roy; Morissette, Johnny "Two-Voice"; Turner, Joseph Vernon "Big Joe"**

DORSEY, LEE

b. Irving Lee Dorsey, 24 December 1924; New Orleans, LA

d. 1 December 1986; New Orleans, LA

Singer, composer, and one of R&B's most distinctive stylists, Dorsey created several enduring songs that became mainstream American standards. Dorsey was a talented vocalist but it was his personalized rhythmic delivery, a sort of Crescent City chant, that made his reputation. Dorsey compressed most of his musical production in a decade-plus period, getting a late start and then having ill health shorten his career. His first entertainment experience came when he boxed professionally as "Kid Chocolate" and it wasn't until after he had served a World War II stint in the navy that Dorsey was involved in the music business. Even then he was only a part-time musician in New Orleans while running an auto body shop as his day job.

In 1961 he signed with Fury Records and had an enormous crossover hit with "Ya Ya," which became a top ten single on the pop charts. A second single, Earl King's "Do Re Mi," had a little success, but Fury went out of business and Dorsey didn't record again until 1965 when he teamed up legendary Louisiana producer Allen Toussaint. The pair delivered a succession of hits, including "Working in a Coal Mine" and "Get Out of My Life, Woman," usually with the Meters as the backing band. But Dorsey dropped out of the music scene in 1970, returning to his auto repair shop. He resurfaced at the end of the decade, performing regularly and touring with James Brown. But Dorsey's comeback, like his life itself, was cut short by emphysema.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

DORSEY, MATTIE

Flourished 1910-1927

Dorsey was known initially as part of the black vaudeville act The Whitman Sisters, whom she left in 1910. She retained the name Whitman for many years afterward in publicity during her solo career. She recorded four songs for the Paramount in 1927. Activity since then is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

DORSEY, THOMAS A.

b. 1 July 1899; Villa Rica, GA

d. 23 January 1993; Chicago, IL

Blues and gospel singer and pianist. Thomas "Georgia Tom" Dorsey's father was a Baptist preacher, Reverend T. M. Dorsey. When Thomas was eleven, the family moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where he entered the world of vaudeville theater. In 1916 Thomas left his family and moved to Chicago, where he became a member of the Pilgrim Baptist Church. In 1921 Dorsey heard Reverend A. W. Nix at the National Baptist Convention and was profoundly influenced by the latter's inspired sermons and songs.

In the 1920s many blacks were aspiring to become blues singers. Lem Fowler gave Thomas Dorsey a lot of advice on how to arrange songs. Dorsey next studied at the Chicago School of Composition and Music. He was then introduced to Clarence Williams by Richard M. Jones, and George W. Thomas introduced him to J. Mayo Williams of the Paramount Record Company. Dorsey began to compose songs

DORSEY, THOMAS A.

for Paramount. Altogether he wrote, recorded, played, and sang with others on more than two hundred blues songs in the 1920s. For his own blues recordings with his guitar partner Tampa Red, he used the soubriquet of “Georgia Tom.” In 1928 this successful piano/guitar duo recorded a very successful song, ambiguously entitled “It’s Tight Like That.” Dorsey also teamed up with Big Bill Broonzy and in 1930 these two artists scored some hits as the Famous Hokum Boys

After the Wall Street crash the record market collapsed. In 1932 the tragic deaths of his wife and his newborn child led him to specialize in gospel. Black America needed reassurance in the dark days of the Depression and Dorsey compositions like “Precious Lord” (Heavenly Gospel Singers) and “Peace in the Valley” satisfied the need. Dorsey founded the Dorsey House of Music, established to publish African American religious music. Dorsey himself composed a thousand religious songs, half of which were published.

In later life Dorsey seldom recorded under his own name, the MGM 78 rpm from March 1953 being an exception. Dorsey has been called the catalyst of gospel music and he continued to preach and sing well into the 1980s.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Discography: DGR; Gospel Records 1943–1966

DOT RECORDS

Record storeowner Randy Wood founded Dot Records in 1951 in Gallatin, Texas. The label’s earliest hits were with Arthur Alexander. Wood sold the label in 1965 to Gulf and Western, where it became part of the ABC group. During its existence, a few blues artists recorded for the label, including Joe Liggins, Barbara Dane, Ivory Joe Hunter, Smiley Lewis, and Harmonica Fats.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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DOTSON, JIMMY “LOUISIANA”

b. 19 October 1934; Ethel, LA

Early career was as singer and drummer, including seven years as Silas Hogan and Lightnin’ Slim’s drummer. Dotson learned guitar in the 1950s, and in the following decade he was based in Memphis. Since 1977 he has been living and performing in Houston, Texas. A 1997 heart attack has limited his performances to special occasions.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Schneider, Stephan P. “Jimmy ‘Louisiana’ Dotson.” *Living Blues* no. 140 (July/Aug 1988): 54.

Discography: LSFP

DOUGLAS, K. C.

b. 21 November 1913; Sharon, MS

d. 18 October 1975; Berkeley, CA

As blues writer and promoter Tom Mazzolini observed, “K. C. Douglas has been an integral part of the Oakland blues scene since its beginning in the mid-1940s.” Douglas had a percussive guitar style and a typical down-home blues vocal delivery perfectly suited for fast boogie figures. After learning from Tommy Johnson’s records and sporadically playing with him at local parties until 1945, Douglas moved to California but never strayed from what he defined as “them cotton picking blues.” In 1948 in Oakland Douglas waxed (with harmonica player Sidney Maiden) his much covered and commercially successful signature song “Mercury Boogie” for Bob Geddins’s Down Town label and another single for Rhythm in 1954. Two years later folklorist Sam Eskin taped—and Cook released—Douglas’s first LP. Few poorly distributed copies of the record were pressed but people at Prestige heard it, and in the 1960s other sessions released by Bluesville and Arhoolie ensued. These recordings made Douglas very popular in the northern California area club

and festival circuit. He participated twice in the Berkeley Blues Festival and once in the San Francisco Bay Blues Festival. Equally at ease as a solo performer, in duo (often with harmonica player Richard Riggins), or in small combos, Douglas recorded 45s for Galaxy in 1967 and for Don Lindenau's Blues Connoisseur in 1972. Accompanied by guitarist Ron Thompson, Douglas finally recorded again for Arhoolie the year before unexpectedly dying of a heart attack at home, just when he was starting to get some recognition.

LUIGI MONGE

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 ———, and Chris Strachwitz. Notes accompanying *K. C. Douglas: Mercury Blues* (1998, Arhoolie CD 475).

Discography: AMG; LSPF

See also Carr, Leroy; Jefferson, Blind Lemon; Johnson, Lonnie; Johnson, Tommy

DOWN HOME BLUES

(1) Song by Tom Delaney (q.v.), written in 1921 and popularized by Ethel Waters on Black Swan Records. The song was published by the firm of Albury and Delaney to capitalize on its success as a record. Its chorus bore a striking likeness to the verse of W. C. Handy's hit "Aunt Hagar's Children Blues." This caused friction between Handy and his former business partner Harry Pace, Black Swan's owner. Some subsequent performances of the song on record, such as the one by Clarence Williams, bore the title "The New Down Home Blues"; the music itself was unchanged.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

(2) Composed by George Jackson, and recorded by Z. Z. Hill for Malaco Records in 1981. It is a twelve-measure blues in (4 + 8) verse and refrain lyric form. Although the melody has much similarity to Jimmy Reed's "Baby What You Want Me to Do," it was performed by Hill and the backing group in a soul manner. It may be argued that the success of the song's release on singles and albums helped to codify and promote soul blues as a newly recognized style, especially to white listeners. After Hill's death in 1984,

the record continued to promote his name through radio airplay and jukeboxes, and the song itself became widely played by artists and bands during summer blues festivals. In 2000 the Memphis Blues Foundation inducted the song into its Blues Hall of Fame, acknowledging Jackson's composition and Hill's performance.

EDWARD KOMARA

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 Waters, Ethel. *His Eye Is on the Sparrow*. New York: Doubleday, 1950; reprint: New York: Da Capo, 1992.

Selected Recordings

(1)

- Clarence Williams and His Orchestra (as "New Down Home Blues") (ca. August 1928, Q.R.S. 7005).
 Ethel Waters with Cordy Williams' Jazz Masters (ca. April–May 1921, Black Swan 2010).
 Mamie Smith (ca. August 30, 1921; OKeh 4446).
 Alice Leslie Carter (ca. September 1921, Arto 9103).
 Mary Stafford (September 28, 1921; Columbia A-3511).
 Ethel Waters (July 28, 1925; Columbia 14093-D).

See also Black Swan Records; Waters, Ethel

DOYLE, CHARLIE "LITTLE BUDDY"

- b. prob. 20 March 1911; Forest City, AR
 d. Unknown

Very little is known about this singer and guitarist who might have been a dwarf hanging around Beale Street in Memphis. But the eight sides he recorded there in 1939 ensured him posterity: well crafted, original and clever blues ("Grief Will Kill You" and "Hard Scufflin' Blues") in the same league with Sleepy John Estes's compositions. The harmonica player on those sides is said to be a young Walter Horton.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: DGR

DR. DADDY-O

DR. DADDY-O

b. Vernon Winslow, 1 April 1911; Canton, OH
d. 13 December 1993; New Orleans, LA

First black deejay on the air in New Orleans, starting in 1949. In 1952, he was picked as one of the top ten radio personalities in the country. He helped popularize early New Orleans rhythm and blues.

TOM MORGAN

DR. HEPCAT

b. Lavada Durst, 9 January 1913; Austin, TX
d. 31 October 1995; Austin, TX

The first black disk jockey in Texas on Austin's KVET. He published *The Blues and Jives of Dr. Hepcat* based on his outlandish radio patter. As a piano player he was influenced by Pete Johnson, Meade Lux Lewis, and locally by Robert Shaw. He cut early records on Peacock, Uptown, and later recordings on Documentary Arts, Catfish, and DA/Arhoolie.

JEFF HARRIS

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Templeton, Roy. "Lavada Durst aka Dr. Hepcat." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 105 (1995): 22.

See also **Johnson, Pete; Lewis, Meade "Lux"; Shaw, Robert; Texas**

DR. JOHN

b. Malcolm John Rebennack, Jr., 21 November 1940; New Orleans, LA

Pianist, singer, composer, producer. With early and extensive involvement in the recording scene as a session star, songwriter, arranger, and producer, Mack Rebennack would have had an accomplished career without inventing his popular Dr. John the Night Tripper performing persona. But he embellished his individual achievements with his creation of the quintessential Crescent City musical icon, giving new life and attention to the rich heritage of New Orleans music.

Rebennack, who released his first single at age eighteen, began as a keyboardist and guitarist on the 1950s New Orleans R&B scene, working with

Professor Longhair, Frankie Ford, Joe Tex, and other established stars. He stepped into the spotlight for a few singles of his own but mostly remained in the background while adding arranging and producing to his credits in the 1960s. He also devoted himself solely to keyboards as a session player after injuring his hand in a gun accident.

After a series of brushes with the law in New Orleans, Rebennack relocated to California and by 1962 he was doing session work in Los Angeles with producer Phil Spector. Using leftover studio time from Sonny & Cher sessions, Rebennack assembled the multi-layered psychedelic funk masterpiece *Gris-Gris* in 1968 that introduced the Dr. John musical personality to the world. Its startling originality immediately attracted a cult of fans, including English rock stars Eric Clapton and Mick Jagger who appeared on the 1971 album *The Sun, Moon & Herbs*.

In 1973 Rebennack, backed by the Meters, had his biggest hit with *In the Right Place*, produced by Allen Toussaint. In the following years his recorded output was a musical gumbo of styles and situations as he did everything from solo piano albums to collections of pop standards, such as the 1989 release, *In a Sentimental Mood*, featuring a duet with Rickie Lee Jones. He also was involved in several special recording projects, including *Triumvirate* with Mike Bloomfield and John Hammond and *Bluesiana Triangle* with jazz drummer Art Blakey and saxist/flutist David "Fat-head" Newman.

Rebennack had a recording resurgence after signing with Blue Note Records, releasing the jazzy *Duke Elegant* in 2000, the roots-oriented *Creole Moon* in 2001, and *N'awlinz: Dis, Dat or D'udda*, his most involved project, a 2004 Crescent City super session featuring local guitar greats Walter "Wolfman" Washington and Snooks Eaglin and a cast of guest stars including B. B. King, Gatmouth Brown, Mavis Staples, and Willie Nelson.

Rebennack's candid, if admittedly idiosyncratic, autobiography *Under a Hoodoo Moon* was published in 1994. His prowess as a pianist, frequently overshadowed by the emphasis placed on his unorthodox vocals, was finally recognized when he won the 2004 W. C. Handy Award for Best Keyboardist.

MICHAEL POINT

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Mandel, H. "Blindfold Test." *Down Beat* 51, no. 10 (October 1984): 49.

Discography: AMG

DRAIN, CHARLES

b. 31 May 1939; Eupora, MS

d. 18 March 1995; St. Louis, MO

Singer best known for his records with the vocal group The Tabs for the labels Vee-Jay and Wand in the early 1960s. Despite unsuccessful solo efforts for small St. Louis labels, he nurtured a local fan following. In later years he ran a car wash in St. Louis, singing in clubs on occasional nights.

EDWARD KOMARA

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DRIFTERS

Formed May 1953 in New York City. The Drifters, one of the finest of all R&B vocal groups, recorded hits with three different configurations between 1953 and 1965. Organized around the lead vocals of Clyde McPhatter, they regrouped behind Johnny Moore and then Ben E. King.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Discography

Clyde McPhatter & the Drifters (1956, Atlantic).

Rockin' & Driftin' (1958, Atlantic).

Save the Last Dance for Me (1962, Atlantic).

Under the Boardwalk (1964, Atlantic).

The Good Life with the Drifters (1965, Atlantic).

I'll Take You Where the Music's Playing (1965, Atlantic).

DRIFTING BLUES

"Drifting Blues," which has also been recorded as "Driftin' Blues," "Driftin' and "Driftin,'" and also simply "Driftin,'" was written by Charles Brown and recorded by Brown and Johnny Moore's Three Blazers on September 11, 1945. Many sources share the writing credits for this song with Johnny Moore and Eddie Williams (Williams being the bass player for the Three Blazers); however; the official release

of Brown's complete recordings for Aladdin Records sites him as the sole composer. There also exists, as a clear antecedent to this song, "Walking and Drifting Blues" (Brown's original working title) recorded by Chicago bluesman Amos "Bumble Bee Slim" Easton, which was recorded on April 12, 1935. Although clearly different songs, there is little doubt that Brown drew inspiration from Easton's lyrics.

Commercially "Drifting Blues" was very successful for Brown, and his smooth vocal style would serve as a standard for several versions to follow. This smooth, "crooning" delivery would be perpetuated by artists such as Billy Eckstine, who recorded this title with Count Basie's Orchestra in 1959, as well as Sam Cooke on his 1963 *Mr. Soul* LP. Ray Charles also released a version of this song in the 1960s in which he begins with two verses from another of Charles Brown's songs entitled "Traveling Blues." By combining these two songs, Ray Charles is not only able to deliver his own interpretation of "Drifting Blues," but he is also able to expand on the wandering traveler motif of the original lyrics.

Curiously enough, Charles Brown would also record a song entitled "Cryin' and Driftin' Blues" eight years later in 1953. This song, short of a few minor changes, is musically identical to "Drifting Blues" yet the lyrical content is entirely different. This in itself is not a strange occurrence as blues players are notorious for reworking their pieces into "different" songs, but what stands out on this recording is that "Cryin' and Driftin' Blues" cites the songwriting credits to Jimmy Locks. On the occasion of this recording, Brown was no doubt trying to rekindle the enthusiasm of his earlier release and merely opted for a different lyricist to freshen up the song's delivery.

Other versions, by blues artists John Lee Hooker, Lightnin' Hopkins, Bobby Bland, B. B. King (Bland and B. B. King would also share a duet with this song years later), Albert King, and John Hammond, tend to treat this song as more of a straightforward blues and thus their vocal style is not in the familiar crooning style of the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s. These early blues versions would lead to interpretations by rock artists such as Paul Butterfield, Pete Townsend of the Who, Carlos Santana, the Marshall Tucker Band, and Eric Clapton. Clapton, on his live 1975 album, *E. C. Was Here*, shares a similar lyrical approach to Ray Charles's version years earlier. The difference lies in Clapton's choice to extend the song, not by adapting lyrics from Charles Brown's library, as Ray Charles had done, but by using Robert Johnson's "Ramblin' on My Mind" to embellish on the lyrical content of the song. By doing this Clapton, like Charles, is able to develop his own adaptation of this song while remaining true to the theme of the

DRIFTING BLUES

original lyrics. This song remains a staple in Clapton's live sets and he again recorded it on his 1994 *From the Cradle* CD. On this recording he gives it a very standard, acoustic, delta blues style interpretation, which, unlike the electric live version of 1975, is much more reminiscent of the easy delivery of this song in its earlier years.

BRYAN GROVE

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DRUMMOND

Label with sister imprint Sugar Hill, run in Detroit in 1956, with the Five Scalders and Baby Boy Warren as leading acts.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

DRUMS

The definition of “drum” varies from source to source. Many standard musical works define the drum as a membranophone, a shell with a membrane (head) that is struck with a stick or the hand. In ethnomusicology the definition is a bit looser, and includes such instruments as hollowed logs (log drums) and drums carved from wood with interlocking tongues (slit drums).

African Antecedents

The history of drums and the blues stretches back to Africa, where drums inevitably accompany song and dance in transmitting the knowledge, rituals, myths, beliefs, history, and values of African life. These aural and kinesthetic cues to culture and identity were carried to the New World, where people torn from their village societies struggled to retain last bits of “home.”

Musical instruments, and drums in particular, carry great cultural significance in Africa. Visual cues—size, structure, decoration, number—can convey nuances important in particular contexts. The size, structure, and height of a drum determine

whether it is played sitting or standing; that coupled with decoration can indicate the drum's intended use: communication, dance, ritual, show of power. For instance, among the Akan of Ghana, the number and types of drums owned by a chief indicate his place in the hierarchy of chieftains; if his drums are removed or captured, he loses status. Drummers themselves are held in high esteem and treated with great respect, especially the “master drum” that calls the rhythms for the rest of the drums.

While drums with skin heads, wooden slit drums, xylophones, hand percussion, rattling or chiming items worn during dances, and finger tapping accompaniment on harps with hollow bodies and skin heads (e.g., kora) are typical African ways of producing rhythm, the human body is also considered an important instrument. Body percussion—stamping feet, clapping hands, “patting juba” (a precise order of striking body parts to accompany rhymes), percussive vocal accents—these are an integral part of dance, song, and storytelling. Most important to those far from home, body percussion is available even when instruments are forbidden.

Drums in the New World

Slaves arriving in the New World often found themselves unable to own drums for fear “drum talk” could lead to revolts on plantations. Denied the drum and all its cultural significance, people made do with what was available. The speed with which they found substitutes for familiar African instruments and became proficient in the music surrounding them is amazing. While some slaves had the opportunity to study music by observing their young charges do so, and even had access to keyboard instruments, most had to settle for instruments easily made and carried. The most popular of these was the fiddle, followed by the banjo, with its comforting similarity to the African harp. In the North, there were even carefully supervised fife and drum ensembles during Colonial times. But body percussion and singing remained the most available, easiest to play, and fastest to whisk out of sight, if need be.

In the early nineteenth century, New Orleans had a large and flourishing instrumental music scene that included opera, concerts, balls, dances, and parades; Creoles of color and freedmen studied classical music and instruments with members of the orchestras. The brass bands were especially popular, and several fine ensembles played for parades, Mardi Gras celebrations, picnics, and funerals. At night, members of those same bands played for dances and

parties. This double duty led eventually to the evolution of the most elementary drumset, which allowed one person to sit and play the snare drum, bass drum, and struck cymbal that were traditionally carried and played by two people in a brass band. An enjoyable and informative description of New Orleans musical life and the evolution of the drumset can be found in the memoirs of Warren “Baby” Dodds, who is widely regarded as the father of modern jazz and blues drumming. In his memoirs, and in William Russell’s taped interviews and film footage, Dodds emphasizes traditional African values: respect for the drum, the role of the drum in ensemble work, and the drum’s ritual importance. This last is especially evident as he describes the traditional New Orleans funeral procession, emphasizing that only the snare drummer was empowered to call the band and mourners together for the march back from the cemetery.

Early Blues: Country and Theatrical

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the musical forms we now call blues and jazz had begun to emerge from the shared melting pot of their origins, including musical and cultural influences from Africa, field hollers, sacred music, brass bands, and singing. The genres are inseparable during this period; blues singers routinely called their ensembles “jass” or “jazz” bands, and jazz and dance bands played the blues in response to public demand. As usual, musicians played whatever they got paid to play without regard to what it was called. The music moved north with the Great Migration, and it did not take long for the vocal blues to make the vaudeville theater circuit, as the newspaper ads for performances by Bessie Smith, Alberta Hunter, “Ma” Rainey, Mamie Smith, and Ida Cox attest.

The rural blues of the South continued in their elemental form, which tended to feature voice and guitar, with the occasional washboard, diddley bow, one-string bass, finger thumping and heavy plucking on guitars, and foot stomping. However, blues acts on the vaudeville circuit played both urban and small-town dates, and soon switched to the more “sophisticated” instrumentation used by the other acts—piano, bass, horns, and drums.

Between 1920 and 1950, a steady stream of country bluesmen headed north for a better life, part of what would later be called the Great Migration. On reaching Chicago, they found themselves considered quaint and old fashioned. Northern bluesmen were working with pianos as a matter of course, and

frequently employed horns, upright bass, and drums as well. The old washtub bass, jug, and foot stomp were nowhere to be found; to get a gig a rhythm player had to be able to play bass or drums. Here, hill country and New Orleans drummers found themselves at an advantage due to experience with the field drum and its classic rudimental style, the foundation of drumset technique. The fife and drum bands of northern Mississippi and Georgia used the traditional military rope-tensioned tenor and bass drums, which have a long and honorable history of their own but are not considered blues instruments. New Orleans parade drumming has its roots in that same tradition, though it derives more directly from the brass band tradition, which employed a 6- to 8-inch-deep snare drum and a bass drum with mounted cymbal.

Drummers in the classic fife and drum style include Jesse Mae Hemphill and G. D. Young; well-known parade band drummers from the early to mid-twentieth century include Louis Barbarin, Louis Cottrell, Dee Dee Chandler, Warren “Baby” Dodds, Cie Frazier, Tony Sbarbaro, and Zutty Singleton. Rudimentary drummers who successfully made the transition to the drumset include Warren “Baby” Dodds (Jimmy Bertrand’s Washboard Wizards, Jimmy Blythe’s Washboard Wizards, Beale Street Washboard Band, Sonny Terry, Bertha “Chippie” Hill, Lovie Austin, Lonnie Johnson), Jasper Taylor (Alberta Hunter, Thomas A. “Georgia Tom” Dorsey, Tampa Red), Tony Sbarbaro (Original Dixieland Jazz Band, Eddie Condon), and Zutty Singleton (Bessie Smith, Ada Brown, Jimmie Gordon, Victoria Spivey, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton).

The Trapset

The “trapset” of the late 1910s and early 1920s was designed to let one person keep the beat going while improvising with a huge array of other sounds. A minimal set included a large (28-inch) bass drum with a 10-inch cymbal mounted near the pedal, a snare drum, and a cowbell and woodblock mounted on the bass drum rim. The sets used by traveling blues ensembles such as Ma Rainey’s Georgia Jazz Band and Mamie Smith’s Jazz Hounds were mindful of having to haul equipment, so they usually added only one or two 14-inch suspended cymbals and a mounted Chinese tom-tom; vaudeville theater sets that could stay put included timpani, gongs, Chinese temple blocks, and so many “traps”—whistles, bird calls, slapsticks, ratchets, tambourines, castanets, triangles, and other miscellany—that one

DRUMS

or more “trap tables” were usually necessary to hold them all.

At this stage, the blues or jazz drummer with a traveling act was still very much tied to the brass band tradition. The bass drum was played on all beats in the measure, usually four to the bar, or two to the bar for marches. The cymbal was struck at the same time as the bass drum by means of a small attachment (slang: “dinger”) on the drum pedal, but there were no options beyond “on” and “off” until the advent of the “snowshoe cymbal.” The snowshoe was a pair of cymbals mounted on two long boards with a hinge and spring to keep them open. A strap held this contraption to the left foot so that the drummer had the option to play the cymbal without constant adjustment of the “dinger” on the bass drum pedal. The snowshoe soon evolved into the “low-boy,” a short pedal-driven pair of cymbals on a stand, and then into the “hi-hat” cymbals played with a pedal on a tall stand used from about the 1940s to the present. The snare drum was played in the marching band style, using rolls and flourishes as ornamentation. The most important snare drum technique during this period was the “press roll,” where the drumstick was pressed and dragged across the calfskin drumhead, producing a buzzing sound. A good press roll was compared to the sound of paper being torn, very even and of moderate volume. The traps were usually arranged on a trap table on top of the bass drum, with items like temple blocks, tambourines, triangles, wood blocks, and cowbells mounted on special holders so the drummer could strike them with a drumstick and make a smooth transition back to the press roll.

Urban Blues

Drums and the Amplified Blues

It was electrification that guaranteed the drums a role in the urban blues. The advent of the electric guitar and amplified bass meant the beat had to be loud enough for the entire band to hear it. Foot stomping and even trapset playing were not enough; even the sound of the big 28-inch bass drum on every beat diffused and was lost under the electric guitar and horns. Like their swing jazz colleagues who worked with horns, blues drummers switched to a smaller 26-inch bass drum, 14-inch wood snare drum, mounted tom-toms and floor toms, and used the bright sound of the 15-inch hi-hat and 20- to 22-inch ride cymbal to cut through the amplification. The band now depended on the drummer to get the

rhythm rock solid and keep everything at a high enough sound level to signal the downbeat. The hi-hat beat evolved from a simple “chup” on two and four to a complex set of rhythms, taking advantage of the ability to get an entire palette of sounds from the open, shut, and partially closed vibrations of the “hats.” The typical blues patterns on both the ride cymbal and the hi-hats included the shuffle and straight eighth notes, with a 12/8 triplet pattern when appropriate. The blues drummers rarely used the dotted-eighth/triplet pattern so popular with jazz drummers.

Important blues drummers from this period include James “Peck” Curtis (“King Biscuit Time” on KFFA with Sonny Boy Williamson, Robert Lockwood, Jr., and Pinetop Perkins), “Baby Face” Leroy Foster (Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, Sunnyland Slim, Muddy Waters), Clifton James (Billy Boy Arnold, Bo Diddley, Willie Dixon, Lafayette Leake, Koko Taylor), Sam Lay (Howlin’ Wolf, Muddy Waters, Michael Bloomfield, Otis Spann, Paul Butterfield, Eddy Clearwater), S. P. Leary (Howlin’ Wolf, Otis Spann, Carey Bell, Lowell Fulson, James Cotton, Johnny Young, Memphis Slim, Detroit Jr.), Odie Payne (Elmore James, Lafayette Leake, Magic Sam, Otis Rush, Little Brother Montgomery, Willie Dixon), Willie Smith (Muddy Waters, Pinetop Perkins, George “Mojo” Buford, Johnny Winter, James Cotton, Big Bill Morganfield), “Stovepipe” (Henry Gray, George Morris Pejoe), and Fred Williams (Big Bill Broonzy, Sonny Boy Williamson, Washboard Sam, Curtis Jones, Willie James, Walter Vinson, Bumble Bee Slim, Memphis Minnie, Ernest Lawler).

Blues and Rock ‘n’ Roll Drumming

By the late 1950s the equipment requirements of urban blues drummers and emerging rock ‘n’ roll drummers proved to be nearly identical, and in the 1960s the drumset available from the major drum manufacturers had settled into models appropriate for use in amplified settings. The two most common off-the-shelf options were the 20-inch and 22-inch “kits.” The 20-inch version included a 20-inch bass drum, 8-inch by 12-inch mounted tom, 14-inch by 14-inch floor tom, 14-inch hi-hats, 18-inch crash cymbal, 20-inch ride cymbal, and 5.25-inch by 14-inch metal snare drum. The 22-inch version had a 22-inch bass drum, 9-inch by 13-inch mounted tom, 16-inch by 16-inch floor tom, 14- or 15-inch hi-hats, 18-inch crash cymbal, 20- to 22-inch ride cymbal, and 6.5-inch by 14-inch metal snare drum. Other than the addition of both sizes of mounted toms in

the late 1960s, these two drumset options have remained the standard for blues, R&B, Motown, and blues-infused rock 'n' roll.

Important drummers from this period include Fred Below (Eddie Burns, Floyd Dixon, Willie Dixon, Buddy Guy, John Lee Hooker, Louis Myers, Otis Spann, Koko Taylor, Little Walter, Muddy Waters, Junior Wells, Detroit Jr., Sonny Boy Williamson, Jimmy Witherspoon), Sam Carr (Buddy Guy, Jelly Roll Kings, Big Jack Johnson, Willie Lomax, T-Model Ford, Robert Walker), Roger Hawkins (Aretha Franklin, Otis Rush, Duane Allman), Al Jackson (Booker T and the MG's), Maurice Jennings (Willie Mabon), Chris Layton (Stevie Ray Vaughan), Earl Palmer (Meade "Lux" Lewis, T-Bone Walker, Fats Domino, Lloyd Price, Professor Longhair, Little Richard, Righteous Brothers, Ike and Tina Turner), Bernard "Pretty" Purdie (Cornell Dupree), and John "Jabo" Starks (Bobbie "Blue" Bland).

Untouched by Time

With the notable exception of the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann, blues-influenced music has remained virtually untouched by electronic drums and by the huge drumsets and drums popular in jazz fusion, heavy metal, and late twentieth-century derivatives of rock 'n' roll. Blues drummers of the twenty-first century play the same size and type of drumsets their mentors played in the 1960s, with the same classic results.

DEBORAH L. GILLASPIE

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DUARTE, CHRIS

b. 16 February 1963; San Antonio, TX

Guitar stylist Duarte moved to Austin, Texas, at age sixteen and immersed himself in the active music scene, absorbing and assimilating an array of roots music influences. He played R&B with Bobby Mack, led a jazz fusion unit, and electrified fans at blues jams before finally forming the Chris Duarte Group. The release of *Texas Sugar/Strat Magik* in 1994 and *Tailspin Headwhack* in 1997 brought his guitar approach, more an enlightened extension of Stevie Ray Vaughan's than a mere emulation, to an international audience. In 2000 *Love Is Greater Than Me* and an appearance on the *New Blues Blood* compilation solidified his reputation.

MICHAEL POINT

DUKE

Record label (Tennessee, 1952). Owners: David James Mattis (b. October 1, 1914, St. Louis, MO; d. July 21, 2000, Wheeling, WV); Bill Fitzgerald. Memphis, Tennessee-based, this label's artists include Johnny Ace ("The Clock," "Cross My Heart," "My Song"), Bobby "Blue" Bland ("Army Blues," "Lovin' Blues," with B. B. King), Earl Forest ("Rock the Bottle," "Whoopin' and Hollerin'"), Bill Fort (with Bonita Cole), Rosco Gordon ("Hey, Fat Girl," "T. Model Boogie"), Gospel Travelers, and St. Louis Jimmy (Oden). In April 1953, Don Robey (of Peacock Records in Texas) acquired the label and name and moved the operation to Houston.

ROBERT EAGLE

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DUKE/PEACOCK/BACK BEAT

Don D. Robey established Peacock Records in Houston in 1949 to launch the recording career of Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown (the first release was "Didn't Reach My Goal" b/w "Atomic Energy," Peacock 1500) with almost thirty additional sides over the next ten years. Assisted by business partner and Buffalo Booking Agency owner Evelyn Johnson, Robey's artist roster grew with both secular acts (Memphis Slim and Floyd Dixon) and gospel acts (Original Five Blind Boys and the Bells of Joy). In 1950, the success of the Blind Boy's "Our Father" (Peacock 1550) established the winning formula of alternating releases of secular records with religious ones.

By the end of the summer of 1952 Robey had recorded or released singles by almost fifty different performers or groups, including the Dixie Hummingbirds and blues-shouter Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton. Robey's Lion Music published all the songs released by the label, usually with Robey taking coauthor credit. It was at this point that he acquired Duke Records, founded only a few months earlier in Memphis by David James Mattis, program director at WDIA. Mattis had cut "My Song" (Duke 102) with Johnny Ace, a record that created a demand that Mattis's limited capital could not supply. Robey offered a partnership, moved the entire operation to Houston (Earl Forest, Rosco Gordon, and Bobby Bland came with the deal), and squeezed Mattis out entirely within a matter of months. Robey employed the talents of Johnny Otis to make Ace a heartthrob and national R&B star.

The R&B record that made Peacock famous was Big Mama Thornton's "Hound Dog" (1953). When Sun Records released "Bear Cat" as an "answer song," Robey sued for copyright infringement and won, a landmark decision in popular music. Another lawsuit that Robey lost led him in 1973 to sell his entire music business interests to ABC/Dunhill for a reported \$1,000,000. By then there was an inventory of two thousand unreleased masters, 2,700 copyrights, and a hundred contracted artists to Duke/Peacock/Back Beat/Song Bird/Sure Shot who owed their labels \$250,000 in advance royalties. He served as consultant to ABC/Dunhill until his death in 1975.

JAMES M. SALEM

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- Salem, James M. *The Late Great Johnny Ace and the Transition from R&B to Rock 'n' Roll*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

DUKES, LAURA

- b. 10 June 1907; Memphis, TN
d. 14 October 1992; Memphis, TN

A Memphis institution who danced, sang, and played banjo ukulele. She worked with Robert Nighthawk during the 1930s. She joined the Memphis Jug Band in the 1930s and later performed mostly with Dixieland groups, primarily for white parties and festivals. Recordings by Dukes have appeared on Wolf, Albatross, and Flyright.

JEFF HARRIS

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Hays, J. Fred. *Goin' Back to Sweet Memphis*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

See also **Memphis; Memphis Jug Band; Nighthawk, Robert**

DUNBAR, SCOTT

- b. 1 July 1904; Deer Park Plantation, MS
d. 1 October 1994; Centreville, MS

Besides working in the native Lake Mary, Mississippi, area as a professional guide and fisherman, guitarist Dunbar recorded for Folkways in 1954, Matchbox in 1968, and a solo LP for Ahura Mazda in 1970.

LUIGI MONGE

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Wolfe, Karl Michael. Notes accompanying *Scott Dunbar: From Lake Mary* (2000, Fat Possum Records 80338-2).

DUNCAN, AL

b. Alrock Clifford Duncan, Jr., 8 October 1927; McKinney, TX
d. 3 January 1995; Las Vegas, NV

Longtime session drummer for Chicago labels Chess, Vee-Jay, Cobra, and others in blues, jazz, and gospel. Outside the studios he was known to play mostly in local jazz venues. He was closely associated with Jay McShann and Willie Dixon.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)
Brisbin, John Anthony. “Al Duncan” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 120 (March/April 1995): 91–92.

DUNCAN, LITTLE ARTHUR

b. 3 February 1934; Indianola, MS

Duncan taught himself harmonica in 1953—learning to play upside down—after hearing his upstairs Chicago neighbor, Little Walter Jacobs, practicing. He played frequently with Little Willie Foster, Floyd Jones, and Jimmy Reed, whose influences are reflected in his repertoire and style. After retiring from his tavern, Duncan returned to music. Four titles recorded for Twist Turner were rereleased on *Blues Across America, Chicago Scene* (Cannonball). His first full-length effort, *Singin’ with the Sun* (1999, Delmark), featured eight original compositions and was followed by *Live in Chicago!* (2000, Random Chance).

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography

Singin’ with the Sun (Delmark DE-733).

DUNN, ROY SIDNEY

b. 13 April 1922; Eatonton, GA
d. 2 March 1988; Atlanta, GA

Early experience was in gospel quartet music, performing with his brothers. Upon moving to Covington, Georgia, and later Atlanta, he came to know blues greats Curly Weaver, Blind Willie McTell, and Buddy Moss. In his later years, he was a source of information on these musicians to researchers. After suffering serious injuries in a 1968 car wreck, he returned to performing full time.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin
Lee, Peter. “Roy Dunn” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 82 (September/October 1988): 38–39.

Discography

Know’d Them All (1976, Trix 3312).

DUNN, SARA

(See Sara Martin)

DUNSON, JOHNNIE MAE

b. 9 March 1921; Bessemer, AL

Drummer, singer, songwriter, and folk artist Dunson moved to Chicago in 1943 and played on Maxwell Street with Eddie “Porkchop” Hines. Said to have authored around six hundred compositions, Dunson wrote or cowrote a handful of Jimmy Reed’s songs, including “I’m Going Upside Your Head.” J. B. Hutto’s “Combination Boogie” was reportedly based on one of her numbers. She recorded four tracks for Chess in 1965, apparently unissued. In 2000 she released *Big Boss Lady* (Bogfire), a CD of all original compositions.

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

Bibliography

Moon, D. Thomas. “The ‘Evil’ Queen of Maxwell Street.” *Blues Revue* no. 56 (April 2000): 24.

Discography: LSFP

DUPONT, AUGUST “DIMES”

b. 28 November 1928; LA
d. 14 September 1997; New Orleans, LA

DUPONT, AUGUST “DIMES”

Saxophonist, and nephew of Danny Barker. Studied at the Snowhill Institute in Alabama. With guitarist Edgar Blanchard he founded the Gondoliers, an R&B and comedy band that lasted for twenty years. By 1970 he was working outside of music.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Hannusch, Jeff. “August ‘Dimes’ Dupont” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 137 (January/February 1988): 50–51.

DUPREE, AL “BIG AL”

b. 7 November 1923; Dallas, TX
d. 3 August 2003; Dallas, TX

Tenor saxophonist and pianist. Began career with Doug Finell in 1935–1936, then left in 1939 to attend Xavier University in New Orleans. Spent World War II working on aircraft engines. Afterward he returned to Dallas and joined Buster Smith’s Heat Waves of Swing. From the late 1940s until his death he worked in local Dallas cocktail lounges. He recorded his first CD in 1995, *Big Al Dupree Swings the Blues* (Dallas Blues Society label).

EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin
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Schuller, Tim. “Big Al Dupree” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 171 (January/February 2004): 63–64.

DUPREE, CHAMPION JACK

b. 23 July 1909 or 4 July 1910; New Orleans, LA
d. 21 January 1992; Hanover, Germany

New Orleans native Champion Jack Dupree, who was raised in an orphanage since he was a baby, learned piano from local musician Willie “Drive ‘Em Down” Hall. Hall taught Dupree his driving barrelhouse style, and by his mid-teens, Dupree was playing for tips throughout the French Quarter. He left New Orleans in 1930 and lived in Indianapolis, New York, and Chicago throughout the decade, and associated with several prominent pianists, including Leroy Carr and Peetie Wheatstraw. A successful boxing career in the late 1930s earned him his “Champion” moniker. Dupree made his first recordings for

OKeh in Chicago in 1940 and 1941. Although no longer a resident of the city, Dupree’s New Orleans barrelhouse style remained intact and these recordings would influence future pianists Professor Longhair and Fats Domino.

An imaginative songwriter, he candidly detailed life’s realities and tribulations, exemplified on his 1941 classic “Junker Blues.” Dupree recorded for many small labels throughout the 1940s and 1950s, but his greatest commercial success came in 1955 with his top ten R&B hit “Walking the Blues” for King. In 1958, Dupree recorded the critically acclaimed LP, *Blues from the Gutter*, for Atlantic. The following year he became the first bluesman to move permanently overseas, and he performed and recorded prolifically in Europe throughout the next three decades. In 1990, Dupree made a triumphant comeback to the American blues scene with several prestigious tours and recording sessions. Champion Jack Dupree, who considered himself “the last of the barrelhouse piano players,” died of cancer at his home in Germany in 1992.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Santelli
Rosen, Joel N. “Champion Jack Dupree: The Godfather of New Orleans Blues.” *Living Blues* no. 97 (May/June 1991): 21–24.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Blues from the Gutter (1992, Atlantic 782434-2).
New Orleans Barrelhouse Boogie (1993, Columbia/Legacy CK 52834).

DUPREE, CORNELL

b. 19 December 1942; Fort Worth, TX

Guitarist. Recording session superstar Dupree’s graceful soul guitar lines have been heard on more than twenty-five hundred albums by artists including King Curtis, Lena Horne, Lou Rawls, Esther Phillips, and Aretha Franklin, with whom he toured from 1967 to 1976. In addition to his solo career, Dupree was a member of the successful jazz/funk instrumental unit Stuff.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Dupree, Cornell. *Rhythm and Blues Guitar*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2000.

DURHAM, EDDIE

b. 19 August 1906; San Marcos, TX
 d. 6 March 1987; New York City, NY

Trombonist, guitarist, composer, and arranger. Durham worked minstrel shows with his brothers, then territory bands in the Southwest and Kansas City. He was a pioneer of electric guitar with Count Basie, 1937–1938, and a freelance arranger during the 1950s and 1960s. He tried his hand at performing again from 1969 with Buddy Tate, Harlem Blues, and Jazz Band.

KENNY MATHIESON

Bibliography

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 Russell, Ross. *Jazz Style in Kansas City and the Southwest*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Discography: Lord**Selected Recordings as Leader**

Eddie Durham (1974, RCA LPL1-5029).
Blue Bone (1981, JSP 1030).

DURST, LAVADA

(*See Dr. Hepcat*)

DUSKIN, BIG JOE

b. 10 February 1921; Birmingham, AL

After experiencing some run-ins with the Klan, Joe moved with his family to Cincinnati when he was around six or seven. Although he had started playing piano in Alabama, Joe took up boogie-woogie piano and blues singing in earnest in Cincinnati, though against the wishes of a religious father who made Joe promise not to play any blues until after the father was dead. When his father died at the age of 105, Joe had been away from the blues for sixteen years, though he had met his hero and a primary influence Albert Ammons and Jimmy Yancey and performed at some USO shows and night clubs in Cincinnati during that time. He left regular performing for a job at the Post Office around 1945 until 1971, when he began performing again at clubs such as Dollar Bill's and Bogart's. Eventually, he began touring in Canada and Europe, recording for Arhoolie, Bluebeat, Wolf, Special Delivery, and other labels, and appearing at festivals such as the San Francisco Blues Festival in 1980 and the New Orleans Jazz and

Heritage Festival in 1989. He continues to perform around Cincinnati and make occasional appearances outside the city, and is revered as one of the major living purveyors of the boogie-woogie style associated with Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson, and Meade Lux Lewis, best known for his "Cincinnati Stomp," and versions of "Well Well Baby" "Tender Hearted Woman," and "Roll 'Em Pete."

STEVEN C. TRACY

Bibliography

Larkin
 Tracy, Steven C. *Going to Cincinnati: A History of the Blues in the Queen City*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Discography

Cincinnati Stomp (1979, Arhoolie 422; rpt. 1995).
Don't Mess with the Boogie Man (1988, Special Delivery 1017).

DYER, JOHNNY

b. 7 December 1938; Rolling Folk, MS

Blues harmonica player, combining Chicago style with West Coast sound. Dyer grew up on the Stovall plantation in Mississippi. He began playing professionally at age sixteen, advised by Robert Lee "Smok-ey" Wilson. In 1958, Dyer moved to California, where he was influenced by George "Harmonica" Smith. Dyer abandoned music for various jobs in the 1960s, but returned around 1982, touring and doing his first recordings with the L. A. Jukes, the Houserockers, and as a sideman. Guitarist Rick Holmstrom often produces Dyer's records.

YVES LABERGE

Bibliography

Larkin
 CD booklet from Johnny Dyer's *Listen Up* (featuring Rick Holmstrom) (Blacktop CD BT 1101).
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Discography

Listen Up (featuring Rick Holmstrom) (1994, Blacktop CD BT 1101).
Jukin' (1995, Blind Pig).
Shake It! (1995, Black Top).
Lookout! (with Rick Holmstrom) (1996, Black Top).

See also Holmstrom, Rick; Piazza, Rod; Wilson, Smokey

E

EAGLIN, SNOOKS

b. Ford Eaglin, Jr., 21 January 1936; New Orleans, LA

Guitarist, singer. Arguably the most musically eclectic in a scene famous for musical eclecticism, Eaglin, known as the “human jukebox” to his fans, used his omnivorous appetite for esoteric material and his encyclopedic knowledge of American music styles to fashion a unique blues identity. The sightless Eaglin, determined to transcend the role of blind soul singer, was equally adept with early Broadway tunes and modern R&B, as well as everything between, and his live shows gleefully mixed and matched genres.

Eaglin began with a recording of the solo acoustic folk blues *Country Boy in New Orleans* album for Folkways in 1958 and *That’s All Right*, showcasing his twelve-string acoustic work, in 1961. But Eaglin was also playing in an R&B band with producer Dave Bartholomew and that was where his heart was, as evidenced by the *Down Yonder* compilation of funky oldies, and where his future would be.

Eaglin, always active on his home turf, enjoyed a career revival outside Louisiana in the late 1980s with a series of albums for the New Orleans–based Black Top Records label, beginning with *Baby You Can Get Your Gun* in 1987. *Out of Nowhere* in 1989 featured guest guitarists Anson Funderburgh and Ronnie Earl, as well as saxists Grady Gaines and Mark “Kaz” Kazanoff. An approximation of Eaglin’s unpredictable performances came with *Live in Japan*, where he segued effortlessly from the deep traditional blues of

“Black Night” to personalized renditions of pop songs by the Isley Brothers and Stevie Wonder.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

EALEY, ROBERT

b. 6 December 1925; Texarkana, TX

Singer, drummer, club owner. A major mentor and influence on a generation of Dallas/Fort Worth blues musicians, Ealey sang in church before moving to Dallas as a twenty-year-old. He formed the Boogie Chillen Boys in Fort Worth with guitarist U. P. Wilson and secured a lengthy residency at the Blue Bird Club, the blues epicenter of the Metroplex. Ealey eventually bought the club after performing in it for two decades. He didn’t record until the 1990s when he released several albums, including *Turn Out the Lights*, which featured guitarist Mike Morgan, and toured Europe with guitarist Tone Sommer.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); Larkin

Discography: AMG

EARL, RONNIE

b. Ronald Horvath, 10 March 1953; Queens, NY

Leading electric guitarist in contemporary blues since the 1980s. Became interested in blues guitar after hearing Muddy Waters with guitarist Louis Myers in Boston in 1975. The next year he left a teaching job to join John Nicholas and the Rhythm Rockers on a five-month tour, during which he stayed with Jimmie Vaughan for a one-month stay in Austin, Texas. Around 1977–1978 he adopted the surname Earl in honor of guitar hero Earl Hooker. In Boston around 1978 he performed and recorded with Sugar Ray Norcia and the Bluetones.

In 1979 he accepted an offer from Roomful of Blues to replace departing guitarist Duke Robillard. He remained with them through 1987, touring New England, the West Coast, and Europe. He formed Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters in 1983, going full time with this group four years later. In the early 1990s he took a break to recover from drug and alcohol problems, then in 1993 he recorded with the Broadcasters the all-instrumental CD *Still River* for the Audioquest label. A 1997 contract with Verve Records brought *The Colour of Love* and much public and critical attention. Commercial overexpectation appeared to sour his relations with Verve, and a bout of manic depression hampered his activity through 2000. He disbanded the Broadcasters during the same period. Since 2000 he has performed as a solo artist in collaboration with others, and was recording for Telarc.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin; Santelli
“Blindfold Test.” *Downbeat* 64, no. 3 (March 1997): 57.
Jordan, Scott. “Ronnie Earl: An Introspective Look.” *Blues Revue* no. 31 (October 1997): 12–16.

Discography: AMG

EARWIG

Chicago-based Earwig Music is the child of producer Michael Robert Frank, an intensely dedicated blues fan with a particular fondness for the older styles of Delta and Chicago blues. Earwig’s first release (1979) was the Jelly Roll Kings, a raw, unadorned Delta trio with Frank Frost on harp, Jack Johnson on guitar, and Sam Carr on drums. Subsequent Earwig releases included CDs by Jack Johnson, Jimmy Dawkins, Louis Myers, John Primer, Louisiana Red, Lovie

Lee, Sunnyland Slim, and David “Honeyboy” Edwards. As of 2004, the label had released more than thirty-five blues albums.

Earwig founder Michael Frank started collecting records as a teenager in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, developing into a self-described “blues LP junkie.” After college, he moved to Chicago in 1972, hanging out nightly in the city’s neighborhood blues bars, absorbing the music, getting to know the musicians, and working part time at the Jazz Record Mart, owned by Delmark Record’s Bob Koester, who encouraged Frank to start his own label. To Frank, Earwig was a way of manifesting his 1960s-style activist spirit. “I wanted to produce records by people who weren’t being heard; in effect, promoting cultural justice for blues musicians through arranging better gigs and recording deals,” he told an interviewer. Earwig is also an artist management and booking company; its most notable client is Honeyboy Edwards, who Frank has managed exclusively since 1973.

STEVE HOFFMAN

Bibliography

Frank, Michael Robert. Notes to *Earwig Music 20th Anniversary Collection* (1999, Earwig 4946); posted as “The Earwig Story.” <http://www.earwigmusic.com/>.

Selected Recordings

Various artists. *Earwig 16th Anniversary Sampler* (1995, Earwig 4933).
Various artists. *Earwig Music: 20th Anniversary Collection* (1999, Earwig 4946).

EASTON, AMOS

b. 7 May 1905; Brunswick, GA
d. 8 June 1968; Los Angeles, CA

Amos Easton, known as Bumble Bee Slim, was an early star on the Chicago blues scene of the 1930’s cutting more than 180 sides for a variety of labels. A first-rate singer and songwriter, he owed a large part of his success in his ability to emulate the popular Leroy Carr.

Born in Georgia, Bumble Bee Slim left after getting married while in his twenties. He moved with his family to Florida where he worked as a section hand. After separating from his wife he headed north to try his hand at music, making stops in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and eventually Chicago.

He kicked off his recording career for Paramount in 1931. One coupling from this session, “Rough

Ragged Blues” b/w “Honey Bee Blues,” wasn’t discovered until the 1990s and provides a rare glimpse of Easton’s guitar playing. His best-known tune was “Sail On, Little Girl, Sail On” covered as “Sail On Boogie” by T-Bone Walker, which later evolved into Muddy Waters’s “Honey Bee.” He recorded prolifically until 1937 also playing on records by Big Bill Broonzy, Cripple Clarence Lofton, and others.

Easton relocated to Los Angeles, in part because he was disillusioned with the recording business and in part because he had an idea that he could break into the movies. He came back to Chicago in the 1940s where he cut sides with Little Brother Montgomery but these were never released. Moving back to Los Angeles he cut four sides for the Specialty label with two appearing on its sister imprint, Fidelity, in 1951. He made his final recording, the album *Bumble Bee Slim: Back In Town!* for Pacific Jazz in 1962. He died of pneumonia on June 8, 1968.

JEFF HARRIS

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda and Stephen Thomas Erlewine); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli
Nowakowski, Konrad. “Amos Easton—The Mae West File.” *Blues & Rhythm* no. 184 (2003).
Zolten, Jerry. “The Rough Rugged Road of Bumble Bee Slim.” *Living Blues* no. 135 (1997): 42–45.

Discography: DGR

Selected Recordings in Reissue

Bumble Bee Slim: The Essential (2002, Classic Blues 200031).

See also Carr, Leroy; Chicago; Paramount; Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box

EASY BABY

b. Alex Randle, 3 August 1934; Memphis, TN

Alex Randle lived in Michigan City, Mississippi, with his grandmother and uncle, both harmonica players, until he was seven, before moving back to Memphis to start school. He began to play harmonica himself and in the early 1950s he played professionally in and around Memphis while working odd jobs like shining shoes and running errands. When he had access to the juke joints and gambling houses of his area, he met and befriended Howlin’ Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson II (Miller), James Cotton, Joe Hill Louis, and even played with many of them.

In 1956, he moved to Chicago and worked as a mechanic throughout the 1950s to 1980s while singing and playing informally in and around Chicago. He recorded an excellent album for Barrelhouse Records in 1979 with Eddie Taylor (guitar) and Kansas City Red (drums) demonstrating his strong harp playing and soulful vocals. Playing the devil’s music did not prevent him from having strong religious feelings and today he lives in an apartment building in the South Side of the Windy City, playing regularly in his church. He only performs occasionally—he played the Chicago Blues Festival in 1998 and 2000 and, in 2001, Wolf Records in Austria offered him his second opportunity to make an album under his name with two of Eddie Taylor’s sons, Eddie Jr. (guitar), and Timothy (drums), with Allan Batts (piano), Johnny B. Moore (guitar), and Sam Lay (drums), among others.

ROBERT SACRÉ

Bibliography

Brisbin, John Anthony, and Steve Wisner. “Easy Baby: We Seen Some Good Days.” *Living Blues* no. 144 (March/April 1999): 58–63.

Discography

The Master of Traditional Chicago Blues (2001, Wolf Records 120 805 CD, Austria).

EBONY (1)

Label owned by J. Mayo Williams in New York City and Chicago in 1945–1946. Ebony 1000 paired Jimmy Oden’s “Going Down Slow” with Sleepy John Estes’s “Some Day Baby.” Other notable artists were the Soul Stirrers (as the Five Gospel Souls), Lil Hardin Armstrong, and Bonnie Lee.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

EBONY (2)

Owned by Charles Priest in Chicago in 1952–1956. Four of its known issues were by pianist Little Brother Montgomery.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

ECKSTINE, BILLY

ECKSTINE, BILLY

b. William Clarence Eckstein, 8 July 1914; Pittsburgh, PA

d. 8 March 1993; Pittsburgh, PA

Singer and bandleader. Studied at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Eckstine began his professional career in Buffalo in 1934, then in 1939 joined the Earl Hines band in Chicago and had a blues hit with “Jelly Jelly” in 1940. Eckstine led a seminal but largely unrecorded bebop big band in 1944–1947. With his rich, smooth baritone and clear diction, he broke into network radio with ballads, unusual for a black singer in the 1940s. His repertoire was weighted toward romantic ballads, but he was an effective, if occasional, interpreter of songs in both blues and jazz contexts. His popularity peaked in the early 1950s, with records for MGM in lush string settings. He continued to perform on the cabaret circuit in later years.

KENNY MATHIESON

Bibliography

New Grove Jazz; Larkin
Friedwald, Will. *Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices from Bessie Smith to Bebop and Beyond*. New York: Scribner's, 1990.

Discography: Lord

Selected Recordings

“Jelly Jelly” (1940, Bluebird 11065).
“Blowin’ the Blues Away” (1944, De Luxe 2001).
Billy Eckstine Orchestra 1945 (1945, Alamac 2415).
“Caravan” (1949, MGM 10368).
Basie/Eckstine Inc. (1959, Roulette 52029).
My Way (1966, Motown 646).

EDISON

Founded in Orange, New Jersey, by Thomas Alva Edison, inventor of sound recording, the Edison company began issuing cylinders in 1894. Vertical cut discs, called Diamond Discs, followed in 1913. Edison personally supervised record issues and his personal and musical prejudices meant very limited involvement with blues. Helen Baxter was recorded in 1923. The only Race series comprised three releases in 1925 by Rosa Henderson, Viola McCoy, and Josie Miles. Cylinder issue continued in the Blue Amberol series, mostly of transfers from Diamond Discs, including all three of Helen Baxter’s titles. Both recording and issue were “suspended” in October 1929.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography: DGR

Dixon, Robert M. W., and John Godrich. *Recording the Blues*. London: Studio Vista, 1970; reprinted in Paul Oliver et al., *Yonder Come the Blues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.
Sutton, Allan. *American Record Labels and Companies, An Encyclopedia*. Denver, CO: Mainspring Press, 2000.

EDMONDS, ELGA

b. 1909; Champaign, IL

d. 26 August 1966; Chicago, IL

Born into a musical family, Elga Edmonds played a variety of instruments before settling on the drums in his late teens. He heard ragtime from his mother’s piano while growing up, and attended a local conservatory with his brothers. His studies gave his music a sober and committed attitude, while the musical camaraderie of his family—particularly of a flamboyant aunt—taught him the essentials of showmanship. He began his career as a jazz drummer in groups emulating the likes of Nat King Cole and other acts with crossover appeal. After gigging around throughout the 1940s to some acclaim, his break came in the person of Sunnyland Slim.

Slim introduced Edmonds to Muddy Waters, whose band was perfecting its electrically amplified blues band sound at the time Edmonds joined in 1950. He contributed much to the group during his tenure, preferring the straight-ahead on-the-fours beat bequeathed by his years as a jazz musician, rather than flashy syncopation. Edmonds grew inflexible on this point even as Waters pushed for the more urgent and aggressive sound that was gaining in popularity over the prevailing urban styles of blues. Rumors that Edmonds handed over his duties to uncredited sidemen on some Chess label sides, rather than play what Waters wanted, persist to this day. A split was inevitable; Waters needed a drummer who would do more than keep time, and Edmonds deemed anything other than anchoring the beat for his bandmates to be flamboyant. Waters dismissed Edmonds in 1956, but the drummer continued to draw on the strength of that association. He toured and played jazz for a time, but his increasing bitterness toward the music business and his disaffection with the blues soured his health, obliging him to retire from music in the mid-1960s.

JOHN OTIS

Bibliography

Santelli

Moon, D. Thomas. "All About the Beat: The Elga Edmonds Story." *Living Blues* no. 136 (November/December 1997): 36–43.

Discography: LSFP**EDSEL**

British record label, subsidiary of Demon Records, established in West London by Andrew Lauder in 1982. Dedicated to "making available again classic recordings of the past," Edsel's blues catalog included reissues from Columbia of albums by Taj Mahal, Son House, and Johnny Otis, and Otis Rush's Bullfrog label album.

HOWARD RYE

EDWARDS, ARCHIE

b. 4 September 1918; Union Hall, VA

d. 18 June 1998; Seat Pleasant, MD

Virginian Archie Edwards's main contribution to blues consists of his double role as musician and teacher who successfully tried to keep what he defined as "East Virginia blues" alive. Edwards started to play the guitar at a very early age under the influence of his father Roy, of Mississippi John Hurt and Blind Lemon Jefferson's records, and of white country music artists. At fifteen, Edwards performed in public at a local party for the first time. Then he worked outside music for many years before being drafted and settling in Washington, D.C., where he was employed by the government as a truck driver.

In 1959, he also opened a barbershop, which would soon become a meeting place for professional and amateur musicians and fans alike. His active interest in music was spurred again in 1963 after meeting his mentor Hurt. For the following three years Edwards accompanied the elder artist and regularly played locally. Immediately after retiring from his regular job, Edwards's talent was finally recognized, and he began to perform for larger audiences at major American and European festivals, including the renowned American Folk Blues Festival, and made few—though excellent—recordings issued on L+R Records, Mapleshade, and NorthernBlues. Though deeply rooted in tradition, Edwards was no mere copyist and contributed original songs such as "The Road Is Rough and Rocky," "Pittsburgh Blues," and

"Duffel Bag Blues." A founding member of D.C. Blues Society, he was very proud when September 19, 1993, was declared Archie Edwards Day.

LUIGI MONGE

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———. Notes accompanying *Archie Edwards: The Toronto Sessions* (2001, NorthernBlues Music NBM0006).

Discography: AMG

See also **Hurt, John Smith** "Mississippi John"; **Jefferson, Blind Lemon**

EDWARDS, BERNICE

Flourished 1930s

Bernice Edwards was raised in Houston with the talented Thomas family, which included Hersal Thomas, Hociel Thomas, and Sippie Wallace. She learned piano with the family, and later, with Black Boy Shine. In her teens she recorded two sessions for Paramount of mostly slow, emotional blues of which "Long Tall Mama" is a fine example. Her final 1935 session, with Black Boy Shine, featured some vigorous piano duets, including "Hot Mattress Stomp."

BOB HALL

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR**EDWARDS, CHUCK**

b. Charles Edward Edwins, 29 November 1927; Philadelphia PA

Singer and guitarist who initially began his career in New York City, and performed with pianist Sonny Thompson (1949–1953). In 1952 he settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but continued to tour, and he made notable records for the Duke and Apollo labels (1952–1957). In 1967 his instrumental "Bullfight" (Rene 7001) was a hit, leading to a follow-up "Bullfight No. 2" and a cover version by jazz guitarist George Benson. In 1971 he formed his family group,

EDWARDS, CHUCK

the Edwards Generation. Since 1972 he has resided in San Francisco.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

LSFP

Gart, Galen. "I Got Loose: The Chuck Edwards Story." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 77 (March 1993): 14–15.

Discography: LSFP

EDWARDS, CLARENCE

b. 25 March 1933; Lindsay, LA

d. 20 March 1993; Baton Rouge, LA

Louisiana "swamp blues" style singer and guitarist. In the 1950s he performed in Louisiana and Mississippi with the Boogie Beats and the Bluebird Kings bands. He recorded with his brother, Cornelius Edwards, and Butch Cage in 1959–1960 sessions for folklorist Harry Oster. A day job at a scrap iron firm in Baton Rouge limited his performing opportunities for many years, but a few album recording and festival bookings came his way before his death.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin

Coleridge, Stephan. "Clarence Edwards" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 110 (July/August 1993): 50–51.

Discography: AMG; Larkin; LSFP

EDWARDS, DAVID "HONEYBOY"

b. 28 June 1915; Shaw, MS

Remarkable for his longevity as well as his musical accomplishments, Edwards was as a young boy a regular witness to performances by figures such as Charlie Patton, Eddie "Son" House, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Howlin' Wolf, and Tommy Johnson. In his early adolescence Edwards learned to play guitar with the help of friends Tommy McClellan and Robert Petway; by late 1932 he had left Shaw to work the picnic and juke joint circuit with Big Joe Williams. After a formative year with Williams, Edwards struck out on his own, playing around Greenwood, Mississippi, before moving to Memphis

in early 1935; there he worked along the riverfront with the then-sixteen-year-old harmonica player Big Walter Horton. He returned home briefly but spent much of the following year playing around the South and living the hard scrabble life of a vagrant.

His travels brought him back to Greenwood, where, in 1937, he met Robert Johnson, whose now-legendary death Edwards witnessed the following year. Edwards spent the next two years playing in various situations across the South and made the acquaintance of a number of notable performers, including Elmore James, B. B. King, Teddy Darby, and Peetie Wheatstraw. In July 1942, folklorist Alan Lomax took Edwards to the Coahoma County Agricultural School in Clarksdale to record seventeen sides for the Library of Congress, including "Water Coast Blues," "The Army Blues," "Stagolee," "Just a Spoonful," "Spread My Raincoat Down," "Worried Life Blues," "Tear It Down Rag," and "I Love My Jelly Roll." Although he continued to travel and to perform (most notably with Little Walter Jacobs), Edwards did not record again until 1951. It was then, under the name of "Mr. Honey," that he made his first commercial recordings for the Houston-based Artist Recording Company,



David "Honeyboy" Edwards performs at the Chicago Blues Festival, June 2000. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

“Build Myself a Cave” and “Who May Your Regular Be,” as well as two unreleased sides, “Early in the Morning” and “Who Could Be Loving You Tonight.” In early 1953, Edwards, now using the name “Honeyboy,” came to Chicago to record a version of Sleepy John Estes’s “Drop Down Mama” for the Chess label; however, Chess did not release the song for nearly seventeen years. Nevertheless, Edwards relocated to Chicago in 1956, where he spent the next ten years playing in South Side clubs and at the Maxwell Street Market in relative obscurity.

From the mid-1960s interest in Edwards’s music intensified, thanks largely to both the American folk revival and the success of English blues-based rock bands such as Fleetwood Mac, with whom he performed in the late 1960s. In the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s Edwards made a number of well-received recordings for a variety of labels and toured across the United States, Europe, South America, and Asia. His memoir, *The World Don’t Owe Me Nothing*, was published in 1997. In 2002 he was the recipient of the United States’ highest honor for a traditional artist, the National Endowment of the Arts’ National Heritage Fellowship; that same year saw the release of Scott L. Taradash’s acclaimed full-length documentary on Edwards, *Honeyboy*.

DEAN A. MASULLO

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Drop Down Mama (1990, MCA/Chess 93002); *Delta Bluesman* (1992, Earwig CD 4992); *White Windows* (1993, Evidence CD 26039); *Crawling Kingsnake* (1997, Testament CD 6002); *The World Don’t Own Me Nothing* (1997, Earwig CD 4940); *Don’t Mistreat a Fool* (1999, Genes CD 9914); *I Catch Trouble* (1999, Genes CD 9914); *I’ve Been Around* (2000, 32 Jazz CD 32185); *Shake ‘Em on Down* (2000, APO CD 2010); *Mississippi Delta Bluesman* (2001, Smithsonian Folkways CD 40132).

EDWARDS, FRANK

b. 20 March 1909; Washington, GA
d. 22 March 2002; Greenville, SC

Singer, guitarist, with rack harmonica. In 1941 he recorded for OKeh, including a rare rendition outside

the Robert Johnson circle of musicians of “Terraplane Blues.” Except for the 1960s, he remained an active musician based in the Atlanta, Georgia, area.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

EDWARDS, “GOOD ROCKIN’” CHARLES

b. 4 March 1933; Tuscaloosa, AL
d. 17 May 1989; Chicago, IL

Singer and harmonica player. Raised in Alabama, Edwards moved to Chicago in 1949. In the early 1950s he performed in local clubs with Big Boy Spires, Otis Rush, Louis Myers, John Brim, and others. He joined Jimmy Rogers in 1955. Through the 1950s he had many opportunities to record but skipped them.

It appeared he had retired from performing during the 1960s. He returned in 1970 at a Detroit blues festival, after which he returned to Chicago. In 1975 he recorded his first and perhaps best work, *Good Rockin’ Charles* (Mr. Blues MB 7601) produced by Steve Wisner. He toured Europe in 1979, and continued performing around Chicago until ill health slowed him in 1983–1984. His harmonica style was grounded in those of John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson and Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II,” but it was current in the 1950s alongside the styles of Little Walter Jacobs and Big Walter Horton. Stories abound of his hustling an extra dollar or two, one time explaining that the need resulted from “Reaganomics.”

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin
Illinois Slim. “Good Rockin’ Charles” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 88 (September/October 1989): 33.

EDWARDS, WILLIE

b. 25 July 1949; Hartford, CT

New England–based soul/blues guitarist and vocalist. Edwards has led various bands throughout New

EDWARDS, WILLIE

England since 1965. He released his debut album *Everlasting Tears* in 1997 on London-based JSP Records.

JOE C. CLARK

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG

See also JSP

EGAN, WILLIE LEE

b. 1 October 1933; Minden, LA

Last name sometimes shown as Egans. Pianist. Moved to Los Angeles at age nine. Main keyboard influences were Amos Milburn, Hadda Brooks, and Camille Howard. Egan produced a string of piano boogie single records for the Mambo and Vita labels in 1955 and 1956, for which he is remembered.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG; LSFP

EL BEE (EL + BEE)

Label owned by John Burton in 1956 in Chicago. Its most collectible release is El Bee 157, Freddie King's debut ("Country Boy"/"That's What You Think").

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

EL, EDWARD H. "EDDIE"

b. 27 June 1914; Mound Bayou, MS

d. 1 June 1982; Chicago, IL

Postwar Chicago guitarist of the 1940s and 1950s. With the Blues Rockers he made six sides for the Aristocrat label that may be heard today as rock prototypes. Although he stopped playing in Chicago clubs around 1965, he was hired by labels as a side guitarist, notably by Delmark Records for Arthur Crudup's 1967 sessions.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Wisner, Steve, and Jim O'Neal. "Eddie El" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 57 (August 1983):15.

Discography: LSFP (see Blues Rockers)

ELECTRIC FLAG

Guitarist Mike Bloomfield formed the Electric Flag after leaving the Butterfield Blues Band in early 1967. The band featured singer Nick Gravenities (vocals), Barry Goldberg (organ), Harvey Brooks (bass), and Buddy Miles (drums), and a horn section. They made a strong debut at the Monterey Pop Festival, but the promise inherent in their powerful blues-rock explorations was never fulfilled. They recorded a film soundtrack, *The Trip*, before their official debut album, *A Long Time Comin'* (1968). Bloomfield departed before *The Electric Flag* (1969), and the band dissolved soon after. A brief reunion in 1974 featured all but Brooks of the original quintet.

KENNY MATHIESON

Bibliography

AMG (Richie Unterberger); Larkin; Santelli Brooks, Ken. *The Adventures of Mike Bloomfield & Al Kooper with Paul Butterfield and David Clayton Thomas*. Hampshire, United Kingdom: Agenda, 1999.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

The Trip (1967, Sidewalk ST5908).
A Long Time Comin' (1968, Columbia 9597).
The Electric Flag (1969, Columbia 9714).
The Band Kept Playing (1974, Atlantic 18112).

ELECTRO-FI

Label founded in Toronto in 1996 by Andrew Galloway with assistance from Gary Collver. Artists include Little Mack Simmons, Snooky Pryor, Mel Brown, Curley Bridges, Fruteland Jackson, Sam Myers, and Paul Oscher.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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ELEKTRA RECORDS

Jac Holzman and Paul Rickholt founded Elektra Records in 1950, with their first offices in Greenwich Village in New York. After buying out Rickholt in 1954, Holzman moved the label toward commercially viable artists like Josh White in the late 1950s and Paul Butterfield in the 1960s. Holzman sold the label in 1970, remaining its head until the label merged with Asylum three years later.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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Southall, Brian. *The A-Z of Record Labels*. London: Sanctuary, 2003.

Discography

Edwards, David, Mike Callahan, and Patrice Eyries. "The Elektra Story." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/elektra/elektrastory.html> (accessed December 18, 2004).

ELEM, ROBERT "BIG MOJO"

b. 22 January 1928; Itta Bena, MS

d. 5 February 1997; Chicago, IL

Bassist/guitarist/vocalist. Elem learned guitar as a boy from Robert Nighthawk and Ike Turner. After moving to Chicago, he landed gigs with local artists such as harpist Mad Dog Lester Davenport and guitarist Arthur "Big Boy" Spire. He switched to electric bass (still a novelty) in the mid-1950s, and formed Earlee Payton's Blues Cats with harpist Earlee Payton. They recruited guitarist Freddie King to handle the fretboard duties; this is the aggregation heard on King's debut single, "Country Boy," recorded for the El-Bee label circa late 1956. Elem remained in King's band, off and on, for about seven years. He also gigged locally with blues artists such as harpist Shaky Jake, Junior Wells, Jimmy Dawkins, and Luther Allison others.

Aside from his road work with King, he preferred to remain mostly a local artist; he was a dedicated family man, and he did not want to risk his day job for the uncertain life of a full-time musician. Perhaps partly for this reason, Elem had the opportunity to record only one album under his own name, 1994's *Mojo Boogie* (St. George). Nonetheless, he was an important figure in Chicago. In the latter years of

his career, he often led the house band at Mister Tee's on West Lake Street, a West Side juke operated by former Freddie King percussionist T. J. McNulty. Here he put forth his high-velocity version of J. B. Lenoir's "The Mojo" (aka "Mojo Boogie"), on which his keening, tenor vocal delivery made him sound eerily like Lenoir himself.

DAVID WHITEIS

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda)

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Discography: AMG; LSFP (as Ealem)

11-29

"11-29," also appearing as "eleven twenty-nine," is a reference found in a number of blues songs dealing with the subject of court sentencing in southern states for criminal behavior. Still standing as law today in the state of Tennessee, the sentence for some crimes is not to exceed 11 months and 29 days, or just under a year. A sentence of 11 months and 29 days originally kept the convict from passing from local to state authority.

Whether or not "11-29" was a desirable fate remains a matter of opinion. The sentence was often the maximum for a misdemeanor crime, thus keeping the convict in local confinement as long as possible. This interpretation is borne out in a number of blues songs. Blacks were often given more severe sentences than whites in a local court of law.

The other view of "11-29" is that the convict was given a minimum sentence for a greater crime and was not allowed to pass into a state prison. But this also meant that the prisoner, on release, did not receive new clothing, some money, and a ticket home as was customary for parolees from a state prison. And the experience of either county or state incarceration during the historical period that shaped early blues lyrics was, in reality, very cruel.

Charley Patton refers to the "11-29" jail sentence of eleven months and twenty-nine days in "Jim Lee Blues, Part 1" recorded in 1929:

When I got arrested what do you reckon was my fine?
Say they give all coons eleven twenty-nine.

The injustice of the sentencing was not restricted to men. Women also found themselves on the receiving end of maximum sentences for local crimes.

Leroy Carr sings of the fate of his “gal” in “Eleven Twenty-Nine Blues” recorded in 1934:

Then I heard the jailer say, “Hello, prisoners.
All fall in line.
I’m also talking about that long-chain woman
that got 11.29.”

References to “11-29” also are heard in the Furry Lewis song “Judge Harsh Blues,” recorded in 1928, and in the Romeo Nelson song “11.29 Blues,” recorded in 1929.

BILL GRAVES

Bibliography

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- Oliver, Paul. *The Story of the Blues*. London: Chilton Books, 1969.

See also **Racial Issues and the Blues**

ELKO

Los Angeles label, owned by John R. Fulbright, which issued less than fifty blues and gospel singles from 1951 to 1955 (with a brief revival in 1959) in a variety of numerical series. Clifton Chenier and Phillip Walker made their recording debut on Elko, which shows Fulbright’s ability to spot talent.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

- Bentley, Chris. “Elko: The Old House of Music.” *Juke Blues* no. 1 (July 1985): 15–18.

Discography: McGrath

See also **Agee, Ray; Bender, D. C.; Chenier, Clifton; Egan, Willie Lee; Mickle, Elmon “Drifting Slim”; Nolen, Jimmy; Thomas, Jesse “Babyface”; Walker, Phillip**

ELLIS, BIG CHIEF

b. Wilbert Thirkfield Ellis, 10 November 1914; Birmingham, AL
d. 20 or 21 December 1977; Birmingham, AL

Self-taught pianist who in the 1940s and 1950s contributed to recording sessions including those by

Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee for Capitol. His solo career was revived after moving from New York City to Washington, D.C., in 1972. He made a late-period album for Trix before his death from a heart attack.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- AMG (Ron Wynn); Harris; Larkin; Santelli Selkowitz, Ira, and Susan Day. “Wilbert ‘Big Chief’ Ellis.” *Living Blues* no. 63 (January/February 1985): 28–35.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

ELLIS, TINSLEY

b. 4 June 1957; Atlanta, GA

Guitarist, singer. Raised in South Florida, Ellis took up the guitar at an early age and ultimately served as a major force in the advent of rocking southern blues. While attending Emory University, Ellis began making a name for himself on the Atlanta blues scene with bands such as the Alley Cats, which also included bassist Preston Hubbard, who would play with Roomful of Blues and the Fabulous Thunderbirds. In 1981 Ellis formed the Heartfixers with veteran singer/harpist “Chicago” Bob Nelson. The group soon became the rocking blues favorite of its region, regularly holding its own against the better-known southern rock bands of the era. Ellis took over vocals when Nelson left in 1983 following the recording of the band’s first two independent albums. The Heartfixers backed Nappy Brown on his 1984 comeback *Tore Up* but couldn’t expand their regional reputation.

Ellis took his trademark Gibson ES-335 guitar and went solo in 1988. The release, and subsequent popularity with radio, critics, and fans, of *Georgia Blue* on Alligator Records a year later made him a national artist. Ellis took advantage of the situation with constant touring while also releasing a series of albums, including *Fanning the Flames*, *Trouble Time*, *Storm Warning*, and the Tom Dowd-produced *Fire It Up*. He also did a guest spot on Jody Williams’s award-winning *Return of a Legend* album while releasing his own *Kingpin* on Capricorn in 1999 and *Hell or High Water* in 2002 and *Hard Way* in 2004 on Telarc.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin
Horowitz, H. "Tinsley Ellis: Atlanta's Heartfixer Rocks the Blues." *Blues Revue* no. 77 (August/September 2002).

Discography: AMG**EMBRY, "QUEEN" SYLVIA**

b. Sylvia Lee Burton, 14 June 1941; Wabaseka, AR
d. 28 February 1992; Chicago, IL

As a bass player, singer, songwriter, and sometimes bandleader, Sylvia Embry was a rare phenomenon on the male-dominated inner-city blues scene. A rudimentary bass player and singer of limited range but undeniable power, she expected and received respect from her peers. Embry moved to Chicago in 1961 and may have taken up bass from her first husband, Walter Eiland, a bass player. She is probably best known as an accompanist alongside her second husband, guitarist John Embry, with whom she appeared on Maxwell Street and in many South and North Side Chicago clubs. Her basic, no-frills style and dependability also earned her invitations to play with guitarists Lefty Dizz and Jimmy Dawkins.

Her lean discography includes *After Work* (1980, Razor Records) on which she shares equal billing with husband John, and *Midnight Baby*, an LP of original material recorded for L&R while on the 1983 American Folk Blues Festival European tour (reissued on Evidence). She also appeared on the tour's official recording as well as on a 1979 Delta Blues Festival recording, and on other anthologies, including four original numbers on Alligator Records' *Living Chicago Blues, Vol. 4*.

Embry, the mother of nine and later a foster mother, burdened with health and financial problems, returned to the Baptist church in the mid-1980s where she became involved in the gospel chorus. She reportedly wrote gospel compositions before her death from hypertension at the age of fifty. Perhaps anointed "queen" at a time when few women on the blues scene played as well as sang, Embry was a formidable presence on the bandstand. Her flat-picked bass lines provided ample support, and her equally unornamented vocals impressed with the strength of her personality.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

Larkin
O'Brien, Justin. "Queen Sylvia Embry." *Living Blues* no. 105 (September/October 1992): 45.

EMERSON, WILLIAM ROBERT "BILLY THE KID"

b. 21 December 1925; Tarpon Springs, FL

Pianist/organist born and raised in Florida. Emerson performed with several local groups, such as the Billy Battle Band and the Charley Bantley Combo. After attending Florida A&M, he joined the U.S. Air Force, where he was stationed in Greenville, Mississippi. It was here that he met Ike Turner and sat in, on guitar, with him at regional delta and Memphis gigs and later performed with Turner's Kings of Rhythm in Florida. Emerson's first recordings were made for Sam Phillips's Sun Records in 1954 and 1955, including "No Teasing Around," "The Woodchuck," and "Red Hot." While in Memphis, Emerson also performed with Phineas Newborn.

Displeased with the lack of success his Sun recordings had made, he soon moved to Chicago, where he played keyboards for a large number of recording sessions. He recorded under his own name for Vee-Jay (1955–1957), Chess (1958–1959), Mad (1960), M-Pac! (1963), and others. In 1966, he formed his own record label, Tarpon, on which he recorded Denise LaSalle and Matt "Guitar" Murphy. While Billy has recorded blues and worked with many blues musicians, such as Willie Dixon, Buddy Guy, Earl Hooker, Lonnie Brooks, Junior Wells, Sonny Boy Williamson II, and Robert Nighthawk, he has remained apart from the central blues community. His blues and R&B are tinged with altered chords and arrangements foreign to standard blues progressions. He often played jazz piano in upscale establishments.

GREG JOHNSON

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O'Neal, Jim. "Living Blues Interview: Billy 'The Kid' Emerson." *Living Blues* no. 45/46 (Spring 1980): 25–48.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Sun/Phillips International/Flip; Turner, Ike

ERBY, JACK

b. John J. Erby, 20 September 1902; Fort Worth, TX

Earned a B.A. degree at Wilberforce University (Ohio) in 1924. Erby recorded as piano soloist and accompanist for the Columbia, Paramount, and OKeh labels through 1929, and toured with Victoria

Spivey as well. He stayed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from 1930 through 1936, when he moved to Los Angeles, California. For many years he was pianist to Hattie McDaniel and Helen Humes. In the late 1940s he founded A Natural Hit label. He has been inactive in music since the early 1960s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

ESQUERITA

b. Eskew Reeder, Jr., 1935 (?); Greenville, SC
d. 23 October 1986; New York, NY

Aka Eskew Reeder, S. Q. Reeder, SQ Rita, The Magnificent Malucci. Nobody knows Esquerita's date of birth, although birth years of 1935, 1938, and 1940 have been given by writers. His name and life are also mysterious. After a youth spent playing piano around Greenville, he recorded in 1955 with the Heavenly Echoes, a gospel group from New York. He is considered to be a copy cat of Little Richard . . . who claims to have learned piano from Esquerita! With his outrageous hairdo, clothes, and manners he became an icon in the rock 'n' roll world, recording some of the wildest and weirdest sides ever for Capitol in 1958–1959. In the 1960s and 1970s, he made more R&B records for Minit, Instant, Everest, OKeh, Norton, and Crosstone, then disappeared from the scene.

ROBERT SACRÉ

Bibliography

Briggs, Keith. "Esquerita" [obituary]. *Blues & Rhythm* no. 30 (1987): 7–8.

Discography

Sock It to Me Baby (1989, Bear Family [D] BCD 15504; reissue).

ESTES, JOHN ADAM "SLEEPY JOHN"

b. 25 January 1899; Ripley, TN
d. 5 June 1977; Brownsville, TN

John Adam Estes was one of sixteen children born to Daniel and Millie (Thornton) Estes in Ripley,

Tennessee, a small town located fifty miles northeast of Memphis. The family soon moved to nearby Jones, Tennessee, and Estes spent much of his childhood farming and picking cotton. Like most poor southern black children of the time, he received little formal schooling. In his youth, Estes was struck in his right eye with a piece of glass while playing baseball and lost his vision in that eye. The injury gave him a cast-eyed appearance, which earned him the nickname "Sleepy."

Estes took an interest in music while still a boy and his first instrument was a homemade guitar made out of a cigar box and broom wire. He received his first store-bought guitar not long after as a reward from his father for working hard in the fields. Early inspiration came from his father, who played the guitar, and an older brother who played banjo.

At age fifteen, Estes moved with his family to nearby Brownsville, Tennessee, a small community that would have an enormous impact on his songwriting and where he would reside for much of his life. He began playing area house parties and country suppers and associated with several prominent musicians, including Hambone Willie Newbern, who helped shape the young guitarist's early blues style. By the late 1910s, Estes, who had already earned a local reputation, teamed up with the talented eleven-year-old mandolin and guitar player James "Yank" Rachel. The pair frequently hoboed throughout Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri during the next decade and played house parties and fish fries throughout the region. In the mid-1920s, Estes and Rachel were joined by Brownsville jug and harmonica player Hammie Nixon, and the trio formed what would become a lasting relationship that would endure off and on for more than five decades.

In the late 1920s, Estes, Rachel, and Nixon relocated to Memphis and performed throughout the city. Around 1928, Estes and Rachel, along with jug and piano player Jab Jones, formed the Three J's Jug Band. On the recommendation of musician Jim Jackson, Estes made his first recordings for Victor in Memphis in September of 1929. His debut release was the splendid "The Girl I Love, She Got Long Curly Hair," which established Estes as a consummate singer and songwriter. The song featured Estes's plaintive singing underscored by his powerful poetic imagery. It also showcased Rachel's evocative mandolin playing, another key element of many of Estes's greatest early recordings.

The success of Estes's first record led to more recordings for Victor throughout the next year, despite the stock market crash of 1929. The following sessions for the label produced more classic recordings such as "Diving Duck Blues," "Milk Cow

Blues,” and “Broken-Hearted, Dirty and Ragged Too.” Estes’s emotional singing was later aptly described by Big Bill Broonzy as “crying” the blues.

He moved back to Brownsville after his last 1930 recording session before relocating to Chicago several years later to join Nixon, who had recently recorded there. Billed for the first time on record as Sleepy John Estes and with Nixon accompanying him on harmonica, he recorded several excellent sides for Champion in 1935. Among these were “Drop Down Mama” and “Someday Baby Blues,” the latter of which would later be recorded by Muddy Waters and the Allman Brothers Band as “Trouble No More.” Big Maceo would slightly alter the song in 1941 and rename it “Worried Life Blues,” which also became a blues standard.

From 1937 to 1940, Estes recorded many of his most personal songs for Decca. During the course of four prolific sessions, he recorded two dozen compositions, many of which describe the trials and tribulations of his life as a poor black man living in the South. His deeply personal accounts covered subjects such as his near-drowning experience (“Floating Bridge”), his life as a hobo (“Hobo Jungle Blues” and “Special Agent”), and the burning down of a friend’s house (“Fire Station Blues [Martha Hardin]”). In 1941, Estes recorded for Bluebird as a member of the Delta Boys, as well as under his own name and affectionately immortalized two more Brownsville residents on “Little Laura Blues” and “Lawyer Clark Blues.” Estes returned to farming in Brownsville in the mid-1940s and married wife Olie in 1948. With his eyesight gradually failing over the years, he finally lost vision in his left eye in 1950 and became totally blind. Later that year, he recorded with Nixon for both Ora-Nelle and Sun and faded into obscurity for the next ten years.

On a tip from Big Joe Williams that Estes was still alive and living in Brownsville (many had presumed him dead), Chicago filmmaker David Blumenthal tracked him down in 1962 where he was living in stark poverty. Estes was then brought to the attention of Delmark label owner Bob Koester and he recorded the acclaimed LP *The Legend of Sleepy John Estes*. Although now totally blind, Estes’s guitar skills and singing remained undiminished. He recorded several more albums for Delmark, often reuniting with Rachel and Nixon, and during the next dozen years recorded for a variety of domestic and international labels, including Testament, Vanguard, and Storyville. With the Folk Blues Revival of the 1960s at its peak, Estes, often with Nixon and Rachel, toured extensively both nationally and abroad, and remained an extremely popular act for more than a decade. Estes performed at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival

and the 1969 Ann Arbor Blues Festival, and also toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival package. He was also a popular draw in Japan, where he recorded several albums. Sleepy John Estes, one of the most distinctive voices and imaginative songwriters of the prewar blues era, died of a stroke in 1977 on the day he was to leave for a tour of Europe. Despite his seemingly successful career resurgence, Estes still lived in extreme poverty in the final years of his life and died penniless. In 1998, the city of Brownsville restored Estes’s shotgun shack and turned it into a museum to commemorate his life and music and that of his musical associates, Yank Rachel and Hammie Nixon.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

EVANS, DAVID HUHNE, JR.

b. 22 January 1944, Boston, MA

Blues historian, ethnomusicologist, record producer, and musician. Evans was trained as a classics scholar, receiving his B.A. from Harvard (magna cum laude) in 1965 with a senior thesis on “The Homeric Simile in Oral Tradition.” He turned to blues and American folklore in the mid-1960s, doing important field research in Mississippi and other southern states during the years of his graduate studies (M.A., 1967; Ph.D., 1976; both from the University of California at Los Angeles).

Among the older musicians Evans interviewed and/or recorded during this period were Babe Stovall, Roosevelt Holts, the Reverend Ishmon Bracey, the Reverend Rubin Lacy, Mager Johnson, and Houston Stackhouse. His first book, *Tommy Johnson*, was based on his master’s thesis, and added greatly to our knowledge of this important Mississippi

EVANS, DAVID HUHNE, JR.

bluesman. *Big Road Blues*, a far broader and more inclusive study, was derived from his dissertation. Despite its title, this work discusses early “city” or “commercial” as well as folk blues, achieving a rare and salutary synthesis of a broad spectrum of different blues styles and issues. Evans combines a deep involvement in oral history and folklore with a solid grounding in music. His field recordings, many of which have been issued on record and CD, are also of great value to blues scholars.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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(Note: All compiled from Evans’s field recordings and/or studio recordings.)

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Presenting the Country Blues: Roosevelt Holts (1969, Blue Horizon LP 7-63201).
It Must Have Been the Devil: Mississippi Country Blues by Jack Owens and Bud Spires (1971, Testament LP T-2222; reissued on CD with extra tracks, 1995, Testament 5016).
The Legacy of Tommy Johnson (1973, Matchbox LP SDM-224).
South Mississippi Blues (1973, Rounder 2009).
Afro-American Folk Music from Tate and Panola Counties, Mississippi (1978, Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress LP L67; reissued 2000, Rounder CD 1515).
R. L. Burnside. *Sound Machine Groove* (1981, Vogue LP 513502).
Jessie Mae Hemphill. *She-Wolf* (1981, Vogue LP 513501).
Hammie Nixon. *Tappin’ That Thing* (1984, High Water LP 1003).
Houston Stackhouse (1910–1980) (1984, Wolf LP 120).
Hezekiah and the House Rockers (1987, High Water LP 1010).
Jessie Mae Hemphill. *Feelin’ Good* (1990, High Water LP 1012).
Bottleneck Blues (1995, Testament CD 5021).
Deep South Blues (1999, High Water CD 6513).
R. L. Burnside and the Sound Machine. *Raw Electric 1979–1980* (2001, Inside Sounds CD ISC-0513).

See also **Johnson, Tommy**

EVANS, MARGIE

b. 17 July 1940; Shreveport, LA

A Louisiana-bred vocalist, Evans joined the Johnny Otis Show in 1969. She produced records, including

six for Bobby “Blue” Bland, and recorded with artists such as Willie Dixon and B. B. King. An active supporter of blues culture, Evans serves as executive director and founder of Los Angeles Music Week.

STEPHANIE POXON

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Discography

- Mistreated Woman* (1982, L&R Records LR 42-050).
Another Blues Day (1984, L&R Records LR 42-060).

EVERETT, BETTY

b. 23 November 1939; Greenwood, MS
d. 19 August 2001; Beloit, WI

Chicago soul singer of the 1960s and 1970s whose expressive depth of vocal expression was put to use on everything from blues to light pop. Everett grew up in Mississippi singing gospel in church, but at age nineteen moved to Chicago and became ensconced in the city’s west side blues scene. She was discovered by Magic Sam who had her sing in his band at Mel’s Hideaway. That led to her signing to the Cobra label, where she recorded blues and hard soul, notably “Ain’t Gonna Cry” and “I’ll Weep No More.” She then recorded for Carl Jones’s C.J. label, her best work being “Why Did I Have to Go.”

In 1961, Everett recorded for Leo Austell four remarkable sides, which were sold to One-derful, the best of which was “Your Love Is Important to Me.” In 1963 she joined Vee-Jay, which saw her as a lighter soul singer with pop appeal. At Vee-Jay she became an international star, first with two great Brill Building songs that producer Calvin Carter picked up in New York, “You’re No Good” (1963) and “It’s in His Kiss (The Shoop Shoop Song)” (1964), and then a duet with Jerry Butler, “Let It Be Me” (1964). Her subsequent label associations were with ABC, Uni, Fantasy, and United Artists. Her last major hit was “There’ll Come a Time” (1968) for Uni.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP**EVIDENCE**

Record label originally founded in 1991 in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, by veteran music retailers Jerry Gordon and Howard Rosen as a way to fulfill their love for jazz. For its first few years Evidence focused on reissuing out-of-print jazz albums (particularly the Saturn catalog of Sun Ra), as well as distributing overseas recordings within the United States. But they soon expanded on their vision to include blues as well. Some of the early reissues included albums by Cephas and Wiggins, Paul deLay, Lowell Fulson, Eddie Kirkland, and Larry Davis. By the mid-1990s, Evidence had gotten the U.S. distribution rights to overseas albums by Billy Boy Arnold, Carey Bell, and Hubert Sumlin, giving the label a loyal following among blues fans.

By the late 1990s, Evidence had grown into a mid-sized blues and jazz label, and had begun issuing new recordings as well as the reissues. (Interestingly, in an interview with *Jazz Weekly*, Gordon said the blues portion of the Evidence catalog outsold the jazz the label was started for!)

By introducing new artists such as Carl Weathersby, Chico Banks, Ellis Hooks, Rico McFarland, and Eric Sardinas to the world, while also promoting underknown blues veterans like Melvin Taylor, Ted Hawkins, Billy Branch, and Jody Williams, Evidence has played an important role in the development and propagation of the blues in the 1990s and early 2000s. The label continues its dual path of recording new material and also finding recordings either no longer in print or not available in the United States, and reissuing them.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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EXCELLO/NASHBORO

Ernest L. ("Ernie") Young (b. 1892; d. 1977), a Nashville businessman described as "the perfect Southern gentlemen, Colonel Sanders without the facial hair," launched Excello Records in 1952 as a division of Nashboro, a gospel label he had founded the previous year. Young was not a blues or R&B fan, but he saw the opportunity to tap into Nashville's black talent while other local studios concentrated on country music. He ran his labels out of modest quarters at 177 Third Avenue North, next door to his retail and mail-order operation, Ernie's Record Mart, which also served as a "one-stop" distributor of other indie labels. Additionally, he ran a publishing arm, Excellorec Music. Young's businesses benefited mightily from his synergistic relationship with Nashville's 50,000-watt R&B powerhouse, WLAC, on which he sponsored deejay John Richbourg's popular "Ernie's Record Parade" program.

Blues fans closely associate Excello with the swamp blues of artists like Slim Harpo, Lightnin' Slim, Lonesome Sundown, and Lazy Lester, and to a lesser extent with swamp pop by Warren Storm, King Karl, and Guitar Gable. Swamp blues has been described as "Jimmy Reed run through a pot of gumbo"; swamp pop was like Fats Domino "played in the key of heartbreak." Recordings in both genres were supplied to Excello by Crowley, Louisiana, producer J. D. Miller over an eleven-year period starting in late 1955. The biggest sellers from this arrangement were Slim Harpo's "Raining in the Heart" (released 1961) and "Baby Scratch My Back" (1966), Lightnin' Slim's "Rooster Blues" (1959), and Warren Storm's "Prisoner's Song" (1958)—the latter actually on Nasco, another Young label.

Excello also recorded its own material—an eclectic array of jump-blues, down-home country blues, doo-wop, and vocal groups, even the occasional gospel or rockabilly release. Many of Excello's sides have a delightfully down-home, earthy feel, exemplified by such quirky classics as the Blues Rockers' "Calling All Cows" and Jerry McCain's "Trying to Please." McCain drove from his home in Alabama for his sessions, but most of Young's artists came out of the fertile, if sometimes overlooked, black music scene of Nashville. Excello's home-grown hits during the mid to late 1950s included Arthur Gunter's "Baby Let's Play House" (covered by Elvis), the Marigolds' "Rollin' Stone" (covered by the Fontane Sisters), Louis Brooks & His Hi-Toppers' "It's Love Baby (24 Hours a Day)" (covered by Ruth Brown and Hank Ballard), Larry Birdsong's "Pleadin' for Love," and the Gladiolas' "Little Darlin'" (covered

by the Diamonds). The cover versions of Excello hits often outsold the originals, generating additional publishing royalties for Young.

In 1966, Young retired, selling his businesses to the Crescent Company, which retained his long-time associate Shannon F. Williams to help run the labels. The company moved to new studios on Woodland Street; changed the Excello logo from its classic navy-blue and orange color scheme to pink, turquoise, and white; and began venturing into soul music on Excello and its new sister labels A-Bet and Mankind. Through the early 1970s, Excello reissued much of its swamp blues catalog on LP and produced new blues LPs in conjunction with Mike Vernon of England's Blue Horizon, but the company increasingly focused on Nashboro and the gospel market.

In 1994, the labels were acquired by AVI Enterprises, which sold them in 1997 to MCA/Universal. Its latest corporate owner has reached into the Excello vaults for a handful of reissues on its Hip-O imprint; Ace Records in the United Kingdom has dug deeper into those same vaults for more than thirty reissue CDs.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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See also Miller, Jay D. "J. D."; Nashville

EXCELSIOR/EXCLUSIVE

Los Angeles-based record labels begun by the songwriting brothers Otis and Leon René ("When It's Sleepytime Down South" and "Rock-in' Robin") in the early 1940s. Otis René, the president and producer of Excelsior, originally formed "The All Colored Recording Company" to record the brothers' songs. Excelsior was involved in the success of numerous acts, including Nat King Cole, Johnny Otis, and Jimmy Rushing. Leon René controlled Exclusive records, where he produced recordings by Joe Liggins and the Honey Drippers, Johnny Moore's Three Blazers, Charles Brown, Ivory Joe Hunter, Herb Jefferies, Mabel Scott, and others. Both labels fueled the Central Avenue blues scene by discovering and recording its unsigned talent.

The René brothers established the independent RGR Pressing plant (René-Gutshall-René) during World War II to speed their ability to get records to market. RGR's use of recycled records during the shellac shortages gives their discs a multi-hued appearance. The inability of the labels to convert to 45 rpm led to each company's closing; Excelsior's last records date from 1951 and Exclusive filed for bankruptcy in 1949. Leon René later cofounded Class Records.

BRIAN MOON

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Discography: McGrath

See also Brown, Charles; Class; Cole, Nat King; Five Blind Boys of Alabama; Hunter, Ivory Joe; Liggins, Jimmy; Moore, Oscar; Otis, Johnny; Rushing, James Andrew "Jimmy"

EXCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM BLUES HISTORY

(See *Women and the Blues*)

EZELL, WILL

- b. 1896; Shreveport, LA
d. Unknown

One of the most important prewar barrelhouse pianists. He is an obscure figure whose reputation is based on recordings made between 1927 and 1931 for Paramount records both as solo pianist and as

house accompanist for blues artists such as Lucille Bogan, Blind Roosevelt Graves, and others. His ten solo recordings are of special importance, synergistically combining ragtime with boogie-woogie into a powerful original style.

PETER MUIR

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Discography: DGR

As Unaccompanied Soloist

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Blues” (1928, Pm 12729); “Barrel House Woman”/“Heifer Dust” (1929, Pm 12573); “Bucket of Blood”/“Playing the Dozen” (1929, Pm 12773).

As Leader

“Freakish Mistreater Blues”/“Hot Spot Stuff” (1929, Paramount [PM] 12914); “Just Can’t Stay Here”/“Pitchin’ Boogie” (1929, Pm 12855).

As Accompanist and Sideman

Blind Roosevelt Graves and Uaroy Graves. “Guitar Boogie”/“New York Blues” (1929, Paramount [PM] 12820); “St. Louis Rambler Blues”/“Sad Dreaming Blues” (1929, Pm 12961); “Staggerin’ Blues”/“Low Down Woman” (1929, Pm 12891).

Lucille Bogan. “Doggone Wicked Blues”/“Oklahoma Man Blues” (1927, Paramount [PM] 12514); “Kind Stella Blues”/“Jim Tampa Blues” (1927, Pm 12504); “War Time Man Blues”/“Women Don’t Need No Man” (1927, Pm 12560).

F

FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS

Electric blues group that was a defining unit of the current Austin, Texas, club blues style. Formed in 1974 by guitarist Jimmie Vaughan and singer/harmonica player Kim Wilson. Other original members included bassist Keith Ferguson and drummer Mike Buck, with briefly vocalist Lou Ann Barton. During the mid- to late 1970s, it was the house band at Antone's club in Austin, and a little later the band was opening concerts for the Rolling Stones and for Eric Clapton. Early albums for Takoma and for Chrysalis through 1982 were critically well received but not high commercial sellers.

By 1982 former Roomful of Blues drummer Fran Christina had joined the band, followed by bassist Preston Hubbard in 1985 from the same group. In 1986, *Tuff Enuff*, the first LP delivered on a new contract with the Epic/Associated label, was an unexpected mainstream bestseller, with the title track becoming widely heard on radio, in bars, and in baseball parks. In 1990, Jimmie Vaughan began performing and recording more with his brother, Stevie Ray Vaughan. After the latter's death, he left the Thunderbirds to pursue a solo career. Duke Robillard and Kid Bangham were hired simultaneously as Vaughan's replacements in 1991. Wilson spent much of the 1990s on solo projects; the CD *High Water* was essentially a Wilson album released under the Fabulous Thunderbirds' name. In the late 1990s Wilson organized a new Thunderbirds line-up featuring guitarist Kid Ramos (formerly of the James Harman Band) and West Coast veteran keyboardist Gene Taylor.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

FAHEY, JOHN

b. 28 February 1939; Takoma Park, MD

d. 22 February 2001; Salem, OR

Guitarist, blues scholar, and writer, Fahey was one of the most colorful and idiosyncratic personalities of the 1960s blues revival. Both of Fahey's parents were musical. His first instruments were piano and clarinet. Fahey was exposed to country music in his youth. An encounter with Blind Willie Johnson's recording of "Praise God I'm Satisfied" instantly converted him into a blues fanatic. He pursued a career as a folklorist, earning a master's degree in folklore and mythology from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1969. His thesis, on Charley Patton, was published in book form in 1970. By this time he had done a good deal of fieldwork in Mississippi, rediscovering Skip James and participating in the rediscovery of Bukka White. He had also released several albums of solo blues guitar on his own Takoma Records label. He was signed by Vanguard Records, which issued three recordings

of his work, including one of his finest albums, *Requia*, in 1967. In the early 1970s he made three ensemble albums for Reprise records. Of these, one, *Of Rivers and Religion*, contains some extraordinary blues and jazz performances. These range from original works to an absolutely faithful recreation of the 1928 record “Texas and Pacific Blues” by Frenchy’s String Band (a New Orleans group). Fahey continued to record for Takoma in the 1970s, although he no longer owned the label.

In the 1980s Fahey suffered grave personal and career setbacks. Following a divorce from his third wife he lost his home and was left destitute. In his last years he made a modest comeback. He also largely turned away from blues and the acoustic guitar, experimenting with the electric guitar in a more eclectic, sometimes avant-garde style. He also founded the CD label Revenant, issuing new recordings of his work and that of other “outsider” musicians. Reissues of some of his older recordings brought him some royalty revenue, but he continued to regard his career in music as something of a disaster.

Fahey was not a great master of guitar technique, and his abilities deteriorated with age and ill health. However, he had a remarkably broad range of guitar styles and sounds at his disposal, and made innovative use of recording technology. He used a remarkable variety of guitar tunings and was able to create atmospheric effects that have eluded other musicians. He found entirely new ways of extending the blues tradition, merging it with everything from the dissonances of modern classical music to Indian raga form. Moreover, some of his recordings of traditional and original blues compositions remain deeply moving and soulful. On balance, he was among the most important and interesting of the country blues revivalists for about a decade beginning in the mid-1960s.

Fahey’s master’s thesis on Charley Patton remains a milestone of blues scholarship. It was republished in book form, and more recently in the Patton boxed CD set *Screamin’ and Hollerin’ the Blues*. Fahey’s other writings, including notes to his own recordings, are as idiosyncratic and inconsistent as his music, vacillating between flashes of insight, displays of random erudition, and deliberately misleading hokum. Together with his recorded legacy, these writings constitute an important body of late twentieth-century folk art that is primitive without being naïve.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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See also James, Nehemiah “Skip”; Patton, Charley; White, Bukka

FAIRFIELD FOUR

Formed in 1921, Nashville’s Fairfield Four became one of the most popular gospel quartets. The group hit their peak in the 1950s when group leader Reverend Sam McCrary recruited James Hill, “Preacher” Jones, and bass singer Isaac “Dickie” Freeman.

JIM THOMAS

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Discography: *Gospel Records 1943–69*

FAME

Rick Hall, with the assistance of Billy Sherrill and Tom Stafford, founded Fame (an acronym for Florence, Alabama, Music Enterprises) in 1959. Hall’s studio became the nexus of what was later dubbed the Muscle Shoals sound; their first hit was Arthur Alexander’s “You Better Move On” (Dot 16309) in 1962. The studio was primarily used by other record labels, especially Atlantic.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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Discography: McGrath

**FANTASY/PRESTIGE/BLUESVILLE/
GALAXY/MILESTONE/RIVERSIDE
RECORD COMPANIES**

Fantasy Records grew from modest beginnings to acquire a string of the most important recording imprints in jazz and blues. The original label was established in 1949 by Max and Sol Weiss in Berkeley, California, in order to issue recordings by jazz pianist Dave Brubeck, who was also a partner in the venture. The pianist ended his partnership in 1955, and Saul Zaentz joined the company that same year as a salesman. He became President when he led a buy-out from the Weiss brothers in 1967.

Zaentz began the process of acquiring important jazz and blues recordings when Charles Mingus gifted him the Debut catalog as a wedding present in 1962 (Zaentz was about to marry Mingus's ex-wife, Celia). Galaxy was launched by the company in 1964 as a subsidiary label, but the really significant acquisitions came in the early 1970s. Buoyed by the commercial success of Creedence Clearwater Revival on the label, Fantasy took ownership of the catalogs of Bob Weinstock's Prestige (1971), including the important Bluesville catalog, described by Samuel Charters as "one of the last great sweeps of the blues as a social document"; Bill Grauer and Orrin Keepnews's Riverside (1972); and Keepnews's Milestone (1973). Keepnews was appointed to oversee the jazz productions in 1972, and Mike Kaffel succeeded Zaentz as President of the company in 1973. They instigated a massive reissue program of double vinyl LPs at single disc price ("two-fers"), mining the riches of the accumulated back catalogs, many of which Keepnews had produced at Riverside and Milestone.

The jazz reissue program was transferred to a new imprint, OJC (Original Jazz Classics), in 1983, reproducing straight reissues of original albums from the Riverside and Prestige archives. A companion label, OBC (Original Blues Classics), was launched to reissue the equally rich blues legacy on these labels, which recorded many—if not most—of the most important names in jazz and blues. Hundreds of albums have been reissued on both labels in the ensuing years in an ongoing program.

The Fantasy group continued to acquire labels, including Stax (1977), Contemporary (1984), Orrin Keepnews's Landmark (1985), Norman Granz's Pablo (1986), Specialty (1991), Takoma (1995), and Kicking Mule (1995).

KENNY MATHIESON

Further Reading

<http://www.fantasyjazz.com/html/about.html>.

FARR, DEITRA

b. 1 August 1957; Chicago, IL

Versatile singer of blues, soul, and popular music ballads. Was singing in local bands, including one with her uncle, by the mid-1970s. Earned a bachelor's degree in journalism at Columbia College, Chicago. Through the 1980s she was singing with pianist Erwin Helfer, and from 1993 through 1995 she was a featured vocalist for the band Mississippi Heat. She recorded her debut solo album, *The Search Is Over*, for JSP Records in 1997.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Living Blues no. 133 (May/June 1997): 22–27.

FATTENING FROGS FOR SNAKES

On June 3, 1925, in New York City, during her last OKeh recording session, minstrel show veteran Virginia Liston recorded "I'm Sick of Fattening Frogs for Snakes." The expression "fattening frogs for snakes" predates Liston's record. Its use, in the African American folk vernacular, describes a situation in which someone provides goods or services to someone else and unintentionally benefits a third party—often referring to love relationships. Wolf interpreted it as "a proverbial expression of futility." In Sierra Leone, linguist Turner collected the similar proverb "fatten lizards for snakes" from Krio speakers, descended from freed American slaves.

Talley's 1922 collection of Middle Tennessee texts includes a song in which one man advises another not to give the speaker's girlfriend treats: "Quit yo' foolin', she hain't studyin' you! Youse jes fattenin' frogs fer snakes!" Other than its use of the proverb, this song has little relation to commercially recorded versions.

Liston described women seducing her man, "leeches" stealing her "peaches." Each verse documents her man's cheating, followed by "I'm sick of fattening frogs for snakes." Rosetta Crawford's 1939 Decca recording is a cover of Liston's.

"Fattening Frogs for Snakes," by Carrie Edwards (OKeh, 1932), was a new song. Edwards was less resigned to her fate than Liston, and in Columbia recording artist Clara Smith's cover, made a month later at her last recording date, Smith was not only "tired" but "angry" and "evil" and declared that it is not a "sin, for a woman to have two or three men."

Bumble Bee Slim (Amos Easton) was the first male to record "Fattenin' Frogs for Snakes" (1935,

Vocalion). He portrayed a woman down on her luck (“no clothes,” “broke and hungry,” “out of doors”); he took up with her, she mistreated him. Easton introduced the chorus line “All these many years, baby, I’m just now seein’ my mistake,” which was incorporated into many later recordings. A string band, the Mobile Strugglers, cut a version of Easton’s “Frogs” for the fledgling American Music label in July 1949. Memphis Slim’s (Peter Chatman) “I See My Great Mistake” (1940, Bluebird) retains Easton’s chorus but with all new verses.

Three versions of Edgar Snead’s “I Ain’t Fattenin’ Frogs for Snakes” were recorded: the Ben Smith Quartet (Snead was a member) for Abbey (1949); the Larks’ doo-wop rendition (1951, Apollo); and Piano Red’s (Willie Perryman) barrelhouse piano performance (1954, released 1993, RCA).

Famed harp-blower/lyricist Sonny Boy Williamson (Aleck Miller) combined elements from Easton’s and Snead’s compositions to create his own distinctive statement in which he resolves to “correct all of my mistakes” (1957, Chess). Most subsequent recordings of “Frogs” are covers of Miller’s, including John Hammond (1982, Rounder), James “Blood” Ulmer (2001, Label M), and Patti Smith for the soundtrack of Amos Poe’s 1998 movie *Frogs for Snakes*.

Andre (Andrew “Blues Boy”) Odum’s 1967 Nation single, with B. B. King-style vocals and guitar, recounts his woman’s misdeeds, and Odum sounds, as in the women’s blues of earlier decades, resigned to his fate of fattening frogs for snakes.

FRED J. HAY

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FEATURE

Owned by Jay D. Miller from 1951 to 1954 in Crowley, Louisiana. Fais-Do-Do was a subsidiary. Artists included Clarence Garlow, Lightnin’ Slim, Tabby Thomas, and Schoolboy Cleve White.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

FEDORA

From humble beginnings in 1993 as an outlet for a Fresno, California, blues fan’s recordings of local blues old-timers, Fedora by the turn of the twenty-first century was a fairly active operation dedicated to ferreting out and recording lesser-known, underrecorded authentic bluesmen. The label was founded by long-time Fresno resident Chris Millar (1952–), a drummer. Its second release, the West Fresno Blues masters, featured Hosea Leavy (brother of Calvin Leavy) and Harmonica Slim (Riley Riggins). That release led to gigs at Blues Estafette and other European blues festivals.

In 1997, Millar sold the label to Joe and Barney Field’s Jazz Depot of New York City, which also runs Highnote, successor to the Muse label. Millar serves as A&R man and session producer. In addition to recording artists from Fresno, central California, and San Francisco/Oakland, such as J. J. Malone, Filmore Slim, and Robert “Bilbo” Walker, Fedora has released CDs of Arkansas’ John Weston, Detroit’s Johnny Bassett, St. Louis’s Bennie Smith and Arthur Williams, New Orleans’ Jessie Thomas, Dallas’s Big Al Dupree, New York City’s Little Buster, Chicago’s Jimmy Dawkins and Homesick James, among others. Most Fedora releases have a down-home, juke-joint feel. In addition, the label released two albums of a techno-blues hybrid under the name Pig in a Can.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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FERGUSON, ROBERT “H-BOMB”

b. 1929; Charleston, SC

Aka “Cobra Kid.” Ferguson was raised in a religious family where it was forbidden to listen to the devil’s music. He began playing piano in his father’s storefront Baptist church when he was six and played at Sunday school; when alone, he started to shout the blues and to play boogie-woogie, influenced by radio programs and by Buddy Johnson’s band. When he

was eighteen, he played professionally in Charleston's night clubs where he was discovered by Cat Anderson and encouraged to hit the road with jazz and/or R&B bands; he toured with Joe Liggins and his Honeydrippers, ending up in New York.

In 1950, he recorded for Derby, then for Atlas, Prestige, Chess (unissued), and Decca, but H-Bomb's biggest break came with Savoy Records in the mid-to late 1950s until rock 'n' roll hit his kind of R&B hard. He moved to Cincinnati and performed in nightclubs around the area until the mid-1960s, cutting a few sides for local labels (Finch, Big Bang, ARC, etc.) and appearing on shows with Hank Ballard, Fats Domino, Big Maybelle, Chuck Berry, and others, but in the early 1970s he was pushed into semi-retirement.

He made a comeback in the late 1970s, sporting his famous collection of wigs and jump suits, playing the piano and fronting his own band, recording new sides for the Radiation label and winning W. C. Handy Awards for a couple of songs in 1986 and 1989. He recorded again for Earwig Records in 1993 and toured Europe and festivals.

ROBERT SACRÉ

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin Pearson, Barry Lee. "'One Day You're Gonna Hear About Me': The H-Bomb Ferguson Story." *Living Blues* no. 69 (1986): 15–21, 24–26.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

Wiggin' Out (1993, Earwig 4926 CD).

FIDDLE

Technical Description

"Fiddle" is a generic term for bowed, stringed instruments played on the arm or shoulder. Because no bluesmen played violas, the term is synonymous with violin, and blues players referred to their instruments both as "fiddle" and "violin." Some musicologists, however, reserve the term "fiddle" for the violin played in folk contexts. The violin first appeared in Italy about 1530 as the soprano voice in a new family of stringed instruments. These differed from medieval European and Middle Eastern ancestors in that they had carved tops, fretless fingerboards, and four strings tuned in fifths. The violin is tuned G, D',

A', E'' though early blues fiddlers often tuned a whole tone lower than concert pitch.

The violin's construction has changed little since its invention. Sound boxes are about fourteen inches long, eight inches wide, and two inches deep. Two narrow sound holes ("F holes") flank a raised, thin bridge. Tops are composed of spruce or pine; ribs, backs, and necks of maple or birch. Strings were "cat gut" (sheep intestines) until the late 1800s. Metal strings were widely adopted in the twentieth century. Bows are constructed from a thirty-inch wood stick to which a ribbon of horse hair is attached. Rosin applied to the hair provides grip that causes the strings to vibrate. Prewar blues fiddlers played traditional acoustical violins, either mass produced or homemade copies. Electric violins introduced in the 1940s appealed to the players then active.

Adoption in Classical and Western European Folk Music, 1550–1900

In Ireland and Britain, as on the European Continent, violins either displaced older stringed instruments or were accepted as a new solo and ensemble voice. Classical and folk fiddling techniques in the 1600s and 1700s were similar because all players avoided higher positions and vibrato. The chin rest was not invented until the 1800s, so players tended to support their instruments with their hand and to hold them at the lower angle still favored by some fiddlers.

Distinct folk fiddling traditions evolved in different European communities. In most the fiddle occupied different roles, mimicking the human voice in song (slow airs) and providing driving rhythms for fast dances (jigs, reels, strathspeys, polkas). The instrument's portability and the itinerant nature of its players assured continuing cross-fertilization of traditions and styles. European immigrants imported both their instruments and their musical tastes. White settlers in the South brought both classical and Anglo-Irish folk fiddling traditions.

African Antecedents

Slaves also imported native instruments and musical traditions. Africa was home to a variety of bowed instruments. In West and Central Africa a *goje*, a one-stringed instrument with a hollow gourd body and round soundhole, was played with a short highly arched bow. (Tosh Hammond's brassy "one-string fiddle" with Butterbeans and Susie [1927] was

probably unrelated.) The earlier survival of African instruments in America cannot be proven, but the construction of fiddles from gourd bodies by slaves may suggest the continuity of West African instrumental traditions, and the early use of a fiddle in Guadeloupe to collect money likewise suggests an instrument with a large sound hole, possibly revealing West African influences.

African earth bows have been identified as precursors of washtub basses, while musical mouth bows native to Mozambique have been suggested as the origin of similar instruments played by pockets of whites in the Appalachians and rural Arkansas.

African American Fiddle Traditions

Paul Oliver concludes that the “fiddle and the banjo were the most prominent of instruments used by the slaves and their immediate successors” (*Savannah Syncopators*, p. 25). Colonial sources document that slaves were accomplished fiddlers as early as the 1600s. Slaves fiddled for white dances and were permitted to fiddle for their own dances on Sundays and holidays. Instrumental combinations usually included one or more fiddlers, often accompanied by banjo and percussion. Fiddling provided a source of money that facilitated escape, and notices for fugitives frequently listed the ability to play well on the fiddle as a means of identification.

The musical content of African American fiddle playing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is unknown. Contemporaneous descriptions employed European musical terms. References to “Negro jigs” and “a Negro tune” might suggest distinctive African American elements (Epstein, pp. 121–124), but transcriptions of such Negro jigs do not preserve any unequivocal African characteristics. Kubik speculates nevertheless that slaves were familiar with African bowed instruments and thus learned the violin more easily, incorporating distinctive techniques into their fiddling that appealed to their non-African American audience.

Most slave fiddlers nevertheless played traditional instruments in conventional ways—though W. C. Handy recalled his fiddler grandfather’s description of a boy reaching over the fiddler’s left shoulder and drumming on the strings with knitting needles. Southern whites remarked repeatedly on the affinity of slaves for the fiddle. One wrote, “The supreme ambition of every negro is to procure a real violin” (quoted in Epstein, pp. 148–149). Strong interest in fiddle playing, often handed down from father to son,

continued among African Americans in the rural South into the twentieth century. Because the fiddle was firmly associated with popular dancing and was not employed in church music, evangelical Christians began to denounce the instrument in the 1700s. Fiddlers were frequently featured in conversion stories, invariably abandoning the instrument upon receiving grace.

Prewar Blues

Dixon, Godrich, and Rye’s discography of pre-1943 blues and gospel recordings identifies sixty-eight fiddlers as principal artists or accompanists. Records preserve a variety of approaches firmly rooted in string band traditions. Typically a single fiddle with other instruments (most often including guitar) accompanied a vocalist. The fiddle either provided sustained obligato or mimicked the vocal line.

In contrast to many Anglo-American rural fiddlers, most blues fiddlers adopted a semi-classical posture, holding the instrument high on the shoulder and gripping the bow at the frog rather than over the hair. Right-hand technique employed heavy on-string bowing, limited string crossings, and bowed tremolo. Left-hand technique emphasized simple fingerings, slides into third and fifth positions, and few or no fingered ornaments such as trills and turns. The most distinct feature of blues fiddling was the free use of extremely broad vibrato produced by shifting (rather than merely rolling) the finger stopping the principal note. When preceded by ascending portamento, this anticipated the technique applied to Hawaiian guitars by blues players. While Oliver claims that this technique actually influenced blues guitarists (*Savannah Syncopators*), Palmer speculates that slide guitar technique evolved independently from African instruments as early as 1900 (*Deep Blues*, p. 46).

String Bands, Jug Bands, and Jazz

Blues comprised only part of the large repertoire of African American string bands in the 1920s. These bands often avoided blues for white and upper-class African American audiences. Some of the earliest recorded blues fiddling were Robert Robbins’s accompaniments to five Bessie Smith records (1924). Robbins played counterpoint and responses to Smith’s vocal line, producing a strong tone and displaying a mastery of the intonation, wide vibrato, and glissando that typified prewar blues fiddling.

Lonnie (Alonzo) Johnson (1889–1970) played fiddle in his father's New Orleans band before World War I where the repertoire was "strictly blues all the way on the violin" (in Oliver, *Conversations with the Blues*, pp. 78–79). Johnson moved with ease from blues to ragtime, and his fiddling singles from the same 1928 recording session were marketed under both race and hillbilly labels. His first recorded vocal-fiddle blues, "Falling Rain Blues" (1925), set the pattern for many others. The fiddle played an introduction, responded to vocals in early verses, and alternated solos on later verses. Double stop and tremolo interludes added variety. Johnson's recorded output also included a unique fiddle blues without vocal, "Five O'Clock Blues" (1926), and rare blues fiddle duets with his brother, James "Steady Roll" Johnson. Johnson eventually abandoned the fiddle for the guitar in the late 1920s, becoming a preeminent jazz guitarist for Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, and Louis Armstrong.

The anonymous fiddler on the recordings of the Kansas City Blues Strummers (1926) provided countermelody and responses to the vocalist. Tom ("Bluecoat") Nelson, leader of a string band in Vicksburg, recorded several blues. On "Blue Coat Blues" (1928) he added a fiddled tag to his own vocal lines. Atlanta fiddler Eddie Anthony (d. 1934) performed and recorded with Peg Leg Howell and others in the late 1920s, moving effortlessly from ragtime to blues that incorporated intense slides and trills. Fiddler James Cole led his string band on up-tempo white rural dance numbers but could also wail blues as on "Window Pane Blues" (1932). The polished fiddling by Leroy Pickett in a duo with Cow Cow Davenport on "Stealin' Blues" (1934) suggests the hand of an accomplished studio accompanist, possibly with classical training. Pickett also accompanied Ma Rainey and Ivy Smith.

The Memphis Jug Band performed regularly at the Peabody Hotel, first with Milton Robie as fiddler, then with Charlie Pierce. On the band's last recordings (1934), Pierce's fiddle drives up-tempo dance tunes, with the jug adding a hokum touch. Will Batts, from Benton County in North Central Mississippi, fiddled regularly in the 1920s and 1930s, both with Jack Kelly's jug band in Memphis and with guitarist Frank Stokes. Recordings from 1929 and 1933 preserve the strident voice of his fiddle, while his simple fingerings and free tremolo suggest the influence of Delta fiddlers.

Tennessee fiddler Howard Armstrong ("Louie Bluie") first played with family string bands and then performed in Knoxville in the 1920s and 1930s with Ted Bogan and Carl Martin as the "Tennessee Chocolate Drops" and "The Four Keys." Dazzling

pizzicato and melodic double stops reveal his origins as mandolin player. Armstrong preferred to play to white audiences "because they had the money"—with a repertoire ranging from Anglo fiddle tunes to Tin Pan Alley and vaudeville. His prewar bands recorded stomps and rags (1930, 1934) but not the blues that he reserved for "regular" (lower-class) African Americans. It was with a "low-down funky blues" that he defeated a New York fiddler in an impromptu contest.

String bands had adopted the Dixieland sound by the late 1920s. The fiddle sound of both Jess Ferguson with Whistler & His Jug Band (1927) and Clifford Hayes with the Dixieland Jug Blowers (1927) mimicked horns. Hayes crossed over to true jazz violin by 1929 when his Louisville Stompers recorded with formidable jazz pianist Earl Hines. The unknown fiddler with Peetie Wheatstraw and His Blue Blowers (1934) also adopted a brassy voice in jazzy exchanges with the trombone and clarinet.

Mississippi Delta Fiddling

A distinct style of blues fiddling evolved among a group of Mississippi Delta bluesmen. Lonnie Johnson was probably a common influence. The most commercially successful players to remain in the South were Lonnie Chatmon (d. 1942/1943) and his brother Bo Chatmon (var. Chatman and Carter) (1898–1964) from Bolton, Mississippi. From 1930 to 1935 Lonnie recorded with guitarist Walter Vincson (Jacobs) as the Mississippi Sheiks such hits as "Sitting on Top of the World" and "Stop and Listen." Bo recorded separately under his own name with Vinson (1928) and occasionally recorded and performed with the Mississippi Sheiks. The Sheiks were copied on four songs by the Alabama Sheiks (1931).

Henry ("Son") Sims (1890–1958) played with future blues guitar great Charlie Patton as early as 1910. Sims led string bands beginning in 1924 and recorded twelve sides as a duo with Patton in 1929–1930. Sims's sisters later recalled that he played without rosin, and his vigorous sawing produced some of the most "blistering" and "crude tonal qualities ever heard on a violin" (Wardlow, p. 13). On songs like "Tell Me Man Blues" (released under Sims's name), Patton's guitar backed up Sims's vocals and solo fiddling. Sims recorded blues with McKinley Morganfield (Muddy Waters) in 1941 and played regularly at the Riverside Hotel in Clarksdale through the late 1940s.

As a child William ("Big Bill") Broonzy played a crude homemade fiddle in hokum performances for white audiences in Mississippi and Arkansas.

After acquiring a violin, he developed a powerful tone with strong bowing and broad controlled vibrato. His fiddling was recorded in the early 1930s shortly after his move to Chicago. “Dad” Tracy from Memphis mastered the Delta sound, providing continuous countermelody to Joe Williams’s vocals and trading the limelight with Williams’s guitar on 1935 recordings.

African American and White Southern Fiddlers

With the rising popularity of blues, both African American violinists in Anglo American dance fiddling traditions and white country fiddlers adopted blues stylistic elements and added blues songs to their repertoire. Andrew Baxter, a Georgia fiddler with African American and American Indian ancestry, recorded Appalachian fiddle tunes and performed occasionally with white musicians in the 1920s. He recorded “Bamalong Blues” (1927) with his son Andrew on guitar. Kentucky African American Jim Booker (b. 1872) played and recorded with his Booker Orchestra but also recorded in 1927 with a white string band.

Georgia fiddler Fiddlin’ John Carson (1868–1949), a white mountain player in the Anglo-Irish tradition, recorded “John Henry Blues” in 1924 and later released two blues songs based on “Lonesome Road Blues.” Texas Swing fiddler Bob Wills (1905–1975) incorporated elements of African American music he heard in the 1920s into his fiddling. Bill Monroe (1911–1996), the father of bluegrass, accompanied legendary blues guitarist and fiddler Arnold Schultz (1886–1931) in the early 1920s and later acknowledged the influence of blues (Smith, pp. 23–33, 56).

Postwar Blues, Jazz, and Rock

The fiddle fell out of use among blues players beginning in the 1930s. Reasons included the soaring popularity of the guitar, which players like Lonnie Johnson and Broonzy adopted exclusively; the practice demands of the fiddle, which conflicted with the work life of most bluesmen during the Depression; and, perhaps, the association of the fiddle with older styles.

A few prewar fiddlers survived to benefit from the blues revival. Howard Armstrong reunited with Martin and Bogdan in 1970, performing for folk audiences and releasing successful LPs. The subject of a

critically acclaimed documentary, “Louie Blueie” (1985), Armstrong received the N.E.A.’s National Heritage Award in 1990 and continued to tour into the twenty-first century. Claude (“Fiddler”) Williams (b. 1908, Muskogee, Oklahoma) played in string bands before moving to Kansas City where he began to play with prominent swing bands. He was the first guitarist to record with the Count Basie Band. He focused on swing violin after 1937, leading small groups for decades, and touring in Europe in the 1970s. In the 1980s Williams’s string band roots brought him to the national attention of folk audiences. He toured and recorded widely, performed at Clinton’s first inaugural, and won an N.E.A. National Heritage Award in 1998.

Other postwar players brought violin skills learned outside prewar fiddling traditions to tastes influenced by postwar jazz, electric, and urban blues. Jazz violin great Hezekiah Leroy Gordon “Stuff” Smith (1909–1967) studied classical violin before touring with jazz bands. His precise playing and restrained vibrato differed markedly from the technique of prewar blues players. Primarily a hot jazz violinist, Smith also occasionally performed and recorded fine blues such as “Old Stinkin’ Blues” (1965). Jazzman Remo Biondi (1905–1981) also studied classical violin as a child and played it as his first instrument, though his fame today rests on his guitar work for prominent mid-century big bands. Biondi fiddled restrained accompaniment on four songs blues recorded by Roosevelt Sykes in 1952.

John Creach took violin lessons as a child in Pennsylvania and studied classical violin in Chicago in the 1930s where he was attracted by urban jazz sounds. An early proponent of the electric violin, Creach moved to California during the war where his small jazz groups played a series of regular gigs for decades. Creach aspired to a thick horn-like sound, with note bending, trilling, accelerating vibrato, and slides up to high positions. Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson observed, “He sounds more like a horn player than a violinist” (*Setting the Record Straight* video). In the late 1960s Creach was “discovered” by rock musicians, and from 1970 to his death he played and recorded regularly (under the moniker Papa John Creach) with the Jefferson Airplane and its spinoff rock groups. Fluent in a variety of genres, Creach also recorded straight-ahead blues with his own bands, notably on *Papa Blues* (1992).

Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown (born 1924 in Vinton, Louisiana, grew up in Texas), multi-instrumentalist and vocalist, recorded a few sides beginning in 1947 that laid a Texas swing fusion of blues, swing, and country—he claimed Bob Wills as

an influence—over a driving rhythm that anticipated rhythm and blues. He later achieved commercial success, including a Grammy in 1982, mostly for vocals and guitar work.

Don (“Sugarcane”) Harris (1938–1999), classically trained violinist from Pasadena, recorded a series of R&B singles in the 1950s, most with Dewey Terry (as Don and Dewey). Harris toured with Little Richard in the 1960s before joining Frank Zappa in 1969. His electric rock fiddling is featured on several Zappa albums, including *Hot Rats* and *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*. In the 1980s and 1990s, Harris toured and recorded with English blues bandleader John Mayall, recorded with bluesmen Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, and revived Don and Dewey.

Rock and R&B innovator Bo Diddley (Ellas McDaniel) studied classical violin for fourteen years. His electric violin, with soulful sliding, restrained vibrato, and pizzicato, is featured on “The Clock Struck 12” (1958). Best known for his distinctive guitar sound, which powerfully influenced early rockers, Bo Diddley explained, “The rhythm guitar sound that I started . . . I call the muted sound. I learned that from playing the classical violin. I taught myself to play it on the guitar, and now they call [the style] funk” (*Bo Diddley* booklet).

MICHAEL HOFFHEIMER

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FIELD HOLLERS

Among the various styles that predated the emergence of blues music, field hollers are considered a major influence, and probably the most obvious link between African traditions and the blues. Originating from the primary functions of gathering animals, calling workmates, or sending information, they turned into a distinctive type of singing that was still remembered in several parts of the southern states until the second half of the twentieth century. Unlike other work songs, they were not intended to support physical effort by steady rhythm or emphasized vocalization; they were just a way to keep in touch with distant fellow workers or introduce some entertainment, during repetitive tasks or after hours.

Definition

Hollers or “whoops” do not belong to any particular community or place, and their usage is often associated with singing. A number of “field cries” have been introduced into various songs that are part of the huge pre-blues heritage collected from songsters like Leadbelly, among which many ballads, work songs, or religious tunes can be identified. But field hollers or “arwhoolies” involved hollering in the very act of singing. They were freely improvised songs, performed by field hands in scattered farming areas, in Texas or Alabama, as well as in the Mississippi Delta, which did not include any large plantations before slavery was abolished.

Although solitary singing can lead to a variety of patterns beyond description, the category of hollers that is referred to as a main inspiration for the blues obeyed some unwritten rules. They could be heard in several working places, among which were not only fields but also levee camps and penitentiaries.

They were never commercially recorded as such, but most of their features can be recognized in deliberate imitations like Texas Alexander’s “Levee Camp Moan” and “Section Gang” blues (1927) with Lonnie Johnson providing a modal, nonrhythmic, single-string accompaniment.

Description

A field holler is a succession of verses interrupted by silence or actual cries, shouts, calls, or comments, sung on a definite range of notes by a single performer. Each verse includes a single sentence, or two sentences related to each other, in which the singer chooses to emphasize several syllables, suggesting complex and irregular rhythmic patterns. Each line is a continuous melodic improvisation with several strong high-pitched accents, always ending on the tonic.

The most basic field hollers consist of one-line verses relying on the three degrees of a major chord, with a random number of accented notes, but the predominant structure is a two-line verse, a feature later found in the recordings of such blues singers as Texas Alexander, Jaybird Coleman, and William Harris, and one that is still traceable in early blues songs that exactly repeat the first line, only introducing some brief modal change at the beginning of the third line.

Most of the examples collected by Alan Lomax in different “state farms,” which still maintained labor conditions close to slavery in 1939 and ten years later, present a fairly regular pattern: a long yelled note, always the highest degree of the range, either initial or preceded by a short rising scale, echoed by a second, weaker accentuation, which divides the first line into two groups of syllables. The process is repeated in the second line with a different arrangement of lower notes, sometimes just one octave below, mostly ending with a typical modulation.

Field Hollers and Early Blues

The predominance of the major mode and the frequent use of the fourth degree of the scale as a linking note are among the main differences between field hollers and blues. The minor seventh, reputed to be of possible African heritage, is among the main emphasized notes together with the fifth and octave. Some hollers take a minor third as the peak note, introducing the same modal complexity as collective work songs.

As in many early country blues, each verse deals with a different subject, and their indefinite number accounts for the appellation “over-and-over,” which was also applied to these songs. French writer Gérard Herzhaft suggested that the practice of “catching verses in the air” may have been inherited from the traditions of the Creeks, Cherokees, or Choctaws who were the first inhabitants of Arkansas and the Mississippi Delta.

Themes do not differ much from blues themes and include personal relationships, travel, or home, with perhaps a marked insistence on nature or weather conditions. The late collection of these songs makes any assertion about lyrics problematic, but their reputation as early songs of protest is based on frequent references to the foreman or employer, as the “Captain” or “Mr. Charlie.” Proverb-like verses, division of the sentence into a “theme and response” scheme, as well as the constant use of the first person, relate them to a tradition of personal songs that predated the recording of blues and folk music.

Many blues titles were reminiscent of hollers until the end of the 1930s, and in spite of the successful “blues” form, which implied instrumental accompaniment, rhyming lines, and ballad-like structures, the vocals in several early country blues songs like Garfield Aker’s “Cottonfield Blues” obviously derived from them.

The African Heritage

Whether field hollers directly borrowed some of their features from African traditions or were mere adaptations of other traceable sources is as questionable as the origins of African American music as a whole. Unaccompanied singing or personal songs are by no means typical of African music, but some examples of praise songs by West African griots are based on similar patterns, with an initial shout forced to the higher limit of the voice, gradually decreasing in a long breathtaking melodic line. Whereas most forms of social music performed by Africans are closely associated with dancing, the loose tempo of field hollers suggests a quite motionless attitude, and yet their complex and irregular accentuations are reminiscent of polyrhythmic features.

The modal character of field hollers, the simplified scales that allow such embellishments as bends and melisma, and the various voice effects like falsetto singing belong to a traditional approach to music that must have been constantly fed back by the arrival of new slaves and the dispatching and mixing of

populations, until the trade and slavery itself were abolished.

These retentions resulted in different musical styles that were often clear adaptations of some European structures. But field hollers, emerging from the hardest living conditions, were the assertion of an original style that was neither related to other musical forms like songs and ballads, nor commanded by any precise function as were work songs, religious songs, or dance music. They are the most identifiable type of secular, individual singing possibly heard at the turn of the century by musicians, composers, or vaudeville singers before the recording industry popularized blues music.

PATRICE CHAMPAROU

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FIELDS, BOBBY

- b. Robert Lee Fields, Jr., 11 September 1928; Chicago, IL
 d. 6 January 1981; Chicago, IL

Tenor saxophonist active in Chicago in the 1950s and 1960s. Toured and recorded with Buddy Guy, Ike Turner, and A. C. Reed, along with additional sessions with Sun Records and Modern/RPM in 1952–1954. In his last years, he worked as a security guard. Not to be confused with Bobby Marchan, who recorded as Bobby Fields for Ace Records in 1956.

EDWARD KOMARA

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FIELDS, KANSAS

- b. Carl Donnell Fields, 5 December 1915; Chapman, KS
 d. 7 March (also reported as 3 August), 1995; Chicago, IL

Drummer. Fields began playing in his teens in Chicago, later in New York. He worked with Ella

FIELDS, KANSAS

Fitzgerald, Eddie Condon, Cab Calloway, Willie “The Lion” Smith, Dizzy Gillespie, Mezz Mezzrow, and others. He was in Europe during 1953–1964, then returned to Chicago. His last recording was with Floyd McDaniels’s Blues Swingers in 1994.

KENNY MATHIESON

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FIELDSTONES

A Memphis electric blues band of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, with guitarist Will Roy Sanders and drummer Joe Hicks, performing renditions of prewar Mississippi blues and 1960s Memphis soul hits. They recorded an album for High Water label produced by David Evans.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Richie Unterberger); Herzhaft; Larkin

Discography: AMG

FIFE AND DRUMS

History

The African American fife and drum tradition is one style of pre-blues music that has stubbornly remained alive into the twenty-first century. Because the institution of slavery in the United States as a rule outlawed the playing of any drums out of fear that they would be used to secretly communicate rebellion it was commonly believed that rural black drumming could not exist. Still, nineteenth-century accounts, including the WPA slave narratives, make mention of fife and drums being played by blacks. Speculation centers on the black musicians recruited for the Civil War or the army surplus instruments readily available after the war, but there are no definite answers on the real genesis of the music. What is clear is that musicians who were born during Reconstruction

and its aftermath (1865–1895) were playing this style of music in a wide range of rural southern locales, including Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia.

The Instruments

The music combines sources of early American military fife and drum music with strong African influence to create a truly unique sound. The combination of snares and bass drums is used in northern white fife and drum groups but the wooden fifes are replaced with cane fifes in the black groups. Most fife players make their own fifes from local cane. A hot iron poker is used to burn a blow hole and six holes for fingering.

Othar Turner, fife player and leader of the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band until his death in 2003 at the age of ninety-four, was particularly well known for the volume and the in-tune quality of his fifes. Although the fife is limited to its six notes, players make the swoops, slides, and bends of blues harpists by overblowing and false fingerings. They also use their voices to fill in between pitches at times, making whoops and yells in a manner also similar to the country harpists. Fife player Sid Hemphill (b. 1876; d. 1963) also played the quills or pan pipes, employing the same whooping technique on both instruments.

Earlier ensembles like Hemphill’s used rope snares common in military marching bands and large, old-fashioned bass parade drums. These gave a large booming sound, perfect for the outdoor dance music developed in a time prior to amplification. More recently these antiques have been replaced by wire snares and bass drums from commercial drum kits giving a crisper sound but still plenty of volume. The dancing to fife and drum is often a solo style and while the other participants watch, their hand-claps add another layer of rhythm to the mix. Turner used the term “kettles” to describe the snare drums. In most bands there are two kettles: the smaller and higher pitched one is called the “lead kettle” and the larger and lower pitched one is referred to as the “bass kettle.” Essentially the two snare drums are tuned an octave apart to clearly delineate them. Drums are tightened by holding them over a fire until the heads shrink. The drummers hold their instruments via straps and the snares are played with drumsticks and the bass with a mallet. Because of their mobility the ensemble can interact and move with the dancers in a way that echoes dance aesthetics found in West Africa.

Sid Hemphill

Folklorist Alan Lomax heard about Sid Hemphill's ensemble while collecting music in the Mississippi Delta in 1942. He finally caught up with Hemphill in the hill country of northeast Mississippi and recorded the group as both a string band and as a fife and drum (or quill and drum) ensemble. Hemphill was born near Como, Mississippi, in 1876 into a musical family and was proficient on nine instruments. He and his fellow musicians (Alec Askew, Lucius Smith, and Will Head) performed for both white and black audiences. They recorded examples using both the fife and a set of quills for the melody instrument. The fife lead pieces seem to come from the repertoire that they may have played for whites, including a march and a nineteenth-century popular tune titled "The Sidewalks of New York." The pieces that use quills either played by Hemphill or Askew are much more polyphonic and syncopated tunes, implying that they were reserved for when they played for black audiences.

Ed Young

In 1959 Lomax returned to the Mississippi Delta area on a trip funded by Atlantic Records. This time he recorded brothers Ed (b. 1908; d. 1974) and Lonnie Young with Lonnie Young Jr. This group was extremely polyrhythmic, sounding more African than almost anything Lomax had recorded anywhere in the South. Although this group only included a single snare played by Lonnie's son, Lonnie Jr., the real rhythm was the interplay between the fife and the bass drum. "Jim and John," "Oree," and "Chevrolet" were made on Lomax's state-of-the-art stereo recorder and later released by Atlantic as part of the Southern Folk Heritage Series. This made them the first fife and drum band to have commercial published recordings. Through Lomax's influence they were also the first ensemble to perform outside a folk festival, appearing at the Newport Folk Festival in the early 1960s.

Napoleon Strickland

Blues researcher George Mitchell came to the same area in 1968 where he found Napoleon Strickland and Othar Turner actively continuing the tradition. Mitchell's research resulted in the book *Blow My Blues Away* and devotes chapters to Othar Turner,

the traditional picnics, and Jesse Mae Hill, Sid Hemphill's granddaughter. Although Turner was older, it was Strickland (b. 1924; d. 2001) who initially took the music beyond the hill country. He had been introduced to the fife by his father, but learned to make fifes from Turner. His energetic playing and singing in performances at blues and folk festivals in the 1960s and 1970s brought the music to a wider audience.

David Evans

Folklorist David Evans conducted research in Mississippi and in Waverly Hall, Georgia, where Mitchell had found another fife drum tradition still very much alive. The Georgia group was also a family band made up of brothers: J. W. Jones, James Jones, and Willie C. Jones. Although other ensembles were thought to exist in the area, only the recordings of the Jones family seem to have been made. "Old Hen Cackled, Laid a Double Egg" is as good as any of the recordings of the northern Mississippi style. The fruits of Evans research work can be found in his article "Black Fife and Drum Music in Mississippi" and in the recordings *Traveling Through the Jungle: Negro Fife and Drum Band Music from the Deep South* and *Afro-American Folk Music from Tate and Panola Counties, Mississippi* that brings together most of the important recordings of fife and drum music with the exception of the Young family band.

Othar Turner

By the early 1980s Como, Mississippi, felt strong enough about the positive impact of the success of Strickland to actually have an official "Napoleon Strickland Day." His career was cut short in the mid-1980s when he was injured in a car crash that forced him to retire. Ironically, it was Othar Turner (b. 1908; d. 2003), from the small community of Gravel Springs, near the towns of Como and Senatobia, twenty years his senior who shepherded tradition into the twenty-first century. He was a farmer who spent most of his life in the same local area. He learned fife from his neighbors as a child and learned the repertoire at picnics in the area. He performed with both Hemphill and Strickland and eventually with his own group called the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band, which was made up mainly of family members.

Turner began the tradition of a Labor Day picnic on his farm that served roasted freshly butchered goat



Othar Turner playing the fife at the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas, October 2001. Until his death in 2003, Turner continued to host annual fife-and-drum picnics on his small farm in Tate County, Mississippi. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

and ended with a dance to the music of the Rising Star Fife and Drum band. This event progressed from a family event to a local gathering, to finally beckoning music fans from all over the world. In 1998 a full-length CD of his fife and drum music was released through the influence of Luther Dickinson, the guitarist for the North Mississippi All Stars. *Everybody Hollerin' Goat* is the first full-length CD devoted to a fife and drum ensemble. Whether this tradition will fade away or not will be determined by the musicians Turner trained and left behind. At the lead of his funeral in 2003 was his granddaughter Sharde Thomas who he had taught to play fife.

JARED SNYDER

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See also Evans, David; Hemphill, Jesse Mae; Hemphill, Sid; Lomax, Alan; Smith, Lucius

FILMS

When moving film first appeared in 1898 it captured the public imagination as quickly and surely as recorded sound had done. Film, however, was at first a silent medium; when shown in theaters, it was accompanied not by a soundtrack but, often, by a house pianist, sometimes an orchestra, or occasionally some simple sound effects produced in-house. From the outset, experiments had been conducted to marry it to recorded sound, but the major problem was always synchronization. It took two separate operators and technologies to achieve any effect, the results being frequently clumsy and unconvincing. Furthermore, no one could devise a method that would last more than four minutes, the maximum length of a sound recording available at that time. Clearly, what was required was an integrated system.

Seeing the need, and sensing huge profits if it could be met, several companies began developing processes in the hopes that they would be the first to overcome the technical restrictions of the period. Current research indicates that an American named Lee DeForest was first, in 1923. His Phonofilm system “heard” sound as light waves, imprinting them on an integrated strip running alongside the film in the camera. Despite the technical successes he achieved, his determination to remain independent limited the growth of his invention.

DeForest’s system was, however, almost certainly the one used by the linguist and folklorist Dr. Milton Metfessell in 1926 when he conducted the experiment he termed “phonophography,” a study of African Americans in North Carolina. He made more than twenty-five short films of people singing, talking, laughing, and playing instruments. He filmed spirituals, popular songs, and a few blues, and was almost certainly the first person to do so. His research, published in the book *Phonophography in Folk Music* in 1928, and the film he shot presumably resides in the archives of the University of North Carolina.

In the meantime both the Western-Electric and Vitaphone companies were developing competing systems. Western-Electric opted for a synchronized disk operation that proved too bulky for most producers and directors. Vitaphone, however, had followed the same path as DeForest and in August 1926 successfully demonstrated its invention publicly in New York. By the following year the Fox Company had perfected “Fox-Movietone,” a system again based on integrated sound pressed onto the film, and sent their camera crews across America and the world with orders to bring back slices of real life for the fledgling newsreel industry. With no rules and a new medium to experiment in, the crews set out enthusiastically,

returning with a wide range of human endeavor that included some African American spirituals, as well as secular track lining, chain gang and other work songs, and footage of the 1928 New Orleans Mardi Gras. This was the first time commercial film had pointed its lens at African American song.

Later that same year the major film companies sat down to agree on one standard system that would allow maximum flexibility and eliminate the incompatibility that competing systems would cause. Because Western-Electric had by now developed its own sound-on-film technology, and was able to offer the most favorable terms, the five dominant American companies agreed to adopt that system.

Despite the instant and enormous success of “talking pictures,” as they quickly became known, the major companies routinely ignored the blues, in almost all its forms. Columbia produced Mamie Smith’s 1929 short *The Jailhouse Blues* but remained unique in doing so. It fell to small independent companies to produce the well-known, if flawed, *St. Louis Blues* featuring Bessie Smith and the less-known *Dark Town Scandals Review* showcasing Sara Martin. Fox Movietone filmed Whistler’s Jug Band in 1930, providing us with the first—and almost last—glimpse of a real jug band, yet that footage remained unused at the time and has only survived through benign neglect. It has now been magnificently restored by film specialist Sherwin Dunner and is available on Yazoo Video/DVD 512.

Throughout the first half of the 1930s the film industry’s attention to anything remotely approaching blues remained, at best, sporadic. Trixie Smith in 1932, Lucky Millinder in 1933, two unidentified singers in a Ruth Etting short that same year, and Alberta Hunter and Alberta Perkins the following year are all that can now be recovered. Then, astonishingly, Leadbelly appeared for the “March of Time” series in 1935, although the result, like that for Bessie Smith, was both patronizing and distasteful. The songs he performed, truncated versions of “Goodnight Irene,” are good enough, but the dialogue between Leadbelly and John Lomax is well beyond the realms of good taste. An excellent unused outtake appears along with all the other Leadbelly film on Vestapol Video/DVD 13016, and there is still raw footage extant that has not been used.

The 1930s continued with only Mamie Smith and Trixie Smith appearing in 1938. As global war loomed, the situation remained largely unaltered; 1941’s *Boogie Woogie Dream*, featuring Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson in fine form, was a glorious exception and remains one of the finest pieces of blues-oriented music on film. Yet again, while the

performance itself is superb, the contextual material surrounding it in the full film remains patronizing. The 1941 film *The Blood of Jesus* featured a short scene in a juke joint that, extraordinarily, employed Black Ace performing a specially recorded version of “Golden Slipper,” a tune he did not record again until 1960. Disappointingly, he is heard only briefly and not seen at all.

The first serious attempt at presenting African American music to its own audience occurred with the endeavors of the “Soundies” corporation. Between 1941 and 1946 the company produced a wide range of three-minute musical shorts, including pop, swing, country, humor, and jazz. Designed to be viewed in visual juke boxes played in public places, a selection of film loops was loaded onto the machine and projected through a screen-style viewer, the machine resembling nothing so much as an early console-model television. Truly the ancestor of the music video industry, the company filmed Louis Jordan, Bull Moose Jackson, Meade Lux Lewis, Rosetta Tharpe, Anisteen Allen, Roy Milton, Deryck Sampson, Trevor Bacon, and many others, providing today’s fans with a good selection of emerging R&B. This is now regarded as especially important since the company was active during the time of the Musicians Union’s ban on studio recording. The legacy provided by these short films is therefore one of the few tangible links between pre- and postwar black music that we have available to us now.

The “March of Time” series filmed Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry very briefly for a documentary on the Library of Congress in 1945, and Louis Jordan’s career in independent film produced a number of feature-length movies between 1946 and 1949 that featured great music and appalling plots. The best musical moments from these are available on BMG Video/DVD 80008. For the decade from the mid-1940s the attention afforded any form of blues remained very spotty. A few independent films appeared, aimed at the African American movie circuit; *Boarding House Blues* with Bull Moose Jackson, *Burlesque in Harlem* with JoJo Adams, the obscure but excellent Dick Barrow in *Killer Diller*, and a few others made the rounds but had no impact outside of the then-segregated African American film industry. Beyond that, only two appearances in movies by Josh White, Roosevelt “Booba” Barnes playing harmonica in Elia Kazan’s *Baby Doll* and a CBS television episode of “Odyssey” including Horace Sprott, are all that can be usefully gleaned from the period. Papa Lightfoot is reported to have appeared in a film entitled *Spooky Loot* but current research indicates no surviving copies.

It was the advent of rock ‘n’ roll that focused wider attention on African American music in any

meaningful way. In the vanguard was a 1955 series variously titled “Showtime at the Apollo,” “Harlem Hit Parade,” or “Rock and Roll Review” that recut and repackaged a series of musical shorts filmed on stage at the Apollo Theater in New York. With no plot, simply linked by bandleader Willie Bryant, Joe Turner, Amos Milburn, the Clovers, Larry Darnell, Dinah Washington, and other R&B-oriented artists appeared in conjunction with jazz artists, dancers, and comedians. Backed by the Paul Williams orchestra, these performances hold up well today and, most importantly—notwithstanding a lack of an audience—were filmed “live,” rather than dubbed or mimed. Permutations of this material were broadcast on TV and shown in movie theaters nationwide. A video containing most of the best R&B is available on Storyville.

The huge and instant success of all forms of rock ‘n’ roll from 1955 onward spurred the making of a number of cheap, quickly turned out exploitation movies. *Rock Around the Clock*, *Go Johnny Go*, *Rock Rock Rock*, *Rock Baby Rock It*, *The Big Beat*, *The Girl Can’t Help It*, and *Mister Rock & Roll* all featured a variety of artists, white and black, who performed a wide catalog of songs that fell within the rock canon. Among the featured artists were Joe Turner, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Roscoe Gordon, Fats Domino, the obscure but very worthy Preacher Smith and the Deacons and, casting the blues net more broadly, the Flamingos, the Moonglows, and Jackie Wilson. Most can be found on commercial videos. Production values are sausage-machine at best, the plots are generally trite, and the music is almost always mimed, but collectively they now form a document of some value. An extraordinary exception was the film *Rockin’ the Blues*, featuring Faye Adams, Reese LaRue, Pearl Woods, and others, inhabiting the same genre, sharing the same production values, but unique in that it was aimed at African American audiences. All of this endeavor was little enough when one considers what could have been achieved, but it pointed the way toward a higher profile for black popular music in the United States in general, and would spark a deeper involvement in documenting the blues.

In the meantime, Big Bill Broonzy had appeared in the film short *Big Bill Blues* in France in 1956. Seen often, but never in synch, it suffers from a certain pretentiousness on the part of the filmmaker but is still a valuable document. However, Broonzy’s later appearance on film, back in the United States, is of far greater value to us today. During this time frame Pete Seeger, working alone with a second-hand sound camera, had filmed Sonny Terry, J. C. Burris, a Cajun

festival, a number of white folk artists, and also Big Bill in what became almost his final recorded performance. Although amateur, the film displays a man still at the apex of his art, effortlessly pulling chords from his guitar that others might only dream of. His magnificent "Guitar Boogie," although incomplete, as Seeger's film stock ran out partway through, is perhaps one of the few truly classic blues performances on film. Both Broonzy films are available on Yazoo Video/DVD 518 and almost all of Seeger's films are available on one Vestapol video, 13042. During this same period Seeger also set about restoring the long-ignored 1948 color footage of Leadbelly. His efforts, and those of his ilk, would fuel the next major turn of events, leading to a far greater profile for blues on celluloid than ever before.

By 1959, with the initial wave of rock 'n' roll abating, giving way to some extent to the "folk boom" that emerged in the late 1950s, the first serious widespread attempts at preserving traditional American music began to take shape. As the interest in all forms of American folk music gained ground, thanks to pioneering efforts by the likes of Chris Strachwitz and Sam Charters, the continued work of Alan Lomax and others, the blues began to receive its first serious attention from filmmakers. The 1960 Newport Festival was filmed by the United States Information Service, including wonderful performances by Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Butch Cage & Willie Thomas, and Jimmy Rushing. In 1962 Sam Charters produced his film *The Blues*, a twenty-minute color short that has never been seen in synch but contains useful footage of Sleepy John Estes, Baby Tate, and J. D. Short, among others.

It fell to the German filmmaker Dietrich Wawzyn to undertake perhaps the first successful documentary about the blues. At the invitation of German SudWestFunk TV he spent the spring and early summer of 1963 traveling from California through Arizona and Texas to Louisiana. With a young Chris Strachwitz as soundman, Wawzyn filmed Lightnin' Hopkins, Mance Lipscomb, Whistling Alex Moore, Blind James Campbell, Black Ace, Willie Thomas, Lowell Fulson, and others for a German TV documentary entitled *Die Blues*. Shown once in 1963 and long inaccessible, all of Wawzyn's classic footage is now available on Yazoo Video 520.

The indefatigable Alan Lomax, in a heroic gesture that lay fallow for years, took two professional movie cameras and a sound crew to the Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island in 1966. With a carte blanche from the organizers, he filmed artists both onstage and off, going so far as to construct a facsimile juke joint, stocked with nonfacsimile alcohol, to allow blues artists to perform with less inhibition. His

efforts paid magnificent dividends; he filmed Son House, Bukka White, Skip James, Howlin' Wolf and his band, Ed & Lonnie Young's fife and drum band, and many other non-blues artists, amassing a superb archive of American folk music that simply sat on shelves for years, known by only a few and seen by fewer. Now restored and reedited, the best of it can be had on Vestapol DVD/Videos 13049 and 13050. The performances by Ed & Lonnie Young are almost certainly the very finest examples of traditional North Mississippi fife & drum playing ever made; the sets by Son House and Bukka White rank among the best on film, and the Skip James songs, the only ones currently available to the public, are superb. That said, perhaps the most stunning music to emerge from this summer session is the Howlin' Wolf set; to see Wolf play slide guitar and harmonica in the company of his regular band, in a loose, relaxed atmosphere, is to experience a truly great performance and one of the most satisfying of any visual images of the genre.

In 1967 a young filmmaker named Les Blank visited Houston and came away with a documentary that still remains an unassailable classic. *The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins*, also featuring Mance Lipscomb, Ruth Ames, and Billy Bizer, is one of the single best films ever made about the subject. Blank's subsequent film career has included *A Well Spent Life*, *Always for Pleasure*, and other films about aspects of American folk music and life and are all currently available on video through Blank's company Flower Films.

The same year guitarist Mike Stewart and others undertook a tour of the South that netted some interesting performances by Gus Cannon, Dewey Corley, Johnny Shines, Hacksaw Harney, Honeyboy Edwards, and others, the best of which can be seen on several Vestapol videos, the balance of which, including Muddy Waters, Johnny Young, and Willie Mabon at the Chicago Blues Festival, remain unused.

Elsewhere filmmaker John Ulman was quietly obtaining funding for his "Masters of American Traditional Music" project. Working within the walls of the University of Seattle, he was able to film and videotape a wide variety of visiting performers using both the university's closed-circuit TV system for monochrome and a single film camera for color. Over a three-year period, from 1967 to 1970, he managed to capture in-depth performances of great quality by Son House, Lightnin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry, Fred McDowell, Elizabeth Cotton, Gary Davis, Robert Pete Williams, Johnny Shines, and others, almost all of which are now available on a variety of videos/DVDs on Vestapol and Yazoo.

FILMS

Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s efforts by a variety of filmmakers, operating within the framework of the University of Mississippi and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, produced a catalog of interesting films covering aspects of Delta music and folklore. Perhaps the most engaging of these is William Ferris's *Give My Poor Heart Ease*, from 1975. Only twenty minutes in length, it nevertheless captures the essence of the blues and contains some remarkable performances by Son Thomas, Wade Walton, and B. B. King. Other films include the fine *Delta Blues Singer—James "Sonny Ford" Thomas*, *Mississippi Delta Blues*, *Delta Blues Festival 1985*, and several highly interesting gospel documentaries. All are available from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, Oxford.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the rise of a number of independent filmmakers who have sunk time, effort, cash, and sweat into producing films that, ultimately, have met with limited commercial success despite their quality. Two good examples are Stevenson Palfrey and Robert Mugge. Palfrey's elegant *Piano Players Rarely Ever Play Together* featured Professor Longhair, Tuts Washington, and Allen Toussaint. Partway through filming Longhair suddenly died. The film took a new turn as a result, encompassing the funeral itself and the aftershock of losing New Orleans's master pianist. It has rarely been seen and is currently unavailable on video/DVD.

Robert Mugge's *Deep Blues* revisited the Mississippi Delta in the 1990s to see what was left. He managed to find not only excellent musicians but also interesting views on where blues was then, where it had been, and where it might be going. Mugge's insistence on treating the music as art rather than product meant that performances were presented in full. Jesse Mae Hemphill's "You Can Talk About Me" is not just a classic performance, but also a *whole* one. Shown sometimes in an edited format and often not at all, it remains a satisfying documentary that has been woefully underappreciated. It is now available as a DVD.

As the concept of the blues as part of mainstream American music gained ground throughout the last twenty years of the twentieth century, its profile altered and began integrating, to a degree, into mainstream entertainment. Thus we find Brownie McGhee appearing on *Family Ties*, B. B. King guesting on *The Cosby Show*, and Albert Collins in a cameo within the movie *Adventures in Babysitting*.

The flashpoint for this heightened interest is arguably the commercial success, in 1980, of John Landis's *The Blues Brothers*, now regarded as a comedy classic and sitting comfortably in cult status. Growing out of a series of appearances on *Saturday Night Live*, when the movie first appeared it offered the general public

not just a helter-skelter collection of car chases and Tom-and-Jerryesque gunplay, but also music of some quality by John Lee Hooker, Walter Horton, Ray Charles, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and Matt Murphy. The twin stars of this crazed epic, Dan Ackroyd and the late John Belushi, were both genuine blues fans. (Ackroyd has quietly funded the making of at least one blues documentary.) Their input, spiritually akin to the Rolling Stones' insistence on Howlin' Wolf appearing with them on TV, helped elevate the profile of blues in a larger public forum at a key time, and their efforts should now perhaps be seen in context as a part of blues history. Certainly many people were first exposed to blues as a result of *The Blues Brothers*.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, revisionist views began to emerge, celebrating traditional American music in a much less segregated forum than it had been placed for some years. Since about 1960, much research, discography, recording, and re-issue of classic material had focused exclusively upon *just* the blues. However, taking cues from Harry Smith's seminal 1952 *Anthology of American Folk Music*, at first Yazoo, then other companies like Old Hat have begun to take a broader view, mixing black and white traditions onto one CD. The visual side of this coin has been embossed by Palm Productions' *American Roots Music*, which emerged in 2001. A four-hour documentary, available on DVD and video, it casts a very wide net over many aspects of traditional American music and points the way toward further revisionism.

The blues is now accepted as part of the global musical landscape, yet at the same time the truly great performers, those who shaped the music, are now very few and far between. The future of the blues therefore lies not just in the hands of current performers but also in the views of historians. How they see the history and then choose to present it will greatly influence any future popular vision of the music. Approached intelligently, even shackled to the relative lack of archival performances (there's no film of Ma Rainey, Leroy Carr, Tampa Red, John Lee Williamson, Robert Johnson, Memphis Minnie, Leroy Foster, Baby Boy Warren, or even Jimmy Reed), it is possible, but challenging, to produce a balanced film history even with judicious use of talking heads, rostrum camera work, and soundtrack. Further, given that much extant footage is limited (Little Walter's only surviving footage is frankly poor), the problem is compounded. As we grow further from original sources, it becomes increasingly important to achieve balance. That said, there are some superb performances on film; one thinks of Lightnin' Hopkins at UCLA, Jesse Mae Hemphill in *Deep Blues*, and

Buddy Guy in *Chicago Blues*. Using the extant material, it should be possible for filmmakers and historians to furnish future generations with a satisfying and enjoyable view of blues history, as well as using whatever new technology becomes available to ensure that archiving of current events remains ongoing.

Finally, bearing in mind that the catalog of blues on film is nowhere near as deep or embracing as it is on record, it should be seen in context, as a useful adjunct to blues history, adding to our knowledge and enjoyment by being able to draw on performances that otherwise we could no longer experience. To see Son House or Bessie Smith perform in those monochrome moments is to be reminded of how grateful we should be for the few morsels that survive, as well as irritated that so much escaped the camera's lens.

PAUL VERNON

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Videography in Order of Citation

Times Ain't What They Used to Be (Yazoo Home Video DVD 512; including Bessie Smith excerpt and Whistler's Jug Band footage); *Legends of Country Blues Guitar, Vol. 2* (Vestapol Video 13016; includes Leadbelly); *Boogie Woogie Dream* (1944, dir. Hans Burger; includes Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson); *The Blood of Jesus* (aka *The Glory Road*; dir. Spencer Williams; 1941, Amegro Films); *Louis Jordan and the Tympany Five* (BMG Video/DVD 80008); *Boarding House Blues* (dir. Josh Binney; 1948, All American); *Burlesque in Harlem* (dir. William Alexander, 1954); *Killer Diller* (dir. Josh Binney, 1948, All American); *The Walking Hills* (with Josh White; dir. John Sturges; 1949, Columbia Pictures); *The Crimson Canary* (with Josh White; dir. John Hoffman; 1945, Universal Pictures); *Baby Doll* (dir. Elia Kazan; 1956, Newtown Productions); *Odyssey* series, episode "They Took a Blue Note" (1956, CBS Television; with Horace Sprott); *Rhythm and Blues at the Apollo* (Storyville Video SV 6016); *Variety at the Apollo* (Storyville Video SV6017); *Rock Around the Clock* (dir. Fred F. Sears; 1956, Clover/Columbia); *Go Johnny Go* (dir. Paul Landres; 1959, Hal Roach Productions); *Rock Rock Rock* (dir. Will Price; 1956, Vanguard Productions); *Rock Baby Rock It* (dir. Murray Douglas Spurr; 1957, Freebar); *The Big Beat* (dir. William J. Cowen; 1958, Universal Pictures); *The Girl Can't Help It* (dir. Frank Tashlin; 1956, 20th Century Fox); *Mister Rock and Roll* (dir. Charles S. Dubin; 1957, Aurora Productions); *Rockin' the Blues* (dir. Arthur Rosenblum; 1956, Fritz Pollard Associates); *Bill Broonzy and Roosevelt Sykes* (Yazoo Video/DVD 518); *A Musical Journey* (Vestapol Video 13042); *On The Road Again: Down*

Home Blues, Jazz, Gospel and More, Filmed on Location in 1963 (Yazoo Video 520; previously titled *Die Blues*); *Devil Got My Woman* (Vestapol Video 13049); *Delta Blues—Cajun Two-Step* (Vestapol Video 13050); *The Blues According To Lightnin' Hopkins* (dir. Les Blank; 1969, Flower Films); *A Well Spent Life* (dir. Les Blank; 1971, Flower Films); *Always for Pleasure* (dir. Les Blank; 1978, Flower Films); *Bukka White and Son House* (Yazoo Video 500); *Reverend Gary Davis and Sonny Terry* (Yazoo Video 501); *Mance Lipscomb and Lightnin' Hopkins* (Yazoo Video 502); *Elizabeth Cotton and Jesse Fuller* (Yazoo Video 503); *Fred McDowell and Big Joe Williams* (Yazoo Video 504); *Lightnin' Hopkins and Roosevelt Sykes* (Yazoo Video 513); *John Lee Hooker and Furry Lewis* (Yazoo Video 519); *Piano Players Rarely Ever Play Together* (dir. Stevenson Palfi; 1982, Stevenson Productions); *Deep Blues* (dir. Robert Muggie; Oil Factory, 1991); *Adventures in Babysitting* (dir. Chris Columbus; 1987, Silver Screen/Tombstone; with an appearance by Albert Collins); *The Blues Brothers* (dir. John Landis; 1980, Universal Pictures); *American Roots Music* (2001, Palm Productions); *Chicago Blues* (dir. Harvey Cokliss; 1972, reissued on Vestapol Video 13095).

FINNELL, DOUG

b. 26 August 1903; Dallas TX
d. 1 August 1988; Dallas, TX

Dallas trumpet player, pianist, and vocalist who served as a mentor to local musicians through the 1980s. He was the pianist on T-Bone Walker's 1929 Columbia session, and he had a 78-rpm release of his own on Peacock in 1954.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR (under T-Bone Walker); LSFP

FIRE/FURY/ENJOY/RED ROBIN

Among the few black-owned record labels during the post-World War II R&B era, owned and operated by Bobby Robinson (b. 1919, South Carolina), a dapper and determined entrepreneur. In 1951, five years after opening a record shop on Harlem's 125th Street, Robinson formed his first label, Robin—soon renamed Red Robin to avoid a lawsuit. That label's early 1950s releases included Brownie McGhee, Jack Dupree, Red Prysock, and the Du Droppers.

Robinson founded Fury in 1957, the name reflecting his anger at having to start a new label to escape

from bad distribution deals. Fire was initially Fury's publishing arm, but it became a recording label in 1959, after Fury became tangled in a legal dispute with rival Savoy Records over its biggest hit, Wilbert Harrison's "Kansas City" (#1 R&B and pop). Fire became known as a blues label, issuing singles and LPs by Lightnin' Hopkins, Elmore James ("The Sky Is Crying," #15 R&B hit, 1960), and Buster Brown ("Fannie Mae," #1 R&B hit, 1960).

Enjoy was launched in 1962; its first release was King Curtis's "Soul Twist" (#1 R&B hit, top 20 pop). Other Enjoy releases were by Titus Turner, Noble "Thin Man" Watts, and Elmore James ("It Hurts Me Too," #15 R&B hit, 1965).

Robinson's labels had two huge hits with New Orleans artists: Bobby Marchan on Fire ("There Is Something on Your Mind," #1 R&B, #31 pop, 1960) and Lee Dorsey on Fury ("Ya Ya," #1 R&B, top 10 pop, 1961). Other blues or blues-based Robinson recording artists included Tarheel Slim (Alden Bunn), Arthur Crudup, Sam Myers, Wild Jimmy Spruill, Mighty Joe Young, Lee Cooper, and Dr. Horse. Memorable releases in an R&B/soul vein included early 1960s hits by Gladys Knight and Don Gardner & Dee Dee Ford. Three other short-lived Robinson imprints were Flame, Everlast, and Whirling Disc.

Described admiringly by one commentator as a "wildcatting record man," Robinson single-handedly took care of the production and promotion for his labels. A typical Bobby Robinson release had a down-home quality to it, reflecting his desire to record music that was "pure, 100%, no water added."

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: McGrath

Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "Bobby Robinson's Labels: Album Discographies." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/fire.html> (accessed January 14, 2005).

Selected Recordings

The Fire/Fury Records Story (1992, Capricorn 42009).

See also **Robinson, Bobby**

FIVE BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA

Founded 1937 in Talladega, Alabama. A traditional Southern Gospel quintet known for both its

longevity and fiery, soaring harmonies. Original members included Clarence Fountain, Jimmy Carter, George Scott, Olice Thomas, Johnny Fields, and Velma Traylor. The current line-up features leader and vocalist Fountain, vocalist Carter, and vocalist Scott, along with newer members Joey Williams (lead guitar), Ricky McKinnie (drums), Bobby Butler (rhythm guitar), and Tracy Pierce (bass).

Background

With their roots in prewar rural Southern Gospel, the Five Blind Boys of Alabama represent a living link between traditional nineteenth-century sacred black music and the evolving soul-gospel singing stylizations that have contributed so directly to contemporary blues, R&B, and rock. In 1939, the original quartet was formed at the Talladega Institute for the Negro Blind in Alabama, and originally recorded in 1948 as the Happyland Jubilee Singers. Soon afterward, they changed their name to the Five Blind Boys of Alabama, in response to the name of another gospel group, the Five Blind Boys of Mississippi. By 1949, the group had their first hit with the Coleman Records recording, "I Can See Everybody's Mother but Mine."

The 1950s represented a period of achievement for the Blind Boys. By participating in a continuing series of large gospel tours or "programs" involving several groups, they were able to perform before large audiences of upwards of 10,000 people in eastern American cities like Philadelphia or New York. ("All the big cities were big gospel towns," Clarence Fountain recalls.) At the same time, the group actively pursued radio work, visiting at as many as two radio stations a day—in two different states—to perform their current releases, such as "Heaven on My Mind."

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, the Blind Boys recorded for a number of record labels, including Specialty (which issued another of their hits, "Oh, Lord, Stand by Me"), Vee-Jay, Savoy, Elektra, and others. However, with the rise of rock 'n' roll, the quartet saw their audiences and venues shrink significantly. In 1970, Fountain left the group to manage bookings for the gospel group the Mighty Clouds of Joy, effectively putting the Blind Boys into hiatus. Ten years later, in 1981, Fountain reconstituted the Blind Boys with its surviving original members and new personnel. A career breakthrough for the group followed in 1983, when they performed as part of the cast of *The Gospel at Colonus*, the Obie Award-winning Off-Broadway and Broadway musical drama created by Bob Telson and Lee Breuer. This opportunity led

to their appearance on two original soundtrack albums in 1984 and 1988, which established their rediscovery by a new generation of listeners.

After recording three successful albums in the 1990s, the Blind Boys reached an even greater audience with their releases on Peter Gabriel's Real World label. *Spirit of the Century* (2001) featured a mix of traditional gospel songs along with contemporary songs reinterpreted by the group. Attracting broad critical praise, the album was awarded the 2001 Grammy Award for Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album. A follow-up album in 2002, *Higher Ground*, won a second consecutive Grammy Award for Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album, as well as a Dove Award from the Gospel Music Association as the Best Traditional Gospel Album. A holiday album, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, was released in 2003.

Musical Contexts

To appreciate the evolution of the Five Blind Boys of Alabama as a musical group, one needs to understand the evolving nature of African American gospel music itself. Although tied to nineteenth-century church spirituals, the genre is essentially a twentieth-century phenomenon, sparked to large degree by the determinations and more than eight hundred gospel compositions of Thomas A. Dorsey, known as "The Father of Gospel Music." Dorsey, who as a young man had accompanied such blues singers as Ma Rainey, was moved to set religious verses to music that maintained the tonal and rhythmic values of blues and jazz. While initially banned by some churches, gospel quickly gained popularity through singers such as Mahalia Jackson and James Cleveland, and through smooth-voiced quartets like the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Fairfield Four, and the Five Blind Boys of Alabama.

However, gospel quartets, which had their heyday from the 1920s through the 1940s, have played another key role in the development of American popular music, by providing a springboard into secular music for singers in the 1960s. One of the first was Sam Cooke, originally a member of the Soul Stirrers quartet and a label mate of the Blind Boys. Others like Wilson Pickett, Aretha Franklin, Lou Rawls, and Johnny Taylor followed. Within this context, the crossover qualities of recent recordings by the Five Blind Boys of Alabama make sense, as gospel itself continues to be a highly inclusive musical medium. The Blind Boys' 2001 *Spirit of the Century* references blues, R&B, rap, Afro-beat, and folk in their song arrangements, but still maintains its emotional and

spiritual core of gruff gospel shouts and impassioned singing.

DAVID BEAUDOUIN

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

The Original Five Blind Boys of Alabama (1959, Savoy LP 14044).
Marching Up to Zion (1970, Specialty LP SPS-2138).
Spirit of the Century (2001, Real World CD 50918).
Higher Ground (2002, Real World CD 12793).

See also Black Sacred Music

FIVE ("5") ROYALES

Active 1952–1965

Rhythm and blues vocal group, formed out of a sacred group, the Royal Sons. Members included guitarist Lowman Perkins, lead singer Johnny Tanner, tenor singer James Moore, tenor singer Obadiah Carter, and bass singer Otto Jeffries, who in 1953 was replaced by Eugene Tanner. Among their Apollo and King labels hits were "Baby Don't Do It," "Think," and "Dedicated to the One I Love."

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richie Unterberger); Larkin

Discography: AMG

FLASH

Los Angeles label, owned by Charlie Reynolds, which between 1955 and 1959 issued more than thirty singles in a 100 series plus a few others on subsidiary labels Pull and Canton. Artists included Sidney Maiden, Bee Brown, Haskell Sadler, James Curry, Gus Jenkins, Frank Patt, Guitar Shorty, and Slim Green.

RAY ASTBURY

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- Propes, Steve. "Confessions of a Flash Counter Girl." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 134 (November 1998): 10–13.

Discography: McGrath

See also Green, Norman G. "Guitar Slim"; Guitar Shorty; Jenkins, Gus; Maiden, Sidney; Patt, Frank "Honeyboy"; Sadler, Haskell Robert "Cool Papa"

FLEETWOOD MAC

English blues group, later international rock act. Founded 1967 by Peter Green (guitar), Mick Fleetwood (drums), and initially reluctant John McVie (bass, role held briefly by Bob Brunning) from Bluesbreakers. Slide specialist Jeremy Spencer joined as second guitarist; recorded two strong blues albums for producer Mike Vernon's Blue Horizon label. Recruited B.B. King–influenced Danny Kirwan as third guitarist. Fleetwood Mac recorded in Chicago in 1969 with Otis Spann, Willie Dixon, and others. They had several U.K. hits, including mysterious "Albatross," but increasingly moved away from blues. Green left in 1970 and was replaced by vocalist Christine Perfect. Spencer joined a religious cult. Many personnel changes occurred as the band transformed into a mainstream popular rock act by the mid-1970s.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

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- English Rose* (US) (1969, Epic 26446).
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- Then Play On* (1969, Reprise 6368).
- Kiln House* (1970, Reprise 6408).
- The Original Fleetwood Mac* (1971, CBS 63875).

FLEMONS, WADE

- b. 25 September 1940; Coffeyville, KS
d. 13 October 1993; Battle Creek, MI

Rhythm and blues singer who made a brief impact on record charts in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Flemons was raised in Wichita, Kansas, but at age fifteen he moved with his parents to Battle Creek, Michigan. In 1958 he was signed by Vee-Jay and recorded a hit, "Here I Stand." His next hit, in 1960, was "Easy Lovin'." The flip side, "Whoops Now," got solid play in a lot of areas. In 1960, Vee-Jay put out the only LP on Flemons. He was at the peak of his success and toured the chitlin' circuit. Flemon's one stab at blues was a remake of the Percy Mayfield song titled "Please Send Me Someone to Love" (1961), his last chart record. But if there was any justice in the world Flemons would have likewise charted in 1964 with his definitive version of the haunting "I Knew You When," which Billy Joe Royal put high on the pop charts in 1965. Flemons was the keyboardist on the first two LPs of Earth, Wind, and Fire.

ROBERT PRUTER

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FLERLAGE, RAEBURN

- b. 13 July 1915; Cincinnati, OH
d. 28 September 2002; Chicago, IL

Ray Flerlage worked variously as a writer, lecturer, disk jockey, and record wholesaler, but was best known as a photographer of blues performers. He moved to Chicago in 1944, and served during the 1940s as midwest executive secretary for People's Songs, a national organization that used folk music to promote social causes. In that capacity he worked with Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly, Josh White, Big Bill Broonzy, and others. He was most active as a photographer between 1959 and 1972. Working exclusively in Chicago, he shot many of the top blues, jazz, and folk performers of that era.

His blues photographs include some of the most famous pictures ever taken of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Memphis Slim, Big Joe Williams, James Cotton, Junior Wells, and many others. They have graced numerous books, films, magazines, and record jackets. Active until his last illness, he was still providing images from his vast collection to producers and editors all over the world when he passed away.

The Photographs of Ray Flerlage

Ray Flerlage's photographs represent the primary visual documentation of the Chicago folk, blues,

and jazz music scenes between 1959 and 1972. Though hardly the only chronicler of this period, his collection of images is by far the most comprehensive, and his work is highly regarded for its technical and artistic quality.

He studied photography under Harry Callahan at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Institute of Design. Colleagues and influences were Chicago photographers Steve Deutch, Yuichi (Gene) Idaka, Jo Banks, Ted Williams, Jim Taylor, Aaron Siskind, and Wayne Miller, and New York photographer Dave Gahr.

Although he was active as a professional photographer for only slightly more than a decade, that decade was the 1960s: Flerlage documented artists who are immensely important to the development of popular music, and who are still popular today. Thus, his collected images have been indispensable to photo editors for more than 40 years—he took hundreds of pictures of Muddy Waters alone.

Most Flerlage photographs capture the artist in performance, often a small, urban club whose smoky ambiance gives the image a strong sense of place and time. He also found his subjects in homes, hotel rooms, dressing rooms, recording studios, rehearsal spaces, and on Chicago streets. Most of his images are in black and white, but a few rare color images, including an early series of Muddy Waters, have survived.

Flerlage was strictly freelance: He would photograph the subjects at his own expense, his customers would choose the ones that suited their needs, and they would purchase single-use reproduction rights for the images they wanted. Ray kept the rights to all his photographs, even his most famous ones. Those photographs were used to illustrate newspaper and magazine articles, and for record jackets. Nationally, Flerlage's pictures appeared in *Down Beat*, *Rhythm & Blues*, and *Jazz*; his primary local outlets were the *Chicago Scene* and the *Daily News*. Record company customers included Chess, Delmark, Prestige, Testament, and Bluesville. Later, his photographs would appear in dozens of books, starting with Charles Keil's *Urban Blues* (1966).

Ray's photos have continued to appear on record jackets as companies worldwide have released new collections of recordings from this extraordinary era. Exhibits of his photographs have been mounted at several galleries and museums, including the Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Some of his most famous images have become popular icons on t-shirts and coffee mugs.

In 2000, ECW Press published a 152-page retrospective of Flerlage's blues photographs, *Chicago Blues As Seen from the Inside: The Photographs of*

Raeburn Flerlage. It has sold well and was favorably reviewed by every major blues journal. As a result of the book's publication, Ray received the Blues Foundation's 2001 Keeping the Blues Alive (K.B.A.) Award for Achievement in Photography.

ANDREW M. COHEN

FLOWER, MARY

b. 1949; Delphi, IN

Singer and guitarist. Began as a folk revival guitarist in Denver, Colorado, in the 1970s. Since the 1980s she has performed mostly blues, especially those of the prewar era. Her style is marked by a husky voice and adept fingerwork on guitar.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Eder)

Discography: AMG (Bruce Eder)

FLOYD, FRANK "HARMONICA"

b. 11 October 1908; Pontotoc, MS

d. 7 August 1984; Cincinnati, OH

Birthplace also given as Toccopola, Mississippi. A white guitarist, harmonica player, and singer active since the 1920s, who by the 1950s had arrived at his prototype rock mix of blues and country music. Most of his early recordings were for the Sun label (which were leased to Chess) in 1951. Floyd was rediscovered in Millington, Tennessee, in 1972 by Stephen LaVere.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin

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FLYING FISH

Founded in 1971 in Chicago, Illinois; acquired by Rounder in 1996. Flying Fish was one of Chicago's small but highly influential labels, and largely the love affair of founder Bruce Kaplan (1945–1992). While blues was only one part of the Flying Fish catalog, several very good blues albums were issued. The label was acquired by Rounder Records following Kaplan's death.

JIM TRAGESER

FLYING FISH

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O'Neal, Jim. "Bruce Kaplan" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 108 (March/April 1993): 51.

Discography

Big Twist & The Mellow Fellows. *Big Twist & The Mellow Fellows* (1980, FF-229).

Cephas & Wiggins. *Dog Days of August* (1986, FF-394).

Moses Racoec. *Blues* (1987, FF-454).

Satan & Adam. *Harlem Blues* (1991, FF-70567).

FLYNN, BILLY

b. 11 August 1956; Green Bay, WI

Flynn apprenticed, toured, and recorded with Jimmy Dawkins, and has also served with Otis Rush, the Legendary Band, Little Smokey Smothers, John Brim, and his own Flynn-tones and Smokedaddy bands. A composer of inventive instrumental blues as well as a songwriter of elegant simplicity, Flynn is noted as an eclectic specialist in postwar guitar idioms.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Discography

Jimmy Dawkins. *Kant Sheck Dees Bluze* (Earwig 4920).

The Smokedaddy Band (Easy Baby EB 400).

FODDRELL, TURNER

b. 22 June 1928; Stuart, VA

d. 31 January 1995; Blacksburg, VA

Acoustic guitarist versatile in blues, folk songs, and the occasional postwar blues. For his living he owned a general store with a gas station on Route 8 near North Carolina.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Wald, Elijah. "North Carolina Blues: Turner Foddrell: If It Sounds Good, I Do It." *Living Blues* no. 107 (January/February 1993): 33–34.

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FOGHAT

Formed in 1971; disbanded in 1984; re-formed in 1994. Foghat was one of the most popular 1970s exponents of heavy blues—a hybrid of Chicago electric

blues and rock and roll that grew out of late 1960s bands such as the Yardbirds. For many young whites in the late 1960s and early 1970s, blues-rock groups such as Foghat, the Allman Brothers Band, and Savoy Brown served as their first exposure to any form of the blues.

The band was formed in London in 1971 when guitarist "Lonesome" Dave Peeverett, bassist Tony Stevens, and drummer Roger Earl all left Savoy Brown, then added guitarist Rod Price to their ranks. The music of Foghat was more upbeat and boogie-shuffle oriented than Savoy Brown's, and Foghat's albums became favorites of the then-new album-oriented rock radio format.

While the band members emphasized writing their own songs, they also covered blues standards; their first album featured Willie Dixon's "I Just Want to Make Love to You," which became a staple of their live shows. Their fifth album, *Fool for the City* (1975), included a cover of Robert Johnson's "Terraplane Blues."

While not primarily a blues band (tending to share the bill with other rock bands, and performing at rock festivals), Foghat retained more blues elements than most "heavy metal" bands, and served as a kind of bridge between the increasingly divergent blues and rock worlds.

The band reunited in 1994, and recorded both a new studio and a new live album before Peeverett died of kidney cancer in 2000. The band has continued to record and tour with a variety of lineups since.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography

Foghat (1972, Bearsville 2077).

Fool for the City (1975, Bearsville 6959).

Live (1977, Bearsville 6971).

FOLEY, SUE

b. 29 March 1968; Ottawa, Canada

Guitarist and singer/songwriter. Relocated from Canada to Austin by blues promoter/record producer Clifford Antone, Foley made her recording debut in 1992 with *Young Girl Blues*, an impressive exhibition of Chicago stylings played on her trademark pink paisley guitar. By the time *Ten Days in November* was released in 1998 Foley had found her voice as a songwriter and had infused an R&B to her vocals. She

returned to Ottawa, where she had performed Memphis Minnie tunes as a sixteen-year-old, to raise her son, added flamenco to her guitar repertoire, and released *Love Coming Down* in 2000, followed by *Where the Action Is* in 2002.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

FONTENOT, CANRAY

b. 16 October 1922; L'anse Aux Vaches, LA
d. 29 July 1995; Welsh, LA

A contemporary and associate of the renowned Ardoin family of Creole musicians, fiddler and singer Canray Fontenot was one of the last traditional Francophone musicians of Louisiana. While other Creoles of his generation helped develop the modern R&B-influenced zydeco form during the 1940s and 1950s, Fontenot hewed closely to traditional Creole music.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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Cajun Fiddle Styles, Vol. 1: The Creole Tradition (Arhoolie 5031).

FORD, CLARENCE J.

b. 16 December 1929; New Orleans, LA
d. 9 August 1994; New Orleans, LA

Sideman who played clarinet and tenor and baritone saxophone with Fats Domino, Snooks Eaglin, Earl

King, Dave Bartholomew, Little Richard, Pee Wee Crayton, Danny Barker, Professor Longhair, Art Neville, and Guitar Slim. Most were recorded at Cosimo Matassa's studio in New Orleans.

TOM MORGAN

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Burke, Tony. "Clarence Ford" [obituary]. *Blues & Rhythm* no. 93 (1994): 14.

FORD, JAMES LEWIS CARTER "T-MODEL"

b. 1922; Forrest, MS

Delta bluesman known mainly in the Greenville, Mississippi, area until he began touring internationally in 1997. Learning electric guitar in his late 1950s, Ford's style can be described as a rhythmically undisciplined "boogie stomp," with explicit lyrics that tend toward violence and a voice known for its guttural, rasping quality.

DANIEL M. RAESSLER

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Discography: AMG

FORD, ROBBEN LEE

b. 16 December 1951; Ukiah, CA

Woodlake, California, also cited as birthplace. After forming the Charles Ford Band in 1969 in San Francisco, Ford was soon hired to accompany Charles Musselwhite. During the next two decades he played with George Harrison, Joni Mitchell, Miles Davis, and others. Defying any kind of categorization, Ford's guitar playing combines his blues roots with elements of jazz, pop, and rock, be it the bluesy pop style of *Talk to Your Daughter* (1988, Warner), certainly his biggest success, or his rather basic blues release *Robben Ford & The Blue Line* (1992, Stretch). Ford's fusion of styles is heard at its best on *Blue Moon* (2002 Concord).

THORSTEN HINDRICH

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Discography: AMG

FOREHAND, A. C. AND "BLIND" MAMIE

Asa "A. C." Forehand

b. 9 August 1890; Columbia, GA
d. 9 May 1972; Memphis, TN

"Blind" Mamie Forehand

Flourished 1920s

Believed to be husband and wife. They made four recordings for Victor in Memphis in 1927, singing sacred material and performing with guitar and finger cymbals. The delicacy of Mamie Forehand's singing and the street corner manner of performance have been the appeal of their records, especially on recent CD reissues.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

FORMAL

Chicago rhythm and blues label of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The label was founded by Angelo Giardini in 1958, but in 1959 it was taken over by independent record entrepreneur Don Talty (1911–1979). He released on Formal such acts as blues pianist and singer Willie Mabon, bluesman Young

Guitar Red, jazz pianist Earl Washington, R&B vocalist Ace St. Clair (brother of Johnny Ace), and soul artist Jan Bradley. The label's biggest successes were with Jan Bradley (who hit nationally with "Mama Didn't Lie" in 1963) and Willie Mabon (who hit with "Got to Have Some"). Talty stopped putting out records on Formal in 1964, but continued to produce for other labels, such as Night Owl (a subsidiary label of Cuca Records, in Sauk City, Wisconsin), Adanti, and Chess. The 1970s saw the end of Talty's recording activities.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

FORMS

Structures

Principles

As stated in the technical discussion in the Blues entry in this encyclopedia, blues forms may be said to have three dimensions: tone, including instrumentation and vocal sound; melody, including lyrics; and harmony. This entry on forms will concentrate on melody with lyrics, with some remarks on harmony.

Components

The typical notated music phrase component is four measures, each consisting of four beats per measure. The four measures, or at least three full measures with the first beat of the fourth measure, is roughly equivalent to the duration of a human breath exhalation. The four-measure component may be doubled, tripled, or as many times as necessary toward constructing eight-, twelve-, sixteen-, and thirty-two-measure song structures.

The lyric structure can be conveyed by letters starting with A, with a new letter from the alphabetical sequence introduced for each new lyric phrase. For example, the first lyric phrase may be designated with

an A, its repeat also with an A, a new contrasting lyric with a B, and another repeat of the first lyric phrase with an A. Hence, the lyric structure would be AABA, and it would be taken into analysis of a song with the numbers of measures in which the song may be notated.

Note, however, that the AABA lyric structure, often used in sixteen-measure songs, should not be confused with the AABA harmonic chord progression often used in thirty-two-measure songs. In the AABA chord progression, it is the sequence of chords per eight measures of music that is given the letter designations, not the lyrics of the song. Therefore, when analysts make use of letter designations to describe the structure of the song, they must always be careful to state whether the letters refer to lyrics or to chord progressions.

EDWARD KOMARA

The Eight-Measure Form

The most common type of eight-measure form is that consisting of two four-measure phrases. Such examples would be Leroy Carr's "How Long How Long" and the early "East St. Louis Blues." The two phrases are dissimilar, yet the second leads from the first. The lyrics can be designated by letters as AB, that is, one phrase followed by a different but rhyming phrase. Among some skillful guitarists, the first four measures are a vocal lyric, the second four measures are an instrumental response, as in Charlie Patton's "Mississippi Boweavil Blues" (1929).

Another type is that of four two-measure phrases (2 + 2 + 2 + 2). The most well-known example of this is the basic chorus of "Catfish Blues," where silent rests mark off each phrase. Sometimes the lyric structure may be AB, but it is as likely to be ABCD, with the D lyric/melody repeated several times as a kind of coda before a new blues chorus is begun (as in Robert Petway's "Catfish Blues" [1941] or in Muddy Waters's "Still a Fool" [1952]).

EDWARD KOMARA

The Sixteen-Measure Form

It should be acknowledged that many older sixteen-measure blues, especially those adapted from black sacred music, can be transcribed in halved-note values in eight measures. One factor toward an appropriate transcription may take into account how the sacred model was presented in nineteenth-century printed sacred collections.

One of the older sixteen-measure blues lyric forms is the AAAB type, that is, with the first lyric phrase sung three times, then a contrasting closing line. Classic examples of this are Blind Lemon Jefferson's "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" (1927) and Robert Johnson's "The Last Fair Deal Gone Down" (1936), both of which could be heard broadly as part of a "Careless Love" song group, which may be transcribed in eight as well as sixteen measures.

Another type is the sixteen-measure hokum tune, a typical melodic example of which is known in jazz as "I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate," but which Tampa Red sang to the words "What Is It That Tastes Like Gravy?" and Robert Johnson as "They're Red Hot." The harmonic chord progression to this melody is unusual for its dominant V chord to accompany each lyric phrase ending. Lyric structures may vary, but a common one is AABA (or AABA'), that is, the first lyric sung twice, a contrasting "punch" line as the third lyric, and then the A lyric, sometimes in a modified form as A'.

Sometimes the sixteen-measure blues may be split into two eight-measure phrases, either as verse-and-refrain chorus, or as an AA scheme, where the lyric is repeated twice. Skip James's "I'm So Glad" is an extreme example of AA, where each of the two identical eight-measure lyric phrases consists of a short lyric repeated several times. Additional types of sixteen-measure forms may be found, in accordance with the sacred tune or popular song from which the blues song was developed.

EDWARD KOMARA

The Twelve-Measure Form

The twelve-measure form (see example), known also as the twelve-bar blues or twelve-bar blues progression, is the most common and pervasive song structure in blues. It is generally based on a three-line rhythm scheme (AAB) with a specific harmonic pattern of I, IV, and V (the tonic, subdominant, and dominant) as triads or dominant seventh chords. The AAB components can be vocal song lines or instrumental themes and are grouped in four-measure sections. Assuming we are in the key or tonal center of C, the simplest twelve-measure form would follow this sequence:

- (A) Measures 1–4: the tonic chord (C or C7) for four measures
- (A) Measures 5–8: the subdominant (F or F7) for two measures, the tonic (C or C7) for two measures

FORMS

12-measure blues form

(B) Measures 9–12: the dominant (G or G7) for one measure, the subdominant (F or F7) for one measure, and the tonic (C or C7) for two measures

Common variations and refinements to the twelve-measure form include the use of the subdominant (F or F7) in the second measure, colloquially called the “quick IV,” the dominant chord (G or G7) in both measures 9 and 10, and a turnaround pattern in measures 11 and 12. The turnaround then is most often a tonic to dominant progression (C to G) that acts to prepare the tonic (C or C7) of the next blues chorus. In twelve-measure blues the turnaround can also follow a tonic–subdominant–tonic–dominant progression (C–F–C–G), as in B. B. King’s “Three O’Clock Blues.”

Other variations in the twelve-measure form are indigenous to the jazz genre. Artists like Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, in “Blues for Alice” and “Freight Trane” (written by Tommy Flanagan) respectively, expanded the harmonic content of the twelve-measure blues. These innovations (in C) include the use of a subdominant minor chord (Fm or Fm7) in measure 6; a secondary seventh chord (A7, the V of ii) in measure 8; a ii–V–I pattern (Dm–G7–C) in measures 9, 10, and 11; and various substitute turnarounds in measures 11 and 12. The latter can be found in Wes Montgomery’s “Sun Down” as a chromatically descending series of dominant seventh chords: (in C) C7–Eb7–D7–Db7.

The twelve-measure form became codified sometime in the early 1900s when it was adopted by various ensemble performers and composers as a standard. By the 1930s it was absorbed into the big band format of the swing era. “Blues in the Night” and “Frankie and Johnny” reflect the twelve-measure

form in popular music. In the 1950s and 1960s many rock ‘n’ roll performers routinely used the twelve-measure form. Salient examples include Chuck Berry’s “Johnnie B. Goode,” Little Richard’s “Lucille,” Elvis Presley’s “Too Much,” and Carl Perkins’s “Blue Suede Shoes.”

The twelve-measure form was also employed for minor blues: Otis Rush’s “All Your Love,” and “The Thrill Is Gone,” arguably B. B. King’s best-known recording. Other blues artists maintained the twelve-measure form and harmonic content but altered the order of the tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords within the structure. Howlin’ Wolf’s “Little Red Rooster” and “Ain’t Superstitious” as well as Buddy Guy’s “Mary Had a Little Lamb” are examples of alternate harmonic patterns with the twelve-measure form.

Additional lyric schemes for twelve-measure blues include the (4 + 8) verse and refrain chorus, especially as heard in W. C. Handy’s “Hesitating [Hesitation] Blues,” Tampa Red’s hokum theme “Tight Like That” (1928), the 1930s/1940s standard “Bottle It Up and Go,” Robert Johnson’s “Sweet Home Chicago,” and in country music, Hank Williams’s “Move It on Over.” Also, the (8 + 4) verse and refrain scheme occur in early blues and blues ballads, especially “Frankie and Albert” (Frankie and Johnny), some versions of “Stagger Lee,” and Henry Thomas’s “Bob McKinney” (1927).

WOLF MARSHAL/EDWARD KOMARA

Forms: Alternate Structures

Many of the great blues composers and performers have chosen to deviate from standard twelve-measure,

eight-measure, and sixteen-measure formal structures. Among the most definitive and asymmetric of these digressions is the nine-measure structure employed by Howlin' Wolf (and later Cream) in the song "Sitting on Top of the World." This composition (in F) is comprised of an unusual scheme that follows this sequence: the tonic chord (F and F7) in measures 1 and 2, the subdominant (Bb) in measure 3, the subdominant minor (Bb minor) in measure 4, the tonic (F) in measure 5, the dominant (C7) in measure 6, the tonic and dominant (F and C7) in measure 7, and a turnaround in the last two measures. The latter is a standard pattern that moves from the tonic to the subdominant (F and Bb) in measure 8 and from the tonic to the dominant (F and C7) in measure 9. Other alternate forms in blues do not present such marked deviations from harmonic rhythm, proportions, and overall structure. When Elvis Presley recorded his historic remake of the Arthur Crudup composition "That's All Right, Mama," he utilized a twenty-measure form. This piece is comprised solely of the standard I-IV-V content of the simplest blues but yields a different form through a relaxing and elongating of smaller internal sections. Its basic folk-like scheme follows this plan: a tonic chord (A) in measures 1 through 8, a subdominant chord (D7) in measures 9 through 12, a dominant chord (E7) in measures 13 through 16, and a return to the tonic (A) in measures 17 through 20.

Another class of blues songs in an alternate structure arises from the infusion of Tin Pan Alley's thirty-two-measure song forms into the blues genre. These pieces contain genuine blues content in terms of melody and harmony yet are cast in larger forms more typical of show tunes and popular songs of the 1930s and 1940s. Examples of such thirty-two-bar AABA forms include "Georgia on My Mind," "Willow Weep for Me," and "At Last." A different type of thirty-two-measure blues song is represented by Jimmy Cox's narrative-style blues "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out." Along similar lines, the idea of a thirty-two-measure *blues with a bridge* is epitomized in Jimmy Rodgers's "Walking by Myself." This hybrid composition exploits a thirty-two-measure AABA form in the vocal sections but reverts to a standard twelve-measure structure for improvised instrumental solos. Muddy Waters further expounded on the *blues with a bridge* in his recording of Willie Dixon's "I Just Want to Make Love to You." This piece remains one of the most striking alternate-structure blues arrangements in the genre. There the first verse (eight measures) was followed by a longer second verse (twelve measures) and harmonica solo (eleven measures) before the eight-measure bridge and the final verse are heard.

A different category of alternate-structure blues songs involves vamps. These are usually played over a single tonal center, chord, or rhythm figure. The vamp blues song is exemplified by compositions like "Spoonful," "Mellow Down Easy," "Smokestack Lightning," "You Need Love," and many of Albert Collins's Imperial recordings in the late 1960s.

WOLF MARSHALL

Melodic Sources and Influences: Religious Sources

The religious influence as pertains to blues melody and form is generally white in origin and of European ancestry. The Southern Pentecostal church tradition can be traced back to Biblical origins and spiritual text. Later blues-inflected Negro spirituals have their precedents in adaptations of Wesleyan hymns and Fasola singing of shape-note hymnals. Moreover, the supernatural aspects and transcendent quality of blues are often religious in mood and tone.

African slaves gravitated to the symbolism implicit in nineteenth-century Protestant hymns. Code words and double meanings were imposed by these African Americans on many of the pieces to suggest metaphors for freedom and renewal. In this sense "Crossing over Jordan" depicted death or a release from bondage. "Go Down, Moses" expressed hopes of reaching the North. "Bound for the Land of Canaan" was reinterpreted and repurposed to mean the land of Canaan was the North. Code words and double meanings remain attributes of the blues repertory to the present.

Religious songs afforded many African Americans a means of expression and the framework in which to extemporize, improvise, and alter themes. Refrains of many adapted hymns, like the chorus of "O, Gwine Away," permitted the interjection of secular elements into sacred songs. This met the need for expression within the incipient culture, which found release in slow chanted sections in "long meter" form, conveying sadness and poignancy, and faster shouts, indicative of joy and exultation.

The roots of the gospel tradition, of which R&B performers Ray Charles and Aretha Franklin are leading exponents, were planted with the application of European harmony, southern folk music, and the formal considerations of sacred songs to the tribulations and triumphs of the black American musical experience. As gospel music evolved it afforded the growing African American community greater opportunities to sing and emote with unrestrained fervor. In the twentieth century, gospel affected blues and rock

'n' roll musicians as diverse as Reverend Gary Davis, Blind Willie Johnson, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Little Richard, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Elvis Presley, Sam Cooke, Jerry Lee Lewis, and the Staple Singers.

WOLF MARSHALL

Melodic Sources and Influences: Work Song Sources

Work songs are generally characteristic of vocal ensemble music created by field hands and work crews. These are "leader-and-response" forms, more commonly named call-and-response forms, in which a leader invokes a phrase (the call) and a vocal group answers (the response). Due to the steady, methodical nature of physical labor performed by workers (chopping of wood, beating of grain, boat rowing), these call-and-response songs fell naturally into regular rhythmic cadences. To plantation owners and bosses, the antiphonal sounds provided aural assurance that work was steady and productive. Such images were picturesque in the Old South. After the Civil War the erstwhile traditions of the South were continued when work songs became part of the standard practices of railroad work gangs and reconstruction labor crews. The use of group work songs in the penitentiary system maintained and carried the tradition beyond its application in times of slavery.

Field hollers developed from work songs. In this form a melody was introduced by a vocalist/field hand. This became a theme passed from one worker to another and then repeated later as an ensemble chorus. Each vocalist had his or her own style distinguished by a unique vibrato, inflections, glissandi, pitch bends, and embellishments. These ornamental factors have endured as permanent features of blues melody. They are generally modal in quality (usually the Dorian mode), utilize microtonal intonation (quarter-step deviations from equal temperament), and often apply yodel-like decorations to principal melody notes. The idiomatic modal and microtonal treatments of the third and seventh degrees of scales in blues melody, as well as larger antiphonal organization, are thought to have arisen from field hollers.

The call-and-response scheme of work songs and field hollers anticipated the three-part phrase structure of formalized blues music. The initial phrase in even the most contemporary blues songs invokes something akin to the work leader's call. It is echoed with little or no variation by a reiteration in a second, responsorial phrase of similar time span and character. This is then offset by a third, contrasting phrase, which serves to provide closure to the three-part

structure. Though a clear connection with the content of work song sources has become blurred in the years that separated the Civil War and the post-World War II periods, the structural scheme of call and response has remained an attribute and identifier of blues music in a variety of subgenera. Disparate but telling examples are found in the phraseology and structure of significant postwar blues pieces such as T-Bone Walker's "T-Bone Shuffle" and "Stormy Monday," Muddy Waters's "Honey Bee" and "Rollin' and Tumblin'," Elmore James's "Dust My Broom," and B. B. King's "Sweet Little Angel" and "Rock Me Baby."

WOLF MARSHALL

Melodic Sources and Influences: Popular Non-Blues Sources

Popular and non-blues sources in the blues genre are more abundant and more discernible after the Civil War. Prior to that time such influences are generally confined to English popular ballads with their strict eight- and twelve-measure forms, conventional harmonic progressions, and three-line couplet-refrain arrangement. The European popular influence remained strong after 1870 however. Origins in Anglo-Scot folk music are evident in "John Henry," a ballad from the late nineteenth century which established the black folk hero. Others followed; notably "Frankie and Albert," "Eddy Jones," "Ella Speed," and "Duncan and Brady."

The tradition began with black performers who provided music for dances during the Colonial period. Slaves stripped of possessions and freedom developed skills on European instruments such as fiddles, flutes, guitars, and other portable instruments that were used to play dance music. In southern states plantation slaves often received formal musical instruction and were taught the popular jigs, reels, minuets, and country dances. A composition from this period referred to by Nicholas Creswell as the "Negro Jig" (1774) may well represent the first record of slave music that influenced a white populace.

In the late 1800s the cakewalks of the plantation walkarounds were employed by Missouri pianists like Tom Turpin ("Harlem Rag," published in 1897) and Scott Joplin ("Maple Leaf Rag," published in 1899). These composers merged the European instrumental tradition with African elements to begin the ragtime movement; a genre characterized by European forms and harmonic structures combined with blue notes, explicit syncopation, and rhythmic complexity. A boom in ragtime music generated an interest in

black dance music that spread to the St. Louis World's Fair and subsequently to Chicago and the East. In this period the earliest manifestations of the New Orleans jazz schools, in which American marches combined with European and African traditions found their greatest fusion, raised polyphonic collective improvisation to an art form.

In the twentieth century, blues enjoyed cross-pollinating influences from jazz, Latin, Tin Pan Alley, and popular music such as country and western, rock 'n' roll, R&B, and even easy listening. Many of the earliest rock 'n' roll records of Elvis Presley are blues compositions in tone and pedigree. Conversely an artist like Ray Charles inflected country music with blues mannerisms in *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music* (1962). By 1967 it was not unusual to hear Albert King crooning a light-hearted version of "The Very Thought of You," while Jimi Hendrix and Cream covered blues tunes by Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

WOLF MARSHALL

FORSYTH, GUY

b. Colorado

Singer, harmonica player, and guitarist active in Austin, Texas, in blues and blues rock. Leads and records with the own group, the Guy Forsyth Band, including three CDs on the Antone's label. Also participates in the local group, the Asylum Street Spankers.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

FORTUNE, JESSE

b. 28 February 1930; Macon, MS

Raised in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Fortune settled in Chicago in 1952 and sang in clubs with, among others, Otis Rush and Buddy Guy, with whom he shared a piercing high voice. His two 1963 singles for USA, produced and mostly written by Willie Dixon, including the strikingly intense "Good Things" and the rumba-flavored "Too Many

Cooks," attracted blues enthusiasts but brought no practical benefit for Fortune, who thereafter worked primarily as a barber. He began singing again in the 1990s with Dave Specter and the Bluebirds and has recorded *Fortune Tellin' Man* (1993, Delmark).

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

FORTUNE/HI-Q

Founded in 1946 by Jack and Devora Brown, Detroit's Fortune Records issued many excellent blues, gospel, and doo-wop recordings throughout the following two decades. Along with subsidiaries Hi-Q, Strate-8, and Rendezvous, the label recorded such notable artists as John Lee Hooker, Doctor Ross, Eddie Kirkland, and Big Maceo.

GENE TOMKO

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FOSTER, "BABY FACE" LEROY

b. 12 February 1923; Algoma, MS

d. 26 May 1958; Chicago, IL

Multitalented pioneer of the post-World War II southern blues resurgence in Chicago. His vocals, drumming, and guitar picking can be found on some of the greatest Chicago bar-band blues. Foster came to the city in 1945 in the company of Little Walter and pianist Johnny Jones, and then worked with Sunnyland Slim and John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. His first appearance on record probably was as the guitarist on two sides Sunnyland Slim did for Opera, in 1947 or 1948. In a subsequent session, he played rudimentary drums on Tempo-Tone (1948) sides with Floyd Jones, Little Walter, and Sunnyland Slim. Foster made his first sides as leader for Aristocrat (1948), exhibiting an expressive ballad style similar to that of Doctor Clayton, lowering and raising the pitch with subtle artistry.

During 1948-1949, Foster played behind Muddy Waters in a couple of sessions for Aristocrat. In 1950,

FOSTER, "BABY FACE" LEROY

he recorded an extraordinary outing for Parkway; the band consisted of Muddy Waters, Little Walter, and Jimmy Rogers, while Foster took the drum chair. Foster was given artist credit (as the Baby Face Trio) on four sides, two of which made up a rollicking performance of the classic "Rollin' and Tumblin'," where on side one Foster sings the lyrics with exuberance and on side two does an eerie hum while his compatriots moan and shout. Foster then cut three sessions for JOB—in 1950, 1951, and 1952, concentrating largely on Clayton-styled ballads. He never recorded again, dissipating his career in alcoholism.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

FOSTER, LITTLE WILLIE

b. 20 April 1922; Dublin, MS
d. 25 November 1987; Chicago, IL

Little Willie Foster was born the son of Major Foster and Rosie Brown in Dublin, Mississippi, ten miles south of Clarksdale. (Researcher Sheldon Harris has given alternate birth data as April 5, 1922, Clarksdale, Mississippi.) Foster's mother died when he was five and he received little formal education, as he spent his childhood working the fields. His father was a local musician and taught him piano, and soon Foster was playing guitar and harmonica.

By 1942 he was working in Clarksdale, but moved to Chicago shortly thereafter. Foster started playing harmonica regularly around the city, often with Floyd Jones, Lazy Bill Lucas, and his cousins Robert Earl and "Baby Face" Leroy Foster. He also befriended Big Walter Horton, whose harmonica style he would emulate. Foster was a regular on Maxwell Street and the club scene from the mid-1940s through the mid-1950s. In 1955, Foster, with Jones, Lucas, and Eddie Taylor, recorded two classic sides for Parrot: "Falling Rain Blues" and "Four Day Jump." In 1956, Foster and band recorded two sides for Cobra: "Crying the Blues" and "Little Girl." Shortly after this session, he was seriously hurt from a gunshot wound to the head by a woman playing with a pistol at a house party. This career-ending injury partially paralyzed Foster and greatly impaired his speech.

In the early 1970s, he began sitting in around Chicago, but on January 6, 1974, Foster surrendered

to police after fatally shooting his roommate. He pleaded self-defense, but due to his deteriorated condition from his brain injury, he was found not guilty by reason of insanity and was committed to a state hospital in 1975. Foster died of cancer in 1987.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: LSFP

FOSTER, WILLIE JAMES

b. 19 September 1921; Dunleith plantation near Leland, MS
d. 20 May 2001; Jackson, TN

Harmonica player and singer; not to be confused with Little Willie Foster. Grew up in the Leland area with Jimmy Reed, and while young he saw performances by Muddy Waters and John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. Served in World War II, and was stationed in England. Until the mid-1950s he split his time between Mississippi, Detroit, and Chicago. Eventually he settled in St. Louis, where he occasionally performed with Big George Brock. He returned to Mississippi in the mid-1960s, basing a music career around Greenville, sometimes leading his own band, at other times performing with Frank Frost, Asie Payton, and T-Model Ford. In the 1990s he made several CDs, notably *At Home with the Blues* (1993, RMD Music), *My Life* and *I Found Joy* (Palindrome), and *Live at Airport Grocery* (2000, Mempho). During the same decade, due to a foot infection, his legs were amputated. After his death, his body was buried in the same Holly Ridge cemetery where Charlie Patton lies.

EDWARD KOMARA

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FOUNTAIN, CLARENCE

b. 28 November 1929; Tyler, AL

At the age of twelve, Clarence Fountain became a founding member of the (Original Five) Blind Boys

of Alabama, whose members were students at the Talladega Institute for the Deaf and Blind. They made their first recording in 1948, and with the exception of a brief solo career attempt during the 1970s, Fountain has been the group's charismatic lead singer, with his gravelly vocals and high, long, falsetto wails.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

AMG (Five Blind Boys of Alabama)

See also **Five Blind Boys of Alabama**

FOUR BROTHERS

Chicago hard soul and blues label of the 1960s. The label and its subsidiary imprints, Bright Star and Hit Sound, were started in 1965 by one-stop distributor Willie Barney. His partners were Granville White and Jack Daniels, with the latter serving as A&R chief and producer. Headquarters were on the west side, at Barney's retail record store. Its blues artists included Junior Wells, G. L. Crockett, Andrew Brown, and Ricky Allen. The company's only national hit was G. L. Crockett's Jimmy Reed sound-alike, "It's a Man Down There" (1965), but Junior Wells's "Up in Heah" (1966) was a number one R&B record in Chicago. The principal hard soul acts were Johnny Moore and Tyrone Davis (who the company pioneered as "Tyrone the Wonder Boy"). The label essentially closed in 1967, when Jack Daniels moved to Mercury and took Junior Wells. Barney, however, occasionally revived the Four Brothers imprint during the next several decades.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

FOWLER, T. J.

b. 10 or 18 September 1910; Columbus, GA
 d. 22 May 1982; Lincoln Park, MI

Pianist and organist. Began career in early 1930s in Detroit suburb of Ecorse. Performed with trumpeter Clarence Dorsey in 1944; formed his own band in 1947. Acclaimed as a boogie-woogie pianist, Fowler

ranked with Detroit Count (Bob White) and Ted Sheely. He had his own groups from 1947 onward. Recorded for Savoy, Paradise, and Sensation.

JIM GALLERT

Discography: LSFP

FOXX, INEZ AND CHARLIE

Inez Foxx

b. Inez Fox, 9 September 1942; Greensboro, NC

Charlie Foxx

b. Charles Fox, 23 October 1939; Greensboro, NC
 d. 18 September 1998, Mobile, AL

Brother and sister soul act of the 1960s and 1970s. Recording in New York, the duo's biggest hit was "Mockingbird," which was a top R&B and pop hit from 1963 and was frequently recorded by other acts (notably in 1974 by Carly Simon and James Taylor). Later hits by the duo included "Ask Me" (1964), "Hurt by Love" (1964), "No Stranger to Love" (1966), "Come By Here" (1966), "I Stand Accused" (1967), and "(1-2-3-4-5-6-7) Count the Days" (1967). In 1969, the duo broke up, and Inez continued to record as a solo artist. Charlie went into producing. Inez and Charlie Foxx were honored in 1995 with the Pioneer Award by the Rhythm and Blues Foundation.

ROBERT PRUTER

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FRAN, CAROL

b. 23 October 1933; Lafayette, LA

Singer and composer Carol Fran recorded for Excello ("Emmitt Lee"), Lyric, Port, and Roulette Records between 1957 and 1967, then spent fifteen years as

FRAN, CAROL

a regional attraction before teaming with Texas guitarist Clarence Holliman for a series of well-received albums. Fran worked with the Don Conway Orchestra, Guitar Slim, Nappy Brown, Lee Dorsey, Joe Tex, and Clarence Holliman.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

FRANCIS, DAVID ALBERT "PANAMA"

b. 21 December 1918; Miami, FL

d. 11 or 13 November 2001; Orlando, FL

Prominent swing and R&B drummer and bandleader, Francis was known for his exceptional technique and was highly desired as an accompanist and session player. His emphasis on the use of the bass drum to anchor the beat made him influential in the developing sounds of rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll. He played on hundreds of recordings with such artists as Ruth Brown, Cab Calloway, Ray Charles, Big Joe Turner, and Dinah Washington.

Francis began playing drums as a child, gaining experience in marching bands and later George Kelly's big band. He moved to New York by 1938, where he worked with Tab Smith and Roy Eldridge (who gave him the nickname "Panama," after the hat he wore to the audition) before joining Lucky Millinder's band (1940–1945). Principally playing the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, he also sat in with the Savoy Sultans. He then played with groups led by Bullmoose Jackson and Willie Bryant, before joining Cab Calloway's band (1947–1952). During this time he released recordings under his own name on the Gotham label, with other members of Calloway's group.

With larger bands breaking up, Francis found studio session work lucrative, and for a decade worked for several New York labels, including Atlantic Records, backing R&B and rock 'n' roll artists. The latter part of his career took him away from those styles and back toward the swing style he preferred. Francis appeared in several films, including shorts with Cab Calloway, *Rock Around the Clock* in 1956, and *Lady Sings the Blues* in 1972.

JEFF WANSER

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Discography: AMG; Lord

See also Atlantic/Atco/Spark; Calloway, Cab; Drums; Gotham/20th Century; Millinder, Lucky

FRANK, EDWARD

b. 14 June 1932; New Orleans, LA

d. 13 February 1997; New Orleans, LA

Edward Frank, a New Orleans pianist, composer, and arranger, worked at Duke Records in the 1950s, coled a modern jazz quintet with saxophonist Fred Kemp, and collaborated with Chuck Carbo, Dr. John, and many others.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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FRANKIE AND JOHNNY

Vaudevillians recast "rough" material from black tradition for genteel whites and published it as "Frankie and Johnny" (1912, Leighton Brothers and Ren Shields). The tune commonly used for "Frankie," and sometimes "Stack Lee," follows a blues chord progression, maybe from tradition, and was published as a strain of "You're My Baby" (1912, A. Seymour Brown and Nat D. Ayer). The Leighton Brothers/Shields version has a different, non-blues tune.

In the Leighton Brothers/Shields version, Frankie and Johnny are "sweet-hearts," but when Johnny tells her that he has lost his heart to another "queen," "Miss Frankie" shoots him. Only "queen" and "Miss Frankie" suggest that she may be a prostitute. There is no indication that they are not white, as in some illustrations, plays, and movies. However, traditional versions speak of "This whore and her turtle dove" and state "She took that Nigger's life." Before 1912 the man and other woman were "Albert" and "Alice Fry." Later they increasingly followed the lyrics of the Leighton Brothers/Shields version, becoming "Johnny" and "Nellie Bly."

Twenty-three-year-old John Huston (of cinema fame) first published substantial evidence that "Frankie" is based on historic events in St. Louis,

Missouri (1930). Further, he stated correctly that “Stack-o-lee” and “Billy” Lyons, and Duncan and Brady, characters in other well-known murder ballads, were St. Louis people.

In black “sporting” society, a mack (pimp and lover, “easy rider,” “fancy man,” “sweet man”) would try to multiply his woman’s earnings, primarily through gambling, to keep them both living “high” and dressed in splendor, St.-Louis-style. In 1899 Frankie Baker and her mack, seventeen-year-old Allen “Al” Britt, lived at 212 Targee Street. As a twenty-three-year-old light brown beauty, she was well known on the black “sporting wheel,” which included St. Louis, Omaha, Kansas City, Denver, San Francisco, and Chicago.

Baker and Britt had moved in together that year. By fall, Britt was consorting with eighteen-year-old Alice Pryor, another prostitute. On Sunday evening, October 15, Baker found them together at the Phoenix Hotel. They quarreled and she went home. In the early morning, Britt came home and they argued again. When he threatened her with a knife, Baker shot him through the liver with his pistol, which she had placed under a pillow. He died on October 19. Baker went free on a ruling of justifiable homicide. For many of the remaining years of her life, she lived in Portland, Oregon. She died in 1952 at Eastern Oregon State Hospital, Pendleton.

No credible evidence supports claims that “Frankie” antedates 1899 or suggestions that it is based on an 1831 North Carolina murder by Frankie Silver. It cannot be coincidence that traditional versions explicitly name Frankie Baker, Al Britt (as “Albert,” an obvious mutation), and Alice Pryor (as “Alice Fry”/“Pry”).

The popularity of “Frankie” is reflected in the diversity of the famous artists who have recorded it. These include Mississippi John Hurt, Leadbelly, Doc Watson, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, the Carter Family, Gene Autry, Charlie Poole, Johnny Cash, Stevie Wonder, Lonnie Donegan, Elvis Presley, Louis Armstrong, Anita O’Day, Ace Cannon, and Sammy Davis, Jr.

JOHN GARST

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FRANKLIN, GUITAR PETE

b. Edward Lamonte Franklin, 16 January 1927; Indianapolis, IN

d. 31 July 1975; Indianapolis, IN

Active in the Indianapolis area, self-taught guitarist and pianist Franklin cut sides for RCA-Victor, with John Brim for JOB (1954), and a solo album for Bluesville (1961) that includes his signature song “Guitar Pete’s Blues.”

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: LSFP

FRANKLIN, REVEREND C. L.

b. Clarence LaVaughn Franklin, 22 January 1915; Sunflower County, MS

d. 27 July 1984; Detroit MI

A moving and eloquent speaker, Reverend Franklin pastored Detroit’s New Bethel Church, broadcast over WJLB, and recorded many of his sermons for Chess records. Father of singer Aretha Franklin; not to be confused with Reverend Cecil Franklin, Aretha Franklin’s brother and manager, who passed away in Detroit on December 26, 1989. Singer Bobby “Blue” Bland has stated in interviews that he was influenced in vocal delivery by Reverend Franklin’s broadcasts and recordings.

ANDREW M. COHEN/EDWARD KOMARA

FRANKLIN, REVEREND C. L.

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: Gospel Records 1943–1966

FRAZIER, CALVIN

b. 16 February 1915; Osceola, AR
d. 23 September 1972; Detroit, MI

Guitarist, singer, and composer Calvin Frazier began his travels in the early 1930s with Johnny Shines and Robert Johnson, settling in Detroit in 1935 to work with pianist Maceo Merriweather and record with Baby Boy Warren and T. J. Fowler.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

FREEDOM/EDDIE'S

Eddie's was founded in 1947 by black former disk jockey Eddie Henry (d. 1952) in Houston; Freedom was founded in 1948 by Solomon M. Kahal (d. 1964). Kahal relied on Henry's advice, sales distributing, and initially for masters. Eddie's artists included Little Willie Littlefield and pianist Clarence Green. Freedom enjoyed hits with Goree Carter ("Rock Awhile," 1949, Freedom 1506), L. C. Williams ("Ethel Mae," 1949, Freedom 1517), Big Joe Turner, Joe Houston, and Clarence Samuels; many sessions were led by saxophonist Conrad Johnson. Freedom folded in 1951, Eddie's the next year upon Henry's death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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FREEMAN, DENNY

b. 7 August 1944; Orlando, FL

Guitarist, pianist. The Dallas-raised Freeman was a stalwart of the Antone's scene in Austin, Texas,

performing with touring stars and recording with locals such as the Cobras and Lou Ann Barton. Freeman, who later relocated to Los Angeles, also released several solo albums, including *Blues Cruise* and *A Tone for My Sins*.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Dan Forte)

Discography: AMG (Dan Forte)

FREUND, STEVE

b. 20 July 1952; Brooklyn, NY

After moving to Chicago in 1976, Freund accompanied Big Walter Horton, Floyd Jones, and Homesick James, and worked fifteen years with Sunnyland Slim, learning to support harp as well as piano. He has led his own Bay Area band since the 1990s and has contributed precisely picked emotional guitar leads and tight rhythm on tours with the Legendary Blues Band, James Cotton, Koko Taylor, Luther Allison, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Boz Scaggs, and Little Charlie and the Nightcats. Freund has produced Henry Gray, Mark Hummel, Magic Slim, Snooky Pryor, and B. B. Odom. His own recordings include *Set Me Free* (1984, Razor), *Romance Without Finance* (1987, Red Beans) and Delmark CDs "*C*" for *Chicago* and *I'll Be Your Mule*, as well as considerable session work.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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AMG

Discography: AMG (Alex Henderson)

"*C*" For *Chicago* (Delmark DE-734).

FRISCO

Record Label (New Orleans, Louisiana, 1962–1964). Owners: Connie LaRocca (b. Constance Sculco, September 26, 1923; San Francisco, CA), Harold (Hal) Atkins. New Orleans, Louisiana-based, Frisco's artists include Warren "Porgy" Jones, Wardell Querzberg (as the Royal Dukes of Rhythm), Willie West (with Art Neville on piano), and Danny White ("Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye," "Loan Me a Handkerchief"). A few of Danny White's releases were leased to ABC-Paramount.

ROBERT EAGLE

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Discography: McGrath**FROG/CYGNET**

CD reissue label established in Walthamstow, London, England, by David French in 1994. Mainly devoted to reissues of vintage jazz and specializing in state-of-the-art remastering, often by John R. T. Davies, the label's remit has also included reissues by both jug bands and country blues artists. In 2001 the label embarked on a definitive reissue of Bessie Smith's recordings, which for the first time includes all surviving performances not issued in her lifetime. The associated Cygnet label programmed by Christopher Hillman and Roy Middleton has produced important reissues of jazz/blues groups associated with Jimmy Blythe and Bob Hudson.

HOWARD RYE

FROST, FRANK OTIS

- b. 15 April 1936; Auvergne, AR
d. 12 October 1999; Helena, AR

Frank Frost's musical interest started at age twelve, when he was taught piano by his father to play in church. Though forbidden to play blues, Frost learned the rudiments of blues guitar and harmonica, and by age fifteen was sneaking off into clubs to hear (and often sit in with) Sonny Boy Williamson II and Howlin' Wolf. He moved to St. Louis in 1951 and worked with Willie Foster, whom he credited as a major influence on harmonica. In 1954, Frost joined Sam Carr's band in St. Louis, and formed what would become a forty-five-year partnership with the drummer.

After stints with Williamson, his other harmonica influence, and Robert Nighthawk, Carr and Frost moved to Lula, Mississippi, and hired Clarksdale guitarist Jack Johnson. As Frank Frost and the Nighthawks, the trio recorded the 1962 classic *Hey Boss Man!* for Sam Phillips's Phillips International label, with Frost's delta harmonica and impeccably timed vocals showcasing many originals such as "Jelly Roll King." In 1966, Frost and Carr, with harmonica player Arthur Williams, recorded for Jewel Records.

Frost, Carr, and Johnson recorded again in 1978 as the Jelly Roll Kings on Michael Frank's Earwig label, which established them worldwide as the archetypical Delta blues band.

Frost appeared in the 1986 film *Crossroads* and recordings followed for Appaloosa, Fat Possum, and HMG. Years of hard living took its toll in the mid-1990s, and after serious health problems, he made his final public appearance at Helena's 1999 King Biscuit Blues Festival, with Carr by his side. Frost died four days later of cardiac arrest.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

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- Frank Frost. *Harpin' On It—Complete 1966 Jewel Recordings* (2001, Westside WESM633).

FULBRIGHT, J. R.(See *Elko*)**FULLER, BLIND BOY**

- b. Fulton Allen, 10 July 1907; Wadesboro, Anson County, NC
d. 13 February 1941; Durham, NC

Blues singer, guitarist. Fulton Allen was one of the ten children of Calvin Allen and Mary Jane Walker from the small country market town of Wadesboro in Anson County, North Carolina. Anson birth dates only date from 1913, so there is some confusion about his day of birth, but July 10, 1907, appears the most likely date. Little is known about his early years, but Fulton reached fourth grade in school.

His mother died in the early 1920s and in the mid-1920s Fulton's father moved the family to nearby Rockingham. It was there that Fulton met his future wife, Cora Mae Martin. In 1926 they married; Fulton was nineteen and his bride only fourteen years of age. In Rockingham his eyes began to trouble him. In 1927, when the couple had moved to Winston-Salem, Fulton began to lose his vision. He had to give up his work as a laborer at a coal yard because



Blind Boy Fuller. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

of his blindness and was forced to try to make a living playing the guitar. One sister and a brother also played the guitar, but Fulton had never done any serious practicing until 1927. In 1928 Fulton was completely blind. In 1929 Fulton and Cora Mae moved to Durham. They were very poor and Cora Mae applied for blind assistance in 1936.

In July 1935 Fulton Allen made his first recordings for ARC in New York City under the pseudonym “Blind Boy Fuller.” He had been taken there by talent scout J. B. Long who first gave him some new clothes from his own shop. Blind Boy Fuller did not create a new style, but drew heavily on other artists. Blind Gary Davis was his mentor, but Blind Blake, Big Bill Broonzy, Julius Daniels, the Harlem Hamfats, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Carl Martin, Joe McCoy, Blind Willie McTell, Memphis Minnie, Buddy Moss, Yank Rachell, and Tampa Red were also sources of inspiration. His imagery was strong and the lyrics were inspired and clearly sung. He used a National Steel guitar with its great resonance and finger picked to further enhance the sound. In four days Fuller recorded twelve songs, accompanied by Blind Gary Davis on the first eight songs and with the extra dimension of Bull City Red’s refreshing washboard rattle on three of them. One of the 1935 songs,

“Homesick and Lonesome Blues,” provides a rare glimpse of Fuller’s bottleneck guitar skills. A year later, in April 1936, Fuller was back in the New York studio. In two days he recorded ten solo pieces. One of them was “Truckin’ My Blues Away,” which was to become one of Fuller’s signature pieces.

In 1937 Fuller had to travel to New York no less than four times—in February, July, September, and December. Forty-nine songs were recorded at these four sessions. Bull City Red was with him in February and September. In September and December there was a second guitarist present: Floyd “Dipper Boy” Council (1911–1976), a truck driver who was known on his own records as “The Devil’s Daddy-in-Law.” The July sessions were recorded not for J. B. Long’s ARC, but for Mayo Williams’s Decca label. Fuller introduced Williams to his friends Richard and Willie Trice who were also recorded. Richard Trice recorded as “Little Boy Fuller” after 1943. J. B. Long was furious when he heard of the Decca recordings. Fuller had broken his contract; Long bluffed and threatened to sue. The result was that most of the Fuller Decca recordings remained unissued in Fuller’s lifetime. Long now drew up a real contract with Fuller and bought him a cheap car. Willie Trice was one of the chauffeurs. Fuller was paid twenty dollars per recording by Long. In September and December Fuller recorded for ARC again. In December he took with him harmonica virtuoso Sonny Terry from his home state of North Carolina.

In 1938 Fuller recorded in New York in April and in Columbia, South Carolina, in October. Sonny Terry was on both sessions and Bull City Red on the December one. “Big House Blues” refers to the prison where Fuller was locked up for shooting his wife in the leg, a case that caused a sensation because of Fuller’s blindness. The shooting was probably accidental, for Cora Mae and Alton were inseparable, and the case was dismissed. That same year, Fuller’s health took a downturn: in October 1938, he was diagnosed with arrested syphilis and suffered from problems with his kidneys and bladder.

Both Sonny Terry and Bull City Red were also present on the July 1939 date in Memphis. However, there is also a second guitarist on “You’ve Got Something There” and “Red’s Got the Piccolo Blues,” who may be Sonny Jones.

Fuller’s final recording year was 1940. Fuller was back in New York in March, together with Sonny Terry and Bull City Red and went to Chicago with Terry, Bull City Red, and Brownie McGhee. On March 5, Fuller recorded one of his signature pieces, “Step It Up and Go,” which he probably learned from Charlie Burse. On March 6, 1940, Fuller accompanied Sonny Terry on “Harmonica Stomp,” the

only time he ever accompanied anyone on record. Brownie McGhee thought that he had never recorded with Fuller, but when Guido van Rijn played him “Precious Lord” from the final session he agreed that the vocal was his. This song and several other religious songs from 1940 were issued as by “Brother George and His Sanctified Singers.”

One month after his final recordings Fuller was in the hospital. On his deathbed he swore that he would cross over to the church if he recovered. It was not to be. Blind Boy Fuller died on February 13, 1941, from an infected bladder and a stricture of the urethra. He was buried at Grove Hill Cemetery, which fell into disuse and disrepair; Fuller’s grave, along with nearly all others in the cemetery, is now unmarked.

Fuller left an impressive recorded legacy of 129 separate master titles in addition to quite a few alternative takes. There is a surprising amount of variation in his repertoire and for a long time he was to remain an influential blues artist. Apart from his accompanists on the records, a few of the many blues artists he influenced are J. C. Burris, Carolina Slim, Pernell Charity, Arthur Gunter, Doug Quattlebaum, Tarheel Slim, Baby Tate, Curley Weaver, and Ralph Willis. On May 22, 1941, Brownie McGhee recorded for Okeh as “Blind Boy Fuller #2.” One of his songs was entitled “Death of Blind Boy Fuller.”

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Discography: DGR

FULLER, JESSE “LONE CAT”

b. 12 March 1896; Jonesboro, GA
 d. 29 January 1976; Oakland, CA

Singer and guitarist, with kazoo and harmonica. Arrived in San Francisco in the 1920s, and turned to performing music in the early 1950s. He was a blues and folk music favorite on the 1960s and 1970s folk music and festival circuits.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jim O’Neal and Stephen Thomas Erlewine); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli; Southern

Discography: AMG; LSPF

FULLER, JOHNNY

b. 20 April 1929; Edwards, MS
 d. 20 May 1985; Oakland, CA

An eclectic artist, Johnny Fuller has recorded in California all kinds of music—down-home blues, city blues, slick blues, R&B, and country music—while retaining a large dose of his Mississippi roots, particularly in his guitar playing. He enjoyed some commercial success with “Johnny Ace’s Last Letter,” “Fool’s Paradise,” and “Haunted House,” but his earthiest sides like “Back Home,” “Buddy,” or “First Stage of the Blues” made him a strong reputation in the blues circles. He stopped his musical career in the late 1960s and made a living as a mechanic.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSPF

FULP, PRESTON

b. 1 November 1915; Stokes City, NC
 d. 23 October 1993; Winston Salem, NC

Among the last of Winston-Salem’s Depression Era bluesmen, Fulp worked at a sawmill, farmed tobacco, made whiskey, and played both blues and hillbilly music. One Musicmaker CD was released a few months before he died.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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FULSON, LOWELL

b. 31 March 1921; Tulsa, OK

d. 7 March 1999; Long Beach, CA

Fulson was a talented guitarist and vocalist but most of all he was a resilient performer and songwriter who effectively adapted to changing tastes and styles, consistently making a lasting mark in each subgenre before moving on.

Fulson, born on the Choctaw Indian Strip south of Tulsa, was proud of his Native American heritage but he was also fascinated by blues at an early age. After singing and playing socials as a child, he joined Dan Wright's string band in 1939 when it came through Ada, Oklahoma, playing guitar in the elaborate seventeen-piece big band. He then hit the road with folk bluesman Texas Alexander, working his way through Texas and ultimately settling in Gainesville in 1941 and working as a cook when the blues gigs dried up.

Following a U.S. Navy stint in Guam, Fulson returned to Oklahoma in 1945 and found employment as a cook again but soon decided to put his full time and energy into a music career. He relocated to Oakland, California, where he had been stationed during military boot camp, and he had a recording deal with Big Town Records within weeks. His first singles were country-tinged guitar duets with his brother Martin, but Fulson soon assembled a full band, one including Ray Charles on piano.

On the strength of a series of classic hit singles, including "Three O'Clock Blues" and "Every Day I Have the Blues," Fulson and his band, featuring saxist Stanley Turrentine in addition to pianist Charles, toured widely, performing at the Apollo Theater in 1951 and playing dates throughout the South. In 1954 Fulson, recording for the Checker affiliate of Chess Records, had his biggest career hit in "Reconsider Baby," a song recorded in Dallas with saxist David "Fathead" Newman sitting in. The song was subsequently covered by everyone from Elvis Presley to Prince.

But Fulson's relationship with Chess was a stormy one and the music produced was erratic and atypical of his usual sound. Chess demanded Fulson record in Chicago under their supervision and with their sidemen, who included Windy City legends Otis Spann and Willie Dixon. But their sensibilities were mismatched with Fulson's West Coast approach and he ultimately took over and produced his own sessions in Los Angeles with more sympathetic sidemen.

Fulson reinvented himself in 1960s, emphasizing a funky R&B persona in his recordings for Kent Records. He scored hits with "Black Nights" and "Tramp," the latter subsequently becoming a smash

success for Otis Redding and Carla Thomas in 1966. Fulson moved on to Jewel Records in the 1970s and seemed to be nearing the end of his commercial career in the 1980s when his diminished touring and recording activity was highlighted only by *One More Blues*, an album recorded in France in 1984 with the Phillip Walker Blues Band.

It's a Good Day, released in 1988, kicked off another phase of Fulson's career. *Hold On*, with longtime friend and musical associate, West Coast pianist Jimmy McCracklin making his belated recording debut with Fulson, won the 1993 W. C. Handy award for Best Traditional Album to cap his comeback period.

MICHAEL POINT

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli
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Discography: AMG; LSFP

FUNDERBURGH, ANSON

b. 14 or 15 November 1954; Plano, TX

Guitarist Funderburgh was carving out a low-key, but accomplished, career for himself on the Dallas scene when he joined forces with Sam Myers to create a synergistic blues success that upgraded both his music and its popularity. Funderburgh formed his band the Rockets in 1978 and built up a reputation as a no-nonsense live act. Funderburgh subsequently went solo in 1981, with his debut *Talk to You by Hand*, which also served as the first album released by the new Black Top Records label.

Funderburgh's partnership with Myers, a Mississippi-born harpist/singer who had worked with Elmore James and Robert Lockwood, began in 1986. It was both an immediate and enduring success, winning W. C. Handy Awards in 1988, 1992, and 1994 for best band while establishing itself as one of the hardest working and most popular American touring blues acts. The combination of Funderburgh's lean, stinging Texas guitar lines and Myers's soulful Delta-bred Chicago vocal stylings gave the band an unusually deep and diverse sound, one especially effective in live performances. In addition, Myers proved to be an excellent songwriter, beginning in 1986 with "My Love Is Here to Stay," his first recording with the band, and that allowed the band to

personalize its repertoire as well as its signature sound.

The sound was put to good use on a series of critically and commercially successful albums, including *Sins*, the 1988 Handy winner for album of year, *Rack 'Em Up, That's What They Want*, and *Change in My Pocket*. Funderburgh brought the music home in 2003, emphasizing the basic blues sensibilities of his native state with *Which Way Is Texas?*, recorded, of course, in Austin.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

FUNK

Historical and Social Contexts

It is interesting to note that the three mainstream styles of African American popular music in the early and mid-1960s, Motown, Stax, and Chicago soul, were all in their own individual ways products of the central social/political facts of integration and the Civil Rights Movement. The story of Motown and Barry Gordy Jr., for example, was predicated on the rise of large-scale black capitalism partially inspired and made possible by the momentous changes of the times; whereas Stax and southern soul, on the other hand, can be seen as a product of the Civil Rights Movement in that they were founded squarely on the collaboration of black and white musicians. To paraphrase Peter Guralnick in *Sweet Soul Music*, southern soul music, purely and simply, grew out of the impulse toward integration. (In the South at the time, this was a political gesture, whether conceived as such or not.) Finally, Chicago soul in the mid-1960s tied directly to the Civil Rights Movement via both the lyric content and mode of performance of songs such as "People Get Ready" and "We're a Winner."

The Civil Rights Movement, as led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., brought about substantial and profound legal and social changes for black and white Americans. For many, the tenor of the time was optimistic—a new day was dawning, very soon all people would be free and equal and most of the garbage that had infected American life for close to

four hundred years would shortly be a distant half-remembered relic of an earlier less civilized place and time.

Such a dream had a lot of resonance but proved ultimately to be naive. By 1967 there may not have been legally segregated washrooms and drinking fountains, blacks may not have had to ride at the back of the bus, and, theoretically, the same schools were open to all, but the reality for the vast majority of African American people was that their lives remained basically the same. They lived in segregated housing in areas of cities with the least social amenities, the schooling their children received was markedly inferior to what white children received, and they continued to be the last hired and the first fired in the job market, earning wages substantially lower than their white counterparts. In other words, equality wasn't even remotely at hand.

As this reality slowly made itself manifest, the tenor of parts of black America began to change. In 1966 during the James Meredith march in Mississippi the former Stokely Carmichael coined the phrase "Black Power." A year earlier Watts had burned in the first of the modern-day race rebellions. In 1967 Newark and Detroit would also burn. This new militancy no longer asked for equality and strove to achieve it by adopting mainstream (read "white middle class") standards of deportment. Instead, equality was assumed and demanded and black Americans were encouraged to celebrate and embrace everything black. Phrases such as "black is beautiful" emerged at this point in time. Africa was taken up psychologically as the motherland. African garb and African names achieved cultural currency, as did the "Afro" or "natural" haircut.

James Brown

Not surprisingly, these changes in beliefs and ideals, this re-Africanization of black culture, was reflected musically. In popular music the most radical example of these impulses was the development of funk by James Brown. In the simplest terms, Brown, beginning in 1967 with a record called "Cold Sweat," de-emphasized melody and harmony (that is, no chord changes within sections of a song, near spoken lyrics) while privileging rhythm (both in qualitative and quantitative terms—that is, employing more complex syncopated figures and using several different rhythm patterns at once to create interlocked grooves). This reconstruction of Brown's music could be interpreted as de-emphasizing parameters favored by Euro-American society while privileging sub-Saharan

African characteristics, in effect re-Africanizing the music, thus paralleling the re-Africanization of African American society at large at the time.

For example, the rhythmically interlocking parts of “Cold Sweat” parallel the musicological and the sociological formations of African drum ensembles. All of the instrumental parts gain full meaning only in the context of the whole, and that meaning is primarily articulated through rhythmic relationships, secondarily through pitch relationships. The correlation between this type of rhythmic organization and a societal ideal tending toward pluralistic, yet interpersonal, and communal values is quite manifest. Everyone and every part is dependent, in a positive sense, on the individual contribution of everyone else. According to a number of scholars, including Richard Waterman, Kwabena Nketia, Robert Farris Thompson, and John Chernoff, interlocked drum patterns, or multi-part rhythmic structures as Nketia refers to them, reflect this very same societal ideal in African drum ensembles. In “Cold Sweat” the employment of interlocked grooves feeds into the concept of re-Africanization—both on the musical level of interlocked groove itself and on the social level of communal codependent gestures combining for a greater whole. In other words, re-Africanization is manifested on the concrete level in the musical gesture itself and on the symbolical level in the very fact that the musical whole replicates a particular societal ideal.

It could be argued that the grooves found in all African American and African American-influenced musics are in a sense interlocked. Here, though, due to the deprivileging of melodic and harmonic content, greater focus is brought to bear on rhythm. This, combined with what could be argued to be an intensification of syncopation at the level of the sixteenth rather than the eighth note, meant that, for many, funk automatically connoted Africa.

Sub-Saharan African musical practices, of course, have a richness and variety that goes far beyond the simplistic stereotype of African music as being rhythmically complex but melodically simple. Such a stereotype, as erroneous as it is, had cultural currency at the time with many, if not most, white and black North Americans. It is likely that this stereotype was understood as a truism by the majority of Brown’s audience as well as by Brown and his musicians. As such, its cultural meaning, its value as a semiotic sign connoting Africanness, holds.

Note that Brown himself has never connected funk to African musical practices. He saw funk as the development of something wholly new. The re-Africanization of black culture was a loose concept that tied most meaningfully to a general sense of a

newly emergent pro-black consciousness-at-large that could be expressed in a variety of ways. Some of these ways tied directly to Africa while others simply connoted a strong sense of blackness that automatically resonated with the larger affinity of blackness and Africa on a general ideological level. Brown and everyone else intrinsically understood funk to be manifestly “blacker” than the music he had been creating up to this point and than most other forms of contemporaneous rhythm and blues, including Motown, Stax, and Chicago soul.

Cynthia Rose, in her book *Living in America: The Soul Saga of James Brown*, argues that while European cultures tend toward linearity with gestures having clear beginnings, middles, and ends, sub-Saharan African and African cultures tend toward an aesthetic of circularity where a process is continually repeated in a cyclic manner. Beginnings and endings are not as important as the fact of the *process itself*. Funk music, as manifested by “Cold Sweat,” is predicated on the latter aesthetic. This is yet one more way that funk manifests the notion of re-Africanization.

Within a year Brown had connected funk lyrically to the newly emergent black consciousness, specifically with the song “Say It Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud.” Significantly, this would be his last top ten pop hit until 1985’s “Living in America.” Conversely, this was the beginning of his greatest success on the R&B charts. (Between 1968 and 1974 Brown had forty-one R&B hits, thirty-two of which went top ten. This is extraordinary testimony to the meaning Brown’s version of funk held for the black community in the United States at the time.) It would appear that as Brown’s music became understood as more African, it was encoded or at least decoded by blacks and whites as having a value and aesthetic system that was largely outside of the experience of most Euro-Americans. Consequently, most white Americans found little they could relate to while, in direct contrast, black Americans embraced funk as one of the most meaningful expressive forms of the time.

Given the adoption in the 1980s and 1990s, via the influence of Brown, of the aesthetics of both the interlocked groove and circularity in rap and the unparalleled acceptance of rap by white America, perhaps much of America has become in a certain sense Africanized, re- or otherwise.

Funk from the Late 1960s to the Present

In the late 1960s, the musical revolution kick-started by “Cold Sweat” was not lost on many of Brown’s contemporaries. In early 1968 Sly and the Family

Stone emerged from the Bay Area with a racially and sexually integrated ensemble that fused aspects of rock and soul over an ever increasingly syncopated funk groove. In Detroit, Norman Whitfield's late 1960s and early 1970s productions on the Temptations, Edwin Starr, and Undisputed Truth quickly emulated the hybrid style of the Family Stone. Other Motown artists, most notably Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye, began using funk rhythms on such early 1970s masterpieces as "Living in the City," "Boogie on Reggae Woman," "What's Going On," and "Trouble Man." In late 1969 Jimi Hendrix replaced the integrated Jimi Hendrix Experience with the all-black Band of Gypsies and began to wed his brand of psychedelic blues guitar lines with funk bass lines, rhythm guitar parts, and drum patterns. While the Band of Gypsies were short lived, for the rest of his life Hendrix continued to explore this fusion of blues melodic lines and funk rhythms.

At the same time that Hendrix was wedding blues to funk, jazz trumpeter Miles Davis was fusing his own blues-inflected jazz lines with funk rhythms, hiring Motown bass player Michael Henderson to anchor his 1970s fusion bands. Davis's 1972 album *On the Corner* represents a milestone in jazz funk. Other notable practitioners of jazz-funk included Davis alumni Herbie Hancock's Headhunters, Ramsey Lewis, George Duke, and Roy Ayers.

Funk also proved to be popular among soul musicians in the South. In New Orleans, Allen Toussaint's late 1960s and early 1970s productions on The Meters, Lee Dorsey, and LaBelle foregrounded funk-based syncopations. In Memphis, beginning with "Do the Funky Chicken" in late 1969, veteran R&B and soul singer Rufus Thomas wrote and recorded a series of funk records centered around both existing and newly created dance steps. Label mates The Staple Singers used a hybrid funk/reggae groove for their 1972 hit single "I'll Take You There."

Thomas's and The Meters' records reached deep into the essence of the funk, presenting the oeuvre in nearly minimalist form. At the opposite end of the sonic spectrum were Isaac Hayes's blaxploitation masterpieces. Beginning with the ground breaking "Theme from *Shaft*" in 1971, Hayes virtually defined the genre of black soundtrack writing. Action scenes in these films acquired much of their dramatic cache via the churning cauldrons of polyrhythm funk concocted by the ever more expansive maestro. A number

of black songwriters subsequently penned funk soundtracks for blaxploitation films, the most notable being Curtis Mayfield's *Superfly*, Bobby Womack's *Across 110th Street*, and James Brown's *Black Caesar* and *Slaughter's Big Rip-Off*.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, a number of self-contained funk bands such as Graham Central Station, Funkadelic/Parliament, Bootsy's Rubber Band, the Ohio Players, the Bar-Kays, Kool and the Gang, Rufus, War, Mandrill, Tower of Power, Brothers Johnson, Fatback Band, Brick, Slave, Zapp, Cameo, Con Funk Shun, the Dazz Band and, to some degree, Earth, Wind and Fire became dominant representing the only real alternative to disco on mainstream black radio.

In the early 1970s, the heightened sense of blackness that was part and parcel of funk was partially signified by the use of additional percussive instruments, conga drums being ubiquitous on funk recordings between 1970 and 1975. Early 1970s black music in general was also marked by the adoption of the electric piano as the primary keyboard instrument replacing the organ and acoustic piano combination that had dominated in the soul era. By the mid-1970s, synthesizers had replaced the electric piano, with late 1970s Bar-Kays tracks containing a dozen or more synth parts, creating layer upon layer of timbre and syncopation.

Funk rhythms have been ubiquitous in many examples of both black and white popular music since the mid-1980s. Black artists such as Prince, Meshell Ndegeocello, and Lauryn Hill and white groups such as the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Primus, and Rage Against the Machine routinely integrate funk rhythms and funk sensibilities with a wide range of other influences.

ROBERT BOWMAN

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G

GADDY, BOB

b. 4 February 1924; Vivian, WV
b. 24 July 1997; Bronx, NY

Bob Gaddy was born on February 4, 1924, in Vivian, West Virginia, a small coal-mining town. He was raised in North Carolina, growing up under the strong influence of traditional gospel music. During World War II while in the Navy, he was stationed in the Pacific and on the West Coast. Gaddy's traditional church music roots began to broaden as he absorbed the sounds he heard on the West Coast including blues, jazz, and boogie-woogie. Upon his discharge from the service in 1946, Gaddy moved to New York and became an active session pianist for Brownie McGhee, Sonny Terry, and others. In 1952 Gaddy recorded his first release, "Bicycle Boogie," on the Jackson label. During the 1950s he made several recordings for the Jax, Harlem, Dot, and Old Town labels spawning regional hits such as "Woe Is Me" and "Operator." Gaddy joined with guitarist Larry Dale to form the Houserockers, one of the top R&B groups in the New York/New Jersey area. As the blues revival of the 1960s waned during the 1970s, Gaddy worked as a cook at a midtown New York City Irish bar on Madison Avenue. In 1987 both Gaddy and guitarist Larry Dale were reintroduced to blues audiences when they were featured at the Blues Estafette in Utrecht, Holland, and in New York, they played with a local group, Killing Floor. (Gaddy recorded with Killing Floor on the OSA label), and they were featured (along with Roscoe

Gordon) in a concert presented by the World Music Institute. Gaddy later recorded with Paul Oscher. His last known release was on the Lollipop label.

Gaddy often described his style of playing as "blues with rhythm." His tight joyful piano style and crisp vocals on standards such as "Flip Flop and Fly" or his own "Rip and Run" held onto a tradition that was both individual and of its time. His most comprehensive recording of "Rip and Run" first appeared on the Old Town label, and was then reissued on Ace and most recently on an expanded CD reissue on the Japanese P Vine label. Bob Gaddy died on July 24, 1997, at Veterans Hospital in the Bronx.

GEORGE BOZIWICK

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

GAILLARD, BULEE "SLIM"

b. 1 (?) January 1916; Detroit, MI, or Santa Clara, Cuba
d. 26 February 1991; London, England

GAILLARD, BULEE “SLIM”

Birth data uncertain, whether date is January 1, 3, or 4, 1916, or whether he was born in Cuba (by Gaillard’s account) or in Detroit (according to a 1960 article). Renowned primarily for his comedic vocal inventiveness and showmanship, Gaillard also possessed considerable musical prowess on both guitar and piano, and is regarded as one of the seminal figures in jive music (the forerunner of jump-blues) in the 1940s. Gaillard concocted and practiced his own jive vernacular, incorporating suffixes such as “oreeny” and “vouty” into the lyrics of his compositions, which themselves contained such absurd titles as “Avocado Seed Soup Symphony” and “Serenade to a Poodle.” Gaillard’s primary mandate was to entertain, and his infectious style influenced many later blues performers.

DONNA LOWE/EDWARD KOMARA

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no. 60 (1991): 17.

Discography: Lord

GAINES, EARL

b. 19 August 1935; Decatur, AL

Soul singer whose style is strongly influenced by his formative years singing in church. While lead singer for Louis Brooks and His Hi-Toppers, Gaines sang lead on the group’s 1955 Excello hit single “It’s Love Baby (24 Hours a Day).” He went on to have several hits on his own in the 1960s and 1970s. He made a comeback to record with Appaloosa, Magnum, and Black Top labels in the 1990s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

GAINES, GRADY

b. 14 May 1934; Waskom, TX

The older brother of guitarist Roy Gaines, tenor saxophonist Grady Gaines first found his place on the

international stage as leader of the Upsetters, backing band for Little Richard. While Gaines did not play on the majority of Little Richard’s most influential recordings (Lee Allen is heard on them), in the decades since, Gaines has earned his own reputation as one of the hottest jump-blues acts around.

Raised in the Houston area, Gaines entered the music business as a member of the house band for Don Robey’s Duke/Peacock labels, recording behind Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown and Big Walter Price, among others. In 1955, Little Richard asked him to head up his touring band; two years later, Richard quit popular music to pursue the ministry, but Gaines kept the band together. During the next 15 years, the Upsetters backed everyone from Sam Cooke to James Brown, Curtis Mayfield to Jackie Wilson. In the early 1970s, Gaines returned home to Houston and ran the house band at a nightclub Robey owned. After Robey’s death in 1975, Gaines toured with singer Millie Jackson for a few years before retiring from the music business in 1980.

In 1985, Gaines returned to gigging around Houston. In 1988, his reconstituted Texas Upsetters, featuring his brother Roy and Clarence Hollimon on guitar, released *Full Gain*, which sold well enough to establish him as a favorite of the blues circuit. In the years since, Gaines has continued to tour and record under his own name, establishing himself as one of the main heirs to Louis Jordan’s jump-blues.

JIM TRAGESER

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(January/February 1997): 44.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

- Full Gain* (1988, Black Top BT-1041).
Horn of Plenty (1992, Black Top BT-1084).

GAINES, ROY

b. 12 August 1937 (?); Waskom, TX

Texas guitarist and singer influenced and inspired by T-Bone Walker. Gaines spent the first half of his long career backing artists ranging from Bobby “Blue” Bland and Junior Parker to Billie Holiday and Ray Charles. For the past 20 years, he has been active as leader. He is the younger brother of saxophonist Grady Gaines.

Birth year has been cited as 1937 or 1934. After growing up in the Houston area idolizing Walker, at

age sixteen Gaines moved to Los Angeles and joined the band of Little Milton. After returning to Texas, he backed Bland and Parker before touring with Joe Turner and then backing Chuck Willis. Work with King Curtis, Big Mama Thornton, Jimmy Rushing, Holiday, and even jazz luminary Coleman Hawkins followed. During the 1960s, Gaines kept busy with session work with artists including Charles, Stevie Wonder, and Aretha Franklin.

In the 1970s, Gaines played with his hero, touring with Walker until his death. He also worked with the Jazz Crusaders and their subsequent incarnation, the Crusaders. Since the early 1980s, Gaines has been recording and touring under his own name, playing an up-tempo Texas swing blues most reminiscent of Walker. During that time, he has issued a series of well-received albums and become a fixture on the blues circuit.

He hasn't completely abandoned his role as preeminent session guitarist, though, lending his sound to Quincy Jones's *Color Purple* soundtrack in 1985, joining Albert Collins and Joe Louis Walker on the *Feds* soundtrack (1988), and sitting in on Candye Kane's 1994 release, *Home Cookin'*.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: LSFP

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I Got the T-Bone Walker Blues (1999, Groove Note 1002).
New Frontier Lover (2000, Severn 8).

GAITHER, BILL (1)

b. 23 February 1927; Los Angeles, CA
d. 24 August 1985; Los Angeles, CA

Tenor saxophonist best known for his work with singer Roy Milton.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: LSFP

GAITHER, BILL (2) "LEROY'S BUDDY"

b. 21 April 1910; Belmont, KY
d. 30 October 1970; Indianapolis, IN

Singer and guitarist of the 1930s, whose recorded performances show that his vocal style was heavily influenced by Leroy Carr (hence the nickname).

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

GALES BROTHERS

Recorded together one CD for the House of Blues label, *Left Hand Brand* (1995). Members consisted of Eric and Eugene Gales of the Eric Gales Band, and their brother Little Jimmy King (born Manuel Gales). All were from Memphis, Tennessee. Other family members include father Samuel Gales (1935–1999) and brother Daniel.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG

Discography: AMG

GALLAGHER, RORY

b. 2 March 1949; Ballyshannon, Eire (Ireland)
d. 14 June 1995; London, England

Guitarist and singer. Brought up in Cork, Gallagher's influences included Leadbelly, Buddy Guy, Freddie King, Albert King, Muddy Waters, and John Lee Hooker. He began playing guitar at nine and acquired his trademark battered Stratocaster at age fourteen.

Gallagher began performing in a showband in Cork as teenager, then formed blues-rock trio Taste in 1965. The band established its reputation, including a triumph at the Isle of Wight Festival 1970, then split in acrimonious fashion early in 1971. Gallagher formed his own trio with Gerry McAvoy (bass) and Wilgar Campbell (drums).

Gallagher recorded three albums in trio format, then added Lou Martin (keyboards), with Rod De'Ath on drums. The hard-working guitarist's honest, no-frills approach to blues rock (symbolized by his sartorial choice of denims and plaid shirt) won him a loyal following, and established his band as an international concert attraction. That approach can

be heard clearly on his live albums of the period, including *Live in Europe* (1972) and *Irish Tour '74*. His gutsy, exciting guitar work and limited but passionate vocals were made for the live setting, but his studio albums were also strong. Gallagher retained his affection for country blues and slide guitar as well as the electric side of his work, and usually included such material in shows and recordings. He recorded with one of his idols, Muddy Waters, on *The London Sessions* (1972), and also appeared live with Albert King at Montreux in 1975.

The quartet disbanded after *Calling Card* (1976), but continued as a trio with McAvoy and Ted McKenna (drums) until 1991 (with a long break in the mid-1980s), then with Brendan O'Neil (drums) until 1994. His last band was a quintet/sextet without the long-serving McAvoy. Gallagher fell ill during a European tour in 1994 and died from complications following a liver transplant; thousands attended his funeral in Cork.

KENNY MATHIESON

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GANDY DANCERS

Gandy dancers were African American railroad workers in the early twentieth century whose rhythmic movements while laying and repairing track appeared to be like a dance. The origin of the term “gandy” was believed to be a reference to the Gandy Manufacturing Company of Chicago, which was thought to have produced track-laying tools and equipment in the early twentieth century. Records at the Chicago Historical Society indicate, however, no one has ever verified such a company existed. Others have speculated the derivation comes from the movements of the workers who shook their legs like ganders as they tamped down the ballast.

Gandy dancers worked in small groups and sang in time to their physical movements. A variety of songs sung at various tempos paced the workers during the tasks of dragging, lifting, and aligning rails, driving spikes, and tamping the ballast of the gravel beds. The caller would lead the singing, thereby coordinating the work and lifting the spirits of his crew. Due to the heavy weight of the rails, a unified effort on the part of the crew was essential to the precision, success, and safety of the work. The callers mixed bits and pieces from folk ballads and spirituals along with improvised lines that they made up on the spot. Alan Lomax points out that often the song was a signal to the foreman about how much work could be accomplished for the day:

We can't tamp no nine-mile section
 All in one day, buddy,
 All in one day, boy.

Frequently the caller would sing about sex and women during the final moments of a hard job where he would have been singing out a work directive before that. Because of the nature of the work, the songs were void of any overall narrative stories.

BILL GRAVES

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GANT, CECIL

- b. 4 April 1913; Nashville, TN
 d. 4 February 1951; Nashville, TN

Pianist and vocalist. Gant's early career was spent working local clubs in Nashville during the mid-1930s and later with his own band on southern tours. In 1944, during army service on the West Coast, he asked to play the piano during the intermission at a Treasury Bond rally in Los Angeles. The impact was such that his commanding officer was asked to release him for further bond promotions. Billed as the “GI-Sing-Sation,” he performed in uniform. He soon began recording, enjoying immediate success with the ballad “I Wonder” (1944, Bronze 117), though most

sales went to a slightly later version (1944, Gilt-Edge 501); many discographies incorrectly show these as identical performances.

As a blues-ballad singer, he was one of those dubbed “Sepia Sinatras” in recognition of their popularity with women rather than their singing style, but he was also an effective boogie pianist as “Cecil’s Boogie” (1944, Gilt-Edge 501) and “Boogie Blues” (1944, Gilt-Edge 502) show. After the war he returned to Nashville, where he made many recordings for Bullet, most of them with country music session musicians. Despite nationwide tours, his popularity declined and even though he recorded for Decca in 1950–1951 he was not able to duplicate his earlier successes despite fine records like “Shot Gun Boogie”/“Rock Little Baby” (1951, Decca 48200). He died of pneumonia.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: LSFP

GARCIA, JEROME JOHN “JERRY”

- b. 1 August 1942; San Francisco, CA
 d. 9 August 1995; Forest Knolls, CA

Guitarist and singer. Early influences included bluegrass of Bill Monroe and the electric blues of T-Bone Walker and Chuck Berry. Best known as lead guitarist in the Grateful Dead, which was formed in 1966 and disbanded after his death. As the focal band in San Francisco’s counterculture, their repertoire took in virtually all forms of American music, including blues, jazz, bluegrass, country, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and psychedelia. Garcia’s solo projects and offshoots also reflected that diversity, including The New Riders of the Purple Sage, Old & In The Way (with David Grisman and Vassar Clements), and the Jerry Garcia Band. Garcia had health problems resulting from a combination of drugs and diabetes, and he died of a heart attack.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

Selected Recordings as Leader

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Almost Acoustic (1987, Grateful Dead 40052).
Jerry Garcia & David Grisman (1991, Acoustic Disc ACD-2).
Bluegrass Reunion (1992, Acoustic Disc ACD-4).
Lonesome Prison Blues (1992, Dead Man 014).
Blues from the Rainforest (1994, Grateful Dead 3901).

GARIBAY, RANDY JR.

Active since the mid-1950s

Singer and guitarist in Texas rhythm and blues, Hispanic music, and doo-wop. Started as a doo-wop vocalist in east Texas, eventually joining the Dell-Kings in a residency at the Las Vegas Sahara Hotel in the 1960s. Later he would assist on tour the O’Jays and Curtis Mayfield. He returned to Texas, founded the group Cats Don’t Stomp, and has since performed in the Texas and Hispanic music styles.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

Discography: AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

GARLAND, TERRY

- b. 3 June 1953; Johnson City, TN

Singer/guitarist who specializes in performing traditional, acoustic blues in a solo environment. Also known for playing a metal-body resonator guitar. Combines covers of classic songs from the blues canon with his own traditional-sounding compositions; also does blues interpretations of rock and other non-blues songs. First came to national attention in the early 1990s with a series of well-received recordings.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

AMG (Niles J. Frantz)

Discography: AMG

- Trouble in Mind* (1991, First Warning 72705-75701-2; reissued by Planetary Music as 9024).

GARLAND, TERRY

Edge of the Valley (1992, First Warning 75713).
One to Blame (1996, Demon 775, 1996; reissued by Planetary Music as 9025).

GARLOW, CLARENCE “BON TON”

b. 27 February 1911; Welsh, LA
d. 24 July 1986; Beaumont, TX

Guitarist and accordionist. Although Garlow had a regionally successful recording career in the early 1950s, his most significant contributions were behind the scenes as a club owner, deejay, talent scout, and mentor. Garlow was working as a mailman in Beaumont, Texas, when T-Bone Walker inspired him to buy a guitar. He started playing locally and so impressed a Houston record company owner one night that he was in the studio the next day, recording “Bon Ton Roula.” He moved on to record for the Aladdin, Flair, and Goldband labels. Garlow also was directly involved in the rise of zydeco. He secured zydeco founder Clifton Chenier’s first recording session by holding a telephone next to a Beaumont bandstand so recording executive J. R. Fulbright could hear him.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

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O’Neal, Jim. “Clarence Garlow 1911–1986” [obituary].
Living Blues no. 72 (1986): 41.

Discography: LSFP

GARNER, LARRY

b. 8 July 1952; New Orleans, LA

Growing up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, singer/guitarist Larry Garner was exposed to the region’s thriving swamp blues legacy as a young boy, hearing performances by such local mainstays as Silas Hogan and Clarence Edwards. Garner was given a guitar by his uncle and began performing gospel music at age twelve with several local groups. Several years later, he started playing bass in his cousin’s rhythm and blues band and eventually stopped performing gospel entirely. After serving in the military upon graduation, Garner returned to Baton Rouge and took a full-time job at a local chemical plant, where he worked for nearly twenty years. In the early 1980s, he began attending local jam sessions at Tabby Thomas’s Blues Box, and spent the next several

years playing part-time with local musicians such as Thomas, Hogan, and Henry Gray. He studied the recordings of B. B. King, Albert Collins, and Albert King as well as those by rock guitarist Santana, and gradually developed his own melodic guitar style.

Garner retired from his day job in the late 1980s to pursue music full time, and his imaginative and witty songwriting skills and modernized swamp blues sound landed him a contract with JSP Records. After two solid outings for the British label, Garner signed with Verve/Gitanes in 1995 and recorded the highly acclaimed *You Need to Live a Little* and *Baton Rouge*. Both releases featured Garner’s finely crafted songs, soulful singing, and strong guitar playing. He continued to tour both in the United States and Europe, with several releases on the German Ruf Records.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG

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Baton Rouge (1999, Evidence ECD 26106-2).

GARON, PAUL

b. 7 July 1942; Louisville, KY

The foremost proponent of using surrealist theory to interpret the blues. A native of Louisville, Garon moved to Chicago in the late 1960s to work at Bob Koester’s Jazz Record Mart. He later became a used book dealer, specializing in jazz and blues. A founding editor of *Living Blues*, Garon articulated the magazine’s editorial position [in #12 & #13 (1973); again in issue #109 (1993)], which rejects a purely acoustical definition of blues in favor of one embedded in African American culture. He also edited a special issue (#25) on surrealism and the blues.

In *Blues and the Poetic Spirit* (1975; revised 1996, City Lights), Garon articulated the surrealist interpretation of blues as an inherently radical mode of thought: “The blues is a music that signifies the rebellion of the spirit, a body of song that achieves poetry by its insistent revolt and demand for liberation.” The book’s topics include whites and the blues, symbolic imagery in blues lyrics, blues as an “unalienated” form of expression, and the limitations of “realist” interpretations.

Garon's focus on poetic protest and the radical imagination in blues lyrics is mostly implicit in the biographical study *The Devil's Son-in-Law: The Story of Peetie Wheatstraw and His Songs* (1971, London: Studio Vista; revised 2003, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr). *Woman with Guitar: Memphis Minnie's Blues* (1992, New York: Da Capo), written together with Beth Garon, employs surrealist analysis explicitly in an extended analysis of topical themes and the subversive potential in Memphis Minnie's songs.

SCOTT BARRETT

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GARRETT, ROBERT "BUD"

b. 28 January 1916; Free Hill, TN
 d. 24 November 1987; Free Hill, TN

In 1961, after a friend sent a demo to Ernie Young of Excello Records in Nashville, singer/guitarist Garrett recorded "Do Remember" and "Quit My Drinkin,'" sturdy blues in the style of 1940s Chicago. He recorded again for folklorists in later life, but the single is his most eloquent legacy.

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: LSPF

GARRETT, VERNON

b. 18 January 1933; Omaha, NE

A gospel-influenced southern soul singer, Garrett has worked professionally from the 1950s on, but found his greatest success in the 1990s. He has been alternately based out of Los Angeles and Dallas since the 1980s.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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GARY, INDIANA

Gary, an industrial city in northeast Indiana on the southern tip of Lake Michigan, was founded in 1906 by the U.S. Steel Corporation. The company made Gary a major steel production center, and the city grew largely as a result of settlement by European immigrants. By the 1920s, southern blacks and Mexicans began settling in the city. In 1930, the city had a hundred thousand residents, forty-five percent white immigrants and eighteen percent blacks. By 1950, Gary had a population of 133,000 and was thirty percent black.

The African American population was socially segregated in an area south of the downtown, centered along Broadway. The street became the hub of black business and entertainment, featuring retail stores, taverns, ballrooms, and record stores. Much of the black population came from the Deep South, and blues was often their music of choice. The large ballrooms, notably Barbara's Playhouse and Miramar Ballroom, featured big-name jazz and blues acts, such as LaVern Baker, Amos Milburn, Memphis Slim, Muddy Waters, and Ivory Joe Hunter. The smaller clubs, significantly the Pulaski Lounge, Tri-State Inn, and the Roadhouse, featured local blues musicians, notably Jimmy Reed, Albert King, Grace and John Brim, and John Littlejohn. Predominantly black Roosevelt High was often used for shows that featured such acts as blues singer Dorothy Fisher, balladeer Wellington Blakely, and the doo-wop group, the Spaniels. In the 1960s, the F&J Lounge featured name blues acts from Chicago, such as Otis Rush and Magic Sam, but also used Earl Hooker in the house band. Jazz musicians were less common in Gary, but in the early 1950s saxophonist John "Schoolboy" Porter recorded some local hits for Chicago-based Chance Records.

Gary had long been served by radio deejays catering to the black community, notably Eddie Honesty, who began on the ethnic station WJOB in 1932. By the late 1940s, two other radio stations, WGRY and WWCA, added black deejays to their programming, the best known being Jesse Coopwood, Sam Evans, and Vivian Carter. The deejays did much to promote the jazz, blues, and R&B acts that came out of that city.

Because adjacent Chicago dominated music recording, Gary had few record labels. Vivian Carter and Jimmy Bracken started their famed Vee-Jay label out

GARY, INDIANA

of their record shop at 1640 Broadway in 1953, but the next year relocated to Chicago. Vee-Jay recorded many Gary acts, notably Jimmy Reed, Wellington Blakely, the Goldenrods, and the Spaniels. United in Chicago recorded another Gary doo-wop ensemble, the Five Cs. In the 1960s, record producer and singer Gordon Keith founded Steeltown records, and was the first to record the Jackson Five, the biggest R&B act to come out of the city. Keith also recorded for Chicago-based One-derful Records.

By the 1980s, Gary was more than eighty percent black. The biggest blues act that lived and worked in the city at this time was Big Daddy Kinsey, who recorded his debut album in 1984. Two sons in his band, Donald and Ralph, later formed the Kinsey Report, and both acts made a significant contribution to modern blues with hard rocking electronic blues.

ROBERT PRUTER

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GARY, TOMMY

- b. 9 January 1909 or 1911 (?), Brownsville, TN
d. 31 July 1975; Memphis, TN

Influential harmonica player, worked with Sleepy John Estes, Robert Wilkins, Yank Rachel and other area musicians. Played American Folklife Festival in 1970. Recorded with Estes.

FRED J. HAY

Bibliography

- Hay, Fred J. *“Goin’ Back to Sweet Memphis”:* *Conversations with the Blues*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001.

Discography

- Mississippi Delta Blues Jam in Memphis, Vol. 2* (1993, Arhoolie CD 386).

GATES, REVEREND JAMES M.

- b. 14 July 1884; Hogansville (?), GA
d. 18 August 1945; Atlanta, GA

Reverend J. M. Gates was the most prolifically recorded black preacher of the prewar years. He was the grandson of an African slave and began to preach when he was in his thirties. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, he was pastor of several Baptist churches in Atlanta, Georgia. From 1926 to 1941 he recorded 220 sermons, monologues, and church songs for a variety of labels, of which Columbia, Victor, and OKeh were the most important. As a preacher he was fairly restrained in his delivery, but he was inventive, and often humorous, with a self-mocking edge at times. Gates usually offered a conservative and misogynist view of the world, but he was an enthusiast for the New Deal and spoke out strongly against racism, preaching a remarkable sermon addressed to “you Negro haters” on one occasion. He died in the same year, in the same manner and at about the same relatively early age as his beloved President Roosevelt, whom he had praised in more than one of his sermons. His funeral in Atlanta was said to be the biggest black funeral until the death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Discography: DGR

GAYLES, BILLY

- b. 19 October 1931; Sikeston, MO
d. 8 April 1993; St. Louis, MO

Vocalist and drummer Billy Gayles became interested in blues and jazz as a teenager, after relocating to Cairo, Illinois. There, he learned to play drums and toured with Earl Hooker and Robert Nighthawk. Gayles settled in Clarksdale, Mississippi, in 1951 and joined Ike Turner’s Kings of Rhythm as a featured vocalist. A dynamic singer, he recorded with Turner throughout the 1950s and early 1960s for labels such as Flair, Federal, Cobra, and Shock. In the mid-1950s, Gayles moved to St. Louis and recorded his best-known single “I’m Tore Up” in 1956 for Federal. He split with Turner in 1963 and spent the remainder of his life playing primarily around St. Louis.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

- O’Neal, Jim. “Billy Gayles.” *Living Blues* no. 113 (January/February 1993): 44–45.

Discography

- Ike Turner’s Kings of Rhythm. *Trail Blazers* (1997, King Records KCD 6017).

GAYTEN, PAUL

b. 29 January 1920; New Orleans, LA
 d. 29 March 1991; Los Angeles, CA

Pianist, composer, arranger, bandleader, and producer. Gayten was a pioneer of New Orleans rhythm and blues and one of the most important and influential figures in the postwar music scene there. His late 1940s recordings under his own name and masterful productions for Annie Laurie and Larry Darnell helped open the door for Crescent City artists to gain national exposure as hit recording artists well into the 1960s. An accomplished pianist, inventive composer, and astute arranger, Gayten organized his first band before World War II; by 1947 he had assembled New Orleans's most popular ensemble and was tearing up the city's top nightspots when he was signed by DeLuxe Records. Gayten immediately hit the R&B top ten with "True" and continued to chart with band singer Annie Laurie's "Since I Fell for You," "Cuttin' Out," and "I'll Never Be Free."

Gayten switched to Regal Records in 1949 and produced a pair of smash hits with vocalist Larry Darnell: the two-sided rap ballad "I'll Get Along Somehow" and the jump-blues classic "For You My Love." He moved his operation to OKeh Records in 1951 with modest success and then switched to Chess in 1954, where he returned to the charts with brilliant productions on Sugar Boy Crawford ("Jock-a-Mo"), Bobby Charles ("Later Alligator"), Clarence "Frogman" Henry ("Ain't Got No Home" and "But I Do"), TV Slim ("Flatfoot Sam"), and other New Orleans artists. He relocated to Los Angeles in 1960 to run the Chess office there and returned to record production in the 1970s with his own label, Pzazz.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

AMG (Jim O' Neal); Larkin; Santelli
 Nelson, David. "Paul Gayten" [obituary]. *Living Blues*
 no. 98 (July/August 1991): 40.

Discography: AMG; LSFP**GEDDINS, BOB**

b. 6 February 1913; Hybank, TX
 d. 16 February 1991; Oakland, CA

Record producer, songwriter, and occasional vocalist, Bob Geddins was the dominant figure in Bay Area blues from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. He

moved to Oakland from Los Angeles in 1941 and, as well as working in the shipyard, also was a partner in a record shop on Seventh Street. Realizing that local artists were not being recorded he began (sometimes in partnership with others) a series of labels (Big Town, Down Town, Cava-Tone, Rhythm, Irma, Veltone, Gedinson's, Art-Tone, etc.) on which appeared all the finest artists the Bay Area had to offer. He was notable too as the first man to set up a pressing plant in the Bay Area, rather than get his records manufactured in Los Angeles. Among his many songwriting credits are "Mercury Boogie" (Sidney Maiden), "Haunted House" (Johnny Fuller), "Hello San Francisco" (Sugar Pie DeSanto), "Johnny Ace's Last Letter" (Johnny Fuller), "Tin Pan Alley" (Jimmy Wilson), and "My Time After a While" (Tiny Powell). His ventures were always undercapitalized and his business acumen was perhaps not the sharpest. As a consequence, he was never as successful commercially as artistically and always faced the danger of losing successful artists to bigger companies. Nonetheless his slow blues with doom-laden lyrics and mournful saxes defined the Oakland sound of his day and his ability to get the best out of his artists justify his claim to be "the father of the Oakland blues."

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: LSFP

See also Agee, Ray; Big Town; Bonner, Weldon H. Phillip "Juke Boy"; Boyd, Eddie; Caesar, Harry "Little"; Cava-Tone Recording; Douglas, K.C.; Fuller, Johnny; Fulson, Lowell; Irma; King, Al; King, Saunders; Maiden, Sidney; McCracklin, Jimmy; McGuirt, Clarence "Candyman"; Oakland; Powell, Vance "Tiny"; Rhythm; Robinson, L.C. "Good Rock-in"; Thomas, Lafayette Jerl "Thing"; Thornton, Willie Mae "Big Mama"; Walton, Mercy Dee; Wilson, Jimmy

GENNETT

Record label and company founded in 1917 by the Starr Piano Co. of Richmond, Indiana, and named for Starr executives Harry, Fred, and Clarence Gennett. Blues recording began with Daisy Martin about April 1921 and gathered pace in 1923 when

Viola McCoy, Josie Miles, and Edna Hicks headlined a brief spurt of activity. Gennett never had a Race series but after 1924 printed "Race Record" on relevant issues, generally grouped in batches in the main series, the only company so identifying its African American catalog.

Only after the introduction of the electrically recorded "Electrobeams" in December 1926 did Gennett become a major blues label with Sam Collins, Cow Cow Davenport, and Irene Scruggs among its artists. A field trip to Birmingham, Alabama, in July–August 1927 netted Jay Bird Coleman, William Harris, and Bertha Ross. Gennett recorded blues for Black Patti in 1927, issuing some of these itself after Black Patti's demise, and also for Paramount in 1929. The last Race Gennett (7319 by Clara Burston) was released in December 1930 but the company continued to issue its subsidiary labels Champion and Superior up to the end of 1934, when Starr withdrew from record issue. Gennett was reorganized by Harry Gennett, who in the mid-1940s sold his wartime shellac allocation to Joe Davis. Davis revived the Gennett label with eight Race issues in a 5000 series but output was soon shifted to Davis's Beacon label.

HOWARD RYE

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GEORGIA

Georgia, the largest state east of the Mississippi River, is defined geographically by six land regions. The three regions of the Piedmont, Atlantic Coastal Plain, and the East Gulf Coastal Plain dominate the majority of the land area. The three highland regions of the Appalachian Plateau, Appalachian Ridge and Valley Region, and Blue Ridge form a smaller tier of land at the top of the state.

The first people of this area were the Native American Cherokees who lived in the highland region to the north and the Creeks who lived in the lower elevations to the south. Spain's Hernando de Soto was the first European explorer in the region. France

followed and explored the coastal islands and rivers. England subsequently claimed the area and named it Georgia in 1732. James Oglethorpe arrived the following year with a number of debtors released from prison to establish the last and southern-most of the thirteen colonies.

Georgia established slavery in 1749 to support its emerging plantation system. This agrarian-based economy expanded during the next century through a number of land cessions that displaced the Creeks and Cherokees. In 1795, a corrupt group of legislators sold off the entire western portion of the state that today makes up Alabama and Mississippi in what became known as the Yazoo Fraud.

The Civil War and the invasion of the Union Army under General Sherman left the economy and the infrastructure of the state devastated by the end of 1864. During the end of the nineteenth century, Georgia expanded its economic base with an increase in manufacturing. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the agricultural base expanded beyond cotton, as farmers raised corn, hogs, chickens, dairy cattle, peanuts, and tobacco.

During the twentieth century, Georgia struggled to balance its growing position in the South as a commercial and industrial center with its historical record of intolerance. As late as 1956, the Georgia legislature voted to add the Confederate battle flag to the state flag. Many saw this as a stand against social integration and a defiance of the federal mandate against segregated schools.

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., showed the region, the nation, and the world that social change could occur through nonviolent protest. His activism influenced Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Jimmy Carter emerged in the next decade as a progressive governor when he was the first person to win a statewide election by publicly denouncing segregation. He was elected president of the United States in 1976. In 2002, Carter became the second Georgian to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

With the advent of sound recordings and radio broadcasts in the early twentieth century, rural and small town Georgian musicians and singers reached expanded audiences. Country music, first known as hillbilly music, gained prominence on WSB radio in Atlanta dating from the early 1920s. Fiddlin' John Carson recorded the first country hit record, "The Little Old Log Cabin," in 1923. Gid Tanner and Riley Puckett followed with their first recordings on Columbia in New York in 1924. Their band, the Skillet Lickers, appealed to a large country music audience during the 1920s and 1930s.

Blues music traces its origins in part to Georgia. Blind Willie McTell was born near Augusta and grew up near Statesboro. He recorded “Statesboro Blues” in 1927. Guitarist Hudson Whittaker, also known as “Tampa Red,” was born in Smithville. He pioneered the bottleneck style of slide guitar playing after moving to Chicago. Georgia White was born in Sandersville. She also gained prominence in Chicago as a blues singer in the late 1930s.

Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, born in Columbus, is often said to be the “Mother of the Blues.” She influenced Bessie Smith who sang in Rainey’s traveling show when Smith was just a teenager. Thomas A. Dorsey, or “Georgia Tom,” another Rainey musician, was born in Villa Rica. He distinguished himself as the creator of hundreds of gospel songs recorded by Mahalia Jackson and Elvis Presley, among others.

A number of jazz artists acknowledged their blues and Georgia beginnings. Composer and arranger Fletcher Henderson was born in Cuthbert and pianist Mary Lou Williams was born in Atlanta. Singer Joe Williams was born in Cordele and lyricist Johnny Mercer was born in Savannah.

In the 1950s, American teenagers discovered the blues roots of rock ’n’ roll. This form of music that was new to middle-class homes was known as rhythm and blues. A number of black performers born in Georgia gained airtime on white-operated radio stations during this period. Ray Charles, born in Albany, turned his career around in the early 1950s when he switched from the Nat “King” Cole style of singing to a southern gospel style. His hit recording “What’d I Say” was released in 1959.

“Little Richard” Penniman, born in Macon, electrified crowds with his piano playing and singing. He left some performances covered with only a raincoat borrowed from his stagehands after throwing all his clothing into the audience. Otis Redding, born in Dawson, distinguished himself as a singer of soulful ballads. Gladys Knight was born in Atlanta where she also formed her famous backup singers, the Pips. James Brown, born in Augusta, became the “Godfather of Soul.” The Kennedy Center honored James Brown with a lifetime achievement award in the performing arts in 2003.

The genre of blues music heavily influenced a number of southern rock bands at the end of the twentieth century. The first and most significant of these groups was the Allman Brothers Band and featured the talents of guitarist Duane Allman, his brother Greg Allman on piano, and Dickie Betts on guitar. Although none of these three were born in Georgia, they pioneered a new rock sound often using double lead guitars and two drummers after they moved to Macon.

Current blues artists with Georgia birth certificates include Tinsley Ellis, born in Atlanta, who has released a number of recordings with Alligator Records. Ellis trades on a scorching and relentless guitar style while acknowledging his debt to the originators of the blues musical form. Robert Cray was born in Columbus and first gained attention with the release of “Smoking Gun” in 1986. Cray’s music attracts both popular and blues audiences.

BILL GRAVES

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GEREMIA, PAUL

b. 21 April 1944; Providence, RI

Among the first white performers to master Robert Johnson and Willie McTell, prewar blues, and related music has been his lifelong profession. Peers and followers alike consider the conviction of his singing to be exemplary.

ANDREW M. COHEN

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

GIANT/GAMMA/GLOBE

Chicago soul label of the late 1960s. The company was founded in 1967 by the husband-and-wife team of Joshie Jo Armstead and Mel Collins. The firm both leased records to larger firms and put out records on their own Giant, Gamma, and Globe imprints. Their best successes were soul music productions of Ruby Andrews (who was recording for Zodiac), Joshie Jo Armstead (“A Stone Good Lover,” 1968), and Garland Green (“Jealous Kind of Lover,” 1969), the latter leased to Uni. Other artists included hard soul shouter Shirley Wahls, jazz singer Little Jimmy

Scott, and blues artists Smokey Smothers, Lee Shot Williams, and Fenton Robinson. The company recorded its blues artists in Chicago under the aegis of Collins, but recorded most of its soul artists in Detroit with arranger Mike Terry under the aegis of Armstead. The company closed down in 1970.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Pruter, Robert. *Chicago Soul*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Discography: McGrath

GIBSON, CLIFFORD

b. 17 April 1901; Louisville, KY

d. 21 December 1963; St. Louis, MO

Aka "Grandpappy Gibson." One of record shop owner Jesse Johnson's discoveries, Gibson was an itinerant musician who recorded in 1929 and 1931 for QRS and Victor and accompanied R. T. Hanen (probably J. D. Short), Roosevelt Sykes, and even white singer Jimmie Rodgers. He was an inspirational, relaxed guitarist somewhat influenced by Lonnie Johnson with a pleasing voice and thoughtful lyrics, but has been curiously undervalued. After the war, he worked with a trained dog for tips and recorded for Bobbin in 1960 as Grandpappy Gibson.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Complete Recorded Works 1929–31 (Document BDCD 6015).

GIBSON, JACK

b. 13 May 1920; Chicago, IL

d. 30 January 2000; Henderson, NV

Aka "Jockey Jack," "Tiger Jack," "Jack the Rapper." Radio personality, promoter, writer. From 1945 through 1962 he was active as an actor, then a disk jockey in Chicago, Atlanta, Louisville, Miami Beach, and Cleveland. For ten years he self-published

his "Jack the Rapper" newsletter. From 1962 through 1972 he worked in promotions for Motown, Decca, and Stax, then marketing for Disney World in 1972–1976. He was founder and first president of the National Association of Jazz, R&B, and Gospel DJs of America, which eventually became the Black Music Association. The Treniers' "You Know, Yeah! Tiger" (OKeh 7012) was dedicated to him.

EDWARD KOMARA

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GIBSON, LACY

b. 1 May 1936; Salisbury, NC

Guitarist/singer Lacy Gibson began playing hillbilly, country, and gospel music as a child growing up in the rural Carolina hills. His parents both played guitar and banjo at mostly white country gatherings. He first heard blues music when his family moved to Chicago in 1949. He attended Roosevelt College for three years, where he studied music theory. He met many blues guitarists and learned some technique from Muddy Waters, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, Wayne Bennett, and others. Gibson began performing with a large number of bands at various nightclubs and recording sessions. He played rhythm guitar in sessions with "Billy the Kid" Emerson (M-Pac!), Willie Mabon (USA), Buddy Guy (Chess), Son Seals (Alligator), and even his then brother-in-law Sun-Ra (Chess). Although he performed with many blues artists, Lacy was more enamored with jazz guitarists. He even had a brief stint performing with Duke Ellington's band around 1958.

Gibson recorded his first song, "My Love Is Real," for Chess in 1963, though the company misattributed it to Buddy Guy. Lacy also recorded several singles for the small Repeto label. He gained some worldwide recognition with his album *Switchy Titchy* on the Black Magic label in 1982. In addition, Gibson has appeared on the Delmark, El Saturn, and Red Lightnin' labels.

GREG JOHNSON

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Herzhaft; Larkin
Whiteis, David. "Lacy Gibson: I Stepped Out of That Line." *Living Blues* no. 130 (November/December 1996): 26–33.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Emerson, William Robert “Billy the Kid”

GILLUM, JAZZ

b. William McKinley Gillum, 11 September 1904; Indianola, MS
d. 29 March 1966; Chicago, IL

Bill “Jazz” Gillum was one of the stalwarts of the Chicago blues scene of the 1930s and 1940s, enjoying considerable popularity as a harmonica player and vocalist. Orphaned at a young age and raised by a series of relatives, he taught himself to play first the harmonium, or pump organ, and then learned the harmonica from his two brothers. After stays in several Mississippi towns, working as a field hand and performing as a street musician, he left for Chicago, arriving there in 1923. He made his first record in 1934 for the Bluebird label, accompanied on guitar by Big Bill Broonzy. Their musical partnership produced many successful records for Bluebird and an enduring bitterness by Gillum over his claim to the authorship of the blues standard “Key to the Highway.” Gillum’s recordings featured collaborations with some of the most prominent blues artists of the era in addition to Broonzy, including Washboard Sam, Roosevelt Sykes, and Big Maceo Merriweather. Blues researcher Neil Slaven has noted that “it’s rare to hear Gillum straining for a note with either voice or instrument,” which neatly describes his musical technique and suggests an explanation for his popular success. Gillum recorded infrequently after 1950, and the decline of his later years was described by guitarist Mike Bloomfield in a chilling vignette in the book *Me and Big Joe*. He died in 1966 from a gunshot wound.

BOB RIESMAN

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP**GILMORE, BOYD**

b. 12 June 1910; Belzoni, MS
d. 23 December 1976; Fresno, CA

Postwar Mississippi Delta slide guitarist known for his recordings for the Sun and Modern labels in the

early 1950s. Musical associates included Pinetop Perkins, Charlie Booker, Houston Stackhouse, Ike Turner, and Earl Hooker. It is believed he moved to California in the mid-1960s. His seeming elusiveness from blues researchers enhanced his later and posthumous reputations.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin
O’ Neal, Jim. “Boyd Gilmore” *Living Blues* nos. 45/46 (Spring 1980): 94–95.

Discography: LSFP**GIPSON, BYRON “WILD CHILD”**

b. 10 January 1930; Burlington, IA
d. 30 January 1994; Peoria, IL

Singer, manager. After U.S. Army service in 1950–1953, he arrived in Los Angeles, California, as a singer and songwriter to Specialty and other West Coast labels. In 1955–1956 he was Little Richard’s road manager. For the following three years he formed a band with saxophonist Freddie Tickon. From 1959 on he stayed in Peoria, Illinois, initially performing with various groups, then as a one-man band.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Labinsky, Daria. “Byron ‘Wild Child’ Gipson” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 115 (May/June 1994): 63–64.

Discography: LSFP**GLENN, LLOYD**

b. 21 November 1909; San Antonio, TX
d. 23 May 1985; Los Angeles, CA

Pianist, composer, arranger. Lloyd Glenn was a prolific urban blues pianist who backed T-Bone Walker and Lowell Fulson and enjoyed R&B chart success with “Chica Boo,” “Old Time Shuffle,” and other early 1950s hits under his own name. He worked with Kid Ory, Marl Young, T-Bone Walker, Lowell Fulson, Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, and Ray Charles.

JOHN SINCLAIR

GLENN, LLOYD

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin; New Grove Jazz; Santelli

Discography: Lord; LSFP

GLOVER

New York City–based label owned by Henry Glover and active 1959–1960. Its artists included Louisiana Red and Titus Turner.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

GLOVER, HENRY

b. 21 May 1921; Hot Springs, AR

d. 7 April 1991; St. Albans, NY

In his early career during the mid-1940s, Henry Glover worked as a trumpet player and arranger for bands led by Buddy Johnson, Tiny Bradshaw, and Lucky Millinder. Glover also began achieving success in the late-1940s as a hit songwriter for R&B artists. In 1948, he began a decade-long career at King Records, where he worked as a producer, songwriter, and A&R man. At King, Glover arranged and produced recording sessions for artists in both R&B (see the *Rhythm and Blues* entry) and country music, at times bringing the two styles together and signaling the rock 'n' roll explosion of the 1950s. After leaving King, Glover produced records for Old Town Records, for his own Glover label, and for Roulette, before rejoining King in the late 1960s. Blues albums produced by Glover in the 1970s included Muddy Waters's *The Muddy Waters Woodstock Album* and Paul Butterfield's *Put It In Your Ear*.

ANDREW LEACH

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GLOVER, LILLIE MAE HARDISON

(See *Big Memphis Ma Rainey*)

GOING DOWN SLOW (I'VE HAD MY FUN)

One of the most durable and resilient of the World War II era blues compositions, "Going Down Slow," by "St. Louis" Jimmy Oden, has remained in blues repertoires since it was first cut on November 11, 1941, and issued on Bluebird 8889. Oden himself recorded a sequel, "Bad Condition," in 1944, and RCA prepared a reissue of "Going Down Slow" to be issued simultaneously in 1945. "Going Down Slow" was reissued on RCA Victor 20-2598, while "Bad Condition" was issued on RCA Victor 20-2650.

It has been recorded more than forty times, with most versions retaining all or part of Oden's original lyrics. One of the first singers to cover "St. Louis" Jimmy's piece was Champion Jack Dupree who recorded it ca. 1945 on Continental 6066. In 1958, he returned with a stronger version recorded for Atlantic (LP 8019) and issued on his deservedly famous LP *Blues from the Gutter*. Ray Charles recorded it for SwingTime (ST 215) in 1949, as "I've Had My Fun (Going Down Slow)," well before his best-known Atlantic recordings. Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry waxed the song several times each. McGhee took the vocal on the pair's mid-1940s Alert 405, and Terry turned in a more resonant performance in the early 1950s on Bob Shad's Jax and Time labels (Jax 309, Time T70006).

The song's tale of slow death from venereal disease may not seem fit for such immortality, but the song has lived on in spite of its morbid flavor. Little Walter recorded it in Chicago in 1957, as "I Had My Fun" (Checker 945). The lively tempo of Walter's version may have signaled the subversion of the lyric's original message. In the best-known version of the song, cut for Chess in 1961 by Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon's spoken interjections directly contradict the original lyrics' theme of sober regret. Wolf only sings the first two verses, but before and between them, Dixon interposes his own humorous comments, about "enjoyin' things that kings and queens will never have" and about having "spent more money than a millionaire."

Muddy Waters recorded it in 1970 for a Stockholm radio broadcast on the Black Bear label (LP 903) and in 1971 at a live Chicago session, issued on Chess LP 680002. Eric Clapton recorded a version of it, and as recently as 1998, veteran Chicago bluesman Snooky Pryor recorded it in Toronto, Canada.

PAUL GARON

GOLD STAR

Houston recording studio and record label, founded by Bill Quinn. In 1947, Aladdin Records could not

entice Lightnin' Hopkins to leave his hometown to record a follow-up to his first recordings with the label, so they had Hopkins record at Gold Star. After selling a few masters to Aladdin, Quinn decided to record Hopkins on his own label. With the success from Hopkins's records, Quinn released recordings of other local blues artists under Gold Star's "600" blues series, including "Lil' Son" Jackson and L. C. Williams. The label's production was limited—in some cases, less than a hundred copies per record were pressed—so in order for the records to reach a national audience, Quinn sold the masters of Gold Star releases to Aladdin's main competitor, Modern Records. By 1950, other record companies realized that Hopkins did not consider his contract with Gold Star to be exclusive, and Quinn soon left the recording business.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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Strachwitz, Chris. Liner notes to *Lightnin' Hopkins: The Gold Star Sessions Vol. 1*. (1990, Arhoolie CD/C 352).

Discography: McGrath

GOLDBAND RECORDS

Eddie Shuler's Goldband Records was run out of his small shop/recording studio in Lake Charles, Louisiana. His successes included the million selling "Paper in My Shoe" by Boozoo Chavis, which is considered the first zydeco recording, the only recordings of Cajun legend Iry Lejeune, and several Swamp Pop hits. Although not known for blues, Goldband issued important records for "Hop" Wilson, "Juke Boy" Bonner, and Lonnie "Guitar Jr." Brooks.

JARED SNYDER

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Tisserand, Michael. *The Kingdom of Zydeco*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998.

Discography: AMG, pp. 61, 68–69, 110–111, 621; LSFP, pp. 20, 364; McGrath

See also Bonner, Weldon H. Phillip "Juke Boy"; Brooks, Lonnie; Chavis, Boozoo; Chenier, Morris "Big"; Lejeune, Iry; Wilson, Harding "Hop"

GOLDEN GATE QUARTET

Initial members: William Langford (1st tenor); Henry Owens (2nd tenor); Willie Johnson (baritone); and Orlandus Wilson (bass). One of the first professional quartets, the Gates formed in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1934. First recording in 1937, they emulated the Mills Brothers, incorporating that group's instrument impersonations and secular style, and dressed alike. Personnel changes over the years left Wilson the only original member by 1959, when the group relocated to France. Not counting their many postwar recordings, between 1937 and 1943 they recorded more than two hundred forty songs (including some air checks), and accompanied Leadbelly and Josh White for the Library of Congress.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin
Young, Alan. *Woke Me Up This Morning: Black Gospel Singers and the Gospel Life*, pp. xxv–xxvi, 56, 72, 78–83. Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 1997.

Discography: DGR

GOLDSTEIN, KENNETH

b. 17 March 1927; Brooklyn, NY

d. 11 November 1995; Philadelphia, PA

Dr. Kenneth S. "Kenny" Goldstein was the first of a generation of activist folklorists. Starting in the late 1950s he edited or produced more than five hundred LPs for Folkways, Stinson, Riverside, and Prestige Records, including recordings by Reverend Gary Davis, Lightnin' Hopkins, Sonny Terry, and Brownie McGhee. His well-crafted writing set the model for scholarly liner notes.

JARED SNYDER

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See also Stinson Records

GOLDWAX

A Memphis-based label whose sixty-plus singles, recorded between 1964 and 1969, are highly esteemed

GOLDWAX

by fans of deep soul music. Goldwax was founded by Quentin M. Claunch (1922–), a Mississippi native with a country music background, with financial backing from Doc Russell, a Memphis pharmacist. Claunch was friends with Sun's Sam Phillips and a part-owner of Hi Records in the late 1950s. His first major signings were O. V. Wright and James Carr, local gospel singers about to go secular under the encouragement of songwriter Roosevelt Jamison. Goldwax released just one single by Wright (the classic "That's How Strong My Love Is") before losing him in a contract dispute with Peacock. The label is most closely associated with Carr, whose "You've Got My Mind Messed Up," "Throwing Water on a Drowning Man," and "Dark End of the Street" are considered masterpieces of deep soul.

Other Goldwax artists included the Ovations, featuring Sam Cooke sound-alike Louis Williams, George and Greer (George Jackson and Dan Greer), and Gene "Bowlegs" Miller. Although Goldwax recorded at various studios, its records had a signature sound, similar to Stax, but even more down-home and countrified, with muted horns, spare guitar, churchy organ, and the vocals front and center and soulful. After ceasing operations in 1969, the label was resurrected on a limited basis in the 1980s.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: McGrath

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Selected Recordings

Various artists. *The Goldwax Story, Vol. 1* (2001, Kent [UK] 203).

———. *The Goldwax Story, Vol. 2* (2004, Kent [UK] 225).

GOODEN, TONY

b. 1939 or 1940, Illinois

d. 28 June 1980; Chicago, IL

Drummer associated most with Mighty Joe Young and Son Seals. His professional career effectively ended in 1978 when his right arm was crippled in a Norwegian train accident.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Iglauer, Bruce. "Tony Gooden" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 47 (Summer 1980): 33.

GOODMAN, SHIRLEY

b. 19 June 1936; New Orleans, LA

Singer and composer. Shirley Goodman began recording with partner Leonard Lee as Shirley & Lee ("The Sweethearts of the Blues") in 1952 and exploded out of New Orleans four years later with the R&B classic "Let the Good Times Roll." Worked with Leonard Lee, Dave Bartholomew, Earl Palmer, Mac Rebennack, Jessie Hill, and Harold Battiste.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

"Shirley Goodman: Sweetheart of the Blues." In *"I Hear You Knockin'": The Sound of New Orleans Rhythm and Blues*, by Jeff Hannusch, pp. 207–218. Ville Platte, LA: Swallow Publications, 1985.

Discography: LSFP

Mohr, Kurt. "A Shirley Goodman Discography." *Shout* no. 106 (1975/1976): 5–9, with additions in no. 108 (1976): 21.

GORDON, JAY

b. Charlotte, NC; active since 1990

Electric guitarist in the manner of Jimi Hendrix, Albert Collins, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Based in Chicago, he has had a series of critically acclaimed CDs on the Blue Ace label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Scott Yanow)

Discography: AMG (Scott Yanow)

GORDON, JIMMIE

Flourished 1930s–1940s

Like Bumble Bee Slim, Bill Gaither, and Johnny Temple, Gordon was a journeyman studio singer of the 1930s, employed primarily to record, for the

jukebox market, covers of hits by artists like Leroy Carr and Joe Pullum, as well as original numbers in similar idioms. A mainstay of the Decca catalog, he made more than sixty recordings, usually accompanied by piano, sometimes his own, and guitar, or by a small band with one or two horns. Although his manner may be too disengaged for current taste, his work often shows imagination and occasionally, as in “Graveyard Blues,” emotional depth.

TONY RUSSELL

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Russell, Tony. “Talking Blues: Blues Masters of the 30’s—Jimmie Gordon.” *Jazz & Blues* 1, no. 3 (June/July 1971): 29.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

GORDON, ROSCO(E)

b. 10 April 1928; Memphis, TN

d. 11 July 2002; Queens, NY

Born and raised in Memphis, influential rhythm and blues pioneer Rosco Gordon, Jr., got his musical start as a child learning on his mother’s piano. A naturally gifted musician, Gordon was entertaining family and friends with his talents on the piano by age seven. Growing up in the 1940s, his early inspirations came from the recordings of Nat “King” Cole, Charles Brown, and Ivory Joe Hunter and from catching performances of area musicians on Memphis’s bustling Beale Street. Around 1950, Gordon won first prize at the amateur show hosted by Rufus Thomas at Beale’s Palace Theater, which led to an appearance on Nat D. Williams’s WDIA radio show. The on-air performance was such a success that within days he began performing on his own show.

Gordon’s music soon caught the attention of Memphis producer Sam Phillips and in 1951 he made his first recordings at Phillips’s Memphis Recording Service. “Booted,” which featured Gordon’s uniquely overemphasized vocals and boogie piano rhythm, was leased by Phillips to both RPM and Chess simultaneously and quickly climbed to number one on the R&B charts in early 1952. Phillips’s leasing practices quickly prompted legal action between RPM and Chess over Gordon’s lucrative contract rights, with RPM eventually securing the artist. Gordon followed the success of “Booted” with the self-penned “No More Doggin” for RPM, which reached number two on the charts two months later. His relaxed, loping shuffle became known as “Rosco’s Rhythm,” a sound that would help

inspire the music genre of ska, a forerunner of reggae, when his popular R&B records reached Jamaica.

Gordon continued to compose and record extensively throughout the 1950s and had releases on RPM, Duke, Sun, and Flip. In 1956, he recorded the regional dance hit “The Chicken” and toured with a live trained rooster as part of his performances. Gordon signed with Vee-Jay in 1959 and wrote and recorded “Just a Little Bit,” which reached number two on the charts and would eventually be covered by various artists, including Elvis Presley. In 1961, Gordon met Memphis singer Barbara Kerr and the two soon married. The following year, the couple moved to New York City where Gordon became active on the local music scene.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Gordon, often with duet partner Kerr, recorded for ABC-Paramount, Old Town, Calla, and his own Bab-Roc label. Kerr died of cancer in 1984 and Gordon continued to perform sporadically throughout the next fifteen years. Gordon was able to regain the composing rights to much of his 1950s material after decades of not receiving royalties on his million-selling compositions. In 2000, he made a strong comeback with the critically acclaimed *Memphis Tennessee* for Stony Plain, in which he returned to his Beale Street roots and reaffirmed his status as a pioneer of 1950s Memphis R&B. In 2002, Gordon gave one of his last performances at the W. C. Handy Awards in Memphis during a tribute to Sun Records alongside old friends B. B. King, Little Milton, and Ike Turner. Rosco Gordon died of a heart attack at his home seven weeks later at age seventy-four.

GENE TOMKO

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Whitburn, Joel. *Top Billboard R&B Singles: 1942–1999*. Menomonee Falls, WI: Record Research, Inc., 2000.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Bootin’: The Best of the RPM Years (1998, ACE CDCHD 694).

Memphis Tennessee (2000, Stony Plain SPCD 1267).

GORDON, SAX

b. Gordon Beadle, 1965; Detroit, MI

Boston area tenor saxophonist in the jump-blues style. In addition to his own CD releases on the

GORDON, SAX

Bullseye label, he has recorded with Champion Jack Dupree and Duke Robillard.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Birchmeier)
Gordon Beadle's website, <http://www.saxgordon.com/>
(accessed December 18, 2004).

Discography: AMG (Jason Birchmeier)

GOSPEL

(See *Black Sacred Music*)

GOTHAM/20TH CENTURY

Sam Goody launched the Gotham label in 1946. Focusing on blues, spirituals, and jazz, Goody's most successful artist was saxophonist/arranger Earl Bostic. In 1948, Goody sold Gotham along with Bostic's contract to Ivin Ballen of Philadelphia. Ballen's two labels, Apex and 20th Century, had been moderately successful, but he hoped Bostic could deliver a national hit. Instead, the breakthrough came from Ballen's new Gotham 600 gospel series, a 1949 release, "Touch Me, Lord Jesus" by Philadelphia locals, the Angelic Gospel Singers.

With that success, Ballen continued releasing Gotham and 20th Century sides from both local artists and catalogs acquired from other labels. Ballen's roster, strong in doo-wop, R&B, blues, and gospel, included artists Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, John Lee Hooker, Champion Jack Dupree, Lee Andrews and the Hearts, the Capris, the Harmonizing Four, the Davis Sisters, and the Dixie Hummingbirds. By the late 1950s, Gotham and 20th Century were phased out as Ballen turned his attention instead to the record-pressing end of the business.

JERRY ZOLTEN

Bibliography

Bastin, Bruce. "The Gotham Gallery." *Juke Blues* no. 11 (Winter 1987/1988): 14–17.

Discography: McGrath

GRANDERSON, JOHN LEE

b. 11 April 1913; Ellendale, TN
d. 22 August 1979; Chicago, IL

Guitarist whose style was established in west Tennessee blues before World War II. He left his parents around 1927, making his way north to Chicago in 1928. For many years he worked as junkman, auto mechanic, and custodian. He performed around Chicago frequently, sometimes with John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson in the 1930s and 1940s, and with Robert Nighthawk through the 1960s. He recorded for Testament in 1962–1966 by himself and as part of the Chicago String Band (with Big John Wrencher, Johnny Young, and Carl Martin). Additional recordings were made for Aldephi. For the most part he ceased performing publicly in 1975, but he continued composing lyrics until his death. He suffered a stroke in February 1979, and he died that August of pancreatic cancer.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris; Larkin
Swain, Tom. "John Lee Granderson 1913–1979" [obituary].
Living Blues no. 56 (Spring 1983): 39.

Discography: LSFP

GRANT, LEOLA "COOT"

b. Leola B. Pettigrew, 17 June 1893; Birmingham, AL

Aka Leola B. Wilson. Before World War I she toured widely as a dancer throughout the United States, Europe, and South Africa. In 1912 she married pianist Wesley "Sox" Wilson (1893–1958) and henceforth they worked as a team. They recorded much, especially before World War II, with jazz bandleaders like Fletcher Henderson. Grant's life after the 1958 death of Wilson remains unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP

GRAVES, ROOSEVELT

b. 9 December 1909; Summerland, MS

d. 30 December 1962; Gulfport, MS

Guitarist and singer of blues and sacred material. Recorded in 1929 and in 1936 with his brother, whose name has been given as Uaroy or as Aaron. During

their 1936 recording sessions in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, they joined pianist Cooney Vaughan for the highly regarded Mississippi Jook Band sides.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

GRAY, ARVELLA "BLIND"

b. Walter Dixon, 28 January 1906; Somerville, TX
d. 7 September 1980; Chicago, IL

Blind singer and bottleneck slide guitarist long active on Chicago's Maxwell Street, who was recorded in the 1960s and 1970s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSPF

GRAY, HENRY

b. 19 January 1925; Kenner, LA

Blues piano player Henry Gray was raised in Alsen, Louisiana, just north of Baton Rouge. He began teaching himself piano at age ten, and within a few years was playing music professionally in local clubs. After being discharged from the army in 1946, Gray moved to Chicago to become a full-time musician. He quickly befriended Big Bill Broonzy, Tampa Red, and Sonny Boy Williamson I, and developed his hard-driving piano style from mentor Big Maceo Merriweather. In the early 1950s, he joined Little Hudson's Red Devil Trio and gigged throughout Chicago. Gray's recording career began in 1952 when he backed Jimmy Rogers on several Chess sides. He went on to become an in-demand session musician for several prominent Chicago blues labels, and recorded with Little Walter, Bo Diddley, and Jimmy Reed, among others.

Gray recorded as a leader for Chess and Parrot in the mid-1950s with promising results, but the tracks were not issued. After playing with a who's who of Chicago musicians, Gray joined Howlin' Wolf's band in 1956 and gigged and recorded with him for the next twelve years. In 1968, Gray returned to Louisiana and became a longtime member of the Baton Rouge blues community and eventually formed his own band, the Cats. After a few European tours and recordings in the 1970s, he released his first domestic album on Blind Pig in 1988, and recorded and toured sporadically throughout the 1990s. Gray continued to be musically active into the twenty-first century, being regarded as an elder statesman of Chicago blues.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: LSPF

Lucky Man (1988, Blind Pig CD 2788).
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GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression started with the Wall Street Crash of 1929, caused by overinvestment, and ended in 1940 with an economic upswing caused by war production.

The first time the term "the panic" was found in a post-Crash recording was when guitarist Hezekiah Jenkins recorded "The Panic Is On" in January 1931. The song depicts the results of the Depression for a variety of people. The selling of apples became the proverbial occupation for the unemployed, but Jenkins sings that the men may even have to resort to stealing and that some women see no way out but in prostitution.

While Herbert Hoover is popularly blamed for the Great Depression, the economic trends that caused the stock market crash, especially the popular practice of buying stock on credit, or on the margin, had begun well before he came into office. However, he believed that economic aid should come from state and local governments rather than the federal government. Thus, while he obtained funding for public works projects that would provide jobs, his administration did not provide any kind of direct aid to individuals or families, and most of the jobs provided

by the public works went to whites. Many people, including many African Americans, lost their homes and went to live in shantytowns known as “Hoovervilles.” Hoovervilles were mentioned by J. D. Short in his 1933 “It’s Hard Time.”

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the new Democratic president who entered the White House on March 4, 1933, announced that he wanted to come into the American homes “for a little fireside chat.” Roosevelt’s energetic personality helped restore confidence in the country and the economy. His administration created direct aid programs as well as a number of federally funded employment agencies on a scale much larger than Hoover had envisioned. Many blues songs of the period make references to these agencies.

The Civil Works Administration (CWA) was installed to guide America through the winter of 1933–1934. Joe Pullum, Reverend J. M. Gates, and Walter Roland sang how comforting it was to receive some cash instead of the second-rate products from the welfare stores.

The National Recovery Administration (NRA), which asked all employers to pay the same reasonable wages and to require the same hours, was a failure. Although Walter Vinson sang the glories of the NRA in January 1935, its codes were too complicated and it folded in May 1935.

Blues guitarist Carl Martin asked for a “Brand New Deal” and it came in the shape of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). From 1935 to 1943 the agency provided work for almost nine million people. Casey Bill Weldon sang about a WPA slum clearance project and Billie McKenzie worked as a prostitute to support her man, but was rejected as soon as her lover had found a WPA job. Peetie Wheatstraw sang three songs about the WPA in which the work on the projects and the 403 dismissal forms are discussed. Sonny Boy Williamson, Big Bill Broonzy, Louis Armstrong, Ida Cox, and Champion Jack Dupree also found musical inspiration in the WPA.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) provided work in national forests and parks for two and a half million young men. Washboard Sam had set his hopes on it after disappointing experiences with the WPA.

The Public Works Administration (PWA) provided “useful public works” at a cost of six billion dollars in the period from 1933 to 1939. Charlie McCoy is overjoyed with the change from “beef and meat” relief to real money, Jimmy Gordon begs the president to support the PWA, and Lonnie Johnson’s theme is the 403 dismissal note.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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van Rijn, Guido. *Roosevelt’s Blues: African American Blues and Gospel Songs on FDR*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997.

GREAT MIGRATION

The Great Migration has been well documented in words, on canvas, and on film. A rural-to-urban migration, it embodied elements of cultural conflict, as generally poor, rural blacks made their way to northern metropolitan centers in numbers that affected the economic conditions and social relations in those destinations, as well as agricultural labor relations throughout much of the Deep South. Although thousands of black people migrated north throughout the nineteenth century, the Great Migration did not begin in earnest until World War I, a half century after Emancipation. It encompassed some six million migrants and it lasted for fifty to sixty years, commonly thought of as dwindling and then ending some time in the 1960s or 1970s. The Great Migration occurred in geographic “streams.” Most migrants from the southern Atlantic coast headed to Atlantic northern seaboard cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, while most migrants from the south central regions, including the blues hearth of the Yazoo Delta in Mississippi, left for midwestern cities, especially Chicago. Migrants brought their culture with them, including musical tastes and skills, and in this way the Delta (or country) blues made its way to Chicago where it would evolve into a more upbeat, self-affirming, and electric sound, called Chicago blues. Big Bill Broonzy, Arthur Crudup, Willie Dixon, Walter Horton, Howlin’ Wolf, Elmore James, Joe McCoy, Little Walter, Muddy Waters, Tampa Red, Junior Wells, John Lee (Sonny Boy) Williamson, and Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller) were among the many blues players coming to Chicago as part of the Great Migration.

The Great Migration occurred for several reasons, both social and economic in nature. The end of Reconstruction and the departure of any substantial federal government presence left southern states to manage their own affairs. What evolved was a disenfranchisement of black people, a virtual apartheid society enforced by “Jim Crow” restrictions, and widespread violence, including lynchings. The federal *Plessy v. Ferguson* case established a legal basis for an apartheid society. An increased presence of the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s clearly contributed to an atmosphere of fear. Economic conditions for most southern black people were dire as well. The sharecropping system soon evolved into a condition of

perpetual debt for many black agricultural workers. The cotton-based agricultural economy throughout much of the South was depressed. Cotton was under attack by several factors, including the boll weevil, competition from the irrigated western states, and floods in the Mississippi and Yazoo Deltas in 1915 and 1916. Despite these reasons for blacks to leave the South, the Great Migration did not begin until there were economic opportunities for black people elsewhere.

The migration was facilitated directly by labor shortages in booming northern industries. World War I truncated the supply of industrial workers from Europe at the same time that many of those industries were experiencing substantial growth due to the expansionary U.S. economy and to the demands of warring nations for U.S. manufacturers' goods. Industrialists turned to the rural South with its ample supply of disaffected black people. Labor agents visited portions of the South, signing up able-bodied younger black males, securing them transport, usually via train, and making it possible for them to return, once established, for their families. Robert Abbott's *Chicago Defender*, a black-owned weekly newspaper read widely throughout the South, changed its stance because of these economic opportunities and began to encourage black migration to northern cities, offering letters attesting to the economic possibilities in northern cities and articles describing the relative freedom in those places, especially when compared to southern racial atrocities also described in the *Defender's* pages. Once earlier migrants were established, their kinfolk and friends often followed in a "chain" migration based on the earlier success stories. While conditions in the North were far from perfect they were generally superior to the climate of fear, the primitive housing conditions, the poor educational opportunities, and the hopelessness of the sharecropping system in the South. The World War I period has been termed the "first wave" of the Great Migration.

Movement from the rural South to northern cities continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s. A surge in migration during the 1940s, generally termed the "second wave," occurred with mechanization in southern agriculture, especially the mechanical cotton picker, the 1927 flood in the Yazoo Delta, and the upheaval of World War II, which again offered increased job opportunities for black people.

Black migrants from the Yazoo Delta in Mississippi tended toward Chicago, with the Illinois Central Railroad as their principal carrier and the South Side of Chicago as their usual destination. The Delta Blues, then, was carried along with this stream as a cultural trait. Its evolution into the "Chicago" or

"urban" blues is an example of culture change brought about by the clash of rural and urban cultures. Blues players found they had difficulty being heard over the din in larger rooms and halls in the city and outside among the chaos of Maxwell Street, spurring an electrified amplification that was already well under way. Songwriters found that most younger urban black people were less interested in the old Delta themes such as poverty and personal crises than they were in more upbeat issues and feelings, reflective of the better economic times and more hopeful futures.

JOHN F. JAKUBS

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GREEN, AL

b. 13 April 1946; Forest City, AR

Singer, songwriter. Green's synthesis of secular and sacred created a unique and highly popular version of southern soul that upgraded the musicality of the subgenre while gaining it unprecedented international exposure.

At age nine he was singing in the family gospel group, the Green Brothers, which toured the South before settling in Grand Rapids, Michigan. But he was expelled from the group as a teenager for straying into secular music due to his admiration of Jackie Wilson. Green coped with the dismissal by forming his own group as a sixteen-year-old. He got his first taste of recording success in 1968 when his group the Soul Mates scored an R&B hit with "Back Up Train."

A year later Green was the opening act at a Hi Records package concert passing through Midland, Texas. The label's guiding force, trumpeter/producer/arranger Willie Mitchell, touring with his own "Soul Serenade" hit, convinced Green to return with him to Memphis and work with the label. The affiliation proved to be a historically significant and commercially successful one as Green and Hi Records crafted

a sensual sound that was stylish, sophisticated, and eminently accessible to airplay.

A 1970 debut, *Green Is Blues*, served as a warmup for his next album, *Al Green Gets Next to You*, which began a run of hit singles that made him one of the best-selling artists of the 1970s. In 1972 "Let's Stay Together" became Green's first top ten single. It would be joined in rapid progression by a succession of enduring soul classics and radio favorites, including "Look What You've Done For Me," "Here I Am," "You Ought to Be with Me," and "Call Me."

Green's unbroken and ever-escalating string of success was ultimately interrupted by romance and religion. A bizarre incident involving an ex-girlfriend who poured boiling grits on him in the bathtub and then shot herself with his gun prompted Green in 1976 to become born again, but he also bought a church in Memphis and was ordained as a minister. He continued to record secular albums, although seemingly with less enthusiasm, but his fragile ballads couldn't compete commercially with the pounding beat of disco.

When Green fell from the stage at a Cincinnati concert he decided it was another sign steering him toward sacred music and he announced his total secular retirement. He recorded gospel albums in the 1980s and worked with Patti Labelle in the gospel musical "Your Arms Too Short to Box with God." He began to ease back into secular music with a performance on the 1988 *Scrooged* soundtrack but his subsequent releases achieved little attention or commercial success through the 1990s.

Green's songs never went away from radio airplay but the singer had to stage a public comeback to remind fans he remained a vital and viable musical force into the twenty-first century. He successfully did just that, headlining the 2003 Austin City Limits Festival to kick off a media-intensive national tour and releasing *I Can't Stop* on Verve Records the same year.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin
Green, Al, and Davin Seay. *Take Me to the River*. New York: HarperEntertainment, 2000.

GREEN, CAL

b. 22 June 1937; Dayton, TX
d. 4 July 2004, Lake View Terrace, CA

Guitar and vocalist who played jazz, blues, and doo-wop. His brother was guitarist Clarence Green

(1934–1997). Green grew up in the guitar-rich environment of Texas, where he drew on Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, T-Bone Walker, Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland, Johnny Guitar Watson, and older brother Clarence for inspiration. In 1954 Green joined Hank Ballard and the Midnighters. Tunes like "Don't Change Your Pretty Ways," "It's Love Baby (24 Hours a Day)," "Tore Up Over You," and "Open Up the Back Door" offered him ample opportunity to display his guitar prowess. Green recorded two double-sided 45s in 1958 for the Midnigher's Cincinnati-based Federal Records: "I Can Hear My Baby Calling"/"The Search Is Over," and the instrumentals "The Big Push"/"Green's Blues." He played on Connie McBooker and Quinton Kimble's RPM Records, served as the Houston sideman for artists such as Big Mama Thornton and Leo Baxter, and toured with Lowell Fulson.

A 1959 marijuana conviction sent Green to Texas prison for 21 months. After his release, he rejoined the Midnighters for a brief stint in 1962. Green's work became more influenced by jazz, and he worked in organ trios with such artists as Brother Jack McDuff and Charles Kynard. During the 1960s Green moved to Los Angeles and played studio sessions for artists like Ray Charles, Roberta Flack, and various Motown artists; he also worked with Sammy Davis, Jr., and Lou Rawls.

JOE C. CLARK

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AMG (Bill Dahl)
Shurman, Dick. "Blue Memories: Cal Green." *Living Blues* no. 24 (November/December 1975): 31–33.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Ballard, Hank; Brown, Clarence "Gatemouth"; Charles, Ray; Collins, Albert; Copeland, Johnny "Clyde"; Fulson, Lowell; Green, Clarence; Rawls, Lou; Thornton, Willie Mae "Big Mama"; Walker, T-Bone; Watson, Johnny "Guitar"

GREEN, CHARLIE

b. ca. 1900, Omaha, NE
d. February 1936; New York, NY

Early jazz/blues trombonist Charlie Green was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1900. Green played with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra throughout the 1920s ultimately playing on several blues classics for Bessie Smith. These sessions immortalized Green with

Smith's recording of "Trombone Cholly" (Columbia 14232-D) in 1927. Green's untimely death occurred in 1936 when he froze to death on the door step of his Harlem tenement.

BRYAN GROVE

Bibliography

Chilton; Larkin; New Grove Jazz

GREEN, CLARENCE

b. 17 June 1934; Mount Belvieu, TX

d. 13 March 1997; Houston, TX

Guitarist; brother of Cal Green. He was raised in Houston's Fifth Ward, where he saw his mother play guitar in the local Church of God in Christ congregation. His early music was in sacred performance, but his tastes shifted to blues, country music, and zydeco. From around 1951 through the early 1960s, he and local Creole bluesman Albert Redeaux formed Blues for Two, which at times had performing with them singer Lavelle White and guitarists Johnny Clyde Copeland and Joe Hughes. After Blues for Two disbanded, Green briefly formed the Cobras, and he also participated in Duke/Peacock studio sessions.

By the end of the 1960s he formed the Rhythmaires, which he maintained until his death. For seven years Trudy Lynn was his singer, and tenor saxophonist Wilbur MacFarland and pianist Leon Haywood were in various lineups. The Rhythmaires were a local favorite, and for many years the group played the Penzoil oil company Christmas party.

Green stayed in Houston, working days for Houston Light and Power electric utility. He recorded for small labels such as Shomar, Lynn, Master, and Pope. For many years writers mistakenly attributed his records to Galveston, Texas, pianist Clarence "Candy" Green and vice versa.

EDWARD KOMARA

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GREEN, CLARENCE "CANDY"

b. 15 March 1929; Galveston, TX

d. 3 April 1988; Galveston, TX

Singer and pianist who spent much of his life traveling abroad, initially with the Merchant Marine (1945–1948), then as an itinerant musician (1954–1972) in Scandinavia and Europe. His recorded work done was mostly in Houston, Texas, in 1952, partly on a contract with Duke/Peacock, and also for the Monarch and Essex labels. Not to be confused with guitarist Clarence Green (1934–1997), brother of Cal Green.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

GREEN, GRANT

b. 6 June 1935; St. Louis, MO

d. 31 January 1979; New York City, NY

Guitarist. Early influences included Charlie Christian and Charlie Parker. His first experience was gained in St. Louis, then in New York from 1960, where he recorded extensively in hard bop and soul jazz settings for Blue Note, and became a central figure in the establishment of the organ trio as a popular phenomenon (his partners included Baby Face Willette, Larry Young, and Big John Patton). His direct, soulful playing was cast in an even more populist context in the 1970s, when he turned to more commercial soul and funk styles. His lyrical style was characterized by a linear horn-like approach that remained rooted in blues.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography

Grantstand (1961, Blue Note 84086).

Born to be Blue (1962, Blue Note 84432).

Feelin' the Spirit (1962, Blue Note 84132).

Am I Blue (1963, Blue Note 84139).

Idle Moments (1963, Blue Note 84154).

GREEN, GRANT

Talkin' About! (1964, Blue Note 84183).

His Majesty King Funk (1965, Verve 68627).

Live at the Lighthouse (1972, Blue Note A 037 G2).

Iron City (Cobblestone 9002).

GREEN, JESSE

b. 23 August 1937; Delhi, LA

Drummer. Moved to Chicago in 1952. His first significant sideman work in blues was with Otis Rush in 1962, then later with Mighty Joe Young in 1962–1968.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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GREEN, LIL

b. Lillian Johnson, 22 December 1919; Clarksdale, MS

d. 14 April 1954; Chicago, IL

Chicago blues singer of the 1940s and 1950s. Her immediately recognizable sly, astringent, and high-pitched voice so intimately defines the character of her songs that one hears true artistry in her music, most notably in her early 1940s hits, "Romance in the Dark," "Mellow Man," and "Why Don't You Do Right?" Green began performing in 1939, and the following year while singing at the Manchester Grill, she was discovered by blues producer Lester Melrose. He got her signed to RCA-Victor's Bluebird imprint, and her debut session, where she was accompanied magnificently by Big Bill Broonzy on guitar and Simeon Henry on piano, yielded one of the great blues ballads, "Romance in the Dark." The record became a standard, being recorded by such artists as Jeri Sullivan and Billie Holiday. Her next hit was "My Mellow Man" (1941), followed by the biggest record of her career, "Why Don't You Do Right?" (1941). The following year Peggy Lee recording with Benny Goodman had a huge hit with a swing version of the song.

Off her recording successes, Green toured the country playing all the large black clubs and the major theaters, generally with the Tiny Bradshaw Band. After World War II, RCA-Victor in attempt to give Green a more modern sound had her record with horn-driven combos, and even a big band, which was led by Howard Callender, who became her

husband. But although hits were not forthcoming, Green continued to tour successfully into the late 1940s. After her Victor contract ran out in 1947, she recorded twice more, for Aladdin (1949) and then Atlantic (1951). In the 1950s Green continued to work the clubs in Chicago, but died in obscurity.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

GREEN, NORMAN G. "GUITAR SLIM"

b. 25 July 1907; Bryant, TX

d. 28 September 1975; Los Angeles, CA

This deep singer and down-home guitarist, who carried the Texas blues tradition into California, recorded some classic sides in the 1940s and 1950s, such as "Alla Blues," that would become some kind of a West Coast national anthem like "Tin Pan Alley." Shortly before his death, he was rediscovered by Johnny Otis who recorded his only album.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Stolper, Darryl. "Slim's Green Story." *Blues Unlimited* no. 63 (June 1969): 11.

Discography: LSFP

Stone Down Blues (1970, Kent LP 549).

GREEN, PETER

b. Peter Greenbaum, 29 October 1946; London, England

Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac was one of the British bands most responsible for popularizing electric blues with young rock audiences during the 1960s. At his peak of popularity in the late 1960s, Green was considered a rival of Eric Clapton as the top British electric blues guitarist.

Green replaced Clapton in the Bluesbreakers in 1966. In 1967, he left to form Fleetwood Mac as lead guitarist and singer. Green's new band was just as immersed in Chicago blues as Mayall's, and Green's ability to write hit songs ("Albatross," "Black Magic Woman") won them a loyal following.

Green disappeared from public view after leaving Fleetwood Mac in 1970. He recorded sporadically in the late 1970s and 1980s before reemerging in the late 1990s, still playing Chicago-style electric blues.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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 Peter Green. *Reaching the Cold 100* (2003, Eagle 20004).

GREENE, L. C.

b. 23 October 1921; Minter City, MS
 d. 24 August 1985; Pontiac, MI

Detroit-based guitarist whose records for the Dot and Von labels are notable if lesser-known examples of Mississippi rural blues migrated to a northern city. On most of his records, he performs with his cousin Walter Mitchell on harmonica.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSF

GREENE, RUDOLPH SPENCER "RUDY"

Active 1940s–1950s

Pianist, guitarist, and singer in 1950s jump rhythm-and-blues and early rock 'n' roll styles. He began in

the 1940s as a T-Bone Walker imitator in Nashville. After a few years in Chicago, he moved to Florida in 1956. The next year during an Ember label session in New York City, he recorded his celebrated song "Juicy Fruit."

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSF

GREER, "BIG" JOHN MARSHALL

b. 21 November 1923; Hot Springs, AR
 d. 12 May 1972; Hot Springs, AR

Vocalist and tenor saxophonist who had considerable success with his own groups and as a featured member of the Lucky Millinder band. His "Got You on My Mind" for RCA Victor was a hit in 1952. Much of his career was guided by childhood friend Henry Glover, who had referred Greer to Millinder, and who later brought Greer to King Records as artist. By 1957 he had returned to Hot Springs, Arkansas, for the remainder of his life.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSF

GREY GHOST

b. Roosevelt Thomas Williams, 7 December 1903; Bastrop, TX
 d. 17 July 1996; Austin, TX

Singer, pianist. Williams acquired his performing name as a young barrelhouse pianist who hopped trains to play juke joints, carnivals, medicine shows, and dances and then disappeared on the rails immediately afterward. He gained brief national attention with a *Time* magazine mention of his "Hitler Blues" during World War II but he ultimately tired of travel and settled in Austin, Texas, where he drove a school bus until he reached retirement age. He enjoyed a career renaissance as an octogenarian due to the

GREY GHOST

efforts of Texas ethnomusicologist Tary Owens, who recorded him in 1987 on Catfish Records. After his rediscovery, Williams, who also released an eponymous album on Spindletop in 1992, performed regularly in Austin up until the time of his death.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

GRIFFIN, BESSIE

b. 6 July 1922; New Orleans, LA
d. 10 April 1989; Culver City, CA

Griffin sang in church choirs and was discovered by New Orleans native Mahalia Jackson, who heard Griffin sing in 1951 at a celebration honoring Jackson. Two years later, she joined the Caravans for a year, eventually settling in Los Angeles. She made her reputation with her blues-drenched contralto voice and her willingness to perform in nightclubs and jazz festivals.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

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GRIFFIN, "BIG" MIKE

b. Lawton, OK

Singer, lead guitarist. Formative influences included Albert King, Albert Collins, and Paul Butterfield guitarists Michael Bloomfield and Elvin Bishop. Raised in Oklahoma, his professional career has been in Nashville, Tennessee. His CD releases have appeared on the Malaco/Waldoxy label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

GRIFFIN, JOHNNY

b. John Arnold Griffin III, 24 April 1928; Chicago, IL

Saxophonist. Associated with the so-called "tough tenors" school in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Combined elements of swing and bop within his hard-hitting style, and always excelled in blues form. Joined Lionel Hampton straight from school in 1945, and later had important associations with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (1957) and the Tough Tenors band co-led with Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (1960–1962). Settled in Europe from 1963, continued to lead his own bands and tour as a "single" with local rhythm sections. Griffin earned his reputation for the fearsome speed of his playing, but he was also a highly expressive interpreter of ballads with a deep feeling for blues.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord

Selected Recordings

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With Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis. *Tough Tenors* (1960, Jazzland 931); *Blues Up and Down* (1961, Jazzland 960); *Live at Minton's* (1961, Prestige 7309, 7330, 7357, 7407); *The Tenor Scene* (1961, Prestige 7191); *Tough Tenor Favourites* (1962, Jazzland 976).

GRIFFIN, RAYMOND L. "R. L."

b. 9 December 1939; Kilgore, TX

Singer, club owner. Initial success came in Dallas, Texas, as a member of Big Bo and the Arrows. In pursuing his solo career, he took as his models singers Bobby Bland and Z. Z. Hill. He made a number of 45-rpm singles, including some for the All Platinum label with Al "TNT" Braggs producing. Since 1985 his Blues Palace (originally Blues Alley) has been a leading blues and soul venue in Dallas.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin
Schuller, Tim. "Dallas Blues: R. L. Griffin." *Living Blues*
no. 129 (September/October 1996): 42–46.

Discography: LSFP**GRIFFITH, SHIRLEY**

b. 26 April 1907; Brandon, MS
D. 18 June 1974; Indianapolis, IN

Blues singer and guitarist. Although Griffith did not receive much critical acclaim during his lifetime, his controlled and expressive voice and his skillful guitar playing garnered him respect from many of the blues musicians with whom he played. Griffith was born in the small farming town of Brandon, but the family moved to Jackson, Mississippi, when Shirley was a small child. By age ten Griffith began learning guitar under the instruction of his aunt and uncle, and in his late teens Griffith had met Tommy Johnson, a noted blues singer and Jackson native. Johnson became Griffith's greatest musical influence and taught him the subtle art of blues music guitar accompaniment, particularly in the Mississippi country blues style. Johnson encouraged him to pursue a career in music and in 1928 Griffith moved to Indianapolis to pursue this dream.

Griffith made a modest living playing at local taverns in Indianapolis and there he met fellow musician Scrapper Blackwell and also Leroy Carr, one of the most popular blues singers of the 1930s. Griffith played with them both, most commonly at local parties, clubs, and taverns. Although Griffith continued playing music throughout his life, by the 1940s he no longer depended on his music for a living and instead held a variety of positions at the local Chevrolet automobile factory. He toured clubs on the East Coast with Yank Rachell in 1968, performed at the first Ann Arbor (Michigan) Blues Festival in 1969 and appeared at the Notre Dame Blues Festival in South Bend, Indiana, in 1971.

ERIN STAPLETON-CORCORAN

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin
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Discography: LSFP**Selected Recordings**

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Indiana Avenue Blues (1962, Prestige/Bluesville).
Mississippi Blues (1973, USA: Blue Goose Records).

GRIMES, LLOYD "TINY"

b. ca. 7 July 1916; Newport News, VA
d. 4 March 1989; New York City, NY

Guitarist. Birth date is unconfirmed. He claimed 1915, 1916, and 1917 at different times, while the Social Security death index suggests 1911. Grimes began his career as a drummer, then became a pianist and singer before settling on guitar around 1938, with a preference for the four-string model. He was influenced by electric guitar pioneer Charlie Christian. Grimes joined pianist Art Tatum in 1943 in a historic trio with bassist Slam Stewart. After leaving Tatum, he led his own groups, including one that recorded an important early bebop session with Charlie Parker on alto saxophone in 1944. He also worked with Billie Holiday during this period.

Grimes switched his focus to rhythm and blues in the late 1940s, leading a popular band known as the Rockin' Highlanders. The band ran until 1955 and recorded for Atlantic and Gotham. It featured saxophonist Jon Hardee and then Red Prysock, who wore kilts on stage and included a couple of Scottish music hall tunes in their jazz and blues repertoire.

Grimes had mainly studio work after 1958. He cut three jazz albums with blues bias as a leader for Prestige featuring Coleman Hawkins, Eddie "Lock-jaw" Davis, and Jerome Richardson. Ill health forced a two-year hiatus in 1964–1966, but he returned to performing and recording, including sessions with Johnny Hodges, Illinois Jacquet, and others, in late 1960s. He toured Europe in 1968 and 1970, the later occasion with Jay McShann and George Kelly, and with Arnett Cobb and Panama Francis in 1974.

He underwent a serious operation in the early 1980s, but returned to performing, and remained active in his last decade around New York and on the jazz and blues festival circuit.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: LSFP**Selected Recordings**

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GRIMES, LLOYD “TINY”

Savoy 526); *Rock the House* (aka And His Rockin' Highlanders) (1947–1953, Swingtime 1016); *Blues Groove* (1958, Prestige 7138); *Callin' the Blues* (1958, Prestige 7144); *Tiny in Swingsville* (1959, Prestige 1796); *Profoundly Blue* (1973, Muse 5012); *Some Groovy Fours* (1974, Classic Jazz 114); *Big Time Guitar* (United Artists UA 3232).

GRISWOLD, ART AND ROMAN

Art Griswold

- b. 10 November 1939; Tillar, AR
- d. 18 November 2003; Sylva, OH

Roman Griswold

- b. 5 September 1936; Tillar, AR

Masters of raucous electric blues. While recuperating from a motorcycle wreck at age seventeen, Art Griswold received his first guitar. Eventually he migrated to Toledo, Ohio, where in 1959 he was joined by brother Roman. They formed a band, gained experience playing at Hines Farm in the early 1960s, then moved the band to Art's Tavern in 1965. By 1980 they were recognized as the mainstays of Toledo blues. Since Art's death, Roman has maintained the band as Roman Griswold and the Griswold Blues Band.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

GROSSMAN, STEFAN

- b. 16 April 1945; Brooklyn, NY

Acoustic guitarist. Grossman acquired a taste for acoustic blues, jazz, ragtime, and early folk guitar styles as a teenager, and studied on weekends with Reverend Gary Davis for eight years from the age of fifteen, absorbing all the veteran bluesman could teach him. His other major influences included Mississippi John Hurt, Charley Patton, Son House, Skip James, Fred McDowell, and Mance Lipscomb.

He formed the Even Dozen Jug Band in 1963 with Peter Siegel. He recorded his influential debut album *How to Play Blues Guitar* in 1966, a foretaste of things to come later in his career, when he chose to focus increasingly on the production of instructional books and videos over performing.

He was a member of the radical rock group the Fugs in 1966, and worked with Chicago Loop and Mitch Ryder in 1967. He moved to Europe in 1967, living for long periods in England and Italy, where he established a notable presence on the folk and blues circuits. He cofounded the Kicking Mule label with Ed Denson, a partnership that lasted until the mid-1980s, when Fantasy bought the catalog.

He returned to America in the early 1980s, and set up his Stefan Grossman Guitar Workshop and Vestapol Videos to produce and sell his teaching materials. His major contribution to the preservation and promulgation of acoustic blues guitar styles has lain in his pedagogical activities.

Although he is a virtuoso technician, he is at best an adequate vocalist, and much of his playing as a performer can seem dry and rather clinical. He is heard to best advantage in that context on some of his early records, and the double LP *Stefan Grossman Live* (1973).

KENNY MATHIESON

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GUESNON, GEORGE “CURLEY” “CREOLE”

b. 25 May 1907; New Orleans, LA

d. 5 May 1968; New Orleans LA

Jazz banjoist, guitarist, and vocalist, Guesnon worked occasionally with blues musicians. In the mid-1930s he toured with Little Brother Montgomery’s Southern Troubadours. A brief stay in New York in 1940 led to work with Trixie Smith and with Jelly Roll Morton.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin, New Grove Jazz

Discography: DGR; Lord

GUITAR

Technical Description

A stringed instrument consisting of a neck approximately thirty inches long attached to a hollow, semi-hollow, or solid body usually made of wood, but also steel, plastic, or other synthetic materials. Most modern guitars have six steel strings, though twelve- and ten-string models also exist. Strings 6–4 (the heaviest) usually have a steel, bronze, or brass wrap over a solid steel core, while strings 3–1 (the lightest) are generally plain, solid steel on electric guitars. Classical and flamenco guitars use nylon for strings 1 and 2 and wrapped bronze strings for 6–3 (as do most flat-top acoustic guitars).

The strings are attached to the top of the neck, or headstock, by tuning machines made of steel with worm gears or by wooden pegs (classical and flamenco guitars) in slots that fit by pressure. At the bottom of the headstock the strings pass over a nut made of bone, brass, plastic, or other synthetic material, with narrow slots cut to hold them in place. They are then anchored at a bridge, or a tailpiece just below the bridge, and near the lower bout of the guitar. The distance between the nut and bridge is called the scale length and varies from twenty-four and a half inches for Gibson guitars to twenty-five and a quarter inches for Fender guitars. The neck has a thin veneer called a fingerboard, usually made of rosewood, maple, or ebony and glued to the front side of the neck into which the steel frets are seated.

Historical Development

The original ancestor of the guitar and, indeed, the first musical instrument, is likely the bow that was paired with arrows as a weapon. Around approximately 2000 B.C. the Assyrians had a stringed instrument called a chetarah as well as huge lyres the size of a harp. A bas-relief from Turkey circa 1300 B.C. shows what looks similar to a small, modern-day travel guitar. Various other cultures produced their own examples. The ancient Hebrews had the kinnura and the Greeks the cithara, from which a line can be drawn to the German fiedel, the French vielle, the English gittern, and the Spanish vihuela and guitarra in the medieval ages. In the twelfth century the Moors brought to Spain a fretted al-ud that would come to be called a lute and have a profound influence on the concept of standardized pitch. The ancestors of the modern Spanish guitar had many courses or pairs of strings and various tunings for hundreds of years. Six-string guitars finally appeared around 1810 and standard tuning of E–A–D–G–B–E (low to high) was documented in a Spanish instruction book in 1820. C. F. Martin was extremely important in helping to develop and popularize the flat-top acoustic guitar in America in the mid-1800s.

Acoustic Guitars

Acoustic flat-top guitars usually have round sound holes, though some have been made with f-holes or oval sound holes. The best have tops made of spruce for its resonant qualities, with sides and backs made of mahogany, maple, or rosewood. Cheap instruments made by Stella and Washburn were favored by blues guitarists in the prewar years and usually had straight, ladder bracing underneath the tops for support. Higher quality Martin and Gibson guitars used an X-bracing system that provides a more resonant sound and has become the accepted method on virtually all acoustic guitars. Arch top guitars with f-holes are constructed of similar materials but have a carved curve or arch to their tops, project a bright, cutting tone, and have traditionally been the instrument of choice for jazz guitarists.

Electric Guitars

Since approximately 1936 electric guitars have been amplified with electromagnetic pickups, made by wrapping thousands of coils of thin copper wire around a magnet. Smaller magnets, called pole pieces,

GUITAR

stick up through the top of the pickup, one for each string, and are often adjustable in height in order to balance the volume for each string. A guitar cord or cable connecting to the amplifier sends electricity to the pickup via an input jack on the side or front of the instrument. The vibrating strings interrupt the magnetic field created by the pickups and a relatively weak electronic signal is sent back from the guitar to an amplifier where it is boosted in volume many times over. Most pickups are passive, but active pickups powered by onboard batteries have proved popular in recent years and provide a much louder signal from the instrument. Acoustic guitars of all types may be amplified by adding pickups.

African Antecedents

According to writer Christo van Rensburg, “Much [African] music is based on speech and the bond between language and music is so intimate that it is actually possible to tune an instrument so that the music it produces is linguistically comprehensible.” This distinction is especially important in light of the fretless stringed instruments found in sub-Saharan Africa that must be seen as precursors of vocal-like bottleneck blues guitar techniques.

The stringed bow as originally used to propel an arrow is likely the second musical instrument to come into being after the drum. In central Africa this manifests itself as the one-string children’s ground bow where one end of the string is attached near the top of a bent stick and the other end is secured to a tin can placed in a hole in the ground for resonance. The string is struck with the right index finger while the left hand stops the string at intervals along the string to create various pitches. The one-string diddley bow that was often attached to the side of a house or a barn in the Deep South in the prewar years and played with a slider is a variation. These two and the following examples fall in the chordophone family of instruments, where sound is produced by means of stretched strings. The Brazilian berimbau, brought to South America by slaves from Angola, is similar inasmuch as the pitch is selected by the left hand via a finger, thimble, coin, or small stone as the right hand strikes the string with a stick. The bow harp from Zaire consists of three to ten curved necks with strings that are plucked, whereas the harp has seven strings on a notched bridge attached to a half gourd as a resonator. Mozambique produced a lute featuring a single string on a neck stuck into a gourd that was bowed rather than plucked. The lyre from Kenya has five to twelve strings fastened to a resonator and is

strummed. In Madagascar the vahiha is more like a zither, with sixteen strings that run the length of a bamboo body and are held in tension via small wedges, and was originally brought to the continent from Indonesia.

It is worth noting that the banjo, preceding the guitar in the blues, is unquestionably an African invention derived from stick and gourd instruments and was first known as the “banjar” or “banza.” Originally tuned much lower than what became common practice, it was first documented in Mozambique in 1678 and famously acknowledged by Thomas Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia* in 1781: “The instrument proper to the [slaves] is the banjar, which they brought hither from Africa.”

Development and Dissemination Through 1890

The nineteenth century saw the gut string, classical guitar played by the upper classes and peasants alike develop into its nascent role of what would become the defining popular instrument of the twentieth century. Virginia planters and others in the original colonies, including Ben Franklin, were known to play in the eighteenth century. However, it was in the hands of freed slaves after the Civil War that the instrument that Beethoven once called a small orchestra in a box became the once and future “voice” of the blues.

Spanish explorers likely introduced the guitar to the American West where they eventually found their way into the callused hands of cowboys in the mid-1800s to provide entertainment around the campfire, and Union troops during the Civil War took guitars into the various campaigns for the same purpose. Most significantly, they undoubtedly left some behind in the South after the conflict to be picked up by emancipated blacks. They had been playing prototypical banjos for years along with other homemade, African-influenced “diddley bows” and stringed instruments. The improved playability and sound of the guitar must have proved enticing, though the thorough transition from banjo to guitar would take decades. Black musicians in the 1860s and 1870s played ragtime, minstrel songs, work songs, ballads, hollers, stomps, breakdowns, and proto-blues like “Frankie and Johnny” (later “Frankie and Albert”), believed to have been sung by Union soldiers stationed in Vicksburg, Mississippi, during the war.

The great folklorist and novelist Zora Neale Hurston described two or three guitarists playing a form of early boogie-woogie in the jukes (jooks) and

lumber camps circa the 1880s before the louder and more cost-efficient practice of having one piano took over. A popular, affordable guitar manufacturer at this time was Lyon and Healey out of Chicago with their Washburn brand. Jefferson “Brock” Mumford is pictured around the turn of the century playing one with the legendary New Orleans cornetist Buddy Bolden.

None other than classical composer Antonin Dvorak stated in 1890 that the future of music in the United States would come from “what are called the Negro melodies.” Indeed, “Joe Turner Blues” appeared a few years later as the prototypical twelve-bar blues and popular music was profoundly changed forever. The guitar would prove to be the perfect accompaniment instrument for the blues with its ability to allow simultaneously fingerpicked bass lines, chords, and riffs.

Pre-Blues Guitar

A Louisiana plantation slave named Mary Reynolds once commented that on Saturday evenings people “brung fiddles and guitars and come out and play. The others claps they hands and stomp they feet and we young-uns cut a step around.” Photographs exist of Union soldiers holding guitars and it is reasoned that they left some behind in the South after the Civil War, contributing to the instrument’s disbursement. Though the banjo, or banzar, descended directly from stick and gourd instruments in Africa, was the more popular (or available) choice prior to 1890 when the first true rumblings of the blues were reported, guitars were obviously employed. The music played by “songsters” or “musicianers” (who often accompanied songsters) on the guitar and banjo was pre-blues consisting of white ballads and hymns adapted by blacks, minstrel tunes, reels, jigs, field hollers, work songs, and breakdowns. The latter also was a term associated with black dances and was characterized by an eight-measure, V7–I chordal pattern apparently derived from Stephen Foster’s guitar arrangement for his “Old Dog Tray” from 1855. “Pretty Polly,” a sixteen-bar British folk ballad that was condensed into an Africanized-Americanized twelve-bar version near the end of the nineteenth century, was known also to be played on the guitar. It was the prototype for the work song ballad “Po Lazarus,” which itself was the basis of Bob Dylan’s “Ballad of Hollis Brown” from 1963. The deeper, fuller tones capable of being extracted from the steel string guitar likely influenced all types of blues accompaniment around the turn of the century.

Prewar

The First Blues Guitarists

Jefferson “Brock” Mumford, Charley Galloway, T-Boy Remy, and Lorenzo Staulz all played blues and jazz with the legendary New Orleans “king” trumpeter Buddy Bolden in the late 1890s and early 1900s. W. C. Handy told a now famous tale about how in 1903 he heard a slide guitarist play in the railroad station in Tutwiler, Mississippi. The first guitarist that Charlie Patton may have heard was Lem Nichols on Heron’s plantation in the early years of the twentieth century. The common denominator for the first blues guitarists is that they went unrecorded. Consequently, a survey of prewar guitarists begins with the first country blues recordings and ends in the early 1940s.

1920s

Acoustic country blues guitar became a matter of record on or near October 24, 1923, when Sylvester Weaver from Kentucky accompanied singer Sara Martin on “Longing for Daddy Blues” backed with “I’ve Got to Go and Leave My Daddy Behind” for Okeh. On November 2 of the same year he was afforded the opportunity to wax the solo bottleneck instrumentals “Guitar Blues” backed with “Guitar Rag.” The latter is a blues guitar landmark, having been appropriated countless times including as “Steel Guitar Rag” by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys in 1936. It was not until March 1926, however, when Blind Lemon Jefferson from Texas cut “Got the Blues” backed with “Long Lonesome Blues” for Paramount that the era of country blues began as the record companies saw the potential for profit among the black populace.

Country blues guitarists often performed solo and were not confined by regular meter, chord changes, or measures. Blind Blake and Mississippi John Hurt (ragtime), Tommy Johnson, Blind Willie McTell (twelve-string guitar), Ishman Bracey, Barbecue Bob, Henry Thomas, Furry Lewis, Robert Wilkins, Jim Jackson, Frank Stokes, Blind Willie Johnson, and Garfield Akers were only some of the most prominent. Guitar and piano duets appeared in the latter half of the decade (with Scrapper Blackwell and Leroy Carr leading the way) as did novelty and risqué “hokum blues” by the Hokum Boys and Cannon’s Jug Stompers.

The two most influential blues guitarists of the 1920s, however, would have to be Lonnie Johnson and Charley Patton. Johnson was perhaps the first

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to explore the potential of single-note lines and played solo and ensemble blues and jazz into the 1960s. Many country blues greats were “discovered” by white talent scout H. C. Speir in his furniture store/recording studio in Jackson, Mississippi, including Patton, the “Father of the Delta Blues,” who commenced recording in 1929 with “Pony Blues” backed with “Banty Rooster Blues.”

1930s

The 1930s saw Patton and others continue to perform and record solo and in small groups as the blues form, especially twelve-bar blues, started to become codified as with Johnny Temple and his cut-boogie “Lead Pencil Blues” in 1935. The Mississippi Sheiks became the most famous string band and contributed “Sittin’ on Top of the World” to the lexicon in 1930. Skip James, Carl Martin, Kokomo Arnold, Hambone Willie Newbern, Henry Townsend, Josh White, Bo Carter, Peetie Wheatstraw, Bukka White, and Big Joe Williams continued with and expanded on the country blues guitar tradition. Women such as Mattie Delaney, Geechie Wiley, and Elvie Thomas proved that they could play guitar in the same arena as the men. Son House worked with Patton and began his equally significant solo career with “My Black Mama” in 1930, as well as being the link to Robert Johnson and eventually Muddy Waters in the 1940s. Johnson, the “King of the Delta Blues,” had a short recording career (1936–1937) and life (1911–1938) but has come to be the most well-known and legendary prewar blues musician, in part due to the “cross-roads” myth that sprung up in the late 1960s. His “Sweet Home Chicago” and “Dust My Broom” are just two of his certifiable classics, but his music actually spelled the end of the ten-year span of acoustic country blues. In Chicago toward the end of the decade, Memphis Minnie, Big Bill Broonzy, and Tampa Red helped develop a form of urban combo blues out of which Minnie would rise to become a pioneer of the electric guitar.

Early 1940s

Robert Lockwood, Robert Johnson’s protégé, cut a handful of traditional acoustic country blues sides in 1941 including “Little Boy Blue” and “Take a Little Walk with Me” before going on to have a long career as a renown electric guitar sideman in the postwar years. Muddy Waters recorded a handful of titles for Alan Lomax and the Library of Congress

in 1941–1942 before leaving the Delta for Chicago. Meanwhile, T-Bone Walker had been working out on the electric guitar, breaking through in 1942 with a powerful, swinging sound and style that would effectively end the era of the itinerant, “rambling” bluesman forever.

Development of the Electric Guitar

The concept of electrifying the guitar goes back at least to the 1920s. Walter Fuller, former head of design and production of electric instruments at Gibson, recalled finding pickups at the factory in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1933 that he believed had been made ten years earlier by Lloyd Loar. Around 1928 thirteen-year-old Les Paul took the needle from the family phonograph, jammed it into the wooden bridge of his acoustic guitar and connected it to a radio. It was a primitive solution, but it worked to a degree and led to his lifelong devotion to amplification and recording. Blues guitarist and pianist Henry Townsend claims a similar experiment around the same time. Note that in the mid-1920s the Dopyera brothers developed what would become the National Steel resonator guitar (a brass or steel-bodied acoustic instrument) as one answer to the problem of increasing the guitar’s volume. These unique instruments, particularly the Duolian model from the 1930s, would find favor in the hands of Delta bluesman like Son House and Bukka White.

In 1931 the Rickenbacher company made an aluminum-bodied Hawaiian guitar with an electromagnetic pickup nicknamed the “Frying Pan.” Rowe-DeArmond began manufacturing pickups in the early 1930s and the Dobro company produced a small run of amplified resonator instruments in 1932. It was not until 1936, however, that Gibson unveiled the first commercially successful electric guitar, the hollow body, arch top ES-150 (dubbed the “Charlie Christian model”) with matching EH-150 amplifier. T-Bone Walker would become a regular user of the upgraded ES-250 and other Gibson arch top electrics.

In the 1940s Les Paul, Leo Fender, and others were toying with the idea of a solid body guitar for the purpose of minimizing feedback, maximizing sustain, and expanding the tonal possibilities. Fender debuted the Broadcaster (Telecaster) as the first commercially successful solid body in 1947 and Gibson followed with the Les Paul in 1952. Along with Fender’s phenomenally popular Stratocaster (1954) and Gibson’s semi-hollow ES-335, 345, and 355 series (1958), much beloved by blues guitarists (including B. B. King with his “Lucille” model), these instruments would set the

standard for sound and playability among blues artists down to the present day.

Postwar

Electric Guitar Pioneers

The story of postwar blues guitar is tied to the story of the electric guitar in America. Besides Les Paul, who had been obsessed with amplifying the guitar since the late 1920s, Eddie Durham, the trombonist, arranger, and guitarist, was seriously experimenting in the mid-1930s. While on the road with Count Basie in 1937 he met Floyd Smith, a ukulele and banjo player who was determined to play electric guitar. Following Durham's encouragement and help he would go on to record the first bluesy electric solo on "Floyd's Guitar Blues" with Andy Kirk in 1939 on an Epiphone Electric Hawaiian guitar. Concurrently, Charlie Christian in jazz and T-Bone Walker in blues were also woodshedding, but on six-string "Spanish" guitars with pickups. Walker's electric guitar debut in 1942 with "I Got a Break, Baby" backed with "Mean Old World" is considered the dawn of postwar electric blues with its sophisticated jazzy chord forms and fluid, horn-like solos. (*Note: A tantalizing but unsubstantiated legend holds that Robert Johnson was seen in a Mississippi juke joint just before his death in 1938 playing electric guitar in front of a combo, his name painted on the bass drum.*)

1940s

Aaron Thibeault "T-Bone" Walker, the "Father of Electric Blues," spawned generations of guitarists and his immense influence continues to the present day. Immediate and direct descendants were Johnny Moore (brother of jazz guitarist Oscar) with singer/pianist Charles Brown, Carl Hogan with jive talking, alto sax shuffle king Louis Jordan, and, most importantly, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown. Moore was jazzier than Walker while Hogan, along with Roosevelt "Ham" Jackson and later Bill Jennings, adapted Walker's licks to the jump-blues style that was developing. Brown, by comparison, boogied hard and distorted his guitar in a manner that predated 1950s blues and rock 'n' roll.

In Chicago, Memphis Minnie and Jimmy Rogers started electrifying a style of urban blues with vestiges of country roots that Big Bill Broonzy and Tampa Red had been creating since the late 1930s. Minnie was not only a pioneering woman electric blues guitarist along

with Sister Rosetta Tharpe (who played gospel and blues), but was the first to wear a strap and stand up and play. Tampa Red (Hudson Whittaker) was a master slide guitarist along with Robert Nighthawk (McCullum, McCoy), "Homesick James" Williamson, and later, his cousin, Elmore James. Muddy Waters arrived in Chicago in 1943, met Jimmy Rogers two years later, and switched to electric guitar, resulting in the epochal "Can't Be Satisfied" backed with "Feel Like Going Home" in 1948. The primal, amplified Delta blues laid the foundation for classic, postwar Chicago blues, taking them in the opposite direction of Walker and his followers. At the same time John Lee Hooker in Detroit was also parlaying his Delta roots into a unique style of overamped country boogie blues with "Boogie Chillen'."

1950s

Muddy Waters would reach his pinnacle in the 1950s with guitarists Jimmy Rogers, Pat Hare, and Luther Tucker supporting his keening slide. In 1951 Elmore James cut an electric slide version of Robert Johnson's "Dust My Broom," continuing a bottleneck trend that would hold sway for the next several years in Chicago. In Memphis, Chester "Howlin' Wolf" Burnett was waxing raw country blues with Willie Johnson playing swinging blues licks with grinding distortion. Riley B. "B. B." King had released his first recordings in 1949 in Memphis, but it was with "Three O'Clock Blues" in 1953 that the torch was passed from T-Bone. King introduced a sophisticated style of soloing based on fluid string bending and shimmering vibrato that would influence virtually every electric blues guitarist that followed. Almost overnight the spotlight shifted in Chicago from harmonica players to guitarists via Jody Williams's example and in tandem with Hubert Sumlin in Howlin' Wolf's band, ending up shining on the stinging West Side sound exemplified by Otis Rush, Sam "Magic Sam" Maghett, and George "Buddy" Guy. Little Milton Campbell in Memphis, Albert King in St. Louis, Freddie King in Chicago, Albert Collins in Texas, and Lafayette "Thing" Thomas and Jimmy Nolen on the West Coast also began their careers in the 1950s.

1960s

Freddie King and Albert King became major blues stars in the 1960s while B. B. King crossed over to the white audience late in the decade. Buddy Guy joined forces with harmonica ace Junior Wells and their

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Hoodoo Man Blues in 1965 is cited as the first album to cross over to the white college audience. At the same time a “blues revival” was taking place that “rediscovered” and brought Mississippi John Hurt, Nehemiah “Skip” James, and Eddie “Son” House to festivals and coffeehouses. In conjunction with the pop music “British Invasion” led by the Beatles, Rolling Stones, and Yardbirds and with a counterculture rock movement sweeping the United States and Europe, white blues bands sprang up. In Chicago, the Paul Butterfield Band, a biracial unit, featured guitarists Mike Bloomfield and Elvin Bishop, while in New York the Blues Project had Danny Kalb. Johnny Winter from Texas signed a huge contract with Columbia Records. In the United Kingdom, John Mayall and his Bluesbreakers presented Eric Clapton, Peter Green, and Mick Taylor in a turn-about where English musicians, including Brian Jones and Keith Richards of the Stones, sent their skillful interpretation of classic black blues back to a white America that was largely ignorant of its existence.

1970s

The blues revival peaked and crested in the 1970s even as independent blues labels like Alligator in Chicago were recording important new talent like Theodore “Hound Dog” Taylor and Frank “Son” Seals. In the latter part of the decade Muddy Waters made a series of records with the help of Johnny Winter and “Steady Rollin” Bob Margolin that breathed fresh life into his classics and also contained new material. Similarly, Freddie King recorded and toured with Eric Clapton and his playing took on a decidedly rock edge as he was exposed to a broader audience. Roomful of Blues retrofitted the horn band sound of T-Bone Walker and jump-blues, making it exciting again with founder Duke Robillard and then Ronnie Earl pulling the strings. In Chicago, Magic Slim, Jimmy Johnson, Lonnie Brooks, and Carey Bell’s son Lurrie appeared on the Living Chicago Blues series.

1980s

A new blues revival was initiated in the 1980s by Stevie Ray Vaughan and Robert Cray with “Texas Flood” (1983) and “Strong Persuader” (1986), respectively. Vaughan’s virtuosic example inspired and continues to inspire legions of followers. Donald Kinsey, Lil’ Ed Williams, Carl Weathersby, Melvin Taylor, Maurice John Vaughan (no relation to Stevie Ray), and Kenny

Neal carried the banner for modern Chicago blues, and the Fabulous Thunderbirds, with Stevie Ray’s brother Jimmie, crossed over to rock radio with “Tuff Enuff.”

1990s

Women and exceedingly young guitarists were a blues phenomenon in the 1990s (see later section titled “Guitar Styles Since 1990”). Bernard Allison (Luther’s son), Chris Duarte, and Kenny Wayne Shepherd, among many others, carried on Stevie Ray Vaughan’s legacy while Jimmy Thackery, formerly of Washington, D.C.’s Nighthawks, and Tinsley Ellis, late of the Georgia Heartfixers, advanced their own style of high-powered blues guitar. Little Jimmie King (Manuel Gale) advanced the style of his former boss, Albert King. Fat Possum Records in Mississippi began chronicling the idiosyncratic, modal, juke-joint blues of David “Junior” Kimbrough and “R. L.” Burnside, while the contemporary dance blues of James “Super Chikan” Johnson and Roosevelt “Booba” Barnes belied an African American audience with funky tastes outside the mainstream. Buddy Guy, after a decade of neglect, signed with Silvertone Records and shot to the superstardom always predicted for him. Luther Allison followed on his heels only to be thwarted by an early death. In contrast, acoustic country blues artists Keb’ Mo’, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Corey Harris, Paul Geremia, Rory Block, and others showed the enduring viability of the genre following the startling sales of the Robert Johnson box set in 1990.

1960s Folk Music Rediscovery

The ascendancy in the late 1950s of rock ’n’ roll driven by electric guitars unwittingly led to the rediscovery and development of acoustic folk music in the 1960s. In 1959 the payola scandals helped foster alienation among some young people as a result of the commercialization of popular music. The same year the Newport Folk Festival had its debut with a lineup that boasted a rare mixture of white and black musicians. Idealistic college kids felt an empathy with the “purity” of the music and the “downtrodden” underclass represented by blues musicians.

From 1960 through to the latter part of the decade blues legends John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters (solo and with his band), Mississippi John Hurt, Skip James, Son House, Bukka White, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Robert Pete Williams, Reverend Gary

Davis, Lightnin' Hopkins, and Mance Lipscomb thrilled and amazed Newport audiences. Hurt, James, and most significantly House had been "rediscovered" by white blues fans that sought them out in the Deep South (or Rochester, New York, in the case of House) and helped them enjoy new, productive careers near the end of their lives. James, in particular, benefitted from the attention as Cream recorded his "I'm So Glad" in 1966 on their first album and the six thousand dollars in royalties paid for his later medical bills and funeral expenses.

The steel string flat-top acoustic guitar was the instrument of choice among the various performers and its pervasive presence created a boom. Gibson and Martin, the major acoustic guitar manufacturers, could not turn out "boxes" fast enough, with the smaller companies like Harmony also taking advantage of the situation. White acoustic blues cats, including John Hammond, Jr., John Fahey, Dave Van Ronk, and Stefan Grossman, performed in coffee houses and have taught country blues in workshops at folk festivals, thereby perpetuating a tradition that has ebbed and flowed but continues to the present time.

Rock Adaptations of Blues Guitar Techniques

Rock guitarists have drunk deeply from the blues well from the very beginning, along with hearty sips from country music and swing jazz. Pop music scholars like to debate which was the first rock 'n' roll record, with some pointing all the way back to Lionel Hampton's 1942 version of "Flying Home" starring Illinois Jacquet honking on the tenor sax. A good argument could also be made for Jimmy Preston's "Rock the Joint" (later covered by Bill Haley) by Chris Powell and the Five Blue Flames from 1949, a frenetic jump blues with guitarist Eddie Lambert beating on the strings like the missing link between T-Bone Walker and Chuck Berry.

Ike Turner's "Rocket 88" from 1951 featuring Jackie Brenston with His Delta Cats, however, introduces a honking, distorted boogie guitar line played by Willie Kizart that is clearly the foundation of much rock that followed. First recorded by Johnnie Temple in 1935, guitar boogie bass figures would be popularized by Robert Johnson and prominently show up decades later in the music of Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Rolling Stones, ZZ Top, and southern rockers like Lynyrd Skynyrd. The most significant stylistic contribution to rock from the blues is the adaptation of the blues scale as the heart of rock soloing. Part of the appeal is the fact that the seeming major/minor ambiguity of the blues

scale lends itself to be played over virtually any diatonic chord progression, whether in a major or minor key. Fluid, improvised solos directly inspired by B. B., Albert, and Freddie King began to be heard in the blues and blues-rock solos of Lonnie Mack in 1963. Blues-based rock soloing took off like a rocket in the late 1960s with guitar heroes such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Peter Green, Mick Taylor, Ritchie Blackmore, and Leslie West revving the blues scale to limits only previously visited by blues legends Pat Hare and Lafayette "Thing" Thomas. As Muddy Waters's drummer Willie "Big Eyes" Smith says, "Rock 'n' roll ain't nothing but blues speeded up."

Slide or bottleneck guitar, one of the most striking instrumental characteristics of the blues, has been slow to be incorporated by rock guitarists. Robbie Krieger of the Doors was one of the first in 1967 when he applied it to the psychedelic "End of the Night" as was Jeff Beck with "Beck's Bolero" in 1968. The Black Crowes in the 1990s, with guitarist Rich Robinson, were one of the few contemporary arena rock bands to employ the siren wail of electric slide guitar, while Jack White of the White Stripes is taking it into the new millennium.

Soul Guitar

Soul guitar is a direct outgrowth of blues and R&B guitar. It has its own set of distinct characteristics highlighted by chunky and arpeggiated rhythm guitar rather than single note, blues-style solos. "I Got a Woman" by Ray Charles from 1954 is often heralded as the dawning of soul music, with guitarist Wesley Jackson firmly embedded in the rhythm section. Sam Cooke's "I'll Come Running Back to You" and "You Send Me" from 1957, however, present soul pioneer Clif White's understated diatonic fills and smooth rhythm guitar. Starting around 1960 Curtis Mayfield with the Impressions and Ike Turner with Tina played funky, intertwining syncopated riffs and chords that would have a major influence on Jimi Hendrix. Steve Cropper behind Otis Redding on Stax Records in the 1960s and Cornel Dupree on Atlantic Records with King Curtis and others in the 1960s and 1970s are universally considered the premier soul guitar men. The "Funk Brothers" guitarists Robert White Joe Messina and Eddie Willis comped along on countless Motown hits in the 1960s, while Robert Ward continues to develop his unique style that began with his band the Ohio Untouchables backing the Falcons and Wilson Pickett on the classic "I Found a Love" in 1962.

Guitar Styles Since 1990

There have been four major developments in blues guitar since 1990. Number one is the continued emphasis on technical virtuosity that began with the debut of Stevie Ray Vaughan in 1983. Building on the influences of Albert King, Buddy Guy, Lonnie Mack, and Jimi Hendrix, Vaughan created a powerful style that showed great depth of feeling along with fretboard pyrotechnics. Following in his cowboy bootsteps in varying degrees have been Jimmy Thackery, Tinsley Ellis, Chris Duarte, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Walter Trout, Smokin' Joe Kubek, and Michael Burks, among countless others.

The emergence of startlingly young blues guitarists like Jonny Lang, Nathan Cavaleri, Shannon Curfman, Jake Andrews, and Derek Trucks was an unprecedented phenomenon in the 1990s. Pubescent adolescents Lang and Curfman displayed mature-sounding blues voices well beyond their years in addition to considerable blues chops and authentic feel. Interestingly, many of the youngsters learned from their parents' record collections, which included classic rock like Led Zeppelin as well as blues. However, Andrews is the son of John Andrews, former guitarist with Tracy Nelson and Mother Earth in the 1960s, and Trucks is the nephew of Allman Brothers drummer Butch Trucks. It will prove instructive to see if this new wave of blues guitarists continues to grow musically in a genre known for careers that usually develop slowly over time and with seasoning.

Women with electric guitars strapped on stepped out front to play the blues to a greater degree in the last decade of the twentieth century than ever before. Debbie Davies, Deborah Coleman, Joanna Connor, Sue Foley, Susan Tedeschi, and Kris Wiley are proving with every hot lick that gender does not have to be a defining issue any more than race in the previously male-dominated world of blues guitar. Concurrently, a parallel situation has occurred in pop music, signaling increased opportunities for women across the (fret)board.

The last recent significant trend in blues guitar styles has been the ascendance of the North Mississippi hill country sound as promoted by Fat Possum Records in Oxford, Mississippi. Beginning with the late Junior Kimbrough, the list includes R. L. Burnside, Kenny Brown, Robert Belfour, T-Model Ford, and Little Axe. Kimbrough and Burnside in particular represent a style of country blues often based around a hypnotic one-chord vamp that is far removed from the majority of B. B. King/Stevie Ray Vaughan imitators on the current scene.

DAVE RUBIN

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GUITAR CRUSHER

b. Sidney Selby, 28 July 1931; Hyde County, NC

Aka "Bone Crusher." Born in rural North Carolina, Sidney Selby was brought up by his grandparents in a deeply religious home environment. A fascination with the blues set in early, but as his grandparents forbade the playing of such earthy music in the house, he was compelled to indulge his more secular musical tastes outside in the woods. He was also a passionate and talented gospel singer, however, and when he left home for New York at the age of fifteen, it was to begin a musical career that would make room for both gospel music and the blues.

Once in New York, he formed a group called the Gospel Wings and, later, a blues/soul combo called the Midnight Rockers (later renamed the Houserocking Melotones). Both were successful; by the 1960s, the Midnight Rockers were playing regularly in the New York and New Jersey areas, and were featured in showcases alongside such eminent names as the Drifters and the Isley Brothers. Things slowed down for Selby's blues group in the 1970s, however, as disco displaced blues and soul music on the radio charts. In 1982 he moved to Germany, where he found an enthusiastic audience for both the blues and gospel music; there he acquired yet another new nickname ("The Big Voice from New York") and formed a new gospel group called the Gospel Roots, with which he still performs. He has recorded several blues albums

in Germany as well, and performs regularly in that capacity.

RICK ANDERSON

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GUITAR GABRIEL

b. Robert Lewis Jones, 16 October 1925 (?); Decatur, GA (?)

d. 2 April 1996; Winston-Salem, NC

There is much confusion about the background of Guitar Gabriel. According to his death certificate, Robert Lewis Jones was born to Robert Lewis and Matilda Jones. Some sources cite his father as the recording artist Sonny Jones; others as the North Carolina entertainer known as "Razorblade." A 1973 Social Security application lists his father as Robert Sanders Jones and his mother as Gertrude Hillhouse. The same document gives his birth dates as October 3, 1934, and his birthplace as Tuskegee, Alabama.

Regardless of Guitar Gabriel's statistics, he expressed an early interest in music. The family moved to Durham, North Carolina, when Robert was young. Influenced by the music of Blind Boy Fuller, Sonny Terry, and Reverend Gary Davis, Jones went on to travel throughout the United States in pursuit of musical fame.

By the 1970s, he had a regional hit in the Detroit area with the 45-rpm recording "Welfare Blues" on the Gemini label. The label renamed him "Nyles Jones." The album that followed, *My South, My Blues*, would lead to a bitter dispute over royalties and Jones's retirement from show business.

Jones moved to Winston-Salem where he sometimes played on the streets with Macavine Hayes until he met Timothy Duffy in the early 1990s and became the inspiration for Music Maker Relief Foundation. As "Guitar Gabriel," he went on to have a successful career, partly due to the efforts of Duffy. "Gabe," as he was known to friends, is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

GAILE WELKER

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Guitar Gabriel, Volume II (Music Maker MMCD 0494).
My South My Blues (Gemini S7101).

GUITAR JR.

b. Luther Johnson, 11 April 1939; Itta Bena, MS

Not to be confused with Luther "Georgia Boy" Johnson, Luther "Houserocker" Johnson, or Lonnie "Guitar Jr." Brooks, this long-time electric blues guitarist and bandleader is a dedicated proponent of the West Side style of postwar Chicago blues. First performing in gospel groups in Mississippi as a teenager, Johnson moved to Chicago with his family in 1955, where he soon began playing in bands fronted by Tall Milton Shelton and Big Mama Thornton. By the mid-1960s, Johnson was working in the band of his mentor, Magic Sam, whose stylistic approach to the electric guitar had a lasting impact on the young Johnson. In 1972, the Muddy Waters Band recruited Johnson, who in the meantime had acquired the nickname "Guitar Jr." and a growing notoriety in Chicago as an outstanding guitarist. During his eight years with Waters, Johnson released his first album, *Luther's Blues*, in 1976 on the French Black and Blue label, backed by members of the Muddy Waters Band, who at the time included guitarist Bob Margolin and pianist Pinetop Perkins. Subsequent recordings followed on the Alligator, Rooster Blues, Bullseye Blues, and Telarc labels. Moving to Boston in 1982, Johnson formed his band, the Magic Rockers, with whom he continues to record and tour. While his guitar playing remains true to his West Side roots, Johnson has more recently introduced other musical styles to his music, including country blues, jump-blues, and New Orleans funk.

DAVID BEAUDOUIN

Bibliography

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GUITAR JR.

Discography: AMG

Luther's Blues (1976; Evidence CD ECD-26010).
I Want to Groove with You (1990, Bullseye Blues CD-BB-9506).
Slammin' on the West Side (1996, Telarc CD 83389).

GUITAR KELLEY

b. Arthur Kelley, 14 November 1924; Clinton, LA

Acoustic "swamp" blues guitarist. Began playing guitar at rent parties and picnics in the late 1940s. During the next two decades he often performed with Lightnin' Slim and Silas Hogan. Selections of his music were released by the Arhoolie and Excello labels. Activity since 1974 is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Santelli

Discography: LSFP

GUITAR NUBBITT

b. Alvin Hankerson, 22 or 23 November 1923; Fort Lauderdale, FL
d. 30 June 1995; Boston, MA

Grew up in Georgia, but moved to Boston in 1945. Began playing guitar in the 1950s. He enjoyed some local Boston fame during the 1960s folk music revival. Nickname "Nubbitt" refers to the loss of his right thumb tip in a hurricane at age three.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

GUITAR SHORTY

b. David William Kearney, 8 September 1939; Houston, TX

Singer, guitarist. Originally inspired by Guitar Slim's acrobatic stage act, Guitar Shorty's quest to "give them something to see as well as hear" led to a

high-energy live show that was almost gymnastic in nature. He made his recording debut in 1957 on a Willie Dixon-produced session for Cobra Records but after a few more singles for Pull Records he fell into relative obscurity while living in Seattle and Los Angeles. His profile was raised in 1992 with the release of the W. C. Handy Award-winning *My Way or the Highway* album with Otis Grand. A series of Black Top Records albums, including *Topsy Turvy* with Clarence Hollimon and Carol Fran, and *I Go Wild* in 2001, followed.

MICHAEL POINT

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Drwen, Norman. "He's One Hell of a Show." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 131 (August 1998): 8-9.
Tipaldi, Art. "Guitar Shorty: Jumpin' and Flippin'." *Blues Revue* no. 15 (Winter 1994/1995): 40-44.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

GUITAR SLIM

b. Eddie Lee Jones, 10 December 1926; Greenwood, MS
d. 7 February 1959; New York, NY

Arguably, one of the greatest blues performers ever was Eddie Jones, who performed under the name Guitar Slim. A dynamic guitar player, he coiled up to 350 feet of guitar cord on a reel behind him and he strolled through the audience, singing and playing to his enthralled fans. Sometimes, Guitar Slim would be carried on the shoulder of an assistant as he played. Several years later, Albert Collins, Houston's "Ice-man," would duplicate this practice at his concerts and his audiences would be similarly delighted.

At the age of five in Greenwood, Eddie's mother died (his father's whereabouts were unknown) and Eddie was sent to nearby Hollandale, Mississippi, to live with his grandmother. He made extra money in the cotton fields during those years and his dancing at local juke joints earned him the moniker "Limber Legs." He began playing with the Willie Warren band in the early 1940s. Besides his early mentor, Willie Warren, Eddie was influenced by T-Bone Walker, Robert Nighthawk, and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown.

By the late 1940s, Eddie had relocated to New Orleans and perfected his persona. Besides the 350-foot cord, Eddie also dressed in wildly colored suits and dyed-to-match shoes. It was in New Orleans that Guitar Slim was born; the Guitar Slim sound, too,

was different. Slim used heavily distorted overtones to give his audiences the “Guitar Slim” sound. This was about twenty years before Jimi Hendrix popularized a similar technique.

Jones biggest hit was “The Things That I Used to Do,” which sold more than a million copies and tracked R&B charts for twenty-one weeks, six of them at number one. Ray Charles was pianist at that session.

Jones died of pneumonia in New York City on February 7, 1959, his health weakened by years of alcohol abuse.

TOM FISHER

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

The Things That I Used to Do (1970, Specialty Records SPS-2170).

Sufferin’ Mind (1991, Specialty Records SPCD-7007-2).

Atco Sessions (1996, Atco ATL0081760).

GUITAR SLIM JR.

b. Rodney Armstrong, 24 August 1952; New Orleans, LA

Guitar, vocals, composer. Guitar Slim Jr. continues the legacy of his father, Eddie “Guitar Slim” Jones, with his raw, soulful guitar, rough vocal attack, and expressive compositions, although his erratic personal life has hindered the development of his career.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

AMG (Jim O’Neal)

Discography

Story of My Life (1988, Orleans Records).

The Orleans Records Story (1999, Orleans Records).

Nothing Nice (Warehouse Records).

GUNTER, ARTHUR NEAL

b. 23 May 1926; Nashville, TN

d. 16 March 1976; Port Huron, MI

Guitar, vocals, composer. Arthur Gunter put Nashville’s Excello Records on the national map in the early 1950s with “Baby, Let’s Play House” but failed to sustain a professional career and made infrequent public appearances after moving to Michigan.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Kurutz)

Discography: LSFP; AMG

Anthologies

Baby Let’s Play House: The Best of Arthur Gunter (1995, AVI-Excello).

The Excello Story (1999, Rhino).

Black and Blues (Excello).

Blues After Hours (Blue Horizon).

Motor City Blues “Live” at the 1973 Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival (Alive/Total Energy).

GURALNICK, PETER

b. 15 December 1943

Renowned writer on American roots music. A native of Brookline, Massachusetts, Guralnick began writing about music—blues, country, and soul—in the mid-1960s for alternative publications, including *Boston After Dark*, *Boston Phoenix*, *Crawdaddy*, and *Rolling Stone*. He developed a clean, direct style in which his presence was minimal, and created intimate, complex stories about artists who were often past their commercial, if not artistic, prime.

Guralnick’s first book, *Feel Like Going Home: Portraits in Blues and Rock ‘n’roll* (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1971), collected some of his earliest writings, including profiles of Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Robert Pete Williams, Johnny Shines, and Skip James, as well as an essay on blues history and a portrait of Chess Records’ last days as a family-owned label. Guralnick, who received a B.A. in classics and an M.A. in creative writing from Boston University, taught school through the mid-1970s, when he made a full-time commitment to writing.

His second book, *Lost Highway: Journeys and Arrivals of American Musicians* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1979), demonstrated a refinement of his storytelling skills. Although much of the book’s focus is on country and rockabilly artists, there are profiles of Rufus Thomas, Bobby “Blue” Bland, Howlin’ Wolf, Otis Spann, and Big Joe Turner, as well as a revealing analysis of the Chicago blues scene in 1977. *Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern*

Dream of Freedom (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), the final volume in his trilogy of roots music books, examined “southern soul,” a style defined more through its emotive qualities than geography. Compared with Guralnick’s previous books, *Sweet Soul Music* presented a more cohesive narrative, interweaving stories about musicians and recording studios, including Stax, Fame, and Muscle Shoals.

Guralnick ventured into fiction with *Nighthawk Blues* (New York: Seaview Books, 1980), which explored the tensions between a veteran blues performer and his young white manager during the 1960s blues revival. In 1982 Guralnick wrote the useful *The Listener’s Guide to the Blues* (no location: Facts on File) and also the same year he published the brief but lucid biographical study “Searching for Robert Johnson” (*Living Blues* no. 53 [Summer/Autumn 1982]: 27–41; reprinted in book form in 1989 [New York: Dutton]).

Guralnick spent most of the 1990s working on his triumphant two-part Elvis Presley biography; the first installment, *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), is notable for its thorough review of the wide range of music that influenced Elvis as a young man.

Guralnick has served as a producer on recordings by artists including Charlie Rich, Johnny Shines, and Sleepy LaBeef, and written dozens of liner notes; he received a Grammy Award for his notes to *Sam Cooke: Live at the Harlem Square Club* (1986, RCA Victor/BMG).

Guralnick wrote the script for the film *Sam Phillips: The Man Who Invented Rock ‘n’ Roll* (2000), and worked closely with the 2003 film series *The Blues*, writing the script for Martin Scorsese’s film *Feel Like Going Home* and editing the accompanying book, *Martin Scorsese Presents The Blues: A Musical Journey* (New York: Amistad, 2003).

At the time of this writing, Guralnick has been working for several years on a biography of Sam Cooke.

SCOTT BARRETTA

GUTHRIE, WOODROW WILSON “WOODY”

b. 14 July 1912; Okemah, OK

d. 3 October 1967; Brooklyn, NY

A singer and prolific songwriter, Guthrie is most often associated with folk music, although his travels introduced him to a wide range of musical styles, including the blues, which he readily absorbed. In the wake of

both the Great Depression and the Oklahoma dust storms of 1935, he traveled to Texas and subsequently joined other refugees in California. It was there, living among and playing to an audience consisting largely of impoverished migrants, that Guthrie would develop the artistic themes of dispossession and social protest that became his trademark, as some of his best-known compositions, including “Goin’ Down the Road Feelin’ Bad,” “Hard Travelin’,” and “I Ain’t Got No Home,” suggest.

In 1939 he traveled to New York, where he befriended and performed with other like-minded musicians, including Cisco Houston, Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, Sonny Terry, and Brownie McGhee. In 1940 Guthrie wrote his signature tune, “This Land Is Your Land,” and made landmark recordings both for Alan Lomax and the Library of Congress, and for Moses Asch, the founder of Folkways Records, as well as *Dust Bowl Ballads* for RCA Victor. After World War II Guthrie joined the Almanac Singers, who set the blueprint for a subsequent generation of folk groups. Guthrie then took a one-month appointment with the Bonneville Power Authority in Washington State, where he wrote nearly a song a day promoting federally controlled hydroelectric power. Returning to New York in 1946, he continued to write, record, and travel until, in the mid-1950s, he began to show the symptoms of Huntington’s chorea, the degenerative neurological disorder to which he succumbed at the age of fifty-five.

DEAN A. MASULLO

Bibliography

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Santelli, Robert, ed. *Hard Travelin’: The Life and Legacy of Woody Guthrie*. Hanover, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1999.

Discography

- Woody Guthrie: Columbia River Collection* (1987, Rounder CD 1036); *Woody Guthrie: Library of Congress Recordings* (1989, Rounder CD 1041-1043); *Struggle* (1990, Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40025); *Songs to Grow on for Mother and Child* (1991, Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 45935); *This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1* (1997, Smithsonian Folkways CD SFW 40100); *Muleskinner Blues: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 2* (1997, Smithsonian Folkways CD 40101); *Hard Travelin’: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 3* (1998, Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40102); *Buffalo Skimmers: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 4* (1999, Smithsonian Folkways CD SF40103); *Dust Bowl Ballads* (Rounder CD 1040); *That’s Why We’re Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement* (Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40001).

GUY, GEORGE “BUDDY”

b. 30 July 1936; Lettsworth, LA

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter. Buddy Guy was born July 30, 1936, in Lettsworth, Louisiana. As a teenager, he picked cotton on Louisiana farms and listened to the music of T-Bone Walker, B. B. King, and Lightnin’ Slim. In 1958, a year after recording some demos like “The Way You Been Treating Me” at a local radio station (WXOK in Baton Rouge), Buddy Guy went to Chicago to cut his first recordings for Cobra Records. His strong, flamboyant, self-taught style on electric guitar impressed many skilled guitarists like Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and Freddie King.

Buddy Guy soon went to Chess Records and from 1959 worked as a sideman for Chess artists such as Little Walter, Howlin’ Wolf, and Muddy Waters. Apart from that, he recorded in 1960 his classic song “First Time I Met the Blues,” with its composer, Eur-real “Little Brother” Montgomery, on piano. Buddy Guy already had a strong, intense, high voice, often overshadowed by his catchy guitar playing.

Buddy Guy was also part of an historical reunion that occurred at the Copa Cabana Club in Chicago on July 26, 1963, when a live recording was made with the finest Chicago bluesmen playing together: Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Willie Dixon, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Otis Spann. Buddy Guy played guitar on all songs and sang lead on two titles: “Worried Blues” and “Don’t Know Which Way to Go.” He shared vocals with Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon for the opening tune, “Wee Wee Baby.” Although his guitar was sometimes a little out of tune, the musical performance and spirit of this concert were unmatched. That unique performance confirmed Buddy Guy’s status as a young musician, only twenty-seven years of age, who played with the living legends of the blues.

The 1960–1963 Chess period was a golden era for Guy. From 1965, Buddy Guy managed his own career and toured in the United States and Europe, adding saxes to his sound and making his guitar solos as intense and as complex as possible. The influence of B. B. King became more visible during that period.

In 1963, Buddy Guy met harmonica player Junior Wells in the Muddy Waters Blues Band. During the 1970s, Buddy Guy often toured with Wells; they recorded an album with Eric Clapton for Atco Records, titled *Buddy Guy and Junior Wells Play the Blues* (1972). On some occasions, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells opened for the Rolling Stones. Guy and Wells specialized in long, slow blues. But their records from the 1970s, recorded for labels such as



Buddy Guy performing at the Pocono Blues Festival, Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania, August 2003. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

Vanguard, Atco, Red Lightnin’, and Quicksilver, were often badly distributed and did not sell well.

Buddy Guy’s younger brother, Phil Guy (born April 28, 1940, in Lettsworth, Louisiana), is a lesser-known guitar player and singer. They have often recorded and performed together since 1969.

During the late 1980s, Guy’s reputation grew, and he became a guitar icon for many rock fans as well as performers. Noteworthy rock guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Mark Knopfler have considered Buddy Guy as a model. In 1985, Buddy Guy was inducted into the Blues Foundation’s Hall of Fame, and he has received many W. C. Handy Awards.

The 1990s saw numerous album releases from Buddy Guy, starting in 1991 with *Damn Right, I’ve Got the Blues*. In 1992, Rhino Records issued a compilation of his recordings from 1957 to 1981, titled *The Very Best of Buddy Guy*. However, his CD *Feels Like Rain* (1993) was received as a venture into rock

GUY, GEORGE "BUDDY"

music rather than a blues album, and did not sell well. *Slippin' In* (1994) marked a return into blues, with covers from Jimmy Reed to Lowell Fulson. But his most original album was *Sweet Tea* (2001), which included some electric and some acoustic country blues songs. This acoustic trend is confirmed with a CD released two years later, *Blues Singer* (2003), that owes much to Skip James, Son House, and the early John Lee Hooker.

YVES LABERGE

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Robble, Andrew M. "Buddy Guy: 'You Got to Play That Thing Like You Was Flyin' a Plane.'" *Living Blues* no. 112 (November/December 1993): 8–21.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Wells, Junior

GUY, PHIL

b. 28 April 1940; Lettsworth, LA

Phil Guy honed his guitar skills in Baton Rouge, playing with Big Poppa John Tilley and Raful Neal. In 1957 he and his brother, Buddy Guy, cut a demo at WXOK in Baton Rouge, the first recording for either of them. Phil Guy also recorded with Raful Neal before leaving his job as a runner with a law firm in Baton Rouge to move to Chicago and accompany Buddy on an influential State Department–sponsored tour of Africa in 1969. For several years afterward Guy played, recorded, and toured with his brother.

In the 1970s he started his own band, the Chicago Machine, and has been a dependable presence on the Chicago scene, employing such sidemen as Maurice John Vaughn and "Professor" Eddie Lusk. He has also worked with Koko Taylor, Son Seals, and others. Guy's notable domestic recording credits include

appearances on five of Buddy's albums and Junior Wells's *On Tap* for Delmark. He has also recorded with Mojo Buford, Lurrie Bell, Jimmy Dawkins, Byther Smith, Big Mama Thornton, Son Seals, and Junior Mance. While his success at home has been comparatively modest, he has toured extensively in Europe and South America and has recorded as a bandleader for Wolf in Austria, Isabel in France, and JSP in England, which issued five Guy CDs, including the powerful, horn-driven *Say What You Mean* (2000).

Phil Guy's style is rooted in the heavily amplified, four-minute-plus, funky soul of his Louisiana peers, as opposed to the edgy, West Side Chicago sound with its staccato guitar bursts that is associated with Buddy. He has been seen by many as one of Chicago's overlooked guitar players, and has graciously endured the undeserved burden of being compared to his brother.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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———. "Phil Guy: Up in Chicago." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 44 (May 1989): 22–24.

Discography: AMG

Say What You Mean (2000, JSP CD-2135).

GUY, VERNON

b. 21 March 1945; St. Louis, MO

Singer whose early career was with Ike Turner in 1963, making "You've Got Me" backed with "They Ain't Lovin' Ya" (sic) (Teena 1703) with the Turner band.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography and Discography

- "Stacey Johnson/Vernon Guy." *Soul Bag* no. 58 (October 1976): 18.

H

HADDIX, TRAVIS

b. 26 November 1938; Walnut, MS

Travis Haddix is a singer-guitarist who performs in a style that straddles Chicago electric blues and Memphis soul. He recorded a series of well-received albums from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s and has remained active as a performer since.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

AMG (Jim O'Neal and Al Campbell)

Discography: AMG (Jim O'Neal and Al Campbell)

Winners Never Quit (1991, Ichiban 1101).
I Got a Sure Thing (1993, Ichiban 1157).

HAIRSTON, "BROTHER" WILL

b. 22 November 1919; Brookfield, MS
d. 17 March 1988; Detroit, MI

Nicknamed "The Hurricane of the Motor City," Brother Will Hairston was a remarkable gospel singer because of the consistently topical and political nature of his songs. In the period from 1955 to 1972 he recorded gospel songs about Emmett Till, the Alabama bus boycott, President Kennedy, Little Rock Central High, the march to Montgomery, the war in Vietnam, and Martin Luther King at a time

when most recording artists did not dare to speak out on these issues.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Bibliography

Paulus, George. "Will Hairston: Hurricane of the Motor City." *Blues Unlimited* no. 86 (November 1971): 21.

HALL, RENÉ (JOSEPH)

b. 26 September 1911; St. Louis, MO
d. 11 February 1988; Los Angeles, CA

Guitarist, banjoist, trombonist, arranger. He became a session musician in the 1940s, recording R&B and vocal accompaniments for Jubilee and Domino, for which he was musical director, including "Irene's Blues"/"Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is" (1950, Domino 305/308) by Max "Blues" Bailey. His 1952–1953 band featured singer/guitarist Courtland Carter.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

Penny, Dave. Insert notes for *Saxophony! Jubilee Honkers & Shouters* (1995, Sequel NEMCD748, London).

Discography: LSFP

HALL, VERA

HALL, VERA

b. 1906; Livingston, AL

d. 29 January 1964; Tuscaloosa, AL

Hall was born and raised on small farm near Livingston, Alabama, where she learned songs from Rich Amerson and Blind Jesse Harris. Folklorist Ruby Pickens Tartt discovered her, which led to recordings by John and Alan Lomax and Harold Courlander. Alan Lomax made her the subject of a portion of his book *The Rainbow Sign* and included her "Another Man Done Gone" in his anthology *Best Loved American Folksongs*. Her "Wild Ox Moan" is considered the finest example of African American yodeling.

JARED SNYDER

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Harris; Larkin

Lomax, Alan. *The Rainbow Sign*. New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1959.

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

See also Amerson, Rich; Lomax, Alan; Lomax, John Avery

HAMILTON, LARRY

b. 21 March 1950; New Orleans, LA

Singer, songwriter based in New Orleans. Hamilton was a member of David Batiste and the Gladiators for more than ten years starting in 1965. An association with Allen Toussaint from the late 1970s eventually led to Hamilton's solo recording debut on Toussaint's NYNO label in 1997. Hamilton's compositions have been sung by Etta James, Irma Thomas, and Albert King, among others.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

HAMMOND, CLAY

b. 21 June 1936; Roseback, TX

Vocalist and songwriter best known as the composer of Little Johnny Taylor's number one R&B hit "Part

Time Love." Hammond recorded for several labels in the 1960s, including Kent, Galaxy, and Duo Disc. He released singles for various labels after the 1960s and performed with the Drifters and Rivingtons on the oldies circuit.

JOE C. CLARK

Bibliography

AMG (Richie Unterberger); Larkin

Discography: AMG

See also Drifters; Taylor, Johnny Lamar "Little"

HAMMOND, JOHN HENRY, JR.

b. 15 December 1910; New York City, NY

d. 10 July 1987; New York City, NY

Record producer, promoter, and critic. Hammond is regarded as perhaps the greatest talent scout in popular music history. His discoveries include many of the leading popular, jazz, and blues artists of his era, including Count Basie, Charlie Christian, Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin, Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday, Lena Horne, Bruce Springsteen, and Sonny Terry. Through the promotion of these and many other artists, Hammond decisively influenced the course of American popular music over a forty-year period.

Hammond was from the top rung of American society, his mother Emily being a Vanderbilt heiress. After dropping out of Yale at age twenty-one, Hammond moved from the Upper East Side family mansion into a Greenwich Village apartment supported by a substantial private income. It was at around this time that he began to become actively involved in the promotion of black music, which had fascinated him since childhood.

The first blues recording he masterminded featured Bessie Smith (Okeh, 1933). This celebrated session was to be Smith's last, as further plans for Hammond to record her were thwarted by her death in 1937. He also produced an important recording session with another female icon of vaudeville blues, Ida Cox, in 1939.

Hammond was closely involved in bringing Count Basie to national prominence. He first encountered Basie's band by chance in Kansas City, and subsequently produced the first recording of Basie's orchestra (1936, Vocalion), featuring vocals by Jimmy Rushing. He produced further sessions

with the band, and promoted it at every important opportunity. A highlight of Hammond's promotional endeavors was the 1938 "From Spirituals to Swing" concert in Carnegie Hall. This event brought to a mainstream audience for the first time a wide range of African American vernacular styles, not just jazz, but also blues and gospel. Blues/gospel artists taking part in the concert included Big Bill Broonzy, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Jimmie Rushing, Mitchell's Gospel Singers, the harmonica player Sonny Terry, and a trio of boogie-woogie pianists: Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, and Pete Johnson. Such was the success of the concert that Hammond organized another in the same venue the following year.

Perhaps the most important consequence of these concerts was that they helped precipitate a nationwide fad for boogie-woogie that lasted well into the 1940s. Hammond had earlier been influential in the promotion of the style when it was almost unknown outside the race record market. In 1935, he had rediscovered Meade Lux Lewis who he recorded for English Parlophone, and he consistently championed the work of Ammons.

Hammond's promotional activities were determined by his political, as well as his musical, interests. He was a leading activist for leftist causes, and wrote regularly for left-wing periodicals such as *The Nation* and *The New Masses* (the latter had, in fact, underwritten the "From Spirituals to Swing" concert). A lifelong champion of racial equality, he was the first to promote racially mixed jazz bands on record and in performance. He joined the board of directors of the NAACP in 1935, and his association with that group lasted for three decades.

PETER MUIR

Bibliography

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- Hammond, John, with Irving Townsend. *John Hammond on Record: An Autobiography*. New York, The Ridge Press, 1977.

Discography

The following are major blues-related recording sessions produced by Hammond.

Albert Ammons

- "Nagasaki"/"Boogie Woogie Stomp" (1936, Decca 749).
 "Early Morning Blues"/"Mil-or-Mo Bird Rag" (1936, Decca 975).

Count Basie/Jimmy Rushing

- "Boogie Woogie"/"Lady Be Good" (1936, Vocalion 3459).
 "Shoe Shine Boy" (1936, Vocalion 2441).
 "If I Could Be with You One Hour Tonight"/"Taxi War Dance" (1939, Vocalion 4748).
 "Jump for Me" (1939, Vocalion, 4886).
 "Rock-a-Bye Basie"/"Baby, Don't Tell on Me" (1939, Vocalion 4747).
 "What Goes Up Must Come Down"/"Don't Worry 'Bout Me" (Vocalion, 4734).

Ida Cox

- "Deep Sea Blues"/"Death Letter Blues" (1939, Vocalion 05336).
 "Four-Day Creep"/"Hard Times Blues" (1939, Vocalion, 05298).
 "Pink Slip Blues"/"Take Him Off My Mind" (1939, Vocalion 05258).

Meade Lux Lewis

- "Honky Tonk Train Blues" (1935, Parlophone R-2187).

Bessie Smith

- "Do Your Duty"/"I'm Down in the Dumps" (1933, Okeh 8945).
 "Gimme a Pigfoot"/"Take Me for a Buggy Ride" (1933, Okeh 8949).

HAMMOND, JOHN PAUL

b. 13 November 1942; New York City, NY

In the early 1960s, Hammond was a young cub in the folk-blues field. Now, in his fifth decade as full-time bluesman, he's a senior statesman. Live, he performs solo, doing upwards of two hundred gigs a year with acoustic guitar and racked harmonica. His nearly thirty albums to date present him in a variety of settings, including electric blues backed by such notables as Levon Helm, Robbie Robinson, Garth Hudson, Rick Danko, Bill Wyman, Mike Bloomfield, Duane Allman, Dr. John, Roosevelt Sykes, the Nighthawks, Little Charlie & the Nightcaps, Duke Robillard, Charlie Musselwhite, J. J. Cale, and Tom Waits. At Greenwich Village's Café Au-Go-Go in the mid-1960s he worked with a then-unknown Jimi Hendrix.

His father was legendary producer and Columbia A&R executive John Hammond. But his mother raised him after his parents divorced, and he asserts no conscious link between his illustrious father and his chosen path in music. As a teenager, he listened to Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, and Bo Diddley, then delved into country blues after hearing Blind Willie McTell and Robert Johnson. He taught himself guitar at age eighteen, began performing at nineteen, got a Vanguard recording contract at

HAMMOND, JOHN PAUL

twenty, then hit the big time with a well-received set at the 1963 Newport Folk Festival. Besides Vanguard, Hammond has recorded for Atlantic, Columbia, Capricorn, Rounder, Flying Fish, Virgin/Pointblank, and Back Porch. Although an interpreter, not a songwriter, he composed the soundtrack to the 1970 film *Little Big Man* and narrated the 1991 documentary *The Search for Robert Johnson*.

Unfairly dismissed by some critics as a white musician trying to sound black, Hammond's legion of fans defend him against what might be termed "reverse racism," noting his lifelong commitment to blues and his mastery of the genre.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: AMG

HAMPTON, LIONEL

b. 20 April 1908; Louisville, KY
d. 31 August 2002; New York City, NY

Vibraphonist, drummer, pianist, bandleader. Born in Louisville, but raised in Birmingham, Alabama. Hampton began playing drums in church, then with bands in Chicago and Los Angeles. He adopted vibes in 1930 and became the best-known practitioner of instrument in jazz, first with Benny Goodman and then as leader from 1937. "Hot Mallets" (1939) foreshadowed elements of bebop. His biggest hit was "Flying Home" in 1942, featuring saxophonist Illinois Jacquet. Hampton combined virtuosity with crowd-pleasing showmanship throughout his career, leading small and big bands that featured many illustrious sidemen, but added little new after the mid-1950s. Blues remained fundamental to his earthy, swinging music.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord

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HANDY, WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER "W. C."

b. 16 November 1873; Florence, AL
d. 28 March 1958; New York City, NY

Songwriter, music publisher, folklorist, cornetist and trumpeter, known in his lifetime as the "Father of the Blues." Handy came from fairly comfortable circumstances by the standards of the time, and enjoyed a solid basic education. His father and grandfather were ministers in the African Methodist Episcopal church, and discouraged secular music. However, Handy was attracted to minstrel shows and brass band music, and set off to enter show business in his teens. He traveled to St. Louis in 1892 with a vocal quartet, intending to see the World's Fair, but it had been postponed for a year, and Handy was left stranded and destitute. However, while there, he collected a strand of black folklore, the text "My man's got a heart like a rock cast in the sea," that he would use twenty-two years later in his biggest hit, "St. Louis Blues."

Handy spent the 1890s polishing his musical skills, playing in brass bands in Kentucky and Indiana. In 1896 he joined Mahara's Minstrels as a cornet player and he worked his way up to bandmaster and arranger with this outfit in two stints, the first ending in 1900, the second in the 1902–1903 season. In between he taught at a black college in Alabama. In 1903 Handy became bandmaster of the black Knights of Pythias band in Clarksdale, Mississippi. This job lasted two years, and beginning in 1905 he was increasingly active in Memphis, the economic hub of the Mississippi Delta region. During these years he became fascinated with blues and other folk music and began arranging elements of these into publishable compositions. In 1909 Handy wrote "Mister Crump," a campaign song that helped elect Edward Crump mayor of Memphis. By this time Handy was an increasingly important Memphis bandleader in parks, roof gardens, and on riverboats. In 1912 he



W. C. Handy and Nat King Cole meet for the first time, New York City, 1952. (Photo by “Popsie” Randolph, © 1986 Frank Driggs Collection)

self-published his “The Memphis Blues,” partly based on “Mister Crump.” He sold the rights to the song for fifty dollars, a mistake he would regret for many years. In 1913, Handy founded Pace & Handy, a music publishing company with a shrewd young entrepreneur, Harry Pace, as the business end of the company. During the next few years Handy wrote and published most of his greatest songs: “St. Louis Blues,” “Yellow Dog Blues,” “Hesitating Blues,” “Joe Turner Blues,” “Beale Street Blues,” “Aunt Hagar’s Children Blues,” and many more. By the end of 1915 numerous vaudevillians, and such future blues greats as Bessie Smith and Clara Smith, were performing Handy’s songs in every black theater in the country.

Handy made his first recordings in New York in 1917. By this time, he was already setting his sights on the north, and he relocated his firm to Tin Pan Alley in 1918. These were the glory years of Pace & Handy, with numerous recordings of their material bringing in a steady income and the firm burgeoning to include such future music leaders as composer William Grant Still and bandleader Fletcher Henderson on its staff.

At the beginning of 1921 Pace left the company to found Black Swan Records, taking the cream of the staff with him. Handy soon suffered severe business reverses in a wildly fluctuating economy, and he was also struck temporarily blind following unsuccessful oral surgery. For the next few years he struggled to keep his business going, now with a skeleton staff largely made up of family. By the late 1920s he was getting back on his feet. Although only partially sighted, he was enjoying a wealth of positive publicity, the early stages of the “Father of the Blues” legend. The services of an able attorney, music buff Abbe Niles, were crucial to Handy’s future success. Together they created a remarkable book, *Blues: An Anthology*, a landmark in establishing blues as a subject worthy of study. Recordings of Handy’s songs, particularly “St. Louis Blues,” were equally important. In 1928 Handy presided over a concert of black music at Carnegie Hall. The following year Bessie Smith made her only film, *St. Louis Blues*, and Handy was involved in production of the film.

In the last thirty years of his life Handy became increasingly famous both in America and abroad,

as revered a figure as any African American. In 1933–1934 he participated in a nostalgic traveling show organized by Joe Laurie, and there were numerous swing and pop recordings of his songs. There were also heartaches. Elizabeth Price Handy, his first wife, died in 1937. In 1943, while in the New York City subway, Handy fell to the tracks, injuring his head. After this, he was totally blind until his death. There was also a growing undercurrent of doubt about his primacy as a blues creator. This began in 1938, when *Down Beat* magazine carried an attack by New Orleans jazz great Jelly Roll Morton, entitled "I Created Jazz in 1902, not W. C. Handy." While Morton's allegations were largely unproved, his great stature lent them automatic credence, and the damage to Handy's reputation has been lasting. Only in recent years has there been a renewed appreciation of Handy and his work.

Handy certainly did not create the blues, but his compositions, by his own admission partial arrangements of preexisting material, did more to bring them to public attention than the work of any other single musician. More than a dozen years before the advent of recordings of country bluesmen, Handy's publications, and recordings of them, created the first wave of interest in blues during the years around World War I. And, while some of his pieces, such as "The Memphis Blues," are essentially ragtime, others, such as "St. Louis Blues," contain the key elements, both tonal and literary, that would embody the generally accepted definition of blues in the 1920s.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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Discography: AMG; DGR; Lord

Selected Recordings

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Handy's Memphis Blues Band, January 1922 Paramount recordings: "St. Louis Blues"; "Yellow Dog Blues."

Handy's Memphis Blues Band, March 1922 Paramount recordings: "She's a Mean Job"; "Muscle Shoals Blues."

Handy's Orchestra, 1923 OKeh recordings: ca. January 5: "Aunt Hagar's Blues" and "Louisville Blues"; March: "Panama," "St. Louis Blues," "Down-Hearted Blues," and "Mama's Got the Blues"; April: "Sundown Blues" and "My Pillow and Me"; May: "Gulf Coast Blues" and "Farewell Blues"; ca. June 4: "The Memphis Blues" and "Florida Blues"; August: "Ole Miss Blues" and "Darktown Reveille."

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W. C. Handy's Orchestra, 1939 Varsity recordings: "St. Louis Blues"; "Loveless Love"; "Beale Street Blues"; "Way Down South Where the Blues Began."

Handy made additional recordings, ranging from brief guest appearances to a set of archival recordings with family members and close associates, into the 1950s, and also appeared a number of times on television in the 1950s.

See also Black Swan Records; Hesitation Blues; Memphis Blues, The ("Mama Don' 'low" or "Mister Crump"); Smith, Clara; Smith, Bessie; St. Louis Blues

HANKERSON, ALVIN

(*See Guitar Nubbitt*)

HARE, AUBURN "PAT"

b. 20 December 1930; Cherry Valley, AR

d. 26 September 1980; St. Paul, MN

The son of Arkansas sharecroppers, Pat Hare started playing guitar at age ten, being taught early on by Joe Willie Wilkins. He was soon playing country fish fries in his uncle's band, and by 1948 was working with Howlin' Wolf in West Memphis. His dynamic playing caught the attention of Sam Phillips of Sun Records in 1952, and during the next two years he recorded behind numerous artists for the Memphis label, most notably Junior Parker, James Cotton, and Coy "Hot Shot" Love. Hare's overly amplified guitar and aggressive attack helped define the new urban blues that was developing in the city. In 1954, he recorded two Sun sides as a leader, including the prophetic "I'm

Gonna Murder My Baby”—a violent theme that he would eventually act out.

Hare moved to Houston in 1954 and during the next three years recorded for Duke Records behind Parker and Bobby Bland. In 1957, he moved to Chicago and replaced Jimmy Rogers in Muddy Waters's band. He went on to record with Waters on many Chess sides and performed with him at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival. By 1963, with his drinking and temperament becoming increasingly worse, Hare was fired by Waters and he moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to work with Mojo Buford. The following December, in an alcohol-fueled jealous rage, Hare murdered his girlfriend and a policeman. He was sentenced to life in prison where, as a model prisoner, he formed a jail-house band and occasionally played in public. Hare succumbed to lung cancer in 1980.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: LSFP

HARLEM HAMFATS

The Harlem Hamfats group was formed in 1936 and signaled a new direction for the blues with the expansion of the repetitive groups of the 1930s into an explosive new sound including brass and reeds. The Hamfats really developed it into a vital, successful sound that led to similar groups like Tampa Red's Chicago Five and Big Bill (Broonzy's) Memphis Five.

The core of the band consisted of blues brothers Joe and Charlie McCoy who played and sang the rough vocals. But musicians who appeared regularly included trumpeter Herb Morand, pianist Horace Malcolm, and clarinetist Odell Rand among others and the unit was immensely tight and disciplined for a group formed simply for recordings.

The Hamfats played blues but with a strong jazz feel and overtones of Western swing, and accompanied vocalists including Rosetta Howard, Frankie Jaxon, and Johnny Temple as well as midnighting as Jimmie Gordon's Vip Vop Band. Its first record, "Oh Red," was a huge hit and the Hamfats recorded extensively until 1939 when their sound was too familiar to attract buyers. The McCoy's both died in 1950, but the Hamfats left an important recorded legacy that still delights today

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: DGR; Lord

HARMAN, JAMES

b. 8 June 1946; Anniston, AL

Raised in rural Alabama, Harman has been performing and touring since 1964, usually playing college fraternity parties and in local soul and blues venues. He moved to Southern California in 1970 and became settled in local blues activity, including performing behind guest artists Big Joe Turner and Johnny Guitar Watson. In 1977 he assembled his first James Harman Band lineup, which over the years has included Kid Ramos, Gene Taylor, Fred Kaplan, and Hollywood Fats. His self-sufficient approach to recording has worked best with small independent labels, his classic examples being the live recording *Strictly Live in '85* (1990, Rivera) and the studio album *Extra Napkins* (1988, Rivera). A stylist in post-war harmonica grounded in Little Walter, Big Walter, and Sonny Boy Williamson II, he has worked mostly in good-time bar band material, although much of it is self-composed. Some songs share underlying concepts, such as those about touring life featured on his 1991 Black Top CD *Do Not Disturb*.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

HARMOGRAPH

Record label of the Harmograph Talking Machine Co., a subsidiary of the Shapleigh Hardware Co. of St. Louis. Introduced in 1921, it used Cameo masters, which included a Lucille Hegamin coupling, in 1922–1923 and thereafter drew from Paramount, including pseudonymous issues by Ida Cox, Alberta Hunter, and Ma Rainey. By mid-1924 masters were sourced from Pathé, including some vaudeville blues. Harmograph ceased trading in late 1925.

HOWARD RYE

HARMOGRAPH

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HARMONICA

Blues Harmonica History

The birth of the harmonica took place in Europe in the 1820s. Its design inspiration came from Asian mouth organs, such as the sheng, sho, or khen, which easily date back 3000 years or more. These are free-reed instruments, capable of producing one or more notes simultaneously while inhaling or exhaling, but only having a single common air hole and requiring the use of the fingers. The harmonica borrowed the free-reed principle and the ability to sound single or multiple notes while inhaling or exhaling, but added a separate air hole for each note, and arranged them linearly.

By 1830, harmonicas were being manufactured in at least six European towns and in America by musical instrument makers Zwahlen and Bazin; an instructional book was also published that same year by Bourne in New York. Harmonicas of that period had diverse tunings, but many were played by exhaling only and often lacked cover plates. They do not appear to have been marketed toward the poor or working classes.

The first significant event in blues harmonica history was when the ten-hole diatonic tuning system was invented by a Bohemian man named Richter, by no later than 1857. His tuning was only intended to allow for the playing of simple, major-key songs with very basic chord accompaniment, while inhaling and exhaling. By complete accident, Richter's tuning was also ideally suited for playing blues.

In 1878, mass-production machines used in the manufacturing of harmonicas were patented in Klingenthal, Germany, by Julius Berthold. By 1882, the M. Hohner Company was using these new machines, and by 1887, was producing well over one million harmonicas yearly, exclusively for the American market. With the combined production of the M. Hohner Company and numerous other European

manufacturers, harmonicas became more plentiful and less expensive. The dawn of mass production launched their popularity throughout the American South. In his autobiography, W. C. Handy reminisced about his childhood in Alabama. "Sometimes we were fortunate enough to have a French harp on which we played the fox and hounds and imitated the railroad trains—harmonica masterpieces" (Handy, 1941, p. 17).

The most famous harmonica, the Marine Band diatonic, was introduced in 1896. Listing for around seventy-five cents at its inception, it is still produced, virtually unchanged in design, and remains the harmonica of choice for most professional players.

Blues Harmonica Types

The two types of harmonicas used in blues are the diatonic and the chromatic. The diatonic is by far the most common and is also known as the harp, French harp, blues harp, mouth harp, and mouth organ. They typically have ten holes with twenty reeds tuned to the seven-note diatonic scale of the labeled key, and are arranged so that a major tonic chord of the key (C on a harmonica labeled "C") can be played anywhere by exhaling and the dominant 7/9 chord of the key (G7/9 on a harmonica labeled "C") can be played by inhaling (see Figure 1). This is the Richter tuning system. Until the 1960s, these harmonicas were mainly available in seven keys: G, A, Bb, C, D, E, and F; all twelve became more readily available later.

The chromatic, used much less in blues, is heard mainly in urban blues from Chicago after 1952 and from the West Coast a few years later. Versions of it were around as early as 1830. The first popular design emerged in the 1910s, but it did not catch on until the 1920s. The chromatic is actually two diatonic harmonicas packaged as one and tuned a musical half-step apart. A button-controlled sliding shuttle mouthpiece, attached to both, diverts air from one into the other.

In the 1930s, the "solo tuning" was made widely available on the chromatic. It used the tuning scheme of holes 4 through 7 of the older chromatic tuning, which is the Richter diatonic tuning, and repeated them an octave higher and an octave lower. While the exhale chord remained the major tonic (C), the inhale chord became a minor sixth (Dm6) (see Figure 2). The solo tuning is the most popular tuning system used on the chromatic harmonica, which typically has twelve or sixteen holes. The earlier Richter-diatonic-tuned version of the chromatic is known as the Koch or the slide harp.

Blues Harmonica Playing

Tongue blocking, or blocking, refers to using the tongue to cover, or block out, one or more holes while playing. It allows for octaves, wide intervals, vamping, and warbling sounds, which have significant importance to the blues harmonica sound. Single notes are obtained by blocking out the undesired holes on one side of the mouth while playing the desired hole out of the corner of the other side.

Octaves and wide intervals are obtained by blocking out one or more middle holes, and playing single holes out of both corners of the mouth. One of the most recognizable blues sounds is produced when holes 2 and 5 are played simultaneously while inhaling on the diatonic. Many early diatonic players (Jazz Gillum, Daddy Stovepipe) and chromatic players (George Smith) used octaves and intervals almost continuously on some songs.

Removing or lifting the tongue when blocking easily produces chords. The combination of blocking and lifting gives a fuller sound that can actually mimic two players playing at the same time (DeFord Bailey, Palmer McAbee). It can also give the note a very full-toned, percussive attack, depending on how the player coordinates tongue motion with breathing (Sonny Boy Williamson I, Big Walter Horton). This is usually called slapping or vamping and is extremely common among the prewar and early postwar players.

By blocking and lifting repeatedly and rapidly, a very full-toned tremolo effect will result (George Smith, Little Junior Parker, James Cotton) and by moving, or wiggling the tongue from side to side across the holes, a warbling or wide trilling effect is obtained (Little Walter, Sonny Terry, Gwen Foster).

Puckering, also called pursing, lipping, or lip blocking, is another popular way to play single or multiple notes using only the lips. It is a more recent method of playing, with a few advantages over blocking. The tongue is free to produce trumpeting-like articulations (Sonny Terry, Little Walter, Junior Wells) or a fluttering effect from sounding the Spanish “R” (DeFord Bailey, Sonny Boy Williamson I, Big Walter Horton).

With puckering, the tongue can participate with more coordination when using the bending technique. Players influenced mainly by Paul Butterfield, John Mayall, and the stream of instructional books that emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, also favor the pucker, usually with the incorrect assumption that bending was not possible when blocking.

Bending is a technique used to alter the normal pitch of a note on the harmonica. It is recognized as

one of the most distinctive blues harmonica sounds, yet its occurrence is a total accident of the harmonica’s design, the result of having two differently pitched reeds in one hole. At least two versions of “Mouth Organ Coon” recorded by Pete Hampton ca. 1904 contain rudimentary examples of bending and also give a nod to the Fox Chase. Bending was first skillfully recorded by Henry Whitter in 1923 and found described in print that same year. Numerous brilliant examples were recorded before the end of the decade. Though the Fox Chases and Train Imitations played by W. C. Handy and his friends in the early 1880s only imply the use of bending, they do depict a scene that was probably typical of its discovery and use.

Bending was certainly happened upon by many people. Depending on the player’s musical background and experience level, it was found to be a blessing or a curse. If it was a part of a player’s musical background, it was probably embraced and quickly incorporated, as was likely with the African Americans and rural, white Southerners. The curse of bending is that it can manifest itself as an uncooperative, unresponsive, and even dissonant instrument when one is not trying to bend. Additionally, when the bending sound was not a part of a player’s musical background, it was likely found to be a nuisance or unwanted noise.

Bending is used for two reasons: to obtain new, previously missing notes (new-note bending), and for various bluesy ornaments (ornamental bending). On the diatonic, this occurs while inhaling on holes 1 through 6 and exhaling on holes 7 through 10 (see Figure 1). It is possible to bend most of the notes on the chromatic, but because bending is less typical in the blues chromatic sound, the following descriptions pertain to the diatonic.

Ornamental bending is characterized by slow, mournful, swooping vocal-like fluctuations in pitch (Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Big Walter Horton) or fast, aggressive, flashy ones (Will Shade, Sonny Terry, Big Walter Horton). The result, coming from a player who can control it, is an extremely intense and emotionally expressive sound.

New-note bending, as mentioned, is the sounding of notes other than those to which the reeds are tuned. Using this allows access to twelve previously missing notes, nine of which are not in the key of the harmonica. The notes essential to the blues sound, the blues notes, are among these new notes.

Overbending, also known as overblowing and overdrawing, is an advanced form of bending that is used to obtain the remaining, previously missing, seven chromatic notes. They are found while exhaling on holes 1 through 6 and inhaling on holes 7 through 10 (see Figure 1). When overbending is used with

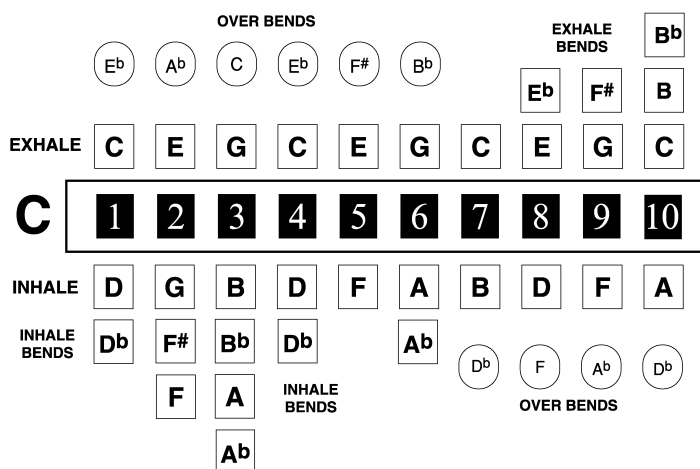


Figure 1: Ten-hole diatonic harmonica. (Illustration courtesy of Filisko Harmonicas)

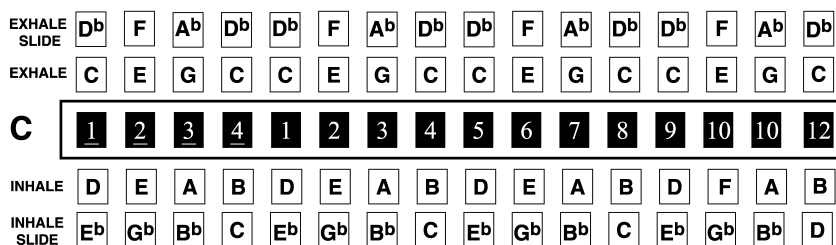


Figure 2: Twelve-hole chromatic harmonica. (Illustration courtesy of Filisko Harmonicas)

new-note bending, the player gains access to a three-octave chromatic scale. It is popular among some modern contemporary players mainly due to the influence of Howard Levy, although Blues Birdhead, aka James Simons, used it as early as October 13, 1929, on his song “Mean Low Blues.”

The player’s hands are extremely important for obtaining various vocal-like effects, tremolo, and enhancing tone. A variety of hand grips can be used to close off part or all of the back of the harmonica, allowing for the effects and for the deepening of the overall tone.

Blues Harmonica Playing Positions

Despite the fact that all diatonic harmonicas are tuned to play in one specific labeled key, players eventually realized that it was possible, even advantageous, to play them in other keys. This has become known as playing the positions. Though never officially standardized, the musical “circle of fifths” is often used to differentiate the twelve possible positions. Before 1952 there were recorded examples of blues played in seven different positions on the

diatonic harmonica: first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and twelfth. This is equivalent to playing a “C” harmonica in the keys of C, G, D, A, E, B, and F. That there were exactly seven keys derives from the fact that there are only seven distinct notes readily available on a diatonic harmonica.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of blues is still only played in second, first, and third positions, and in that order. The main reason is that these three positions have complete tonic chords with the potential to yield previously missing blues notes by bending, while inherently minimizing the possibilities of accidentally playing undesirable notes. Another reason is the influence of the strong playing traditions that came out of Chicago and Memphis.

Playing first position, or straight harp, is playing in the same key as the harmonica, or the exhale chord (key of C on a harmonica labeled “C”). Blues is most effectively played on holes 7 through 10 while exhaling because blues notes can be found on holes 8, 9, and 10 by bending. This was a very popular blues position in the prewar years, after which it began to lose favor. Jimmy Reed revived first position when he used it on numerous hit recordings for Vee-Jay records (Honest I Do; Bright Lights, Big City). Other players used it a little during that time

but favored the lower four holes (Little Walter, Big Walter Horton, Sonny Boy Williamson II). The first known blues player who recorded using first position was Herbert Leonard on January 31, 1924 (with Clara Smith, "My Doggone Lazy Man"). This is also the first known blues harmonica recording.

Second position, cross, cross harp or choking, in simplest terms, uses the inhale chord as the key, or tonic chord (key of G on a harmonica labeled "C"), which is up a musical fifth. This is also the Mixolydian mode, or scale, popular in blues due to its flatted seventh note. The appeal of second position lies in its ability to obtain blues notes by bending, while inhaling on the same holes that also sound a dominant chord, a principle blues chord. It eventually became the standard blues position after the debut recording success of Sonny Boy Williamson I on May 5, 1937, and to a lesser degree Sonny Terry later that same year. Probably ninety percent or more of all postwar blues is played in second position.

The first known recordings of second position are those of the hillbilly artist Henry Whitter, who recorded at least three old-time blues tunes on December 12, 1923. Among them were the "Old Time Fox Chase" and "Lost Train Blues," solo harmonica pieces that were popular throughout the South, crossing all racial lines. The first African American to have recorded in second position was Sam Jones, aka Stovepipe No. 1, who recorded five non-blues tunes on August 19 and 20, 1924, and at least six unreleased blues songs. This was followed by examples from Herbert Leonard, Robert Cooksey, and Will Shade. But the earliest recorded player to capture second position's bluesy essence was Jaybird Coleman (ca. July 28, 1927, with vocalist Bertha Ross, "My Jelly Blues").

Third position is played a musical fifth above second position (key of D on a harmonica labeled "C"). Holes 4, 5, and 6 sound a minor chord when played together and become the new key, or tonic chord. This is the Dorian mode, or scale, popular in blues due to its flatted third and seventh notes. Though arguably more popular today than even first position, no recordings have been found using third position prior to December 29, 1951, when Little Walter first played it on the Muddy Waters song "Lonesome Day." Numerous other examples soon followed, by him and many others (George Smith, Junior Wells, James Cotton, Forrest City Joe).

Blues playing on the chromatic is usually in third position, taking advantage of its minor chord, inherent when inhaling (see Figure 2). Players tend to use the slide button little, if at all, unless it is predominantly held in, putting the harmonica in a key a half-step higher.

Blues Harmonica Playing Categories

All blues harmonica playing can fit into one of four categories: soloist, player and vocalist, instrumentalist, and sideman.

Harmonica soloists are mostly associated with the prewar players who played the Train Imitation, Lost John, Fox Chase, Mama Blues, and other call-and-response type pieces that featured the harmonica over the voice, if the voice was used at all. These pieces are seldom heard today. Notable players were DeFord Bailey, Palmer McAbee, Freeman Stowers, George "Bullet" Williams, William McCoy, Alfred Lewis, Roger Matthews, Sonny Terry, and Peg Leg Sam.

The harmonica player/vocalist category is the most common. The earliest approach was to play a verse of the melody in between the sung verses, which was also common in old-time music. This is represented by the recordings of Daddy Stovepipe, Stovepipe No. 1, Jaybird Coleman, Jazz Gillum, and Elder Roma Wilson. This approach was mostly abandoned after the recording debuts of Sonny Boy Williamson I and Sonny Terry, who usually used a call-and-response approach featuring the voice. The most well-known postwar harmonica player/vocalists are Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Howlin' Wolf, and Jimmy Reed.

The harmonica instrumentalist category differs from the soloist in that it relies on accompaniment. Urban players Robert Cooksey, Blues Birdhead, and Rhythm Willie and country players Richard Sowell and Ellis Williams represent this in the prewar period. Many fine examples were recorded by jug band players Noah Lewis and Jed Davenport along with the Atlanta player, Eddie Mapp.

Little Walter set the new standard in the postwar period with his hit "Juke," followed by some thirty additional instrumentals including "Off the Wall," "Sad Hours," "Blue Light," and "Roller Coaster." The song "Honeydrinker" was recorded as an instrumental by numerous players (Little Walter, Papa Lightfoot) as was "Tommy Dorsey's Boogie Woogie" (Big Walter Horton, Louis Myers). Since the recording of "Juke," it is almost assumed that harmonica players have some instrumentals in their repertoire.

The harmonica sideman supports the vocalist or soloist. Many of the early instrumentalists doubled as sidemen; the most notable early sidemen were the jug band players Will Shade, Noah Lewis, and Jed Davenport. They were influential on the playing of Hammie Nixon, who recorded and worked behind Son Bonds and Sleepy John Estes. Hammie was an influence on Sonny Boy Williamson I, whose sideman

work with Big Joe Williams, Robert Lee McCoy (Robert Nighthawk), and Yank Rachell is among his best playing. Sonny Terry started recording as a sideman for Blind Boy Fuller before his partnership with Brownie McGhee.

In the postwar scene, the importance of the sideman role was elevated, mostly due to the success of Muddy Waters and the popularity of Chicago blues. Harmonica players became such an essential part of the 1950s Chicago scene that bands had a hard time finding work without one. Playing with Muddy became the highest honor among players. Among those so honored were Little Walter, Junior Wells, Big Walter Horton, George Smith, James Cotton, Mojo Buford, Paul Oscher, and Jerry Portnoy.

Most Influential Players

DeFord Bailey was the premier soloist. His Train Imitation, Fox Chase, and other solo pieces were heard weekly throughout the South on the Grand Ole Opry radio program from 1925 to 1941. He recorded eighteen sides in 1927 and 1928; eleven were issued.

Sonny Terry, best known for his nearly forty-year partnership with Brownie McGhee, also recorded with Blind Boy Fuller, Leadbelly, and Woody Guthrie. In December 1938, he performed in the renowned "From Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall in New York. His playing was heard in two very successful Broadway shows (*Finian's Rainbow*, *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*) and his image is featured on a 1998 U. S. Postage Stamp.

John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson I may be the most significant player in the history of the instrument and certainly one of the most imitated. He recorded for the Victor/Bluebird label from 1937 until his death in 1948. His debut recording session yielded the smash hit "Good Morning School Girl." Ten years of hits and great sideman work followed. He was the first to make the harmonica a legitimate instrument in blues. The next generation of players showed obvious signs of his influence.

Little Walter Jacobs was greatly influenced by Sonny Boy Williamson I. He started out as an amazing imitator, but his individual style soon emerged. He is the most significant postwar blues harmonica player. His May 1952 instrumental hit "Juke," which has become the blues harmonica anthem, showed the sophistication of his playing style and amplified sound. His sideman work with Muddy Waters and Jimmy Rogers are still prime textbook examples. Little Walter remains the player most well

known for first using amplification and for helping to create the postwar Chicago blues sound.

Aleck Miller, aka Sonny Boy Williamson II, recorded for the Trumpet label from 1951 to 1954 and for Chess from 1955 until his death in 1965. His style was original, despite his stealing John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson's name. Predominantly an acoustic player, he was well known for his minimalist approach to playing, his generous use of hand effects, and nervous vibrato.

Big Walter "Shakey" Horton, also influenced by Sonny Boy Williamson I, is immortalized in his full-toned sideman work with Muddy Waters, Jimmy Rogers, Johnny Shines, Sunnyland Slim, and Willie Dixon. That he was also a master instrumentalist is clearly heard in his 1953 Sun recording of "Easy." He was the blues harmonica icon throughout the 1970s until his death in 1981.

George "Harmonica" Smith became the father of the "West Coast Harmonica Sound" after his move to California in the mid-1950s. He remains known for his Hammond-organ-like chromatic harmonica sound and his blending of Chicago blues with the Kansas City Swing.

Jimmy Reed will always be known for his fluid high-note bending in first position. Although he was not the only player doing this, he was the one who recorded the most hits with it.

James Cotton and Junior Wells were among the first players to use the harmonica with R&B and funk grooves. Both were equally capable of playing in the pure Chicago blues context.

Paul Butterfield's approach to playing blues has largely become the prototype for rock and fusion-flavored blues. He influenced many to start playing.

JOSEPH FILISKO

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- Williamson, Sonny Boy (I). *The Bluebird Recordings* (RCA 07863 66723-2).

HARMONICA FATS

- b. Harvey Blackston, 8 September 1927; McDade, LA
d. 3 January 2000; Los Angeles, CA

Harmonica player, vocalist, and songwriter who first appeared on the R&B scene with his 1962 hit "Tore Up." Joined the Bernie Pearl Blues Band and released the album *I Had to Get Nasty* in 1991. Collaborated with Pearl as an acoustic duo and recorded two albums for Bee Bump Records.

STEPHANIE POXON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP (as Blackston)

HARNEY, RICHARD "HACKSAW"

- b. 16 July 1902; Money, MS
d. 25 December 1973; Memphis, TN

"Hacksaw" Harney was a legendary guitarist amongst the guitarists of the Mississippi Delta, but there are very few recordings to substantiate his reputation. He reputedly played with a jazz orchestra in the 1920s and was said to have been equally talented on the piano. He made his living as a piano tuner and repairer and earned the nickname "Hacksaw" from the small hand saw he carried for his work.

In 1927 he and his brother Mylar auditioned for a Columbia Records field recording team in Memphis, but recorded only as accompanists for singers Walter "Pat" Rhodes and Pearl Dickson. Rhodes was a street singing accordion player from Ruleville, Mississippi, who may well be the oldest delta musician recorded. The contrast of his archaic style with the swing and sophistication of the Harney brothers makes for a fascinating record. Mylar was killed in a juke joint shortly after the recording sessions, but Richard continued to play with many of the most important musicians in the delta including Robert Johnson, Robert Jr. Lockwood, and Big Joe Williams. His influence was also spread by appearances on the King Biscuit Time radio show broadcast from Helena, Arkansas.

Harney recorded a single session in 1972 after being located by blues enthusiasts. He claimed to have not played a guitar in twenty years, but made a fine showing revealing a sophisticated finger style of guitar playing that is less of the delta and more of the swing of a performer like Blind Blake.

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

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- Harney's 1927 Columbia recording sessions: DGR, p. 215 (accompanying Pearl Dickson); DGR, p. 752 (accompanying Walter Rhodes).

See also Adelphi Records; Lockwood, Robert Jr.; Williams, Joe

HARPER, JOE

HARPER, JOE

b. Joe Martin, 5 May 1930; Raymond, MS
d. 24 February 1973; Chicago, IL

Learned guitar from father Robert Holmes, a gospel guitarist. Moved to Gary, Indiana, in 1955, then to Chicago in 1957. From the late 1950s until around 1966 he performed with Big Del and the Vibrators. From 1967 until his death from tuberculosis, he performed mostly with Carey Bell, but also made notable appearances with Jimmy Dawkins.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HARPO, SLIM

b. James Moore, 11 January 1924; Lobdell, LA
d. 31 January 1970; Baton Rouge, LA

Guitarist, harpist, singer, composer. The universal popularity of Harpo's laid-back but insistent blues approach took the muddy, atmospheric sound of Excello Records from tiny Crowley, Louisiana, to a worldwide audience. The smoldering sexuality of Harpo's songs, covered by acts as diverse as the Rolling Stones, Hank Williams Jr., the Kinks, and Lou Ann Barton, among many others, infused his music with an enduring signature style.

Harpo's parents died when he was a youth and he hit the streets as a performer, working dances, parties, and street corners as Harmonica Slim. He eventually got recording studio work on the recommendation of his friend Lightnin' Slim and after doing several sessions as a backing musician he cut his first single, the classic "I'm a King Bee."

But a Harmonica Slim already existed as a recording act on the West Coast so Slim Harpo came into being when his wife Lovelle simply reversed his name, took the slang term for the instrument, and added an O. It wasn't the only career assistance she provided; she also cowrote many of his most successful songs, including "I'm a King Bee."

The hits kept coming. The mournful "Raining in My Heart," which made its way onto the national pop charts in 1961, was even more successful than his first hit. It was, however, "Baby, Scratch My Back," the beneficiary of attention gained by the Rolling Stones recording "I'm a King Bee" on their first album, that became the biggest hit, enabling Harpo to finally play live shows in California and New York. He ultimately reunited with Lightnin' Slim

and they toured together through the 1960s. Their first European tour was scheduled when a seemingly healthy Harpo, one of the cleanest living bluesmen of his era, unexpectedly died from a heart attack.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSPF

HARRINGTON/CLEARWATER FAMILY

One of the prolific families in the blues, the Harrington clan most notably includes Chicago veterans Eddy Harrington, better known as Eddy Clearwater, his cousin Carey Bell Harrington, and Carey's son Lurrie C. Bell. Eddy's uncle was Reverend Houston H. Harrington, the founder of the idiosyncratic Atomic-H label in Chicago. Reverend Harrington's sons, Joe (bass) and Vernon (guitar), once led a West Side band called the Atomic Souls.

Carey Bell fathered a number of blues-playing sons in addition to guitarist Lurrie: Carey Jr. (bass), Steve (harmonica), James (drums), and Tyson (bass). The younger Bells sometimes performed in their childhood years as the Ding Dongs. By extension or informal adoption, Carey Bell's "family" also includes pianist Lovie Lee (Edward L. Watson), who mentored Carey back in Mississippi and brought him to Chicago, and Lee's son Douglas Watson; prewar blues pianist Charley West was also the father of Carey's wife Dorothy (and, hence, grandfather to the younger Bell/Harrington children). To further extend the family tree into yet another prolific branch, Carey was also at one time married to Willie Dixon's daughter Patricia.

Carey Bell and Clearwater did not know they were related until they were together in the studio for a Rooster Blues session and a producer asked, noting that they both had the same last name and birthplace. The Harringtons started comparing notes and both traced their families back to the Macon, Mississippi, area.

JIM O'NEAL

HARRIS, COREY

b. 21 February 1969; Denver, CO

Though often viewed as revivalist or retro, Corey Harris's music is completely contemporary, reflecting

a thorough knowledge of the complete American and African American music spectrum. Harris's past albums have included funk, reggae, soul, rock, country, and pop elements right alongside blues tunes, and he mixed African and world music ingredients with blues on the outstanding release *Mississippi to Mali*. Harris has been praised for his ability to take a musicological approach without lapsing into a dry, academic lyrical or performing stance.

Corey Harris's debut release, *Between Midnight and Day*, was labeled as a reworking of the music of Charlie Patton and Robert Johnson. But Harris has always preferred original works to repertory and covers, is equally at home with acoustic and electric instruments, and never confines himself to any single blues strain. Before becoming a musician, Harris studied anthropology at Bates College, and frequent appearances in African and European festivals have made him a dynamic advocate for musical and cultural eclecticism. Harris received his greatest mainstream exposure in 2003 following his participation in the great director Martin Scorsese's film *Feel Like Going Home*, one of several movies made for the 2003 "Year of the Blues" celebration, in which Harris's appearance with Mali music giant Ali Farka Toure was an unforgettable highlight.

RON WYNN

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 Guralnick, Peter, ed., *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues*. New York: Amistad, 2003.

Discography: AMG

HARRIS, DON "SUGARCANE"

- b. Donald Bowman, 18 June 1938; Pasadena, CA
 d. 1 December (?) 1999; Los Angeles, CA

Date of death also reported as 27 or 30 November. Violinist, guitarist. Family members were traveling carnival entertainers. Harris studied classical music at school in Los Angeles. He went on to form a doo-wop group, The Squires, in early 1950s, then worked with pianist Dewey Terry as Don and Dewey. He recorded with John Lee Hooker in 1959. He was the first electric violinist to make a genuine impact in blues and rock music. He devised a method of amplifying his violin by adapting a cartridge from a

record player, giving him unprecedented power and aggressive attack.

"Sugarcane" acquired his nickname while working with Johnny Otis. He toured Europe with Little Richard in a band that also included a youthful Jimi Hendrix. He joined Frank Zappa in 1969, and contributed to the radical innovations on albums like *Hot Rats* (1969), *Burnt Weeny Sandwich* (1969), and *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* (1970).

Harris's first solo album, *Keep on Driving*, was released in 1970. He joined John Mayall for *USA Union* (1970) and remained with Mayall's touring band for several years in the 1970s, although a drug habit made him unreliable at times. He also worked with guitarist Harvey Mandel, and in blues-rock band Pure Food and Drug Act. He recorded several more albums as leader, and united with jazz-rock violinists Jean Luc Ponty and Michael Urbaniak for the album *New Violin Summit* in 1971. Harris recorded *Changing Seasons* (1980) with jazz violinist Billy Bang. He did further work with Zappa, Mayall, and John Lee Hooker in the 1970s, and then reunited with Dewey Terry in 1975, an association that continued until 1998. Harris recorded again with Mayall in 1994, but his career declined after 1970s. Pulmonary disease forced him to give up playing in 1998.

KENNY MATHIESON

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

Selected Recordings as Leader

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Sugarcane (1970, Epic 30027).
Fiddler on the Rock (1971, Musidisc 15062).
Choice Cuts (1972, Epic 31401).
Got the Blues (1973, Polydor 21283).
Cup Full of Dreams (1974, BSAF 68030).
I'm on Your Case (1974, MPS 21912).

HARRIS, HI TIDE

- b. 26 March 1946; San Francisco, CA

Vocalist and guitarist (both conventional and slide). According to researcher Sheldon Harris, birth name reportedly may have been Willie Gitry or Willie Boyd. Backed Jimmy McCracklin and John Mayall on record before playing on the soundtrack of the film *Leadbelly* (1975). In the late 1980s he moved to Japan and has recorded regularly for Japanese labels, while making occasional live appearances in the States.

RAY ASTBURY

HARRIS, HI TIDE

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Selected Recordings

The Hey Day of Hi Tide Harris 1970s–90s (Tezu 0002).

HARRIS, HOMER

- b. 6 May 1916; Drew, MS
d. 16 October 2000; Chicago, IL

Vocalist known to record collectors for his 1946 Columbia label recordings with guitarist Muddy Waters and pianist Jimmy Clarke. Harris's interest in music had begun at the time of his move to Chicago in 1943. From then until 1956 he performed in Chicago clubs with Clarke (until the latter's death in 1952) or with Johnnie Jones.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

HARRIS, KENT L. "BOOGALOO"

- b. 1930; Oklahoma City, OK

Singer, songwriter, producer. Raised in San Diego, California, Harris moved to Los Angeles in 1952 after service in the U.S. Air Force. His 1955 Crest label recording of his song "Cops and Robbers" released by Bo Diddley; the same thing happened to his song "Clothesline," but this time it was the Coasters who garnered the higher sales. Later he began producing freelance, and he founded the Romark label in 1960.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HARRIS, PEPPERMINT

- b. Harrison D. Nelson Jr., 17 July 1925; Texarkana, TX
d. 19 March 1999; Elizabeth, NJ

Guitarist, singer. After serving in the Navy in World War II, Harris moved to Houston in 1943. He devoted his full time to music a few years later and became a protégé of Houston blues patriarch Lightnin' Hopkins, who landed him (as Peppermint Nelson) his first recording session with the Gold Star label in 1948. Harris, whose mellow, laid-back singing style was surprisingly sophisticated for his country upbringing, gained some early attention with the regional favorite "Raining in My Heart" in 1950. But it was the surprise success of his "I Got Loaded" ode to alcohol a year later that made him a star, creating a blues subgenre in the process, one Harris repeatedly mined with follow-ups like "Have Another Drink and Talk to Me" and "Three Sheets in the Wind."

Harris relocated to California and served as a staff writer for Modern Records, writing lyrics for a series of B. B. King and Etta James hits. He also recorded under his own name, once with a youthful Albert Collins, for an assortment of small West Coast labels. But Harris couldn't get commercial traction for his career. After signing with Jewel Records in 1965, he ultimately returned to Houston and worked primarily in nonmusic jobs. Following several European festival appearances, Harris officially retired in 1988, spending his final years in Sacramento, California, before a brief move to New Jersey for family reasons. His final albums, *Texas on My Mind*, released in 1995, and the posthumous *Shreveport Downhome Blues*, released in 2003, combine with the compilation of his later work, *Lonesome as I Can Be: The Jewel Recordings*, to form the core of his recorded catalog.

MICHAEL POINT

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Burke, Tony. "Peppermint Harris" [obituary]. *Blues & Rhythm* no. 139 (1999): 20.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

HARRIS, THURSTON

- b. 11 July 1931; Indianapolis, IN
d. 14 April 1990; Pomona, CA

Vocalist and saxophonist who recorded for Aladdin. Harris's biggest hit was 1957's "Little Bitty Pretty One."

TOM MORGAN

Bibliography

Nelson, David. "Thurston Harris" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 94 (1990): 54.

Discography

Little Bitty Pretty One (1984, EMI American LP SQ-17237).

HARRIS, TONY

b. March 1934; Austin, TX

Harris's early career and recordings through 1956 were in sacred music, including with the Traveling Four sacred group. Initial efforts in secular music through Art Rupe's Specialty label were futile, but his single "Chicken Baby Chicken" for Rupe's ex-wife Leona Rupe's Ebb label was a national hit in 1957. Subsequent blues and soul recording efforts did not sell well, but he continued performing and road-managing various musical acts. Since the 1980s he has sung both gospel and rhythm and blues, mostly around Los Angeles.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography and Discography

Nations, Opal Louis. "The 'Chicken Baby Chicken' Man: The Story of Tony Harris." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 115 (Christmas [December] 1996): 4-7; no. 117 (February 1997): 4-7.

HARRIS, WILLIAM "BIG FOOT"

b. ca. 1900

d. ca. 1930s

Delta blues guitarist and singer active in the Glendora, Mississippi, area through the early 1930s. An early discovery of blues talent scout H. C. Speir, Harris recorded for Gennett Records in 1927.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Wardlow, Gayle Dean. "'Big Foot' William Harris." *78 Quarterly* no. 3 (1988): 45-48.

Discography: DGR**HARRIS, WYNONIE**

b. 24 August 1913; Omaha, NE

d. 14 June 1969; Los Angeles, CA

Birth year also reported as 1915. Singer, composer. Wynonie Harris was an immensely popular urban

blues artist whose exuberant recordings of wildly imaginative compositions like "Grandma Plays the Numbers," "Good Morning Judge," and "Bloodshot Eyes" dominated the R&B charts between 1945 and 1952. A dynamic blues shouter and crowd-pleasing performer, "Mr. Blues" helped create the image of the flamboyant, hard-living show-business personality that served as the template for the rock 'n' roll stars of the 1950s and thereafter.

Harris was discovered by bandleader Lucky Millinder, who hired him as vocalist with his popular orchestra and featured him on the band's number one R&B hit, "Who Threw the Whiskey in the Well" (1945, Decca). Harris then went out on his own, recording for Apollo in 1946 before signing with King the next year. His first number one single for the label, a rollicking reading of Roy Brown's prophetic "Good Rockin' Tonight" (1948), inspired a young Elvis Presley to cut the song for his second Sun release several years later.

Harris extended the theme with "All She Wants to Do Is Rock" in 1949 and then released a series of bawdy jump-blues anthems that celebrated the joys of sex ("I Want My Fanny Brown," "Sittin' on It All the Time," "I Like My Baby's Pudding," "Lovin' Machine") and the woes associated with heavy drinking. But his songs were too adult oriented and risqué to allow Harris to cross over into the white rock 'n' roll marketplace of the mid- and late 1950s, and his career took an abrupt nosedive from which the singer never recovered.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: LSFP

"Who Threw the Whiskey in the Well" (1945, Decca; with Lucky Millinder Orchestra); "Playful Baby" (1946, Decca); "Wynonie's Blues," "Around the Clock Blues" (1946, Apollo); "Good Rockin' Tonight," "Lollipop Mama" (1948, King); "Grandma Plays the Numbers," "I Feel That Old Age Coming On," "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee," "All She Wants to Do Is Rock," "I Want My Fanny Brown" (1949, King); "Sittin' on It All the Time," "I Like My Baby's Pudding," "Good Morning Judge," "Oh Babe!" (1950, King); "Bloodshot Eyes" (1951, King); "Lovin' Machine" (1952, King).

HARRISON, VERNON

(See *Boogie Woogie Red*)

HARRISON, WILBERT

HARRISON, WILBERT

b. 5 January 1929; Charlotte, NC
d. 26 October 1994; Spencer, NC

Rhythm and blues singer who recorded two songs that were to become rock classics: “Kansas City” (1959) to be covered by the Beatles in 1964, and “Let’s Work Together” (also, “Let’s Stick Together”) (1969), which was popularized in rock by Canned Heat in 1970.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Penny, Dave. “Wilbert Harrison.” *Blues & Rhythm* no. 96 (February 1995): 12–13.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

HART, ALVIN “YOUNGBLOOD”

b. Gregory Edward Hart, 2 March 1963; Oakland, CA

Singer and acoustic blues guitarist, considered one of the best to have emerged during the 1990s blues revival.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Richard Skelly)
Jung, Maureen. “Acoustic Blues in Oakland: Alvin Youngblood Hart and Elmer Lee Thomas.” *Living Blues* no. 126 (March/April 1996): 34–39.

Discography: AMG

HART, HATTIE

Flourished 1920s–1930s

Hart’s tough, sexy delivery was first heard in 1930 on the Memphis Jug Band’s “Memphis Yo Yo Blues” and “Cocaine Habit Blues.” She recorded in 1934 with Allen Shaw and Willie Borum, and in 1938, under the name Hattie Bolten, in Chicago, where she may have moved to live.

TONY RUSSELL

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Larkin
Olsson, Bengt. *Memphis Blues*. London: Studio Vista, 1970.

Discography: DGR

HARVEY, TED

b. 21 December 1930; Chicago, IL

Drummer best known for his work with guitarist Hound Dog Taylor. Began as saxophonist as a teenager, continuing on that instrument and trumpet during service in the U.S. Army in the early 1950s. He took up drums while in the army. Fred Below was a significant influence, from whom Harvey learned the bass backbeat. Around 1961–1962 he began performing with Hound Dog Taylor, staying with him until the latter’s death in 1975. During his tenure with Taylor, Harvey received his first set of Ludwig drums, and he supported Taylor on the Houserockers albums for Alligator. In 1976–1978 he drummed for J. B. Hutto, then from 1978 through 1997 he was in the Jimmy Rogers Band.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HATCH, PROVINE, JR. “LITTLE HATCH”

b. 25 October 1921; Sledge, MS
d. 14 January 2003; Eldorado Springs, MO

Singer and harmonica player. He moved to Kansas City, Missouri, in 1946, and for many years worked days at Hallmark Cards. He performed in local clubs for more than fifty years. He recorded for the labels M&M, Modern Blues, and Analogue Productions Originals.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HAWKINS, ERNIE

b. 22 September 1947; Pittsburgh, PA

Ernie Hawkins is an Anglo master of the early Piedmont and Texas acoustic blues styles. Hawkins apprenticed with Reverend Gary Davis in the 1960s before returning to Pittsburgh to work with Bobby “Niles” Jones, aka “Guitar Gabriel.” In the 1970s, Hawkins studied in Texas with Mance Lipscomb and Art Eskridge before launching his own professional career.

JERRY ZOLTEN

Bibliography

AMG (Ken Chang)

Discography: AMG (Ken Chang)**HAWKINS, ERSKINE**

b. 26 July 1914; Birmingham, AL

d. 11 November 1993; Willingboro, NJ

Trumpeter and bandleader. Billed as the "Twentieth Century Gabriel" for his high-note acrobatics, Hawkins led the 'Bama State Collegians from 1934, which became the Erskine Hawkins Orchestra in 1938. A popular success with "Tuxedo Junction" (1939) established the band (remade in 1950). The band had a real feel for both blues and swing, and included fine soloists, notably the brothers Dud (trumpet) and Paul (tenor saxophone) Bascomb, and pianist Avery Parrish, who wrote "After Hours," a blues hit for the band in 1940. The band was popular until early 1950s, when Hawkins reduced the band to a small group other than for special reunions. He remained active into the 1980s.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord**Selected Recordings**

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HAWKINS, SCREAMIN' JAY

b. Jalacy J. Hawkins, 18 July 1929; Cleveland, OH

d. 12 February 2000; Paris, France

Screamin' Jay Hawkins (born Jalacy J. Hawkins) was one of the most theatrical R&B singers of all time, remarked as years ahead of his time in his outlandish performances, which included gold and leopard skin

costumes and notable voodoo stage props such as his smoking skull on a stick—named Henry—and rubber snakes. His stage act and mystique put a new point on the map of the blues, but also created a new element to mainstream media and popular culture.

Hawkins's biggest hit, "I Put a Spell on You," was originally conceived as a ballad. However, when he, guitarist Mickey Baker, and Sam "The Man" Taylor went to record the song while intoxicated, the resulting product was a raw, guttural track that became an instant success on the OKeh label in 1956. Soon after, Hawkins cemented his wild and bizarre voodoo persona, after being offered a three hundred dollar bonus by radio show host Alan Freed to pop out of a coffin on stage.

His personal evolution and character was fundamentally shaped by remarkable life stories. Legend has it that he spent his first eighteen months in a Cleveland orphanage before the Blackfoot Native American tribe adopted him. In addition to musical interest in his youth, he was also a prizefighter, winning the middleweight Golden Gloves title in 1947.

After the height of his career, in the 1950s and 1960s, film director Jim Jarmusch resurrected his career, featuring him in his remake of the film *Mystery Train* in 1989. He later appeared in *A Rage in Harlem* in 1991 and *Dance with the Devil* in 1997.

Hawkins's styles, sometimes referred to as "jump-blues" or "ghoul rock," have influenced many rock 'n' roll acts, including Black Sabbath and Alice Cooper. "I Put on Spell on You" continues to be covered in various stylistic formats, ranging from Them's soulful jazz interpretation to Pete Townshend's guitar acoustic style to Marilyn Manson's dark edge.

MEG FISHER

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[part 1]. *Blues & Rhythm* no. 31 (September 1987): 4–8;
[part 2]. *Blues & Rhythm* no. 32 (October 1987): 10–13;
[part 3]. *Blues & Rhythm* no. 33 (December 1987): 18–21.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

I Put a Spell on You (1957, Collectables LP 9006); *At Home with Screamin' Jay Hawkins* (1958, Columbia LP N-3448); *The Night & Day of Screamin' Jay Hawkins* (1965, Planet LP 1001); *What That Is* (1969, Phillips LP 600319); *A Night at Forbidden City* (1969, Sounds of Hawaii LP 5015); *Screamin' Jay Hawkins* (1970, Philips LP 600336); *Portrait of a Man & His Woman* (1972, Hot Line LP 10024); *Screamin' the Blues* (1979, Red Lightning LP 0025); *Frenzy* (1982, Edsel LP 104); *Real Life* (1983, Charly LP 163); *Live* (1985, Midnight LP 114); *Feat of the Mau Mau* (1988, Edsel LP 252); *Live & Crazy* (1989, Evidence LP ECD-26003); *Black Music for White*

HAWKINS, SCREAMIN' JAY

People (1991, Rhino LP R4-70556); *Cow Fingers & Mosquito Pie* (1991, Epic LP ET-47933); *Stone Crazy* (1993, Rhino LP 71184); *I Shake My Stick at You* (1994, Aim LP 1031); *Rated X* (1994, Performance LP 8237); *Some-thin' Funny Goin On* (1995, Bizarre/Straight LP 40105); *She Put the Wammee on Me* (1998, M.I.L. Multimedia LP 6121).

HAWKINS, TED

b. Theodore Hawkins, Jr., 28 October 1936; Lakeshore, MS

d. 1 January 1995; Los Angeles, CA

Ted Hawkins's life could be the credible basis for a blues song. He was born to a mother who was both an alcoholic and a prostitute, and he was in a juvenile reformatory by the time he was twelve. He took up music after seeing a performance by Professor Longhair, which prompted him to enter a talent contest. Upon release from the reformatory at age fifteen, the hapless youth earned a three-year term at Parchman Penitentiary for stealing a leather jacket. While there, he learned his mother had died of cirrhosis of the liver. Meanwhile, Hawkins was playing guitar and singing; his main influence was Sam Cooke, whom Hawkins idolized. He came to play a variety of material—soul, pop music, blues. Upon release he lived as an itinerant in various places including Chicago, Philadelphia, and Buffalo. He married twice in that period as well: The first ended in annulment by the bride's mother, the second in his wife's death from cancer. A third marriage lasted until his death.

In 1966, Hawkins bought a one-way ticket to Los Angeles. He searched to no avail for Sam Cooke's manager, but he recorded a single for Money Records. The single garnered no royalties for the artist, who, despairing of the music business, took his music to the streets. He began playing around the Ocean Front area of Venice Beach, busking on the boardwalks for spare change. During that period, Hawkins caught the attention of HighTone producer Bruce Bromberg, who took the nearly indigent singer under his wing. In 1971, Bromberg recorded sessions with Hawkins in a small group setting and solo. A single released on the Joliet label was the only part of those sessions released through 1982. Bromberg lost touch with the singer, and Hawkins had run afoul of the law again. Yet those sessions, released in 1982 on Rounder Records as *Watch Your Step*, brought Hawkins national recognition. At the request of a deejay, Hawkins moved to England and stayed for four years, where there and in Europe he was given overwhelming ovations from the audiences. Despite his success overseas, however, Hawkins returned to street performing in the United States. In the early

1990s, he was signed to Geffen Records by Tony Berg. The CD *The Next Hundred Years* was well received by the blues public on its release in 1994, and he seemed poised to return to the spotlight. Instead, he died on New Year's Day of the following year.

JOHN OTIS

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin Bonner, Brett. "Ted Hawkins" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 120 (March/April 1995): 93.

Discography: AMG

HAWKINS, WALTER "BUDDY BOY"

Flourished 1927–1929

Guitarist and singer active in the southern states in the 1920s. It is believed (but not well documented) that he came from Blytheville, Mississippi. He recorded for Paramount Records in 1927 and 1929. In the 1929 session he recorded "Voice Throwin' Blues," an odd piece of ventriloquism to the melody of W. C. Handy's "Hesitation Blues."

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: DGR

HAYES, CLIFFORD

Flourished 1924–1931

Violinist and session leader of recordings, especially for Louisville jug bands with banjoist Cal Smith.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Scott Yanow)

Discography: AMG; DGR

HAYES, HENRY

b. 5 August 1923; Marlin, TX

Houston-based saxophonist, songwriter, bandleader, and producer. Recorded for Aladdin, Gold Star, Savoy, Peacock, and Mercury labels—as well as his

own Kangaroo imprint. Produced the first recordings of Albert Collins, Joe Hughes, and Elmore Nixon.

ROGER WOOD

Bibliography

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Wood, Roger. *Down in Houston: Bayou City Blues*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

Discography: LSFP

HAYES, ROLAND

(See *Boy Blue*)

HAZELL, PATRICK

b. 1945

Based in Washington, Iowa. Hazell taught himself boogie-woogie piano in the 1950s. From 1968 through 1980 he was a member of the Mother Blues Band. Since then he has performed as a one-man band at piano, harmonica, and drums. His recent work has been exploring other American soundscapes, especially his *Vicksburg* CD (2000), which is evocative of the 1863 Civil War siege.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda, Larry Belanger)

Discography: AMG (Cub Koda, Larry Belanger)

HEALEY, JEFF

b. 25 March 1966; Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Blind guitarist from Toronto who plays his electric instrument lap-style. Healey's major label debut *See the Light* (1989, Arista) was well received, including a hit ballad single "Angel Eyes." His four Arista releases were based in blues, but his subsequent work has branched into jazz and other types of music.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Cote, M. "Jeff Healey and the Coolness Factor." *Blues Revue* no. 39 (July/August 1998): 30ff.

Discography: AMG

HEARTSMAN, JOHNNY

b. 9 February 1937; Houston, TX

d. 27 December 1996; Sacramento, CA

Multi-instrumentalist (guitar, bass, trombone, flute, all kinds of keyboard), songwriter, arranger, and, in his later career, vocalist). Brought up in Oakland, by the early 1950s he was playing piano in a local club and also learning guitar from Lafayette Thomas. He formed his own band, the Rhythm Rockers, which became one of the hottest in Oakland, and he worked for Bob Geddins, for Ray Dobard as A&R man for Music City, and for Ron Badger (Wax, Shirley); his distinctive guitar style "characterised by speedy fingerwork up the fretboard, as well as a moaning sound produced with the volume control" (Feld, p. 52) can be heard on many of the records made in the East Bay in the late 1950s and 1960s. In 1957 "Johnny's House Party," a two-part instrumental for Music City, was an R&B chart hit. A second Music City single did less well and instrumental singles for Big Jay, Red Fire, Triad, and Arhoolie in the early 1960s made little impact. Despite working in "the 'no man's land' between blues, jazz and funk" (Dick Shurman, *Juke Blues* 37 [Spring 1997]: 33) he gradually (having become a competent singer) became better known and began to appear at blues festivals both in the States and abroad. He also began to record again, with albums for Cat n' Hat (1983), Crosscut (1988), Alligator (1991), Have Mercy (1994), and Inak (1996), but perhaps never achieved the popularity which his many talents deserved.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

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Shurman, Dick. "Living Blues Interview—Johnny Heartsman." *Living Blues* no. 47 (Summer 1980): 5–14.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Geddins, Bob; Oakland; Thomas, Lafayette Jerl "Thing"

HEGAMIN, LUCILLE

b. Lucille Nelson, 29 November 1894; Macon, GA

d. 1 March 1970; New York City, NY

Among the first "classic blues" singers on phonograph records. Married pianist Bill Hegamin in

HEGAMIN, LUCILLE

1914, and after their divorce in 1923 she retained the surname. Hegamin was active in musical theater and cabaret. She recorded often in 1920–1926, with two additional titles in 1932. By the late 1930s she left music to become a nurse. She did return briefly to singing and recording for the Spivey label in the early 1960s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Scott Yanow); Chilton; Harris; Larkin; New Grove Jazz; Santelli; Southern

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

HELFER, ERWIN

b. 20 January 1936; Chicago, IL

Growing up on Chicago's South Shore, Helfer was drawn to traditional blues, boogie-woogie, and ragtime and befriended musicians Cripple Clarence Lofton, Baby Dodds, Grover Compton, Big Joe Williams, Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery, and Estella "Mama" Yancey, the widow of Jimmy Yancey. His first stage appearance was with Mama as a last-minute substitute for Montgomery in 1956.

While studying at Tulane he sought out New Orleans musicians, often breaking the segregation laws to do so. His 1950s field recordings of Doug Suggs, Speckled Red, and Billie Pierce released on his Tone label as Primitive Piano (reissued on Sirens) remain important, rare recordings of these early blues and boogie artists.

Helfer recorded twice with Big Joe Williams, once for Eli Toscano's Cobra label. He also sang duets with former house-rent pianist Jimmy Walker for Testament in 1964, and issued two LPs with drummer Odie Payne. For Red Beans, which he cofounded with Pete Crawford, he released a solo LP, *Erwin Helfer Plays Chicago Piano* (1986), and accompanied Mama Yancey on *My Turn to Cry* (1983, reissued on Evidence), on which he delivered a remarkably sensitive performance behind the elderly but still evocative vocalist. He shared the piano bench with Willie Mabon, Sunnyland Slim, Jimmy Walker, and Blind John Davis on *Heavy Timbre*, and with Barrelhouse Chuck Goering, Pinetop Perkins, and Detroit Junior on *8 Hands on 88 Keys*—both for Sirens. A European release featured Helfer with former Five Blazes guitarist Floyd McDaniel.

His playing is featured on Sirens' *I'm Not Hungry, But I Like to Eat—Blues* with saxophonist John Brumbach, and *St. James Infirmary* with Skinny Williams.

Helfer, a teacher with advanced degrees, has mentored many musicians and singers and has hired those just starting out as well as veteran musicians, and to his credit has prolonged the careers of many elderly and overlooked artists. His musical movable feast has featured such musicians as S. P. Leary, Odie Payne, Jeanne Carroll, Clark Dean, Mama Yancey, Truck Parham, Floyd McDaniel, Barrelhouse Chuck, Pat Soul, Katherine Davis, Zora Young, and "Big Time Sarah" Streeter.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

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Discography

I'm Not Hungry, But I Like to Eat—Blues (Sirens SR-5001).
Maybe I'll Cry (Evidence ECD 26078-2).

HEMPHILL, JESSIE MAE

b. 18 October 1933 (?); near Como, MS

Various sources give her birthplace as near Como or Senatobia, and her birth date as 6 or 18 October, and the year as 1933 or 1934.

Jessie Mae Hemphill is living proof of the vitality and resilience of Mississippi traditional music. Born into a musical family and a relative of bluesman Doctor Ross, Hemphill started to play guitar, bass drum, and snare drum at a very early age under the influence of her grandfather Sid Hemphill, an accomplished multi-instrumentalist who was recorded by folklorist Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress in 1942. When she was young, Jessie Mae limited herself to playing secular songs at local country picnics and sacred songs at church meetings from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, when she started to make a career thanks to musicologist David Evans's encouragement. The recipient of three W. C. Handy Awards, Hemphill released an album for Vogue in 1981 (where in one track she played the diddley bow) and one for High Water Recording Company in 1990 (both reissued on High Water/HMG) and began to regularly tour the United States, Canada, and Europe, often accompanying herself on guitar and hand and foot

tambourine. After recovering from a stroke suffered in December 1993, Hemphill still makes sporadic public appearances in her local area and Memphis, mostly singing a gospel repertoire. Deeply rooted in the old local tradition of fife and drum bands, Jessie Mae Hemphill’s guitar style is highly repetitive and percussive. Never in the twelve-bar format, her original songs either have a very danceable boogie rhythm (“Feelin’ Good”) or an introspective quality of their own (“Brokenhearted Blues”), with lyrics reflecting her personal experience.

LUIGI MONGE

Bibliography

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 Mitchell, George. *Blow My Blues Away*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971.

Discography: AMG

See also Hemphill, Sid

HEMPHILL, JULIUS ARTHUR

b. 24 January 1938; Fort Worth, TX
 d. 2 April 1995; New York City, NY

Saxophonist, composer. Although best known for his progressive jazz achievements as a founding member of the World Saxophone Quartet, Hemphill, also a published poet, played in Texas R&B bands and with Ike Turner in the 1960s before immersing himself full time in the jazz scene.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

HEMPHILL, SID

b. 1876; Como, MS
 d. 1963; Senatobia, MS

LSFP gives dates as 1887–1961. Sid Hemphill, the son of a slave fiddler, was an instrument builder, a multi-instrumentalist, and a songwriter. He and his band—Alec Askew, Lucius Smith, and Will Head—performed as both a string band with Hemphill on fiddle and as a fife and drum group with Hemphill on fife or quills. Equally adept at fiddle tunes or long

ballads, he performed reels, popular songs, and spirituals for both black and white audiences in northern Mississippi. His quill playing was highly syncopated and displayed the closest ties to African music. Alan Lomax recorded him in 1942 and 1959.

JARED SNYDER

Bibliography

Larkin
 Lomax, Alan. *The Land Where the Blues Began*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1993.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

See also Fife and Drums; Hemphill, Jesse Mae; Lomax, Alan; Smith, Lucius.

HENDERSON, BUGS

b. 1944; Palm Springs, CA

Guitarist, singer. Artist’s website cites 1944 as birth year; 1943 cited by some researchers. Texas blues rocker Henderson grew up in Tyler, Texas, and experimented with everything from pop/rock, where he had a hit as a member of the Dallas-based Mouse and the Traps, to progressive country before dedicating himself to the blues in 1974 with his long-running band the Shuffle Kings. His recordings included *Have Blues . . . Must Rock* in 1998 and *Backbop* a year later.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Bugs Henderson website, <http://www.bugshenderson.com/> (accessed December 18, 2004).

Selected Recordings

Daredevils of the Red Guitar (1994, Flat Canyon 103).
That’s the Truth (1995, Flat Canyon 104).
Have Blues. . . Must Rock (1998, Burnside 29).
Backbop (1999, Burnside 34).
Heartbroke Again (2000, The Orchard 4231).

HENDERSON, DUKE “BIG”

b. S. C. Henderson
 d. ca. 1972 (?)

Active 1950s–1960s. Singer in the blues shouter style of Wynonie Harris and Big Joe Turner. Recorded in the 1950s for various labels including Apollo and Specialty. In the 1960s he turned to religion, becoming

HENDERSON, DUKE “BIG”

a minister in California and a gospel deejay on California and Mexico radio. He is thought to have died around 1972.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

HENDERSON, KATHERINE

b. 23 June 1909; St. Louis, MO

Niece of Eva Taylor; many of Henderson’s professional opportunities in stage and radio were made possible by her aunt. Active from childhood through the mid-1940s. Recorded in 1927 through 1930 in Clarence Williams’s sessions for Brunswick, QRS, and Velvet Tone. Her most notable side to historians is a vocal version of “West End Blues” with its composer King Joe Oliver on cornet (1928, QRS R7024).

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

HENDERSON, MIKE (I)

b. 15 June 1944; Marshall, MO

Mike Henderson writes, sings, and plays guitar in the deep Delta blues tradition from his base in Oakland, California, where he is also a widely recognized painter, experimental filmmaker, and art educator at University of California–Davis. Has worked with Mike Bloomfield, Sunnyland Slim, and John Sinclair.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Discography

Oakland Blues (1998, Pathway CDs).
Only Time Will Tell (2001, Pathway CDs).

HENDERSON, MIKE (II)

b. 7 July 1951, Yazoo City, MS, or Independence, MO

Singer, slide guitarist, songwriter, active in Nashville, Tennessee. Since the 1990s he has led and recorded

with the Bluebloods, in styles ranging from Delta blues, honky-tonk country music, and gospel. He has recorded for the RCA and Dead Reckoning labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); Larkin

Discography: AMG

HENDERSON, ROSA

b. Rosa Deschamps, 24 November 1896; Henderson, KY

d. 6 April 1968; New York City, NY

Vocalist. In 1918 she married and began touring with comedian Douglas “Slim” Henderson. She has recorded more than one hundred sides with artists including James Johnson and Fletcher Henderson. Pseudonyms include Flora Dale, Rosa Green, Mae Harris, and Bessie Williams.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

Bibliography

Harris

Stewart-Baxter, Derrick. *Ma Rainey and the Classic Blues Singers*. New York: Stein and Day, 1970.

Discography: DGR

HENDRIX, JIMI

b. James Marshall Hendrix, 27 November 1942; Seattle, WA

d. 18 September 1970; London, England

James Marshall “Jimi” Hendrix was one of the most innovative and influential guitarists in history. Hendrix was renowned for his imaginative soundscapes and unique rock and pop stylings through such pieces as “Purple Haze,” “All Along the Watchtower,” “Foxy Lady,” “Hey Joe,” “The Wind Cries Mary” and the much-covered “Little Wing.” Though his affect on rock and blues musicians such as Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jeff Beck, Robin Trower, Yngwie Malmsteen, and Steve Vai is undeniable and profound, Hendrix also influenced R&B players such as Sly Stone and George Clinton and jazz icon Miles Davis. While he is frequently cited as the most

important rock guitarist of all time, Hendrix was also a knowledgeable and convincing albeit iconoclastic blues musician as evidenced by his work on such recordings as his self-penned “Red House” and reinterpreted classics like “Killing Floor,” “Hoochie Coochie Man,” “Born Under a Bad Sign,” “Rock Me, Baby,” and “Come On.” In his lifetime Hendrix openly acknowledged the influence of Howlin’ Wolf, Muddy Waters, Albert King, B. B. King, Freddie King, Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, and Elmore James on his style.

Early Years

Jimi Hendrix was born on November 27, 1942, in Seattle, Washington, the first child of Al and Lucille Hendrix. He was originally named John Allen Hendrix and was called Johnny until his father renamed him James Marshall Hendrix in September 1946. Entirely self-taught Hendrix was drawn to music from an early age. In his youth he played the harmonica, violin, and piano, but ultimately settled on the guitar at around age twelve. Hendrix’s earliest influences included Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran, Muddy Waters, Elmore James, and B. B. King. At seventeen Hendrix quit high school and joined the armed forces. After training in California he was assigned to the 101st Airborne Paratroopers and was stationed in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Hendrix was a member of the elite “Screaming Eagles” squad and completed twenty-five successful jumps before suffering a broken ankle. He was honorably discharged soon after.

First Bands and Early Professional Years

While in high school Hendrix joined the Rocking Kings, a regional semipro group, and played his first gig at a National Guard armory. In the armed forces Hendrix met, befriended, and performed with fellow serviceman bassist Billy Cox in an R&B combo named the King Kasuals. Upon his discharge Hendrix adopted the itinerant lifestyle of a sideman, touring and occasionally recording with the Isley Brothers, B. B. King, Jackie Wilson, Sam Cooke, Little Richard, Ike and Tina Turner, King Curtis, Joey Dee, Wilson Pickett, and Curtis Knight. He settled in New York City in the mid-1960s. Hendrix briefly changed his professional name to Jimmy James in this period and formed a self-led group named Jimmy James and the Blue Flames. At this time he built a reputation and cult-like following in Greenwich Village with striking performances in local night

clubs. There he experimented with feedback and electronic effects, perfected his famed stage antics, and developed an eclectic style that merged R&B, folk music, and free jazz with his rock and blues roots. Hendrix was encouraged and aided by Linda Keith, a girlfriend of Rolling Stone Keith Richards, who brought Chas Chandler to a performance at the Café Wha? in Greenwich Village. Chandler became Hendrix’s manager and arranged for him to relocate to London, England. There the two formed and launched the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

The Jimi Hendrix Experience

The Jimi Hendrix Experience was a trio formed in 1966 with Hendrix on guitar and lead vocals, Noel Redding on bass, and Mitch Mitchell on drums, and it was his most well-known group. The Experience made three official albums, toured internationally, and disbanded in 1969. Though the bulk of the Experience repertory consisted of original rock compositions by Hendrix, several blues pieces were recorded and performed live and in the studio. The most notable of these are his “Red House,” “Voodoo Child,” and the acoustic country-styled blues piece “Hear My Train a Comin’.” Also significant are Experience covers of Earl King’s “Come On,” Howlin’ Wolf’s “Killing Floor,” and Muddy Waters’s “Mannish Boy.”

Band of Gypsies

Band of Gypsies was Hendrix’s second group. Like his Experience, this band was a trio with Hendrix on guitar and vocals, longtime friend Billy Cox on bass, and Buddy Miles on drums and vocals. Formed in 1969 the trio recorded a number of blues pieces including “Once I Had a Woman,” an electric version of “Hear My Train a Comin’,” and Albert King’s “Born Under a Bad Sign.” Hendrix died just before midnight on September 17, 1970, in London, England, the result of drug-induced suffocation.

Instruments and Sound

Hendrix is closely associated with the Fender Stratocaster, an instrument also played by his blues heroes Buddy Guy and Otis Rush. He used right-handed models flipped over and restrung to accommodate his left-handed technique. Hendrix set new standards in sonics with his exploitation of the guitar’s timbres and manipulation of the vibrato bar. Unlike his forebears Hendrix preferred large, high-volume 100-watt Marshall amplifiers and 4×12 speaker cabinets.

HENDRIX, JIMI

A lifetime pioneer in electronic effects Hendrix embellished his sound with a Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face distortion unit, a Vox wah-wah pedal, a Mayer Octavia, and a Uni-Vox Uni-Vibe. On rare occasion he used a Gibson Les Paul or a Flying V for an alternate guitar tone.

Recorded Works

Are You Experienced? (1967, track issued in America on Reprise), *Axis: Bold as Love* (1968, Reprise), *Electric Ladyland* (1968, Reprise), *Smash Hits* (1969, Reprise), and *Band of Gypsies* (1970, Capitol) are the official releases issued during Hendrix's lifetime. A part of Hendrix's performance at the Woodstock Festival in 1969 was included on *Woodstock* (1970, Cotillion). Posthumous unofficial Hendrix albums and recorded live concerts include *The Cry of Love*, *Rainbow Bridge*, *Isle of Wight*, *Hendrix: In the West*, *War Heroes*, *Loose Ends*, *Crash Landing*, *Midnight Landing*, *Nine to the Universe*, *The Jimi Hendrix Concerts*, *Johnny B. Goode*, *Band of Gypsies 2*, *Live at Winterland*, *Radio One*, and the recently issued *First Rays of the New Rising Sun* and *South Saturn Delta*. Hendrix also appeared as a guest performer with Lonnie Youngblood, the Isley Brothers, Rosa Lee Brooks, Little Richard, King Curtis, Curtis Knight and the Squires, McGough & McGear, Eire Apparent, Buddy Miles, Lightnin' Rod, Stephen Stills, Love, and an unreleased album by the Ghetto Fighters. A posthumous all-blues Hendrix collection was issued in 1994 as *Jimi Hendrix: Blues*.

WOLF MARSHALL

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Shapiro, Harry, and Caesar Glebbeek. *Jimi Hendrix: Electric Gypsy*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.

Selected Transcriptions

Experience Hendrix. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1998.

HENRY, CLARENCE "FROGMAN"

b. 19 March 1937; Algiers, LA

New Orleans R&B singer whose biggest hit, the 1956 novelty number "Ain't Got No Home," was

improvised on the bandstand, Henry began his career playing piano and trombone with Bobby Mitchell from 1952 to 1955 before joining saxist Eddie Smith's band. Henry didn't have another hit until 1961 when he took an Allen Toussaint arrangement of "Don't Know Why But I Do" onto the charts, followed by similar success with "You Always Hurt the One You Love." He recorded with country instrumental stars Boots Randolph and Floyd Cramer and opened concerts for the Beatles in 1964 before settling back into the New Orleans club scene and a showcase set each year at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

HENRY, RICHARD "BIG BOY"

b. 1921; Beaufort, NC

d. 5 December 2004; Beaufort, NC

Learned guitar and busked in youth, but quit in the 1950s to fish and to preach. He returned to festivals and like venues in the 1980s, singing blues, gospel, and work songs. He was acutely aware of his songs' folkloric value.

ANDREW M. COHEN

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

Discography: AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

HENSLEY, WILLIAM P. "WASHBOARD WILLIE"

b. 24 July 1909; Phenix City, AL

d. 24 August 1991; Detroit, MI

Washboard, drums, percussion, vocals. Washboard Willie took up the washboard in 1940, moved to Detroit in 1948, and established himself as a popular multi-percussionist and bandleader, fronting his Super Suds of Rhythm from the early 1950s through the late 1970s. Hensley worked with Eddie Burns, Little Sonny, Calvin Frazier, and Boogie Woogie Red.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Harris; Larkin

Discography

Whippin' That Board (1982, Barrelhouse Records; 1986, JSP Records, 1986).

Motor City Blues "Live" at the 1973 Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival (1998, Alive/Total Energy).

Cherry Red Blues, Washboard Shuffle, Washboard Blues (JVB).

Detroit Blues (Blues Classics).

Natural Born Lover, Wee Baby Blues (Herculon).

HERALD/EMBER

Founded in New York City around 1951 by veteran music entrepreneur Fred Mendelsohn, the Herald label remained inactive until 1953 when Al Silver and Jack Braverman were taken on as partners, shortly before Mendelsohn sold his interest in the company to Jack Angel. Angel had formed the Ember label in early 1953 with Mercer Ellington, who similarly sold his interest in the label to Al Silver in the same deal. Herald issued older Chicago tracks by Little Walter and St. Louis Jimmy and Texas blues by Lightnin' Hopkins as well as scoring hits with Joe Morris's band, while Ember featured Rudy Greene and Cousin Leroy among the vocal groups. Both labels were wound up around 1964.

DAVID PENNY

Discography: McGrath

Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "Herald/Ember/Music Album Discographies" Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/herald.html> (accessed December 11, 2004).

Remembering the Roots of Soul #1: Heralding the Hits (2002, RPM CD SH248).

HERITAGE

British label. Founded in 1959 by Tony Standish, then assistant to the editor of *Jazz Journal*, Heritage produced twelve limited-edition LPs and an EP series that pioneered reissues of such artists as Blind Lemon Jefferson and Blind Blake. Contemporary artists included Arvella Gray and Buster Pickens (1960). Standish later revived the label in his native Australia.

HOWARD RYE

HERWIN (1943 AND BEFORE)

The record label of the Herwin Record Company of St. Louis, taking its name from proprietors Herbert

and Edwin Schiele of the Artophone Company, phonograph makers and record distributors. Launched in late 1925, it was primarily a Race label, sold almost exclusively by mail order in the southern and midwestern states allegedly through advertising in journals circulated among farmers. It was first produced by the Starr Piano Company, then after 1927 by New York Recording Laboratories. The label's repertoire was derived from those companies' Gennett and Paramount labels; blues artists issued included Ardell Bragg, Charlie Patton, and Will Ezell. Releases ceased in mid-1929. The mailing list and remaining stocks were purchased by the Wisconsin Chair Co., Paramount's parent organization, in 1930, and the label then discontinued. The name was revived in 1967 by Bernard Klatzko for a series of significant reissue albums and was also used on five 78-rpm issues including Library of Congress field recordings by Bukka White and Son House and contemporary recordings by Skip James.

HOWARD RYE

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MacKenzie, John. "Herwin, Part One." *78 Quarterly* no. 1 (1967): 19.

Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

Wylar, Mike. "A Glimpse into the Past, 2: Herwin." *Storyville* 1, no. 2 (December 1965): 9.

HERWIN (1967 AND AFTER)

Trademark revived from 1967 through the mid-1970s by scholar/collector Bernard Klatzko for reissues on 78-rpm discs and 33-1/3 albums of pre-World War II musicians, including notable releases by Skip James, Charlie Patton, Gus Cannon, and Henry Thomas.

EDWARD KOMARA

HESITATION BLUES

Also known as "Hesitating Blues." A song (1915) by W. C. Handy. The folkloric roots of this piece have not been revealed. Its genesis may relate in some way to a craze for "hesitation" dances (hesitation waltz, hesitation tango) around the time the song was written. Handy's "Hesitating Blues" was registered for copyright on June 11, 1915. The very same day, the white

HESITATION BLUES

Louisville firm of Smythe and Middleton registered Billy Smythe's "Hesitation Blues," a remarkably similar piece. Ascribing this to sheer coincidence would strain credulity.

Although there have been some notable vocal recordings of the song, in its early years it was most popular on records as an instrumental. In this form it was recorded by Prince's Band (a Columbia Records in-house brass band), Handy's Orchestra of Memphis, and the brass band Lieutenant James Reese Europe brought back from service in World War I. However, by this time the "Hesitating/Hesitation" piece was quite popular as a song in black vaudeville. Bessie Smith was performing it by the end of 1915, as were a great many other black vaudeville artists. Particularly evocative is a reference to a May 1915 show staged for the benefit of the prisoners at the Indiana State Prison by J. C. Miles and Minstrels with Cole Bros. Shows (a variety troupe including circus acts). According to the report in the *Indianapolis Freeman* (June 3, 1916) among the best received acts were "... the band playing the 'Blues,' and when Mrs. Miles sang the 'Hesitating Blues' the riot commenced. A happy day for the boys within." In the 1920s, the song was recorded by several of the commercial blues singers, including Sara Martin and Eva Taylor.

In style, "Hesitating Blues," like many commercial blues of the pre-1920 period, combines elements of blues with ragtime in a fairly conventional framework. The song lacks the structural daring of "St. Louis Blues," being in major keys throughout, with a modulation from F to B-flat at the chorus. This chorus is not as strong as the verse, a curious structural imbalance not found in many successful popular songs. The verse, most likely the part of the song deriving from folk sources, also includes the best opportunities for pauses if the piece were used to accompany one of the "hesitation" dances. Not surprisingly, many later performers, especially from the folk tradition, omit Handy's chorus entirely. Many performers, such as Jelly Roll Morton, sang the piece with completely different lyrics from Handy's. This is particularly true in blues recordings, since the song's simple verse structure easily lends itself to the insertion of any of a number of common blues lyric tropes. In the jazz tradition, the song, in any form, has become less of a perennial than such other Handy numbers as "St. Louis Blues," "The Memphis Blues," and "Beale Street Blues." To the extent the song retained much vitality in the folk blues tradition, it was largely as a reversion to the original folk elements that Handy had used as his verse section in 1915.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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- . *Father of the Blues*. New York: Macmillan, 1941.
- Rust, Brian. *Jazz Records 1897-1942*, 4th ed. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1978.

Selected Recordings

- Artists who recorded the song as "Hesitating Blues" included Prince's Band, Handy's Orchestra of Memphis, Jim Europe's 369th Infantry ("Hell Fighters") Band, Brown and Terry's Jazzola Boys, Esther Bigeou, Bobby Leecan, Jelly Roll Morton, Muggsy Spanier, Little Brother Montgomery, and Big Maybelle.
- Artists who have recorded the song under the "Hesitation Blues" title include the Victor Military Band, Al Bernard, Sara Martin, Eva Taylor, Leadbelly, the Reverend Gary Davis, Jesse Fuller, Wingy Manone, and Nat Gonella.

HESS, CHICAGO BOB

Singer and electric slide guitarist in postwar electric Chicago styles of blues and rock. Active mostly on the southeast coast, especially South Carolina. In 2001-2004 he led the house band at the House of Blues in Myrtle Beach.

HEATHER PINSON/EDWARD KOMARA

HI RECORDS

Hi was founded in Memphis in 1957 by Ray Harris with five partners including Joe Cuoghi, a co-owner of the local Poplar Tune record store. They established the label's Royal Recording Studio on South Lauderdale in Memphis, in the former Royal Theater. Its early hits were instrumentals performed by a group led by former Elvis Presley bassist Bill Black, or by saxophonist Ace Cannon. Willie Mitchell (1928-) was among the studio musicians from the late 1950s through the 1960s, and he eventually became the leader of the Hi house band. In 1970, the same year Cuoghi died, Mitchell bought Ray Harris's share of the ownership, and he became president of Hi Records, developed the 1970s Hi Records sound with heavy bass and drums and the Memphis Horn group, and with that sound he produced hit records with singers Al Green, Ann Peebles, and Syl Johnson. He left Hi in 1979, two years after the label was bought by Al Bennett. During the 1980s some Hi material, especially the Al Green albums, was reissued

by Motown, and currently it is reissued on CD by EMI Special Products.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: McGrath

Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "Hi Records Album Discography." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/hi.html> (accessed February 13, 2005).

HICKS, CHARLIE

b. 11 March 1900; Lithonia, GA

d. 28 September 1963; Cairo, GA

Aka Charley Lincoln. Despite his manic laughter on records by Nellie Florence and his brother, Barbecue Bob, Charlie became a depressive alcoholic after Bob died in 1931. He was later jailed for a shooting and died in prison. He was probably taught his singular guitar style by Savannah (Dip) Weaver, Curley Weaver's mother. He began playing with Bob, and soon gained a contract of his own, but his songs were generally gloomy and he was dropped in 1930.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Harris; Santelli

Bastin, Bruce. *Red River Blues*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Discography: DGR

HICKS, EDNA

b. Edna Landreaux, 14 October 1895; New Orleans, LA

d. 16 August 1925; Chicago, IL

Vocalist. Half-sister of Lizzie Miles, first married to Will Benbow. Hicks was touring with traveling shows by 1916. She married John Hicks ca. 1920 and recorded during 1923–1924, including "Down on the Levee Blues"/"Lonesome Woman Blues" (1924, Paramount 12204). She died from burns caused by a domestic accident.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

HICKS, ROBERT

(See *Barbecue Bob*)

HIDE AWAY

One of the most popular blues instrumentals of all time, the influential hit single "Hide Away" was recorded by Freddie King and released on Federal Records as the B-side of the song "I Love the Woman" in March 1961. An immediate success, the song charted for nineteen weeks and eventually reached #5 on the R&B charts. It also crossed over to the pop charts where it made it to #19. The song's impact was so great that it quickly became a mandatory staple of blues bands throughout the country, and it continues to be a standard for countless blues and rock musicians performing today.

King based "Hide Away" on a then-unrecorded instrumental that Chicago singer and slide guitarist Hound Dog Taylor played regularly throughout West and South Side Chicago clubs in the 1950s, including the popular Mel's Hide Away Lounge in the West Side. Known for his highly energetic and exuberant performances, Taylor created the catchy melody using his riveting slide style. Taylor's influential song, often referred to as "Taylor's Boogie," first inspired guitarist Magic Sam and then King to work out bandstand versions of their own.

In early 1961, just weeks before King's "Hide Away" was released, Magic Sam recorded "Do the Camel Walk" for Chief Records, an instrumental closely based on "Taylor's Boogie." Issued as the B-side of the single "Every Night About This Time," the song featured the main riff of "Hide Away," but employed a slightly slower tempo than King's song and featured a saxophone prominently to accent its bouncy rhythm and provide the main solo. "Hide Away" on the other hand, which was recorded the previous August, was an obvious showcase for King's guitar alone.

Named after Mel's Hide Away Lounge, King's song incorporated several familiar melodies and borrowed ideas into its many instrumental breaks, the first of which was taken from Jimmy McCracklin's 1957 hit single on Checker titled "The Walk." Another acknowledgment went to jazz, film, and television

HIDE AWAY

composer Henry Mancini, whose famous bass line from the theme to the 1950s television show “Peter Gunn” was featured. King also worked in a section that effectively used diminished chords that he learned from guitarist Robert Lockwood. These memorable sections added to the song’s appeal, but ultimately it was Taylor’s endearing melody over the chugging Chicago shuffle rhythm that made the song so successful.

The tremendous popularity of “Hide Away” prompted King to record many more up-tempo blues instrumentals for Federal, several of which would become standards on their own. “San-Ho-Zay” made it to number 4 on the R&B charts several months after “Hide Away” was released, and “Sen-Sa-Shun,” “In the Open,” and “The Stumble” would also become instrumental bandstand favorites. The highly regarded all-instrumental album *Let’s Hide Away and Dance Away with Freddy King* was released in 1961 and contained many of King’s most popular early 1960s titles.

“Hide Away” has been recorded by many blues and rock musicians throughout the years, including Eric Clapton, Lonnie Brooks, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Magic Slim.

GENE TOMKO

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Whitburn, Joel. *Top R&B Singles: 1942–1999*. Wisconsin: Record Research, Inc., 2000.

HIGGINS, CHARLES WILLIAM “CHUCK”

b. 17 April 1924; Gary, IN
d. 14 September 1999; Los Angeles, CA

One of the founders of the “honking” tenor sax style, he moved to Los Angeles in 1940, forming his first band after the war. He recorded prolifically during the 1950s for Combo, DooTone, Specialty, and other labels, but then became a music teacher and performed and recorded only sporadically thereafter.

RAY ASTBURY

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LeBlanc, Eric. “Chuck Higgins.” *Blues & Rhythm* 150 (June 2000): 16–17.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Combo; DooTone/DooTo/Authentic; Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box

HIGGINS, MONK

b. Milton Bland, 3 October 1936; Menifee, AR
d. 3 July 1986; Los Angeles, CA

Record producer. Earned a B.A. in music at Arkansas State University, with additional study at the Chicago School of Music. Broke into the record business as producer and arranger at the One-derful Records label. His notable work was as coproducer with Al Bell of Bobby Bland sessions in the 1970s and 1980s. He was also an excellent tenor saxophonist, playing on a hit solo single “Who Dun It” backed with “Ceatrix Did It” (St. Lawrence label).

EDWARD KOMARA

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“Monk Higgins 1936–1986” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 72 (Fall 1986): 41.

HIGGS, GEORGE

b. 1930; near Speed, NC

Singer, harmonica player, and acoustic guitarist, in the Piedmont blues styles of Sonny Terry and Peg Leg Sam. He performs widely at festivals, concerts, and academic symposia. Among his honors is the 1993 North Carolina Folk Heritage Award from the North Carolina Arts Council.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HIGH WATER

Label begun in 1979 by Dr. David Evans and Memphis State University (later University of Memphis).

Specializes in the music of Memphis and north Mississippi including the Fieldstones with Wilroy Sanders, Jessie Mae Hemphill, and early recordings of Junior Kimbrough and R. L. Burnside.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HIGHTONE

Founded 1983 in Oakland, California. Although HighTone has never been a blues-only label, it has issued quite a few first-rate and influential blues, gospel and R&B recordings over the years, particularly of West Coast artists who might otherwise have been overlooked.

HighTone Records was founded as a way to sell Robert Cray's second album, *Bad Influence*, when larger labels didn't show any interest. Founders Bruce Bromberg, who had produced Cray's first album for Tomato Records and was putting the second together, and Larry Sloven were both veterans of the recording industry and were able to use their professional contacts to gain good distribution for their new label, helping ensure its success.

In addition to Cray, Joe Louis Walker found his first national audience with HighTone, as did both James Armstrong and Jessie Mae Hemphill. Blues veteran Phillip Walker had *The Bottom of the Top*, an out-of-print album from the early 1970s, reissued by HighTone in 1989 and saw his career surge. HighTone has also issued sides by the Jelly Roll Kings and Chicago pianist Henry Gray, and reissued numerous out-of-print recordings by artists such as Johnny Shines, David "Honey Boy" Edwards, Sleepy John Estes, and Mississippi Fred McDowell. There have also been albums by L.A. doo-wop veterans The Calvanes, and gospel troupes The Pattersonaires and The Spirit of Memphis Quartet.

JIM TRAGESER

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HighTone label website, <http://www.hightone.com/> (accessed December 11, 2004).

Discography

Robert Cray. *Bad Influence* (1983, HighTone 8001).
 Joe Louis Walker. *The Gift* (1988, HighTone 8008).
 Phillip Walker. *Bottom of the Top* (1989, HighTone 8020).

HIGHWAYS

The development of highways in the twentieth century increased American mobility and transformed the nation into a culture dominated by the automobile. With the development of highways, the southern region became more accessible to the rest of the country and moved out of its isolation. This newfound mobility contributed to the migratory shift of rural black people from southern states to northern cities. The experience of this movement found its way into the body of blues music.

History

The need for better roads in the United States became a growing political concern during the 1890s. Until this time, railroads had enjoyed a period of unprecedented growth for more than a half-century. Where roads and turnpikes had come into existence for the forty-year period following the Revolutionary War, that development stopped as railroads expanded in the nineteenth century. In the 1890s, changes occurred that led to the emergence of a highway system of paved road surfaces that would come to span the entire country.

The Populist movement in the late nineteenth century demanded that government provide farmers with improved roads in order to get their crops to markets. This Populist sentiment led to the creation of the Office of Road Inquiry under the direction of the Department of Agriculture in 1893. Three years later, the U.S. Postal Service began the free delivery of mail to all rural areas in the country.

At the close of the nineteenth century, America's unpaved road surfaces made for difficult travel. When roads became wet, driving a horse and wagon or an automobile was impossible. These conditions led Charles Bland, the mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina, to say in 1902 that "North Carolina was saved from the invasion of Sherman because the roads were so bad he could not get through." This comment came at the height of the Good Roads movement. Progressive politicians in the South and elsewhere spoke of the great need for paved road surfaces to a growing consensus.

While the Good Roads movement gained public support from state to state, the conditions of roads improved only marginally. By the time of World War I, the automobile industry had grown significantly to the point that there was a need for better highway surfaces to keep pace with the growing use of cars. In 1916, Congress passed legislation to fund a system of primary highways in the United States. Congress

HIGHWAYS

initially prohibited convict labor in the planning and construction of this federal highway system. When President Woodrow Wilson signed the bill into law, however, convict labor had been reinstated by its formidable lobby. Convicts had been a primary source of labor in building the levees and the railroads of the South and now they would be a primary labor source in building the highways.

While the original purpose of the Good Roads movement had been to improve local roads for farmers, the larger need to promote interstate travel replaced this purpose. Progressive politicians such as Mayor Charles Bland of Charlotte saw that a new system of highways for the South would promote the social and ideological ties to other regions of the country. This larger need created a progressive mind-set of bureaucratic expertise that would drive the legislative and technical development of highways for the next fifty years in the United States. The Bureau of Public Roads enjoyed a broad agreement in public opinion and gained oversight of state construction of federal highways in 1921. This consensus continued until 1936, and during this period, rural America became more closely tied to urban America.

Beginning in 1936, the popular support of the Bureau of Public Roads began to diminish. While the federal system of highways succeeded in connecting rural areas to urban areas, promoting individual and family travel between states and improving commerce, it also brought about a new problem. Traffic congestion became a growing concern in the towns and cities that the federal highway system had connected, and the growing dependency on automobiles magnified this problem.

A new consensus emerged in 1956 with the emergence of the interstate highway system. This new system proposed to address the problem of urban access. Where federal highways had stopped at the city limits in the 1920s and the 1930s, the new interstate system would go through large and medium-sized urban areas. The idea was for automobiles to enter and exit cities with more ease. Automobiles, buses, and trucks came to challenge the place of the railroad as the primary source of ground transportation in America. This newly developed system of travel dominated the way of life in the nation and altered its social order.

Social Change

The rural South found that it was challenged by the social changes brought about by the early

development of highways. The United States entered World War I the year after President Wilson signed the first road improvement legislation in seventy-five years. From the beginning of the war in 1914, immigration from Europe stopped, as did the flow of laborers into American factories. The need for men to fill uniforms in the army of the United States made for even fewer men to work in the factories in the northern region. This shortage of labor forced factory owners to look elsewhere for the manpower to keep the factories open.

African Americans in the South were recruited to come and work in the North. Not only were they promised jobs, but they were also promised better schools for their children and freedom from the reality of Jim Crow violence that threatened their daily life. As white Southern landowners saw the initial benefit of paved roads and highways that would carry their crops from farm to market, they also saw their source of labor beginning to leave.

The migration out of the South for many African Americans continued after the end of World War I. As better highways began to encourage interstate travel, even more people moved away from the grinding poverty of the sharecropper's existence. Spencer Crew notes that while many traveled out of the region by train, there were thousands who left in automobiles, buses, and trucks. When they arrived in their new cities, they often found that they were forced to live in segregated neighborhoods.

The migration from the South continued during the 1920s and 1930s as more people moved along America's new federal highways to a different life. The conditions of sharecropping changed after World War II. Whereas many rural blacks were restricted from leaving the land that they farmed because of an impossible debt load, they found in the late 1940s that their labor was no longer needed. Newly developed machines made farming far less labor intensive than it had been. Consequently, many blacks who had stayed and lived in the rural South were displaced from the land that they had worked for their white landowners for generations. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, another wave of migrants traveled along highways to a new life.

As more people relocated to cities in the South and outside the region, there was a growing political awareness that urban highways could be expanded and cities could be made more accessible to automobile, bus, and truck traffic. When the experts decided on routes for the new urban highways, they looked at the segregated areas of many cities where the black migrants of the rural South had settled. As more interstate highways cut into the hearts of American

cities, they did so while displacing large segments of blacks from their neighborhoods.

Influence on Blues Music

The working conditions for most rural blacks in the South governed by Jim Crow laws were extremely harsh. As more paved roads were constructed in the farming areas of the region, landowners achieved easier access to their markets while sharecroppers saw a way to leave the difficult conditions of their lives. This migration continued over several decades. By 1960, close to 50 percent of black migrants living in the city of Chicago were from the Mississippi.

Many of these migrants from the Delta region of Mississippi followed along U.S. Highways 49, 51, and 61. Highway 49 ran from Jackson to Clarksdale in Mississippi. Highway 61 ran from New Orleans to Vicksburg, Memphis, St. Louis, and on to Minnesota. Highway 51 ran from New Orleans to Jackson, Memphis, and on to Illinois. Blues artists followed these routes, too. Paul Oliver notes that the blues artist sang about these highways from the direct experience of having traveled on them. Roosevelt Sykes recorded “Highway 61 Blues” in 1932; Joe Williams recorded “Highway 49” in 1935; and Curtis Jones recorded “Highway 51 Blues” in 1938.

Highways also took people and blues artists to juke joints that were established away from towns. Most juke joints were located off the highway and hidden from view. They were found by following directions provided by word of mouth. Revelers in these early juke joints drank, danced, argued, and often fought each other. They could become violent scenes as the hours wore on into the night. As dangerous as they could become, they offered blues artists a valuable venue for performance.

In the 1920s, record talent scout Henry C. Speir sometimes traveled from his Jackson record store to the Delta to see blues artists like Charlie Patton and Tommy Johnson by driving on various Mississippi two-lane highways. A decade later, John and Alan Lomax began traveling throughout the southern states with a five-hundred-pound recording machine installed in the trunk of their car, with the aim of recording blues, work chants, and other types of music by white and black Americans in oral cultures.

The dismal conditions of rural life in the South in the early twentieth century motivated many blacks to abandon their lives as sharecroppers. As many decided to leave, they had only a limited orientation as to how and where to go. Often there was only a dirt road leading away from the land they lived on and the sun

in the sky for direction. Setting out on foot, migrants could hope for a ride on the back of a friendly wagon or truck going away from the farm. Their plan was to get to a numbered federal highway where they could look for the odd numbers leading north.

Blues artists like other black migrants knew that once they got to a federal highway, they had to get a bus ticket for the final part of the journey. Whereas they might be able to get a friendly ride deep in the rural world they were leaving, they could not often get a ride on a passing truck and might even be arrested for vagrancy. Once convicted, the migrant could be sentenced to work on a chain gang in building or maintaining the highway. State archives show thousands of men and women met this fate across the South.

Finding their way along the highway was only part of the challenge for the migrants. They also had to subsist as best they could and often the challenge was overwhelming. Blues lyrics note that this experience was a lonely one and that often friends, family, and lovers had been left behind. They had to live off the land and sleep in the open before they could get to a place that might be better than the place they had left.

Peter Guralnick notes that the metaphor of the highway is central to the blues artist. It represents that something vital is sought and gained by going down the road. It is also the process of losing what was once possessed. Blues music like all music is carried on the air and is as temporal an experience as moving down the highway from one place to another.

BILL GRAVES

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HILL, BERTHA “CHIPPIE”

HILL, BERTHA “CHIPPIE”

b. 15 March 1905; Charleston, SC
d. 7 May 1950; New York

Singer and dancer. Hill moved to New York in 1919, appearing with Ethel Waters. She then toured with Ma Rainey and worked solo on the TOBA circuit in the early 1920s before moving to Chicago, where she performed and recorded blues with important musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Thomas A. Dorsey, and Tampa Red (1925–1929). Between 1930 and 1945, she worked only intermittently in music. In 1946, she recorded for Circle and resumed an active career until her death, caused by a hit-and-run driver. She is particularly associated with the classic song “Trouble in Mind” by Richard M. Jones.

PETER MUIR

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Harrison, Daphne Duval. *Black Pearls: Blues Queens of the 1920s*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP; Lord

HILL, JESSIE

b. 9 December 1932; New Orleans, LA
d. 17 September 1996; New Orleans, LA

Percussionist, song writer, and vocalist who wrote and recorded “Ooh Poo Pah Doo,” for Minit record producer Allen Toussaint in New Orleans. Performed with Professor Longhair, and recorded and wrote songs for Dr. John.

TOM MORGAN

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AMG (Bill Dahl)
Broven, John. *Rhythm and Blues in New Orleans*. Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1983.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

HILL, JOSEPH “BLIND JOE”

b. 1931; Pennsylvania
d. 17 November 1999; Los Angeles, CA

Blind from glaucoma. Hill was a one-man band (harmonica, guitar, drums) based in Akron, Ohio, for

some years, then on the West Coast. While in Akron in the mid-1970s, he recorded his LP *Boogie in the Dark* for George Paulus’s Barrelhouse label (Barrelhouse BH-08).

EDWARD KOMARA

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Thomas Schuller, “Akron’s One-Man Band: Blind Joe Hill.” *Living Blues* no. 30 (November/December 1976): 12–13.

Discography: AMG

HILL, KING SOLOMON

b. ca. 1897; McComb, MS
d. ca. 1949; Sibley, LA

Hill—real name probably Joe Holmes—was closely connected with Sam Collins and traveled with Blind Lemon Jefferson and Rambling Thomas. Extensive research by Gayle Dean Wardlow has suggested his nom-du-disque came from the King Solomon Hill community near Yellow Pine, Louisiana.

Holmes married Roberta Allums, the source of much information about him, in 1918, and they had one daughter. He wandered through Louisiana and Texas playing and in 1932 was invited with Ben Curry and Marshall Owens to record for Paramount, playing guitar with a cow bone.

Curiously, two of the songs each had two takes—one sung in a ferocious falsetto in Sam Collins’s style and the other in a normal voice. One coupling rediscovered in 2002 includes a tribute to Jefferson, “My Buddy Blind Papa Lemon,” while “Gone Dead Train” is a masterly travelogue listing the places he visited on the Southern and Illinois Central railroads and almost equaling Blind Willie McTell’s superb “Travelling Blues” on the same theme. After this one session, King Solomon Hill disappeared from records although Joe Holmes continued hoboing and playing for the rest of his life. He was ludicrously identified as Big Joe Williams in the 1960s but his real story is told in depth by Gayle Dean Wardlow.

DAVID HARRISON

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Wardlow, Gayle Dean. “One Last Walk Up King Solomon Hill.” *Blues Unlimited* nos. 148/149 (Winter 1987): 8–12.

Discography: DGR

HILL, MICHAEL

b. 29 June 1952; New York City, NY

Guitarist, singer, composer. One of the few modern blues artists to devote the bulk of his attention to sociopolitical concerns, Bronx bluesman Hill stayed true to the core sensibilities of the music while expanding it with a hard-edged synthesis of Hendrix-influenced rock, topical tunes, and worldbeat rhythms.

After picking up the guitar at age eighteen, Hill formed a group with several siblings in 1973. He moved on to a series of significant sideman gigs, playing live and in the studio with Little Richard, Carla Thomas, Archie Bell, and others. In the mid-1980s he became involved with the Black Rock Coalition after working with Vernon Reid. He formed the seven-piece Bluesland in 1987 and then streamlined it into the trio Blues Mob as an outlet for his socially conscious original material. Hill made his recording debut with *Sooner or Later* on Flying Fish in 1992. He released a trio of albums on Alligator, beginning in 1994 with *Bloodlines*, with Reid as a guest. After his Alligator stint Hill added *Larger Than Life* in 2001 and the double-disc *Electric Storyland Live* in 2003 to his recording catalog.

MICHAEL POINT

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AMG (Richard Skelly); Larkin Gussow, Adam. "Interview with Michael Hill." *Living Blues* no. 173 (July/August 2004): 18–27.

Discography: AMG**HILL, RAYMOND**

b. 29 April 1933; Clarksdale, MS

d. 16 April 1996; Clarksdale, MS

Tenor saxophonist for Jackie Brenston and Ike Turner during the 1950s. Played the saxophone solo on the 1951 Brenston/Turner release "Rocket 88" (Chess 1458). Toured with Albert King in the late 1960s. He spent his last years in Clarksdale, taking up guitar.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSPF**HILL, ROSA LEE**

b. 25 September 1910; Como, MS

d. 22 October 1968; Senatobia, MS

Like her father Sid Hemphill, Rosa Lee Hill was discovered by Lomax. She was a singer and guitarist strongly rooted in the Northern Mississippi model and highly rhythmic blues tradition. She only recorded three sides. She greatly influenced her niece Jessie Mae Hemphill.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: LSPF

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HILL, Z. Z.

b. Arzell Hill, 24 September 1941; Naples, TX

d. 27 April 1984; Dallas, TX

Singer. Revitalized the sound and appeal of Southern soul music through a string of hit singles, including the anthemic "Down Home Blues." With his brother Matt frequently acting as his producer, Hill created a personalized and popular vision of Southern R&B that successfully overcame the dominance of disco on the airwaves and record charts. As Bobby "Blue" Bland declared, "Z. Z. kept us all working. Having 'Down Home Blues' be a hit really helped me and everybody else singing real R&B because it got people to pay attention to the music again." Birth year 1941 cited by Hill to Jim O'Neal in a 1982 *Living Blues* interview. September 1935 is cited by other researchers.

Hill was originally a member of the Spiritual Five gospel group but his love of blues was never far from the surface, even as he chose a performing name, the distinctive Z. Z. initials, because of its similarity to that of his hero B. B. King. After playing around Dallas for a few years, Hill recorded his debut single "You Were Wrong" in 1964 in California for his brother's label. It gained enough attention to get him signed by Kent Records, where he released a succession of singles, none of which achieved much commercial success.

Hill was successful on a series of record companies in the 1970s but his best work, including "Down Home Blues," came after he signed with Malaco in the 1980. Hill, who won the best soul vocalist W. C. Handy award in 1983 and 1984, was just beginning to

HILL, Z. Z.

take his fame and music to a higher level when he died of a heart attack.

MICHAEL POINT

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O'Neal, Jim. "Living Blues Interview: Z. Z. Hill." *Living Blues* no. 53 (Summer/Autumn 1982): 17–15.

Discography: AMG

HILLERY, MABEL

b. 22 July 1929; Lagrange, GA
d. 24 April 1976; New York City, NY

First name sometimes spelled "Mable." Singer of traditional African American music including blues and ballads. During the 1960s she performed often at colleges and folk festivals, including tours with the Georgia Sea Island Singers. In the 1970s she made her base in New York City.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Southern

Discography: LSFP

HINTON, ALGIA MAE

b. 29 August 1929; Johnston County, NC

Piedmont guitarist of blues and dances. Through 1978 she performed mostly within her local community, but since then she has appeared in occasional festivals, and she was filmed for Alan Lomax's American Roots film series.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MacDonald, Mary Anne. "North Carolina Blues. Part 2: Algia Mae Hinton: Keep Us Dancing and Kept Us Singing." *Living Blues* no. 108 (March/April 1993): 25–26.

HINTON, EDWARD CRAIG "EDDIE"

b. 15 June 1944; Jacksonville, FL
d. 28 July 1995; Birmingham, AL

Vocalist and guitarist whose style blended gospel-tinged R&B and country. Hinton contributed to hits

by several artists, among them Percy Sledge, Joe Tex, and Boz Scaggs. He also cut four solo albums, among them the evocative *Letters from Mississippi* (1988, Almathea; reissued on Mobile Fidelity 749).

RON WYNN

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HISPANIC INFLUENCES ON THE BLUES

In at least two areas, southern Texas and New Orleans, the influences of Hispanic music cultures on African American blues have been apparent. Despite barriers of ethnicity, race, and language, musicians in these regions have selectively adopted and syncretized performance ideas and musical styles. In the Texas–Mexico border region, down-home blues guitarists were influenced by the lifestyle of Mexican street singers and their chordophonic musical traditions. And in New Orleans, Cuban rhythms particularly affected a school of blues pianists who developed the New Orleans "sound" of rhythm and blues.

Texas

Historical conditions in Texas and Mexico have been conducive to the development of musical syncretisms between African Americans and Hispanics. In those areas where Spain utilized large numbers of slaves, especially the West Indies and northern portions of South America, social and cultural integration among blacks and Spanish colonists occurred at a much faster pace than it did in the British colonies. In the North American southwest, Estevanico, a free black Spaniard, played a key role in the exploration of New Mexico and Arizona. The unplanned growth of a new racial stock, the *mestizo*, in the huge area of Nueva España was the result of the lack of miscegenetic stigma against Spanish, Indian, and African mixing.

Sympathetic interracial attitudes have also been reflected in the history of border relations. The border as a symbol of economic, social, and cultural freedom for African Americans goes back to the 1830s when substantial numbers of slaves fled to Mexico, often assisted by Mexicans. In the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico made a vain attempt to have slavery permanently abolished in the territories it was forced to cede to the United States.

In the twentieth century, the social and miscegenetic attitudes of Mexicans and blacks resulted in a familiarity that found expression in the blues lyrics (travel to Mexico, Mexican partners, the status of Mexicans) of African American recording artists such as Texas Alexander, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Six Cylinder Smith, Memphis Slim, Charlie Segar, Big Bill Broonzy, and Frankie Lee Simms. The life histories of African American itinerant performers also reveal the acculturative conditions of the Texas–Mexico region. For a time vaudeville blues singer Ma Rainey lived in Mexico. Texas blues singer and jack-of-all-trades Lefty Wing Gordon reportedly often crossed the border. Robert Lee McCoy, aka “Robert Nighthawk,” took his band on tour as far as Mexico. Alabama native Johnny Watson, who would gain later fame on Chicago’s Maxwell Street as “Daddy Stovepipe,” went to Mexico in 1937 and played in towns and cities along the Gulf coast. In the 1960s Houston blues pianist Elmore Nixon frequently enjoyed playing before Mexican audiences across the border.

Such citations from social history, blues lyrics, and the lives of black entertainers point to a significant and largely unwritten history of Mexican and African American interaction. Whenever and wherever such interactions have taken place, African Americans have been confronted with a vigorous chordophonic tradition. Since the introduction of the *vihuela de mano* (the antecedent of the modern guitar) by the *conquistadores*, all classes in Mexican society have exhibited a widespread use of this and related chordophones. Américo Paredes has shown that unlike the *a cappella* traditions of so much Anglo-American ballad singing, the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries along the border were a time when singing was usually accompanied by the guitar.

African Americans in Texas came into contact with this tradition of guitar accompaniment through an obvious occupational role model for musicians—the wandering Mexican street singer, the itinerant *trovador*, *cantador*, *ciego*, or *guitarerro*. As the traditional descendants of Spanish medieval and renaissance *juglares* and *trovadores*, Mexican *trovadores populares* or *cantadores* were solitary singers who accompanied themselves on finger-style guitar in public places for monetary donations. Often, these folk professionals were engaged in the creation and propagation of Mexican ballads or *corridos* in oral or broadside form.

Descriptions of the roving lifestyle of Mexican street singers approximate accounts of their African American counterparts. Twentieth-century references to blind entertainers is particularly relevant to blues. The many itinerant blind African American street singing blues musicians who have been interviewed,

cited by discographers, and discussed by such knowledgeable informants as Angeline Johnson, wife of the legendary Blind Willie Johnson, are often accounted for by the explanation that stigmatized black males in the postbellum South had few economic options other than becoming preachers or street singing entertainers and bluesmen. The severe social and economic oppression of these stigmatized persons lends itself to such an argument, but it does not explain the historical existence of such occupational role models. From the sketches of the Spanish painter Francisco Goya in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the testimonies of fieldworkers in folklore in the twentieth, it is evident that many peripatetic guitar-playing *cantadores* have been afflicted with the stigma of blindness and might, therefore, have provided such a role model. Mexican sources reveal the singing of nineteenth-century *corridos* by blind minstrels or *ciegos*. Similarly, Alan Lomax in the 1930s collected border ballads in Brownsville, Texas, from José Suarez, the blind town minstrel. Blind Mexican American street musicians in the Southwest have also been cited by Manuel Peña, Alice Corbin, and Aurora Lucero-White.

Given the proximity of such cultural models, it might be argued that language has acted as a barrier between Black and Mexican. The aural language of music, however, often strikes a common cultural note. Thus, the well-known virtuosity of many Mexican guitarists has often aroused the interest of black musicians. One scholar has documented Lightnin’ Hopkins’s admiration for the technical skills of Mexican guitarists. In a now legendary incident, an ambivalent sense of respect for, and fear of, expertise may have prompted Robert Johnson to hide his hands during recorded performances, from Mexican guitarists, at his ARC sessions in San Antonio, by facing a room corner.

John “Knocky” Parker, a European-American musician who played with Blind Lemon Jefferson, has remembered the prevalence of guitars in Texas and a pervasive “Spanish” melodic influence that affected African American style and repertoire. The paucity of commercially recorded evidence for such a syncretistic development may be accounted for in part by the actions of on-location recordists from commercial record companies who generally discouraged blacks and Mexicans from playing and singing each other’s music, since they had ready access to the “real thing.” In actual social conditions, however, field researchers have ascertained that blues musicians who encountered Mexican guitarists had no qualms about playing Mexican music. In 1962 McCormick taped Texas blacks playing guitars and singing in Spanish in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. David Evans’s complete repertoire

analysis of Crystal Springs, Mississippi, blues singer Mott Willis reveals a number of waltzes, including one entitled “The Mexican Waltz,” which Willis “learned in Mexico on one of his trips with a minstrel show” from blues musician Tampa Red.

With regards to African American musicians who adopted Mexican musical styles, the performances of wayfaring Blind Lemon Jefferson, who grew up on the Mexicia Road of Wortham, Texas, who had affinities for Mexican “browns,” and whose anomalous guitar style has been an inspiration to countless musicians, exhibit such influence. Jefferson’s music and that of Mexican *cantadores* shared many stylistic likenesses: The guitar was used in a complex fashion as an accompanying rhythmic device but also as a complementary and independent voice; finger-style guitar was employed; instrumental introductions and instrumental breaks between sung stanzas were common; breaks often began with high treble notes, sometimes in harmony, and then descended a scale into final, full chord strums, struck several times and often punctuated with rapid attacks on the bass strings.

More immediate musical links with Mexican players may be heard in the music of Blind Lemon Jefferson’s partner, Huddie Ledbetter, aka “Leadbelly,” who migrated to Dallas from Louisiana, met Jefferson in 1912, and played regularly with him for five years. A talented singer and multi-instrumentalist (guitar, mandolin, accordion, and harmonica), at some point Leadbelly encountered Mexican made *bajo sextos* and twelve-string guitars, instruments originally from central Mexico that at the time were emerging, along with the accordion, as core instruments of border *conjuntos*. As researchers have noted, Leadbelly’s twelve-string guitar techniques developed from the bass figures of barrelhouse pianists and Mexican twelve-string guitarists. A comparison of Leadbelly’s twelve-string bass runs with those of accomplished Mexican-American singer-musician Lydia Mendoza reveals startling similarities in rhythms and marcato attack; for example, consider Lydia Mendoza’s “El Lirio” (the lily) (1934) and Leadbelly’s rendition of “Sweet Jenny Lee” (1948). Given the popularity of waltz rhythm among *cantadores*, it is noteworthy that one of the first songs Leadbelly adapted to the twelve-string guitar was “Irene,” a waltz he learned from his uncle Bob Ledbetter.

New Orleans

Hispanic influences on African American blues musicians in New Orleans are intricately intermingled in a cosmopolitan musical heritage that features a

complex chordophone other than the guitar—the piano. Interestingly this unique Hispanic–African American blues heritage only reached the attention of international music critics in 1970, through the “rediscovery” of Henry Roeland Byrd (1918–1980), better known as “Professor Longhair,” by British rhythm and blues fans who were familiar with his few early recordings. The ensuing international publicity among blues enthusiasts along with a triumphant appearance at the 1971 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival sparked a resurgence of Professor Longhair’s career and a popularity that continued to escalate until his death in 1980. A musician’s musician, Longhair was the local mentor of many postwar blues, rhythm and blues, and rock ‘n’ roll artists including Huey Smith, Dave Bartholomew, Fats Domino, Alan Toussaint, James Booker, and Mac Rebennack. It was Professor Longhair’s use of Hispanic, African-Cuban sounds that make his piano blues a stylistic standout. One does not have to be an ethnomusicologist to sense the Latin rhythms of his music. Byrd himself described his style as incorporating “rumba, mambo, and Calypso.” One analyst has interpreted his piano playing as “a superimposition of very fast triplets on a syncopated 8/8 rumba beat.” When asked where he obtained this Latin influence, Longhair often attributed it to his stint with the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937, a time when he “played with a lot of West Indians, Puerto Ricans, Jamaicans, Spanish boys, Hungarians.” He also maintained that he heard Latin rhythms on Mexican radio stations while working with the Corps in Brownsville, Texas. Others maintain that his bass runs are direct adoptions from the Cuban *son*, an antiphonal musical form that developed during the second decade of the twentieth century.

The Latin inflections that Professor Longhair melded with blues were in turn based on the remarkable rhythmic syncretisms of Spanish and African music cultures that evolved in Cuba; such African-Cuban rhythms have been evident in New Orleans since the nineteenth century, through both direct contact and through the Cuban-influenced music of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants and visitors. The constant beat in virtually all traditional Cuban polyrhythmic dance forms is voiced by *clave*, a 3–2, sometimes 2–3 pattern, played over two measures. Reflecting these patterns, the *habanera* was the initial African-Cuban dance rhythm to have an impact on New Orleans music. Scholars have speculated that this rhythm reached there via Cuban immigrants, New Orleans musicians who joined circus work crews that toured Cuba, and/or by New Orleans musicians who took part in the Spanish-American War (1898).



Lidia Mendoza ca. 1936. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Sheet music evidence also attests to a Mexican link. *Habanera* rhythm attained great popularity in Mexico by the 1870s and *danzas* employing it were played in New Orleans by a succession of Mexican marching bands and *orquestas* that toured the city beginning in 1884. These ensembles continuously infused New Orleans with various kinds of Hispanic music and resulted in the extensive publication of sheet music, a development that was later bolstered by a national blues craze begun with W. C. Handy's publication of "Memphis Blues" in 1912 and "St. Louis Blues" in 1914, both of which employed *habanera* rhythms, a result of Handy's tours in the island republic.

Professor Longhair's best known antecedent-contemporary pianist who used Latin rhythms was Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton (1890–1941), the multitalented New Orleans composer-musician and self-proclaimed "inventor of jazz," whose work often reflected what he described as the "Spanish tinge" of New Orleans music. Interestingly, Morton, who took guitar lessons from "a Spanish gentleman in the neighborhood" as a youngster, was familiar enough with the blues idiom at the beginning of the century to compose a regional piece, "New Orleans Blues" (1902), which syncretized a blues progression with a Latin beat. While Morton's fame generally rests on his jazz and ragtime compositions, he went on to compose and record many other blues including "Jungle Blues," "Winin' Boy Blues," "Buddy Bolden's Blues," "Mamie's Blues," "Michigan Water Blues," "Cannon Ball Blues," "Futuristic Blues," and "Tom Cat Blues," many of which exhibit the "Spanish tinge." Although he was certainly one of the most sophisticated, musically trained New Orleans ragtime piano "professors," Morton's complex style also reflected his close association with New Orleans blues musicians of the barrelhouse circuit and the Latin musical traditions of his home city.

The Crescent City blues sound and its derivatives are so much a part of the international blues scene today that it is easy to lose sight of their origins. Syncretized blues with Latin beats have been played by Louisiana blues musicians such as Guitar Gable ("Guitar Rhumbo"), Lazy Lester ("Blowin' a Rhumba"), and Edgar Blanchard ("Blues Cha-Cha") as a matter of course, and it has become commonplace for blues pianists and blues bands outside the New Orleans orbit to play blues rumbas. Thus, blues pianists such as Detroit's Vernon Harrison (aka Boogie Woogie Red) and Texan-Californian Lloyd Glenn have performed their own rumbas ("Red's Rhumba," "Conga Rhumba"), and Mississippi's great Albert King authoritatively played blues such as "I Get Evil," and "Crosscut Saw" with rumba rhythms.

Moreover, the simultaneous development of other Hispanic–African American musical fusions in this century such as Cubop, the Hispanic soul blues of Ray Charles ("What'd I Say," "Mary Ann"), salsa, and the bugalú might appear to muddy the waters of regional vernacular song. Yet what is so remarkable about Spanish-tinged New Orleans blues, however, is its *sense of place*. From the title of Jelly Roll Morton's "New Orleans Blues" to Professor Longhair's "Mardi Gras in New Orleans" and "Big Chief," to Dave Bartholomew's "Carnival Day" and the Hawketts's "Mardi Gras Mambo," it is clear that New Orleans blues musicians have often been inclined to use the Spanish tinge when aurally identifying their home city.

Clearly the unique history, particular ethnic mix and geographic position of New Orleans predisposed it to continuous infusions of Latin and African cultural ideas. A gateway to the Caribbean and Latin America where barrelhouse and honky-tonk blues pianists coexisted with their jazz and ragtime counterparts, New Orleans' cosmopolitan milieu nurtured cultural distinctiveness that emerged in musical styles—one of these was a form of blues with the rhythmic underlay of *clave*. And this musical tradition is a time-honored one.

Conclusion

While this discussion has emphasized the influences of Hispanic music-cultures on African American blues musicians in Texas and New Orleans, the other sides of these coins remain unexplored. To what extent did the music-cultures of African American blues musicians affect their Hispanic counterparts? Pioneer *mariachi* accordionist Narciso Martinez recorded blues for Victor and Bluebird in the 1930s, and one student of Cuban vernacular music has maintained that blues and "blues licks" have always been evident in Cuban bands. Thus a total picture of the musical syncretisms created by African American blues musicians and Hispanic musicians remains far off.

PETER NARVÁEZ

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Early History

The first significant collection of black song was edited by William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison in 1867 (*Slave Songs of the United States*, New York: A. Simpson, 1867). James Trotter’s *Music and Some Highly Musical People: Sketches of the Lives of Remarkable Musicians of the Colored Race* (Boston and New York: Lee and Shepard; Charles Dillingham, 1878) was another pioneering work. But the first blues verses appeared in Will Thomas’s *Some Current Folk-Songs of the Negro* (Austin, TX: Folklore Society of America, 1912). The 1920s saw four different perspectives emerge to focus on the blues as a body of song: academic analysis of folk songs, literary creations, songbooks, and commercial advertisements.

In the 1920s, the then-newly established press at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill launched a pioneering series of folklore studies that included two books by Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs* (1925) and *Negro Workaday Songs* (1926). The latter work especially emphasized blues and commercial recordings, an unusual perspective for folklorists of the time. Simultaneously, from Harvard University Press came Dorothy Scarborough’s *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs* (1925) and Newman Ivey White’s excellent *American Negro Folk-Songs* (1928).

W. C. Handy’s *Blues: An Anthology* (Boni and Liveright, 1926) was the first collection of blues songs issued by a trade publisher to the general public. The same year, composers Porter Grainger and Bob Ricketts issued their *How to Play and Sing the Blues Like the Phonograph and Stage Artists* (New York: Jack Mills, 1926). A year later, Paramount Records, who had been issuing “race” records since 1922, released *The Paramount Book of Blues* (Port Washington, WI: New York Recording Laboratories,

1927). It not only contained thirty songs with music, but it also carried six portraits of Paramount artists like Ma Rainey and Blind Lemon Jefferson, along with brief biographies.

Harlem Renaissance writers like Langston Hughes (*Weary Blues*, New York: Knopf, 1926), Claude McKay (*Banjo*, New York: Harper, 1929), and Sterling Brown (see “Ma Rainey” in *Southern Road*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932) wove strands of blues inspiration through their works, while the white sociologist Howard W. Odum penned a trilogy of blues-influenced novels about a character he dubbed “Black Ulysses” (see, for example, his *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1928).

Finally, “race” record advertisements in African American newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* provide a graphic history of the blues recording industry, its releases, and its artists. These colorful and often degrading advertisements appeared in many papers throughout the 1920s and are reproduced in many blues histories.

1933–1942

In 1933, Louis W. Chappell published his prodigious study of the folklore hero John Henry (*John Henry: A Folk-Lore Study*, Jena: Frommannsche Verlag Walter Biedermann). There had been an earlier study by Guy B. Johnson (*John Henry: Tracking Down a Negro Legend*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929), but the scholarly presses were relatively silent during the 1930s. Several parallel developments compel our attention, however.

With funds from the Council of Learned Societies and ties to both the Macmillan Company and the Library of Congress, in June 1933, John Lomax and his young son Alan began the first of their famous African American song-collecting trips through the South. Their labors have been tallied in many Library of Congress publications—see, for example, *Checklist of Recorded Songs in the English Language in the Archive of American Folk Song to July, 1940*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Music Division, 1942). Countless songs have been issued, and more are still being released. In 1929, Zora Neale Hurston wrote of her folklore collecting, but the work wasn’t released until 1935 (*Mules and Men*, Philadelphia: Lippincott). Thus, she was an experienced field worker when she studied anthropology under Franz Boas and went back into the field, occasionally joining Alan Lomax as she did in Florida in 1935.

The Lomax's *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: Macmillan, 1934) contained a sizable component of African American material, but in 1936, they released *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead Belly* (New York: Macmillan), the first biography of a blues singer.

These were the years of the New Deal and change was in the air. The Popular Front may have kindled the spark that ignited the first folk song revival in the late 1930s, but collector of African American songs Lawrence Gellert had been publishing selections from his field work in the cultural journal of the Communist Party of the United States, *New Masses*, since 1930. By 1936, he was able to publish *Negro Songs of Protest* (New York: American Music League), and he released a companion volume several years later, titled *Me and My Captain (Chain Gangs)* (New York: Hours Press, 1939). By this time, Leftist interest in "indigenous" African American music had gained significant momentum, and John Hammond produced his first "From Spirituals to Swing" concert under the sponsorship of the *New Masses*. The legendary Robert Johnson was scheduled to play at this venue, and his name appears in the *New Masses* advertisements for the concert. Hammond soon discovered that Johnson had already died, and Big Bill Broonzy replaced him.

Simultaneously with the Leftist interest in folk song came the interest of serious jazz scholars, typified by Fredric Ramsey and Charles Edward Smith's collection of essays, *Jazzmen* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1939) with its essay on blues by E. Simms Campbell.

John W. Work, in 1940, released his *American Negro Songs and Spirituals* (New York: Crown, 1940) and the eve of World War II saw the publication of W. C. Handy's autobiography, *Father of the Blues* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), marking the winding down of the career of the prolific composer. Also, in 1941, Sonny Payne began to broadcast from Helena, Arkansas's KFFA, just two weeks before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. With the second Sonny Boy Williamson and under the sponsorship of Interstate Grocer's King Biscuit Flour, the radio show "King Biscuit Time" was born.

PAUL GARON

World War II–1958

Pioneers

One measure of the spreading interest in blues was the varied fields that sought to encompass it in their

research. The jazz discographers Albert McCarthy and Dave Carey (with Ralph G. V. Venables) incorporated all the known blues releases on 78 rpm in *The Directory of Recorded Jazz and Swing Music*, a six-volume release that covered the letters A–Lo before being discontinued. (Also known as *Jazz Directory* [cover title], Fordingbridge, Hampshire: Delphic Press, 1949; London: Cassell and Company, 1957). This was the first blues discography.

Jazz writers such as Rudi Blesh emphasized the importance of blues in their work. In his *Shining Trumpets* (Knopf, 1946), he devoted fifty pages to blues, analyzing its origins, history, and structure. By the late 1950s, Derrick Stewart-Baxter was writing a regular blues column for *Jazz Journal*, "Blues on Record," and Paul Oliver wrote frequently on blues for *Jazz Monthly*.

James McKune and Bernard Klatzko in New York, Francis Smith in England, Max Vreede in Holland, and Werner Benecke in Germany began to systematically collect blues 78 issues. This geographical diffusion of interest was also signaled by the frequency of foreign concerts given by U.S. blues or blues-related performers. Leadbelly's 1949 performance in Paris marked the first such visit, although black jazz artists had been performing in Europe for decades. Josh White toured Europe in 1950 and Big Bill Broonzy followed in 1951, performing in both Paris and London and returning in 1952. Lonnie Johnson played in Europe in 1952. Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry crossed the Atlantic in 1958, as did Muddy Waters and Otis Spann. These visits carried knowledge of the blues to a much larger audience than was available in the United States, and the singers were made welcome enough that a number of them, like Champion Jack Dupree, Memphis Slim, and Eddie Boyd, stayed on as expatriates.

Two important autobiographies appeared in the mid-1950s: Ethel Waters's *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* (with Charles Samuels, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1951) and Big Bill Broonzy's *Big Bill Blues* (as told to Yannick Bruynoghe, London: Cassell and Company, 1955). Broonzy's story was keen on insight and particularly revealing of the everyday life of a blues singer.

Recordings

Blues LPs began to appear from three sources: field recordings, studio recordings, and reissues of earlier 78 issues. Moe Asch had been recording Leadbelly since 1944 and issuing his songs on the Asch label, among others, but soon began to issue Leadbelly material on long-playing records, thus breaking new ground in the use of this new medium. Folklorist

Harold Courlander's 1950 field trips resulted in the six-album set on Asch's Folkways label, *Negro Folk Music of Alabama*, issued during the period from 1950 to 1956. Frederic Ramsey traveled the South from 1951 to 1957, harvesting remarkable field recordings of Horace Sprott and others. These were issued on three albums in the Folkways series, *Music from the South*. Meanwhile, a younger generation of field workers began to comb the United States. One of the earliest of these was Samuel B. Charters, whose mid-1950s trips in the southern United States resulted in the Folkways recordings of Furry Lewis, Lightnin' Hopkins, and others. Simultaneously, in the Midwest, Robert Koester recorded Big Joe Williams and Speckled Red for future release on his Delmar label. Under its new name Delmark, this would become one of the longest lived blues labels in the United States.

Folkways used studio recordings, on-location material recorded during radio shows or concerts, and field recordings often made in the home of a folklorist. One of the first such blues LPs—lacking the more diverse “folk” material typical of Leadbelly's repertoire—was a ten-inch LP on Folkways by Brownie McGhee, issued ca. 1951.

Soon the record companies seized on a new source of blues material. Early 78 releases could be reissued on the new long-playing medium. In 1953 Riverside began reissuing the recordings of Blind Lemon Jefferson on ten-inch LPs. but it was in 1952 that Folkways, again, released what was to become one of the most important reissues in the field of folk music.

Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* was a set of six LPs issued in three albums with extensive notes provided by Smith. The selection of material was diverse, consisting as it did of blues, reels, gospel, cajun, and ballads by artists like Charlie Patton, Henry Thomas, Jim Jackson, and Cannon's Jug Stompers, interspersed among titles by the Bentley Boys, Darby and Tarleton, and the Carter Family. Its eighty-four tunes gave the listener an indispensable view of the breadth of American folk music, and provided a healthy surge of new inspiration to the burgeoning folk revival. Folk performers from Bob Dylan to Joan Baez claimed to have been energized by it, and it gave many collectors a clearer view of the diversity of their goals. For those just learning about the blues, it introduced them to dozens of new artists.

As their exposure to blues increased, it was not surprising that young whites would also want to play the blues. One of the first white blues practitioners, the United Kingdom's Alexis Korner opened a “blues club” in 1954 with Cyril Davies. In the United States, Barbara Dane had her first job (with Turk Murphy, in 1956). A few years later

Jerry Silverman wrote the first how-to book aimed at new white aspirants, *Folk Blues* (New York: Macmillan, 1958). Interpreting “folk blues” rather liberally, Silverman collected 110 pieces, with “In the Pines” and “Titanic” and “Get Thee Behind Me, Satan” interspersed among more conventional selections like Little Brother Montgomery's “Vicksburg Blues,” Blind Lemon Jefferson's “Bad Luck Blues,” and Leadbelly's “Leavin' Blues.”

1959–1970

Modern Criticism Begins

The period from 1959 to 1970 was truly the dawn of modern blues criticism. Dozens of major works were issued by trade houses and music specialty publishers, while academic houses remained relatively silent.

Samuel Charters's *The Country Blues* (New York: Rinehart, 1959) and Paul Oliver's *Blues Fell This Morning* (London: Cassell, 1960) appeared within a year of each other, the latter carrying an introduction by Richard Wright. *The Country Blues* was a popularly written introduction to the blues, from W. C. Handy to Lightnin' Hopkins, with emphasis on the “race” recording labels and brief biographies of major artists like Barbecue Bob, Robert Johnson, and Blind Boy Fuller. Oliver's more scholarly work emphasized the connections between the lyrics in the blues and the everyday life of rural and working class African Americans, and he printed hundreds of recorded examples to illustrate his themes.

Amiri Baraka's *Blues People* (written under the name LeRoi Jones) was a cultural, political, and musical history of African Americans (New York: Morrow, 1963) that opened new political doors to blues criticism. Unfortunately these thresholds were not crossed for another decade. Another unique work of the period was the autobiography of pianist, songwriter, publisher, record promoter, and more, Perry Bradford (*Born with the Blues*, New York: Oak, 1965) It was Bradford who arranged Mamie Smith's 1920 OKeh session that changed the history of popular recording by marketing an African American singer who performed in an African American style.

Oliver and Charters remained active, and in doing so they often established major patterns that blues criticism would follow for the next several decades. Oliver had already written a short biography of Bessie Smith (*Bessie Smith*, London: Cassell, 1959) issued in Cassell's “Kings of Jazz” series (the only blues singer so honored), and in 1970 he produced a pictorial history, *The Story of the Blues* (London: Barrie and

Rockliff, 1969) that is still useful today. His 1960 field trip to the southern United States produced *Conversation with the Blues* (London: Cassell, 1965), a compilation of blues singers' first-person testimonies about the lives they led. In 1968 Oliver published *Screening the Blues* (U.S. title: *Aspects of the Blues Tradition*), a collection of essays on various themes in the blues (London: Cassell).

After a study of blues poetics (*The Poetry of the Blues*, New York: Oak, 1963), Charters compiled a group of biographies, both to flesh out the brief sketches in *The Country Blues* and to introduce new figures. *The Bluesmen* (New York: Oak, 1967) introduced Charlie Patton, Robert Johnson, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Texas Alexander, and more to a new, wider audience.

Urban Blues (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) by Charles Keil was one of the first academic blues analyses. Harry Oster's *Living Country Blues* (Detroit: Folklore Associates, 1969) came shortly afterward. Keil applied the techniques of the sociologist to understand the role of the urban blues artist. While few have followed in his footsteps, his work was an inspiration for many readers. Oster supplied a vast array of blues lyrics culled from his song-collecting expeditions to Louisiana prisons and the surrounding countryside. These were prefaced with a lengthy literary analysis of the blues. This was an approach to the blues that a number of other studies would pursue.

More remarkable insights about the blues came from the field of African American literature. Ralph Ellison's penetrating observations in his essay collection, *Shadow and Act*, were built on by his colleague Albert Murray in Murray's first book, *The Omn-Americans* (New York: Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1970). Nor was literature the only field to offer an unusual perspective. Fredric Ramsey, Jr.'s 1950s photographic study of the African American south and its inhabitants has yet to be matched (*Been Here and Gone*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1960).

The 1960s was a decade of great discographical achievement as well. Jazz writer and publisher Walter C. Allen published Dan Mahoney's discography of Columbia race records, *Columbia 13/14000-D Series* (Stanhope, NJ: Walter C. Allen, 1960), and it was followed a few years later by the first comprehensive blues discography, *Blues and Gospel Records 1902–1942*, by Robert M. W. Dixon and John Godrich. (London: Storyville, 1963). In 1970 they provided a guided tour of this discography in their *Recording the Blues* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), a history of the many field trips undertaken in the South by the recording companies of the 1920s and 1930s. Mike

Leadbitter and Neil Slaven had been compiling details on postwar blues for some years, and in 1968 produced *Blues Records, January 1943 to December 1966* (London: Hanover), a companion to Dixon and Godrich's "prewar" discography.

Recording the Blues was one of the first books issued in the blues series edited by Paul Oliver, with the assistance of Tony Russell. The first four books were also published in the United States and they included Oliver's own study of the African roots of the blues, *Savannah Syncopators*, Russell's analysis of shared trends among black and white folk musicians, *Blacks, Whites and Blues*, and Derrick Stewart-Baxter's history of the vaudeville-influenced blues singers of the 1920s, *Ma Rainey and the Classic Blues Singers*. The four titles were all published by Studio Vista in 1970.

Other biographical or regional studies to appear in the series included John Fahey's book on Charlie Patton, which featured lyric and music analysis as well (*Charley [sic] Patton*), Bengt Olsson's history of the Memphis blues artists, *Memphis Blues and Jug Bands*, and Karl gert zur Heide's *Deep South Piano*, which focused on the music of Little Brother Montgomery and his friends. William Ferris's study of improvisation and composition, *Blues from the Delta*, rounded out this group of releases that Studio Vista issued in 1970.

Our picture of the publishing accomplishments of this decade would not be complete without mentioning several significant but specialized works. Eric Sackheim published a handsome collection of transcribed lyrics, augmented by the drawings of Jonathan Shahn. *The Blues Line* (New York: Grossman, 1969) may have been the first blues art book. Finally, two children's books on blues appeared the same year, Carman Moore's story of Bessie Smith, *Somebody's Angel Child* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969) and Frank Surge's compilation of biographies, *Singers of the Blues* (Minneapolis: Lerner, 1969).

The Belgian magazine *R & B Panorama* (Brussels, 1960) was one of the first blues magazines, although a close contender is Robert Koester's *Jazz Report* from St. Louis which evolved into *Blues News* ca. 1960 in Chicago. Anthony Rotante and Paul Sheatsley's discographical *Blues Research*, an offshoot of *Record Research*, also appeared at that time. The United Kingdom's *Blues Unlimited*, edited by Simon Napier and Mike Leadbitter, became the first English-language blues magazine, and Bob Groom's *Blues World* began in 1965. Chris Strachwitz's *American Folk Music Occasional* (United States, 1960) provided a depth and breadth not available in other publications; the second issue (1970) was coedited by Pete

Welding who had begun reviewing blues LPs for *Down Beat* in 1960. *Jefferson* (Sweden) and *Soul Bag* (France) both began in 1968. *Jefferson* may be the oldest blues magazine still in existence. Not until 1970 did the United States have its own blues magazine, *Living Blues*, also still publishing.

Performers Past and Present

Print media are not our only source of information about blues activity in the 1960s. Classic blues performances originally issued on 78s in the 1920s and 1930s were beginning to appear on twelve-inch LPs. The Heritage label (United Kingdom) reissued Memphis Minnie and Blind Lemon Jefferson, while RBF (another Moe Asch label) issued *The Country Blues* to accompany Samuel Charters's book of the same name. As with the Harry Smith anthology, Folkways (and Samuel Charters) were introducing an increasingly large audience to blues artists such as Leroy Carr, Bukka White, Tommy McClennan, and others.

Meanwhile, in New York city, Pete Whelan and Bill Givens, with the assistance of Bernard Klatzko, who wrote the liner notes and supplied many of the 78s to the Origin Jazz Library, reissued the first LP of Charlie Patton's work. Looking askance at the relative urbanity of some of the selections on *The Country Blues* LP, they issued Origin's second LP, *Really! The Country Blues*, containing work by Ishman Bracey, Skip James, William Moore, and others.

Some years later, in 1967, Nick Perls (New York) founded his Yazoo label, which was to become the major label reissuing blues 78s. Up until this time, the major labels had been relatively inactive in terms of blues reissues, but in 1970, Columbia reissued and repackaged the complete work of Bessie Smith in a heavily promoted set of ten LPs. This set greatly increased the popularity of the blues.

Many of the greatest blues singers were still alive and came to the attention of young white blues enthusiasts in the 1960s. Their work, and the work of more contemporary blues artists, rapidly began to appear on LP. Prestige established their Bluesville label in 1959–1960 and began their lengthy series by issuing LPs by Al Smith, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, and Willie Dixon. Robert Koester issued his first blues LPs—by Speckled Red and Big Joe Williams—almost simultaneously, and soon began to record other artists like Sleepy John Estes and Junior Wells. One of the most successful labels, Arhoolie, was founded in 1960 by Chris Strachwitz. Arhoolie consistently produced quality blues LPs, either taken from 78s or recorded live (both in the studio and in

the field). Mance Lipscomb and Lightnin' Hopkins were important artists for Arhoolie in those years. Hopkins was to become the subject of one of the first blues film documentaries, Les Blank's *The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins* (1969).

Many of these same performers began to appear at blues festivals, both in the United States and abroad. The American Folk Blues Festivals began to travel overseas in 1962. Only at the end of the decade did blues festivals start to appear regularly in America. The Ann Arbor Blues Festival (1969) was the first; the Washington (DC) Blues Festival (1970) was the first to be produced by African Americans.

Young devotees began to comb the South looking for singers and information about them. They refined their techniques and scoured birth and death records, marriage records, city directories, phone books, census reports, and even police files. Interviews with these recently located singers appeared in books and magazines.

Other white enthusiasts took up playing the blues. One of the first of these was Barbara Dane who appeared in a feature in the November 1959 issue of *Ebony* (and was the first white woman to be so featured). Bob Dylan appeared on the scene in 1961–1962, featuring remakes of tunes by Bukka White, Henry Thomas, and others. In Chicago, Paul Butterfield, Elvin Bishop, and Mike Bloomfield were joined by Charlie Musselwhite from Memphis as they visited South Side blues clubs to learn from their heroes. Even before the Butterfield Blues Band formed in 1963, John Fahey had begun recording his blues-inspired guitar music. The trio of John Koerner, David Ray, and Tony Glover (Minneapolis) issued their first record in 1963, while in England, where Alexis Korner already reigned, Jo An Kelly began to record. Kelly made a private pressing EP in the mid-1960s, right around the time Eric Clapton joined John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

Instructional guides for playing the blues began to appear. Stefan Grossman generated a cottage industry with these tutorials, beginning with his *The Country Blues Guitar, Volume I: Mississippi John Hurt, the Memphis Sound and Then Some* (New York: Oak, 1968).

With all this exposure, mainstream sources began to take note of the blues. *Sing Out*, which began in 1950, began to print more blues pieces, as did the folk magazines *Broadside* (1962) and *Little Sandy Review* (1960). Even *Rolling Stone* and *Newsweek* had occasional pieces of blueslore. Jazz and folk festivals noticed the blues well before blues festivals came into being. The Newport Jazz and Folk Festival of 1960 featured blues artists, and by 1963 featured them regularly. The University of Chicago Folk Festivals

(1961) frequently had blues acts like Ed and Lonnie Young.

Contemporary American drama reflected the wider interest in the blues when Edward Albee's play *The Death of Bessie Smith* first opened, in Berlin, in 1960.

1970–1983

Background and History

Three important books helped place the blues in historical context. John Lovell, Jr.'s mammoth undertaking *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame* (New York: Macmillan, 1972) was a comprehensive study of the development of the African American spiritual. Dena Epstein's *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), elucidated a period of development for black folk music little known to blues followers at that time. And Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York: Oxford, 1977) surveyed black culture in the light of its social and psychological meanings to African Americans, grounding his findings in the material and historical matrix of Black life in America. Like Paul Oliver's *Blues Fell This Morning* (q.v.), only more vast in scope, Levine's work enabled blues aficionados to understand how, why, and from what fabric the blues emerged.

A number of important historical regional and stylistic studies were published in the 1970s. Mike Rowe's landmark study of the Chicago blues, *Chicago Breakdown* (London: Eddison Press, 1973), is still the most definitive book on the subject. Bruce Bastin documented the blues of the Eastern states, from Georgia through the Carolines, in one of the final entries in Paul Oliver's blues series, *Crying for the Carolines* (London: Studio Vista, 1971). William Ferris's *Blues from the Delta* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Anchor Press, 1978), an analysis of improvisational techniques among a group of Delta blues artists, was an expanded version of his entry of the same title in Oliver's blues series. (London: Studio Vista, 1970). Blues in New Orleans was documented in John Broven's *Walking to New Orleans: The Story of New Orleans Rhythm and Blues* (Bexhill-on-Sea: Blues Unlimited, 1974). One work of blues history that emphasized the Delta was Robert Palmer's *Deep Blues* (New York: Viking, 1981), one of the most popular books on blues ever to be released.

The University of Illinois Press continued to publish important blues studies such as Jeff Todd Titon's analysis of the music of the *Early Downhome Blues*

(Urbana, 1973). Titon also integrated his material with aspects of the daily life of rural working class blacks, and was one of the first authors to review actual record and phonograph sales figures. David Evans's *Big Road Blues* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) studied patterns of creativity in a group of Mississippi blues musicians. *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*, by Paul Garon (London: Eddison Press, 1975), was a controversial psycho-poetical study of the blues, drawing on Marxism, psychoanalysis, and a surrealist view of poetry. A more orthodox history was supplied by Giles Oakley's *The Devil's Music: The History of the Blues* (New York: Taplinger, 1977), a tie-in with the BBC documentary of the same name, produced a year earlier.

Works like George Mitchell's *Blow My Blues Away* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971) and Robert Neff and Anthony Connor's *Blues* (Boston: David Godine, 1975) consisted largely of first-person testimony by blues artists. Peter Guralnick's popular *Feel Like Going Home* (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1971) was based on such material, largely rewritten. His *Lost Highway* (Boston: David Godine, 1979) was in a similar format, but also covered country and rock and roll singers, as well as blues artists.

Singers and Their Songs

Several significant biographies appeared in this decade, one of the most noteworthy being Chris Albertson's life of Bessie Smith, *Bessie* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972). *Mother of the Blues: A Study of Ma Rainey* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981) was the first blues book by a woman author. Related was Sally Placksin's 1982 work on women musicians, *American Women in Jazz. 1900 to the Present. Their Words, Lives, and Music* (New York: Seaview, 1982), although it emphasized jazz artists more than blues performers. *The Devil's Son-in-Law: The Story of Peetie Wheatstraw and His Songs*, by Paul Garon (London: Studio Vista, 1971), was the last entry in Paul Oliver's blues series, making an even dozen releases. Samuel Charters released *Sweet as the Showers of Rain* (New York: Oak, 1977), which, like *The Bluesmen*, contained short biographies of important performers such as Memphis Minnie, Sleepy John Estes, and Bukka White.

Arnold Shaw's biographical history of blues and R&B, *Honkers and Shouters* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), was aimed at a more popular audience, as was Charles Sawyer's *The Arrival of B. B. King* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980).

A single entry represented the field of discography, Max Vreede's study of race releases on the Paramount label of Port Washington, Wisconsin, *Paramount 12000 13000* (London: Storyville, 1971).

But a new field was coming into its own: blues songbooks and instruction books. A. X. Nichols had already released a mass-market paperback collection of blues lyrics, *sans* music, *Woke Up This Mornin'* (New York: Bantam, 1973), but books like Woody Mann's *Six Early Blues Guitarists* (New York: Oak, 1973) were aimed at those wanting to learn to play the blues. Samuel Charters's *Robert Johnson* (New York: Oak, 1973), Chris Albertson and Gunther Schuller's *Bessie Smith: Empress of the Blues* (New York: Schirmer/Walter Kane, 1975), and Paul Oliver's *Early Blues Songbook* (London: Wise, 1982) contained words and music, but without the how-to component. In the next decade, two significant collections of blues lyrics appeared: Jeff Titon's *Downhome Blues Lyrics: An Anthology from the Post-World War II Era* (Boston: Twayne, 1981) and Michael Taft's *Blues Lyric Poetry* (New York: Garland, 1983).

Hettie Jones's *Big Star Fallin' Mama* (New York: Viking, 1974) was one of the few blues children's books published during this decade, but a number of literary efforts were published that were aimed at an adult audience. Albert Murray, whose musings on the role of blues in jazz were published in 1976 by McGraw-Hill (*Stomping the Blues*), released the first novel in his blues trilogy, *Train Whistle Guitar* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974). Augustus Arnold, brother of bluesman Billy Boy Arnold, and writing as Julio Finn, produced *Nefario* (London: Allison & Busby, 1974), while Peter Guralnick, who had already published several collections of short stories, wrote the novel *Nighthawk Blues* (New York: Seaview, 1980). Blues poet Sterling Plumpp released his *The Mojo Hands Call and I Must Go* (New York: Thunder's Mouth), just a year before Alvin Greenberg's play, *Love in Vain: The Life and Legend of Robert Johnson*, was released as a paperback original by Doubleday (Garden City, NY, 1983).

Black Perspectives in Music began to appear in 1973, an indication of the deepening interest academics were taking in the blues. In 1981, the Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi was established and two others soon appeared: the Chicago Blues Archive at the Chicago Public Library (1981) and the Center for Black Music Research (1983) at Columbia College, Chicago. Public interest was also drawn to more popular venues like the Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Also on the popular side, Robert Crumb's blues-related artwork began to appear in stories, short pieces, and on album covers. Peter Guralnick's *The*

Listeners Guide to the Blues (Facts on File, 1982) was the first release in what would become a very popular field. Eric Townley clarified arcane references on blues (and jazz) records in *Tell Your Story: A Dictionary of Jazz and Blues Recordings 1917-1930*. (Chigwell: Storyville, 1976). Although helpful to most listeners, it was aimed largely at a non-American audience.

The year 1980 saw the first airing of Steve Cushing's long-lived radio show, *Blues Before Sunrise*. The same year John Landis's *Blues Brothers* appeared in theaters across the country, reviving the blues in a way few people anticipated.

A landmark publication that has maintained its usefulness throughout the decades, Sheldon Harris's *Blues Who's Who*, was released in 1979 by Arlington House and kept in print in subsequent years by Da Capo. Indeed, Da Capo's series of blues reprints, inaugurated in the late 1970s, gave new life to many works in the genre.

1984-2002

History

The two most popular eras for blues criticism were the 1960s and the period under discussion. Several publications of this era were noteworthy for their elegance. *Nothing But the Blues*, edited by Larry Cohn (New York: Abbeville, 1993), may have been the first coffee-table book, but the scholarly level of its essays, by experts like Jim O'Neal, Mary Katherine Aldin, and others, belies such a glib appellation. More adventuresome in layout was *Bill Wyman's Blues Odyssey* (New York: DK Publishing, 2001), a handsome history of the blues with hundreds of artist photos, label shots, and more. William Barlow's social history of the blues, *Looking Up at Down: The Emergence of Blues Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1989) linked the lives of the singers with the social conditions that produced the blues, while Francis Davis's *The History of the Blues* (New York: Hyperion, 1995) was a popularly written account, tied in with a TV documentary.

Sufficient works had been produced by this time that several blues writers were able to produce collections of their or others' work. Paul Oliver's best record liner notes were collected under the title *Blues Off the Record: Thirty Years of Blues Commentary* (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Baton, 1984). Gayle Dean Wardlow published many of his articles and field research reports as *Chasin' That Devil Music: Searching for the Blues* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman,

1998), while several books in Paul Oliver's blues series (*Savannah Syncopators*, *Recording the Blues*, and *Blacks, Whites and Blues*) were collected in *Yonder Come the Blues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Perhaps the most notable sign of the blues' maturity was the appearance of Steve Tracy's *Write Me a Few of Your Lines: A Blues Reader* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), a 600+-page compendium of excerpts from books and essays by more than forty blues scholars.

Greatly expanding an earlier work, Bruce Bastin's *Red River Blues: The Blues Tradition in the Southeast* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986) was a meticulous history of the blues from the East Coast states, with much information on nonrecorded artists. Barry Lee Pearson focused on Archie Edwards and John Cephas in *Virginia Piedmont Blues* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), and Steve Tracy surveyed blues from the Queen City in *Going to Cincinnati* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.)

Paul Oliver produced an extraordinary study in *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), a study of the diverse vocal traditions that functioned as sources for race records. Jon Michael Spencer's *Blues and Evil* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993) surveyed the influence of religion on blues, while Guido van Rijn's *Roosevelt's Blues: African-American Blues and Gospel Songs on FDR*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997) was a comprehensive review of blues dealing not only with the president, but with World War II, the WPA, and other topics of the era.

Autobiographies and biographies were the most abundant of the blues publications for the decade, some coming from trade houses and others from university presses. Willie Dixon (with Don Snowdon) wrote *I Am the Blues* (New York: Da Capo, 1989), and Mance Lipscomb's reminiscences were edited by Glen Alyn in *I Say Me for a Parable* (New York: Norton, 1993). The highs and lows of Johnny Otis's career appeared in *Upside Your Head!* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), while Buddy Guy's assertions alternated with Donald E. Wilcox's commentary in *Damn Right I've Got the Blues: Buddy Guy and the Blues Roots of Rock-and-Roll* (San Francisco: Woodford Press, 1993). Henry Townsend (with Bill Greensmith, *A Blues Life*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), David "Honeyboy" Edward (*The World Don't Owe Me Nothing*, Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1997), and Yank Rachell (by Richard Congress, *Blues Mandolin Man*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001)—all bluesmen who started out in the 1920s—were published in the last decade of this century. Voices as diverse as

Jimmy Reed, Eddie Boyd, Muddy Waters, Houston Stackhouse, and many more artists whose interviews have appeared in *Living Blues* have been collected by the original reporters, Jim O'Neal and Amy van Singel, in *Voice of the Blues: Classic Interviews from Living Blues Magazine*. (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

Other works conformed to a more familiar biographical approach, although Robert Sacre's collection of papers on Charlie Patton was the result of the first such blues symposium that he organized in Leige, Belgium (*Voice of the Blues. Charley Patton and the Mississippi Blues Traditions. Influences and Comparisons*, Leige, Belgium: Presses Universitaires Leige, 1987), and Julio Finn's *The Bluesman* (London: Quartet Books, 1986) was only partially a biography of Robert Johnson and partially a disquisition on voodoo and blues.

Jazz critic Helen Oakley Dance released a detailed biography of T-Bone Walker (*Stormy Monday: The T-Bone Walker Story*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987). Steven Calt, coauthor with Gayle Dean Wardlow of a biography of Charlie Patton (*King of the Delta Blues: The Life and Music of Charlie Patton*, Newton, NJ: Rock Chapel Press, 1988), released his controversial biography of Skip James in 1994 (*I'd Rather Be the Devil: Skip James and the Blues*, New York: Da Capo).

Five major artists all received full-scale biographies during this period, although Robert Johnson's was slight due to a lack of available material (Peter Guralnick, *Searching for Robert Johnson*, New York: Dutton, 1989). *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly*, by Charles Wolfe and Kip Lornell (New York: Harper-Collins, 1992), finally gave the Leadbelly legend its due, while Paul and Beth Garon combined the details of the life of Memphis Minnie with a study of her songs (*Woman with Guitar. Memphis Minnie's Blues*, New York: Da Capo, 1992.) Sebastian Danchin's "*Blues Boy*": *The Life and Music of B. B. King* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998) helped clarify the life history of a star who had been heretofore only obliquely glimpsed. The life of Muddy Waters, first sketched by Sandra Tooze in *Muddy Waters: The Mojo Man* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1997), was brought forth in greater detail by Robert Gordon's *Can't Be Satisfied: The Life and Times of Muddy Waters* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2002).

Daphne Duval Harrison was the first African American woman to publish a full-length blues study. Her *Black Pearls: Blues Queens of the 1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988) is still a major source of information on Sippie Wallace, Edith Wilson, Victoria Spivey, and others. Angela Davis's study in social protest was another

groundbreaking stroke in the history of black women's struggle (*Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday*, New York: Pantheon, 1998).

Varying Perspectives

In 1988, Robert McLeod began his mammoth undertaking of transcribing all the blues songs reissued by Yazoo and Document (*Yazoo 1-20*, Edinburgh: PAT, 1988, etc.). Michael Taft had already issued the immense three-volume *Concordance* to accompany his earlier work (*Blues Lyric Poetry: A Concordance*, New York: Garland, 1984).

The blues was stirring artistic and literary inspiration and nowhere was this more true than in Houston Baker, Jr.'s stunning analysis of black literary works, *Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). The plastic arts inspired an exhibition for which Richard J. Powell prepared an excellent catalog, *The Blues Aesthetic: Black Culture and Modernism* (Washington, DC: Washington Project for the Arts, 1989).

The art form most in the service of the blues has always been photography, and many excellent collections appeared during this period. Half photographic essay, half history of Texas blues, Alan B. Govenar's *Meeting the Blues* (Dallas: Taylor, 1989) was an early entry in the field, but not the only one with a regional basis. Chicago and the Delta were the focus of two other works: Stephen Greene's *Going to Chicago* (San Francisco: Woodford, 1990) and Birney Imes's *Juke Joint* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1990), with an introduction by Richard Ford. James Fraher interspersed his photographs with testimony from the musicians themselves in *The Blues Is a Feeling: Voices and Visions of African American Blues Musicians* (Shorewood: Midwest Traditions, 1998), and Marc PoKempner took a Southside blues club as his focus in *Down at Theresa's: Chicago Blues* (Munich: Prestal Verlag, 2000).

Ray Flerlage's penetrating studies had been appearing on album covers and in books for decades, but it wasn't until 2000 that he published *Chicago Blues as Seen from the Inside* (Toronto: ECW). Jeff Dunas's unusual and formal blues portraits appeared

in his *State of the Blues* (New York: Aperture, 1998), which was graced with a preface by John Lee Hooker.

The first comprehensive blues bibliography appeared in 1989 (Mary L. Hart, Brenda Eagles, and Lisa N. Howorth, *The Blues: A Bibliographic Guide*, New York: Garland), although it has been superseded by the more recent *A Blues Bibliography*, by Robert Ford (Bromley, Kent: Paul Pelletier, 1999).

Laurie Wright's encyclopedic discography, *OKeh Race Records, the 8000 "Race" Series* (Chigwell, UK: Laurie Wright, 2001) was a significant discographical publication of this period, as was Chris Smith's amazingly detailed study, *That's the Stuff: The Recordings of Brownie McGhee, Sonny Terry, Stick McGhee and J. C. Burris* (Shetland: Housay Press, 1999).

Paul Oliver's *The Blackwell Guide to Blues Records* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989), with each chapter by a different blues scholar, established a more scholarly tone for its several editions than was achieved by more popular guides that soon flooded the market. Two more encyclopedic guides to the blues appeared during this interval: Robert Santelli's biographical *The Big Book of Blues* (New York: Penguin, 1983) and Gerard Herzhaft's *Encyclopedia of the Blues* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1992).

Christiane Bird produced the first comprehensive club guide, *The Jazz and Blues Lover's Guide to the US* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1991).

The venerable *Blues Unlimited* published its last issue (#149) in the winter of 1987, but several excellent magazines had already arisen to replace it: *Blues & Rhythm: The Gospel Truth* in July 1984 and *Juke Blues* in June 1985, both from the United Kingdom. The *Black Music Research Journal* debuted in 1988. *Blues Revue* first appeared, as a tabloid, in 1991.

Johnny Parth founded Document Records in Austria in 1990 with the purpose of reissuing every prewar blues 78; a few years earlier, Smithsonian had acquired the entire Folkways catalog, an enormous repository of blues and other folk forms.

Two important industry histories have appeared in recent years: Peter Goldsmith's *Making People's Music: Moe Asch and Folkways Records* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998) and Nadine Cohodas's story of Chess Records, *Spinning Blues into Gold* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000).

PAUL GARON

HITE, LES

b. Leslie Leroy Hite, 13 February 1903; DuQuoin, IL
d. 6 February 1962; Santa Monica, CA

Alto saxophonist and bandleader, active mostly in jazz but also made significant blues recordings with T-Bone Walker. Raised and educated in Illinois, Hite made his way as a musician to California in 1924. In 1925–1928 he performed in various Los Angeles bands. In 1929 or 1930 at Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club he began leading a band including vibraphonist/drummer Lionel Hampton and George Orendorff; it isn't clear if Hite took over Paul Howard's Quality Serenaders in which they were in, or if he simply hired them away. With this group Hite performed and recorded with Louis Armstrong in 1930–1931, and he kept it through September 1939, with film appearances and occasional East Coast stints.

In late 1939 he took over Floyd Turnham's band with whom he recorded "T-Bone Blues" (Varsity 8391) with vocalist/guitarist T-Bone Walker and with guitar solos from Frank Pasley, an important record toward the rhythm and blues style. Through 1945 he led additional bands, but after World War II he retired from bandleading. His subsequent career was as partner in a music booking agency.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: Lord**HITE, MATTIE**

b. ca. 1890; New York City, NY
d. ca. 1935; New York City, NY

Spent singing career in New York City, except for a four-year stint from 1915 to 1919 in Chicago. Two of her 1923–1924 recording sessions were accompanied by Fletcher Henderson at piano. Activity after 1932 unknown or unconfirmed.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR**HOEKE, ROB**

b. 9 January 1943; New York City, NY
d. 9 November 1999; Krommenie, Netherlands

A pianist in the boogie-woogie style. His Rob Hoeke Rhythm and Blues Group enjoyed some success in Holland in 1965 and 1966. He recorded again in the 1980s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richie Unterberger)

Discography: AMG (Richie Unterberger)**HOGAN, SILAS**

b. 15 September 1911; Westover, LA
d. 9 January 1994; Scotlandville, LA

Guitar and harmonica player, Silas Hogan reflected the swamp blues sounds of his heroes: Jimmy Reed, Lightnin' Slim, and Slim Harpo. Hogan remained in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for the most part and made several recordings before becoming a resident artist at Tabby Thomas Blues' Box in Baton Rouge. His son Samuel continues to perform.

HEATHER PINSON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP**HOGG, JOHN**

b. 5 August 1912; Westconnie, TX
d. 11 November 1997; Los Angeles, CA

Singer and guitarist; cousin of Andrew "Smokey" Hogg. Learned some guitar from Pee Wee Crayton. Music was secondary to Hogg's day jobs, but he did take some opportunities to record commercially in 1951 for the Mercury and Octive labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

HOGG, SMOKEY

b. Andrew Hogg, 27 January 1914; Westconnie, TX
d. 1 May 1960; McKinney, TX

Guitarist, singer. Not to be confused with guitarist Willie Anderson Hogg, born in 1908 and also nicknamed "Smokey." Country blues purveyor Hogg, a fan of Peetie Wheatstraw and a cousin of Lightnin' Hopkins, worked with Texas slide guitarist Black Ace in early 1930s. He made his recording debut with Decca in 1937 and achieved his first hits a decade later for the Blue Bonnet label. He wrote the R&B hit "Broken Hearted" for Floyd Dixon in 1949 and had R&B two hits of his own, "Long Tall Mama" in 1948 and "Little School Girl" two years later. He recorded prolifically until the last few years of his life with his best-known work coming via a series of singles for Specialty Records in the early 1950s.

MICHAEL POINT

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Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

HOLDER, ACE

b. Albert Holder, 18 December 1937; Evergreen, AL

Singer and harmonica player. Learned harmonica at age twelve; formative influences were Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson (II)" and Little Walter, then later Jimmy Reed and Little Junior Parker. Holder moved to Los Angeles, California, in 1957, and from 1960 through 1967 he made several singles for the small labels Pioneer International, Vanessa, Lulu, Movin, and Downey.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

HOLE, DAVE

b. 30 March 1948; Heswall, England

Idiosyncratic slide guitarist Hole rose from obscurity in Australia to international acclaim. Raised from age

four in Perth, Hole returned to Australia in 1972 after a stint in London and achieved a regional reputation. His 1990 self-financed *Short Fuse Blues* was brought to the attention of *Guitar Player* magazine and then Alligator Records, resulting in a recording contract. His personalized technique reversed the standard style by placing the slide on the index finger with his hand hanging over the guitar neck. This unusual technique, combined with the ferocity of his music, made his 1993 North American debut a major success and led to regular recording and touring.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

HOLEMAN, JOHN DEE

b. 4 April 1929; Orange County, NC

Piedmont blues acoustic guitarist with a marked influence from Blind Boy Fuller. Has worked as farmer and bulldozer operator. Since 1976 he has made performing appearances outside of North Carolina, often with Fris Holloway. He has made one CD recording with Mapleshade Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HOLIDAY, BILLIE

b. Eleanora Fagan Gough, 7 April 1915; Baltimore, MD, or Philadelphia, PA

d. 17 July 1959; New York City, NY

An utterly distinctive voice, a cruel and abbreviated childhood, a tumultuous stint as singer with an early edition of the Count Basie Orchestra, a string of broken romances, and a long-standing drug habit that led to an early death have all combined to make Billie Holiday one of the great tragic legends of American music.

What is often overlooked in the fixation on the pathos of her life (which has been well documented in numerous biographies) is the important role Holiday played—along with Basie, Louis Armstrong, Jay McShann, and a handful of others—in bridging the worlds of jazz and blues. For if generally classified as a jazz singer, few artists have ever been as completely at ease in both worlds as Holiday—a lesson she may have taken from her short time with Basie, but which more likely was simply inherent to her sense of the music. Holiday also penned several classics of the blues canon, songs such as “Fine and Mellow,” “Billie’s Blues,” “Don’t Explain,” and “God Bless the Child.”

The product of a broken home, Holiday’s childhood was rough by any standard. By most accounts, Holiday was raped at age ten, and began working as a prostitute while still a young teenager after her mother moved them to New York City. (However, this should all be tempered with the knowledge that Holiday was reported to often embellish or even fabricate her own history, and there is even doubt about her role in the writing of her autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*.) She began singing at local clubs as a way to earn money, taking her name from the film star Billie Dove.

Her big break came in the early 1930s when, while still a teenager, she was discovered by John Hammond—one of the first major discoveries in his legendary career, which would later include Basie, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Hammond introduced her to Benny Goodman, who was just starting out himself, and in 1933 Goodman hired her to sing with his small combo for a two-song recording session. Stretches with Jimmie Lunceford and Fletcher Henderson followed, and for most of 1937 she sang with Basie’s band before leaving (or being tossed out, depending on the account) to join Artie Shaw’s outfit. In addition to starring as the singer for these well-known big bands, Holiday also recorded under her own name during this time period, and a 1937 recording of “Carelessly” reached the top of the charts. This recording shows a singer whose approach to the music is upbeat, bright, and sassy—utterly unlike the darker, brooding material to follow. Many critics and fans hold that her late 1930s material is her best. There is little doubt that her voice was at its strongest during this period, although she was often stuck with stock Tin Pan Alley material.

It was shortly after quitting the Shaw orchestra that Holiday’s cult status began to be formed. In a now-legendary encounter, she agreed to sing a song brought to her by a fan at a live performance. The

song was “Strange Fruit,” a harrowing account of racial lynchings in the South, and while banned by most radio stations, it became a hit via jukebox. Its success despite radio censorship helped fuel the Holiday legend.

From the late 1930s to the mid-1940s, Holiday was one of the most popular entertainers in the nation—on a par with Basie, Goodman, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Frank Sinatra, and Ella Fitzgerald. She had numerous hits, was a top-draw live performer, and was making very good money.

An unhappy love life and a tendency toward substance abuse began to take their toll by the mid-1940s. Most reports indicate she was already regularly using heroin as early as 1944, along with abuse of alcoholism and marijuana. In 1947, she was arrested on drug charges and checked herself into a detoxification program. Five years later, she again enrolled in a detox program.

A five-year stint recording for jazz impresario Norman Granz (1952–1957) provided her numerous opportunities to record with some of the greatest talents in the jazz world—and many of her recordings from this era rank with her best. But her vocal range, never extensive, was already shrinking, her tone becoming rougher at the edges.

Much as Frank Sinatra did after the rupture of his vocal cords, Holiday responded to her new vocal limitations by pouring even more emotion into her performances. Many fans and critics prefer her last few years’ work as her most moving and revealing.

A 1957 television special titled “The Sound of Jazz” paired Holiday with her former friend from the Basie years, saxophonist Lester Young, plus saxophonists Ben Webster and Coleman Hawkins and other jazz stars, for a performance of Holiday’s own blues standard, “Fine and Mellow.” Most critics regard this as her last great performance. A subsequent album, *Lady in Satin*, her last, maintains a mixed reception among her fans.

Two years after performing with Young, Webster, and Hawkins, she was dead from complications of her long years of alcohol and drug abuse.

Despite the title of her autobiography, Holiday didn’t sing many straight blues songs. But even her covers of Tin Pan Alley hits had a broad swath of the blues running through them. It was blues as interpreted by Count Basie, Charles Brown, or Jeannie Cheatham: a sophisticated, uptown jazz setting. Holiday’s music was at the heart a synthesis of jazz, blues, and American pop, and to try to pigeonhole her into any of these categories is to deny the talent that transcended genre.

JIM TRAGESER

HOLIDAY, BILLIE

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85979).

Videography

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Kultur).

HOLLIMON, CLARENCE

b. 24 October 1937; Houston, TX
d. 23 April 2000; Houston, TX

Guitarist. Rarely seen, but frequently heard, Clarence Milton Howard Hollimon, a product of the Houston Fifth Ward blues scene that produced Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland, and Lightnin' Hopkins, established himself as a Gulf Coast blues legend whose stylish guitar lines were emulated by his better-known contemporaries as well as by a succeeding generation of Texas blues players.

Often skipping high school classes to do so, Hollimon was an early Duke Records session star, heard to best advantage on a series of classic Bobby "Blue" Bland hits recorded in 1956–1959. He toured briefly with Big Mama Thornton and before joining Charles Brown's touring band when he graduated. He first met his future wife and musical partner Carol Fran, a member of Guitar Slim's band and later bandleader for Joe Tex, while playing in Brown's group in the 1958. He married her in 1983.

Hollimon tired of the road in 1960 and left Brown to return to the studio, working with O. V. Wright, Buddy Ace, Lavelle White, and Ernie K-Doe, among others. After being coaxed back out on to the road to back Nancy Wilson in 1964, Hollimon relocated to New York City, doing session work with Chuck Jackson and Dionne Warwick for Scepter Records. He returned to Houston within a year but the rise of

disco and the fall of Duke Records made the 1970s a lean era.

As a result of saxist Grady Gaines's lobbying with Black Top Records, the lean Hollimon, nicknamed "Gristle" by Brown for both his wiry frame and musical resilience, got his second wind as a session star in the 1980s, appearing on albums by Anson Funderburgh, Guitar Shorty, Marcia Ball, Solomon Burke, and the Tri-Sax-Ual Soul Champs, among others. He and Carol Fran also got to finally go into the studio under their own name, recording *Soul Sensation* and *See There!* in the early 1990s.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography

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See also Fran, Carol

HOLLINS, TONY

b. ca. 1900–1910, possibly Clarksdale, MS
d. ca. 1959, possibly Clarksdale, MS

Influential Delta blues singer and guitarist Tony Hollins was reportedly raised on a plantation outside of Clarksdale, Mississippi, and played throughout the area in the 1920s and 1930s. He met a young John Lee Hooker in Clarksdale and was a major influence on the aspiring bluesman, even providing Hooker with his first guitar. Hollins recorded seven sides for Okeh in June 1941 in Chicago, including "Crawlin' King Snake," "Married Woman Blues," and "Cross Cut Saw Blues" (which predates Tommy McClennan's version by three months). Hollins relocated to Chicago in the late 1940s and recorded his final session in 1951 for Decca with pianist Sunnyland Slim.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Harris

Discography: DGR; LSFP

HOLLOWAY, RED

b. James Wesley Holloway, 31 May 1927; Helena, AR
 Tenor and alto saxophonist. Smoky-toned, blues/soul/jazz. Started out in Chicago. Holloway worked with Roosevelt Sykes and Nat Toles before starting his own quartet in 1952, which he maintained through 1960. He sometimes worked with Red Saunders's house band at the Regal Theater. He also participated in recording sessions with Otis Rush (1956) and Pee Wee Crayton (1956–1957). In 1960 he relocated to New York, and from 1963 through 1966 he toured with Brother Jack McDuff. After a brief return to Chicago, he migrated to Los Angeles in 1967, where at the Parisian Room he led the house band.

DENNIS TAYLOR/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord**HOLLYWOOD FATS**

b. Michael Leonard Mann, 17 March 1954; Los Angeles, CA
 d. 8 December 1986; Los Angeles, CA

Guitarist. A principal figure in the West Coast blues revival of the 1980s, Hollywood Fats, nicknamed by Buddy Guy, influenced a generation of aspiring California blues guitarists while humbling multitudes of accomplished professionals. And he did it in an unfortunately short period of time, dying at thirty-two. Hollywood Fats, who was already playing guitar as a preteen, was both precocious and prodigiously talented in his childhood. His father would drive him to local blues clubs to play and he was subsequently befriended by Shakey Jake, who procured his first professional job, backing singer Big Sadie, at age fourteen.

Freddie King and Magic Sam served as influences and mentors and word soon spread about the talented teenager. A gig with J. B. Hutto and the Hawks was his first touring job and it led to work with Albert King, John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Witherspoon, and Muddy Waters. He left Muddy Waters to form the first Hollywood Fats Band in 1975 and added Canned Heat ex Larry Taylor on upright bass in 1976. The band's *Rock This House*, a live recording from 1979 was later released by Black Top Records. Hollywood Fats worked

extensively, both live and in the studio, with West Coast bandleaders James Harman, where he was paired with guitarist Kid Ramos for awhile, and Rod Piazza, where he worked on *Harpburn*, in the 1980s. He also recorded three albums with William Clarke, one with Canned Heat and briefly explored roots rock when he replaced Dave Alvin in the Blasters.

MICHAEL POINT

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HOLMES BROTHERS**Wendell Holmes**

b. 19 December 1943; Plainfield, NJ

Sherman Holmes

b. 29 September 1939; Plainfield, NJ

Popsy Dixon

b. 26 July 1942; Virginia Beach, VA

Gib Wharton

b. 15 September 1955; Mineral Wells, TX

The Holmes Brothers band was mainly composed of Wendell Holmes on guitar, Sherman Holmes on bass, and friend Popsy Dixon on drums, along with the collaborative efforts of Gib Wharton on pedal steel guitar. The band was largely based in New York after the brothers, Wendell and Sherman, moved there around 1959. The brothers played in several bands before forming the Sevilles in 1962, and they accepted an invitation to play as the house band at Gibson's. They developed a style of their own with a mixture of blues, soul, gospel, and R&B and got the opportunity to play with Shep and the Limelites, John Lee Hooker, Jerry Butler, and the Impressions.

Wendell played with "Wild" Jimmy Spruill, Inez and Charlie Fox, and finally with Tommy Knight where he met Popsy Dixon. In 1979, Sherman found

HOLMES BROTHERS

Wendell and Popsy Dixon a gig at an East Village bar called Dan Lynch's. It was at this club that the Holmes Brothers along with Popsy solidified their three-part vocal harmony which was heard by producer Andy Breslaw who introduced them to Rounder Records. The group signed a recording contract with Rounder Records in 1989, and a year later *In the Spirit* was released leading to a series of performances and five European tours in just two years.

The Holmes Brothers were invited by Peter Gabriel to travel to his studio in Bath, England, and record a compilation album called *A Week in the Real World* along with their own album entitled *Jubilation*. Breslaw also encouraged them to act in the movie *Lottoland* by John Rubino and to record the soundtrack. The Holmes Brothers continue to perform and record in New York with their flexible ability to play almost any style of music.

HEATHER PINSON

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Promised Land (1996, Rounder).
Speaking in Tongues (2001, Alligator Records AL 4877).
Righteous! The Essential Collection (2002, Rounder).

HOLMES, WRIGHT

b. 4 July 1903; Hightower, TX
d. 12 September 1970; Houston, TX

Singer/guitarist Holmes played in the Dowling Street area of Houston in the 1930s and 1940s and recorded a few sides in 1947, notably a garbled, eccentrically accented, seemingly impromptu yet mesmerizing "Alley Special." Soon afterward he forswore the clubs and, when interviewed in 1967, was playing only in church.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: LSFP

HOLMSTROM, RICK

b. 30 May 1965; Fairbanks, AL

While growing up in Alaska, he was introduced by his radio disk-jockey father to blues and early rock 'n' roll. After moving to California in 1985, he began hearing live blues, then began playing it himself as guitarist. His two Black Top albums with harmonica player Johnny Dyer led to better performing opportunities, including a tenure with Rod Piazza. His solo efforts range from straight blues to avant-garde.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG (Char Ham)

HOLT, NICK

b. 15 January 1940; near Grenada, MS

Bassist; brother of Magic Slim. Lived near Grenada, Mississippi, until 1956. Early singing and musical training was in the church. Also played a "one-string" wire attached to the side of a house wall. He moved to Chicago, and soon began working in Big City Laundry until 1969. He began playing bass for Magic Slim in 1960, eventually making music with his brother a full-time career in 1978.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HOLTS, ROOSEVELT

b. 15 January 1905; Tylertown, MS
d. 27 February 1994; Franklinton, LA

A relative and disciple of Tommy Johnson, Holts's importance lies in his ability to combine elements learned from his influential mentor (see the song "Big Road Blues"). David Evans extensively recorded him in 1966. Two albums were issued in his name, one for Blue Horizon and one for Arhoolie.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: LSFP

See also Johnson, Tommy

HOME COOKING

Label founded in the mid-1980s by Roy Ames, initially featuring Houston-area blues musicians; the first releases included recordings of Weldon "Juke Boy" Bonner, T-Bone Walker, and Lightnin' Hopkins. Many releases, whether of living or deceased musicians, have been criticized in print for raw demonstration-quality production and for apparent lack of creative input from the living musicians.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HOMESICK JAMES

b. James Williamson, 30 April 1910; Somerville, TN

A contemporary and acquaintance of Robert Johnson, Son House, Johnny Shines, Big Joe Williams, Elmore James and other major blues luminaries, Homesick James has been described as the quintessential bluesman—a guitarist who evolved from itinerant Delta songster to Chicago-based recording artist and performer.

Citations of his birth date and year have varied, from 30 April or 3 May, and from 1905, 1910, or 1914. Some sources list his birth name as John William

Henderson. Williamson ran away from home at an early age, playing at dances, picnics, and fish fries throughout Mississippi, Tennessee, and North Carolina during the 1920s. During that period, he met and worked with Sleepy John Estes, Yank Rachell, and Blind Boy Fuller, the latter of whom he names as his mentor. Moving to Chicago in 1930, Williamson worked at various clubs and juke joints both in the city and throughout the South during the next two decades, recording briefly with the Victor label in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1937. He also performed as a sideman to blues artists Big Bill Broonzy, Albert King, and Memphis Minnie, his reported girlfriend, as well as forming his own touring band in 1938. However, it was not until 1951 that he recorded several sides for the Chance Label in Chicago. One song, "Homesick," became a local hit in 1952 and led to Williamson's nickname. From 1955 to 1963, he played rhythm guitar with the Broomdusters, a band led by his supposed second cousin, slide guitarist Elmore James. Since James's death in 1963, Williamson has continued to record for a number of labels, and to tour both in the United States and internationally, where he enjoys an enthusiastic following.

DAVID BEAUDOUIN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

HOOCHIE COOCHIE MAN

"Hoochie Coochie Man" is a pivotal song in the history of the blues. Written by Willie Dixon and first recorded for Chess Records by Muddy Waters on January 7, 1954 (with Dixon playing the bass), "Hoochie Coochie Man" was an instant hit for Waters and was soon on its way to becoming a definitive song in the Chicago blues style as well as a seminal song to what was to become rock 'n' roll. Dixon reportedly first presented the lyrics to this song and its classic, often imitated, da-dadada-dum rhythm to Muddy Waters in the men's room of The Zanibar, a Chicago nightclub where Waters enjoyed a regular performance schedule. Waters then talked his band through the chord changes at the beginning of

their next set and, according to Dixon, received such a positive response from the audience that they played it two or three more times that evening. It soon became the biggest hit of Waters's career, spending three months on the Billboard charts, reaching the number three position.

In "Hoochie Coochie Man" Dixon combines several aspects of Delta blues, New Orleans jazz, African American culture, and pop music of the day. At this point in his career, Muddy Waters was relying mostly on reworking traditional Delta blues into an electric, band-oriented setting. With "Hoochie Coochie Man," Dixon enables Waters to break away from this formula, while still remaining true to his blues roots. By maintaining the standard I-IV-V7 musical structure of the blues and also by lyrically relating some of the superstitious beliefs held by many rural blacks of the day, Dixon, via Waters, is able to maintain the connection with the black audience as he begins to embellish on this time-tested musical structure and thus help to carry the blues to its next inevitable level. Dixon also employs a musical stop-phrase, common in contemporary New Orleans jazz styles of the day, which allows for an instrumental phrase to be played over a short silence. Dixon draws from this stop-phrase delivery, yet, instead of using an instrumental phrase over this silence, in the case of "Hoochie Coochie Man," he implants an *a capella* vocal phrase over the two and a half beats of silence. Waters uses a similar stop-phrase beat earlier in 1953 with his recording of "Mad Love (I Want You to Love Me)." Although this song uses a very similar beat, it does not remain faithful to the rhythmic "punch" produced by Dixon's stoic attention to the two and a half beats of instrumental silence.

After Waters's success, "Hoochie Coochie Man" would become a staple in the sets of many blues artists to follow including B. B. King, Buddy Guy, and John Hammond, as well as Willie Dixon himself. It would also work its way into the set lists and recordings of many rock artists including Chuck Berry, the Allman Brothers, Eric Clapton, and Jimi Hendrix.

Waters would also revisit this stop-phrase beat many times throughout his career, as would many of his contemporaries. In another of his signature songs, "Mannish Boy," Waters employs this musical phrase verbatim as well as using lyrics of sexual bravado and superstitious beliefs reminiscent of those used in "Hoochie Coochie Man." This classic blues phrase would eventually work its way into the psyche of modern culture by being featured in musical genres from folk to rock and even children's songs as well as being used in television and radio commercials.

BRYAN GROVE

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HOOD, WILLIE

(See *Rhythm Willie*)

HOODOO

Hoodoo is one of the most misunderstood phenomena of North American black culture. The blues above any other cultural creation formulated within black society has maintained a direct relationship with hoodoo. If hoodoo is the religion of the blues, then the blues is the anthem of hoodoo.

Before venturing into the specifics of the mutual relationship between the blues and hoodoo, it would be best to clear up some of the misunderstandings regarding hoodoo. To begin, the word "hoodoo" is not a transposition of the word "Voodoo." They are two entirely different words often used synonymously but nonetheless incorrectly. Further confusion over these two words is evident in instances where hoodoo and Voodoo are practiced in the same geographical location, such as New Orleans. Hoodoo is a fragmented system of magic and medicine, while Voodoo, as the word is spelled in New Orleans, is a religion.

In general, a religion is comprised of certain components working together to form a cohesive body of ritualistic activities generally performed within a collective body. Throughout the world, one can find religions that are comprised of hierarchical leadership, often in the form of priests, ministers, pastors, deacons, bishops, church elders, queen mothers, and other clerical titles. In general, the hierarchical leadership within a given religion facilitates communal engagements. In addition most religions have a specific location for worship services, be it a temple, a church, a synagogue, or a shrine. More often than not, religions are comprised of acts of ritual, which join the roles of hierarchical leadership and communal engagement. These can take the form of baptismal services, rites of passage, secret society oaths, or a child-naming ceremony. Finally, most

religions provide a process for the act of worship, and/or insist that its adherents express measures of placation, reverence, and faith to at least one, if not more, spiritual beings. All of these elements are dependent on the operations of each other to create a functioning religion in its purest sense of the word. These are the basic structural elements of nearly any given religion, which should not be confused with the individual practice of religion. Structurally speaking, hoodoo is not comprised of those features that would constitute a religion.

With few exceptions, most enslaved Africans in North America were acculturated under the hegemony of Protestant Anglo-American Christian slaveholders and as such were unable to maintain relations to the structural religious elements of their former African spiritual systems. Of those few exceptions in North America where Africans were enslaved and may have practiced non-Protestant faiths, such as Catholicism in Louisiana, and the Quaker faith in the Northeast, one will still find the practice of hoodoo. Slave territories with majority Catholic populations afforded enslaved Africans a wider opportunity to mask and redirect the pluralist aspects of African cosmology. Some of the likely factors that created these opportunities are perhaps the large isolated communities of enslaved Africans coupled with some structural similarities between Catholicism and African cosmology as well as the fundamental feature in nearly all African cosmological systems to be inclusive of other spiritual paradigms. The existence of these and other factors kept alive the present-day New World black religions such as Brazilian Candomble, Cuban Lukumi, Puerto Rican Santeria, Haitian Vodun, and New Orleans Voodoo.

Hoodoo adherents in slave-holding areas dominated by the Protestant faith were forced to collapse their understanding of multiple spiritual forces into the dichotomous Protestant spiritual forces: Jesus or the devil (savage). As an evolutionary result of years of lost cultural knowledge, hybrid cosmological thoughts, and the suppression and oppression of African religious expression, hoodoo has no defined deities. Hoodoo's major spiritual counterpart was Southern Protestant Christianity and in comparison to the whole of African cosmological thought, it is a rather restrictive spiritual system. While religion was doled out to blacks in highly controlled, minute formulations during the better portion of slavery it was virtually force fed to them during the last fifty years of slavery. Within this process, the option for spiritual transposition is limited by the lack of pluralistic spiritual expressions, which are not found in Southern Protestantism.

What Is Hoodoo?

Hoodoo is a highly individualized practice of magic and medicine formulated from an admixture of cultural beliefs. Note that, while the structural elements of ritual, spiritual placation, communal engagement, hierarchical leadership, and specific sites of worship are absent in hoodoo, hoodoo is not absent from the other New World black religions listed previously. Through the combined use of magic, medicine, and the interpretation of dreams and signs, hoodoo is concerned with the primary issues of love, health, prosperity, revenge, and protection. Although it would be incorrect to assume that hoodoo does not have strong elements of early European and Native American cosmological influences, the core formulations of hoodoo and the blues are rooted in African cosmological foundations. These foundations, which are present in both hoodoo and the blues, break down in the following manner: a proactive standpoint, transformation, and magic and medicine, as discussed next.

Proactive Standpoint

One who has a proactive standpoint believes that human beings are able to effectuate earthly changes in their day-to-day life through the means of supernatural engagement. In the case of hoodoo this takes place on a very individual basis through the use of charms usually constructed from a combination of found objects, roots, herbs, personal articles, animal parts, dirt, and, most importantly, focused intention. Personal intention can override any of the powers found within the objects used and this fact further personalizes the inherent individuality found in hoodoo.

Transformation

Transformation is the belief that various means of supernatural engagement will transform an individual's circumstances. Generally this transformation is believed to take place immediately. In the Robert Johnson song "Hellhound on My Trail," he is immediately affected by the "hot foot powder" and sets upon the road to "ramblin'." Transformation in the hoodoo system takes place within three basic concepts: *Magic* is the use of charms and personal objects, laying of tricks, and employing of herbs for curative and malevolent reasons, and magic is used where situations are temporally altered. *Dreams*

provide a source of personal divination. *Signs* act as a form of precautionary forecast.

Hoodoo, while being a far flung child of African cosmology, is still predicated on the belief that all objects as well as occurrences in the universe, such as signs and dreams, contain their own life force. This life force is both secular and sacred, acting as a fluid energy and maintaining an ebb and flow within the daily lives of human beings. Within hoodoo one need only know how to direct these life forces in order to gain the desired results. Within various cultures the concept of a life force is described in many ways: the Yoruba of West Africa call it “ache,” in China it is called “Chi,” and in Mali, it is known as “Nommo.” Under the system of hoodoo one would generally employ the help of a root or hoodoo doctor. It was believed that such a person better understood the natural forces of the universe, and would then combine their knowledge of these forces along with the customer’s intentions to enact transformation of a given situation. With the advent of manufactured hoodoo products, and the migration of blacks to urban areas, the root or hoodoo doctor was gradually removed from this equation.

Magic and Medicine

There is the belief that magic and medicine can be both harmful and curative, while simultaneously serving as an agent of transformation. It is not uncommon for hoodoo to be referenced as evil and the blues to be referenced as devil’s music. Two cultural reasons can account for this phenomenon. First, the concept that hoodoo causes illness was often overemphasized within the minds of blacks as they negotiated the superimposed Protestant cultural phenomena of good versus evil. Ma Rainey’s “Black Dust Blues” provides a good example of hoodoo in blues acting as a causative agent for illness. A jealous woman accuses the narrator of stealing her man, and swears revenge; later, the narrator finds black dust sprinkled around the entrance to her house and is beset with illness. While the story is one of revenge, the song also illustrates hoodoo’s employment as an agent to counter inappropriate social behaviors. Yet within the dominant society, the act of causing illness would stand out because it does not fit within the larger social framework of either Christian morals or American jurisprudence. Under such cultural paradigms it is clear how hoodoo came to be perceived as evil.

Second, blacks employed hoodoo as a means to “negotiate oppression” very much in the same manner in which they employed the blues to articulate

oppression. It would not be in the best interest of the dominant culture to allow black agency through the usage of hoodoo, therefore, hoodoo had to be framed as acts against society mores.

Actions of aggression employed through the use of hoodoo are often not contextualized for their necessity of use among an institutionally marginalized population, and are all too often only understood as behaviors contrary to Christian mores. This phenomenon has often been applied to both the blues and hoodoo, thereby associating both with the devil. Hoodoo as a whole operates as a social mediator and spiritual law enforcement tool with blues as its informant. On a continuum from slavery to the present, hoodoo has become far more associated for the harm it can do, as opposed to any good it has to offer.

Hoodoo’s role as a social mediator is clear when we listen to the blues. By examining a few lyrics from any blues song that references “goffer dust,” we are better able to see this issue. Goffer dust is commonly thought to be graveyard dirt, and primarily used to direct illness against another. This important hoodoo ingredient has been employed perhaps more often than any other ingredient found in blues songs. Harry Middleton Hyatt in Volume 1 of his *Hoodoo—Conjuration—Witchcraft—Rootwork* documents nearly thirty instances of the use of goffer dust. Within these instances, there are at least half a dozen different meanings of what goffer dust is and how it is employed. The following lyrical excerpts illustrate not only the various ways in which goffer dust is utilized, but also the means in which it is employed as a tool for social mediation.

“I Don’t Know”

(Cripple Clarence Lofton)

Getting sick and tired of the way you do

Time, Mama, I’m gonna poison you

Sprinkle goffer dust around your bed

Wake up some morning, find your own self dead.

“Hoodoo Blues”

(Bessie Brown)

I’m on the war path now, I’m mean and evil I vow

Some woman stole my man, to get even I’ve a plan

Gonna sprinkle ding’ ’em dust all around her door.

Goffer Dust

The key to understanding these lyrics and the many more like them would be to understand that blues is not merely music, it is working class black American culture expressed in musical form. The isolation of blues as music delimits its identity and

commodifies working class black American culture into a product employed by external society members as a peeking window. Therefore it is no wonder that over the years the only interpretation that lyrics of this nature obtained were that of acts of malevolence. But, these lyrics are weighted with contradiction, which cannot be simply explained away, by merely focusing on their malevolent nature. Take for example, Cripple Clarence Lofton's "I Don't Know": "Sprinkle goffer dust around your bed / Wake up some morning, find your own self dead." The title of the song, "I Don't Know," suggests ambivalence. The song's lyrics speak of a looming death. Lofton's mate has treated him poorly, and she must pay. But, Lofton also speaks of the ability to "wake up" and find [her] "own self dead." Clearly a literal death cannot be interpreted by these words. Other lyrics, which play on undoable actions, peppered with words of kindness, begin to shatter the concept of complete malevolence as the driving motive for the use of hoodoo. Lofton wants his mate to understand that she has committed an act of transgression, and that, while civil court may not be an option, the use of hoodoo is.

On the surface, the blues, like other black musical genre before it, appeared to be nothing more than "Negro" entertainment. But at its core were encoded life's lessons. Blacks of the southern industrial agricultural labor force relied heavily on both hoodoo and blues, as both a source of entertainment as well as a guide and informant.

Although there are gender differences to these experiences, simple examination of the blues illustrates that women as well as men, equally conveyed their messages of a harsh life via the theme of "love gone wrong."

Hoodoo is further operationalized in the blues as lyrics that describe the desire and need to travel. These lyrics represent issues of transformation where the act of traveling serves as the actual mojo. The phrase "Leaving this morning," is echoed frequently throughout the blues, and is not just a message about a fast get away, but symbolizes empowerment, the agency to alter one's situation.

In African cosmology, it is change and the personal enactment to spark such change that defines agency for humans. Such an understanding is clear upon examination of the blues and hoodoo within the framework of African cosmology. For example the word "mojo," from the Kikongo language and culture means "spiritual spark," "force," or "soul". In the music of the blues the use of a "mojo" activates transformation while allowing both performer and listening audience opportunity to communicate with the supernatural world. Blues acts as "Nommo," the

West African concept meaning to literally speak transformation into being.

Blues songs on the subjects of sex and food represent larger issues of self-control. As the blues was developing so were initial opportunities for working class blacks to exercise personal desires with regard to their choice of sexual mates, as well as their consumption of food items. These two combine to create some of the most outlandish blues lyrics, such as: "Put a little sugar in my bowl"; "Jelly roll"; "Now I'm goin' to put in my order mama, for two weeks ahead. I'd rather eat your cookin' than my own home bread. You's a love makin' mama. . . ." To some people, these lyrics may seem to indicate issues of immorality in black society, and if that was the case, it had to do with larger issues of social injustice, whereas by contrast issues of sexuality and food were pleasures and necessities of life not requiring moral condemnation.

Hoodoo and the blues are the magic and sound that emerged from the dust of North American enslavement and the dry air of Jim Crow. And the two could only take shape within the mythic riddle-laden hoodoo as it served a religion-like function for the blues, while the blues saluted hoodoo in the best way it could by keeping its "mojo workin'."

PHOENIX SAVAGE-WISEMAN

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HOOKER, EARL ZEBEDEE

- b. 15 January 1929; Quitman County, MS
d. 21 April 1970; Chicago, IL

Among his peers, Earl Hooker is widely considered the greatest guitarist of his generation. His wild performances attracted a loyal following wherever he went as he entertained the crowds by playing behind his back, picking the guitar with his feet or teeth, or doing flips on stage without missing a note. Hooker always had a predilection for the latest electric guitar technology, becoming famous for his double-neck guitars and even making the wah-wah pedal work in a blues context. In addition to blues he had incorporated country and western music in his repertoire early on. Hooker was the archetype of the rambling bluesman, having spent most of his life on the road. Along the way he cut singles for a host of tiny labels that did little to get the word out. The result was that he remained little known outside the insular blues world until the late 1960s.

Born in the Mississippi Delta (1930 is sometimes cited as a birth year), Earl Zebedee Hooker arrived in Chicago as a child. As a youngster he began playing music in the streets with future blues artists Bo Diddley and Louis Myers. He met Robert Nighthawk in Chicago in the early 1940s and it was Nighthawk who became his primary influence, teaching him the rudiments of his remarkable slide technique. Hooker would eventually surpass his mentor, developing an entirely new language for the slide guitar. Hooker frequently ran away from home, often heading down

South to play music. During these trips he reunited with Nighthawk and played with Ike Turner, Sonny Boy Williamson, and others. He formed the Roadmasters in the early 1950s and with constantly changing personnel played all over the country for the next twenty years.

Hooker's initial recordings were in 1952 for King with Johnny O'Neal, cutting sides the following year for Rockin' and Sun. By the early 1950s he was back in Chicago cutting singles for Argo, C.J., and Bea & Baby before joining with producer Mel London (owner of Chief and Age) in 1959. For the next four years, he recorded both as sideman and leader for the producer, backing Junior Wells, Bobby Saxton, Lillian Offitt, Ricky Allen, Big Moose Walker, and A. C. Reed plus cutting notable instrumentals like "Blue Guitar" and "Blues in D-Natural." He also contributed slide work to Muddy Waters's 1962 Chess waxing "You Shook Me." After Age folded Hooker recorded sporadically between 1964 and 1968 for tiny outfits like Cuca, Jim-Ko, Duplex, and again for C.J.

He finally drew increased attention during the late 1960s starting with *Two Bugs & A Roach*, his first full-length album, for Arhoolie in 1968. In 1969 he hooked up with ABC-BluesWay churning out several albums for the label in addition to playing on records of BluesWay artists such as Andrew Odum, Johnny "Big Moose" Walker, Charles Brown, his cousin John Lee Hooker, and others. In late 1969, Hooker traveled to Europe to play in the American Folk Blues Festival. By this time, he was quite ill with advancing tuberculosis, a condition he battled his entire life, and after his return was admitted to a Chicago sanitarium where he passed away on April 21, 1970.

JEFF HARRIS

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Earl Hooker: Simply the Best (1999, MCA 11811).

See also ABC-Paramount/BluesWay; Arhoolie/Blues Classics/Folk Lyric; Chicago; Hooker, John Lee; Kansas City Red; Nighthawk, Robert; Sun/Phillips International/Flip; Turner, Ike; Walker, Johnny Mayon "Big Moose"; Wells, Junior

HOOKER, JOHN LEE

b. 22 August 1917; near Clarksdale, MS
 d. 21 June 2001; Los Altos, CA

John Lee Hooker is known as The Hook, King of the Boogie, and Godfather of the Blues. He was a giant of the form and a unique performer. Unlike Lonnie Johnson, T-Bone Walker, or B. B. King, highly gifted musicians and professional showmen who had a profound influence on younger generations of guitarists, Hooker was a storyteller, a completely untutored, unstructured, and unselfconscious artist who could not be imitated.

Along with Lightnin' Hopkins, he is the most-recorded figure in the history of the blues. His guitar playing was percussive, without orthodoxy or connection to Mississippi, Texas, or any other perceived regional style. His lyrics were often spontaneous and ran roughshod over niceties like the twelve-measure structure and other conventions of form. He could moan, scream, plead, hum, or scat; in the same verse he might speak, waver with a wild, seemingly uncontrollable vibrato or simply sing—on pitch—in a very sonorous and melodious voice. Part of the tension

with John Lee Hooker was that he was so incredibly unpredictable. He listened only to his inner logic. The mysterious qualities he brought to a performance are perhaps as evocative of the centuries of African American experience as anything that has ever been. There is no possible way to imitate an artist like John Lee Hooker.

He played finger-style (not with a flat pick) on both electric and acoustic guitar. He used open string keys, primarily E and E minor, when in standard tuning. For many songs, particularly boogies, he used open tunings in A major (low to high: E–A–E–A–C#–E) or G major (D–G–D–G–B–D). He played in both duple (straight eighth) and triple (shuffle) rhythms, and used several different strumming techniques, including what appears to be his own take on the Carter Family Strum.

Early Years

Hooker was born near Clarksdale, Mississippi (some sources say Vance, Mississippi), to a family of



John Lee Hooker. (Photo by Tom Copi, © Frank Driggs Collection)

sharecroppers. His father, William Hooker, was a part-time preacher. At age eleven, John Lee began to play guitar; one was given to him by blues singer Tony Hollins. When he was fourteen, his mother Minnie Ramsey remarried. His stepfather Will Moore (not to be mistaken for the Willie Moore who played guitar with Charley Patton and Son House), was a significant influence on Hooker's development, giving him some basic lessons on the instrument.

In 1933, Hooker moved to Memphis, Tennessee, and two years later to Cincinnati, Ohio, singing gospel with such groups as the Fairfield Four, as well as blues. Hooker arrived in Detroit, Michigan in 1943, at the height of wartime activity in the automotive plants. He got a job as a janitor, and performed at clubs and house parties. His recording career began in 1948, when his first manager, Elmer Barbee, helped connect him to producer Bernie Besman. On November 3, 1948, he recorded "Boogie Chillen'," which was issued on Modern, a label that would be home over the years to B. B. King and many other blues icons.

"Boogie Chillen'" hit number one on the Race records juke box chart in February 1949, much to the surprise of Hooker. He quit his day job. Other hits followed: "Crawlin' Kingsnake" (1949), "I'm in the Mood" (1951) on Modern, and numerous songs on the Regal, Gone, Staff, and Sensation labels. Because of his contractual obligations, Hooker recorded under various pseudonyms: Birmingham Sam, John Lee Booker, Texas Slim, Delta John, and others. He never changed his sound or style. He recorded for Chess from 1952 to 1954, continuing to moonlight on different labels.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, he was associated with Vee-Jay Records, where he stayed until 1964. During this period his influence was strongly felt by the British blues scene, particularly with the releases of "Dimples" (1956) and "Boom Boom" (1962).

Solo Performer or Bandleader

Because of the profoundly idiosyncratic nature of his music, John Lee Hooker was most effective musically as a solo performer. By himself he could ramble at will, singing and playing whatever occurred to him, and he never failed to mesmerize his audience.

Because he was a storyteller first and foremost, his band recordings stand out less than his solo pieces. The LP *That's My Story: John Lee Hooker Sings the Blues*, produced in 1960 by Orrin Keepnews, provided Hooker with an enviable rhythm section consisting of jazz bassist Sam Jones and drummer Louis Hayes, who were with Cannonball Adderley at the time.

Although the trio sound is full, and Hooker appears relaxed, Hayes and particularly Jones get turned around repeatedly on such cuts as "I Need Some Money," "I'm Wanderin'," and "No More Doggin'." The odd meters, false starts, abrupt shifts of texture, and other characteristics of Hooker's music don't translate well to ensemble performance.

On "Blues Before Sunrise" (1956), he's accompanied by a small group of backing musicians obviously trained in the standard blues protocol. Hooker begins singing the verse at the sixth measure (instead of the first). The band, however, continues with the traditional arrangement of the song, and the contrast between what they're playing and what he's singing is quite dramatic.

John Lee Hooker had a unique strength and focus. He never counted measures or beats. Once the music got going he simply went his own way, for better or worse. These examples testify to his individuality but also speak very clearly to his limitations as an ensemble musician.

A Different Audience

Throughout the 1960s Hooker gained more fans among young whites, as opposed to the almost entirely black audience that was his before. The white fans were from the worlds of folk and rock. He performed at the Newport Folk Festival in 1960 and the Newport Jazz Festival in 1964. He toured England on a number of occasions and performed at hip rock clubs in New York and other big cities.

In 1970 Hooker left Detroit and moved to Oakland. He recorded with Canned Heat, a white blues-rock group whose founding members Bob Hite and Al Wilson had been strongly influenced by him over the years. This kept him in the rock limelight. His other recordings of the 1970s were not musically significant, and by the end of the decade his career had slumped. In 1980 he was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Hall of Fame, and appeared in the *Blues Brothers* movie the same year.

Resurgence

With the release of *The Healer* (1989, Chameleon), Hooker entered a new phase of his career. The record, produced by Roy Rogers, Hooker's former guitarist, had guest appearances by Bonnie Raitt, Carlos Santana, and Robert Cray. The CD, which outsold all previous Hooker recordings, won a Grammy

Award for best blues recording. In 1990 he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

A special tribute concert followed in New York City's Madison Square Garden, with many stars in the blues and rock fields performing. Continuing in the same vein, Hooker and Rogers released *Mr. Lucky* (1991, Point Blank) and again sold in big numbers, but the emphasis was on the guest stars. Hooker by now was really aging, and he couldn't keep up with the demands of recording at this level any more.

Until his death in 2001, Hooker shared with B. B. King the title of elder statesman of the blues. He was semi-retired for the last decade and performed or recorded rarely. He continued to receive awards, including a commemorative stamp bearing his photo in 1996 from the country of Tanzania. Knowing the financial pitfalls of the music business, Hooker over the years saved and invested money and lived comfortably, first near Los Angeles and then in Los Altos, a genteel area south of San Francisco. His four marriages yielded eight surviving children, Zakiya and Robert (both musicians), Diane, Karen, John, Jr., Shyvonne, Lavetta, and Francis.

What is the special appeal of John Lee Hooker? His music is demanding, an acquired taste. He reminds us of the griot tradition of African tribes. He possesses a magic that more polished and sophisticated performers lose, or never had in the first place. As B. B. King said many years ago about his dear friend and colleague, "Whenever they say true blues, pure blues, John Lee Hooker comes as close to it as anybody I've ever heard."

Because of the impossibility of accurately cataloging Hooker's five-decade recording career—perhaps the largest output of any blues performer—the reader is encouraged to examine a particular website, *The World's Greatest Blues Singer*. Compiled by Claus Röhnisch, this English-language website contains a full Hooker discography, a year-by-year recap of his life, selected obituaries and numerous other items of interest. There are also links to different Hooker (and related) websites. Röhnisch's site is updated frequently.

LENNY CARLSON

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John Lee Hooker: The Modern Detroit Years 1948–1955 (1994, Flair, V21Z39658).

HOPKINS, JOEL

b. 3 January 1904; Centerville, TX

d. 15 February 1975; Galveston, TX

Acoustic guitarist and country blues singer, Joel Hopkins started playing guitar at the age of nine, and began a part-time career in 1922, when he met Blind Lemon Jefferson and followed him for five years. Later, Joel Hopkins recorded alone with Mack McCormick for the British Heritage Label, and with his brothers John Henry Hopkins and Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, for Arhoolie, on February 16, 1964, and again in March 1965.

YVES LABERGE

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Discography: LSFP

See also Hopkins, Sam "Lightnin'"

HOPKINS, LINDA

b. Helen Melinda Matthews, 9 November 1925; New Orleans, LA

Vocalist. Recorded with Johnny Otis, 1951. Hopkins toured with the show Jazz Train, called the Broadway Express in Europe, 1960. Featured tribute to Bessie Smith, *Me and Bessie*, from January 1974. She has continued to play this role in parallel with work such as the album *How Blue Can You Get* (1982, Palo Alto 8034).

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: LSFP

HOPKINS, SAM "LIGHTNIN' "

b. 15 March 1912; Centerville, TX

d. 30 January 1982; Houston, TX

Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins was one of six children born to musician father Abe and mother Francis Sims. Two of Hopkins's brothers, Joel and John Henry, were also musicians. Hopkins's first instrument was a homemade guitar from a cigar box with chicken wire for strings.

Life

In the early 1920s at the age of eight Hopkins spent time with Blind Lemon Jefferson, whom he met at a country picnic. Jefferson allowed Sam to perform with him, and Hopkins eventually became Jefferson's guide, which developed a lifelong bond between the two. Hopkins left home at an early age; and spent much of his teen years traveling through east Texas doing small gigs. During this period, Sam developed much of his guitar style from his cousin, Alger "Texas" Alexander, a local legend who didn't play guitar, but had a free-flowing vocal style that was unrestricted with regard to the traditional twelve-bar blues form. Hopkins and Alexander traveled regularly throughout Texas and parts of Mississippi to play house parties and juke joints. Hopkins spent some time in jail at Houston's County

Prison Farm during the mid-1930s for an unknown offense, and rejoined with Alexander when he was released.

They were performing together in Houston's Third Ward when talent scout Lola Anne Cullum caught their act and was immediately impressed with Hopkins. Cullum dropped Alexander from the duo and replaced him with pianist "Thunder" Smith. Sam Hopkins was instantly renamed "Lightnin'" Hopkins, and the new duo was quickly signed to Los Angeles-based Aladdin Records. On May 9, under the name "Thunder and Lightnin'" they recorded their first sides, "Katie May," later followed by "Shotgun Blues," "Short Haired Woman," "Abilene" "Big Mama Jump," and others.

With Aladdin, a "race records" label, Hopkins recorded forty-three of his earliest sides from 1946 to 1948. Hopkins's recording career is incredibly diverse. Reportedly, he worked for more than twenty different labels, which led to what is widely known as possibly the most extensive and complex discography in history (more than eighty-five albums). He often recorded for two labels simultaneously and delivered slightly different versions of the same tunes for both. His greatest hits include "Tim Moore's Farm" (1949) for Modern/RPM, "T-Model Blues" for Bill Quinn's Gold Star, a label he recorded with from 1947-1949, "Give Me Central 209," "Coffee Blues" (1952) on Sittin' in With, and countless other tunes on Jax, Mercury, Decca, and other labels.

Near the end of the 1950s, the style of Lightnin' Hopkins was somewhat forgotten due to a lull in interest in country blues. His popularity resurged in 1959 when Houston blues scholar Mack McCormick presented him as a "pure" folk-blues artist to a new generation of blues lovers. Throughout the 1960s Hopkins suddenly found himself performing for an entirely new audience in coffee houses, college campuses, and festivals across the country.

During this period, Chris Strachwitz heard Hopkins in a Houston club, and afterwards he rereleased the Gold Star sides on his Arhoolie label. In addition, musicologist Sam Charters recorded a lengthy session of tunes in Hopkins's tiny apartment and produced an album on the legendary Folkways Records label that same year. A European tour followed in 1964, along with a variety of new record deals on Jewel, Candid, Vee-Jay, Verve Prestige/Bluesville, and others.

In 1960 Hopkins performed for Queen Elizabeth II, and in Carnegie Hall with Pete Seeger and Joan Baez on the same bill. In the 1960s he opened for the rock group Jefferson Airplane and performed



Lightnin' Hopkins. (Photo by Tom Copi, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

with the Grateful Dead. After a 1970 car crash, he stayed home most of the time, choosing to give concerts on his porch or at a local bar. Hopkins was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus and died of complications due to pneumonia on January 30, 1982.

Music

Hopkins was a prolific songwriter who was known for drawing on practically any life experience and weaving an entire composition from it instantaneously. Consequently, there was an overwhelming wealth of material available to him at any given time to compose for the many labels he worked for, as he made up verses spontaneously and altered lyrics to fit any occasion. He often began singing a lyric and allowed the guitar to complete the vocal phrase. He was also well known for stopping in the middle of

a song to tell a humorous story as part of the performance. He played both electric and acoustic guitar, although the raunchier music was documented during the mid-1950s when he recorded the Herald Records sides, which contain legendary recordings of what is known as the best electric guitar performances of Hopkins's career. Such high-energy tunes such as "Lightnin's Boogie," "Lightnin's Special," and especially "Hopkins' Sky Hop" had great impact on future generations of guitarists, including Texas-born guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, Wild Child Butler, Buddy Guy, John Hammond, Jr., and Hound Dog Taylor.

Hopkins chose to live life on his own terms, filling his days in pursuit of all of his favorite activities: liquor, women, music, gambling, fishing, and black rodeo shows. He hated to fly and refused to have a telephone. At home in Houston, his favorite places to perform were scattered among Dowling Street in the Third Ward district, as well as on West Dallas Street. He much preferred to play for local bars for a meager twenty dollars than to tour for a week and make two thousand. He always liked to be paid up front and in cash before he would record for a label or producer, and rarely provided more than one take for each song. Because of his erratic style of singing and guitar playing, it was incredibly difficult for sidemen to follow him, and he was more comfortable performing without accompaniment.

Hopkins's personality and music was best captured on film by Les Blank's critically acclaimed 1968 short film entitled *The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins*, which won the Gold Hugo Award at the Chicago Film Festival for Outstanding Documentary in 1970.

WAYNE E. GOINS

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

HORNBUCKLE, LINDA

b. 1955

Singer active in the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Early singing was in gospel and commercial background work. In the early 1990s she was lead singer of the band No Delay, which included former members of the Paul DeLay Band. In recent years she has been leading and recording under her own name.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HORTON, BIG WALTER

b. 6 April 1918; Horn Lake, MS

d. 8 December 1981; Chicago, IL

Walter Horton, child of Emma and Albert Horton, moved while still quite young to Memphis, Tennessee. A child prodigy, Horton learned to play the harmonica by the age of five. As a youth, he played with Frank Stokes, Jack Kelly, Little Buddy Doyle, the Memphis Jug Band, and others. Stories of Horton recording with the Memphis Jug Band in the 1920s have not been substantiated.

In 1939, Horton accompanied guitarist Doyle on his OKeh recording session in Memphis. From 1951 to 1953, Horton recorded as vocalist and harmonica virtuoso backed by small combos, which variously included Joe Willie Wilkins, Pat Hare, Jack Kelly, Joe Hill Louis, Willie Nix, Albert Williams, and others. Singles by "Mumbles" were released on Modern, RPM, and Chess. In Memphis in 1953, Horton and guitarist Jimmy DeBerry recorded the instrumental masterpiece "Easy" (Sun), based on Ivory Joe Hunter's "Since I Lost My Baby."

Horton moved to Chicago in 1953, though he made frequent trips home to Memphis to visit his mother. He played briefly in Muddy Waters's band, taking Junior Wells' place. In 1954, Horton recorded as Big Walter and His Combo (States) and in 1956 as "Shakey" Horton (Cobra)—a name, like "Mumbles," that he detested. Argo released an LP in 1964. During his lifetime, recordings by Horton were issued on more than a dozen labels. A prolific sideman, Horton recorded with Johnny Shines (including 1953's "Evening Sun," famous for its compelling harmonica), Muddy Waters, Otis Rush, Jimmy Rogers (1956's "Walkin' by Myself" with its celebrated harp solo), Robert Nighthawk, Johnny Young, Willie

Dixon, J. B. Hutto, Floyd Jones, Wild Child Butler, Koko Taylor, and others. In 1972–1973, Horton was reunited with Jimmy DeBerry in Memphis (1989, Crosscut).

Horton toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival and was included in the 1968 BBC documentary by that name. In his last two decades, Horton played many major festivals, clubs, and college dates but continued playing for tips on Maxwell Street. He appeared in the 1978 PBS-TV special *Good Mornin' Blues* and in a cameo, accompanying John Lee Hooker, in the popular *Blues Brothers* movie (1980).

Harris states that Horton was married to Anna Mae and had five children. In the 1970s, he was living with Fanny and their extended families on Chicago's South Side. On December 8, 1981, Horton was pronounced dead at Chicago's Mercy Hospital; official causes were "heart failure" and "acute alcoholism." Rumors persist that Horton had been beaten by members of his own household.

Adept at single-note playing, Horton was best known for the richness of his tone. Fields described Horton's playing: "masterpieces of power, feeling, and the element of musical surprise. He was a master at filling the harp with air; his playing had a full-throated resonance that has never been surpassed."

Influenced by Will Shade and Hammie Nixon, Horton influenced every blues harmonica player of his time, even the great and equally distinctive stylists/virtuosos Little Walter Jacobs and Sonny Boy (Aleck Miller) Williamson.

FRED J. HAY

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HOUSE, EDDIE “SON”

b. 21 March 1902; Riverton, MS

d. 19 October 1988; Detroit, MI

Son House was born in Riverton, a hamlet south of Clarksdale, Mississippi, that has since been absorbed into the town. The year of House’s birth is questioned by Dick Waterman who suggests House may have been thirteen or fourteen years older, but dissembled about his age to obtain work.

House’s father was an amateur horn player who also played some guitar. The family lived for a time in Tallulah, Louisiana, but after his parents separated and his mother died, House returned to the Mississippi Delta, where as an adolescent he worked on farms. At this time House also became involved with the Baptist religion, and by the time he was twenty he was preaching in a church near Clarksdale. Though blues were all around, House scorned such music. As he said later, “I just hated to see a guy with a guitar. I was too churchy!”

The next few years House fluctuated between preaching and manual labor. A love affair with a member of his congregation caused one sabbatical. The lovers slipped away to Louisiana where House worked on a ranch. When the affair ran its course, he wandered back to the Clarksdale area to take up preaching once again. Then, in his mid-twenties, House heard a guitar player named Willie Wilson (sometimes Willie Williams) playing bottleneck guitar and it changed his life. House bought a battered guitar. Wilson patched it up, put it in Spanish tuning, and soon House was accompanying him. Because Wilson never recorded, the extent of his influence on House is impossible to determine.

Soon House came under the influence of Rube Lacy and James McCoy. The moaning and foot stomping on Lacy’s only two surviving sides, “Mississippi Jail House Groan” and “Ham Hound and Gravy” (incorrectly titled “Ham Hound Crave”), became parts of House’s style. McCoy is an unrecorded obscurity, now known only for teaching House two songs tailor-made for House’s personality and musical sensibility: “My Black Mama” and “Preachin’ the Blues.”

By 1927, with this musical apprenticeship, House was performing around the Clarksdale area at juke joints and “frolics,” venues where he soon acquired strong tastes for whiskey and womanizing.

Surprisingly enough, after becoming a bluesman, House continued to preach for awhile, an unlikely combination of careers that speaks of the conflict between religion and blues that would bedevil him the rest of his life. As he sang in “Preachin’ the



Son House. (Photo by Joe Alper, © Frank Driggs Collection)

Blues,” “Whiskey and women would not let me pray.” A year later, his budding musical career was interrupted by the sort of incident that gave blues its dubious reputation. At a boisterous frolic in Lyon, House shot and killed a man. He claimed self-defense, but was sentenced to time at the state prison, Parchman Farm. In late 1929 or early 1930, House’s case was reexamined and he was released. The judge, however, advised him to leave Clarksdale forthwith. House caught a ride to Lula, a town seventeen miles north of Clarksdale, where, improbably enough, his musical destiny awaited him.

Grafton and After

While playing in the Lula railway station, House caught sight of Charley Patton for the first time, and soon he and Patton were hanging out and playing music. Opinions differ about the extent to which Patton and House actually played together in juke

joints in the Lula area. Be that as it may, despite their different temperaments—Patton being a blithe spirit compared to the saturnine House—they spent several months together in early 1930, having blues, corn liquor, and women as shared interests.

That spring Arthur Laibley, who had produced Patton’s last session for Paramount, stopped in Lula to arrange another session. Patton told Laibley about House and two other musicians, the guitarist Willie Brown and a piano player named Louise Johnson, and thus was set one of the historic recording sessions in the history of blues.

Patton, with money from Laibley, hired Wheeler Ford, a sanctified singer in a Lula gospel group, to chauffeur the foursome to Paramount’s studio in Grafton, Wisconsin. Everyone drank except Ford. Johnson, who began the trip as Patton’s girl, dumped him for House before they reached Grafton.

House recorded six songs at the session; three filled both sides of a 78: “Dry Spell Blues,” “Preachin’ the Blues,” and “My Black Mama.” Two songs, “Clarksdale Moan” and “Mississippi County Farm Blues,” were issued, but no copy has ever been found. The latter song, which House composed on the spot, is likely a version of the song he would record in 1942 as “County Farm Blues.” An unissued test titled “Walking Blues” was found in 1985.

Only Patton got a modest hit from the session. Record sales had dwindled in the Depression, and Paramount folded two years later. House would not record again until 1941, and those recordings would not be commercial releases.

The Grafton trip began a long musical friendship between House and Willie Brown. For a time, House reverted to his former pattern of preaching and then going back to the blues, usually at Brown’s urging (it is said Brown did not like to sing). But with Patton’s death in 1934, House became the biggest star in the Delta, and thereafter it seems his blues reputation finally made it impossible to find a pulpit. For the rest of the 1930s, he and Brown played all over the Delta as well as Arkansas and Tennessee, occasionally with a drummer, Charlie Ross, and a trombone player, Little Buddy Sankfield.

Library of Congress Recordings

In August 1941 the folklorist Alan Lomax found House and recorded him for the Library of Congress. At Clack’s General Store near Lake Cormorant, House recorded “Levee Camp Blues,” “Government Fleet Blues,” “Walking Blues” (in which a passing train is heard in the background), “Shetland Pony

Blues,” and “Delta Blues.” On the first three, House sings and plays guitar, accompanied by Willie Brown on guitar, Fiddlin’ Joe Martin on mandolin, and Leroy Williams on harp. House performs “Shetland Pony Blues” by himself. On “Delta Blues,” Williams accompanies on harp.

The next summer House recorded, unaccompanied, ten more songs for Lomax. “County Farm Blues” is a later version of the similarly titled song recorded at Grafton, based on “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean.” But where Jefferson’s song is in standard tuning, House plays his song in open G with a bottleneck. “Pony Blues” and “Jinx Blues” are drawn, respectively, from Patton’s two most important songs, “Pony Blues” and “Maggie,” though House probably learned them from Willie Brown. “American Defense” is a musical curiosity; with a melody similar to “Polly Wolly Doodle,” it is a waltz time piece about the war that is by turns oddly touching and slyly funny—one stanza describes General MacArthur’s fear “there won’t be enough chaps to shoot a little game of craps.”

The next year, 1943, House disappeared from the blues scene.

Rediscovery

Then, on June 23, 1964, Dick Waterman, Phil Spiro, and Nick Perls found House in Rochester, New York. The story made *Newsweek* magazine. House had moved there in 1943, and in the intervening years worked as a railroad porter and short-order cook. He had played occasionally, until on learning in 1953 of Willie Brown’s death he quit music entirely. Waterman convinced House to relaunch his career. Waterman became his manager, and the guitarist Al Wilson (later of Canned Heat) helped House relearn his old repertoire.

In 1965 House recorded *Father of the Delta Blues*, produced by John Hammond for Columbia Records and featuring Wilson on second guitar and harp. Incorporating new material with reshaping of older songs, it was one of the most successful recordings of the Delta blues made during the 1960s.

For the next five years House played folk festivals and coffeehouses in the United States and toured Europe. He also performed locally in Rochester, sometimes with Joe Beard, and several times at the Schaubroecks’ coffeehouse, the Black Candle. Then, in the winter of 1969–1970 House passed out drunk in a snow bank and his hands became frostbitten. As a result, he missed the biggest gig of his life; Waterman reports that Eric Clapton and Delaney of Delaney

and Bonnie wanted House to open for them at their sold-out Fillmore East show.

House played only occasionally after this, sitting in sometimes with John Mooney. In 1976, his health deteriorating, House moved to Detroit where relatives helped care for him. He died there in 1988.

In the Delta blues, Son House shares the company of Charley Patton and Robert Johnson. Every song recorded at Grafton in 1930 is considered a blues classic. His bottleneck work is accomplished after only three years of playing. Striking lyrics abound: “My black mama’s face shine like the sun” is an image worthy of Pound, while “Preachin’ the Blues” paints a devastating picture of the Baptist religion:

I’m gonna get me religion, I’m gonna join the Baptist church
I’m gonna be a Baptist preacher, and I sho’ won’t have to work.

Likewise, the songs recorded in 1941–1942 are reckoned Delta blues classics. “Walking Blues” with Willie Brown and the others may be the best indication on record of what Delta blues sounded like in the juke joints of the 1930s, and indicates why House was a major influence on Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters.

DANIEL BEAUMONT

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

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ADD; the complete 1941–42 Library of Congress recordings); *Son House and the Great Delta Blues Singers* (Document DOCD-5002).

HOUSE OF BLUES RECORDS

CD label founded in association with the House of Blues chain of restaurant clubs. Most of its issues from 1995 through 1999 were of anthologies of regional styles or of instrumental styles, but a notable release of a single act was *Left Hand Brand* by the Gales Brothers of Memphis.

EDWARD KOMARA

HOUSE-RENT PARTIES

House-rent parties grew out of the need among black Americans living in northern cities to meet the excessive rents charged by landlords during the early twentieth century. The migration of southern blacks brought more people into overcrowded, segregated neighborhoods in these cities. High rents followed this increase in the demand for available housing. Rent parties allowed tenants to collect money and avoid eviction. The social occasion of rent parties provided musical entertainment performed by blues piano players.

The idea of the house-rent party originated, as Margaret Perry notes, in the black southern social event known as the shindig. Families historically provided themselves with extra money on occasion by hosting a party where they offered music and an opportunity for dancing. Guests paid a small fee to gain entrance. If they enjoyed the food and drink, they paid an additional amount to the host. The high quality of the food assured the host of good word of mouth in the neighborhood. People came back to a house that hosted a good party.

Blacks in the South enjoyed another social occasion that provided the inspiration for the house-rent party. Pound parties were community affairs where people brought food instead of money. Hosting groups accepted anything edible for admission to these parties. People, according to Clarence Williams, brought a pound of vittles that included chitterlings, pig’s feet, hog maw, and barbecue. The hosts shared the food among the guests and provided music and dancing as well.

The tradition of the community party in Chicago predates Prohibition. Often as rent day approached, the only way for some people to pay the landlord was to throw a party and charge admission. This social event was called “pitching boogie.” Tenants invited

HOUSE-RENT PARTIES

the whole neighborhood and collected payments of fifty cents, sandwiches, or liquor to those who came for the evening.

The First World War stopped the steady flow of immigrant European labor into America's expanding industries in northern cities. Consequently, these industrialists recruited black Americans living in the South to fill the void in the labor pool. As the black migration began, Harlem in New York had an abundance of cheap housing available and landlords struggled to fill vacancies. As the steady flow of migrants arrived, however, these vacancies disappeared. An excessive rise in the charge for rents followed this demand for limited living space. On arrival in New York and other northern cities, many blacks found housing to be crowded and limited to segregated neighborhoods.

The tradition of the house-rent party grew in popularity in order to meet the extraordinary demands of high rents. Hosts usually gave the parties at the end of the month on a Friday or Saturday night. Often they promoted the party by placing a sign in the front window at street level announcing the event. Hosts sometimes printed cards with information about when and where the party would take place and handed them out.

Langston Hughes recalls the promise made on a house-rent party card. "We'll have oodles of girls, tall, slippery and slim. They can do the Mombo till it's too bad, Jim!" The card often promoted the party as if it were a social club. These events captured the attention of black writers and appeared in novels, short stories, and poems. House-rent party skits also appeared on stage in musicals and comedy routines. People called house-rent parties by an assortment of different names: parlor socials, Saturday night functions, social parties, and whist socials among others.

According to Hughes, house-rent parties distinguished themselves from two other kinds of Harlem parties. The top tier, or upper crust, social event might include guests like W. E. B. Du Bois or James Weldon Johnson. The next level down found Renaissance writers, critics, editors, social workers, and students from Harlem and Greenwich Village with everyone chipping in money to pay the local bootlegger.

House-rent parties attracted a large cross-section of average people. Single men and women went to meet other people. Couples rolled back the rugs and danced the lindy or the black-bottom on the bare floors. After work, truck drivers, railroad porters, salesmen, bellhops, cooks, and house cleaners all crowded in for the social occasion.

House-rent parties coincided with the advent of Prohibition. Consequently, they served bootleg

liquor. Sometimes these events attracted other illegal activities and served as a front for prostitution. Whether or not the parties were legitimate, they became a refuge for blacks wanting to socialize away from the white tourist who frequented Harlem and the Cotton Club. Blacks also needed a place to relieve the stress of overcrowded urban living.

In cities other than New York, as Paul Oliver notes, the house-rent party inspired small business efforts called "good-time flats." Appearing much like a house-rent party in concept, they provided food, liquor, and live music. They also provided inexpensive prostitutes and private rooms for gambling. Like house-rent parties, they could turn violent. The police collected protection money to ignore the illegal activities. If the police failed to receive their payments and closed down the operation, it moved to another address.

The piano player provided the principal source of musical entertainment for house-rent parties. New York parties most often featured a stride piano player. In cities like Saint Louis, Chicago, and Detroit, the blues pianist played a style known as boogie-woogie. This style of piano playing developed out of the blues tradition found in lumber camps across the Deep South. Boogie-woogie piano playing was more complex and polyrhythmic than stride and more chromatic than ordinary blues. Pinetop Smith, Cow Cow Davenport, Crippled Clarence Lofton, Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, and Jimmy Yancey distinguished themselves as house-rent party piano players in the blues style.

House-rent parties inspired a number of blues songs. Bessie Smith recorded "House Rent Blues" in 1924; Hubie Blake and Broadway Jones recorded "House Rent Lizzie" in 1929; Johnny Dodds recorded "House Rent Rag" in 1926; Lil Johnson recorded "House Rent Scuffle" in 1929; Virginia Liston and Clarence Williams recorded "House Rent Stomp" in 1923; and Cripple Clarence Lofton recorded "House Rent Struggle" in 1939.

BILL GRAVES

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HOUSTON

(See Texas)

HOUSTON, EDWARD WILSON "BEE"

b. 19 April 1938; San Antonio, TX
d. 19 March 1991; Los Angeles, CA

Texas-born Bee Houston taught himself guitar while in his teens, inspired by T-Bone Walker and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown. By 1956, he formed his own group with twin brother "Bo," and during the next several years often backed touring acts such as Junior Parker and Bobby Bland. He moved to Los Angeles in 1961 and eventually joined Big Mama Thornton's band, and recorded on her 1968 *Ball 'N Chain* album for Arhoolie. Impressing Arhoolie owner Chris Strachwitz, Houston subsequently cut his own self-titled 1970 release that featured his stinging, fast-picked guitar, rough-hewn vocals, and effective songwriting over a tight, horn-driven band. He died from complications of alcoholism in 1991.

GENE TOMKO

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AMG (Ron Wynn); Harris; Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Bee Houston & His Highsteppers: The Hustler (1997, Arhoolie CD 9008).

HOUSTON GUITAR SLIM

b. Rayfield Jackson, 12 May 1935; Houston, TX

Guitarist who was influenced formatively by Lightnin' Slim and Guitar Slim (Eddie Jones). Performs mostly in the Houston area. Led his own band through 1994, then worked with guitarist Clarence Green until the latter's death in 1997.

EDWARD KOMARA

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HOUSTON, JOE (JOSEPH ABRAHAM)

b. 12 July 1927; Austin, TX

Vocalist/tenor saxophonist. He first played alto saxophone and joined the Sam Houston College marching band when he was fifteen years old. Later in his teens he worked with Ray Charles in Orlando, Florida; toured with Gatemouth Moore for five months, leaving the tour in New Orleans, where he pawned his alto saxophone for fare to Houston, Texas, to join Amos Milburn on tenor saxophone for nine months of one-nighters. He then joined King Kolax's band for a tour of Texas and Oklahoma playing third alto sax. He returned to Louisiana with jazz-singer Betty Roche. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1949 he joined Big Joe Turner, with whom he made his first records for the local Rouge label. In 1949 he also recorded in Houston for Freedom under his own name. In late 1950 he launched his own jump/R&B combo, recording for Freedom, Macy's, and Modern, before relocating to Los Angeles in 1952. Numerous records on Imperial, Combo, and RPM, backed by nationwide touring, emphasized the fashionable honking style of the time but the band remained firmly rooted in jump-blues, featuring the leader's effective blues shouting (e.g., "Jump the Blues," 1949, Freedom, 1535; and "Goodbye Little Girl," 1949, first issued as Pathé 1561.381). In the 1960s he became a session musician at Crown but from the mid-1980s he reactivated his solo career, playing festivals in both America and Europe.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

HOVINGTON, FRANKLIN "FRANK"

b. 9 January 1919; Reading PA
d. 21 June 1982; Felton, DE

Guitarist in blues, old-time, jazz, and black sacred music. Played at Pennsylvania house parties through the mid-1940s. He then played professionally in various bands in Washington, D.C., through the 1950s. He was discovered in Delaware by John Fahey, a chance meeting that led to some performing on the East Coast. His 1975 Flyright album *Lonesome Road Blues* is considered a late gem of acoustic blues.

EDWARD KOMARA

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 "Frank Hovington" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 53 (Summer/Autumn 1982): 48.

Discography: AMG**HOW LONG HOW LONG (SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD)**

"How Long How Long" was first recorded as "How Long Daddy How Long" by Ida Cox, with "Papa" Charlie Jackson on banjo, in 1925 for Paramount Records (Paramount 12325). The song was later transcribed and published in a Paramount songbook. The form is of eight measures, split into a four-measure verse and a four-measure refrain. Harmonically the melody stays in one chord, using the flatted seventh scale step as an inflecting dissonance during the second four measures. Because of the eight-measure length and the simple nature of the tune, it may be of unknown origin and transmitted by tradition. Lyric antecedents may be found in John Lovell's *The Black Forge* (New York: Macmillan, 1972).

The 1928 recording of "How Long How Long Blues" for Vocalion (Vocalion 1191) by pianist/vocalist Leroy Carr and guitarist Scrapper Blackwell made the two a star team and established the song in the mainstream blues repertory. Carr's smooth easy vocal delivery facilitated by the electric microphone was a key to the record's popular reception. Carr and Blackwell would record two follow-ups as "How Long How Long" numbers 2 and 3, then sing the tune to new words such as "You Got to Reap What You Sow" (1928, Vocalion 1232). Cover versions abounded: Tampa Red (1928, Vocalion 1228), Kokomo Arnold (1935, Decca 7070), Amos Easton (Bumble Bee Slim) (1935, Champion 50008), and Blind Lemon Jefferson (1928, Paramount 12685, in a discomfited performance), among many others. It was picked up by Mississippi musicians, including recordings by Sam Collins (1931, ARC labels) and Skip James (titled for release as "How Long 'Buck,'" 1931, Paramount 13085). It is also said the song was among the first blues learned by Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters.

Yet the lyrics sung by the Mississippi Sheiks as "Sitting on Top of the World" are of a different sort, taking up more of the melody without the lengthy pauses found in "How Long How Long." Their release of "Sitting" in 1930 on Okeh 8784 was an explosive hit, and helped them to continue recording through 1931–1933, the worst years of the Great Depression. Other recording acts quickly made versions of their own or light reworkings, such as Charley Patton's

"Some Summer Day" recorded for Paramount some six months after the Sheiks' record. Other songs following the "Sitting" lyric pattern are "Things 'Bout Comin' My Way" recorded in Chicago by Tampa Red (1931, Vocalion 1637) as well as by the Mississippi Sheiks (1931, Okeh 8922), and "Six Feet in the Ground" (1934, Decca 7017) by St. Louis Jimmy Oden.

Robert Johnson devised a notable treatment of the melody to the words "Come On in My Kitchen." When he recorded it in 1936 for Vocalion, he performed the first take in a slow tempo, the second take at a much quicker pace. The slow take was first released in 1961, and its longtime availability makes it better known to today's listeners than the up-tempo take, which was the one released during Johnson's lifetime (Vocalion 03563). Bob Groom in 1976 noted several recordings in this "Kitchen" variant, including those by Cooper Terry (Corosello CLN 25021), Mickey Baker (Roots SL-517), Johnny Shines (BMC-2003), and Sparky Rucker (Traditional SR 372). White folk and rock versions in the 1960s and 1970s included those by David Bromberg, Delaney and Bonnie, and the Steve Miller Band, as well as an "aside" singing by David Crosby between the last two songs of the first Crosby, Stills, and Nash album (Atlantic SD 8229).

"Sitting on Top of the World" would continue to be performed after 1945, when Howlin' Wolf recorded it for Chess (Chess 1679) in 1957. The British group Cream adopted it into rock repertory in 1968 on its album *Wheels of Fire* (Atco SD 2-700), sung by bassist Jack Bruce with guitar accompaniment from Eric Clapton. In 1970, Howlin' Wolf and Clapton made a version together for the LP *The Howlin' Wolf Sessions* (Chess CH 60008).

During the 1980s, B. B. King made use of the melody as the basis for "Darlin,' You Know I Love You" (1982, *Blues 'N' Jazz*, MCA LP 5413), and of a related if broader melodic contour with altered ending measures for "There Must Be a Better World Somewhere" (1980, MCA LP 5162).

EDWARD KOMARA

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HOWARD, CAMILLE

b. 29 March 1914; Galveston, TX
 d. 10 March 1993; Los Angeles, CA

West Coast boogie-woogie pianist and singer. Howard developed her piano skills in Los Angeles and in the early 1940s joined the Roy Milton Orchestra. She made many recordings with the Milton band—notably “R. M. Blues”—both playing piano and singing. In 1946 she made her recording debut with the Pan American label. The following year, she joined Specialty, and scored a major hit with “X-temporaneous Boogie” (1948); the ballad flip, “You Don’t Love Me,” was also a hit. Her accompanists were Dallas Bartley (bass) and Roy Milton (drums). She garnered two more hits for Specialty, with “Fiesta in Old Mexico” (1949) and “Money Blues” (1951). Howard later recorded two West Coast sessions for Federal in 1953. Her last recording session was for Vee-Jay (1956).

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

HOWARD, ROSETTA

b. 1914; Chicago, IL
d. 1974; Chicago, IL

Blues singer who recorded in the 1930s with the Harlem Hamfats. In 1947, Howard made twelve sides with Chicago blues artists including Willie Dixon and Big Bill Broonzy. From the early 1950s she devoted herself to church, including Thomas A. Dorsey’s Pilgrim Baptist Church.

TOM MORGAN

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

HOWELL, JOSHUA BARNES “PEG LEG”

b. 5 March 1888; Eatonton, GA
d. 11 August 1966; Atlanta, GA

Howell was born into a farming family and taught himself guitar. After losing a leg in 1916 in a gun fight with his brother-in-law, he turned to music, busking on street corners in Atlanta. In 1925, he was jailed for bootlegging but the following year was heard by a Columbia Records scout and began a four-year recording career.

Howell’s records are a fascinating collection of unusual material. “Coal Man Blues” consists of a fragment of a song about a coalman and concludes with coal vendors’ street cries. “Skin Game Blues” is an elegant, evocative gambling song with a memorable chorus that was derived from the traditional “Coon-Can Game” and “The Roving Gambler.” And “Please Ma’am” is little more than one slightly varied line, repeated almost as if on a tape loop.

Howell often recorded with his gang, guitarist Henry Williams and fiddler Eddie Anthony, and they produced some remarkable wild dance music. Anthony and Williams both recorded on their own as well.

Solo, Howell tended toward more lugubrious songs, such as “New Prison Blues,” but often wandered away from the standard twelve-bar format into sixteen-bar or irregular formats.

He recorded once more in 1963 to raise money for his care—he lost his other leg in 1952—but his final recording was considerably less well regarded.

DAVID HARRISON

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

HOWLIN' WOLF

b. Chester Arthur Burnett, 10 June 1910; White Station, MS
d. 10 January 1976; Hines, IL

Howlin’ Wolf was one of the most dynamic performers in the history of electric blues. Blessed with a voice that sounded like a raging chain saw, he stood six feet, three inches tall and weighed 275 pounds, with massive hands and feet. Wolf commanded immediate attention onstage. His tunes often contained a single chord or riff droning hypnotically under improvised rhythmic and lyric variations. Whether stalking the stage like a man possessed or crawling about on all fours like a wild beast,

his intensity, growled vocals, falsetto moans, and powerfully direct harp playing rarely failed to astonish an audience.

Wolf was born Chester Arthur Burnett to Leon Dock Burnett and Gertrude Young on June 10, 1910, in White Station, Mississippi, a tiny railroad stop near West Point in the Mississippi hill country. Fascinated by music as a boy, he often beat on pans with a stick and imitated the whistle of the railroad trains that ran nearby. He also sang in the choir at the White Station Baptist church. When his parents separated, his father moved to the Delta. A few years later, Wolf's mother forced him to move out because he wouldn't work in the fields. He was taken in by his uncle Will Young, who treated him harshly. One childhood friend said Young was the meanest man between here and hell. Wolf's relationship with his mother was also troubled. Gertrude spent much of her adult life as a street singer, eking out a living by selling handwritten gospel songs to passersby, and she denounced her son for playing the devil's music.

At the age of thirteen, Chester ran away to the Delta to rejoin his father who lived on the Young and Morrow plantation near Ruleville, Mississippi. There, Chester became fascinated by local musicians, especially the Delta's first great blues star, Charley Patton, who lived on the nearby Dockery Plantation. When Chester's father bought him his first guitar in January 1928, Chester convinced Patton to give him guitar lessons. He later took harmonica lessons from Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller), who was romancing his sister, Mary. He also learned from records by Blind Lemon Jefferson, Tommy Johnson, the Mississippi Sheiks, Jimmie Rodgers, Leroy Carr, Lonnie Johnson, Tampa Red, and Blind Blake.

From the start, Wolf's voice was startling—huge and raw like Charley Patton's, and even more powerful. He learned to play guitar and blues harp simultaneously, using a rack-mounted harp, and for awhile, he played music while wearing tiny wire-rim glasses like his idol Blind Lemon Jefferson. When he wasn't working on his father's farm, he traveled the Delta with other musicians such as Williamson, Robert Johnson, Johnny Shines, and Floyd Jones.

Drafted in 1941, Wolf went into the Army Signal Corps and spent most of his time in the service at Fort Lewis, Washington, and Camp Adair, Oregon. When he got an early release from the Army in November 1943, he returned to farming. He also played music on weekends at Lake Cormorant and elsewhere in northern Mississippi with Willie Brown and Son House.

In 1948, at age thirty-eight, he moved to West Memphis, Arkansas, where he put together a dynamic

band that included harmonica players James Cotton and Junior Parker and guitarists Pat Hare, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, and Willie Johnson. Wolf and his Houserockers were soon the most popular band in West Memphis. He also got a spot on radio station KWEM, playing blues and endorsing farm gear.

In 1951, Wolf came to the attention of a young Memphis record producer, Sam Phillips, who took him into the studio and recorded "Moanin' at Midnight" and "How Many More Years," and leased them to Chess Records. Released in 1952, they made it to the top ten on *Billboard's* R&B charts. Wolf cut other songs in West Memphis for the Bihari brothers' label RPM. Chess eventually won the fight over Wolf, who moved to Chicago in 1953 and called the city home for the rest of his life. Phillips, who recognized musical talent (he later discovered Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, and Charlie Rich), said that Wolf was his greatest discovery, and losing Wolf to the Chess brothers in Chicago was the biggest disappointment of his career.

Wolf wrote and recorded songs for Chess that became blues standards: "Smokestack Lightning," "Killing Floor," "Who's Been Talking," "Rockin' Daddy," and many others. Chess songwriter Willie Dixon also wrote classic blues songs for Wolf such as "Spoonful," "Little Red Rooster," "Evil," "Back Door Man," and "I Ain't Superstitious."

Wolf's great rival for Chicago blues supremacy was his sometime friend, Muddy Waters. Their rivalry continued through the 1960s, aggravated by Waters's temporary theft of Wolf's guitarist, Hubert Sumlin. Like Waters, Wolf was an ambitious man. Their competition, though friendlier than fans realized, forced both to struggle to be the best in blues.

Wolf was a no-nonsense bandleader. He paid his band members on time and withheld unemployment insurance. Wolf also stood up for his band and refused to let himself or his bandmates be taken advantage of. Jimmy Rogers, who played for years in Waters's band, has said that he could think of no better bandleaders than Howlin' Wolf. Saxophonist Eddie Shaw says: "I spent a lot of time with the man, not because of the money, but because I cared about him. The Wolf taught me a lot about the blues, a lot about dignity, a lot about self-respect.... He was one of a kind." Drummer Sam Lay said, "To be honest, he was like a father, man. I don't care what nobody say. I know what he was to me." Bassist Calvin Jones, who also played for Waters, said, "To me, there wasn't no better person than the Wolf."

In his later years, Wolf continued to perform with the intensity of a man half his age, often in small clubs that other well-known bluesmen had abandoned. Drummer S. P. Leary recalls, "He wasn't going to

turn his people down to go play a job for the white people just because they give him a few dollars more, if he done already signed a contract here.”

In 1964, Wolf married his long-time sweetheart Lillie Handley, whom he had met in 1957 at Silvio's nightclub in Chicago. (His first wife, the sister of famed bluesman Willie Brown, died when Wolf was in his early thirties.) Wolf called Lillie a flower from the first day he met her, and he doted on her two daughters, Barbara and Bettye Jean. Despite his wild antics onstage, Wolf was a responsible family man offstage—honest, hardworking, and upstanding to a fault. He loved to hunt and fish, owned farmland in the South, volunteered with the local fire department, and was a proud member of the local chapter of the Masons.

Wolf's collaborator on many of his greatest songs was guitar wizard Hubert Sumlin, who played electric guitar with his bare fingers—an oddity for a Chicago bluesman. Sumlin's eccentric, angular attack made him a favorite guitarist of countless guitarists, including Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

During the 1960s, Wolf and Sumlin continued to record sizzling blues that anticipated rock and heavy metal—classic songs such as “Commit a Crime,” “Hidden Charms,” and “Love Me, Darlin.” In 1964, he toured eastern and western Europe with the American Blues Festival. In 1965, he appeared on the American rock television show *Shindig* with the Rolling Stones. In 1970 he recorded *The London Howlin' Wolf Sessions* in England with Eric Clapton, members of the Rolling Stones, and other British rock stars. It was his best-selling album, reaching #79 on the pop charts.

Wolf suffered several heart attacks in the early 1970s and was in an auto accident in 1970 that destroyed his kidneys. For the rest of his life, he received dialysis treatments every three days, administered by Lillie. Despite his failing health, Wolf continued to record and perform. In 1972 he recorded a live album at a Chicago club, *Live and Cookin' at Alice's Revisited*. In 1973, he cut his last studio album, *Back Door Wolf*, which included Shaw's boldly anti-racist “Coon on the Moon,” the autobiographical “Moving,” and “Can't Stay Here,” which hearkened back to Charley Patton.

Wolf's last major performance was in November 1975 at the Chicago Amphitheater. On a bill with many other stars, Wolf rose almost literally from his deathbed to perform many of his old stage antics. The crowd gave him a five-minute standing ovation, but backstage, Lillie had to call in a team of paramedics to revive him. He died two months later, after his heart gave out during an operation for a brain

tumor. He is buried in Hines, Illinois, next to his beloved Lillie, who died on May 11, 2001.

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Discography: AMG; LSF

Selected Recordings

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HUFF, LUTHER AND PERCY

Huff, Luther Henry

b. 5 December 1910; Fannin, MS
d. 18 November 1973; Detroit, MI

Huff, Percy

b. 7 November 1912; Fannin, MS

Luther Huff played mandolin, Percy guitar. Their brothers, Willie B. Huff (b. 1905; Fannin, MS) and Johnny Huff, played guitar on occasion. Luther Huff served in World War II, after which he moved to Detroit, Michigan. Percy stayed in Jackson, Mississippi, and drove a taxi. While visiting in

HUFF, LUTHER AND PERCY

Jackson, Luther earned money for the return trip to Detroit by recording himself and Percy in a Trumpet Records session. The resulting four sides are cherished by collectors of postwar acoustic Mississippi blues. In 1957 Luther suffered a spinal and left shoulder attack, which was deemed by doctors as an Army injury, which then enabled him to receive disability checks. In 1968, Adelphi Records taped a session with Luther, Percy, and Willie.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

HUGHES, JOE "GUITAR"

- b. 29 September 1937; Houston, TX
d. 20 May 2003; Houston, TX

Singer, guitarist. A stalwart of the Houston blues scene for decades, Hughes stayed at home while his local friends and peers, which included Albert Collins, Lightnin' Hopkins, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, and Johnny Copeland, achieved international success. Originally inspired as a fourteen-year-old by T-Bone Walker, Hughes joined the Dukes of Rhythm in 1953 with Copeland as a bandmate. After establishing himself as a leader he settled into a Houston club residency while releasing a few singles on the side.

Hughes did occasionally venture outside his hometown as a backing musician. With Houston saxist Grady Gaines he was a member of the Upsetters, the barnstorming Little Richard group that served as the stage band for touring superstar soul revues. In the 1960s Hughes also worked regularly in the touring bands of Texas-based R&B singers Bobby "Blue" Bland and Al "TNT" Braggs.

Hughes, seemingly satisfied to be a local legend, maintained his low profile until 1985 when he toured Europe under the auspices of old friend Copeland. The overseas exposure and the acclaim it brought energized Hughes's interest in performing and revitalized his career, ultimately leading to his first full-length American album, *If You Want to See These Blues*, on Black Top Records, in 1989. He recorded two more albums as a leader, *Texas Guitar Slinger* in 1996 and

Stuff Like That in 2001, on regional labels. Hughes also did guest spots on several recordings by fellow Houstonians, including Copeland's "Flyin' High" and "Breakfast Dance" by harpist Sonny Boy Terry.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

HUMES, HELEN

- b. 23 June 1909; Louisville, KY
d. 13 September 1981; Santa Monica, CA

Helen Humes's birth date was long given as 1913, but her own later testimony to writer Helen Oakley Dance revealed she was actually born in 1909. Her father, John Henry Humes, was a lawyer. Her mother, Emma Humes (née Johnson), was a schoolteacher and was musical. She encouraged her to sing and to play piano, and later taught her to read music. She played with the local Sunday School band, which also featured trombonist Dicky Wells and trumpeter Jonah Jones.

She recorded two sessions for OKeh in St. Louis and New York in 1927 (her accompanists included guitarist Lonnie Johnson and pianist James C. Johnson). She worked in a bank and as a waitress before turning to a professional career as a singer in the mid-1930s, initially in Buffalo and then in New York City. She worked with Stuff Smith and Al Sears in the mid-1930s. Count Basie and John Hammond heard her sing with Sears in Cincinnati in 1937, and arranged for her to record as a vocalist with Harry James that year.

She was offered a job with Count Basie in 1937, but turned the offer down because the pay was too low (he hired Billie Holiday instead). She relented and joined Basie as Holiday's replacement in March 1938, and remained with the band until 1941. She shared the vocal spotlight with Jimmy Rushing, the band's blues specialist. As a result she was largely restricted to ballads and pop songs like "Dark Rapture," "It's Torture," and "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" rather than blues, although she did record "Blues for Helen" with a small group led by Basie in 1938. The recording remained unissued until the late 1950s, when it was issued by Hammond disguised as

part of the “From Spirituals to Swing” concert of December 1938.

She worked as a singer at Café Society in New York after leaving the Basie band, where her accompanists included Art Tatum, Albert Ammons, Meade “Lux” Lewis, Pete Johnson, and Teddy Wilson. She moved to Los Angeles in 1944, and adopted more of a rhythm and blues style in the clubs of Central Avenue. A substantial hit with the jump blues “Be-Baba-Le-Ba” (with Bill Doggett) in 1945 cemented that shift. She recorded a series of blues and jump-blues sides, including “Unlucky Woman” and the instrumental “McShann’s Boogie Blues” with pianist Jay McShann; “Central Avenue Boogie,” “Pleasin’ Man Blues,” and “See See Rider” for Aladdin; and “Jet Propelled Papa” and “I Refuse to Sing the Blues” for Mercury with trumpeter Buck Clayton.

She appeared on film with Dizzy Gillespie’s big band in *Jivin’ with Bebop* in 1947, and toured with Norman Granz’s Jazz at the Philharmonic shows (1946–1951). She remained a popular draw in Los Angeles, and worked with Nat “King” Cole at the Club Oasis in early 1950. She signed to Discovery Records, and had another major hit with “Million Dollar Secret,” recorded live at impresario Gene Norman’s Rhythm & Blues Jamboree at the Shrine Auditorium that summer. (She revealed later that she had been paid only the original broadcast fee for it.)

She was joined by saxophonist Dexter Gordon on “Airplane Blues” and “Helen’s Advice” in 1951, and toured in a rhythm and blues showcase with Joe Turner and saxophonist Hal Singer. The demise of Discovery Records led to a switch to Modern, and then to Decca in 1952.

She recorded a number of sides for the label, and also made one single for the Los Angeles–based Dootone label in 1955. She toured Australia with vibraphonist Red Norvo in 1956, and made three albums for the Contemporary label in 1959–1961. She toured in Australia again in 1962 and performed in Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival tours in 1962–1963, alongside John Lee Hooker, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, and T-Bone Walker. She undertook a third tour of Australia in 1964, and remained there for ten months before returning to the United States. She retreated from the music business and returned to Louisville to care for her aging parents in 1967, but returned to performing when writer Stanley Dance persuaded her to join the Count Basie Orchestra for the Newport Jazz Festival in New York in 1973. She remained an active performer throughout the decade, and made further recordings for the Paris-based Black and Blue label, and for Columbia and Muse in the United States.

Her precise intonation and subtle control of dynamics and rhythmic inflections allowed her to approach a wide range of material with equal assurance. She was at home with sophisticated ballads, jazz standards, and earthy blues and R&B songs, and was an accomplished and expressive performer in all of these forms.

KENNY MATHIESON

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HUMMEL, MARK

b. 15 December 1955; New Haven, CT

Harmonica player, singer, and occasionally songwriter who grew up in Los Angeles and moved to Berkeley in 1972. The son of a white methodist minister, Mark Hummel mixes influences from West Coast blues and the upbeat side of Chicago blues. From 1980, he toured under his own name or with the Blues Survivors, sometimes with Muddy Waters’s sidemen: drummer Willie “Big Eyes” Smith and bassist Robert Stroger. Hummel recorded his first LP in 1985, and debuted as a solo artist in 1992 with *Hard Lovin’ 1990s*.

Recorded for the Dutch label Double Trouble, Flying Fish, ToneCool, and currently Electro-Fi label. He revered Little Walter and James Cotton and has recorded with Brownie McGee, Charlie Musselwhite, Eddie Taylor, Sue Foley, and Charles Brown.

YVES LABERGE

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HUMOR

Those for whom “blues” signifies a mood of “sadness” and “gloom” may be surprised to know that a large proportion of blues songs are humorous. Even a bluesman as somber as Son House got off the occasional funny line, singing in “American Defense” of General MacArthur’s concern that “there won’t be enough chaps to shoot a little game of craps.” Yet as soon as one considers the social setting in which blues was played this seeming paradox disappears. For blues was, for most of the past century, the dominant form of dance music in the black American community: Blues was good-time music. Moreover, the themes that dominate blues lyrics are ones commonly associated with comedy in many literatures. Most prominent in this regard are sex and love, which are by far the most common themes treated in blues lyrics. Yet many other topics are also mined for their humor in blues lyrics: human foibles like drinking and gambling, and even social institutions like religion and law.

Humor in Blues History

Comic lyrics were essential to blues from the beginning, often drawing on minstrel music, vaudeville

lines, and medicine show routines, as exemplified by the repertoire of Jim Jackson. The song “Charmin’ Betsy,” recorded by Texas songster Ragtime Henry Thomas, whose repertoire reached well back into the latter decades of the nineteenth century, features lines like:

Well, a white man lives in a fine brick house
He thinks that’s nothin’ strange
We poor colored men lives in the county jail
But it’s a brick house just the same!

The repertoires of the classic blues singers like Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey were leavened with humorous lyrics, and country blues artists of the same period also made great play with satire and humorous lyrics. In “Mosquito Moan,” Blind Lemon Jefferson sang:

I believe I’ll sleep under a tin tub, just to let them bust
their bad old bills (2×)
Well mosquitoes so bad in this man’s town, keep me
away from my whiskey still.

Hokum blues, spurred by the hit “It’s Tight Like That” by Georgia Tom Dorsey and Tampa Red, drew on jug band music and vaudeville for bouncy, rag-influenced songs that abounded with double entendres like Bo Carter’s “Banana in Your Fruit Basket.” At the same time, female blues singers in the 1930s continued to turn out bawdy, funny songs like Georgia White’s “I’ll Keep Sittin’ on It If I Can’t Sell It.”

Even as hokum was a more emphatically comic version of blues in the 1930s, so too was rhythm and blues in the 1940s. In songs by Louis Jordan, Big Joe Turner, and Wynonie Harris, perennial themes—infidelity, gambling, drinking, slippery preachers, and so forth—were even more likely to receive comic treatment, while alliterative titles like “Flip, Flop and Fly” hearkened back to the nonsense verbalisms of hokum.

A comic perspective was common in Chicago blues of the 1950s and 1960s, and it is no surprise that two outstanding blues composers, Sonny Boy Williamson II and Willie Dixon, were also outstanding composers of humorous songs. Williamson’s wry comments on life and love are evident in the standards “Don’t Start Me to Talkin’,” “Your Funeral and My Trial,” and “Wake Up, Baby.” Many of Dixon’s humorous songs were performed by Howlin’ Wolf whose stage persona was especially well suited to songs like “Three Hundred Pounds of Joy,” “Built for Comfort,” and “I Ain’t Superstitious.”

Since that time, blues artists continue to turn the blues to comic ends. Albert Collins’s 1978 hit “Mastercharge” was such a devastating satire that the bank

company sued him to change the title. The 2002 R&B song by Bill Coday “If I Can’t Cut the Mustard (I Can Still Lick Around the Jar)” might have been a hokum title.

Comic Devices

Blues over the years has rendered humorous such themes as infidelity, poverty, and jail by the same means found in comic literature the world over. First, purely rhetorical devices—that is, word play, hyperbolic language, outlandish metaphor, humorous nicknames, the use of nonsense words, especially to refer to taboo terms—are used. Second, the songs make use of comic reversal, by which is meant that the usual state of affairs—whether it be a piece of dialogue or a dramatic situation—is turned on its head. Third, in a more extended way, satiric and ironic treatments are given to “serious” themes. Needless to say, the various means in this threefold division are not exclusive. Far from it, a humorous song is likely to combine many comic devices.

The simplest form of word play is nonsense language. In the hit tune “It’s Tight Like That,” which spurred the hokum fad, the phrase “Beedle-Um-Bum” is a kind of scat phrase, both funny in itself and seemingly implying a sexual reference also. Blind Blake’s expression “Diddie Wa Diddie” makes the link to sex even more closely: “There’s a great big mystery, and it’s really been botherin’ me. . . . I wish somebody would tell me what ‘Diddie-Wa-Diddie’ means!”

Yet such invented phrases do not always have sexual references: Willie Dixon’s “Wang Dang Doodle” simply means a raucous party. The same song catalogues a series of humorous nicknames, some of which were drawn from actual people: “Tell Automatic Slim, tell Razor Totin’ Jim, tell Butcher Knife Totin’ Annie, tell Fast Talking Fanny . . . tell Kudu-Crawlin’ Red, tell Abyssinian Ned, tell ol’ Pistol Pete, everybody gonna meet. . . .”

Another common means of comic device can be called “reversal.” Typically, a stanza creates an expectation in the listener that it will be followed by a commonplace sentiment or even a cliché, but the lyrics defeat this expectation with a humorous reversal of the cliché. Most often this sort of reversal punctures some pretense and diminishes with the sense. The many examples of this type found say in Freud’s *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* could be matched by a number of blues lyrics that function the same way for comic ends.

An excellent example is B. B. King’s “Nobody Loves Me But My Mother,” which exploits the clichéd notion of blues as a gloomy, self-pitying genre to hilarious effect: “Nobody loves me but my mother—and she could be jivin’ too.” When delivered by King at live concerts with his masterful timing, the line never fails to elicit a roar of laughter.

A more subtle version of comic reversal is Lemon Jefferson’s line in “Shuckin’ Sugar Blues”:

I’ve got your picture and I’m going to put it in a
frame (2×)

So if you leave town, we can find you just the same.

Implausible or exaggerated metaphor and simile can obviously be put to comic use, sometimes structuring a single stanza and sometimes an entire song. Metaphors for sex, common in blues lyrics, are often used for comic effect, as in Lonnie Johnson’s “Sweet Potato Blues” and “Tooth Ache Blues.” Blues lyrics are often condemned for the violence they depict—especially toward women. But James Cotton’s “Murder” plays on this for comic effect. “Murder” is metaphor for the almost unbearable sexual desire aroused by a woman of whom Cotton sings.

Irony, though not inherently comic, can serve humorous ends when the second meaning subverts and undercuts the obvious primary meaning. Moreover irony, as a figure, can structure not merely a line but an entire song. Here too it is well to note that in such cases the singer often creates a persona that must be understood by the audience to be different from himself for the irony and humor to work. Charley Patton’s “Spoonful” about cocaine use is an example. As Calt and Wardlow say, the song is likely based on a rag, and they speak of “its flippant, thematic treatment of its subject. . . .” Ostensibly a cautionary tale about the drug, Patton gives it an ironic reading, creating a spoken dialogue between an incredulous man questioning his woman about her devotion to that “spoonful.” Willie Dixon’s “I Ain’t Superstitious” provides another well-known example; again for the humor to work there must be an ironic distance between the singer and the persona portrayed by lyrics, “I ain’t superstitious . . . but a black cat just crossed my path. . . .”

Professor Longhair’s “It’s My Fault, Darling” from 1980 provides a more recent and hilarious example. Once again the topic is adultery—a subject that blues often treats in the light, racy manner of bedroom farces. What is more, parody also comes into play, since the title rewrites a common blues lyric “It’s all my fault, treat me the way you wanna do.” In serious treatments of this theme, the unfaithful man confesses that it is all his fault that his

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woman has left him due to his philandering. Professor Longhair parodies this by putting the line in the victim's mouth and having him assume the blame for finding his woman with another man, saying "I didn't know you had company, girl, I wasn't in no condition to fight."

These examples show the limits of another truism about the blues, that the blues is a deeply personal and emotional statement by the singer. For the humorous truth to emerge in the cases just mentioned, it is necessary for the audience to understand the ironic distance between the singer and the persona created by the lyrics.

Social Contexts of Humor

The social context of humor must also be noted. Although instrumental ability was appreciated by the audience, the vocal content of songs was perhaps more highly prized by the black audience. Clearly, humor and wry comment on life's difficulties were valued as pure entertainment, yet the use of humor extended further. Humor in blues is also a way of coping with one's problems and with defeating or at least mocking one's adversaries.

In this respect, one stark fact about the social setting of blues in its inception must be borne in mind. Blues originated in black rural communities segregated from white society, and while it would be misleading to think of the blues as "protest music," blues as secular entertainment is characterized by, at the very least, a covert stance of resistance toward those social conditions. Since the penalty for offending white society could be heavy, satirical lyrics about white politicians, Jim Crow, duplicitous plantation owners, and businessmen are relatively rare—but not entirely unknown. W. C. Handy, hired by the Memphis mayoral candidate E. H. Crump, composed a campaign tune for him, then surreptitiously added lyrics apparently based on the spontaneous singing along of the crowd. The result was the famous lines:

Mr. Crump won't allow no easy riders here (2×)
We don't care what Mr. Crump don't allow
We're gonna barrelhouse anyhow.

Countless versions of these lines spread throughout the blues:

Mama don't allow no whiskey drinking here (2×)
Don't care what Mama say, we're gon drink whiskey
anyway.

(Or: guitar or banjo playing, or boogie-woogie, etc.)

Certainly political/social issues apart from race were sometimes addressed. The Mississippi Sheiks' song "Sales Tax" features these verses:

Old Aunt Martha live behind the jail
The sign on the wall says liquor for sale
You know the sales tax is on it
Oh, the sales tax is on it
Oh the sales tax is on it everywhere you go.

Recorded during Prohibition, the proximity between bootleg liquor and the jail cannot but suggest the corruption of the law. In the 1930s, Sleepy John Estes rewarded a lawyer who won his case with "Lawyer Clark Blues":

Now Mr. Clark's a good lawyer
He good as I ever seen
He the first man that proved
That water run upstream.

Even the death penalty is the subject of humor in "Lectric Chair Blues" by Blind Lemon Jefferson:

I wonder why they electrocute a man after the one
o'clock hour of the night (2×)
Because the current is much stronger, when the folkses
turn out all the lights.

And insofar as the entirety of blues can be read as protest against life's conditions, among which white racism and repression were the foremost obstacles, some satire was done in a veiled language—"signifyin'" it has been called. Consider the ancient line in a pre-blues song Stanley Booth heard from Furry Lewis:

My ole miss, she promise me, when she die she set me
free
She lived so long till her head got bald,
And God had to kill her with a white oak maul.

A more obvious target of satire was religion. Within the black community, blues for most of its history has existed in a permanent state of tension with black Christianity, exemplified by its well-known tag "the devil's music." Condemned by the preacher and his flock, not surprisingly, blues musicians struck back with barbs of comedy and satire against religion.

Charley Patton's "Elder Green Blues," based on the popular song "Alabama Bound," depicts two churchmen going to New Orleans to drink and whore. Son House's "Preaching the Blues" sketches an even more devastating portrait of a preacher:

Oh, I'm gon get me religion, I'm gon' join the Baptist
church (2×)
I'm gon be a Baptist preacher, and I sure won't have to
work.

The preacher is frequently depicted as a leech and an interloper, as in Hi Henry Brown's "Preacher Blues":

Preacher come to your house, you ask him to rest his
hat
Next thing he want to know, “Sister where’s your
husband at.” (2×)

Joe McCoy’s song of the same name:

He will eat your chicken, he will eat your pie
He will eat your wife out on the sly
Some people say a preacher won’t steal
But I caught three in my cornfield, one had a yellow,
one had a brown
Looked over the mill and one was getting down.

The lyrics “Some people say a preacher won’t steal
. . .” were ubiquitous. They are found in Frank Stokes
1927 song “You Shall,” which begins also begins with
a sendup of the Lord’s Prayer :

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Preacher owed me ’leven and he only payed me seven
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
If I hadn’t a taken seven, I would’n’ a gotten none.

But the most prominent comic topic was sex—yet
even here religious images could be used in such a way
that the satire could cut both ways. Lucille Bogan’s
ribald “Shave ’Em Dry” may serve as segue for this
topic with its lines:

Now your nuts hang down like a damn bell-clapper
And your dick stands up like a steeple
Your goddamn asshole hangs open like a church door
And the crabs walks in like people.

All manner of topics related to sexuality are
sources of comedy, ugly partners, for example, in
Mary Dixon’s “You Can’t Sleep in my Bed”:

You’re too big to be cute, and I don’t think you’re clean
(2×)
You’re the darndest lookin’ thing that I ever seen.

In “Put It Right Here (Or Keep It Out There)”
Bessie Smith sang:

I had a man for fifteen years
Give him his room and board
Once he was like a Cadillac
Now he’s like an old worn out Ford.

Peetie Wheatstraw’s “The First Shall Be Last, and
the Last Shall Be First” (which again deploys a reli-
gious allusion in a sexual context—a standard comic
device) deals with a certain inhibition:

Well, the first woman I had, she made me get down on
my knees (2×)
And had the nerve to ask me if I liked limburger cheese.

Even though male braggadocio is commonplace in
blues, impotence also comes in for a comic treat-
ment—and not only by women—in a song like “My
Pencil Won’t Write,” first done by Bo Carter in 1931,

later done in the 1970s by Muddy Waters. But the
most important topic for comic purposes is infidelity,
already addressed in so many of the preceding
examples that I will only add one more example:
Infidelity in Louis Jordan’s “I’m Gonna Leave You
on the Outskirts of Town” is viewed humorously,
when Jordan finds that none of his seven children
look like him.

Blues’ comic treatment of sexuality in the midst of
a puritanical culture makes it clear that humor in
blues is an assertion of freedom from preconceived
notions—from prejudices of all sorts, that is—and,
hence, one is tempted to say that humor belongs
to the essence of blues. Humor in blues deflates pre-
tense, skewers sentimentalities, and affirms secular
pleasures against religious taboos. Indeed, simply
taking into account the theme of sexuality, the
healthy effect of blues on American culture must be
regarded as considerable insofar as the good humor
and freedom with which sex is treated has had a great
impact through various other forms of blues-
influenced popular music, most prominently, of
course, rock ’n’ roll.

More generally, if blues has a single dominant
theme, it is probably, as Robert Palmer remarks,
impermanence; blues offers images of coping with
life’s pains and losses, and humor is among the
most effective techniques for transforming pain into
pleasure, and loss into gain. Hence, blues humor
is about survival. As Furry Lewis, one of the wittiest
of bluesmen, used to say, “Give out, but don’t
give up—.”

DANIEL BEAUMONT

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(The author also wishes to acknowledge numerous replies
from Yahoo!’s prewar blues group.)

HUNT, DANIEL AUGUSTA “D. A.”

- b. 23 May 1929; Munford, AL
d. ca. 1964; Phoenix, AZ

A foundry worker, singer, and guitarist, D. A. Hunt
recorded only one session for legendary producer
Sam Phillips in Memphis in 1953, featuring the haunt-
ing “Greyhound Blues,” one of the deepest blues ever
issued by the Sun label.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

HUNT, DANIEL AUGUSTA "D. A."

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Discography: LSPF

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HUNT, OTIS "SLEEPY"

b. 29 April 1923; near Pine Bluff, AR

d. 4 July 1998; Chicago, IL

Nicknamed for his frequent naps, even while playing poker. Hunt moved to Chicago in 1945, and began playing harmonica in an effort to win his first wife back from Howlin' Wolf. He performed mostly in Chicago clubs and at Oliver Davis's Delta Fish Market. Hunt contributed several tracks to the *Lost American Bluesmen* anthology CD for the Midnight Creeper label (Midnight Creeper 2002).

EDWARD KOMARA

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HUNT, VAN ZULA CARTER

b. Van Zula Carter, 1 September 1901; Somerville, TN

d. 4 May 1995; Memphis, TN

Memphis singer who performed in various black minstrel troupes including the Rabbit Foot Minstrels and Silas Green from New Orleans from 1917 through 1945. In 1930 she recorded "Sellin' the Jelly" for Victor with Noah Lewis, John Estes, and Hammie Nixon. In later years through the 1980s she regularly performed at local Memphis blues festivals.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR; LSPF

HUNTER, ALBERTA

b. 1 April 1895; Memphis, TN

d. 17 October 1984; New York City, NY

Earning international recognition with a career that spanned eight decades, Hunter began singing in Chicago circa 1912. Known as much for her tenacity and longevity as for her vocal style, Hunter was a versatile performer whose repertoire encompassed classic blues, popular show tunes, and French cabaret songs.

Born in Memphis, Hunter left for Chicago as a teenager, where she began singing at Dago Frank's, eventually working her way up to headlining at Dreamland. In 1921 Hunter left Chicago for New York where she made her first recordings for the Black Swan label. She soon switched to Paramount, recording frequently between 1921 and 1924, accompanied by notable artists, such as Fletcher Henderson, Louis Armstrong, and Eubie Blake. In 1923 she recorded with a white jazz band, the Original Memphis Five, which was rare at the time. Circumventing exclusive contracts with record companies, Hunter recorded under a variety of pseudonyms, including Josephine Beatty, for Gennett; May Alix (borrowing the name of her friend and recording artist) for Paramount, Famous, Harmograph, and Puritan; and Helen Roberts, for Silvertone.

Hunter never learned to read music, yet she composed many of her own songs, including "Chirping the Blues," "Mistreated Blues," and "Down South Blues." The most successful of her compositions, "Down Hearted Blues" (co-written with her accompanist Lovie Austin), was recorded by Bessie Smith in 1923 and is a classic blues standard. That same year Hunter replaced Smith at the Apollo in the musical revue *How Come?* Hunter spent the next several years touring and recording for Paramount and OKeh. In 1926 she recorded "Sugar" and "Beale Street Blues" for Victor records, featuring Fats Waller on the organ.

In 1927, Hunter left for Europe, where she played the Casino de Paris and the National Scala in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 1928–1929 she appeared as Queenie in *Show Boat* at the Drury Lane Theater in London, playing opposite Paul Robeson. Other engagements in London included BBC broadcasts from the Dorchester hotel with Jack Jackson's orchestra in 1934 and an appearance in Radio Parade of 1935. She also performed for NBC radio broadcasts from Europe and New York. Hunter performed at the Cotton Club in New York and joined the Cotton Club European tour in 1937.

Hunter spent much of the 1940s and 1950s abroad entertaining troops with the USO. In 1956, following

the death of her mother, Hunter left the stage and started a new career as a licensed practical nurse. In 1977, forced to retire from nursing, and at the age of eighty-two, Hunter appeared at The Cookery in Greenwich Village to great acclaim. Her successful comeback resulted in a new album, *Amtrak Blues*, and the film score for *Remember My Name*. Hunter continued to tour and perform until shortly before her death in 1984. In 2003, Hunter's life and work was brought to the stage in Marion J. Caffey's off-Broadway production of *Cookin' at the Cookery: The Music & Times of Alberta Hunter*.

TREVOR S. HARVEY

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

HUNTER, IVORY JOE

- b. 10 October 1914; Kirbyville, TX
 d. 8 November 1974; Memphis, TN

Ivory Joe Hunter was one of the most prolific blues songwriters ever, a fine singer, and a talented pianist. Ivory Joe Hunter was his birth name; he grew up in a family with thirteen brothers and sisters. His father, Dave Hunter, played guitar, while his mother sang gospel songs. In his twenties, he worked as a radio program manager and from 1942 as a record company executive for his own label, Ivory. Although he did his first recording with archivist John Lomax for the Library of Congress in 1933, Ivory Joe Hunter began as a professional artist in the mid-1930s and went to the West Coast in 1942. His first successes were boogie songs released on King Records from 1947.

From 1950, his more relaxed style combined piano accompaniment with soft arrangements, sometimes jazzy, often including light brass (a trumpet or saxophone), drums and bass, quite similar to Charles Brown or Amos Milburn. A versatile artist, Ivory Joe Hunter wrote thousands of songs, from smooth

R&B ("Changing Blues," "Please Don't Cry Anymore," "No Money, No Luck") to ballads ("Guess Who"), jump blues, and on some occasions country music.

His best-known compositions from the 1940s include "Blues at Sunrise," "Pretty Baby Blues," "Landlord Blues," "Since I Met You Baby," and "I Almost Lost My Mind," which was covered by Pat Boone. Even Elvis Presley converted into top twenty hits three R&B compositions by Ivory Joe Hunter: "My Wish Came True," "I Need You So," and the upbeat "Ain't That Loving You Baby" (cowritten by Ivory Joe Hunter with Clyde Otis, and completely different from the Jimmy Reed song). Nevertheless, Ivory Joe Hunter's career declined from the early 1960s and he had definitively converted to country music by 1969.

Ivory Joe Hunter died of a lung cancer in November 1974. He should not be confused with Motown's first piano player from 1958 to 1963, Joe Hunter (born Joseph Edward Hunter, November 19, 1927).

YVES LABERGE

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Discography: DGR;LSFP

Recorded for Ivory Records, Pacific Records (his own companies), 4 Star, King, MGM (from 1949), Atlantic (from 1954), but also Strand, Vee-Jay, Capitol, Paramount, Dot.

See also Presley, Elvis Aron

HUNTER, LONG JOHN

- b. 13 July 1931; Ringgold, LA

Raised on several secluded farms during his childhood, noted West Texas singer/guitarist Long John Hunter wasn't exposed to the blues until 1953 when he saw B. B. King perform, shortly after relocating to Beaumont, Texas. Awestruck by King's performance, Hunter purchased a guitar and began practicing diligently, and soon was playing with his own band throughout the Beaumont/Port Gibson area. He made his recording debut in 1953 with the regional hit "Crazy Girl," which was quickly picked up by

Duke Records. Hunter continued to play around Beaumont until relocating to the popular border town of Juarez, Mexico, in 1957. He promptly landed a permanent daily gig at the premier nightspot, The Lobby, and showcased his powerful style of hard-edged blues and rock 'n' roll nightly there throughout the next thirteen years.

Hunter's acrobatic playing style and creative guitar work influenced many musicians who traveled to see his shows, including fellow bluesmen Phillip Walker and Lonnie Brooks, and rock 'n' rollers Buddy Holly and Bobby Fuller. Throughout the 1960s, Hunter recorded for the small Yucca label, and enjoyed some regional success. With the closing of The Lobby in 1970, Hunter continued to play his distinctive brand of Texas roadhouse blues in virtual obscurity until receiving national attention with his 1993 CD *Ride with Me* on Spindletop. He later signed with Alligator and was reunited with his old Juarez jamming partners Walker and Brooks on the successful collaboration *Lone Star Shootout*. Hunter continued to record several solo albums for Alligator and remained a popular festival draw in the United States and abroad.

GENE TOMKO

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HURT, JOHN SMITH "MISSISSIPPI JOHN"

b. 8 March 1892; Teoc (Carroll County), MS
d. 2 November 1966; Grenada, MS

Birth year has also been listed as 1893.

Life

Blues and folk singer and guitarist. John Hurt grew up in a large family, one of eleven children. His birth date has also been given as July 3, 1893. His father died when John was two years old. He showed interest in music from an early age, and his mother bought him a guitar when he was nine years old. Hurt

was entirely self-taught, learning songs from fellow field hands and others. He spent most of his life in Avalon, a small agricultural community where he picked crops, worked with cattle, and worked on the Mississippi River and, in 1915, on the railroad. He began entertaining locally at the age of twelve, playing square dances and house parties. In the early 1920s he began working with a white fiddler named Willie Narmour. This association eventually led to Hurt's being heard by a talent scout for Okeh records, Thomas J. Rockwell. Rockwell arranged for Hurt to record his first 78-rpm record in Memphis on February 14, 1928. He was paid twenty dollars per song, good money at the time for a Mississippi field hand. The following December Hurt traveled to New York, where he recorded the remainder of his Okeh sides in two sessions. During his week in New York he became acquainted with New Orleans guitarist Lonnie Johnson and the two played a good deal of music together. Hurt's recordings seem to have sold only moderately well in 1928–1929. Then the stock market crashed and the recording industry went into a deep slump with the rest of the economy. By this time Hurt was back in Avalon, Mississippi, doing farm work. He was employed by the WPA during the Great Depression, and his life reverted to the obscurity he had long been accustomed to.

In 1963 blues scholar Tom Hoskins tracked Hurt down to his hometown of Avalon and offered him the opportunity to come north to perform at the Newport Folk Festival. His first appearance in decades was an electrifying event for the folk revival movement. In the last three years of his life, Hurt was in great demand as a performer, and he made several recordings for Vanguard Records. He also appeared on television. There may not be surviving videotape of his 1963 appearance on the *Tonight* show with Johnny Carson (a large number of the shows were erased by an NBC employee), but an appearance on Pete Seeger's *Rainbow Quest* from 1966 survives. Hurt performs "Spike Driver Blues" and "You're Going to Walk That Lonesome Valley."

One of Hurt's former homes, a "shotgun shack" in Teoc, was purchased by family members and moved to land they own near Avalon. On the Fourth of July, 2002, the building was dedicated as a museum in Hurt's honor.

Music

Strictly speaking, it would be more accurate to call John Hurt a "songster" rather than a bluesman. Like most of the oldest southern black folk musicians to



Mississippi John Hurt. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

record, he had a broad repertoire of songs, only some of which were blues. Hurt also sang hymns, folk songs, bad man ballads, and other material. Musically, he is representative of the period just before blues emerged as the dominant folk music of the black communities of the south. Ragtime, reels, two-steps, and other now antiquated genres made up much of his musical background. Hurt's performances of the 1890s bad man ballads are particularly intriguing. These songs, such as "Frankie and Johnnie" and "Stackolee," are probably among the key immediate antecedents of blues music. Hurt's 1928 recording of "Frankie" probably indicates a good deal about the style and social context of the Mississippi musical environment at the dawn of blues. Hurt takes the piece at a rapid tempo, and gradually speeds up as he goes along. This invigorating style, probably derived from ragtime guitar style, would have been suitable for entertaining in a juke-joint environment, and could have been enjoyed by dancers of the ragtime and early jazz dances.

Hurt's vocal and guitar styles were atypical for a bluesman. His vocal production was gentle, almost a whisper, even when singing about murder and other acts of violence. It is a sound both seductive

and reassuring. He was self-taught as a guitarist, and his technique was absolutely unique. His conception of melody, and of the importance of telling a story in music, pervaded his playing: "I always tried to make my strings say just what I say." To some extent, Hurt was a ragtime guitar picker, like Blind Blake and Reverend Gary Davis. He was less obviously virtuosic than they, Blake in particular, but his technique was every bit as subtle as either of theirs, and perhaps more diverse. Hurt kept up a steady bass with the thumb of his right hand, like many guitarists, but for the most part he did all the other work with his first finger and middle finger, resting his ring finger and little finger under the sound hole. This is particularly remarkable given the elaborate, filigreed passagework on some of his early work, such as the 1928 "Frankie." He worked in a fairly wide variety of keys for a bluesman, including G (highly convenient for his type of thumbed bass work), A, C, D, and E. Unlike such classic Delta blues masters as "Son" House, Hurt made only sparing use of bottleneck technique, using an ordinary pocketknife when he did so. He tended to reserve this for special effects, such as impersonations of speech, animal sounds, or train noises, as in his version of "Casey Jones."

Influence

During his lifetime Hurt’s influence was primarily local, a situation that did not change for many years. In 1952 Harry Smith issued his landmark record set *Anthology of American Folk Music*, which contained two of Hurt’s finest 1928 sides, “Frankie” and “Spike Driver Blues”; this gave Hurt a legendary stature as the folk music revival burgeoned during the next decade. However, it was Hurt’s reemergence in 1963 that finally made him a genuine celebrity, and in the last three years of his life his influence on young blues and folk musicians was intense and pervasive. Among the many important musicians to be influenced by him during the 1960s were Bob Dylan, Taj Mahal, Ry Cooder, John Fahey, Rory Block, Roy Book Binder, Eric von Schmidt, and Patrick Sky. Some, such as Stefan Grossman, deliberately apprenticed themselves to him, studying his style assiduously. Others, such as Fahey, created some of their finest original works in response to Hurt’s style or in tribute to him (for example, “Requiem for John Hurt” on Fahey’s 1967 album *Requia*).

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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“Big Leg Blues” (December 21, 1928; OKeh matrix 40174-B; recorded in New York; unissued).
“Blessed Be the Name” and “Praying On the Old Camp Ground” (December 28, 1928; OKeh 8666; New York).
“Blue Harvest Blues” and “Spike Driver Blues” (December 28, 1928; OKeh 8692; New York).
“Louis Collins” (December 21, 1928; New York) and “Got the Blues Can’t Be Satisfied” (December 28, 1928; New York) (issued together as OKeh 8724).

“Stack O’ Lee Blues” and “Candy Man Blues” (December 28, 1928; OKeh 8654; New York).

Hurt’s complete early recordings have been reissued on several CDs, including *Avalon Blues: The Complete 1928 OKeh Recordings* (Columbia Legacy CK 64986); *Mississippi John Hurt: 1928 Sessions* (Yazoo 1065); and *The Greatest Songsters* (Document 5003; also includes Richard “Rabbit” Brown and “Hambone” Willie Newburn).

Later recordings include two originally issued on Piedmont Records and now available as *Avalon Blues* (Rounder 1081) and *Worried Blues* (Rounder CD 1082; a live recording from the Ontario Club in Washington, D.C.). More numerous are the Vanguard releases: *Mississippi John Hurt Today!* (Vanguard 79220); *The Best of Mississippi John Hurt* (Vanguard 19/20; live at Oberlin College, April 15, 1965); *The Immortal Mississippi John Hurt* (Vanguard 79248); and *Last Sessions* (Vanguard 79327).

HUTTO, JOSEPH BENJAMIN “J. B.”

b. 29 April 1926; Elko, SC

d. 12 June 1983; Harvey, IL

Guitarist, singer. Intensity, as expressed in raw, almost visceral vocals and slashing, high-volume slide guitar licks, was the most distinctive aspect of Hutto’s blues approach. Like kindred spirit Hound Dog Taylor his music was both ragged and relentless, the perfect sort of industrial strength “houserockin’ music” for the blue collar fans on Chicago’s West Side.

The irrepressible Hutto was a colorful performer with a penchant for sartorial splendor that included hot-pink suits and all manner of exotic headgear. His live shows, which featured extended forays deep into the audience, were interactive affairs powered by Hutto’s primal guitar pyrotechnics and larger-than-life vocals.

Hutto, one of a dozen children of a preacher, performed with the Golden Crowns Gospel Singers in Augusta, Georgia, before moving to Chicago in 1947 to expand his musical horizons. He worked day jobs as a painter and plumber while perfecting his musical abilities on drums and piano. But it was the slide guitar work of Elmore James that most fascinated him and he faithfully followed the guitarist from show to show.

Through practice and persistence Hutto taught himself to play guitar, later stating “can’t nobody but me be blamed for my style.” He also landed a steady gig, playing drums with Johnny Ferguson and His Twisters. But Hutto wasn’t happy being in the background and in 1954 he stepped center stage with his guitar and his new group the Hawks. He made his recording debut with a series of singles for the Chance label but he couldn’t break through the highly competitive Chicago blues scene.

Hutto endured almost a decade of tough times, working at a funeral parlor until his dramatic re-emergence in 1964. His reconfigured edition of the Hawks eliminated the role of bassist in favor of a lean and mean trio with two guitars and drums. In 1967 Hutto and the Hawks were featured on the historic *Chicago/The Blues Today* compilation, showcasing his unorthodox band and electrifying energy on five tracks. He built on the momentum a year later with the release of *Hawk Squat!* on the Chicago-based Delmark label.

For the next dozen years Hutto and an ever-changing version of the Hawks took their insistent, in-your-face blues directly to the fans. He recorded for an assortment of small labels, both in the United States and overseas, but it was in live action that his sizzling slide guitar work reached its zenith.

Upon the death of Hound Dog Taylor in 1976, Hutto inherited his hard-working Houserockers band and moved to Boston for the final phase of his career. He performed regularly while helping his nephew Little Ed Williams start his tribute band Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials and had a Grammy dedicated to him for his participation in the Montreux Jazz Festival compilation *Blues Explosion*.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

HY-TONE

Chicago blues and jazz label of the late 1940s. The label was operated by former guitarist and bandleader Freddie Williams (1898–1955) and jukebox operator Nathan Rothner (1912–2003). Opening in early 1946, the company initially was run out of Williams's Melody Lane Record Shop (and used the shop's name), but after a couple of releases Rothner came in and the label's name was changed to Hy-Tone. The company never got a hit, but blues pianist Memphis Slim made a number of outstanding recordings for the label. Hy-Tone was a true pioneer, coming out with the first recordings of blues pianist Sunnyland Slim, uptown blues singer Jo Jo Adams, blues shouter "Crown Prince" Waterford, jump band trumpeter and vocalist Bill Martin, balladeer "Bing" Williams, saxophonist T. S. Mims, and electric guitarist ace Floyd Smith under his own name. In addition, Hy-Tone put out a gospel series, notably three releases by famed singer R. L. Knowles. By the end of 1948, after some twenty-five releases, Hy-Tone was out of business.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

I

I BELIEVE I'LL MAKE A CHANGE (DUST MY BROOM)

“I Believe I’ll Make a Change” was first recorded on February 25, 1932, by Aaron and Milton Sparks in Atlanta, Georgia, for Victor Records. This blues song is in a twelve-measure, three-phrase form with an AAB lyric scheme. The Sparks brothers’ recording was released on Victor 23359 as by Pinetop and Lindberg (Aaron and Milton, respectively), during the lowest time for the record industry during the Great Depression. Nonetheless, other musicians were to use the song’s melody on their own recordings, including Jack Kelly and His South Memphis Jug Band in 1933 (as “Believe I’ll Go Back Home,” Melotone M12812), Josh White (ARC labels including Melotone 13235, recorded on August 1, 1934), and Leroy Carr with Scrapper Blackwell (Vocalion 02820, recorded on August 16, 1934). Other version of “I Believe I’ll Make a Change” continued to appear through 1942, the most notable of which was Washboard Sam’s (Robert Brown) rendition for Bluebird (serial number 8184) in 1939; a copyright was registered by Brown with Duchess Music in 1942.

The tune is best known today by the title “I Believe I’ll Dust My Broom,” first recorded to those words by Robert Johnson on November 23, 1936, for the ARC labels (including issue on Vocalion 03475). Lyric antecedents for the “dust my broom” stanza have been noted (especially by Bob Groom in 1976) in such recordings as “Mr. Carl’s Blues” by Carl Rafferty with Roosevelt Sykes in 1933 (Bluebird B 5429), “Sagefield Woman Blues” by Kokomo Arnold in

1934 (Decca 7044), and “49 Highway Blues” by Big Joe Williams in 1935 (Bluebird B 5996). In addition to singing such new lyrics to the existing melody, Johnson accompanied himself on guitar to a “rocking” boogie beat on the fifth and sixth scale degrees of the prevailing chord.

The “Dust My Broom” version of the song would continue to be played as bluesmen traveled between Mississippi and Chicago. Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup recorded one version in March 1949 (released on Victor 50-0074), Johnson protégé Robert Lockwood another in November 1951 for Mercury 8260.

Elmore James is the post-World War II musician most identified with “Dust My Broom,” having four versions made between 1951 and 1962. The version for Trumpet Records (Trumpet 146) in Jackson, Mississippi, on August 5, 1951, was James’s first hit. Whether he learned the song from Robert Johnson in 1936–1938, especially when both men were living in Belzoni, Mississippi, is debatable, given the wide currency of the melody and lyrics since 1932 and especially since 1934. Nonetheless it became James’s signature song, and his backup band was known as “The Broomdusters.” The 1951 Trumpet version was also the subject of a controversy after James’s death regarding whether he had been recorded unaware during a rehearsal session. The matter was laid to rest when Trumpet owner Lillian McMurry released for publication copies of her contract with James, the copyright sheets, canceled checks, and a telephone call transcript with James. The musical impact of James’s various recordings remains. Recent performances

I BELIEVE I'LL MAKE A CHANGE (DUST MY BROOM)

by blues and rock musicians imitate his singing and his high-octave guitar lick, sometimes adding James-styled bottleneck slide guitar solos during the instrumental choruses.

EDWARD KOMARA

I JUST WANT TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU

One of the most frequently covered of all blues songs, “I Just Want to Make Love to You” and its numerous title variations, such as “Just Want to Make Love to You” and “I Just Wanna Make Love to You,” are credited to Willie Dixon, the bassist in Muddy Waters’s great early 1950s band. The song is most often associated with Muddy Waters, though numerous artists of widely varying musical backgrounds have recorded it: Etta James, Freddie King, Memphis Slim, Denise La Salle, Van Morrison, Eric Burdon, Foghat, Buddy Guy, Eddy Clearwater, B. B. King, Barbara Carr, the Rolling Stones, and Isaac Hayes.

On Waters’s 1954 Chess Records version of this song, one can hear the full Chicago blues sound: the electrified Mississippi Delta blues captured by a phenomenal group of musicians, including Waters on guitar/vocals, Little Walter on harmonica, and Otis Spann on piano. Besides Muddy’s powerful vocals, this cut features Walter’s highly amplified, reverb-heavy harmonica solo that redefined the blues harmonica sound and solidified what would become generally known as the “Chicago blues sound”: a heavy rhythm section consisting of guitar/bass/drums punctuated by harmonica rhythm riffs and solos. Robert Palmer suggests that this “new” Chicago blues sound can initially be heard on Muddy’s 1950 “Louisiana Blues,” a reworking of the Delta blues standard “Rollin’ and Tumblin’,” which expanded the nonamplified “Bluebird sound” (a general term derived from many early blues artists who recorded on Bluebird Records) of preceding Chicago recordings such as those of Big Bill Broonzy, John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, and Big Joe Williams.

Lyrics to Muddy’s version—as well as the stop-time, four-note repeating riff—have remained relatively unchanged over time, not only in the blues tradition, but also in rock performances including the Rolling Stones’ 1964 recording for Decca/London.

Versions by women such as Etta James and Denise La Salle express this song from a female perspective, in which the female is seeking sex and companionship. James’s live versions, on *Rocks the House* (1964) and *Blues in the Night* (1986), demonstrate how the original song can be adapted to fit the opposite sex’s point of view: in the lyrics she changes “man” to “girl” where appropriate, and says she wants “to cook

your bread, just to make sure your well-fed.” In the latter version, James makes it quite apparent that she is invoking Muddy Waters’s version, as she turns “I Just Want to Make Love to You” (as listed on James’s CD) into a Muddy medley, by ending this tune with a couple of verses from Waters’s “Hoochie Coochie Man.” Denise La Salle’s 2000 version takes a similar approach to adapting Waters’s song to fit the female situation in the new millennium—by keeping this classic song close to the original with just a few necessary point-of-view changes.

JUSTIN WERT

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ICHIBAN RECORDS

Ichiban was founded by Jon Abbey in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1985, and it released much blues and gospel, in addition to jazz and rap. A sampling of its singers include Trudy Lynn, Millie Jackson, Clarence Carter, and Charles Wilson, among many others. It is also a distributor for more than thirty-five independent labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

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I'M A MAN (MANNISH BOY)

One of the great legendary crossover blues to rock 'n' roll songs is “I’m a Man (Mannish Boy).” The song starts with a deep, soulful “Oooh, yeah,” followed by a slight pause, then charges in with one grabbing note

on electric guitar, followed by a three-note riff—and the audience is hooked. The blues call style, spelling out “M-A-N”—with lead vocal calling out the individual letters as the band hollers back enthusiastically “woo” and other exclamations—creates this classic blues song’s fabric.

The swirling dervish of rock ’n’ roll’s roots took curious paths in 1955, when the song was recorded by two, now-legendary performers: Bo Diddley recording “I’m a Man” and Muddy Waters recording his rebuttal “Mannish Boy.” Both versions of the song brought immense popularity and status to each musician, one cast with a decided rock ’n’ roll direction (Diddley) and one toward electric Chicago blues (Waters). Both musicians were catalytic to introducing their brands of this same now-classic song to the mass market via their both recording their relative versions of the song on Chess Records, which was a beehive of activity in Chicago in the 1950s.

Bo Diddley (aka Elias McDaniel) had grown up in the same home state as Waters: Mississippi. Diddley had a diverse musical background, having played and composed for the violin, while also playing the drums and guitar. Diddley described his core sound as trying to play “drum licks on a guitar,” with a hard-driving beat with electric edge.

Diddley had written the song “I’m a Man” after a decade of playing local clubs in Chicago, where he had migrated with his family as a youth. He originally cut a demo disk, with “Uncle John” as side A and “I’m a Man” on the flip side, at Chess Records’ studios in Chicago in early 1955. Owners Leonard and Phil Chess requested some personalization be done of the “Uncle John” cut. The final, rerecorded disk, with revised “Bo Diddley”/“I’m a Man,” was completed on March 2, 1955, at Bill Putnam’s Universal Recording Studio in Chicago. It hit the R&B charts immediately, landing on May 4, 1955.

The song very much encapsulated the considerable blues and rock ’n’ roll scene that had been heating up in Chicago. “I’m a Man” carried enough of a pack to add to Chess’s punches to a broader audience of white listeners that had already been feasting on the likes of songs by Chuck Berry, Buddy Guy, and Muddy Waters.

Muddy Waters (aka McKinley Morganfield) already had been setting his own blues bonfires since 1948 with the release of his first songs “I Can’t Be Satisfied” and “I Feel Like Going Home.” Waters performed in Chicago clubs along with notable bandmate Willie Dixon, who penned and served up an indelible backbeat for Waters’s powerful blues voice and mean blues electric guitar delivery.

Waters thus responded to Diddley’s “I’m a Man” with his version, “Mannish Boy,” later in the year of

1955. The song was one of many that affected the Rolling Stones. The Stones, who coined the name of their band based on one of Waters’s songs “Rollin’ Stone,” picked up the song and have performed it and also included it on the *Love You Live* album.

“I’m a Man (Mannish Boy)” also appears on the 1970 release *Birth of Success* by Jimi Hendrix, as well as live and studio versions by the Yardbirds.

Even today, the lasting sound and power of the song “I’m a Man (Mannish Boy)” has compelled it to be selected for major motion picture soundtracks for films such as *Risky Business* to *Good Fellas* to *Ghosts of Mississippi*.

MEG FISHER

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I'M GONNA MOVE TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN

Originally titled “We Gonna Move (to the Outskirts of Town),” the classic prewar blues song was written and first recorded by William “Casey Bill” Weldon in 1936 for Vocalion Records. The song would be covered by dozens of blues, jazz, and rock musicians throughout the years, including Louis Jordan, Big Bill Broonzy, B. B. King, Ray Charles, Jimmy Rushing, Jimmy Witherspoon, Jazz Gillum, and Muddy Waters. Weldon, a remarkable slide guitarist who was often billed as “The Hawaiian Guitar Wizard,” featured his bottleneck style prominently on the original, but popular cover versions of the blues standard curiously did not incorporate the guitar technique.

Weldon’s classic composition effectively conveys two of blues music’s most enduring themes—love and jealousy. The singer expresses his plans to keep his woman faithful to him by moving away with her and living far from everyone else. He goes one step further in suggesting that he will also eliminate the need for any visitors, thereby removing all temptations. He intends on replacing the iceman with a modern refrigerator and his coal stove with a gas-burning system, as well as purchasing his own groceries, all to do away with the need for any deliverymen. The memorable final verse reiterates his paranoia with his desire to have children who have features that resemble his, thereby reassuring himself that his woman was indeed faithful to him.

I'M GONNA MOVE TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN

Piedmont singer and guitarist Blind Boy Fuller recorded a thinly disguised version of the song the following year titled "I'm Gonna Move (to the Edge of Town)," but Weldon's composition didn't receive major national attention until 1941 when it was covered by singing bandleader and musician Louis Jordan. Recorded on Decca as a slow blues with the title that is best known today as "I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town," Jordan's successful jump-blues style fit perfectly with Weldon's song, and its enormous popularity gave the singer his first hit record. The following year, Jordan wrote and recorded the witty answer song "I'm Gonna Leave You (on the Outskirts of Town)," which reached number three on the R&B charts. In Jordan's updated response, the frustrated singer admits that his original plan has failed, and he has now decided to leave her there.

The popularity of Jordan's version inspired many others to cover the song throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Swing bandleader Jimmie Lunceford's version made it to #17 on the Pop charts in 1942. Blues shouter Jimmy Rushing also recorded a popular version with the Count Basie Orchestra in April of that year. Rushing would record the song several times throughout his career and it became one of the songs most associated with the artist. The song was also among singer Jimmy Witherspoon's favorites.

In 1961, Ray Charles's version reached #25 on the R&B charts and it crossed over briefly onto the pop charts. B. B. King also featured the song in his performances, and it became one of the staples of his live shows throughout his long career.

GENE TOMKO

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IMPERIAL

Founded in Los Angeles in 1946 by ex-NBC employee Lewis R. Chudd, the Imperial label made steady progress through its first years, mainly recording local West Coast acts—such as Lloyd Glenn, Poison Gardner, Jake Porter, and Charlie "Boogie Woogie" Davis—until the company began expanding in the late 1940s. Imperial was one of the first independent record labels to make forays into the blossoming New Orleans R&B scene in 1949 and the label was rewarded with big sellers by Fats Domino, Smiley

Lewis, Dave Bartholomew, and Jewel King. Bartholomew soon became Chudd's right hand in Crescent City, operating with Chudd's patronage as talent scout/A&R man/musical arranger/house band leader. During the 1950s, it was New Orleans in general, and Fats Domino in particular, that would prove to be the company's chief asset—leading Chudd to relocate to the Crescent City for several years—although the Imperial label remained in Los Angeles and continued to record other blues artists such as Li'l Son Jackson, Mercy Dee Walton, Smokey Hogg, Cecil Gant, Pee Wee Crayton, and T-Bone Walker.

Riding on the timely success of Fats Domino in the rock 'n' roll market with inoffensive hits such as "Ain't It a Shame," "Blueberry Hill," and "Blue Monday," Chudd and Imperial Records were easily able to weather the economic storm that threatened many other established independent labels, and continued to enjoy chart success with Domino and rockabilly recordings by, for instance, Ricky Nelson through to the early 1960s, when Chudd began expanding his portfolio with the purchase of Aladdin Records in 1961 and Minit Records in 1963. The last purchase stretched Chudd's finances just a little too thinly, resulting in Imperial and all of its subsidiaries—Colony (founded 1951), Bayou (1953), Catalina (1954), Moppet (1954), Post (1955), Knight (1958), and Bonnie (1962)—being sold to Liberty Records later that same year.

DAVID PENNY

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INSTANT

New Orleans-based label active from 1961 to 1972 and co-owned by Joe Banashak, Larry McKinley, and Irvin Smith. Artists included Chris Kenner, Art Neville, Chick Carbo, Ernie K-Doe, Huey Smith, and Larry Darnell. Valiant was a subsidiary.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

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IRMA

Oakland label, operated by Bob Geddins (after whose wife it was named) and Isaac Neal Jr. from 1956 to 1958. The artist roster included Jimmy McCracklin, Johnny Fuller, Jimmy Wilson, Candyman McGuirt, Big Mama Thornton, and Houston guitarist Juke Boy Barner (Bonner), as well as a couple of vocal groups.

RAY ASTBURY

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IRONING BOARD SAM

b. Sammie Moore, 1939; Rock Hill (or Rockfield), SC

Ironing Board Sam, the stentoric singer and electric pianist with an enormous repertoire and earth-shaking delivery, earned his stage moniker in 1959

when he mounted the keyboard from an upright piano on an ironing board and rigged a primitive electrical hook-up to create an early electronic keyboard. His legend grew in the late 1970s by means of spectacular displays of stagecraft, which included his plan to parachute into New Orleans’ Jackson Square and his 1979 JazzFest appearance submerged with his piano in a tank of water. Woefully underrepresented on record, Sam continues to electrify audiences well into the twenty-first century.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: LSFP

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IVORY RECORDS

Owned by “King Ivory” Lee Semiens in Houston, Texas, from 1957 to 1965. Artists included Semiens, D. C. Bender, and Lightnin’ Hopkins.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

J

JACKSON, ARMAND “JUMP”

b. 25 March 1917; New Orleans, LA
d. 31 January 1985; Chicago, IL

Jump-band style drummer who recorded on many Chicago blues sessions in the 1940s and 1950s, and on the first American Folk Blues Festival tour in 1962. As an entrepreneur, Jackson founded La Salle Records on which he issued music by Eddie Boyd, Eddy Clearwater, Little Mack Simmons, and himself.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne); Larkin

Discography: LSFP

JACKSON, BENJAMIN CLARENCE “BULLMOOSE”

b. 22 April 1919; Cleveland, OH
d. 31 July 1989; Cleveland, OH

Tenor and alto saxophone/vocal. He preferred “Moose” but the longer form of his nickname was generally used. He took up tenor saxophone in high school and by 1939 was in Freddie Webster’s band. Following residencies in Buffalo and Cleveland in the early 1940s, he joined Lucky Millinder’s band in 1944. In August 1945 he recorded with leading members of Millinder’s band, launching a career as a blues and

jive singer that soon led to individual billing with Millinder. “We Ain’t Got Nothin’ (But the Blues)”/“Bull Moose Jackson Blues” (1945, Queen 4102) defined the style. In June 1948, he went solo with his Buffalo Bearcats whose recordings for King up to 1955 made them a leading jump/R&B combo, which undertook nationwide touring. He also achieved some notoriety for mildly risqué material such as “Big Ten-Inch Record” (1952, King 4580) and “Meet Me With Your Black Drawers On” (1953, King 4634). On later records he mostly left saxophone playing to sidemen and featured himself as a singer only. Though still making occasional records, he retired in 1959 and by 1963 was working as a waiter, while leading a trio for weekend gigs. After 1974, he made a gradual comeback, appearing regularly with the Flashcats after 1983 and touring Europe with the Johnny Otis Show in 1985.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; New Grove Jazz; Santelli Millar, Bill. Liner notes for *Big Fat Mamas Are Back in Style Again* (1980, Route 66 KIX14, Stockholm).

Discography: AMG; LSFP

JACKSON, BESSIE
(See *Bogan, Lucille*)

JACKSON, BILL

JACKSON, BILL

b. 22 February 1906; Granite, MD
d. Unknown

Although he was due to sign for the Victor label in 1928, songster Bill Jackson didn't record before his discovery by Pete Welding in 1962. He is noteworthy for his nimble finger-picking guitar style in the East Coast tradition, his light vocals, and his memorable blues lyrics as in "22nd of November," a moving tribute to President Kennedy.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

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Discography

Can't Keep from Crying (1994, Testament CD 5007).
Long Steel Rail (1994, Testament CD 5014).

JACKSON, BO WEAVIL

Flourished 1920s

Aka Sam Butler. Guitarist and singer, noted for his distinctive singing and slide guitar technique. Jackson was discovered performing in Birmingham, Alabama, and recorded for the Paramount and Vocalion labels. Although Paramount publicity referred to him as coming from the Carolinas, experts believe his music to have traits of Alabama styles.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne); Larkin

Discography: DGR

JACKSON BROTHERS

Wilfred Jackson

b. 1920; Gary, IN

Harold "George Hack" Jackson

b. 1924; Gary, IN

Billy Jackson

b. 1929; Gary, IN

Brother swing group active in Los Angeles in 1949–1957 and led by oldest brother Wilfred. Their "We're Gonna Rock This Joint" (1952, RCA Victor 20-5004) is considered an example of proto-rock 'n' roll. Their success was dampened by a 1953 bandstand arrest of then-vocalist Billy Henderson for drug possession. Brothers Harold "George Hack" and Billy later were members of the Treniers.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Vera, Billy. "Gonna Rock This Joint." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 68 (April 1992): 4–6.

JACKSON, CALVIN (1)

Active 1940s

1940s West Coast singer who recorded two jump-style sides in Los Angeles in 1945 for the 4-Star label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: LSFP

JACKSON, CALVIN (2)

b. 1961; MS

Drummer from north Mississippi who recorded with Junior Kimbrough, R. L. Burnside, and various five-and-drum groups. By 1995 he had moved to Holland, continuing his blues drumming with local and visiting groups.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Bonner, Brett, *et al.* "40 Under 40." *Living Blues* no. 120 (March/April 1995): 77–90.

JACKSON, CHARLES "PAPA CHARLIE"

b. ca. 1880; New Orleans or Algiers, LA (unconfirmed)

d. Spring 1938; Chicago, IL (unconfirmed)

Although Jackson is the first commercially successful solo, self-accompanied (banjo, guitar, ukulele) male

blues singer, hardly any factual biographical information is available. In 1924 *The Paramount Book of the Blues* (which is the source of Jackson's best known photograph) claims that he came from New Orleans. This is supported by his accent, and his regular rhythm may indicate experience as a band member [Smith]. He reportedly worked as a singer/performer on various touring minstrel/medicine shows across the United States during the 1910s. From the early 1920s he lived in Chicago, where he worked for tips in "Jew Town" and on Maxwell Street, and where he recorded most of his disc records. In 1926 Paramount sponsored his appearance at the Mardi Gras and afterward at the TOBA theatre in New Orleans. In December 1928 an ad placed by Paramount in the *Chicago Defender* depicts Jackson in a fairground setting and states that he "went down to the great Kentucky Sate Fair last summer." Apart from the fact that Jackson recorded one session in Milwaukee and another three in Grafton, Wisconsin, between September 1929 and May 1930, this is the only evidence that he also traveled outside Chicago. Until his probable death of alcoholism (other sources claim he committed suicide by jumping in the Chicago River), he lived on the west side of Chicago, where he frequently worked club dates. He may have been survived by his sister. (He should not be confused with jazz guitarist Charlie Jackson, who had recorded with the Tiny Parham Band in Chicago in 1928.)

On record Jackson played both guitar and a guitar banjo—a hybrid six-string banjo strung and fingered like a guitar. He incorporated a variety of melodic devices. One song would start with single note runs (flatpick style) and finger-picking patterns and then fly into chords played so fast that it seemed like the rhythm was actually the melody line. Although he is among the very few blues banjo players on records in his time, his style had a jazz flavor: He was probably one of the most technically proficient artists of his time in any genre [Website]. Jackson bridged the gap between the nineteenth-century songsters tradition and the country blues. His recorded repertoire is unusually diverse and sometimes reflects his minstrel experiences ("Don't Break Down on Me"). It embraces anything from straightforward collections of traditional verses ("Shake That Thing") to topical ("Judge Cliff Davies Blues") or autobiographical blues composed by himself ("Lexington Kentucky"). There is double entendre ("Shave 'Em Dry"), vaudevillian straight fare ("Your Baby Ain't Sweet Like Mine"), even affinities with hillbilly music ("I'm Going Where the Chilly Winds Don't Blow"). He was particularly well known for songs about Chicago landmarks ("Maxwell Street Blues"). The title that established him as a best-selling record star in 1924

was "Salty Dog Blues"; a couple of years later Paramount let him record the title again in the company of Freddie Keppard's Jazz Cardinals from New Orleans.

Jackson's most important impact probably lies in the fact that he paved the way for other male blues artists, not least his Paramount mates Blind Blake or Blind Lemon Jefferson, at a time when the business was dominated by female singers. As a blues banjoist he is, apart from Gus Cannon, almost a stand-alone figure; he used a "crossed notes" technique involving "returning to a chord," to facilitate finger-picking patterns. Especially in his links between choruses, some of the fingering patterns that later emerged in the jazz playing of Lonnie Johnson are identifiable ("Long Gone Lost John"). As a guitar player ("Jackson's Blues") he prefigured such performers as Leadbelly. As a small-voiced baritone blues singer, his most important influence is on his friend Big Bill Broonzy, the irony being that their one joint recording session for ARC in 1935 (Jackson's last recordings) remains unissued and apparently no tests have survived. Jackson himself obviously admired Blind Blake ("Forgotten Blues"), and on one occasion they recorded a duet ("Papa Charlie and Blind Blake Talk About It"). Jackson was an entertainer and one of the first blues recording artists to rely primarily on his own material, and the first blues singer to record happy-go-lucky, up-tempo music that made him popular among the black record-buying public [Calt]. But, as Smith has pointed out, white listeners and blues critics sometimes find fault with this lack of "deep intensity," or ponderously slow and sorrowful blues.

Jackson made his record debut in 1924 for Paramount, and his second disk became a best-seller. Most of his records during the next decade are self-accompanied blues (Paramount, 1924–1930; OKeh, 1934), but he also recorded with, or provided accompaniment for, Lottie Beaman, Blind Blake, Lucille Bogan, Bill Bronzy (1935, ARC unissued), Ida Cox, Amos Easton, Teddy Edwards, Hattie McDaniel, Ma Rainey, and Freddy Keppard's Jazz Cardinals. Paramount also issued a "Descriptive Novelty" on which the "Paramount All Stars" Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Blake, Will Ezell, Charlie Spand, The Hokum Boys, and Papa Charlie Jackson performed short excerpts from some of their recorded titles. The Broadway label used the pseudonyms "Casey Harris" or "Charlie Carter," respectively. A freak German Biberphon issue was mislabeled "Manhattan Roof Orchestra." Notable LP reissues are Yazoo L-1029 and Biograph BLP-12042. The complete oeuvre was reissued in chronological order on three Document CDs, DOCD5087–5089.

RAINER E. LOTZ

JACKSON, CHARLES “PAPA CHARLIE”

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Discography: DGR

JACKSON, CORDELL “GUITAR GRANNY”

b. 15 July 1923; Memphis, TN

Memphis rockabilly cult figure who came to national prominence by playing her instrumental “Knockin’ 60” on a Budweiser beer commercial in 1991. Her career dates back to performing with her father in the 1930s. She founded Moon Records in 1956, which she sustained while selling Memphis real estate.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

JACKSON, FRUTELAND

b. 9 June 1953; Doddsville, MS

Singer, acoustic guitarist, and teacher of blues-in-the-schools workshops.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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JACKSON, GEORGE HENRY

b. 1936; Greenville, MS

Songwriter and singer. As composer he supplied top R&B hits to soul singers Clarence Carter (“Too Weak

to Fight”) and Z. Z. Hill (“Down Home Blues”). In mainstream popular music, his songs were massive hits for Bob Seger (“Old Time Rock and Roll”) and the Osmonds (“One Bad Apple”). As singer he has recorded for Fame and Hi labels, later for MGM and Black & Tan.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Ed Hogan); Larkin

Discography: AMG (Ed Hogan); Larkin

JACKSON, GRADY “FATS”

b. 22 November 1927; Asheville, NC

d. 17 or 18 January 1994; Atlanta, GA

Saxophonist. Jackson played in Chicago with Elmore James and was a member of Little Walter’s 1954–1955 touring band before returning to Atlanta where he worked extensively with vocalist Billy Wright and recorded “Go Girl” in 1990 with Sil Austin and Mark “Kaz” Kazanoff as the Tri-Sax-Ual Soul Champs.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

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JACKSON, JIM

b. 1884; Hernando, MS

d. 1937; Hernando, MS

Jim Jackson is one of the oldest blues guitarists to have come from Mississippi. He was a songster in the minstrel show tradition whose heavy strumming indicates a nineteenth-century origin for his songs. He recorded from 1927 to 1930 and his influential “Kansas City Blues” presumably was one of the world’s first gold records.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

JACKSON, JOHN

b. 25 February 1924; Woodville, VA
 d. 20 January 2002; Fairfax Station, VA

After his discovery by folk revivalists in the mid-1960s, Jackson became one of folk-blues' best-loved purveyors of Piedmont-style acoustic blues guitar, with its alternating bass patterns, ragtime rhythms, and finger-picked melodies on the treble strings. Self-described (accurately so) as a "songster" who played not only blues but country music, old-timey dance tunes, ballads, reels, and folk songs. Jackson was raised in rural Rappahannock County, Virginia (about 80 miles southwest of, but worlds away from, Washington, D.C.) in a large, poor family that entertained itself with homemade music and old 78s (including those of his favorites, Blind Blake and Jimmie Rodgers).

Around age twenty-five, Jackson moved to Fairfax County, closer to D.C., but retained his lilting Blue Ridge drawl and old-fashioned manners—gentle and gracious but with a quiet dignity. He worked a variety of hard-labor jobs, including grave digging, having mostly abandoned his youthful hobby of playing at area house parties and country dances, until folklorist Chuck Perdue chanced upon him practicing at a Fairfax gas station in 1964 and took him to D.C. concerts of John Hurt and Mance Lipscomb, where Arhoolie Records' Chris Strachwitz met him and signed him on the spot. Jackson soon became a favorite on the folk-blues circuit, playing coffee houses and festivals. After three albums on Arhoolie, Jackson cut two for Rounder and one for Alligator. He was awarded a prestigious National Heritage Fellowship in 1986. In later years, he often performed with his son James.

Not an originator nor (despite some critical hyperbole to the contrary) a dazzling guitarist, Jackson nevertheless was an adept player with a delightfully eclectic repertoire and a personable performer who exuded good-natured warmth off-stage as well as on.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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 Pearson, Barry Lee, and Scott Barretta. "Tribute to John Jackson." *Living Blues* no. 163 (June 2002).

Discography: AMG; LSPF**JACKSON, LEE**

b. Warren George Harding Lee, 18 August 1921; Gill, AR
 d. 1 July 1979; Chicago, IL

Guitarist, singer, songwriter known for his bright, slightly reverberated leads, epitomized by his "Apollo" instrumentals for Cadillac Baby and Carl Jones. Jackson was also an accompanist to J. B. Hutto and appeared on his Testament and Delmark LPs, and on ten sides with Roosevelt Sykes. His first issued recordings, "Fishin' in My Pond" b/w "I'll Just Keep Walking" (1956, Cobra), and "Pleading For Love" b/w "Juanita" (1961, Key Hole), were strong efforts for small independents. In 1974 he recorded his sole LP, *Lonely Girl (Blues On Blues)*, and appeared on Ralph Bass's *I Didn't Give a Damn If Whites Bought It, Vol. 5*. Jackson went to Europe in 1970 with Willie Dixon's Chicago Blues All-Stars, and in 1979 was murdered in a domestic dispute.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

O'Brien, Justin. "All Around Man." *Living Blues* nos. 33/34 (Summer 1977): 4.

Discography: AMG; LSPF**JACKSON, LIL' SON**

b. Melvin Jackson, 17 August 1916; Tyler, TX
 d. 30 May 1976; Dallas, TX

In 1948, thirty-two-year-old Dallas mechanic and amateur bluesman Melvin Jackson cut a disk in an amusement arcade for a quarter. His friends urged him to send it to Bill Quinn of Houston's Gold Star Recording, which had launched a Race series the previous year. To Jackson's surprise, Quinn invited him to Houston to record. His Gold Star records sold well enough in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana to attract the attention of Lew Chudd at Imperial Records. Now a full-time musician, Jackson recorded more than fifty sides for Imperial in Los Angeles and Texas between 1950 and 1954.

Jackson followed a path similar to that of Smokey Hogg, Frankie Lee Sims, and Lightnin' Hopkins—fellow Texas bluesmen who recorded in a dry and spare rustic blues vein rather than in the more modern, jazzy style of Texas guitarists Gatemouth Brown and T-Bone Walker. On Imperial, he recorded both solo and with a band, the latter marred by Jackson's

JACKSON, LIL' SON

idiosyncratic timing. His best remembered song is "Rockin' and Rollin'" (1951), usually known as "Rock Me" (as by Muddy Waters) or "Rock Me Baby" (as by B. B. King). (Despite some lyrical overlap, Jackson's song is not the same as Arthur Crudup's 1944 "Rock Me Mamma.") A shy and religious man whose personality was not well suited for show business, he quit blues after a 1956 car wreck en route from an Oklahoma gig, although Arhoolie's Chris Strachwitz coaxed him out of retirement long enough to record an album in 1960.

STEVE HOFFMAN

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli; Southern

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Texas

JACKSON, LITTLE WILLIE

b. 9 September 1912; Houston, TX

d. 13 February 2001; Los Angeles, CA

Blind bandleader, vocalist, and saxophonist who played swing jazz and jump-blues with some boogie elements. He formed the Honeydrippers with pianist Joe Liggins, and had the 1945 R&B hit "The Honeydripper." Recorded for the Aladdin, Specialty, Mercury, Honeydripper, and Blues Spectrum labels.

JOE C. CLARK

Bibliography

AMG (Richie Unterberger)

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Aladdin/Score; Liggins, Joe; Mercury/Fontana/Keynote/Blue Rock; Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box**

JACKSON, MAHALIA

b. 16 October 1911 (1912?); New Orleans, LA

d. 27 January 1972; Evergreen Park, IL

Mahalia Jackson, dubbed the "Queen of Gospel Music," is generally regarded as the most influential figure in American gospel music. Jackson was born in

New Orleans and moved with her family to Chicago as a teenager. She began singing in Baptist churches located in both cities, notably Chicago's Greater Salem Baptist Church with the Prince Johnson Gospel Singers in the 1920s. Although Jackson exclusively performed spiritual music, her singing style was recognizably influenced by the secular genres of ragtime, jazz, and blues that she encountered while in New Orleans and Chicago. Specifically, blues legend Ma Rainey is cited as one of Jackson's early inspirations. Jackson is listed as a noteworthy influence by performers such as R&B singer Aretha Franklin.

Jackson began a solo career in the mid-1930s, initially under the Decca label, then for Apollo Records in 1946, and eventually for Columbia Records in 1954. She also had a popular radio program for CBS in the 1950s. Among Jackson's numerous recordings are the singles "God's Gonna Separate the Wheat from the Tares" (1937) and the best-selling "Move On Up a Little Higher" (1948), and albums such as *The Power and The Glory* (1960) and *Mahalia Jackson Recorded Live in Europe* (1961). Jackson collaborated extensively with gospel writer/composer Thomas A. Dorsey, and thanks to her growing popularity as a live performer, enjoyed international success, especially in Europe. Notable performances during the height of her popularity include the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, the 1961 inauguration of President Kennedy, and the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968.

Jackson succumbed to heart failure in early 1972. She was posthumously inducted into the Gospel Music Association's Hall of Fame in 1978.

BEN MCCORKLE

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Jackson, Mahalia, and Evan McLeod Wylie. *Movin' On Up*. New York: Hawthorne Books, 1966.

Discography: AMG; DGR; Gospel Records 1943–1969

JACKSON, VASTI

b. 20 October 1959; McComb, MS

Best known as Katie Webster's longtime guitarist and arranger, Jackson has also backed artists as varied as soul singers Bobby Rush and Z. Z. Hill, jazz diva Cassandra Wilson, and zydeco star C. J. Chenier. His guitar style is polished and restrained, and contains both jazz and R&B influences.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

Nelson, David. "Vasti Jackson." *Living Blues* no. 120 (March/April 1995): 27–34.

Discography

No Borders to the Blues (2003, Vasti Jackson Music).

JACKSON, WILLIS "GATOR" "GATOR TAIL"

b. 25 April 1928; Miami, FL
d. 25 October 1987; New York, NY

Saxophonist. Willis "Gator" Jackson combined fervor and showmanship with an underrated harmonic knowledge and sophistication. Jackson's sax skills were often underrated by critics who viewed his emphasis on melodic statement and preference for rhythmically frenetic compositions as evidence he lacked the skills or desire to play more challenging and experimental pieces. But Jackson had studied music theory in college, although his training was intensified during stints in Cootie Williams's group. Jackson also learned bop from the genre's masters, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. His facility at delivering growls, smears, and background embellishments made vital musical contributions to vintage R&B and soul tunes, particularly sessions with former wife Ruth Brown. Jackson invented a special horn for ballads he dubbed the "Gator horn." This was a long instrument with a ball-shaped bell and a small opening that had a sound midway between a soprano and alto.

Jackson's greatest dates as a leader were small combo efforts, where he provided sterling, robust solos in a setting usually dubbed "soul-jazz." On these albums Jackson often used groups with an organist and guitarist, sometimes a second horn, plus a drummer and/or conga player. Jackson's finest ensemble was a trio with guitarist Pat Martino (then emerging as a star) and organist Carl Wilson. Jackson made outstanding releases for Prestige during the 1960s, most notably *Thunderbird* and *Together Again!* that matched him with Brother Jack McDuff. He also had some classic 1970s dates, among them *Headed and Gutted*, *Bar Wars*, and *In the Alley*.

RON WYNN

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Discography: Lord

JACOBS, MARION WALTER

(See *Little Walter*)

JACQUE, BEAU

b. Andrus Espre, 1 November 1952; Duralde, LA
d. 10 September 1999; Kinder, LA

Accordionist, vocalist, composer. Beau Jacque took up the accordion in 1987 while recovering from a back injury. Upon his recovery, he formed the Zydeco Hi-Rollers, and fused zydeco music with elements of urban soul music, rock, hip-hop, and reggae. He was a best-selling artist for Rounder Records, and a top draw in New Orleans and the Louisiana bayou venues until his untimely death from a heart attack.

JOHN SINCLAIR/EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG

JACQUET, ILLINOIS

b. Jean Baptiste Illinois Jacquet, 31 October 1922; Boussard, LA
d. 22 July 2004; Queens, NY

Saxophonist. Jacquet perfected his aggressive, almost exhibitionistic, tenor technique in Milton Larkin's territorial big band in Texas and then, at age nineteen, established his reputation via the success of his signature tune "Flying Home" with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra in 1941. Jacquet moved on to Cab Calloway's big band in 1943. In 1945 he joined the Count Basie Band for a couple of years before leaving to become a part of the Jazz at the Philharmonic all-star touring aggregation and ultimately to lead his own band. He recorded extensively for Savoy, Mercury, RCA, Epic, Atlantic, and other major labels.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

JAMES, CLIFTON

b. 7 October 1936; Chicago, IL

Chicago drummer best known for performing with guitarist Bo Diddley, heard on the latter's *Chess*

JAMES, CLIFTON

Records releases from 1955 through 1959. Formulated with Diddley the execution on drums and guitar of Diddley's signature "shave-and-a-haircut, two bits" beat pattern.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Cushing, Steve. "Behind the Beat of Blues." *Living Blues* no. 96 (March/April 1991): 12–23.

JAMES, ELMORE

b. Joe Willie James, 27 January 1918; Richland, MS
d. 24 May 1963; Chicago, IL

James, the son of Leola Brooks and an unknown father, was given his stepfather's name. Years later he became Elmore, distinguishing himself from friend and frequent playing partner, Joe Willie Wilkins.

James's family moved from farm to farm in Holmes and surrounding counties. In Canton, the James family adopted Robert Earl Holston, an orphan the same age as Elmore. The two boys learned on homemade instruments. Ajan Wilson is remembered teaching the boys guitar when the Jameses were living on a plantation near Tchula. Soon they were performing at Tchula's Midnight Grill. By 1937, James was working in the vicinity of Belzoni and playing music in various Delta locations; he was still known then as Joe Willie or "Cleanhead."

Sometime in the 1930s, James made the acquaintance of Robert Johnson and Sonny Boy Williamson (Aleck Miller). From the former he absorbed guitar technique and the song that became his theme, "Dust My Broom." Like Johnson, James was influenced by the recordings of Kokomo Arnold and Tampa Red. Williamson and James often worked together, including occasional performances on Williamson's King Biscuit Time radio show, which broadcast from station KFFA in Helena. In 1937, Elmore married Josephine Harris, the first of several short-lived marriages. Harris states that James had three children.

On July 24, 1943, James was drafted—serving with the Navy in the Pacific during World War II. Discharged November 28, 1945, James returned to Belzoni to find that his mother had left for Chicago and that Robert Holston had opened a radio repair shop in Canton. James assisted in his brother's shop while rebuilding his musical career. In 1946, James became aware of the heart condition that plagued him the rest of his life.

The year 1947 found James sharing a room with Williamson in Belzoni and sometimes accompanying him on his radio show sponsored by the patent medicine Talaho. When Williamson left for West Memphis and station KWEM, James returned to Canton. Heart problems slowed him down but he continued to gig in the area and worked occasionally with pianist Willie Love and His Three Aces.

In January 1951, in Jackson, Mississippi, James joined Joe Willie Wilkins, Willie Love, and drummer Joe Dyson backing Sonny Boy Williamson on his first Trumpet recording session. During the first half of 1951, James appeared on several Trumpet sessions with Williamson and Love and, on August 5, recorded his first record, "Dust My Broom," accompanied by Williamson on harmonica and Leonard Ware on bass. There has been much speculation and several stories circulated as to why James recorded only one song for Lillian McMurry's label. Wilkins, who was in the studio that day, said that Williamson and James got into an argument over Williamson's duplication on the harmonica of James's famous guitar lick. James never recorded for Trumpet again.

At this time, James was staying with Williamson and his wife Mattie on North Farish Street in Jackson. After recording his song, James returned to Canton. McMurry released it backed by Bobo Thomas's "Catfish Blues." Both songs were attributed to Elmo James. Trumpet 146 was Trumpet's biggest hit, ranking ninth on the R&B chart in April 1952.

Early in 1952, Joe Bihari of Modern Records recorded James in a Canton nightclub. James was still under contract to McMurry and she stopped Bihari from releasing any of James's records until the contract expired in late 1952. Bihari released "I Believe" (a "Dust My Broom" cover) backed with "I Held My Baby Last Night" on his new Meteor label. By February 1953, it too had reached the ninth rank on the national R&B chart.

Bihari switched James to his Flair subsidiary for his next single "Early in the Morning"/"Hawaiian Boogie" in June 1953. James continued to record for the Bihari brothers—with a brief lapse in 1953 in which he made a session for Chess resulting in one single, another version of his hit song—until 1956. In 1953, James recorded behind Junior Wells (States), Johnny Jones (Flair and Atlantic), and Big Joe Turner (Atlantic)—including the latter's hit "TV Mama."

By the end of 1953, James had returned to Canton and in 1954 hired Otis Ealey of Atlanta as his manager. James relocated to Atlanta and Ealey booked him on series of one-nighters through the South and Midwest.

The Biharis did not renew their contract with James, and in 1957 Mel London signed him to a contract with his new Chicago-based label Chief. In the company of J. T. Brown, Johnny Jones, Eddie Taylor, Homesick James, Odie Payne, and Wayne Bennett, James recorded some outstanding sides including “The Twelve Year Old Boy,” “It Hurts Me Too,” and the instrumental “Elmore’s Contribution to Jazz.” Rights to these recordings were purchased by Vee-Jay and they were quickly reissued.

Heart disease led James to return to Canton but, by November 1959, he was back in Chicago where New York record producer Bobby Robinson recorded him with his usual accompanists. That session produced one of James’s most copied songs, “The Sky Is Crying” (number fifteen on R&B chart). James recorded exclusively for Robinson’s Fire and Enjoy labels—with one second defection to Chess in 1960—for the remainder of his life, resulting in a corpus of more than forty sides, mostly recorded in New York City, including such favorites as “I Done Somebody Wrong” and “Shake Your Money-maker.” His remake of “It Hurts Me Too” charted at twenty-five in 1965.

While staying with Homesick James in Chicago, James suffered his last heart attack. Funeral expenses were paid by Chicago deejay Big Bill Hill; he was buried at the Newport M. B. Church in Holmes County, Mississippi.

James’s influence is widespread including Homesick James, Boyd Gilmore (both have been identified as his cousins), J. B. Hutto, Hound Dog Taylor, B. B. King, Albert King, and many more including a whole generation of rock guitarists both in the United States and internationally. Joe Willie Wilkins observed that any accomplished guitarist could replicate James’s licks but none has the genius to recreate his sound.

FRED J. HAY

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JAMES, ETTA

b. Jamesetta Hawkins, 25 January 1938; Los Angeles, CA

Singer, songwriter. A powerful and versatile singer, Etta James is one of a handful of widely recognized women blues singers still recording and performing today. At an early age, Jamesetta Hawkins got her start singing in St. Paul’s Baptist church under the tutelage of James Earle Hines in downtown Los Angeles. She became quite a sensation in the church community, but not long thereafter Dorothy Hawkins, her mother, moved them up to San Francisco. However, Dorothy’s jazz club night life and obsession with the glamorous life led her to leave young Jamesetta in the care of Lula Rogers, a rooming house owner, who James referred to as “Mama Lu” or “Mama.” In her teenage years, James ran around with a rough street crowd in the Fillmore District but soon found the R&B-blues scene intriguing. Calling herself “Etta James,” she put together a trio called the Peaches (also James’s nickname) with a couple of neighborhood girls and got noticed by R&B musician/talent man Johnny Otis. The Peaches’ first hit single was “Roll with Me Henry” (1955) followed up by another hit “Good Rockin’ Daddy” (number six on the “Black Singles” charts) later that same year. The Peaches went on tour, beginning James’s remarkable national touring and local clubbing experiences and associations with a “who’s who” of R&B and rock ‘n’ roll stars such as Sam Cooke, Johnny “Guitar” Watson, Tina Turner, Charles Brown, Sam Cooke, Chuck Berry, Marvin Gaye, Jimi Hendrix, Keith Richards, Ruth Brown, Sly and the Family Stone, and Little Richard.

After some hard times concerning recording rights and royalties with Modern Records, James went to Chicago and eventually signed with Chess Records. In 1960 she had her first hit single for Chess, “All I Could Do Was Cry” (#2, Black Singles charts; #33, Pop Singles charts), which was soon followed by “At Last” (#2, Black Singles charts; #47, Pop Singles charts). Her successes continued in the early 1960s with “My Dearest Darling,” “Fool That I Am” “Stop the Wedding,” and “Something’s Got a Hold

on Me”—all in the top twenty on Black Singles charts and top fifty on Pop Singles charts. As Leonard Chess recognized, Etta James was a great “crossover” artist—the first for Chess Records—who sold records to both black and white audiences. Meanwhile, her live performances were also successes. Recorded at a club in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1963, *Etta James Rocks the House* showcases her powerful vocals on stage, demonstrating the development of her individual blues sensibility: She translates well-known songs, such as Ray Charles’s “What’d I Say,” the medley of Jimmy Reed songs in “Baby What You Want Me to Do?,” and Muddy Waters’s “I Just Want to Make Love to You,” into her own dynamic expressions from smooth full-bodied soul to a growling scat-like imitation of a harmonica.

All of this success, while gratifying to James, brought her little fortune, especially as James struggled with drug addiction, and money was in high demand but often in short supply. Various extended family and music figures drifted in and out of her life, helping her to endure the hardships of addiction to heroin, some destructive romantic liaisons, and the demands of her life as a star recording artist and blues performer.

During the next stage of her career in the mid- to late 1960s, James recorded a few more hit blues and R&B singles, especially those on the LP *Tell Mama* (1968); its title track reached #23 on Pop Singles charts and #10 on the Black Singles charts, and a cover of Otis Redding’s “Security” reached #35/#11 on the same charts. But arguably the album’s most powerful number was “I’d Rather Go Blind” (the B-side to the “Tell Mama” single), a slow blues ballad that James sings with a unique sensitivity that teeters on the edge of tenderness and explosiveness. Produced by Jerry Wexler at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, *Tell Mama* is one of the finest recordings of James’s early career and of soul/R&B recordings of the 1960s. Despite this tremendous success, James’s personal life was traumatic: a newborn baby, Donto, to take care of; various scrapes with the law, especially in Alaska and Los Angeles, which only compounded her difficulty in caring for Donto, whose health was fragile; and continuous struggles with drug addiction.

While James’s struggles with addiction and abusive men caused her some difficult times in the 1960s, her blues records and performances were in high demand. In the 1970s, James’s recordings became less of a commodity in a market dominated by funk, rock ’n’ roll, and disco. James’s problems with the law continued in New York and then in Texas, where her husband Artis Mills took sole responsibility for possession of some heroin they had and spent a

number of years in prison for the offense. Though devastated by this turn of events, James at least had a safe haven: a house in Los Angeles that Leonard Chess had paid for until his death in 1969 when the deed was handed over to James.

During this period, James continued to perform and record, making several LPs for Chess and one for Warner Brothers. Many of these recordings, while not popular successes like those in the 1960s, demonstrate the lasting power of James’s voice on such songs as “Losers Weepers” on the album of the same name; “Only a Fool” and “Leave Your Hat On” on *Etta Is Betta Than Evah*; and “Only Women Bleed” and “Sugar on the Floor” on *Deep in the Night*.

In the 1980s James’s home base continued to be Los Angeles. James performed around Los Angeles clubs and sang “When the Saints Go Marching In” at the opening ceremonies of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Some of her best albums of this period are the live recordings with Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson—*The Early Show* and *The Late Show*—as well as the phenomenal studio LP, *Seven Year Itch*, which features a version of Otis Redding’s “I Got the Will,” “Come to Mama,” and one of the best slow blues tunes ever recorded, “Damn Your Eyes.”

In the 1990s and the new millennium, James has continued to record: her blues albums *The Right Time* (produced by Wexler) and *Life, Love and the Blues* (James’s sons, Donto and Sametto, join in on drums and bass, respectively) are excellent CDs with tunes that testify to James’s enigmatic, powerful phrasing, creating new renderings of classic soul and blues songs such as “Love and Happiness,” “Down Home Blues,” “Born Under a Bad Sign,” and “I Want to Ta-Ta You.” In 1994, James also ventured into recording a jazz LP—*Mystery Lady: The Songs of Billie Holiday*—which won her a Grammy for best jazz album.

As an artist, James never ceases to take chances with music: She sang the Rolling Stones’ “Miss You” in an appearance on the *Tonight Show* in support of *Matriarch of the Blues* (2001). Her latest CD, *Burnin’ Down the House*, became the number one blues album of 2002.

JUSTIN WERT

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

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JAMES, JESSE

b. Unknown

d. Unknown

Jesse James is a shadowy figure who recorded four sides for Decca in June 1936. He is also believed to be the pianist on three adjacent matrices by Walter Coleman, in which case he was probably involved in the Cincinnati blues scene. James was an exciting, if somewhat undisciplined, two-fisted barrelhouse pianist, with a hoarse, declamatory vocal style. He seems to have relied mostly on traditional material, as exemplified by his vigorous treatment of “Southern Casey Jones.” In James’s version, Jones is described unflatteringly as a “natural born Eastman” (someone who did not work or lived off a woman’s earnings) and his wife appears only too willing to accept the compensation for his death and take another husband. The explicit “Sweet Patuni” was understandably not issued at the time, but surfaced many years later on a bootleg “party” record. On “Highway 61,” also unissued, James is accompanied by an unknown jug player, who also participated in the subsequent Walter Coleman recordings. The legend that James was a convict, brought to the studio under guard for the session, and that he broke down before it was completed is wholly unsubstantiated. This fanciful story appears to have been based on the lyrics of “Lonesome Day Blues,” which contain several references to prison life. The latter, which has an outstanding piano introduction and a walking octave bass accompaniment, also contains the line: “I’ve been to the Nation, ’cross the Territor (y),” apparently a reference to a Native American reservation.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: DGR**JAMES, NEHEMIAH “SKIP”**

b. 9 June 1902; Benton, MS

d. 3 October 1969; Philadelphia, PA

Singer, guitarist, and pianist. Since the 1950s, James has been generally regarded as one of the greatest Mississippi blues musicians of the prewar period. His posthumous reputation rests mainly on eighteen titles recorded for Paramount Records in 1931, and to a lesser extent on a handful of albums made after his rediscovery by blues revivalists in the 1960s.

James was born and raised on the Woodbine plantation, fifteen miles south of Yazoo City, Mississippi. His father, Edward, a guitarist and bootlegger, abandoned the family as a wanted man in about 1907. An only child, James was raised by his mother Phyllis, who worked as a cook and babysitter for the plantation owners, and by his maternal grandparents. He studied guitar from the age of seven, and learned basic piano in high school. He left Benton around 1919 and for the next few years worked as a laborer in various locations in Mississippi and Arkansas. By 1924, he had returned to Benton, initially as a sharecropper, then as a bootlegger. He was also, it seems, active as a gambler and pimp. Music at this time—indeed for much of his life—was a sideline and, in the 1920s when he was acquiring a local reputation as a bluesman, bootlegging was a far more lucrative activity. Late in the decade he married Oscella Robinson, the sixteen-year-old daughter of a local clergyman, and around 1929, they moved to Dallas. The marriage quickly collapsed, his wife deserting him for his traveling companion, and, dispirited, James moved back to Benton.

In 1931 came the major recordings. James was persuaded to audition for H. C. Speir, music store owner and A&R man for the Race record industry. Speir sent him to Arthur Laibly at Paramount Records, and in February, at the Grafton studios, the classic sessions took place. Much to James’s disappointment, however, the records made little impact. The Race record market had collapsed with the Depression and the records hardly sold. His life changed direction in late 1931, when he was reunited with his father, who had become a minister, and persuaded James to join him in Dallas in the seminary he operated there. In becoming actively involved with religion, James abandoned the blues, refusing a further offer by Speir to record. He remained in Dallas until 1935, where he led a touring gospel group, the Dallas Jubilee Quartet. In 1937, again through his father, he moved to Selma, Alabama. By the early 1940s, he was working as a laborer in Birmingham, where he met his second wife Mabel. He returned



Skip James. (Photo by Julie Snow, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

once more to Bentonia in 1948, and to blues performing, although his traditional style was by now passé. In 1953, he moved to Memphis and then to Tunica, Mississippi, where he did menial work.

Unbeknownst to James, his musical reputation had by this time grown to legendary status through reissues of the 1931 recordings. He was eventually located by blues enthusiasts in 1964, becoming one of the major rediscoveries of the burgeoning folk music revival. From then until his death five years later, he enjoyed the status of a folk-blues celebrity, performing on the concert, coffee house, and folk festival circuit. Adding greatly to his reputation was a cover of “I’m So Glad” by the British rock group Cream, which earned James six thousand dollars in royalties. In 1965, James left Mabel for his third wife Lorenzo and moved with her the following year to Philadelphia from Washington. He died after a long fight with cancer in 1969.

James was a complex, contradictory character. He was a solitary, misogynistic introvert, who, despite his outward restraint, was capable of extreme violence. (According to one biographer, he had psychopathic tendencies and probably killed at least one person.) His early years, spent in bootlegging, pimping, gambling, and blues singing, were apparently left behind after he became actively involved in religion in 1931.

However, one has the sense that his religious commitment was half-hearted: Although he was eventually ordained as a Methodist minister around 1942, it had no part in his subsequent livelihood. When, in the 1960s, he returned to blues singing full time, he apparently had few qualms about becoming reacquainted with the “Devil’s music.”

It is partly these inner personal contradictions which make James’s artistry so powerful. At the heart of his music is a pervading sense of sadness. Even a light-hearted song like “Drunken Spree”—apparently a plantation song learned by James as a child—becomes tinged with melancholy in his version. Unlike peers such as Blind Lemon Jefferson or Charlie Patton, James rarely states his feelings in an open, direct way. However, far from detracting, this sense of held-back passion gives great poignancy to his work. From this point of view, he is closer to Mississippi John Hurt, although he lacks Hurt’s lightness: There is always a quality of controlled, brooding introspection to James’s performances. Perhaps the consummate example of this is “Devil Got My Woman,” which has become one of the most celebrated of Mississippi blues compositions. After a stark guitar introduction consisting of a series of chromatically falling harmonies over a tonic pedal (a device James used frequently), the voice enters with a wailing, modal three-measure phrase that forms the melodic basis for the entire work. The atmosphere is greatly enhanced by James’s eerie falsetto, which he used in a majority of his guitar-based songs. In this number, as much as in any recorded blues, there is a powerful sense of personal expression, as though James is actually experiencing the pain he sings about. This song is, in fact, probably autobiographical, as is clear from the last verse: “The woman I loved . . . took her from my best friend/But he got lucky, stoled her back again.” (James’s first wife had deserted him for his traveling companion less than two years before the song was recorded.)

James mastered both piano and guitar. What is perhaps more remarkable about that fact is that he adopted different, complementary styles on each instrument, as if each one fulfilled a different inner need. He generally uses the guitar as a continuous, interactive backdrop to his singing, whereas his piano playing tends to be deliberately disjointed and angular, almost an extension of his voice rather than an accompaniment to it. With both piano and guitar he incorporates frequent interludes and breaks.

His technical approach to both instruments is highly original. On the guitar, he adopted a three-fingered picking technique, used by only a few other blues guitarists, such as Patton and Hurt. Unlike them,

however, he plucked with his fingernails like a classical guitarist, rather than using his fingers or a pick. He also used D minor, rather than open, tuning on all but two of the pieces in the 1931 recordings. This device, as well as the three-finger approach, he learned from Henry Stuckey, a friend from his youth, who was his first guitar influence, and with whom he was professionally associated in the 1920s. These innovations give his playing a most individual sound, and his distinctive approach, as well as his remarkable virtuosity, is seen in a number like his showpiece, "I'm So Glad." James's piano playing is no less distinctive, with unusual devices like rapidly repeated chords and glissandos being frequently used, the whole being underpinned by sparse, jagged chord voicings. In this, he seems to have been influenced by a musician called Will Crabtree whom he met while living on a sawmill camp in Arkansas around 1922, though just how great the influence is cannot be precisely determined because Crabtree never recorded.

James's repertoire shows considerable variety. Much of it is related to folk-blues, of course, and there are several "straight" blues in the 1931 session (e.g., "Four O'Clock Blues," "Cypress Grove Blues," "Hard Luck Child") as well as some more wayward examples ("Little Cow and Calf Is Gonna Die Blues"). Even less conventional are numbers like "Devil Got My Woman"—effectively a two-line blues—and "Illinois Blues," which has a most eccentric, though highly effective, five-line structure (AABBB). In addition there is a traditional eight-bar blues, "How Long 'Buck'," an idiosyncratic version of "How Long Blues," a song popularized by Leroy Carr, along with gospel songs ("Jesus Is a Mighty Good Leader," "Be Ready When He Comes") and "Drunken Spree," which may have originated as a plantation song. "I'm So Glad" is James's transformation of the 1924 pop hit "So Tired," by Arthur Sizemore, an obscure writer of pop and commercial blues numbers.

By common consent, the recordings from the 1960s fall short of the 1931 sessions. James had worked only intermittently as a musician in the intervening years, and, in any case, by the time of his rediscovery he was already battling cancer. As a result, his technical powers had faded, and the original freshness was lost. Nevertheless, they remain an important part of his legacy.

In terms of influence, James was too much of an individualist to have had many imitators among his contemporaries, although a notable exception is Robert Johnson who recast "Devil Got My Woman" (perhaps with the structure of Yola My Blues Away) as "Hellhound on My Trail."

PETER MUIR

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JAMES, STEVE

b. 15 July 1950; New York City, NY

Guitar, mandolin, and banjo player; singer. Multi-instrumental acoustic folk-blues ace James moved to Tennessee in the early 1970s where he sought out Furry Lewis and others. He worked as a luthier and deejay in San Antonio in the mid-1970s before relocating to Austin. He began recording in the early 1990s, releasing *Two Track Mind* and *American Primitive* under his own name while making guest appearances on releases by Gary Primich, Angela Strehli, Candye Kane, Guy Forsyth, and others. His 1995

album *Art and Grit* featured guests Primich, Bob Brozman, and Ann Rabson and *Boom Chang* in 2000 had Alvin Youngblood Hart involved. James, who has also authored instructional books and videos and numerous magazine articles, released *Fast Texas* in 2003.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG (Dan Forte)

JAPAN

The first Japanese blues bands started to be heard around 1970. The land was a long way from the birthplace of the blues, and without any substantial black population, but blues nevertheless took root.

The so-called British Invasion of the mid-1960s aroused interest in the blues, or R&B, among fans of rock music. Although Japan has centuries of national history with its own distinct culture, the dominant culture after World War II became much more Americanized, and younger generations listened enthusiastically to rock and pop music from the United States. Many English words had been subsumed into Japanese with similar pronunciation. One example is the word “blues,” which was used as the title of some Japanese popular songs even before the war. There even was a “Queen of the Blues” who sold millions of records in her lifetime. However, this “blues” music was not the twelve-bar American blues, but just a slow lament in Japanese, which had probably been adopted as a Japanese rendition of vaudeville singing of songs like “St. Louis Blues.” (In Japanese, “blues” is usually pronounced and written as something like “bluce.”)

When the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, and Cream made the charts with their interpretation of African American blues, people became aware that an enormous musical culture existed in the urban centers of the north and cotton fields of the south. Radio stations were not keen on playing the blues and R&B, dismissing them as too ethnic to be accepted among the general public; however, the U.S. Armed Forces radio called the Far East Network turned out to be an important source for those interested in the music.

The pioneering reissue of vintage blues from the Chess catalog together with those of B. B. King from the Kent masters started in 1969, and they taught Japanese rock fans what the real blues was all about. The year 1971 even saw the release of a three-LP set of prewar blues, culled from the Victor/Bluebird catalog and ranging from Tommy Johnson to Jazz Gillum, which was better received than had been expected. B. B. King’s tour of Japan in 1971, following his hit “The Thrill Is Gone,” was perhaps the very first Japanese tour by any blues musician. Some Japanese blues bands, notably the West Road Blues Band, who opened for King, the Blues House Blues Band, and Yukadan (meaning “blue songs band”) who would later tour with Sleepy John Estes, started to gain popularity at the blues clubs such as Jittoku in Kyoto. By the end of 1974, general interest among rock fans led to the “blues boom.” The first Blues Festival featuring Robert Lockwood, who would be later called “God of the Blues” because of his authentic music and solemn features, the Aces (Louis and Dave Myers with Fred Below), and Sleepy John Estes/Hammie Nixon was an unexpected success. Lockwood’s sensitive, calm but very creative style, the core Chicago band beat sound of the Aces, along with the spirituality of the old blind man from Tennessee made a lasting impression. Since then, prominent blues artists have toured Japan two or three times a year.

Although the Blues Festival ended with its third session in 1975 with Otis Rush, Big Joe Williams, and Little Brother Montgomery, several attempts at holding annual blues showcases followed; the Blues Show! (1979–1986), the Japan Blues Carnival (1986–still ongoing), and the Park Tower Blues Festival (1994–still ongoing) have all been well received, mostly by enthusiastic fans craving for live blues. Some of the outstanding performances in the history of these festivals are Buddy Guy and Junior Wells (1975), Lightnin’ Hopkins (1978), Bobby Blue Bland and Gatemouth Brown (1978), Lowell Fulson (1980), Albert Collins (1982), James Cotton (1985), Otis Rush (1986), Little Milton (1988), Cab Calloway (1988), Lucky Peterson (1995), Snooks Eaglin (1996), and the Carter Brothers (1997). Of special note is the limited but zealous following, beginning in the 1970s, for deep soul music, which in Japan is distinguished from the blues. Both O. V. Wright and Otis Clay made memorable performances of modern soul music.

Long before so-called “world music” came to the fore, Japanese blues fans in the 1970s and 1980s had begun to look for music beyond American culture and their own. However, it was Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Clapton who attracted new

generations of blues fans—or blues guitar fans. Whether or not the blues can keep stimulating another generations in the twenty-first century depends on how the genre evolves in the United States. In the case of a few Japanese bands, the music of blues, soul, funk, reggae, Latin, and African is well assimilated, and the cultural synthesis brought together to create unique and powerful music. Though blues still does not have a mainstream following in Japan, and no major labels have released notable blues albums, blues still retains its popularity. The independent label P-Vine started in 1975 with the Calvin Leavy LP, but now boasts some twenty-five hundred titles of CDs in blues as well as other genres. There is a popular bimonthly magazine called *Blues & Soul Records*; the magazine *The Blues*, first published in 1969, would later become the hip-hop/R&B magazine called *Black Music Review*, which celebrated its 300th issue in 2003. Chain stores such as Tower Records as well as smaller shops contain wide selections of import CDs from all over the world.

While the recession of the 1990s has still not completely abated, sales of blues albums have remained strong. It may well be the feeling of alienation in the days of globalization that maintains the popularity of blues in Japan.

YASUFUMI HIGURASHI

JARRETT, JAMES “PIGMEAT”

b. 8 December 1899; Cordele, GA
d. 5 September 1995; Cincinnati, OH

James “Pigmeat” Jarrett moved with his family to a mining camp in Rockhouse, Kentucky, when he was three years old and then to Cincinnati five or six years later. He was an active member of the Cincinnati blues scene from the 1920s, well known for improvising lengthy blues and stomps on such songs as “Mr. Freddie Blues,” “The Dirty Dozens,” and “Look at the People.” He appeared at Miss Kitty’s, Arnold’s, Coco’s, and various clubs in Cincinnati, at the Chicago Blues Festival in 1992, and at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. June 19, 1992, was declared Pigmeat Jarrett Day in Cincinnati.

STEVEN C. TRACY

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JARRETT, THEODORE “TED”

b. 17 October 1925; Nashville, TN

For years, the city of Nashville, Tennessee, was affiliated in the public mind with country music alone, despite the fact that other genres made a home in Music City U.S.A. Rhythm and blues was one, and Ted Jarrett was the most successful black entrepreneur in that field. From the 1950s to the 1960s, he ran any number of independent labels, including Calvert, Champion, Cherokee, and Poncello, and worked with countless acts, including the vocalists Gene Alison and Earl Gaines, both mainstays of that local scene. His biggest hit was Allison’s 1958 “You Can Make It If You Try,” later covered by the Rolling Stones. Attention to both Jarrett and the black music produced in Nashville was elevated in 2004 when the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville mounted “Night Train to Nashville: Music City Rhythm & Blues 1945–1970.” An autobiography by Jarrett, *You Can Make It If You Try*, has been announced.

DAVID SANJEK

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JAXON, FRANKIE “HALF PINT”

b. 3 February 1895; Montgomery, AL
d. Unknown

Frankie “Half Pint” Jaxon was a major figure on the early blues circuit, performing and producing shows and revues in theaters and clubs. Although he worked in New York early in his career, he is best known for his work in Chicago. He was an actor, singer, cornetist, and composer; his best-known compositions were “Fan It” (Vocalion 1257), “Corrine Blues” (Vocalion 1424), and “Fifteen Cents” (Vocalion 2603). Jaxon worked in vaudeville as a female impersonator, and

JAXON, FRANKIE “HALF PINT”

is most famous for singing suggestive blues, especially those recorded with Tampa Red and “Georgia Tom” Dorsey on Vocalion. A short man, he was called “Half Pint” and used that nickname for his stage name.

Life

Frankie “Half Pint” Jaxon (aka Cotton Thomas) was born February 3, 1895, in Montgomery, Alabama. One of three children, he was orphaned at an early age. He worked the New World Café in Atlantic City with Willie “The Lion” Smith, then worked on the road in the Midwest, finally settling in Chicago in 1927 for an extended stay; in 1930 he did some club dates with Bennie Moten in Kansas City. He left Chicago and the music business in 1941, moving to Washington, D.C., to take a government job. Later he relocated to Los Angeles in 1944, and was not heard from after that.

Music

Jaxon’s most prolific period for appearances, productions, and recordings was in Chicago, where he lived from 1927 to 1941. His career can be tracked through the *Chicago Defender* newspaper, to which the following dates refer. During his time in Chicago, Jaxon produced and performed at the most famous jazz/blues venues on Chicago’s South Side. These included the Sunset Café (January 28, February 4 and 18, September 20, and October 7, 1922, and March 3, 1923), Entertainer Café (September 1 and November 3, 1923; March 29 and May 3, 1924), Dreamland Café (November 7, 1925), Metropolitan Theater (October 8 and 15, 1927; August 27, 1932); Grand Theater (April 20, 1929), Midnite Club (June 8, 1935), Apollo Theater at 47th Street (January 29 and March 19, 1927); Ritz Café (November 29, 1930); Regal Theater (December 26, 1931; September 30, 1933); Savoy Ballroom (May 27, 1933; April 6, May 4, and June 4, 1935); Dave’s Café (July 14, 1934); Navy Pier (August 25, 1934); and Harlem Café (December 27, 1941).

Radio and Recordings

Jaxon was considered a major radio star; he broadcast live on several radio stations in Chicago,

including from clubs where his groups performed. For example, see *Defender* ads for WJJD, dated May 27, June 5, and July 1, 1933, and for WBBM, dated June 3 and September 30, 1933. He led Frankie Jaxon’s Hot Shots, Waves of Rhythm, and Quarts of Joy.

Jaxon recorded for several labels, including Black Patti, Decca, Gennett, Okeh, and Vocalion. He recorded with many early Chicago artists, including Henry “Red” Allen, Lil Hardin Armstrong, Buster Bailey, Barney Bigard, Glover Compton, the Harlem Hamfats, Freddie Keppard, Punch Miller, Ikey Robinson, Jasper Taylor, Bob Shoffner, and Casino Simpson.

Jaxon’s enduring fame is for blues recorded on Vocalion with Tampa Red and Thomas “Georgia Tom” Dorsey in 1929, including “Corinne Blues,” “Fan It,” “Fifteen Cents,” “It’s Tight Like That,” “Mama Don’t Allow No Easy Riders Here!,” and “My Daddy Rocks Me.”

DEBORAH L. GILLASPIE

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Discography: DGR; Lord

See also **Black Patti; Decca; Dorsey, Thomas A.; Gennett; Harlem Hamfats; Moten, Benjamin “Bennie”; Okeh; Tampa Red; Vocalion**

JAXYSON

Obscure (and primarily gospel) label operating in Oakland between 1948 and 1950. It issued the first record of Johnny Fuller (as Brother Johnny Fuller). Its only blues artists were “Goldrush,” a piano player not unlike Mercy Dee Walton, and “Black Diamond,” a guitarist from Texas (real name apparently James Butler).

RAY ASTBURY

Discography

McGrath

See also **Fuller, Johnny**

JAZZ

Distinction Between the Jazz Tradition and the Blues Tradition

Though a cloud of controversy surrounds its birth and early development, the position of jazz as a distinctively African American music is undeniable. Since its beginnings sometimes around the turn of the twentieth century, however, it has overstepped the confines of ethnicity and genre and is currently played and enjoyed throughout the world. Evolving from folk and popular sources, it is considered by many to be America's greatest artistic gift—a view that its global impact on both popular and art music supports. Over the years jazz has existed in a number of diverse though related styles. These include New Orleans- and Chicago-style Dixieland jazz, big band or swing, bebop, cool jazz, hard bop, funky or soul jazz, modal jazz, free jazz, jazz rock, and fusion. The fact that jazz is primarily an approach to performing music rather than a particular repertoire accounts, in part, for its continuing change and variety.

Jazz evolved from the fusion of black folk forms such as ragtime and blues with various popular and light classical music being created just before the turn of the twentieth century. Having existed in some recognizable form from about 1905, the heyday of the legendary though controversial cornetist Buddy Bolden, jazz currently embraces a plethora of popular music styles from Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, as well as diverse modern, classical, and avant-garde performance traditions.

Although its origins are obscure, the earliest forms of jazz emerged in cities such as New Orleans, Chicago, and Memphis. Jazz has a long prehistory, however, that began with the distinct rhythmic musical tradition brought to America by enslaved Africans and developed on southern plantations. Traditional African instruments were largely forbidden but West African performance practices such as call-and-response singing, foot stomping, and hand clapping survived and were common. This was particularly so in the performance of work songs and hollers in fieldwork and the spirituals in worship. European string instruments such as the violin and guitar were the earliest musical instruments adopted by African Americans. The African-derived banjo was also popular. With the approach of the reconstruction era, the brass and woodwind instruments so important to the musical life of city

dwellers were incorporated. These were used primarily to accompany Spanish American War-era military marches, popular songs, and light classics popular among all classes and ethnic groups during the later years of the nineteenth century.

As the first decade of the twentieth century progressed, it became increasingly clear that a new music had evolved. Not yet labeled jazz, the music was still called ragtime and musicians referred to the manner of performing it simply as playing “hot.” “Hot” was a term used to describe the emotional warmth and intensity of this new music and the performance practices that produced them.

Although an exact line cannot be drawn between jazz and its precursors, ragtime and the blues are agreed to be its immediate predecessors.

Ragtime

Ragtime, which is primarily piano music, integrates complex African-derived rhythmic practices with the harmonies of light classics, parlor music, show tunes, and popular songs. Highly syncopated in a possible effort to duplicate African cross rhythms, it is conceivably the result of an African American banjo style being transferred to the piano. Ragtime as we have come to know it is a composed non-bluesy music. Whether this was true of its earlier itinerant stages before the style became formalized remains a question. First appearing after the Emancipation, when African Americans were free to work as itinerant musicians in saloons, dance halls, and brothels, it was widespread by the 1890s—especially in towns along the Mississippi River like St. Louis, and eventually New Orleans. Before the end of the nineteenth century it was also being played in New York, Baltimore, and other eastern cities. By the turn of the twentieth century it had outgrown the saloons where it developed and was popular throughout the country.

Scott Joplin, Eubie Blake, Tony Jackson, and Jelly Roll Morton, some of the greatest ragtime pianists, also composed. Consequently, sheet music became an important focus of home entertainment for families, both black and white, who owned pianos. In addition, ragtime was played by all types of instrumental soloists and ensembles. These ranged from string bands and brass bands to syncopated orchestras. The syncopated orchestras led in New York by James Reese Europe, Will Marion Cook, and others during the first two decades of the twentieth century, for instance, were deeply indebted to the precise

contrapuntal style of piano rags. James Reese Europe, who was the most important East Coast figure in pre-jazz history, pioneered rhythmic concepts in ragtime that anticipated true jazz expression.

Blues

The blues was originally a completely separate music from ragtime and early jazz. It is believed to have developed along the Mississippi River during the 1890s and 1900s. While some writers place the genesis of the genre well back into the nineteenth century, no firsthand reference exists before the 1900s. “Memphis Blues” (1912), by W. C. Handy, one of the first published blues, was derived from and reflected the rural folk music of African Americans. The composition’s treatment of life’s hardships, through the use of insinuating melodies and sexual suggestiveness, had an immediate impact on the public. The blues is a unique vein that permeates all American popular music. And, of course, the blues is an inseparable component of all styles of jazz performance. An ability to play the blues is a mandatory skill for all jazz musicians.

Overlap and Crossover Between the Jazz Tradition and Blues Tradition

Vaudeville, minstrel shows, and carnivals presented the environment in which early jazz and the blues first met, were nourished and blossomed. Professional singer-entertainers, of which Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith were two of the most important, established what was to become known as the classic blues tradition. Ma Rainey’s country roots permeated her style and content, whereas Bessie Smith’s approach and sound reflected a city-oriented lifestyle. Classic blues crystallized as these vaudeville singers used both blues and blues-tinged popular songs to present commentaries on love and life. Along with an increasingly flexible approach to melodic lines and phrasing, they used shouts, groans, moans, and wails to heighten the impact of the lyrics they sang. By altering non-blues songs to fit the blues in format and feeling, they broadened the base of the blues market and effected changes in other types of popular singing.

Bessie Smith, who was accompanied by musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, and Fletcher Henderson on her recordings, developed vocal techniques as sophisticated as those used by

instrumentalists. More than any other vocalist, she established the style and quality of the blues tradition. With the assistance of the jazz artists who accompanied her, she grounded the blues in the broader tradition of jazz.

The twelve-bar blues form is one of the most used forms for such interactions. It consists of three four-measure phrases reflecting a statement, a repeat of that statement, and an answer—the AAB form. An item of fundamental importance is the pause in the vocal line that traditionally provides space for an instrumental fill-in. Country blues singers usually accompanied themselves and provided this fill-in on guitar. Classic blues singers, on the other hand, were accompanied by jazz (stride) piano or jazz band in which the piano played the underlying beat and a solo horn improvised on the fill-in. This process is superbly illustrated on Bessie Smith’s recording of “Careless Love Blues” with Louis Armstrong providing the instrumental solo on the fill-in.

The close relationship between blues and jazz was nourished as classic blues singers and their jazz accompanists interweaved vocal melodies with the rhythmic and melodic improvisations of the accompanying instruments. Through the use of slurs, shakes, mutes, half-valves, and other devices, the bent tones, blue notes, and vocal timbre used by blues singers were mimicked by instrumentalists and added to the jazz vocabulary.

Prewar Era, 1900–1942

Early Jazz

By 1915, jazz had distinguished itself from other forms of African American music through an emphasis on improvisation and hot rhythm. Its first and most endearing style is generally referred to as New Orleans jazz. Many of the earliest known Jazz masters, including Buddy Bolden, Bunk Johnson, Kid Ory, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, Sidney Bechet, and Freddy Keppard, were all from New Orleans. Further, by the beginning of the twentieth century’s second decade, Jelly Roll Morton and others were beginning to fuse blues spirit and harmonic elements with ragtime and other types of African American music. As a result, New Orleans has traditionally been regarded as the birthplace of jazz. This supposition was challenged when a group of writers insisted that jazz initially surfaced in several locations, particularly in the south and southwest, simultaneously. It is generally conceded

though that New Orleans was jazz's first important center. The reason why jazz first crystallized in New Orleans may be due to the converging of several factors, not the least of which was the city's cultural diversity.

The mixed social environment created by the various layers of French, Spanish, Creole, African American, Haitian, and Indian cultures had reflections throughout the city. Musical activities ranged from European concert programs and traveling and minstrel shows to the performances of funeral, carnival, parade, and dance bands. In addition, a somewhat direct African influence emanated from Congo Square, a former slave auction site that later became an important open-air gathering place for the continuance of African and African-derived music and dancing. Finally, Storyville, the infamous red light district whose role in the birth of jazz has probably been overemphasized, encouraged a proliferation of brothels, gambling houses, and saloons where many of the early New Orleans musicians first performed.

Many of the early New Orleans jazz bands and performers, including Sidney Bechet and Jelly Roll Morton were Creoles. Until the late 1800s, this culturally distinct light-skinned group of African Americans had enjoyed a privileged position that placed them socially somewhere in between whites and blacks. Unlike their blacker counterparts, for example, many Creoles were trained musicians who had studied formally and were able to read and compose music. This changed, however, when a restrictive racial segregation law was enacted that included Creoles among those to be segregated. As time passed, non-Creoles such as Louis Armstrong and King Oliver were integrated into Creole bands.

By 1910 the diverse musical styles alluded to above had coalesced to produce a music almost exclusively associated with New Orleans. Unfortunately, no recordings have been found of jazz from this time period. How the music actually sounded can only be inferred from later recordings by New Orleans musicians, oral histories, and photographs. Cornetist Buddy Bolden is the person most often cited as the first New Orleans jazz musician. It seems fairly certain now, though, that the music he played was a mixture of ragtime and blues, perhaps with some traces of the emerging jazz feeling.

The typical New Orleans jazz group consisted of a front line and a rhythm section. The front line usually included one or more cornets, clarinet, and trombone. The rhythm section had either string bass or tuba, piano, and guitar or banjo. The function of the cornets, which were later replaced by trumpets,

was to take the melodic lead. The clarinet played a countermelody and the trombone added a melodic bass line. The rhythm section provided the beat and filled in the harmonies. Blues-based songs formed the typical New Orleans jazz ensemble's repertoire.

Collective improvisation and solo improvisation were the two main types of improvisation used in early jazz. Solo improvisation exists when musicians take solos one at a time. Collective, or group, improvisation takes place when more than one musician improvises simultaneously. Collective improvisation was the identifying feature of New Orleans-style early jazz music as well as that of the later Chicago-related Dixieland style. Collective improvisation is used in the early recordings of Kid Ory, King Oliver, and Jelly Roll Morton. It can also be heard on recordings made by white bands such as the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, the Wolverines, and Chicago's Austin High School Gang.

The first "jazz" recording was actually made in New York in 1917 by a white New Orleans-based ensemble called the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Though James Reese Europe had recorded his black syncopated orchestra as early as 1913, and while Johnny Dunn and Kid Ory had recorded by the 1920s, the first representative New Orleans-style jazz recordings by black musicians were those made in the Midwest by King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton in 1923.

The move by New Orleans jazz musicians from New Orleans to Chicago, thereby shifting the creative focus of jazz to the Midwest, is often linked to the closing of Storyville in 1917. Of greater significance was the Great Migration of southern African Americans to the north where greater economic opportunities presented themselves during the World War I years. New Orleans musicians found a receptive audience in Chicago and developed profitable solo careers. They also benefitted from a less hostile racial climate. Chicago-style Dixieland jazz came about when white musicians, inspired by the music of New Orleans jazzmen, attempted to emulate their style. In Chicago, individual solos became more important, the rhythm changed from 4/4 to 2/4, and the guitar replaced the banjo. In addition, the saxophone gained importance.

Because it can be played without outside accompaniment, the piano developed in more independent ways than other jazz band instruments. Stride piano, for example, combined the alternation of chords and single notes or octaves in the left hand with typical ragtime figures in the right. In essence it was ragtime laced with the improvisatory feel and looser rhythms of jazz. This ragtime-derived piano style proved influential on later styles of jazz. Several of the best swing

era bandleaders, including Duke Ellington, Earl “Fatha” Hines, and Count Basie, were heavily influenced by Harlem stride pianists such as James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Willie “the Lion” Smith, and Luckey Roberts. Other jazz pianists deeply indebted to stride include Teddy Wilson, Art Tatum, and Thelonious Monk. Even avant-garde bandleader Sun Ra played stride.

Boogie-woogie, another piano style, was created by untutored black musicians working in the rural south and highly developed in the house-rent parties of Chicago. Essentially a transfer of the twelve-bar blues to the piano, it involved the use of a simple repetitive bass combined with the playing of single figures with the right hand.

Big Band

Jazz continued to change as it moved north. By the time that Fletcher Henderson’s New York–based band made its first recordings in the 1920s, jazz was being played by much larger ensembles. In addition, considerable change had taken place in repertoire and style of playing. These big bands, using ten or more instrumentalists and carefully written arrangements, greatly resembled the refined dance orchestras popular at the time. While original blues formed the basis of the early jazz repertoire, jazz musicians of the 1920s began performing waltzes and popular songs. The polyphonic focus of the New Orleans front line was replaced by an antiphonal big band style. Here whole sections, often in call-and-response format with a single soloist, traded off unison or close harmony riffs (repeated figures). Whereas the typical New Orleans early jazz ensemble consisted of three horns and a rhythm section, big bands of this time generally contained a brass section consisting of three trumpets and one trombone, and three or four reeds (saxophones and clarinets). The swing bands of the 1930s were often expanded to include fifteen or more pieces. The rhythm section for the big band or swing ensemble consisted, most often, of piano, string bass, drums, and usually an acoustic guitar.

Though featured soloists were not known in the New Orleans style, the emergence of the full-fledged jazz solo improviser was probably the most important development of the big band era. No one did more to bring this change about than Louis Armstrong. Armstrong’s experiences in Chicago had demonstrated well the theatrical possibilities of successful solo building. During 1924 and 1925, while performing with the Fletcher Henderson band in New York, his impact on the band was so great that

he was almost personally responsible for its change from a straight-laced dance band to a New Orleans–influenced style that would become known as swing. The recordings Armstrong made with his own groups during the 1920s featured not only the majestic tone and fresh phrasing of his brilliant trumpet, but his distinctive singing voice as well. Louis Armstrong sang the same way that he played and thus became the model for flawless jazz phrasing. He also popularized scat singing, which substituted nonsense syllables for words. His recordings of “Body and Soul” and “Stardust” during the 1930s demonstrated his uncanny ability to redefine popular songs in the jazz tradition. Armstrong’s 1929 fronting of a big band in New York presaged the movement toward Harlem as the new jazz capital and swing big bands as the prevailing sound. It also underscored the decline of Chicago and Chicago-style jazz.

Many of the greatest swing big bands, however, were not from Harlem but from Kansas City and the southwest. Known as territory bands, these groups had a much closer contact with the blues than those based in New York. In the bands that performed in Kansas City’s clubs and casinos, jazz and blues became so tightly fused that musicians made little or no distinction between the two. Kansas City, a terminal point for many vaudeville shows, a meeting place for country and city blues, and host to an extensive collection of mob-owned after-hours nightclubs, was the most important center for territory bands. A Kansas City jazz band style had been introduced in the early 1920s by Bennie Moten’s group. Count Basie, the pianist in the band during its final stage, brought the core of that band to New York in 1936. Marked by looser, four-to-the-bar rhythms, freer styles of soloing, and the extensive use of repeated figures called riffs, the Count Basie band, more than any other, featured the blues. It introduced a new generation of hard-swinging soloists that included Lester Young, Hershel Evans, and Buck Clayton as well as vocalist Jimmy Rushing. Rushing symbolized blues singers featured in the bands of Kansas City and the territories who, because of their strong voices and performance styles, were labeled blues shouters. Other influential singers from this category include Oran “Hot Lips” Page, Joe Williams, and Big Joe Turner. Turner’s “Shake Rattle and Roll” became one of early rock ‘n’ roll’s biggest hits when covered by Bill Haley and the Comets.

Interest in jazz and the blues was stimulated in 1938 when producer John Hammond rediscovered boogie-woogie pianist Meade “Lux” Lewis in Chicago. In addition to initiating the return of Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson, Jimmy Yancey, and other

boogie-woogie pianists to positions of prominence, the rediscovery resulted in a temporary boogie-woogie craze. Although a piano style, boogie-woogie was successfully adapted for the big bands of Lionel Hampton, Count Basie, Erskine Hawkins, and others. Many white swing bandleaders including Woody Herman, Gene Krupa, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Bob Crosby, Les Brown, and Glenn Miller added up-tempo boogie-woogie numbers to their books during the 1940s.

The big band swing era was the only time that jazz could truly be considered the popular music of America. From the late 1920s through the early 1940s, dance bands led by Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, Jimmie Lunceford, Andy Kirk, Teddy Hill, and Earl "Fatha" Hines, as well as those of Chick Webb, Cab Calloway, and Lionel Hampton, competed with the white bands of Benny Goodman, Paul Whiteman, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, and a host of others.

The band vocalist was another phenomenon that characterized the swing era. Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Peggy Lee, Jimmy Rushing, Louis Jordan, and Frank Sinatra, among others, appeared as big band singers during this time.

The ascension of the soloist made celebrities out of jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong who became "stars" in both black and white communities in Europe as well as the United States. The big band era also introduced tenor saxophone stars such as Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster.

Bebop and Modern Jazz Era, 1942–1959

Bebop

Charlie Parker came to New York in the early 1940s as an alto saxophonist in the southwestern band led by Jay McShann. This band, largely through Parker's innovations, was carrying the seeds of bebop. Parker, whose extraordinary technical facility and harmonic prowess was rooted in the Kansas City blues tradition, was to set the stage for the next generation of jazz musicians. Though bebop is often referred to as a reaction to big bands and swing, it is interesting to note that all of the bebop pioneers drew on their prior performance experiences with swing musicians, often in big bands. Earl Hines, Billy Eckstine, Coleman Hawkins, and Cootie Williams were mentors to many beboppers, while the big band led by Dizzy Gillespie in 1945 and 1946 was one of the first great bebop groups.

After Charlie Parker left Jay McShann, for example, he and Gillespie worked together in bands led by Hines and Eckstine, while Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell performed in groups led by Cootie Williams. Nonetheless, dissatisfactions did abound. Bebop's genesis was rooted in a perceived need for fundamental changes in the basic elements of melody, harmony, and rhythm. Inspired by the virtuosic playing and harmonic sophistication of players like pianist Art Tatum and tenor saxophonists Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins in the early 1940s, Parker and Gillespie moved toward a music noted for its complexity and a brand new difficult repertoire. Pianists Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell, and others such as trumpeter Fats Navarro and bassist Charles Mingus, were also founding members, as were white musicians such as pianists Lennie Tristano and Al Haig and alto saxophonist Lee Konitz.

Extended harmonies, flatted fifths, rhythmic complexity, and a return to the blues characterized bebop. A cult-like atmosphere enveloped its arrival that influenced the dress, speech, and mannerisms of its devotees. It was during this time that the concept of being "hip" and "cool" developed. The first hints of bebop emerged when drummer Kenny Clarke transferred the time-keeping function of the drum set from the bass drum to the high-hat cymbal, reserving the bass drum for rhythmic accents. This style was adopted by young drummers such as Max Roach and Art Blakey. Meanwhile, instrumental soloists were busily extending the harmonic limits of the blues and popular songs and struggling to develop a new but difficult to comprehend tonal vocabulary.

In the same sense that the New Orleans style defined early jazz, bebop established performance practices and procedures for what is still called modern jazz. The standard ensembles of bebop were small and generally consisted of a rhythm section of piano, bass, and drums and one or two horns. Solo format in the usual bebop combo included a statement of the theme in unison, improvised solos several choruses in length by each soloist, and a restatement of the theme in unison to take it out. Bebop brought to jazz a new repertoire of standards often based on the twelve-bar blues or derived from the chord changes of George Gershwin's "I've Got Rhythm." Beboppers experimented with everything. They played Latin jazz, they recorded with string accompaniments, and they experimented with the sonorities of twentieth-century European concert music. Sophisticated compositions and improvisations were increasingly geared toward listening. Bebop reached its height of popularity not in the dance hall but in the nightclubs and after-hours clubs of Harlem and

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52nd street. Jazz solos became more rhythmically adventurous and tempos became faster as the music was relieved of its dance function.

New Orleans Revival, Rhythm and Blues, and Mainstream

Suddenly the pre-World War II jazz world erupted. Changes initiated by bebop's arrival, the lackluster swing scene, and restrictions due to the war effort sent the swing band environment into a tailspin. New taxes on cabarets and dance halls forced many venues to cut operating expenses. This led some to hire smaller bands and others to close. Many bandmen were drafted into the army. Gas rationing made touring increasingly difficult. The rationing of materials necessary for the manufacture of phonograph

records and a ban on recording called by the American Federation of Musicians brought instrumental recording to a virtual halt for a two-year period.

Purists seized the opportunity to push for a return to the basics. Buoyed by the rediscovery of New Orleans trumpeter Bunk Johnson and the desire to find, present, and record jazz pioneers, they envisioned a return to the so-called "Golden Age of Jazz" that existed during the 1920s. In the wake of the 1938 "From Spirituals to Swing" concert at New York's Carnegie Hall and an interest in early jazz bubbling just beneath the surface since the swing era began, jazz in the 1940s saw a New Orleans revival and bebop running concurrently. The revival secured the continuation of the New Orleans tradition both at home and abroad. Because blues was so vital to early jazz expression, the revival also underscored its seminal position in the formation of jazz.



A crowd lines up for a 1947 jazz performance at New York City's Apollo Theater. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Discontented swing musicians accused bebop of being an elitist style and the reason why jazz was no longer America's popular music. While the argument has some merit, it is difficult to say conclusively that bebop was solely responsible for ending jazz's popular rein. Big bands, for example, were struggling years before bebop arrived. By the 1950s even the Count Basie and Duke Ellington bands were suffering the effects of economic problems and the dance rhythms emanating from R&B and early rock 'n' roll.

R&B artists such as Louis Jordan began filling the void left by dance-oriented swing bands and big band vocalists. Jordan, a saxophonist and former singer with the Chick Webb band, was one of the most popular performers of the 1940s. With his Tympany Five, a jump band that bridged the gap between swing and R&B, Jordan launched many similar groups and paved the way for rock 'n' roll. Using a shuffle boogie style, witty lyrics, and lively saxophone playing, the group produced a series of chart busters starting in the early 1940s that included "I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town" (1942), "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby" (1944), and "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie" (1946).

In 1944, a traveling jam session called Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) was organized by impresario Norman Grant. Featuring an all-star lineup of mainstream jazz performers, JATP was a well-organized venture that has served as a model for the jazz festivals that have followed. Mainstream was a swing-oriented style that included the more easily absorbed elements of bop. Under the JATP banner, artists such as Lester Young, Illinois Jacquet, Flip Phillips, Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, Gene Krupa, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Coleman Hawkins, Billie Holiday, and a long list of others performed in concert halls and auditoriums all over the world. Its great success was seen as a sign that audiences had been starving for the exciting extended improvised solos that had been increasingly absent in dance-oriented swing ensembles.

Cool Jazz, Hard Bop, and Modal Jazz

As the 1950s approached, the tendency toward unrest and excitement was replaced by a move toward calm and smoothness. Experiments with strings and European concert music influenced pianist John Lewis and former Charlie Parker trumpeter Miles Davis who led the way to a style later called "cool jazz." During the late 1940s, Davis began an association with a group of white musicians that led to the establishment of an unusual and historically important nine-piece group. This group, with arrangements by Gil Evans and featuring "non-jazz" instruments such as french

horn and tuba, set the tone for the cool jazz sound and the era that was to follow. Evans, who had arranged for Claude Thornhill's band, established an important orchestral palette for the Miles Davis sound during the following decade. The ensemble's elegant, relaxed rhythms, complex and progressive harmonies, and intimate solo styles proved enormously influential to white musicians such as Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, Lennie Tristano, Dave Brubeck, George Shearing, and Stan Getz, as well as to John Lewis's Modern Jazz Quartet.

Cool jazz was a highly structured understated cerebral style that placed emphasis on what has been called the tuneful aspects of melody and played down the bluesy aspects of jazz performance. With the use of a less active, quieter rhythm section and an emphasis on ensemble precision and light vibratoless controlled sounds, it leaned more toward European performance practices than those of the African diaspora.

Davis maintained his interest in large ensemble-arranged music through the 1950s. Renewing his collaboration with Gil Evans in 1957, he continued his experiments with orchestrations derived from European concert music. This partnership resulted in the production of two of the most artistically and commercially successful albums of the era, *Porgy and Bess* (1958) and *Sketches of Spain* (1959).

Cool school experimentations ultimately resulted in a complete merging of jazz and European classical musical elements into a unified entity. Given the title "third stream" by white composer Gunther Schuller, this marriage has not been altogether successful among jazz audiences. Its concepts have been embraced, though, by such stellar jazz composers as John Lewis and George Russell.

In addition to cool jazz, Miles Davis managed to be in the forefront of a surprising number of other jazz styles. Included among those was hard bop, the other major trend of the 1950s. Hard bop, an aggressive bop played with a bluesy, funky delivery, featured long intense solos like those common to the 1930s cutting contests. Set in a riff-based, gospel-tinged framework and driven by the backbeat inflections of rhythm and blues, it includes among its exponents Horace Silver, Art Blakey and his Jazz Messengers, Sonny Rollins, Clifford Brown, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, and Cannonball Adderly. Miles Davis's 1954 album *Walkin'* is considered to be the seminal work that signaled the change from cool jazz to hard bop.

Miles Davis's popular and influential album *Kind of Blue* (1959) introduced modal jazz. In modal jazz, improvisation is generated by modes or scales rather than by the usual chord changes. The use of modal

scales slows down the harmonies and presents almost limitless possibilities for melodic extensions. These could, if desired, border on the brink of atonality. The members of Davis's ensemble on the recording included John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderly, and white pianist Bill Evans. Coltrane and Evans in particular incorporated this modal approach into their future work.

Breakdown of Blues Forms and Scales and the Reaffirmation of Older Black Music Forms in Jazz, 1960–1967

By the early 1960s jazz was reaching yet another crossroad. It was about to confront its biggest revolution since bebop. Change was taking place on many fronts and in many areas. Swing era jazz masters like Lester Young and Billie Holiday had died. So had Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Clifford Brown, and other younger innovators whose premature deaths were due to heroin addition, mental illness, or accidents. Rhythmic and harmonic conventions established during the swing era had, since that time, been bent, reworked, and manipulated to the point of shattering. A growing number of players were beginning to feel that all possibilities had been exhausted. They reached the conclusion that running chord changes chained them to the background of the music and allowed them no room for true musical expression.

With this as a backdrop, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, and John Coltrane led the way for a whole new generation of musicians that included Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp, Marion Brown, Bill Dixon, Sun Ra, and Don Cherry. These artists embraced what was to become known as avant-garde or free jazz. In free jazz, implied tempos, unexpected harmonies and timbres, and often intense and lengthy solos were substituted for the swinging rhythms and melodies of traditional jazz. By the mid-1960s, even the theme–solo–theme structure so necessary to postwar jazz was being discarded. Instead a dissonant brand of collective improvisation was used; one that was similar to the energetic polyphony of early jazz. In an effort to play pure emotion, new roles were assigned to both soloist and accompanists. Timbre itself became a structural element focused on the projection of individualized sound. In its use of squeals, shouts, cries, moans, and blue notes, free jazz produced vocalized sound not too far removed from the melisma of early blues singers. It is perhaps no accident that Ornette Coleman and several other important free jazz players, including John Coltrane, Albert

Ayler, and Pharaoh Sanders, had worked in rhythm and blues bands before becoming jazz artists.

Ornette Coleman is the person generally acknowledged to be most responsible for these changes in the music. His blues-based and strongly rhythmic music contained radical approaches to tone and tonality. Coleman's use of extremes of range including harmonics, purposely split notes, and his deliberate attempts to add colors by playing "out of tune" drew massive criticism from the community of well-tempered ears. In his album *Free Jazz* (1960), Coleman grouped eight musicians into two quartets and had them play against each other—improvising collectively and as soloists. The musicians had no previous rehearsal and the free improvisations were not based on pre-determined melodies, chord progressions, or structures. Five years later this same structural scheme was used to great effect by John Coltrane and a group of eleven players on his album *Ascension* (1965).

Free jazz musicians received inspiration from the civil rights activities that dominated the period. Using their music to address issues of race, black nationalism, and related concerns, they became extremely active in contemporary politics. They were often joined by Max Roach, Charles Mingus, and others from the previous generation. Many visited Africa during the 1960s, and some converted to Islam. Amiri Baraka and others in the Black Arts Movement considered the extended solos of John Coltrane to be authentic African American forms of great spiritual value.

The more that free jazz moved outside musical norms, however, the more it was berated by both traditional musicians and members of the general jazz audience alike. By the late 1960s, many free jazz musicians were seeking a way to move their alienated black audience back into the fold. Once again, it was Miles Davis who was in the forefront.

Jazz Since 1967

During the late 1960s, Miles Davis began incorporating electric instruments along with funk, rhythm and blues, and rock rhythms into his recorded work. This blending of traditional jazz styles with contemporary rock gave birth to fusion or jazz rock. Fusion became a controversial style that inspired accusations that Davis was selling out to the demand of commercial success. His hallmark album *Bitches Brew* (1969) fused jazz with almost every idiom then popular and shaped the style of the most popular jazz groups of the 1970s. *Bitches Brew* not only legitimized a whole

new area of exploration and experimentation, but broadened the audience for jazz as well.

Spin-off groups led by former members of Miles Davis's various electric ensembles included Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters*, Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul's *Weather Report*, Chick Corea's *Return to Forever*, and John McLaughlin's *Mahavishnu Orchestra*. These groups enjoyed tremendous success with mass audiences and set the tone for the 1970s jazz rock movement.

In the 1970s, the purist mantle was carried by the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). The Chicago-based organization was founded in 1965 by Muhal Richard Abrams and involved a group of musicians who had been playing in the city since the early 1960s. Espousing ideas of racial pride, artistic freedom, and economic independence, the AACM and its St. Louis offshoot, the Black Artists Group, have spearheaded many of the most important developments in jazz since the mid-1970s. AACM members Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill, and musicians from the Art Ensemble of Chicago, the most famous of the performing groups to grow out of the AACM, have all been important exponents of what they call creative music. With 1960s free jazz as a starting place, they used anything they found helpful from the entire ragtime to free jazz experience. AACM members also experimented with serialism, chromaticism, polytonality, and the use of extended unaccompanied solo on instruments other than the piano.

At no point in jazz history were as many options open to the jazz musician as there were in the 1980s and 1990s. Technological advances, the continued breaking of barriers between jazz styles, the broadening scope of cultural interactions, and a new emphasis on scholarship and institutional support set the framework for a new age of exploration.

The institutionalization of jazz in the 1980s was reflective of a growing interest in many areas of African American culture. Universities, symphonies, museums, and government agencies established programs that secured the position of jazz as an important national art form. By the 1980s, jazz masters were being honored and granted public awards at Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center; and local, state, and federal grants were being awarded in increasing numbers for jazz research, composition, and education. By the mid-1980s, a National Jazz Service Organization had been installed whose mission was to coordinate activities and function as a support system for the field of jazz nationwide. Jazz orchestras dedicated to preserving the repertoire and fostering new jazz compositions were established at the

Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., as well as at New York City's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. In addition, jazz was being integrated into the repertoires of traditional symphony orchestras.

Since the 1970s, jazz musicians such as Mary Lou Williams, Max Roach, Archie Shepp, Jackie McLean, Donald Byrd, Bill Dixon, and Anthony Braxton, among many others, have held positions in universities throughout the nation. Though a history of formally trained musicians exists that extends from Lil Hardin Armstrong to Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis, an increasingly large proportion of the best young jazz musicians now come from conservatories or university music departments. This type of training has presented to the field of jazz not only avant-gardists such as David Murray and Anthony Davis, who are firmly rooted in the broader jazz tradition, but bebop-derived traditionalists like Wynton Marsalis who has spearheaded a movement that has restored jazz to a level of prominence it has not seen for a great number of years.

Jazz is a pluralistic music. From the "Spanish Tinge" of Jelly Roll Morton's time to the world music explorations of John Coltrane, Yusef Lateef, Don Cherry, and Collin Walcott, jazz has adapted anything around it that might broaden its range. By the mid-1960s, jazz had made special use of Cuban and Brazilian rhythms, scales from India and the near east, and instruments from many parts of the world. Toward the end of the 1980s, a case had been made for the building of bridges between cultures along with a search for common roots and a universal energy. A staggering number of ethnic fusion and crossover styles have resulted worldwide. While improper preparation in cultural studies has led overall to superficiality, this is fertile ground that could reap enormous benefits in the future. Shakti, the Codono trio, and Oregon are three of the most integrated world music groups.

Fusion and crossover in the jazz and contemporary arena ranged from the jazz-flavored offerings of smooth jazz to cutting-edge free improvisations on funk and hip-hop foundations. Acid jazz, for example, was basically a dance music developed in London dance clubs during the 1980s. It combined jazz, soul, funk, and hip-hop in a somewhat updated version of the 1970s-style fusion performed by Donald Byrd and the Blackbirds. Working from another vantage point, major jazz players such as Max Roach and Brandford Marsalis, along with Steve Coleman and Greg Osby of Brooklyn's M-BASE collective, have experimented with the sounds of funk and hip-hop in more ambitious but traditionally oriented ways.

As jazz enters its second century, an eclectic assortment of younger musicians such as saxophonist

Joshua Redman, pianist Geri Allen, singer Cassandra Wilson, and trumpeter Nicholas Payton are joined in their quest to improvise of the history of jazz by veterans like pianist Andrew Hill who have reemerged with forward looking ideas for the twenty-first century.

LEONARD GOINES

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JEFFERSON, BLIND LEMON

b. 24 September 1893; Couchman, TX
 d. December 1929; Chicago, IL

Blues singer and guitarist. Jefferson is one of the most original and creative forces in American vernacular music. The first country blues artist to achieve national popularity, he has had a unique impact on blues culture from the 1920s into the present. His reputation rests largely on a series of approximately one hundred recordings made for the Paramount record company between 1926 and his premature death in 1929.

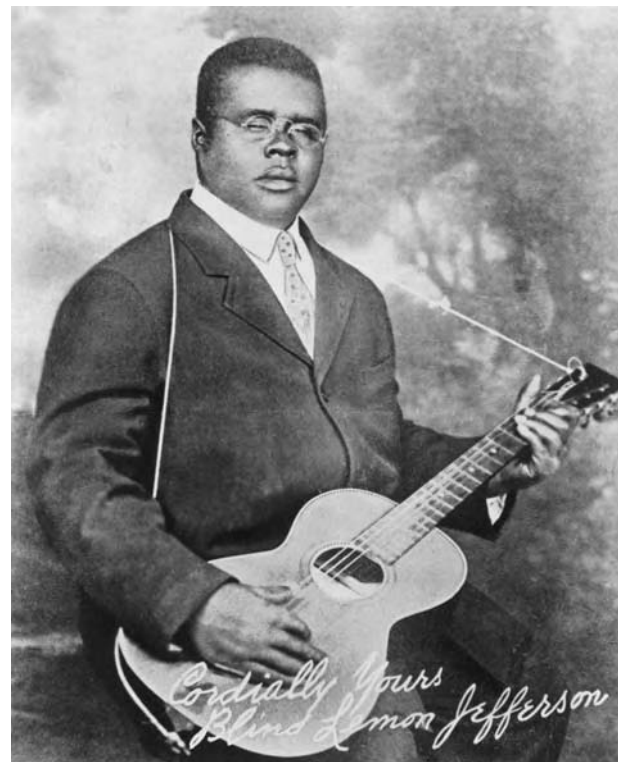
Life

Little is known for sure about Jefferson aside from the bare facts of his biography. The youngest of seven children, he was born and raised on a small farm owned by his parents Alec and Classie in Freestone County sixty miles south of Dallas. It is unclear

whether he was born with his visual handicap or whether it was the result of childhood injury or illness; in either case, there is a mass of circumstantial evidence to suggest that he was at least partially sighted rather than completely blind. Little is known of Jefferson's childhood, or his early musical involvement and influences.

Throughout his career, Jefferson worked as an itinerant musician, singing and accompanying himself on the guitar. (He also worked for a time as a bootlegger and, according to one source, as a wrestler.) He would wander from town to town, playing wherever he would be paid—at parties, picnics, on street corners, in brothels, barrelhouses, saloons, and perhaps even churches.

He started working professionally in his teens. By 1912, he was working over a wide area of Texas, including East Dallas, Silver City, Galveston, and Waco. For a time, he seems to have been based in Deep Ellum, the sporting house district of Dallas. Later in the 1910s, he began traveling further afield, to Arizona in 1917 and elsewhere. During the 1920s, he wandered extensively throughout the South, including Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia, and the Carolinas.



A “signed” publicity photo of Blind Lemon Jefferson. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

While it would seem he was most happy performing solo, he also worked with others, either as a duo or occasionally as part of a small group. His most important musical association was with his fellow Texan Leadbelly, with whom he traveled around 1916. He also associated with a number of other musicians, some of whom (such as T-Bone Walker and Lightnin' Hopkins) went on to become major blues stars.

In late 1925, Jefferson was brought to the attention of the Paramount record company by Dallas music store owner R. T. Ashford. Paramount's signing of Jefferson was a courageous move, for his earthy sound and raw delivery were fundamentally different from the sophisticated approach of the female-dominated commercial blues market of the time. Paramount probably hoped that Jefferson would open up a market for down-home blues, just as white violinist Fiddlin' John Carson had managed to do for authentic hillbilly music with his 1923 recordings for OKeh.

The gamble paid off. Jefferson's records were an instant success and catapulted him from regional obscurity to national celebrity within the black community. For the remaining three years of his life, Jefferson recorded prolifically for Paramount's Race series and, on one occasion in 1927, for OKeh. He was probably the top-selling male blues artist of the 1920s, paving the way for a legion of rural blues recordings over the next decade.

Despite his success, which allowed him to maintain a chauffeur-driven Ford and a healthy bank balance, Jefferson's lifestyle was little affected. While he spent time in Chicago—where most of his recordings were made—he continued to work as an itinerant performer in the South. He died in mysterious circumstances in Chicago in December 1929, possibly of a heart attack or by freezing to death on the streets after losing his way during a blizzard.

Little is known of his personal life. It seems he married during the 1920s (his wife's name was Roberta and there are also reports of a son, Miles), though there is nothing to suggest that he ever settled into a stable domestic life. There are various legends about his personality—that he was alcoholic, that he physically abused his wife, for example—but there is no clear evidence to support these assertions.

Music

It is fortunate that Jefferson's recorded legacy, made over such a comparatively brief period, is so substantial. Nearly all of his records are self-accompanied on

the guitar, though on a handful he is accompanied by piano. Most are of blues, a fact that probably reflects Jefferson's personal preference as well as those of the record-buying public. However, it is important to remember that Jefferson, like most other African American street musicians of his era, was as much a songster as he was a specialist blues musician, with a wide repertoire of gospel songs, spirituals, ragtime, and other folk material at his disposal.

Jefferson's style is an idiosyncratic blend of various southern idioms encountered during his extensive wanderings, in particular those of the Mississippi Delta and his native Texas. Nearly all his blues are in the standard three-lines-per-stanza format and use a conventional AAB text structure with melodies transplanted directly from the folk idiom. These elements aside, almost everything about his approach is startlingly personal.

His singing voice is one of the most distinctive in all blues, combining elemental power with a wide range, natural flexibility, and the frequent use of ornamentation. His phrasing is particularly unusual, with individual lines being shortened or lengthened according to his whim. For this reason, his blues are hardly ever exactly twelve bars long. For example, the opening stanza of the second recording of "Long Lonesome Blues," his first hit, is 16½ measures long, each of its three lines freely elongated. Although such asymmetry is not uncommon in early country blues artists, Jefferson carries it to an extreme: In his characteristic work, very little is regularly phrased.

Jefferson's guitar playing is outstanding both creatively and technically. He is noted mainly for his accompaniments (his only solo guitar recording is the virtuoso ragtime number "Hot Dogs"). These show a variety of approaches. Non-blues items such as the spiritual "He Arose from the Dead" and the proto-blues "Beggin' Back," along with four-line blues like "Wartime Blues," "One Dime Blues," and "See My Grave Is Kept Clean," are all accompanied in traditional style with the guitar mainly acting as a rhythmic backdrop for the voice. For straight blues, however, the guitar takes a greatly expanded role, frequently breaking the rhythm to provide a stark counterpoint to the voice. The tension between voice and guitar is enhanced by Jefferson's remarkable ability to handle the two lines independently, so much so that, when listening, it is often hard to conceive of the voice and guitar being the work of one man.

Another distinctive element of Jefferson's style is his improvisatory approach. Alternate takes of the same composition are never exactly alike. Jefferson constantly tinkers with details of performance like phrasing and timing. Accompaniments are often substantially improvised. For example, the guitar parts of

the two surviving versions of "Got the Blues" draw on a common stock of ideas, but combine them in quite different ways. Lyrics are also altered between performances, most often to a minor extent. However, in certain instances, such as "Got the Blues" and "Matchbox Blues," more than two-thirds of the lyrics were probably improvised during the recording. Jefferson's spontaneous risk-taking gives an exciting edge to his performances. The sense of waywardness is at times increased by small fluctuations in tempo that often result in a momentary loss of the beat (for example, the first line of "Got the Blues," first version).

Jefferson is widely regarded as one of the greatest of blues poets. His use of metaphor is particularly striking. For example, the famous opening of "Got the Blues," where the blues is described as coming to Texas "loping like a mule." He is impressive not just for ability to create vivid images of this sort but, where appropriate, to extend them, which he does in a most imaginative fashion. The lyric for "That Crawling Baby Blues," recorded less than three months before his death, is based entirely on the metaphor of the baby as lover, on which it elaborates for its five verses. The result is one of the most compelling and harrowing statements of sexual rejection to be found in all folk poetry.

It is convenient to subdivide Jefferson's recording career into two periods, from ca. December 1925 to ca. October 1927, and from ca. February 1928 to September 1929. In the first period Jefferson's blues are mainly nonthematic and predominantly use traditional texts. During the second period, they are mostly thematic and mainly use nontraditional texts. (Some of these blues may have been the work of other composers although there is controversy over this point.) It seems likely that this change of direction came not from Jefferson but from Paramount, which was attempting to consolidate his commercial appeal. The fact that the blues from the second period are closer in approach to the commercial norm of the day has drawn much criticism. Certainly they are more conventional in certain ways than the recordings of the first period. But they are still of a remarkably high standard, and in fact it could be argued that the use of a thematic text allows Jefferson to develop his poetic imagery in a way that is not possible with a nonthematic text.

Influence

Jefferson's influence on his contemporaries was profound, as it was essentially through his agency that

rural blues moved into the mainstream. His importance is shown by his being the first artist featured in *The Paramount Book of the Blues* (a ca. 1927 publication celebrating the company's top-selling race artists); by his inclusion on the 1929 Hometown Skiffle record by the Paramount All Stars; and by tributes after his death by Washboard Walter and John Byrd ("Wasn't It Sad About Lemon?") and Reverend Emmett Dickinson ("Death of Blind Lemon"; both tracks are 1930, Pm 12945). Jefferson has also had a seminal influence on later blues artists. Indeed almost every musician who plays country blues has felt his impact directly or otherwise. A number of his songs have become classics and have been much covered by other artists, particularly "Matchbox Blues," "Got the Blues," "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean," and "Black Snake Moan." His impact on popular culture in general is seen in the naming of various organizations in his honor, including the rock bands Jefferson Airplane and Blind Melon, the Swedish blues magazine *Jefferson*, and various blues clubs in North America.

PETER MUIR

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JEFFERSON, BONNIE

b. Bonnie Lewis, 28 June 1919; Shoal Creek, AR

Singer and guitarist of pre-blues and country blues. Married Calvin Jefferson in 1949 and soon left Arkansas for Nebraska, then to the West Coast and San Diego. Initially learned guitar as a child, but became more interested in the instrument in the 1930s. Came to public attention through the efforts of guitarist Thomas Shaw and writer Lou Curtiss.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography: Harris

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JEFFREY, ROBERT ERNEST LEE "BOB"

b. 14 January 1915; Tulsa, OK
d. 20 July 1976; San Diego, CA

Piano was Jeffrey's preferred instrument, but he could also play guitar in the style of Blind Lemon Jefferson. He moved to Bakersfield, California, in the 1930s as part of the Dust Bowl migration, then to San Diego during World War II. In the 1970s he was part of the

San Diego blues circle that included Tom Shaw and Bonnie Jefferson.

EDWARD KOMARA

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JEMF (JOHN EDWARDS MEMORIAL FOUNDATION)

Founded in 1962 by the estate of John Edwards, the JEMF is an archive for early "hillbilly" and "race" music. In 1986, the collection left the University of California at Los Angeles to join the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The JEMF has reissued blues, gospel, and old-time recordings on LP.

OLIVIA CARTER MATHER

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JENKINS, BOBO

b. John Pickens Jenkins, 7 January 1916; Forkland, AL
d. 15 August 1984; Detroit, MI

An important member of the Detroit circle of down-home blues musicians of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Ronert P. "Bobo" Jenkins made his mark not only as a singer and guitarist, but as a promoter and record label owner. Jenkins had sung in a gospel quartet and played harmonica in Mississippi, and after serving in the army decided to move to Detroit. He was befriended by John Lee Hooker, who helped Jenkins get his first song recorded with Chess Records—the politically themed "Democrat Blues" of 1954. Jenkins would later update the lyric to "Watergate Blues" for his own Big Star label. Jenkins also had singles on the Boxer, Duchess, and Fortune labels. His Big Star operation began in 1964; three albums and several singles by Jenkins and other local artists were issued in the 1970s, when Jenkins helped to organize and promote Detroit's blues scene, which was overshadowed by the city's fame as the home of Motown.

JENKINS, BOBO

Like most other Detroit bluesmen, Jenkins worked by day in an automotive factory. The Big Star records he made in his studio by an assortment of mostly little known artists often had a rough, homegrown quality that limited their initial sales but have made them prime collectors' items today among blues and funk fans.

JIM O'NEAL

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Discography: LSFP

JENKINS, DUKE

b. Herman Jenkins, 11 October 1928; Malvern, OH

Pianist, singer, and bandleader based in the Cleveland, Ohio, area from 1946 through the 1990s. His career highlights include recording sessions for Aristocrat (1949) and Cobra (1956–1957), a Cleveland television show (1955–1956), booking and promotions from Dave Clark (1956–1957), and a residency at the Eden Roc Hotel, Miami Beach (1959–1962).

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

JENKINS, GUS

b. 24 March 1931; Birmingham, AL
d. 22 December 1985; Los Angeles, CA

Pianist and vocalist, influenced by Walter Davis. Recorded for Chess in 1953 and then moved to Los Angeles, recording for Specialty, Combo, Cash, and Flash, and for his own Pioneer International and General Artists labels (he also leased sides to Tower and SAR). Jenkins retired from music as the 1960s ended. He took the Islamic name Jaarone Pharaoh.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: LSFP

See also **Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet; Combo; Davis, Walter; Flash; SAR/Derby**

JENKINS, JOHNNY

b. 1939; Macon, GA

Rhythm and blues guitarist and singer. During much of his career he was associated with Capricorn label founder Phil Walden, who supervised Jenkins's albums *Ton-Ton Macoute!* (1970) and *Blessed Blues* (1996). He stayed mostly in Macon, Georgia, but personally knew Otis Redding and Jimi Hendrix.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

JESUS IS A DYING BED MAKER (IN MY TIME OF DYING)

"Jesus Is a Dying Bed Maker" or, as it is also known, "In My Time of Dying" was first recorded by Blind Willie Johnson for Paramount Records on December 3, 1927. Johnson, a gospel singer with a strong blues influence in his performances, set a standard with his rendition of this song that would be followed for decades. His use of a pocketknife as a slide to mimic different sections of the melody line, especially its repetitive chorus, was to be interpreted and embellished on by many artists including Charlie Patton, Bob Dylan (reportedly using a lipstick canister as a slide), and the British rock group Led Zeppelin.

Most of Johnson's work can be traced to early gospel origins where praising Jesus on one's dying bed is a common theme in the lyrical content of these songs. Johnson would not have considered himself a blues singer and, therefore, would not have drawn his inspiration from the burgeoning blues movement of his day but rather from the wealth of country gospel music in which he immersed himself. To illustrate this common theme in spiritual music, it is beneficial to consider the Jubilee Gospel Team's recording of "Lower My Dying Head," which was

recorded less than a year after Johnson's version in September 1928. The fact that these songs, recorded in such a narrow time frame, share the common "death-bed scene" as well as a similar refrain and verse structure implies that Johnson's version is most likely a hybrid of lyrics and melodies from several different country church songs that he undoubtedly would have pieced together himself.

It can be argued that Johnson's development of this song is accomplished through the folk process within the gospel music setting. Charlie Patton's October 1929 recording for Paramount Records was the earliest of various performances by blues musicians. Other renditions by black secular musicians include those by Josh White, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Big Joe Williams, and Leadbelly. The reissues of these performances on LP records in the 1960s would enable the adoption of the song by folk-blues revival musicians and by rock bands.

Bob Dylan, in his self-titled debut album of 1961, uses a similar approach to Johnson's slide work, however, his slide emphasis relies more on the melody line mirroring the "so I can die easy" phrase rather than the "well, well, well" phrase emphasized by Johnson and Patton. Dylan's popularity, much like Patton's, ensured that this song would reach an entirely new generation of listeners. After the folk-blues revival of the 1960s waned, this song was to be interpreted by such mainstream artists as Led Zeppelin and John Mellencamp. Mellencamp's use of a dobro-style slide and backup female singers keeps his version of this song closely tied to its country gospel roots, whereas, Led Zeppelin's eleven-minute rock "epic," from their 1975 album *Physical Graffiti*, uses a repetitive electric slide phrase reminiscent of the acoustic slide work of Bob Dylan fifteen years earlier.

BRYAN GROVE

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JEWEL/PAULA/RONN

Jewel was established by Stan Lewis in 1963 in Shreveport, Louisiana. In 1948 he opened his first retail record store in a small chain that would come to be known as Stan's Record Shop, and he advertised his business through sponsoring radio broadcasts on clear channel stations in Shreveport and Little Rock, Arkansas. By the end of the 1950s he was one of the largest record retailers in the South. After

starting Jewel, Lewis added the Paula, Ronn, and Sue subsidiaries. His labels concentrated on blues, soul, and gospel, recording Lightnin' Hopkins, Lowell Fulson, Ted Taylor, Jerry McCain, and Frank Frost. Later he acquired and reissued 1950s blues recordings of defunct independent Chicago labels such as Cobra, Chief, and JOB.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: McGrath

JOB (J.O.B.)

Chicago blues label prominent in the 1950s. Although JOB was primarily a deep blues label, it also released gospel, soul, pop, calypso, and jazz material. Its blues artists included Floyd Jones, Sunnyland Slim, Snooky Pryor, J. B. Lenoir, Eddie Boyd, Johnny Shines, Little Hudson, Willie Cobbs, and King Kolax. In the early days of the label, recording was done professionally in the best studios in Chicago; latter-day JOBs were recorded as cheaply as possible, sometimes on location, and often sounded pretty rough. The label was opened in 1949 by Joe Brown (1897–1976) and presumed partner James Burke Oden (St. Louis Jimmy). During 1952, JOB scored a number one R&B chart hit in "Five Long Years" by Eddie Boyd. In 1953 Brown established a strategic alliance with Chance that produced a string of first-rate blues sessions, but by the end of the year JOB was back on its own again. There were further waves of recording activity in late 1956 (after the failure of the Abco label, which Brown had invested in); in 1958–1959, when Brown took over the Oriole label and got involved with the Ruler label; and in 1960. Thereafter, activity on JOB was increasingly sporadic. Joe Brown sold most of his masters to Jewel Records in 1972 and closed down JOB in 1974.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

JOE DAVIS/DAVIS/BEACON

A music publisher since the dawn of the commercial recording business, Joseph Morton Davis had been a successful musical entrepreneur for nearly thirty years before setting up the Joe Davis Music Co. Inc. in New York City in late 1941. Beacon Records was incorporated early the following year (the name being taken from one of Davis's composer pseudonyms) and recorded the likes of Savannah Churchill, teenage boogie-woogie sensation Deryck Sampson, country blues guitarist Gabriel Brown, and jive vocal group the 5 Red Caps. By 1944, Davis's empire expanded with a string of new record labels, including Celebrity, a revitalized Gennett, and the eponymous "Joe Davis," the latter of which was responsible for some fine Champion Jack Dupree recordings. In early 1946, Davis launched the "Davis" record label, but within two years he had all but retired from the record business, resting on the laurels of past publishing and recording successes. From 1948 to around 1953 he leased recorded product to MGM Records; however, by 1953 he had begun to show interest in the recording business again, eventually reactivating some of his old labels and inaugurating a new label, Jay-Dee Records, to concentrate on the modern R&B sound of New York City.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography: McGrath**Selected Recordings in Reissue**

- Piano Boogie and the Blues* (1988, Krazy Kat LP KK802).
- Champion Jack Dupree: The Joe Davis Sessions 1945–1946* (1995, Flyright CD FLY22).
- Gabriel Brown: Mean Old Blues 1943–1949* (1996, Flyright CD FLY59).

JOHN HENRY

"John Henry" may be the best known folk song in the United States, and numerous blues singers from

Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry to Pink Anderson and Memphis Slim have recorded it dozens (if not hundreds) of times. Nonetheless, its foundation and composition are controversial and scholars still disagree over many essentials of its history.

We can say the song is based on real, but unidentifiable, events involving a living African American miner, or tunnel-worker, that took place in Summers County, West Virginia, during the building of the Big Bend Tunnel on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad during the period from 1870 to 1872.

In spite of the fact that John Henry was African American and that he occupies a specific terrain in African American folklore, the song has spread rapidly among whites as well as African Americans, and white musicians have had a considerable role in shaping the song into its current configuration. The white contribution to "John Henry" is evident from several perspectives. First, several early verses are similar to those found in the British ballads "Mary Hamilton" and "The Cherry Tree Carol." Other stanzas resemble "The Lass of Roch Royal." In addition, the African American folk song tradition rarely engages in the composition of lengthy narratives with such formal structure, form, and detail. Blues and blues ballads tend to be fragmentary and imaginistic commentary rather than detailed and descriptive reportage [Laws]. Henry Thomas's version of "John Henry" demonstrates these qualities.

Nonetheless, "John Henry" is a favorite among African American performers—as well as white—and the Two Poor Boys (Joe Evans and Arthur McLain) have produced an unusually intricate version of deftly interwoven guitar and mandolin lines behind the duet's singing. Big Bill Broonzy has recorded the song a number of times and his very last version is engaging and vigorous. While Broonzy displays expert flat-picking, versions by Gabriel Brown, for the Library of Congress, and Furry Lewis both display agile slide guitar styles.

There are many versions of "John Henry," most of which maintain some connection with the following stages of development: infancy and premonitions of death, the contest (and its preparations), his dying words, and the behavior of the women at the news of his death.

It is a song about work and not a work song, that is, it is not sung while working to a rhythm that matches and encourages the rhythm of the task. Related to "John Henry" is the work song, or hammer song, "Nine Pound Hammer" (a variant of which is "Take This Hammer"), which although sung to a different melody, often incorporates verses about John Henry.

Mississippi John Hurt's "Spike Driver Blues" is an excellent example of this latter combination, for its melody is that of the "Nine Pound Hammer" family, but it incorporates the line

This is the hammer that killed John Henry, but it won't kill me.

PAUL GARON

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Discography

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- Mississippi John Hurt. "Spike Driver Blues" (1928, OKeh 8692).
- Furry Lewis. "John Henry (The Steel Driving Man)" (1929, Vocalion 1474).
- Two Poor Boys. "John Henry Blues" (1931, Oriole 8080).
- Big Bill Broonzy. *Last Sessions, Part 3* (1957, Verve V-3003).
- Gabriel Brown. *Field Recordings, Volume 7, Florida 1935-1936* (Document DOCD-5587).

JOHN, LITTLE WILLIE

b. 15 November 1937; Camden, AR
d. 26 May 1968; Walla Walla, WA

Born William Edgar John in Arkansas; reference sources list birthplace as Camden or Cullendale, two towns near one another. Raised in Detroit; nicknamed "Little Willie" due to diminutive stature. John sang in a family gospel group, and by the early 1950s was guesting with big bands on their Detroit stops. At his debut session for King at age seventeen,

he turned a novelty number, "All Around the World," into a transcendent R&B gem, his first hit (1955). Subsequent hits on King (1956-1961) included the bluesy torch ballad "Need Your Love So Bad," the sensual classic "Fever," the impassioned "Talk to Me, Talk to Me," and the heavily orchestrated pop tune "Sleep." Touring in the mid-1950s, his opening act was James Brown, who later recorded a tribute album to him. A notoriously fast-living character with a hot temper, John was convicted of manslaughter for stabbing a man to death in an after-hours Seattle club and died in prison two years into his sentence. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996. Sister Mable John was a Raellette who recorded solo for Stax.

Perhaps the best measure of the awesome artistry of R&B tenor singer Little Willie John is how savvy judges of talent reacted upon hearing him. When Johnny Otis saw the then-fourteen-year-old at a 1951 Detroit amateur show, he tried to get him recorded. A couple of years later, bandleader Paul "Hucklebuck" Williams took the teenage singing prodigy on the road. After an afternoon audition in June 1955, King Records' Henry Glover rushed to record him that very night. Later, Apollo Theater manager Robert Schiffman called John "the best male singer I have ever heard," adding, "He used to send chills up and down my spine, and I never met a singer who had that kind of emotion and feeling in his songs."

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

JOHN R.

(See *Richbourg, John*)

JOHNNY NOCTURNE BAND

JOHNNY NOCTURNE BAND

West Coast band specializing in 1940s jazz and jump-blues music since the late 1980s, led by tenor saxophonist John Firmin. Through 1994 the band's featured vocalist was Brenda Boykin, since 1998 Kim Nalley.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Gilbert, Andrew. "Swingin' Horn Refuge." *Down Beat* 67, no. 9 (September 2000): 52.

Discography: AMG

JOHNSON, AL "SNUFF"

b. 10 August 1913; Cedar Creek, TX
d. 18 January 2000; Austin, TX

Aka "Alfred," "Snuff." Singer, acoustic guitarist of blues and sacred music. Performed informally on weekends at house parties or at church from the 1920s onward. His first appearances for pay were in the late 1980s, mostly in or around Austin. The professional recordings of his music were made through the efforts of writer Alan Govenar in 1994.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Govenar, Alan. "Snuff Johnson: Black Cowboy Blues." *Living Blues* no. 116 (July/August 1994): 52–53.

Discography: AMG

JOHNSON, ALVIN LEE

b. Alvin Lee Johnson, 15 March 1944;
New Orleans, LA

Singer, composer, trumpeter, pianist. Al Johnson created his Mardi Gras R&B classic, "Carnival Time," in 1960 but failed to sustain a musical career. He drove a cab for years before resurfacing on the New Orleans music scene in the 1990s.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Discography

"Carnival Time," "Lena" (1960, Ric Records).
Mardi Gras Strut (2000).

JOHNSON, BIG JACK

b. 30 July 1940; Lambert, MS

Clarksdale, Mississippi, singer/guitarist Big Jack Johnson started out at age thirteen sitting in with his father's local blues and string band. Although his early musical influences were country artists, he soon immersed himself in the blues of B. B. King, Albert King, Howlin' Wolf, and Robert Nighthawk, and quickly developed his uniquely expressive guitar style. In 1962, Johnson sat in with Delta musicians Frank Frost and Sam Carr at the Savoy Theatre in Clarksdale and was subsequently hired. The trio, billed as Frank Frost and the Nighthawks, recorded for Sam Phillips's Phillips International label later that year. The group continued to play throughout the region, sometimes with Nighthawk and Sonny Boy Williamson II, but all three would not record together again until 1978 when blues aficionado Michael Frank decided to start a label specifically to record them. Dubbed the Jelly Roll Kings (after one of the group's 1962 songs), the trio recorded *Rockin' the Juke Joint Down* for the newly formed Earwig Records, which featured Johnson as a vocalist for the first time. Johnson decided to go out on his own in 1986 and recorded *The Oil Man*, a moniker he earned from his day job as an oil truck driver. He appeared in the 1992 film *Deep Blues* and occasionally reunited with Frost and Carr. A gifted songwriter, Johnson tackled such topical subjects as AIDS, spousal and drug abuse, and gangs. He continued to lead his own band performing worldwide more than two hundred dates a year. He has recorded for Rooster, Fat Possum, and M.C. Records.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

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The Jelly Roll Kings: Off Yonder Wall (1997, Fat Possum CD 80310-2).

JOHNSON, BLIND WILLIE

b. 22 January 1897; Independence, TX
 d. 18 September 1945; Beaumont, TX

Blind Willie Johnson was an influential gospel singer and guitarist whose music shares elements with those of country blues. He is regarded as one of the greatest slide guitarists.

Life

Only glimpses into the life of Blind Willie Johnson remain. What is known about the blind street singer comes from the often-contradictory remembrances of acquaintances and family, his thirty recordings, his death certificate, and, of course, legend.

Johnson was born in Independence, Texas, the son of Willie Johnson, Sr., and Mary Fields (Willie Johnson Sr. is the name recorded on Johnson's death certificate. His father has also been identified as George Johnson). Details of Johnson's childhood survive through his wife Angeline. His interests in religion and music began when he was still quite young. When he was five, he told his father that he wanted to become a preacher. Later that year, his father made him his first guitar out of a cigar box. About this time, Johnson's mother died and his father remarried. Willie Sr.'s new wife was unfaithful and took up with another man. When Willie Sr. beat her for her infidelity, she took her revenge by blinding young Willie by throwing lye in his eyes. He was seven years old.

Johnson spent his youth working as a street singer in Marlin, Texas, and later in Hearne, Texas. He appears to have married his first wife, Willie B. Harris, sometime in 1926 or 1927. A daughter survives from their marriage, Sam Faye Johnson Kelly, who was born in 1931. Johnson likely married his second wife, Angeline, in June 1928 or 1929. According to Angeline, the two met in Dallas, Texas, where Johnson was working as a street singer. It is possible that he was carrying on a relationship with both women at the same time.

Johnson recorded a total of thirty songs for Columbia Records between 1927 and 1930. His first session took place on December 3, 1927, in Dallas and produced six tracks, including some of his most well-known works: "Mother's Children Have a Hard Time," "Dark Was the Night—Cold Was the Ground," and "If I Had My Way I'd Tear the Building Down." His first release, "I Know His Blood Can

Make Me Whole," was one of the best-selling 78s on Columbia's 140000 Race series. Johnson's records continued to sell well until the Depression worsened in 1930.

Johnson's second recording session was held in Dallas on December 5, 1928. The session produced four tracks. Accompanying Johnson on all four songs was Willie B. Harris on vocals. A third recording session was held a year later in New Orleans on December 10 and 11, 1929. The two-day session produced ten songs. After the session, Johnson stayed on in New Orleans for a month and sang in the streets. Legend has it that when Johnson sang "If I Had My Way I'd Tear the Building Down," in front of the Customs House on Canal Street, a passing policeman mistook Johnson's shouts as a threat and arrested him.

Johnson's final recording session was held in Atlanta on April 20, 1930, producing ten tracks. Joining him once more was Willie B. Harris. Harris later recalled meeting Blind Willie McTell, who happened to be recording at the same studio that day. Perhaps it was after this session that Johnson and McTell began touring together. In a 1940 interview with John Lomax, McTell recalled that he and Johnson "played together in many different parts of the states in different parts of the country, from Maine to the Mobile Bay."

From approximately 1930 onward, Johnson made his home with Angeline in Beaumont, Texas. Little is known of his life during these years. He likely continued to play music on the streets and at church functions. Evidence also suggests that he may have been working as a preacher. A 1944 Beaumont directory lists one "Reverend W. J. Johnson" and the "House of Prayer" at the same address of Johnson's last residence. What's more, his death certificate records his occupation as "minister."

Johnson died on September 18, 1945. The events leading up to his death are recorded by Angeline and by his death certificate. According to Angeline, in the weeks prior to his death, their house caught fire. She and Johnson slept within the charred remains, making do by laying newspapers over their wet mattress. As she recalled, Johnson grew sick and was refused entrance into the hospital because of his blindness. Days later, he died of pneumonia. Johnson's death certificate reveals a different story. It records a death from malarial fever with contributing causes of syphilis and blindness. The attending physician notes that he tended to Johnson for weeks prior to his death. Johnson was buried in Blanchette Cemetery in Beaumont on September 20, 1945.

Music and Influence

An early promotional ad from Columbia Records describes Johnson in a language that evokes an evangelical preacher, “Hear Blind Willie Johnson spread the light of old-time faith.” Although his music had a profound impact on the blues, Johnson was a gospel singer who recorded no blues music. His music drew from spirituals, hymn books, and popular hymns of the day. Like a preacher, Johnson also worked from his own knowledge of the Bible. For example, the most enduring of his songs, “If I Had My Way I’d Tear the Building Down,” is a retelling of the story of Samson and Delilah. In songs such as “Jesus Is Coming Soon” and “Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed,” Johnson uses rhetorical devices often used in sermons. Unsurprisingly, one of his earliest influences was a Marlin singer and preacher named Madkin Butler. Johnson’s own religious affiliation was with the Baptist Church, but the uninhibited passion of his harsh vocal performances and the images found in his music suggest Pentecostal influences. This may be due to his relationship with Willie B. Harris, who was associated with the Church of God in Christ.

Resurrected by performers such as the Reverend Gary Davis, Johnson’s music grew popular within the 1960s folk and blues revivals. Since then, it has been covered or adapted by artists as diverse as the Staples Singers, Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and the Grateful Dead. Johnson’s greatest influence on the blues is his slide guitar playing. He primarily played in an open D tuning, most likely with a pocketknife. He played with an emotive vibrato, creating melodic lines that served to double or counterpoint his vocals. His influence is apparent in the work of bluesmen such as Blind Willie McTell and Muddy Waters and, more recently, Duane Allman and Ry Cooder. His slide masterpiece, “Dark Was the Night—Cold Was the Ground,” has been described by Cooder as “the most soulful, transcendent piece in all American music.”

STEVEN GALBRAITH

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Discography: DGR

Selected Recordings

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See also **Allman Brothers Band; Black Sacred Music; Charters, Samuel Barclay; Clapton, Eric; Columbia; Cooder, Ry; Davis, Reverend Gary; Forms; Lomax, Alan; McTell, Blind Willie; Texas; Waters, Muddy**

JOHNSON, BUDDY

- b. Woodrow Wilson Johnson, 10 January 1915; Darlington, SC
 d. 9 February 1977; New York City, NY

Pianist and bandleader whose dance band success of the 1940s anticipated the rock ’n’ roll era. Johnson moved to New York City in 1938 and played small nightclubs. He began recording for Decca in 1939 with a small combo, and in 1944 began recording with a fourteen-piece big band. During World War II, Johnson was at the height of his career, recording a variety of ballads and jump tunes. His sister, Ella Johnson (b. June 22, 1923, Darlington, SC; d. February 16, 2004, New York), had joined the band as vocalist in 1940, hitting with “Please Mr. Johnson.” Other hit singles featuring Ella as lead were “When My Man Comes Home” (1944), “That’s the Stuff You Gotta Watch” (1945), and “Since I Fell for You” (1945). Arthur Prysock joined as a vocalist in 1943, and the band had a big hit with the Prysock-led “Because” in 1950.

In 1952, Johnson moved from Decca to Mercury, establishing himself on the label with “Hittin’ on Me” (1953), “I’m Just Your Fool” (1954), and “(Gotta Go) Upside Your Head” (1955). By the mid-1950s, Mercury was promoting Johnson as a rock ’n’ roll act, a designation that fitted his long-established beat-driven sound. On several of Alan Freed’s packaged shows, Johnson led his “Rock ’n’ Roll Big Band.” Johnson’s last three chart records were “I Don’t Want Nobody (To Have Love But You)” (1956 and 1960) and “Bring It Home to Me” (1956), both with vocals by Ella, and “Rock On!” (1957), with vocals by Buddy. After leaving Mercury in 1959, Johnson

recorded for Roulette. His last recordings were with Old Town (1964).

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

JOHNSON, CONRAD

b. 15 November 1915; Victoria, TX

Houston-based saxophonist, composer, and band-leader. Recorded for Gold Star, Eddie's, and other labels—under his own name or as leader of Connie's Combo, and as a backing musician. He directed the house band at the Eldorado Ballroom.

ROGER WOOD

Bibliography

Wood, Roger. *Down in Houston: Bayou City Blues*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

Discography: LSFP

JOHNSON, EARNEST "44 FLUNKEY"

b. ca. 1903; Durant, MS (?)

d. 12 May 1972; Greenville, MS

Earnest Johnson, born around 1903, was a highly rated pianist from Durant, Mississippi. He acquired his nickname because he was adept at The Forty-Fours and because he worked as a flunkey on the Y & MV railroad. He accompanied vocalist Tommy Griffin on a Bluebird recording session in 1936 in New Orleans. Johnson moved to St. Louis in the late 1930s and to Chicago after World War II.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

O'Neal, Jim. "Earnest 'Flunkey' Johnson." *Living Blues* no. 44 (Autumn 1979): 3.

Discography: DGR (Tommy Griffin entry)

JOHNSON, EDITH NORTH

b. 2 January 1903; St. Louis, MO

d. 28 February 1988; St. Louis, MO

Blues singer and pianist. Edith Johnson was the wife of producer Jesse Johnson and the sister-in-law of James "Stump" Johnson. She made some recordings from 1929 with interesting accompanists, including "The Honey Dripper" with Roosevelt Sykes. In 1961 she made her only postwar recordings.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Harris; Larkin
van Rijn, Guido, Cor Van Sliedregt, and Hans Vergeer. Notes accompanying *Edith North Johnson: Honey Dripper Blues* (1992, Agram Records AB 2016).

Discography: DGR; LSFP

JOHNSON, ERNIE

b. Winnsboro, LA

Dallas, Texas, singer of soul and soul-blues. Primary influences have been Bobby Bland, Z. Z. Hill, and Little Milton. First recorded for Movin' Records in 1968. His recent CDs have been released by Malaco/Waldoxy and Phat Sound.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Schuller, Tim. "Dallas Blues: Ernie Johnson." *Living Blues* no. 129 (September/October 1996): 46–49.

Discography: AMG

JOHNSON, HENRY "RUFÉ"

b. 8 December 1908; Union, SC

d. February 1974; Union, SC

Singer, guitarist, occasional pianist. Johnson occasionally performed guitar with a bottleneck. He became known as a blues singer outside his immediate community when around 1973 he was discovered and recorded by the Trix label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Lowry, Pete. "Henry 'Rufe' Johnson, 1908–1974." *Living Blues* no. 17 (Summer 1974): 6.

JOHNSON, HERMAN E.

JOHNSON, HERMAN E.

b. 18 August 1909; Scotlandville, LA
d. 2 February 1975; Zachary, LA

Deeply influenced by Blind Lemon Jefferson's 78s, country blues guitarist Herman Johnson was discovered by Harry Oster, who recorded him in Louisiana in 1961. Johnson retired from music in 1970 due to bad health.

LUIGI MONGE

Bibliography

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———. *Smoky Babe/Herman E. Johnson: Louisiana Country Blues* (1996, Arhoolie CD 440).

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Jefferson, Blind Lemon

JOHNSON, JAMES PRICE

b. 1 February 1894; New Brunswick, NJ
d. 17 November 1955; New York City, NY

One of the most important early jazz pianists, Johnson was a sensitive accompanist to numerous female vaudeville blues singers, including Bessie Smith. He also recorded blues both solo and in groups, on disk and piano roll.

PETER MUIR

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Brown, Scott E. *James P. Johnson: A Case of Mistaken Identity*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press and the Institute of Jazz Studies, 1986.

Discography: DGR; Lord

As Unaccompanied Soloist

"Mama's Blues" (ca. 1917, Rythmodik E17933; Singa/Supertone 5228; piano rolls).

"Bleeding Hearted Blues" (1923, Vic 19123).

"Weeping Blues/Worried and Lonesome Blues" (1923, Col A-3950).

"Snowy Morning Blues" (1927, Col 14204-D).

"Backwater Blues" (1939, Voc 4903).

"Snowy Morning Blues" (1942, Asch 350-3).

Blue Moods 1/Blue Moods 2/ Blue Moods, Sex (1958, Folkways FG 3540).

As Leader

"Chicago Blues" (1928, Col 14334-D).

"Fare Thee Honey Blues" (1929, Col 14417-D).

As Sideman

Bessie Smith. "Preachin' the Blues/Back-Water Blues" (1927, Col 14195-D).

"Lock and Key" (1927, Col 14232-D).

"Sweet Mistreater" (1927, Col 14260-D).

"Blues Spirit Blues/Worn Out Papa Blues" (1929, Col 14527).

"He Hot Me Goin'/It Makes My Love Come Down" (1929, Col 14464-D).

"Wasted Life Blues/Dirty No-Gooder's Blues" (1929, Col 14476-D).

"You Don't Understand/Don't Cry Baby" (1929, Col 14487-D).

"On Revival Day/Moan Mourners" (1930, Col 14538-D).

JOHNSON, JAMES "STEADY ROLL"

b. ca. 1888; New Orleans, LA (?)

d. ca. early 1960s; East St. Louis, IL

Birth and death data possibilities from Harris. Brother of Lonnie Johnson, played piano, celeste, violin, guitar, and banjo. On record, he made "No Good Blues" b/w "Newport Blues" for OKeh in 1926, was a member of Henry Johnson's Boys and backed several other St. Louis blues singers in the 1920s. With his brother, he played on the riverboats in Charlie Creath's Jazz-O-Maniacs.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

JOHNSON, JAMES "STUMP"

b. 17 January 1902; Clarksville, TN

d. 5 December 1969; St. Louis, MO

James "Stump" Johnson was a St. Louis piano player who had a hit with the ditty "The Duck's Yas-Yas-Yas." The twenty-one songs James Johnson recorded from 1928 to 1932 provide a fascinating insight into the barrelhouse and brothel piano music of St. Louis during the Depression. The tunes are catchy, the piano playing is simple, but effective, and the lyrics are raw, but hilarious. His only postwar recordings were made in 1964.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP

JOHNSON, JOE

b. 19 January 1942; Independence, LA

Harmonica, guitar. Raised in Greensboro, Louisiana, where he participated in high school gospel group, then in Guitar Grady's Strings of Rhythm from 1959 to 1967. In 1971 he formed his own group and became active in east Texas.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris

La Rocca, Joe. "Joe Johnson." *Blues Unlimited* no. 90 (April 1972): 18.

Discography: LSFP**JOHNSON, JOHNNIE**

b. 8 July 1924; Fairmont, WV

d. 13 April 2005; St. Louis, MO

Pianist Johnnie Johnson learned to play on his family's piano as a child of four. In his teens he was influenced by Avery Parrish, the pianist in Erskine Hawkins's Orchestra, and Meade "Lux" Lewis whose "Honky Tonk Train Blues" formed the basis of his own "Johnnie's Boogie."

By the 1950s Johnson was leading his own trio at the Cosmopolitan Club in East St. Louis when one fateful New Year's Eve he hired Chuck Berry to replace his saxophonist. Berry became the star attraction, soon taking over the band and the pair developed an instinctive, integrated musical partnership, Johnnie's boogie rhythms becoming the perfect foil to Berry's ringing guitar. When Berry began to record for Chess, it was Johnson's piano that underpinned the music. He will forever be remembered for his sparkling contributions to "Maybellene," "Roll Over Beethoven," "Carol," "Let It Rock," and many other classic Chuck Berry songs.

Johnson also recorded with Albert King on some of his early 1960s Bobbin sides. However, it wasn't until the 1986 *Chuck Berry—Hail, Hail Rock and Roll* movie that he emerged from Berry's shadow, helped by praise from Keith Richards and Eric Clapton. Since then, Johnson has recorded six albums, including the 1992 "Best Traditional Blues" Grammy-nominated *Johnnie B. Bad* and played on numerous blues albums including those by John Lee Hooker and Buddy Guy. In 2002 Johnnie Johnson lost his royalties lawsuit claim to fifty percent composer credits for thirty Chuck Berry songs.

FRED ROTHWELL

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AMG (Richard Skelly)

Fitzpatrick, Travis. *Father of Rock and Roll*. Houston: Thomas Cooke & Co., 1999.

Discography: AMG**JOHNSON, L. V.**

b. 1946; Chicago IL

d. 22 November 1994; Chicago, IL

Singer, guitarist, songwriter in Chicago soul and soul-blues. A nephew of Elmore James, Johnson was a guitarist on the staff of Stax Records, then played in support of Tyrone Davis. In the 1980s he went solo. His last CDs were for Ichiban Records in the early 1990s. He was also part owner of a Chicago steakhouse.

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn)

Discography: AMG; LSFP**JOHNSON, LARRY**

b. 15 May 1938; Atlanta, GA

Singer and acoustic guitarist proficient in pre-World War II Texas, Mississippi, and Piedmont styles.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Pomposello, Tom. "Living Blues Interview: Larry Johnson." *Living Blues* no. 16 (Spring 1974): 16–22.

Discography: AMG; LSFP**JOHNSON, LEMUEL CHARLES "LEM"**

b. 6 August 1909; Oklahoma City, OK

d. 1 April 1989; New York City, NY

Clarinetist and tenor saxophonist. He emerged out of the Midwest territory bands to settle in New York City in 1937. Active mostly in jazz, his blues work

JOHNSON, LEMUEL CHARLES “LEM”

included recordings with Sam Price and as an early member of Louis Jordan’s Tympany Five.

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Discography: DGR; Lord; LSFP

JOHNSON, LESLIE

(See *Lazy Lester*)

JOHNSON, LONNIE

b. Alonzo Johnson, probably 8 February 1889;
New Orleans, LA

d. 16 June 1970; Toronto, Canada

Lonnie Johnson was one of the most influential guitarists the blues has had, and arguably the most important blues guitarist of the 1920s. He was also a pioneer in the nascent field of jazz guitar. He performed and recorded with legendary figures from Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Bessie Smith to Texas Alexander and Sonny Boy Williamson. His recorded duets with the great white jazz guitar pioneer Eddie Lang are considered a standard of the genre.

Johnson was also a gifted singer and composer in the blues idiom. By 1932, as the Depression halted his recording work temporarily, he had produced 130 recordings, more than any other major blues performer of the time. He did most of these for the OKeh Race record label; Sony Columbia owns the masters and has reissued some of his most significant work.

Robert Johnson sometimes passed himself off as Lonnie Johnson on unsuspecting audiences. T-Bone Walker, B. B. King, and Jimi Hendrix have cited him as primary influences. Johnson played a major role in the evolution of the music and the technical approach to blues guitar.

Lonnie Johnson’s technical prowess as a guitarist was unrivaled during the late 1920s and early 1930s, the period of his greatest influence. He played very smoothly, and at faster tempos than any other guitarist of the day. He improvised many of his solos. He came from a musical family (one of thirteen children), early on learning violin, piano, banjo, and mandolin along with guitar.

He had no specific background as either a country or ragtime musician; however, researcher Pete Welding has written that since Johnson grew up in New

Orleans, he would have heard various kinds of music around the ethnically diverse city.

According to blues scholar and guitarist Stefan Grossman, there is no footage of Johnson in performance, so modern listeners must imagine from the accounts of Johnson’s contemporaries. Big Bill Broonzy maintained that Johnson always used a flat pick. Because Johnson played broken chords and counterpoint like a finger-style player, it must be assumed that he played with pick and fingers, not exclusively with a pick. The majority of his music recorded during the 1920s was in the key of D major, or D position without a capo. He tuned both his six-string and his twelve-string D–G–D–G–B–E (low to high).

Like many virtuoso stylists on different instruments, Johnson had a tendency to accelerate tempo appreciably when playing solo. This is natural in the effort to create excitement for the listener, but also because the art of solo guitar playing, particularly at his unique level, had just come about. The only guitarists with comparable sophistication at the time were Eddie Lang, who played a very different style, and the great Southeastern ragtime blues guitarist Blind Blake. The concept of swing was not yet in full bloom when Johnson made his most popular recordings.

After performing around New Orleans as a youth, Johnson traveled to London with a musical revue in



A signed publicity photo of Lonnie Johnson. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

1917. When he returned, he found out that his entire family, except one brother, had succumbed to the influenza epidemic that was killing millions of people. Bereft, Johnson settled in St. Louis. There he made his first recording (playing violin and singing): “Won’t Don’t Blues,” with Charlie Creath’s Jazz-O-Maniacs on November 2, 1925. His first guitar recording, “Mr. Johnson’s Blues,” was recorded two days later for OKeh.

The following seven years were the high period of Johnson’s career. He was featured as a blues and jazz soloist and ensemble musician, writer of blues and other material he recorded, and a sought-after accompanist for the leading vocalists of the day. Perhaps his signature piece as a guitar soloist is the 1928 “Away Down in the Alley,” which provided for guitarists the same kind of milestone that Louis Armstrong’s “West End Blues” did for aspiring trumpeters and the rest of the jazz world. Johnson was one of the most popular black vaudeville performers, traveling the TOBA (Theater Owners Booking Association) circuit.

Johnson’s duets with Eddie Lang (who recorded under the pseudonym Blind Willie Dunn) merit special mention. The two guitarists each proclaimed these to be their favorite recordings. Lang provided a foil for Johnson’s fireworks, playing steady and imaginative rhythm guitar and occasionally soloing. Johnson blossomed in these sessions. The arrangements were made up on the spot in the studio. Such cuts as “Hot Fingers,” “Bullfrog Moan,” and “A Handful of Riffs” remain highlights of guitar literature for the ages. These were also the first major integrated recordings in the jazz or blues field.

He was married to the blues singer Mary Lou (Signifyin’ Mary) Johnson. They had seven children. His 1927 song “I Love You, Mary Lou” was written for her. The song is in a broader, Tin Pan Alley format. The lyrics have been called maudlin and the chords and melody rambling, but Johnson’s voice, intonation, and phrasing carry the performance.

Johnson enjoyed great longevity as an artist, supporting himself occasionally outside the music business when times were hard. Through changing popular tastes, he had a handful of records that hit the charts in the 1940s and 1950s. He was rediscovered in the early 1960s as part of the blues and folk music boom. He died in 1970 of complications from having been hit by a car.

Lonnie Johnson left a remarkable musical legacy, particularly for guitarists. Technical devices he established or popularized include vibrato, string bending, double stops, and melodic syncopation.

LENNY CARLSON

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JOHNSON, LOUISE

Active 1927–1940

Louise Johnson, according to Son House, was “a real young girl” at the time of her only recording session. She lived in the Clarksdale area of Mississippi and is believed to have been from Robinsonville. The pianist John “Red” Williams remembered her in Tunica in the late 1920s. According to Williams she was a small woman, about twenty years old, playing piano in a joint attached to the cotton oil mill quarters. By 1930 she was playing and living on Joe Kirby’s plantation near Claxton, Mississippi, on Highway 61.

Louise Johnson was an associate of Willie Brown, Charley Patton, and Son House, and recording director Art Laibley arranged for them all to record for Paramount in 1930. At the session Louise Johnson was said to be so nervous that she needed the verbal support of House and Brown to play, although this was denied by Laibley. After the session she continued to play in the Clarksdale area plantation juke joints, in the company of House and Brown. Around the early 1940s she is rumored to have moved to Memphis but no trace has been found of her there.

Four issued sides and one unissued alternate take represent Louise Johnson’s entire recorded output. The emotional quality of her singing and the ferocity of her piano attack makes these performances outstanding. On all of the recordings she accompanies her keening vibrato with a hard-hitting boogie piano, moving from a single-note figure to a walking octave bass. “On the Wall,” apart from its explicit sexual allusions, is also notable for its spectacular piano accompaniment, loosely based on the familiar “Cow Cow Blues” theme. “By the Moon and Stars,” “Long Ways from Home,” and “All Night Long Blues” feature more gritty vocals and great piano from

JOHNSON, LOUISE

Johnson, urged on by the encouragement of House and Brown.

BOB HALL

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Discography: DGR

JOHNSON, LUTHER "GEORGIA BOY" "SNAKE"

b. Lucius Brinson Johnson, 30 August 1934;
Davisboro, GA
d. 18 March 1976; Boston, MA

Luther Johnson quit picking cotton in rural Georgia when Santa Claus brought him a guitar. In Chicago, he did stints behind Howlin' Wolf and Junior Wells before, around 1966, realizing his boyhood dream of backing Muddy Waters. Johnson, known by several nicknames including "Georgia Boy" and "(Creepin') Snake," had a feel for the music. What he lacked in flash or speed, he made up in feeling, so he was able to join Muddy playing bass—more than capable of adding a funky feel to the instrument—and wait for a guitar slot to open. He stayed with Muddy for nearly a decade, assuming the role of bandleader when Muddy was out for several months in 1970 after a car crash. Ultimately, however, Johnson had star dreams of his own. With Muddy, the band often performed a good part of the evening without the star, and Snake soon co-opted the boss's tune "Long Distance Call," complete with Muddy's gospel preaching at the song's climax. Snake settled in Boston, where he was embraced by the popular blues scene. His band became a training ground for many players, including Bob Margolin, David Maxwell, Babe Pino, and Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff.

ROBERT GORDON

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Discography: AMG

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Luther Johnson with the Muddy Waters Blues Band (aka *Chicken Shack*) (1968, Douglas Records 781).

JOHNSON, LUTHER "HOUSEROCKER"

b. 15 July 1939; Atlanta, GA

Current Atlanta electric blues guitar favorite. Largely self-taught, Jimmy Reed and Lightnin' Slim had formative influences on Johnson. After some years in Atlanta bar bands, he formed the Houserockers in the 1980s. He has recorded for the Ichiban label since 1989.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

JOHNSON, MARGARET

Flourished 1920s

Singer from Kansas City, MO who participated in variety of blues recording sessions in the 1920s, from urban blues and jazz with the Clarence Williams Blue Five, to rural styles with Leecan and Cooksey. In the 1930s she turned to piano accompaniment.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

Discography: DGR

JOHNSON, MARY

b. 1905; near Jackson, MS (or circa 1900; near Eden Station, MS)
d. ca. 1970; St. Louis, MO

Mary Johnson, Lonnie Johnson's wife, was a St. Louis blues singer who recorded from 1929 to 1936 with wonderful accompaniment. After the war she turned to gospel music, but unfortunately no postwar recordings have survived.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR

JOHNSON, PETE

b. Kermit Holden Johnson, 24 or 25 March 1904;
Kansas City, MO

d. 23 March 1967; Buffalo, NY

Johnson dropped out of school at the age of twelve and took a variety of manual jobs including shipping clerk, shoe shine boy, movie usher, freight car loader, and slaughterhouse and laundry worker. His first instrument was the drums and he obtained a job with pianist Louis "Good Bootie" Johnson, who taught him the rudiments of the piano. He also learned ragtime from his uncle "Smash" Johnson, Myrtle Hawkins, Slamfoot Brown, and Stacey La Guardia. By the age of eighteen he was playing piano at house parties, and when Louis Johnson was the worse for drink, Pete Johnson took over. One of his first jobs with his own group was at the Backbiter's Club, a speakeasy on the north side of Kansas City, in an area known as "Little Italy." Here, around 1927, he met blues singer Joe Turner and began a partnership that lasted, off and on, for more than thirty years. Other places Johnson played included the Grey Goose and the Spinning Wheel, where he was the pianist with Herman Walder's Rockette Swing Unit. By the late 1920s Johnson was playing at the Hawaiian Gardens. When the Hawaiian Gardens was raided by the FBI, Johnson moved to the Sunset Crystal Palace at 12th and Woodlawn. Here he eventually had a seven-piece band together with vocalists Joe Turner and Henry Lawson. The band made radio broadcasts over W9XBY from 12 to 12:30 p.m. and played for dancing and the floor shows.

In 1936 John Hammond and agent Willard Alexander visited Kansas City and arranged for Johnson and Turner to appear at The Famous Door in New York. The trip proved abortive and their one other appearance, at the Apollo Theatre, Harlem, was not well received. Turner sang a ballad: "I'm Glad for Your Sake, Sorry for Mine" instead of their more familiar blues and boogie-woogie numbers. The duo went back to Kansas City but in May 1938 received a telegram from New York inviting them to audition for Benny Goodman's Camel Show. They got the job and signed with the Willard Alexander agency. Their big break came in December 1938, however, when John Hammond invited them to appear in his celebrated "From Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall. Riding on their success at the concert, Hammond obtained a residency for Albert Ammons, Meade "Lux" Lewis, Pete Johnson, and Joe Turner in Café Society, a popular New York nightclub. Many classic live broadcasts from Café Society followed, featuring various combinations of Ammons, Lewis,

and Johnson on two pianos, billed as the Boogie Woogie Trio, with occasional vocals from Turner. Of the three pianists, Johnson was far and away the most sympathetic accompanist, and the outstanding "Roll 'Em Pete," "Cherry Red," and "Goin' Away Blues," featuring Turner's vocals and Johnson's vibrant piano, were recorded at this time. When Lewis and Turner left Café Society, Ammons and Johnson formed a regular partnership and appeared in many cities across the states. Johnson still accompanied Turner on engagements and recordings, however, and together they made some classic sides, including "Rebecca" and "Little Bitty Gal's Blues" in 1944.

Although known primarily as a blues and boogie pianist, Johnson had a wide repertoire of popular songs, and recorded some fine small group jazz dates with Hot Lips Page for Savoy in the mid-1940s. Johnson made trips to California in 1947 and 1948, where he performed with Ammons and Turner. Turner was able to adjust his style to the burgeoning teenage market and Johnson too recorded a number of jump band sides, including "Rocket 88," Parts 1 and 2, for Swing Time, which set the scene for the new R&B style.

In later years Johnson suffered a series of strokes that incapacitated him and he died on March 23, 1967, after a long illness.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

AMG (Scott Yanow); *New Grove Jazz*; Santelli Mauerer, Hans J. *The Pete Johnson Story*. New York, Frankfurt am Main: self-published 1965.

Discography: DGR; Lord; LSFP**JOHNSON, PLAS**

b. John Johnson Jr., 21 July 1931;
Donaldsonville, LA

Possessed of one of the richest, fattest tones ever heard on tenor saxophone, Plas Johnson will forever be associated with Henry Mancini's "Theme from the Pink Panther," for which he played the instrumental lead on the soundtrack. But he has also had an active career in blues and jazz, lending his tone to landmark recordings by other artists and recording some highly regarded soul-jazz albums of his own.

Born in Louisiana, Johnson and his brother, Ray, formed a jazz combo in New Orleans that was active locally for a few years before Plas struck out for Los Angeles in 1951 as a member of Charles Brown's

band. In California, Johnny Otis added him to his revue, and Johnson also began doing session work. While he is best known for his film and television work (he was a longtime member of *The Merv Griffin Show* band), Johnson has also added his sax to recordings by B. B. King, Etta James, Albert Collins, Dr. John, T-Bone Walker, Arthur Prysock, O. C. Smith, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, and Aaron Neville, among many others.

On those rare occasions when he has recorded as a leader, Johnson has shown an affinity for the blues and soul-jazz similar to what he would have played during his brief stint with Charles Brown. On two albums in the mid-1970s for Concord, and on a series of releases in the 1980s and 1990s for Carell, Johnson's playing takes in soul and rhythm and blues, all tied together in a small-combo jazz setting.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: Lord

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JOHNSON, ROBERT LEROY

b. 8 May 1911; Hazelhurst, MS

d. 16 August 1938; Greenwood, MS

Robert Leroy Johnson was a brilliant guitar technician and expressive singer who since his death at an early age has come to occupy a central position in blues history and legend.

Johnson was born in Hazelhurst, Mississippi, the son of Noah Johnson, a laborer, and Julia Major. Major had been abandoned by her first husband Charles Dodds; within a few years she located him in Memphis, Tennessee, and placed her toddler son Robert in his care. She married Willie "Dusty" Willis, a sharecropper near Robinsonville, Mississippi, in 1916, and took Robert back in 1918. He received some formal schooling perhaps as late as his teenage years.

Johnson's first instrument was the harmonica, which he played for his schoolmates. By or in 1929 he took up the guitar, with the intent to play music full time. Early on, he tried performing on guitar and harmonica, but he eventually concentrated his study

solely on guitar. Also that year, he married Virginia Travis, who would die with her child during childbirth in April 1930.

Charlie Patton's half-year stay in Lula, Mississippi, in 1930, and Son House and Willie Brown's arrival in Robinsonville that summer would have afforded Johnson ample opportunity to view these musicians who had recorded for Paramount during that summer. Johnson's own efforts at performing at this time were unimpressive to House. A period of study and performance in Hazelhurst during 1930 and 1931, with the help of Grady, Alabama, guitarist Ike Zimmerman, brought a sudden improvement in Johnson's playing. He is also believed to have fathered an illegitimate son, Claude, with a local woman named Vergie (Virgie) Jane Smith. He returned to Robinsonville sometime in 1931, impressing House to the point of astonishment with his newly acquired guitar skills.

From 1931 through late 1932 or early 1933, Johnson appears to have traveled and performed throughout the Mississippi Delta, Jackson, Hazelhurst, and Hattiesburg. During this same period he married Caletta Craft, but the marriage was short lived due to his frequent travels and her illnesses. When in Jackson, he apparently traded songs with Johnny Temple, a protégé of Nehemiah "Skip" James. Temple would record the Son House "Walking Blues" melody as "Lead Pencil Blues" in 1935, and Johnson in turn would later create treatments to new lyrics of James's "22–20 Blues" and "Yola My Blues Away."

By 1934 Johnson added Helena, Arkansas, as a base. It may have been at this time that he made the first of several trips to St. Louis, Missouri, coming into contact at least with the music of Roosevelt Sykes, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Henry Townsend. In the Helena area he came to exert influence on two younger guitarists, Johnny Shines then of Hughes, Arkansas, and Robert Lockwood of Marvell. That Johnson had a relationship with Lockwood's mother Estella Coleman has led some writers to suppose a stepfather/stepson contact between these two musicians, although the men were only four years apart in age. Younger Mississippi Delta musicians who came to meet Johnson at this time include Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson II" and Chester Burnett "Howlin' Wolf."

In October 1936 Johnson had a successful record audition with Henry "H. C." Speir, a record store owner and talent scout, in Jackson, Mississippi. The following month Johnson recorded sixteen songs for the American Recording Corporation (ARC) in three sessions in San Antonio, Texas. The initial release, "Kind Hearted Woman Blues"/"Terraplane Blues," enjoyed great popularity and sales, and it was even noted in print by John Hammond in the March 20,

1937, issue of *New Masses*. Other notable titles from the 1936 sessions include “I Believe I’ll Dust My Broom,” “Sweet Home Chicago,” “Cross Road Blues,” “If I Had Possession over Judgment Day,” and reworkings of two Son House pieces, “Walking Blues” and “Preaching Blues (Up Jumped the Devil).”

In the spring of 1937 Johnson and Johnny Shines traveled with Shines’s cousin Calvin Frazier, who was moving north to evade retaliation for a 1935 shooting. The three went as far as Windsor, Ontario, but Frazier decided to settle in Detroit. Afterward, Shines recalled Johnson going to Chicago, New York, and St. Louis on the same trip.

Johnson enjoyed a second set of ARC sessions in July 1937, held in Dallas. He recorded thirteen songs, including “Hell Hound on My Trail” and “Love in Vain Blues,” none of which matched the sales of “Kind Hearted Woman Blues” upon their release in 1938–1939.

The remainder of 1937 and 1938 was spent performing in Mississippi and east Arkansas. During this time he made acquaintance with David “Honeyboy” Edwards near Itta Bena, Mississippi, and with Elmore James in Belzoni. Anecdotes of Johnson performing with a pianist and drummer, and of him playing an electric guitar, would be dated to this last year of life.

Johnson died on a plantation near Greenwood, Mississippi, on August 16, 1938. The death certificate records the local overseer’s opinion of death from syphilis, although oral accounts of his death by poisoning have received serious consideration from biographers and historians.

Columbia Records acquired the Johnson masters when it bought ARC in 1938. The recordings are now maintained by the Sony Corporation. The song copyrights were secured in 1978 by King of Spades Music, part of the Delta Haze Corporation.

Johnson’s surviving music may be grouped into three types, each indicative of a distinct time period. The first is his imitation of blues guitar masters through 1934, including those of Mississippi, especially Son House, Willie Newbern (“If I Had Possession over Judgment Day”), Skip James likely by way of Johnny Temple, and to a lesser extent Charley Patton (“The Last Fair Deal Gone Down”) and Arthur Petties. On “Stop Breaking Down Blues” he adopts the vocal mannerisms of Memphis Minnie’s “Caught Me Wrong Again” (1936). Johnson was influenced also by the 1920s records of guitarists outside the Delta, most clearly by those of Lonnie Johnson (“Malted Milk,” “Drunken Hearted Man”); stylistic echoes of Tampa Red and Blind Blake may be heard in Johnson’s own records.

A second type is Johnson’s imitation of blues pianists, especially Leroy Carr, Roosevelt Sykes, and Peetie Wheatstraw, of the early to mid-1930s. He successfully adapted for the guitar three kinds of piano boogie bass runs. One was the repeated monotone “stationary” bass (as heard on “Come On in My Kitchen,” “Me and the Devil Blues,” “Kind Hearted Woman Blues”) on the fifth scale tone of the prevailing chord. Another was the “rocking” bass alternating between the fifth and sixth scale tones of the prevailing chord (“I Believe I’ll Dust My Broom”; “Phonograph Blues,” take 2); recent notated transcriptions published by Hal Leonard suggest Johnson used an Aadd9 tuning (low to high E–B–E–A–C#–E) to facilitate the fretting of this bass pattern. The third boogie is the “walking” type on the fifth, sixth, and flatted seventh scale degrees of the prevailing chord (“When You Got a Good Friend”); transcribers agree that Johnson most likely tuned his guitar to standard E. The impact of Leroy Carr on Johnson extends also to his vocal singing style, even on songs that do not have piano-style accompaniments.

The third type of Johnson’s music is a harmonic, homophonic kind making use of inverted tonic (I), tonic-seventh (I7), and submediant (vi) chords sharply plucked on three or four strings. This style may be best heard on his “Terraplane Blues” and “Cross Road Blues.” How Johnson came to conceive and realize this kind of accompaniment is not documented, but Johnny Shines’s anecdote of Johnson singing and playing harmonica on Highway 61 around 1935, then afterward adapting those songs to the guitar, may be relevant here. Whether or not this is derived from his unrecorded harmonica style, it is strongly possible it originated with Johnson, because no antecedents for this accompaniment have yet been found on records.

Oddly, Johnson in his recorded repertoire appears to have used preexisting melodies that had already appeared on other musicians’ records by the time of his 1936–1937 recording sessions. His improvising skills lay in supplying a wide array of guitar ornaments and fills—licks between lyric phrases, and in engaging in a staggering display of lyric word play from word substitutions to phonetic imitation. His best and most virtuosic music performances, especially “Rambling on My Mind,” “Terraplane Blues,” and “Cross Road Blues,” exhibit his improvisational strengths to breathtaking effect.

During his lifetime, “Terraplane Blues” was Johnson’s best-known record. It is the basis of Frank Edwards’s “Terraplane Blues” (1941), still the one known commercially recorded treatment of a Johnson song before 1943 by a musician outside the Johnson circle.

Johnson exerted greater influence in person. His piano-style accompaniment was mastered by Calvin Frazier and Robert Lockwood, and his harmonic/homophonic style of guitar fills was taken up by Johnny Shines. Echoes of bottleneck slide sound may be heard in the later records of Honeyboy Edwards, Muddy Waters, and Elmore James. His songs were performed by these artists as well as by Howlin' Wolf and Floyd Jones. The adoption of some songs in St. Louis and Chicago may be due to Roosevelt Sykes.

The 1961 Columbia Records reissue *Robert Johnson: King of the Delta Blues Singers* brought his music to the attention of young white musicians, including Johnny Winter and Bob Dylan in the United States, and Eric Clapton and Rolling Stones members Brian Jones and Keith Richards, among others. Their adoption of his songs informed the blues-based rock music of 1966 through 1980. The 1990 compact disc reissue of Johnson's complete recordings led to a blues revival that decade involving talented musicians—black and white, young and old, male and female.

Research on Johnson has stood at the forefront of blues scholarship since John Hammond's unsuccessful effort to engage Johnson for the 1938 "From Spirituals to Swing" concert in New York City, and Alan Lomax's 1941–1942 Library of Congress recording trips to Mississippi. Rudi Blesh's depiction in *Shining Trumpets* (1946) of Johnson as a solitary, haunted bluesman set the tone for future writing by Samuel Charters and Paul Oliver. In 1966 Pete Welding published Son House's comment on Johnson: "He must have sold his soul to the devil to play like that." During the 1970s when white rock groups claimed to have done just that, some writers combined the House quote with a crossroads deal story associated with Tommy Johnson (unrelated) to emphasize the devil aspect of Johnson's lyrics. The most influential of these combinations, Greil Marcus's *Mystery Train* (1975), Robert Palmer's *Deep Blues* (1982), and Julio Finn's *The Bluesman* (1986), continue to shape cultural studies of Johnson and the blues. Historical research relies greatly on the work of Stephen LaVere, Mack McCormick (as reported by Peter Guralnick), and Gayle Wardlow (with some assistance from Stephen Calt). Many lyric transcriptions have been attempted, notably those published by Bob Groom in the *Blues World Booklet No. 1* (1967) devoted to Johnson and the full set by LaVere in the 1990 Columbia reissue. Musical transcriptions of Johnson have been published since Blesh's inclusion of "Hell Hound on My Trail" in *Shining Trumpets*. The individual efforts of Woody

Mann and of Scott Ainslie and Dave Whitehill paved the way for the recent transcriptions by Pete Billman (with Dave Rubin and Jim Schustedt). The study of Robert Johnson is sure to grow with each future innovation in blues research.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Format: Title. Take number: label and matrix number/original issue/selected reissues/selected transcriptions, page numbers.

A. November 23, 1936, San Antonio, Texas

- “Kindhearted Woman Blues.” Take –1: American Recording Company [ARC] matrix [mx.] SA 2580-1/Vocalion 03416/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 13–15; M, 10–15; B, 7–13. Take –2: ARC mx. SA 2580-2/Vocalion 03416/SCL 46222.
- “I Believe I’ll Dust My Broom.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2581-1/Vocalion 03475/SCL 46222/AW, 17–18; M, 78–81; B, 13–19.
- “Sweet Home Chicago.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2582-1/Vocalion 03601/SCL 46222/AW, 20–21; M, 88–89; B, 20–26.
- “Rambling on My Mind.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2583-1/Vocalion 03519/SCL 46222, Columbia CL 1654/AW, 23–24; M, 74–77; B, 27–32. Take –2: ARC mx. SA 2583-2/Vocalion 03519/SCL 46222.
- “When You Got a Good Friend.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2584-1/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 26; M, 86–87; B, 33–38. Take –2: ARC mx. SA 2584-2/SCL 46222.
- “Come On in My Kitchen.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2585-1/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 29–30; M, 66–67; B, 39–44. Take –2: SA 2585-2/Vocalion 03563/SCL 46222.
- “Terraplane Blues.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2586-1/Vocalion 03416/SGL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 31; M, 39–43; B, 45–52.
- “Phonograph Blues.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2587-1/SCL 46222/AW, 36–39; M, 16–20; B, 53–58. Take –2: ARC mx. SA 2587-2/SCL 46222/B, 59–65.

B. November 26, 1936, San Antonio, Texas

- 32–20 Blues. Take –2: ARC mx. SA 2616-2/Vocalion 03445/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 41–43; M, 21–23; B, 66–73.

C. November 27, 1936, San Antonio, Texas

- “They’re Red Hot.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2627-1/Vocalion 03563/SCL 46222/AW, 45–46; M, 94–96; B, 74–76.
- “Dead Shrimp Blues.” Take –2: ARC mx. SA 2628-2/Vocalion 03475/SCL 46222/AW, 48–51; M, 24–26; B, 77–82.
- “Cross Road Blues.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2629-1/Vocalion 03519/SCL 46222 Take –2: ARC mx. SA 2629-2/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 53–57; M, 44–48; B, 83–89.
- “Walking Blues.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2630-1/Vocalion 03601/SCL 46222, Columbia CL 1654/AW, 59–60; M, 52–53; B, 90–95.
- “Last Fair Deal Gone Down.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2631-1/Vocalion 03445/SCL 46222, Columbia CL 1654/AW, 62–63; M, 54–55; B, 96–102.
- “Preaching Blues (Up Jumped the Devil).” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2632-1/Vocalion 04630/SCL 46222, Columbia CL 1654/AW, 65–66; M, 68–70; B, 103–110.
- “If I Had Possession over Judgment Day.” Take –1: ARC mx. SA 2633-1/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 68–71; M, 49–51; B, 111–118.

D. June 19, 1937, Dallas, Texas

- “Stones in My Passway.” Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 377-2/Vocalion 03723/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 73–75; M, 56–58; B, 119–124.
- “I’m a Steady Rollin’ Man.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 378-1/Vocalion 03723/SCL 46222/AW, 77–78; M, 27–29; B, 125–130.
- “From Four Until Late.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 379-1/Vocalion 03623/SCL 46222/AW, 80–82; M, 92–93; B, 131–136.

E. June 20, 1937, Dallas, Texas

- “Hellhound on My Trail.” Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 394-2/Vocalion 03623/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 84–88; M, 71–73; B, 137–142.
- “Little Queen of Spades.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 395-1/Vocalion 04108/SCL 46222, M, 30–31; B, 143–147. Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 395-2/Vocalion 04108/SCL 46222/AW, 90–91.
- “Malted Milk.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 396-1/Vocalion 03665/SCL 46222/AW, 93–95; M, 82–83; B, 148–152.
- “Drunken Hearted Man.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 397-1/SCL 46222/M, 84–85; B, 153–157. Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 397-2/SCL 46222/AW, 97–98.
- “Me and the Devil Blues.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 398-1/Vocalion 04108/SCL 46222/B, 158–162. Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 398-2/Vocalion 04108/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 100–101; M, 32–35.
- “Stop Breakin’ Down.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 399-1/Vocalion 04002/SCL 46222/AW, 103–104; M, 62–63; B, 163–169. Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 399-2/Vocalion 04002/SCL 46222.
- “Traveling Riverside Blues.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 400-1/CL 1654 (CD reissue)/B, 170–176. Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 400-2/SCL 46222, CL 1654/AW, 106–111; M, 64–65; B, 177–183.
- “Honeymoon Blues.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 401-1/Vocalion 04002/SCL 46222/ AW, 113–115; M, 36–38; B, 184–188.
- “Love in Vain.” Take –1: ARC mx. DAL 402-1/SCL 46222/AW, 117–118; M, 90–91; B, 189–192. Take –4, possibly a recut of –2 or –3: ARC mx. DAL 402-4/Vocalion 04630/SCL 46222.
- “Milkcow’s Calf Blues.” Take –2: ARC mx. DAL 403-2/Vocalion 03665/SCL 46222/M, 59–61. Take –3: ARC mx. DAL 403-3/Vocalion 03665/SCL 46222, Columbia CL 1654/AW, 120–125; B, 193–197.

JOHNSON, SYL

b. Sylvester Thompson, 1 July 1936;
Holly Springs, MS

Chicago soul singer and record company executive of 1960s and 1970s. With his strong, sharp, and wailing voice, Johnson built a career in the 1960s and 1970s recording hard soul and blues. As a teenager, he began playing guitar in blues clubs, and in 1959 was signed to the Federal label. His twelve released sides for the label, however, only generated a few plays on

local radio. His first hit, albeit locally, was “Straight Love, No Chaser,” for the Zachron label in 1966. He finally achieved national success in 1967 with “Come On and Sock It to Me,” recording for Twilight (soon changed to Twinight). Other hits quickly followed, notably “Different Strokes” (1967), “Is It Because I’m Black” (1969), and “Concrete Reservation” (1970). Johnson moved to Willie Mitchell’s Hi label in 1971 and continued his hit-making streak, notably with “We Did It” (1972), “Back for a Taste of Your Love” (1973), and the original hit version of “Take Me to the River” (1975). He also operated the Shama label at this time, producing such blues artists as Lee “Shot” Williams and Nolan Struck.

Like many classic soul artists, Johnson did not fare well during the disco era, but he did manage one final chart record that successfully combined disco with a blues sensibility, “Miss Fine Brown Frame” (1982). During the early 1980s, Johnson was recording predominantly blues, releasing some of his LPs on his Shama label. During much of the 1980s and 1990s, Johnson was largely out of the music business. He returned with an outstanding CD for Delmark, *Back in the Game*, in 1995. Later CDs were less successful, but Johnson continued to play blues festivals, sometimes with his brother, bluesman Jimmy Johnson.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP

JOHNSON, TOMMY

b. ca. 1896; Terry, MS

d. 1 November 1956; Crystal Springs, MS

Tommy Johnson recorded less than twenty known sides, though there is evidence of others that have not yet been found, in a short two years from 1928 to 1929, but he became one of the most influential Mississippi bluesmen, a major figure remembered with enormous respect and admiration long after his death.

Tommy Johnson was born to Idell Johnson and Mary Ella Williams and was one of thirteen children, all apparently related to Lonnie Johnson through their father. One brother, the Reverend Ledell Johnson, who claims to have taught Tommy guitar, provided much of the information known about

Tommy. He ran away from home when he was either twelve or around eighteen (Ledell gave contradictory information on this) and worked as an itinerant musician in the Rolling Fork area. In 1915, he married Maggie Bedwell, an attractive fourteen-year-old who was later immortalized in “Maggie Campbell Blues.” (It should be mentioned here that Ishmon Bracey insists Maggie Campbell was a different Maggie, a former girlfriend of Johnson’s. But Johnson and Bedwell were living apart by this time, and his family felt the song was an attempt to win her back.)

Later that year the Johnson family moved to the Tom Sander plantation in Drew where Tommy started playing with Willie Brown and Dick Bankston, and Ledell recalled performing with Tommy and Charley Patton who visited the area to perform at juke joints and dances. Tommy wandered the small towns of the Delta and sometimes played with another Johnson brother, Mager, or Rube Lacey, Charlie McCoy, Ishmon Bracey, John Byrd, and Walter Vincent. He is remembered as a bad stutterer except when singing, and he emphasized his sibilants with a kind of hiss.

Johnson enjoyed spreading the rumor that he had been taught to play by the devil. In a story remarkably similar to the one that grew around Robert Johnson a decade later, Tommy claimed to Ledell he had gone to a crossroads at midnight and started playing, upon which the devil appeared and taught him tunings and playing techniques.

But considering Johnson’s companions such as Patton and Willie Brown it seems very likely that he picked up elements of his style from the two experienced musicians who were playing long before he started, although there is controversy over whether Tommy taught Patton the theme of “Pony Blues” (which he himself recorded as “Bye Bye Blues”) or whether Patton was the originator. Bracey insisted Tommy sang it first, but the tune was one of two that Patton reworked through his career. Interestingly, Patton’s other main tune, “Moon Going Down,” was also used by Johnson, and Johnson is also reported to have copied Patton’s showmanship by playing his guitar behind his back, a stunt which, in turn, influenced Howlin’ Wolf to add a few spectacles to his shows some thirty years later.

Tommy was a notorious womanizer who married several times. He was also a serious alcoholic, drinking anything—bay rum, canned heat, shoe polish, moonshine—as his brother recalled. It was a ruinous habit that wrecked his recording career and eventually killed him.

In 1927, Johnson and the similar but less gifted Bracey, were discovered by talent scout H. C. Speir (who also arranged recordings sessions for Patton and

Skip James among others). He made test pressings of them above his store in Jackson and sent them to Victor who called the two men to Memphis in February 1928 with singer Rosie Mae Moore. According to Bracey, the bus went off the road en route and Rosie was injured. He obtained compensation for them but remained bitter that they never thanked him for it. Johnson was accompanied by Charlie McCoy on second guitar and the eight sides made for Victor (two takes unissued until the LP era, and a third apparently lost) remain the apogee of Johnson's craft: striking imagery, varied subjects, and perfectly integrated guitars. The first four sides were a mix of the original and the traditional and all show Johnson's clear, vivid voice at its best. He used a spine-chilling falsetto exactly where it heightened the tension of his songs, while his rather limited guitar, wonderfully underscored by McCoy's mandolin-like decorations, is a classic example of the workmanlike transcending its limitation to produce a supremely successful effect.

"Cool Drink of Water Blues" is largely traditional but Johnson had the ability to make a familiar theme sound fresh and new. The contrast with Patton's aggressive roughness is startling yet the singing remains hovering closely to the sound of the ancient cornfield holler. "Big Road Blues" is another collection of standard verses thrown together rather haphazardly with no real story line and the instrumental breaks, on which McCoy again demonstrated his immense skills, are more interesting than the vocals. But the song remained one of Johnson's most copied and was still being sung in Chicago clubs during the 1950s. Johnson's sister-in-law believed it had won a contest organized by Victor to find the best blues on a big road theme. (Bessie Smith was said to have come in second, possibly with "Long Old Road.")

"Bye Bye Blues," recorded the following day, adds little to what has already been heard apart from the mystery over the origin of its theme, but the fourth song was "Maggie Campbell Blues," possibly the best remembered of all his songs. It scarcely matters if Campbell was Bedwell or another woman—as David Evans wrote, "Its charm seems to lie in its very obscurity." On this side, possibly because of some kind of emotional involvement, Johnson's vocal was magnificent—deeper than before but emphasizing the emotional imagery with an involvement sometimes missing from his music, with both he and McCoy offering a peerless, complex accompaniment. Each of the four songs made the musicians thirty dollars and they received no extra royalties.

Johnson was back in Memphis alone in August the same year and he recorded four songs, two of which

were unissued until the LP era. "Big Fat Mama" is a fine traditional blues with a superb guitar backing, but "Canned Heat Blues" remains Johnson's most personal and prophetic blues. Tommy would drink anything if he couldn't get whiskey, and canned heat, an alcoholic cooking fuel, could be strained and added to sugar and water to make a potentially fatal cocktail. It was also serenaded on record by Bracey, Willie Lofton, the Mississippi Sheiks, Sloppy Henry, and Keghouse. Knowing Johnson's predilection for the drink, "Canned Heat Blues" becomes a chilling self-epitaph.

Victor never asked Johnson back and it was 1929 before Paramount called him to Grafton, Wisconsin, at Speir's suggestion. Ishmon Bracey, who also recorded at the same sessions, said Johnson was so used to drinking canned heat, he went wild when he was offered whiskey. Reportedly, he became so drunk that he ruined nearly every take and kept hitting bad notes so Bracey claimed he played guitar while Tommy sang (perhaps on rehearsal run-throughs—the few surviving Paramounts seem not to bear this out). But his solo sides were excellent although his vocal approach had descended into a kind of brooding introspection, and his guitar work remained consistently inventive, especially for an alcoholic. Only the sides with the New Orleans Nehi Boys demonstrate a sad clash with Johnson's vocals, Kid Moliere's gas pipe clarinet, and the jazz sounds of the group resulting in a totally incompatible mix. A number of tracks from this session are still missing, although a test of one turned up at auction in 2001, an attempt to sing maudlin ballad "I Want Someone to Love Me."

It was a sad end to Johnson's recording career. Supposedly he received some payment for the Mississippi Sheiks version of "Big Road Blues," which they called "Stop and Listen Blues," but was too drunk to press for his full rights. He traveled the Delta with Bracey until they split over money, and was consistently popular with both black and white audiences. But his drinking got worse and often he couldn't play because of it and his sound became old fashioned. He developed prostate problems and told Bracey he wanted to give up drinking and become a preacher like him. After playing at Ledell's daughter's birthday party, he died quietly, possibly from a heart attack. A 1960s white blues-rock group named themselves Canned Heat after his record. Modern artists who have recorded versions of his songs are Boogie Bill Webb, Bubba Brown, Roosevelt Holts, Houston Stackhouse, Shirley Griffiths, John Dudley, K. C. Douglas, Robert Nighthawk and many more.

DAVID HARRISON

JOHNSON, TOMMY

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Evans, David. *Tommy Johnson*. London: Studio Vista, 1971.
Wardlow, Gayle Dean. *Chasin' That Devil's Music: Searching for the Blues*. San Francisco: Miller Freeman, 1998.

Discography: AMG; DGR

See also **Bracey, Ishmon; Patton, Charley**

JOHNSON, WALLACE

b. 8 October 1937; LA

Soul-blues singer based in New Orleans. From 1962 through 1972 he recorded twelve 45-rpm singles with producer Allen Toussaint. For the following twenty years, he worked as a longshoreman and as owner of Mr. J's club in Thibodaux, Louisiana. He returned to performing in 1993, and he resumed recording with Toussaint in 1995.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

JOHNSON, WILLIE LEE

b. 4 March 1923; Lake Cormorant, MS

d. 26 February 1995; Chicago, IL

Innovative guitarist Willie Johnson played on many of Howlin' Wolf's classic 1950s hits. He drifted into obscurity after Wolf fired him for fighting, but his molten, distorted tone greatly influenced blues guitarists from the 1950s on.

JAMES SEGREST

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JOLIET

Record label (California, 1971–1977). Owner: Bruce M. Bromberg ("David Amy") (b. 31 October 1941;

Chicago, IL). This Los Angeles, California-based labels' artists include Prince Dixon, Johnny Fuller, Ted Hawkins ("Watch Your Step," with Phillip Walker), Lightnin' Hopkins ("Please Settle in Vietnam"), Bee Houston, John Littlejohn ("Dream"), Lonesome Sundown (Cornelius Green) (with Phillip Walker), Johnny Shines ("Skull and Crossbone Blues"), and Phillip Walker ("Laughin' and Clownin'"). Sessions during this period were sometimes produced with Dennis Walker, and were also issued on Advent (Johnny Shines), Alligator (Lonesome Sundown), Arhoolie (Bee Houston), Bluesmaker (Johnny Fuller), Playboy (Phillip Walker), Rounder (Ted Hawkins, Phillip Walker), and Vault Records (Lightnin' Hopkins).

ROBERT EAGLE

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Discography: McGrath

JONES, ALBENNIE

b. 29 November 1914; Gulfport, MS

d. 24 June 1989; Bronx, NY

First name sometimes shown as "Albinia." Jones was raised in Gulfport, Mississippi, but by 1932 had moved to New York City. She was a popular singer in Harlem clubs in the 1940s, and she worked comfortably and recorded with various urban blues and jazz musicians. A fall onstage in the early 1950s slowed her career, and not long afterward she retired from music. She died of leukemia.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

JONES, ANDREW "JUNIOR BOY"

b. 16 October 1948; Dallas, TX

Son of a renowned jazz singer, Andrew Jones played the guitar in the bands of Freddy King, a friend of

his mother, Bobby Patterson, Johnnie Taylor, and Charlie Musselwhite. His precise, concise, and efficient single-string Texas guitar style is matched by his sensitive vocals as featured in his own albums that he has lately been able to record.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: AMG

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JONES, BESSIE

b. Mary Elizabeth Jones, 8 February 1902;
Smithville, GA
d. 4 September 1984; Brunswick, GA

Guiding member of the Georgia Sea Island Singers. Although she rarely sang blues, with her contralto voice she led the singers in traditional African American spirituals, children's songs, and slave songs.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

JONES, BIRMINGHAM

b. Wright Birmingham, 9 January 1937; Saginaw, MI
Harmonica player, saxophonist, guitarist active in Chicago. Played saxophone and guitar as sideman to J. B. Lenoir and Elmore James in the 1950s. Switching to harmonica in the mid-1950s, he has performed in the style of Little Walter.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

JONES, CALVIN "FUZZY"

b. 9 June 1926; Greenwood, MS

Guitarist and bass guitarist. Initially he began learning blues on harmonica at age nine or ten, but he soon switched to guitar. He moved to Chicago in 1947 and continued learning blues guitar from records. In the late 1940s he performed with Harmonica Slim, then led his own weekend bands while holding a weekday job at a plating shop. Upon getting laid off in the mid-1960s, he turned to music full time, performing bass for Howlin' Wolf through 1968, and shortly afterward for Fenton Robinson.

From 1971 through 1980 he was bassist for Muddy Waters, for whom he and drummer Willie "Big Eyes" Smith were the driving rhythm section. In 1980, Jones, Smith, harmonica player Jerry Portnoy, and pianist Pinetop Perkins left Waters to form the Legendary Blues Band. Upon Perkins's departure in 1984, Jones and Smith maintained the band with new musicians.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Tidwell, Emily. "Going Back to Where I Had Been: Calvin Jones and Willie Smith." *Living Blues* no. 99 (September/October 1991): 18–21.

JONES, CARL

b. 9 June 1913; Waxahachie, TX
d. 24 September 1985; Chicago, IL

Blues record company executive of the 1950s and 1960s. Jones moved to Chicago in 1937. He recorded for Mercury as a singer in 1945. He formed C.J. Records in 1955, and within a few years added the Firma and Colt subsidiary imprints. Notable blues performers on his labels were Little Mack Simmons, Slim Willis, Earl Hooker, Homesick James, Detroit Junior, and Betty Everett (with whom he recorded a duet). Jones was the first to record Hound Dog Taylor. In 1960, he had some local success with Bobby Saxton's "Trying to Earn a Living." Jones continued the label until his death, but in its last years the label was virtually moribund. He earned his living tending bar in the famed South Side blues club, Theresa's.

ROBERT PRUTER

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JONES, CASEY

b. 26 July 1939; Nitta Yuma, MS

One of Chicago's top blues drummers in his prime, Casey Jones stepped out from behind the drum kit to embark on a career as a standup vocalist after he began to record his own blues albums in the 1980s and 1990s. Jones, whose first experience as a drummer came with a high school marching band in Greenville, Mississippi, got his first job with Otis Luke and the Rhythm Bombers not long after arriving in Chicago in 1956. During the 1960s he worked the Chicago clubs with Otis Rush, Freddie King, Howlin' Wolf, Koko Taylor, and other blues, R&B, funk, and soul acts, singing blues and Little Richard tunes on occasion. He played drums on sessions with Rush, Muddy Waters, Earl Hooker, Mighty Joe Young, Ricky Allen, McKinley Mitchell, and others.

In 1978 a band led by Jones and bassist Aron Burton was recruited to record and tour with Albert Collins as the Icebreakers. Jones stayed with Collins for six and a half years, and became a regular studio drummer for Alligator Records as well, recording not only with Collins but with Johnny Winter, Lonnie Brooks, and others, and with Rooster Blues artists Eddy Clearwater, Valerie Wellington, and Johnny Littlejohn. Jones was also a partner and coproducer with A. C. Reed, a fellow Icebreakers alum, in the Ice Cube label. His first recordings as a singer were R&B efforts released on the Mod-Art, EPI, and Ronn labels, and his own Airwax company. He switched to a more straight-ahead blues format for an LP on Rooster Blues in 1987 and three further releases on Airwax in the 1990s as he continued to promote his career as a blues singer in the Chicago clubs.

JIM O'NEAL

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Discography: AMG

JONES, CLARENCE M.

b. 1889; Wilmington, OH
d. 1 June 1949; New York

Pianist/composer. A fine jazz pianist, he provided superb accompaniments on record for Monette

Moore ("Best Friend Blues," 1923, Paramount 12034) and Laura Smith ("Lonesome Refugee"/"The Mississippi Blues," 1927, Victor 20775). He joined the staff of Clarence Williams music publishers in 1932 and organized the Southernaires vocal group from 1933.

HOWARD RYE

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JONES, CURTIS

b. 18 August 1906; Naples, TX
d. 11 September 1971; Munich, Germany

Blues and boogie-woogie pianist who made his biggest impact in the 1930s. Jones's first musical instrument was the guitar, but during the 1920s he switched to piano and began performing in clubs in Dallas. By the early 1930s, Jones was playing clubs and house parties in Kansas City, Kansas. He moved to Chicago in 1936. Not long afterward he made his first recording session, for Vocalion Records, yielding one of his most successful records, "Lonesome Bedroom Blues." From 1937 through 1939 Jones recorded some sixty sides for Vocalion. Following one session with Victor's Blue Bird imprint in 1940, Jones recorded some twenty-five sides for the revived OKeh label during 1940–1941. His last session for OKeh produced what has become a standard in the blues world, "Tin Pan Alley."

Jones was not given another opportunity to record until 1953, when Al Benson recorded a session on him for his Parrot label. One outstanding single, "Cool Playing Blues" b/w "Wrong Blues," was released, but further numbers that Jones cut remained in the vaults until Relic issued them in 1989. In the 1960s, when an LP market developed for white blues fans, Jones cut at least four albums, notably *Trouble Blues* (1960) for Bluesville and *Lonesome Bedroom Blues* (1962) for Delmark. After moving to Europe in 1962, he recorded another two albums in London.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSPF

JONES, DENNIS “LITTLE HAT”

Flourished 1929–1930, San Antonio, TX

Street singer and guitarist. His OKeh label records from 1929 and 1930 show him to be adept at finger-picking and executing boogie bass runs. He also provided guitar accompaniment to a Texas Alexander recording session.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

JONES, EDDIE “ONE-STRING”

Eddie Jones was recorded on the streets of Los Angeles in 1960 by folklorist Fredrick A. Usher. He accompanied himself on a homemade one-string instrument beating a steady rhythm under his singing and playing electrifying slide breaks between his vocal lines. He was thought to have been from the Memphis area.

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Diddley Bow**

JONES, FLOYD

b. 21 July 1917; Marianna, AR
d. 19 December 1989; Chicago, IL

Singer/guitarist Floyd Jones grew up in the northern region of the Mississippi Delta, and often caught performances by Charley Patton and Tommy Johnson as a boy. Around 1930, Jones started playing the guitar, after graduating from a homemade instrument consisting of bailing wire nailed to a wall. He left home after his mother died in 1933, and spent the next ten years performing and hobnobbing throughout the region, often partnering himself with Howlin’ Wolf. In 1945, Jones settled in Chicago and began performing on Maxwell Street for tips. He soon

teamed up with fellow Maxwell Street musicians Snooky Pryor and cousin Moody Jones and together they played an active role in shaping the tough, new postwar Chicago blues sound that was emerging from the bustling street.

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, Jones recorded over a dozen songs for Marvel, JOB, Chess, and Vee-Jay, including the Chicago blues classics “Stockyard Blues,” “Hard Times,” and “Dark Road.” His powerful but somber writing style dealt mainly with social and economic hardships, such as poverty, disenchantment, and unemployment. Jones also appeared on recordings throughout the 1950s by Eddie Taylor, Little Willie Foster, and Sunnyland Slim, and continued to play in clubs and on Maxwell Street into the 1970s, often with Big Walter Horton. In 1966, he shared an album with Taylor for Testament and later appeared on the 1980 reunion album *Old Friends* for Earwig. Jones rarely performed in his later years due to poor health and died of heart failure at the age of seventy-two.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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JONES, JAMES “MIDDLE WALTER”

b. 16 July 1935; Augusta, AR
d. 1 November 1986; Gary, IN

Harmonica player active in Chicago, Illinois, and Gary, Indiana, from the mid-1950s until his death. The nickname “Middle Walter” was given to him by Johnny Littlejohn, between “Big” Walter Horton and “Little” Walter Jacobs. Jones began playing bass in the mid-1970s when a lung ailment appeared. His last two years were as a member of the Kinsey Report.

EDWARD KOMARA

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JONES, JOE

JONES, JOE

b. 12 August 1926; New Orleans, LA

Singer, composer, arranger, producer. Joe Jones enjoyed a national hit with “You Talk Too Much” for Roulette Records in 1960, turned to producing with the Dixie Cups and other acts, and remains active as a composer and artists’ manager. He has worked with the Dixie Cups, Harold Battiste, Clarence Carter, Leo Nocentelli, and Derek Shezbie.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography

“You Talk Too Much” (1960, Roulette).

JONES, “LITTLE” JOHNNY

b. 1 November 1924; Jackson, MS

d. 19 November 1964; Chicago, IL

Johnny (sometimes spelled “Johnnie”) Jones was born in Hinds County, Jackson, Mississippi, on November 1, 1924, one of three children. Both parents were musicians; his mother Mary played piano in church and his father George was a guitarist and harmonica player. His younger cousin was pianist Otis Spann, and together they played house parties in the Jackson area in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Jones moved to Chicago in 1946 and befriended “Big Maceo” Merriweather, a popular pianist and recording artist, who became his greatest influence. Maceo suffered a stroke the same year, giving Jones the opportunity to take over the piano chair with Tampa Red, Maceo’s regular partner and the most popular Chicago blues artist at the time. Between 1949 and 1953, Jones and Tampa Red recorded a number of sides together, including “But I Forgive You” and “Sweet Little Angel.”

Jones also recorded with Muddy Waters in 1950, and in 1951 formed a regular band with slide guitarist Elmore James, from Canton, Mississippi. This band, with J. T. Brown on tenor and Odie Payne, Jr., on drums, played five nights a week at Sylvio’s on Chicago’s West Side, until 1957. They also recorded more than forty sides, including the classics “The Sky Is Crying,” “Crossroads,” “It Hurts Me Too,” and “I Can’t Hold Out.” Jones and James also backed Joe Turner on the 1955 hit “TV Mama.” In

1957 Jones formed a band with Magic Sam and Syl Johnson on guitars and S. P. Leary on drums, which had a residency at the Tay May Club in Chicago. After Sam was drafted, Jones freelanced, performing and recording with Howlin’ Wolf and Eddie Taylor. The collaboration with Wolf produced “Down in the Bottom” and “The Red Rooster” among others. From 1960 he began to have health problems and he died of lung cancer on November 19, 1964.

Although principally known as a sideman, Jones was a fine vocalist with a warm tenor voice, and did make a few recordings under his own name, of which the best known are “Big Town Playboy” and “Shelby County Blues.” An excellent shuffle boogie player, he was possibly the last truly two-handed blues pianist, switching between eight-to-the-bar and a heavy stride bass in tenths for a slow blues. Jones was a seminal figure in the rise to popularity of modern Chicago blues and, in addition to those mentioned, his deft, rolling piano work can also be heard on recordings by Jimmy Reed and J. B. Hutto.

BOB HALL

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Eagle, Bob. “Big Town Playboy: Johnnie Jones.” *Living Blues* no. 12 (Spring 1973): 28–29.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

JONES, LITTLE SONNY

b. Johnny Jones, 15 April 1931; New Orleans, LA

d. 17 December 1989; New Orleans, LA

New Orleans singer who had received his nickname “Little Sonny” from Fats Domino. He made records for Specialty and Imperial in 1952 and 1953. Until his death he was a local fan favorite, especially at the annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festivals.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

JONES, MAGGIE

b. Fae Barnes, 1900; Hillsboro, TX

Singer in black theater and clubs in New York City and Dallas/Fort Worth area in the 1920s and 1930s. Notable among her recordings are those made in several 1924 Columbia label sessions with cornetist Louis Armstrong and pianist Fletcher Henderson. Activity after 1934 unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR**JONES, MAX**

b. Ronald Maxwell Jones, 28 February 1917; Bushey, Hertfordshire, England
d. 2 August 1993; Chichester, Sussex, England

For almost forty years (1944–1982) Jones fought the cause of jazz and blues in the English weekly music paper *Melody Maker*, interviewing and writing about visiting musicians and reviewing their records. Earlier he edited, with Albert McCarthy, the wartime magazine *Jazz Music*. His books include *Louis: The Louis Armstrong Story 1900–1971* (with John Chilton; London: Studio Vista, 1971) and *Talking Jazz* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1987).

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

New Grove Jazz

JONES, MOODY

b. 8 April 1908; Earle, AR
d. 23 March 1988; Chicago, IL

Guitarist Jones joined his cousin Floyd Jones and Snooky Pryor around 1946 on Maxwell Street. His “Telephone Blues” and “Snooky and Moody’s Boogie” (the inspiration for Little Walter’s “Juke”), released on Old Swingmaster (1949), were among the first postwar Chicago blues recordings with a modern sound. He later recorded at least three additional tracks and accompanied Floyd Jones on his classic “Stockyard Blues.” Also worked and recorded with John Brim, Sunnyland Slim, and Johnny Shines.

Although he was considered by contemporaries to be the best guitarist on the Chicago scene, Jones quit music in the 1950s to preach.

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

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Rowe, Mike. “The Old Swingmasters: Moody Jones.” *Blues Unlimited* nos. 137/138 (Spring 1980): 4.

Discography: LSFP**JONES, PAUL “WINE”**

b. 1946; Flora, MS

Learned guitar from his father. Jones worked as a cotton laborer through 1971, then as a welder in Belzoni, Mississippi. Since 1995 he has been a Fat Possum label and touring artist, performing electric guitar with a drummer.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG**JONES, TUTU**

b. John Jones, Jr., 9 September 1967; Dallas, TX

Singer, guitarist. The son of Dallas R&B guitarist John Jones grew up in a musical family that also included two uncles who were active on the local blues scene. As a teenager Jones worked as a drummer, first with lesser known locals and then with Texas soul singer Z. Z. Hill and Mississippi bluesman R. L. Burnside, but his goal was always to be in the spotlight. After working, both on stage and in the studio, with U. P. Wilson, Jones made his solo debut in 1994 with *I’m for Real* and followed it with *Blue Texas Soul* in 1996 and *Staying Power* in 1998.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG

JONES, WILLIE

JONES, WILLIE

b. William Martin Jones, 21 February 1920;
Vicksburg, MS
d. 31 December 1977; Chicago, IL

Chicago jazz pianist and session musician of the post-World War II era. Beginning in 1945, Jones regularly played Chicago jazz clubs heading his own combo and worked as a backing musician on jazz, blues, and R&B recording dates. Jones played in a fast locked-hand style, with frequent dissonances. His one recording date under his own name, for Vee-Jay in 1954, was with his band associates—Betty Dupree (bass) and Earl Phillips (drums). His last session work was in the early 1970s, accompanying tenor sax player Tommy “Mad Man” Jones (no relation).

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP

JOPLIN, JANIS

b. 19 January 1943; Port Arthur, TX
d. 4 October 1970; Los Angeles, CA

Singer. Her career barely spanned five years and her biggest hit was posthumous, but the self-described “boozy blues broad” still managed to become a beloved counterculture icon and an enduring influence on almost all female vocalists who followed her.

Joplin performed folk-blues material in bars and coffee houses around her hometown before moving to Austin, Texas, to attend college. But she spent more time at Threadgill’s folk music hot spot than in class and ultimately relocated to San Francisco in 1966, joining the rock group Big Brother & the Holding Company. Her electrifying rendition of Big Mama Thornton’s “Ball & Chain” at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival turned the media spotlight on the band and its second album, *Cheap Thrills*, capitalized fully on the attention by topping the charts in 1968.

Joplin’s first solo album, *I Got Dem Ol’ Kozmic Blues Again Mama!*, was recorded with the Kozmic Blues Band and she toured widely, playing festival dates throughout North America. She assembled an all-star backing unit, the horn-powered Full Tilt Boogie Band, for her final album, *Pearl*, but Joplin

died, at age twenty-seven, before the album’s release, overdosing on heroin in a Hollywood hotel in October 1970. “Me and Bobby McGee” became a posthumous number one single in 1971.

MICHAEL POINT

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JORDAN, CHARLEY

b. ca. 1890; Mabelvale (Mabelville), AR
d. 15 November 1954; St. Louis, MO

Charley Jordan was a blues guitarist who recorded from 1939 to 1937, at a time when most artists had no recording opportunities because of the Depression. His closest partner was Peetie Wheatstraw, and their guitar-piano combination was one of the most successful ones of the 1930s. Jordan walked on crutches because of a spine injury incurred during a bootlegging shooting incident in 1928.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn); Harris; Santelli
Klatzko, Bernard. “‘Conspiracy’ Against Charley Jordan.” *78 Quarterly* no. 1 (Autumn 1967): 39–41.

Discography: DGR

JORDAN, LOUIS

b. 8 July 1908; Brinkley, AR
d. 4 February 1975; Los Angeles, CA

Saxophonist, singer, and bandleader. The most successful black entertainer of the 1940s, and one of the few to cross over from so-called “Race” hits to the mainstream charts and white record buyers. His jump-blues recordings were an important precursor in the development of rock ‘n’ roll, although the arrival of that phenomenon finally ended his run as a major star.

His father was a musician and music teacher, and taught him to play clarinet and later saxophone (he was one of many musicians initially seduced by the look of the shiny curves of the instrument in a music store window, rather than its sound). He played a summer residence with bandleader Junie



Publicity photo of Louis Jordan. (Image courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Bug Williams while still in high school, and also performed with Fat Chappelle's Rabbit Foot Minstrels while in college in Little Rock, Arkansas.

He had mastered all of the saxophones by the time he left college, but his first-choice instrument was the alto saxophone. He played with a local band led by Jimmy Pryor, then moved to New York in 1929. He made his recording debut with the Jungle Band, a group of sidemen from the Chick Webb Orchestra. He returned to Little Rock for a time, then moved to Philadelphia, where he worked with Charlie Gaines, and was part of a band backing Louis Armstrong on a recording in 1932.

He worked with tuba player Jim Winter and Gaines, then recorded with Clarence Williams in 1934, which included his debut as a singer on record. He returned to New York and worked with drummer Kaiser Marshall, then joined Chick Webb's band in 1936, where he replaced Edgar Sampson. Webb's band was flying high at the Savoy Ballroom, and featured a stellar lineup, including Ella Fitzgerald (Jordan later recorded a duet with Ella, and also with Bing Crosby). Jordan handled introductions

as well as playing, and the exposure helped raise his own profile.

He remained with the band until 1938, and recorded many sides with them. Although he later said he loved playing and singing the blues with the band, he left the group in order to form his own small band, a radical step at that time, when the big bands ruled the roost. Jordan's instinct proved sound, and the small group setting allowed him to exercise not only his talents as a musician and singer, but also his passion for showmanship and entertainment (he billed himself later as "Mr. Personality").

His first band went under the name of the Elk's Rendezvous Band, but he soon changed the name to Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five (although the band had no timpani and usually at least six members). The band boasted many fine players in the following decade, when Jordan achieved an unprecedented level of popularity for a black musician in America.

His style was based on a jump-blues formula, and his repertoire contained many novelty songs that proved hugely popular. The band built a following in a residence at the Capitol Lounge in Chicago, and then developed their familiar routines in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The material and routines they worked up in the Midwest proved a sensation when they returned to Chicago, and Jordan's rise to stardom was under way. His first big seller was a blues, "I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town." It was the first of many hits for Decca, who transferred him to their newly launched Sepia Series in 1941, aimed at a white as well as black marketplace. The band took off, and Jordan became known as the "King of the Jukeboxes" as they racked up a succession of cross-over hits in the 1940s, which included perennially popular items like "Five Guys Named Moe," "Caldonia Boogie," "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie," "Beware," "Let the Good Times Roll," "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens," "Reet, Petite and Gone," "Saturday Night Fish Fry," and many more. "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" achieved the unique distinction of reaching number one on the country and western charts in 1944, the only black artist to do so until the arrival of Charley Pride two decades later.

Jordan and his band were featured in a number of films based around his songs, which have been seen as a forerunner of music videos. They included *Five Guys Named Moe* (1942), *Ration Blues* (1944), *Caldonia* (1945), *Beware* (1946), *Reet, Petite and Gone* (1947), and *Look Out, Sister* (1948).

He circumvented potential race problems at his concerts by arranging double dates, playing once for a black audience, and separately for a white one. Changing musical fashions began to erode his

unchallenged supremacy in the charts by the end of the 1940s. Like his first, his last significant hit was a blues, “Weak Minded Blues” in 1951. He recorded again with Louis Armstrong in 1950, this time with equal billing, and put together a fourteen-piece big band in 1951, but it was a short-lived experiment.

His long association with Decca ended in 1952, and he went on to record for Aladdin and various other labels. His discs for Mercury in the mid-1950s featured some excellent jazz performances, a reminder that he was a very fine saxophonist as well as a great populist entertainer. He also recorded for Ray Charles’s Tangerine label in 1962. His music was highly influential in the development of rock ‘n’ roll. Bill Haley was a great admirer, and frequently acknowledged his debt to Jordan’s example, as did Ray Charles, Chuck Berry, B. B. King, and diverse other artists. Ironically, Jordan himself was unable to capitalize on the new craze, although his 1957 release on RCA, *Rock ‘N’ Roll Call*, was an attempt to remake some of his famous hits in the new style. He never recaptured anything like the same level of success, but continued to perform on the cabaret and cocktail lounge circuit, and to make the occasional album until his death from a heart attack in 1974.

His popularity has led critics to undervalue his work, but his popularity at the time of his greatest success was unarguable. His music proved to have staying power as well, and furnished the material for a very successful stage musical, *Five Guys Named Moe*, in 1990.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

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Ain’t Nothing But a Bird” (1940, Decca 8501); “I’m Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town” (1941, Decca 8593); “Saxa-Woogie” (1941, Decca 8560); “I’m Gonna Leave You on the Outskirts of Town” (1942, Decca 8638); “Five Guys Named Moe” (1942, Decca 8653); “What’s the Use of Getting Sober (When You Gonna Get Drunk Again)”/“The Chicks I Pick Are Slender, Tender and Tall” (1942, Decca 8645); “Is You Is or Is You Ain’t My Baby?” (1943, Decca 8659); “Ration Blues” (1943, Decca 8654); “G. I. Jive” (1944, Decca 8659); “Mop Mop” (1944, Decca 8668); “Buzz Me” (1945, Decca 18734); “Caldonia Boogie” (1945, Decca 8670); “Salt Pork, West Virginia” (1945, Decca 18762); “Ain’t Nobody Here But Us Chickens”/“Let the Good Times Roll” (1946, Decca 23741); “Ain’t That Just Like a Woman” (1946, Decca 23669); “Beware” (1946, Decca 18818); “Choo Choo Ch’Boogie” (1946, Decca 23610); “Reet, Petite and Gone” (1946, Decca 24381); “Boogie Woogie Blue Plate” (1947, Decca 24108); “Open the Door, Richard” (1947, Decca 23841); “You’re Much Too Fat (and That’s That)” (1947, Decca 28444); “Beans and Cornbread” (1949, Decca 24673); “Cole Slaw” (1949, Decca 24633); “Saturday Night Fish Fry” (1949, Decca 24725); “Blue Light Boogie” (1950, Decca 27114); “Fat Sam from Birmingham” (1951, Decca 28983); “Weak Minded Blues” (1951, Decca 27547); “I Gotta Move” (1954, Decca 29880); “Dad Gum Ya Hide Boy”/“Whiskey Do Your Stuff” (1954, Aladdin 3223); “Gotta Go” (1954, Aladdin 3295); “Louis’ Blues” (1954, Aladdin 3249); *Rock ‘N’ Roll Call* (1956, RCA 66145); *Somebody Up There Digs Me* (1956, Mercury MG20242); *Man, We’re Wailing* (1957, Mercury MG20331); *Hallelujah, Louis Jordan Is Back* (1964, Tangerine 1503).

JORDAN, LUKE

b. 28 January 1892; Appomattox County, VA
 d. 25 June 1952; West Lynchburg, VA

Singer and guitarist based in Lynchburg, Virginia. His records, sporadically released after their 1927–1929 recording sessions, are today collector’s items. Much of his recorded repertoire was likely from vaudeville. His “Cocaine Blues” was rerecorded by white performer Dick Justice in 1929.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

JOSEPH, PLEASANT

(*See Cousin Joe*)

JSP

Record label of John Stedman (Promotions), London, England, which commenced operations in 1978 as an adjunct to his activities as a concert and club promoter. Recordings by artists who visited Britain under his auspices have figured largely in the catalog, including Louisiana Red (1978), Professor Longhair (1978), Jimmy Rogers (1979), Jimmy Witherspoon (1981), Fernest Arceneaux (1981), Jimmy Dawkins (1985), and Hubert Sumlin (1989), along with albums by European residents Johnny Mars and Eddie C. Campbell and by visiting artists whose styles overlapped jazz and blues such as Gene “Mighty Flea” Connors, Hal Singer, and Jay McShann. Progressively the label became independent of the promotions, producing recording sessions in the United States. Buddy Guy was recorded live at the Checkerboard Lounge, Chicago, in October 1979. Further albums followed by Buddy and by Phil Guy, who was recorded in both Chicago and Britain, as were Carey and Lurrie Bell (1987–1988).

In the 1990s, the label launched the recording careers of several significant new artists, among them Guitar Shorty (1990), Larry Garner (1990), Tutu Jones (1993), and Ike Cosse (1997). Into the twenty-first century, JSP has produced chronologically organized box set reissues of vintage jazz and blues in superior sonic quality, including sets by Blind Lemon Jefferson, Charley Patton, and Blind Willie McTell, but has not neglected contemporary blues with noteworthy albums by Joe Louis Walker (2001 and 2002) and a project to market new artists “direct to midprice,” launched with sessions by Lil’ Dave Thompson and Lisa Bourne.

HOWARD RYE

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JUBILEE/JOSIE/IT’S A NATURAL

Herb Abramson and Ahmet Ertegun founded Jubilee Records in 1946. A year later, the two created Atlantic Records and sold Jubilee to Jerry Blaine, who ran the label out of New York City until 1970. Jubilee excelled as an independent rhythm and blues label, finding early success with the Orioles. Often regarded as the first rhythm and blues vocal group, the Orioles originally appeared on Blaine’s short-lived “It’s a Natural” label in 1948, but, evidently after complaints that the label’s name was too close to National Records, they were moved onto Jubilee. In 1954,

Blaine founded the subsidiary label Josie (JOZ), which had hits with rock ’n’ roll groups such as the Cadillacs and Bobby Freeman. Other notable rhythm and blues or blues-related artists who recorded with Jubilee or its subsidiaries include Memphis Slim, Carol Fran, and Dorothy Donegan. Selected Jubilee recordings have been rereleased on the British label, Sequel Records.

STEVEN GALBRAITH

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“Jerry Blaine.” *Variety* (March 14, 1973): 71.

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JUG

The use of the jug as a musical instrument is rooted in the long African American tradition of transforming everyday objects into makeshift musical instruments (see also the *Rubboard* and *Spoons* entries). To play the jug, the musician blows across the mouth of the instrument, which acts as resonator for the sound. Generally, the player also vibrates his or her lips to produce a buzzing sound, tightening and loosening the lips in order to produce different pitches; another technique involves the vocalization of pitches while blowing. Jug players have usually played earthenware jugs, though glass and metal jugs, oil cans, lengths of pipe, and bottles have also been utilized to achieve the same effect. The instrument has primarily been associated with the ensemble called the jug band, in which it typically functions as a bass instrument (playing a similar role to that of the tuba in early jazz bands). Other instruments commonly employed in jug bands have included the harmonica, kazoo, guitar, fiddle, mandolin, banjo, various percussion instruments, and even horns.

While there is evidence that jugs were used as folk instruments in several parts of the southern United States during the nineteenth century, scholars have generally traced the jug band’s origins to the African American groups that began emerging in Louisville around 1900. The most influential of the Louisville jug bands was the Dixieland Jug Blowers, led by fiddler Clifford Hayes and featuring the celebrated jug

playing of Earl McDonald. Their recordings in the mid-1920s inspired the formation of numerous jug bands throughout the country, the most famous of which were organized in Memphis. Overall, the jug band sound in Memphis was characterized by a more rural, blues-oriented style than the heavily jazz-influenced approach of the Louisville jug bands. The most legendary Memphis groups were the Memphis Jug Band (often with Charlie Polk or Jab Jones playing the jug) and Cannon's Jug Stompers (featuring Gus Cannon, who blew into a railroad coal-oil can and played the banjo simultaneously).

In addition to playing blues, jug bands performed popular hits, minstrel songs, and dance tunes, and they were quite popular among whites as well as blacks during the 1920s and 1930s. Later, as the Great Depression drastically diminished record sales and as newer and more urbane musical styles emerged, jug bands became increasingly rare, and the jug virtually disappeared from commercial recordings by the late 1930s. During the folk revival of the 1960s, however, several new jug bands were formed (mostly by young white musicians), largely replicating the style of the Memphis jug bands. Today, a number of such groups still perform in this style.

ANDREW LEACH

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JUKE JOINTS

Juke joints are spatial manifestations of blues culture, having significant presence in African American communities today. In his 1936 case study of Indianola, Mississippi, John Dollard observed that "Negroes experience much less security in their own homes and pursuits than do whites. Physical invasion of Negro privacy is not taken too seriously." During that time, African Americans exercised a system of communicating and moving within the prevailing environment with little or no detection by whites. Even since segregation, juke joints continue to be operated under the same conditions as before.

Juke joints are not permanent structures in a usual sense. They usually inhabit buildings originally built for other purposes, so as a result, no real physical commonality ties these buildings together. Proprietors

and patrons reappropriate the available building and transform its space as a juke joint with complex yet subtle gestures. In this sense, the information offered in a juke-joint floor plan has to be supplemented with notes on the seen elements and unseen functions exercised in the actual space.

Drinking serves as a primary activity within a juke joint. In most southern states, juke-joint licenses are purchased at the local town halls for slight fees. Sometimes, though, juke joints operate without these licenses. Proprietors often purchase beer (usually Budweiser, Budweiser Light, and Anheuser-Light Natural Light) by the case at local stores or warehouses, then sell it to patrons by the can. Also, patrons freely bring hard liquor like Crown Royal Canadian whiskey into juke joints, a practice that is not legal but anyway acceptable according to juke-joint practices. It is interesting to note that many juke joints do not generate significant amounts of revenue for the proprietors, who usually keep full-time jobs and operate their juke joints on their own time. In such cases, they simply wish to provide social gathering places for their individual communities, where patrons can listen to blues and have a certain amount of freedom to drink, dance, smoke, and celebrate.

It is not surprising then, that the proprietors maintain very personal involvement with their juke joints and their patrons. Although the specific proprietors discussed later are men, female proprietors are not uncommon. The rules and expectations of conduct are imparted not by signs but mostly through oral understanding. Recognition of frequent customers is important to proprietors. The principle in operating a juke joint is about creating and sustaining a local intimacy, while ensuring a collective anonymity to outsiders.

A kind of escapism associated with the blues may be discerned in the celebratory and figurative décor inside a juke joint. Blues historian Paul Oliver wrote that blues music is a "rich storehouse of the fantasy production" of the lower class African American communities in the South. Juke joints thus have a visual as well as social "function." Participation in such a setting depends on one's knowledge, anticipation, and acceptance of the communal experience on and within its walls.

The events within a juke joint are not extraordinary: drinking, smoking, dancing, and listening to music. The covert nature of juke joints can be viewed by outsiders as protection under a low profile of such illegal activities as prostitution, drug use, and gambling that often occur inside. What seems anonymous to those outsiders is, once inside the juke joint, to the owner and patrons an intimate, even communal experience based on recognition of faces. Therefore



Eddie Mae's Cafe, a juke in Helena, Arkansas, was home to musician Frank Frost (1936–1999). (Photo by Gene Tomko)

juke joints are interactive, combining individual people, groups, physical space, music, and dancing, toward moving and blurring the boundaries between the tangible and the ephemeral. What occurs in a particular juke joint relies greatly on how people act within it. What follows are several individual examples.

J. J.'s (Clarksdale, Mississippi)

J. J.'s occupies two former spaces that in the 1940s were The Belmont, a segregated café, and the OK Grocery store. The three front doors to this building are physical reminders of the segregation era. One was used by whites for the OK Grocery (African Americans entered through a back door no longer extant). The other two front doors were the “Whites Only” and “Negroes Only” entrances to the Belmont. J. J. closed the former

“Negroes Only” door when he purchased the property in 1991.

With no formal signage designating this building a juke joint, J. J.'s depends on word of mouth for patronage, an indication of the oral dynamic in the local African American community. Nevertheless, the number of people coming to J. J.'s on busy nights sometimes is greater than the space's capacity. As a result the overflow spills out to the sidewalk in front of the building, where these patrons are almost always gathered during peak hours. The entrance functions at such busy times for the owner J. J. as a point of interaction with the patrons, sometimes as a filtering process. This is not to say that the entrance of J. J.'s necessarily operates as a way of turning people away, but rather to remove the initial anonymity among the patrons and the owner. The juke joint literally offers a place where everybody knows each other's name. The quasi-privacy offered at a typical public bar is not extended here. Entering a juke joint without participating in the initial greeting process like that at J. J.'s

disrupts the social and oral dynamics of the local culture and would not be tolerated, because the regular patrons sort themselves out through dialogue, interaction, and response.

Poor Monkey's Lounge (Merigold, Mississippi)

The Poor Monkey's Lounge is owned by Willie "Monkey" Seaberry, a sharecropper on the Hiter Farm located in Merigold. Moving to Hiter Farm in 1954 at the age of thirteen, he started his juke joint with his older brother in a former sharecropper's shack located on the farm. In 1963, he moved into his juke joint because, by then, overseeing the juke joint had become his primary activity. This fusion at Monkey's of private home with public juke joint blurs the conventional realms between home and business. Like the former segregated café that now houses J. J.'s juke joint, this reuse of a 1940s sharecropper shack offers a link between the Jim Crow era and the present. Although he has the juke joint open for only a few hours per week, Monkey feels it makes a better home for him than an actual house. Originally the building consisted of only the main room. Since 1963, a poolroom, stage area, kitchen, and bedroom have been added.

Entering Monkey's requires a more intimate knowledge of the local community than J. J.'s. For one, this juke joint is located far enough off the main roads of Merigold that patrons must know its location beforehand. Monkey's fusion of home and juke joint increases the intimacy found between the patrons and proprietors. Like J. J.'s in Clarksdale, Monkey does not turn people away, but he uses the initial welcome into his juke joint to personalize his relationship with every person who crosses inside. Also, the patrons at Monkey's have been going there for many years; indeed, some are fellow Hiter Farm employees who have known Monkey since the 1950s. There is no listing of Monkey's juke joint in any directory, yellow pages, map, or other official guide. To show that his juke is open on a given night, Monkey turns on a single string of Christmas lights.

Junior Kimbrough's (Holly Springs, Mississippi)

Junior Kimbrough's burned in 2000, but in its time it offered a complicated example of the connection between community and space within a juke. Holly Springs lies about thirty miles northwest of the mostly

white University of Mississippi in Oxford. For many years, Junior's developed a following of white university students and other Oxford residents who regularly frequented his juke on Sunday nights, which came to be referred to by Junior and his son Kinny (who took over the juke after Junior's 1998 death) as "white nights." According to Kinny, Junior's was open on other weeknights only for the local black community.

Like J. J.'s and Monkey's, Junior's didn't have signs identifying it as a public space. The building was an old store located about eight miles away from the closest commercial business. The attendance of a racially mixed crowd on Sunday nights may have changed the social scope of the juke temporarily, but Junior, Kinny, and the regular patrons maintained control by sharing awareness and oral information among themselves.

Junior's had colorful wall paintings that transformed the physical space into a metaphorical experience. The paintings ranged from abstract to portraiture, and some altered the nature of the space itself. The main walls were covered with floor-to-ceiling paintings of places such as a house settled within a landscape filled with trees, clouds, and water; a forest scene; a huge setting (or perhaps rising) sun on the poolroom wall; palm trees; and mountainscapes. The lintels within the main room had portraits of famous African Americans including Oprah Winfrey, Little Richard, Magic Johnson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. These paintings had been done by a local customer at Junior's request.

Do Drop Inn (Shelby, Mississippi)

The town of Shelby spans about three blocks off of Highway 61, with no major grocery store or restaurant, yet it has at least five jukes that are open at various times. They remain an important, if not altogether visible, piece of the Delta landscape. On most Friday and Saturday nights for the last twenty years, Earnest "Big E." Walker has operated the Do Drop out of an old lumberyard building. A maintenance worker for the town of Shelby during the week, Big E. grew up on a sharecropping farm in the Delta, and for a time he attended elementary school with Monkey. His present juke joint is the latest in a long line he has run throughout his life. He rents the building, and in most months the juke profits just cover the costs of his rent and liquor.

While the Do Drop does have a sign on the front of the building, it is known to patrons and local residents as "Big E.'s." Over the front door, "DO

DROP INN” is painted directly on the shingles, and below that, “Big E. Place” [sic] is spray-painted there and again to the right of the front door. Despite these visual signs, Big E. told me his customers know the juke joint is open when they see his truck parked in front.

Shortly after opening at his current location, Big E. renovated part of the kitchen and bars, but the large open space remaining is taken up by the stage and patron areas. The transformation from lumber building to juke joint extends also to the walls. Similar to those at Junior’s, the paintings seen at Big E.’s depict scenes of celebration and, to a certain extent, escapism. They evoke another world within the Do Drop, particularly in the main room painting where the Do Drop Inn with Big E.’s truck floats in a fantasy world, surrounded by palm trees, in a visual promise that this is where paradise may be found. Other paintings show couples dancing, and huge, surreal champagne glasses clinking together, although champagne is never served at a juke. While less abstract than those at Junior’s, these wall depictions enclose the crowd and music in the same way.

Smitty’s Red Top Lounge (Clarksdale, Mississippi)

Smitty’s opened around 1950 on Yazoo Street, only two streets away from J. J.’s. Despite this proximity, patrons of one rarely go to the other. While talking with customers at J. J.’s in 1997, I was told by many that Smitty’s did not have a good crowd and was not where they felt welcome; a few days later Smitty’s regulars told me the same thing about J. J.’s.

Like the Do Drop Inn, Smitty’s consists of a large open area with the bar on one wall and the pool table stationed close to the front door. It also has a professionally made sign over the front door simply reading “Red Top Lounge,” without the “Smitty’s.”

Since it opened in the early 1950s, the Red Top Lounge has been operated successively by three men.

The current proprietor, James Alford, has owned and run it since 1993 and like Monkey he lives in his juke joint. Interestingly, Alford goes by the name Smitty, as did the two previous proprietors. Alford also runs a juke in West Helena, Arkansas, located about thirty minutes east of Clarksdale, where he does not use the name Smitty. The personal nickname “Smitty” belongs to the place Smitty’s. Just as historian Lawrence Levine wrote that no single person owned a blues song, no one person owns Smitty’s or, in a broader sense, designs or defines a juke joint.

JENNIFER NARDONE

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JVB

Detroit label owned by Joe Von Battle in 1948–1959. Subsidiaries were Battle, Gone, Viceroy, and Von. Many of its issues were sermons by Reverend C. L. Franklin, with blues sides by Baby Boy Warren, John Lee Hooker, Calvin Frazier, Eddie Burns, and Washboard Willie.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

K

KANE, CANDYE

b. 13 November 1966; Ventura, CA

Proudly flaunting her past as a former X-rated model and actress, Candye Kane sings blues-based R&B, rock, country, and saloon songs with a larger-than-life persona that reminds one of classic blues singers like Bessie Smith. With a voice strong enough to match her confidence, Kane straddles most American styles with comfort and aplomb.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

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The Toughest Girl Alive (2000, Rounder 619605).

KANSAS CITY

Kansas City was one of the quintessential music cities of the twentieth century. It gained national recognition with a distinctive sound that blended the blues with an up-tempo swing beat. The music scene peaked from the 1920s until the early 1950s. Charlie "Bird" Parker, Lester Young, Jay McShann, and Big Joe

Turner are just a handful of the legends who sprang from the Kansas City area.

Kansas City, historically, was defined by its geographical relationship with the Kansas and Missouri rivers, both of which feed the Mississippi River. With its vast network of railroad lines converging in Kansas City, manufacturing, meatpacking, and other general commerce brought people together from throughout the Midwest region throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Important to the mix was the fact that Kansas City marked the center of the pre-Civil War struggles between slave states and free states. Although Jim Crow laws continued to be upheld either legally or through social mores until the 1960s, Kansas City's overall attitude and spirit enabled a sense of freedom for the African American population.

The other major item influencing the creation of the Kansas City sound was political in nature. Political strongman "Boss Tom" Pendergast, who controlled Kansas City's government and police force from 1920 to 1939 during both Prohibition and the Great Depression, provided a fertile ground where bootlegging, gambling, and prostitution could thrive—as did more than fifty nightclubs and juke joints that filled the city center and red light district.

The Kansas City Sound

Many performers who are considered "Kansas City blues" artists brought their roots and blues traditions from neighboring regional blues music hubs such as

KANSAS CITY

St. Louis, Chicago, Memphis, and Louisville. The most notable local Kansans and Missourians who rose to fame included the legendary saxophonist Charlie Parker, blues shouter Big Joe Turner, and singer/pianist Julie Lee.

The most typical performer of the Kansas City blend of blues and jazz of the 1940s was Jay McShann, who had played local Kansas City blues clubs for decades. His LP *Blues from Kansas City* captures the spirit and energy of the mixing of the blues with swing and bebop influences from Parker, drummer Gus Johnson, and vocalist Walter Brown.

The mystique and roaring good times of the scene were captured in such titles as “Kansas City Blues” by Jim Jackson, as well as “Kansas City” by Wilbert Harrison, which codified the blues music scene.

Juke Joints

The blues and jazz scenes through the heyday of the 1920s to 1950s centered in the bustling commercial downtown Kansas City area near the river bottoms.

The district between 12th to 18th streets, and from Central to Vine streets was lined with clubs, playing six nights a week to jam-packed crowds. Of the fifty or so blues and jazz clubs in downtown Kansas City, a handful of them provided stages on which blues legends could make their names.

One dynamic duo—owner Felix Payne and manager Thomas “Big Piney” Brown—had success in running two clubs. The Subway Club was a popular bar at the famous corner of 18th and Vine. They also owned and ran The Sunset Club. One of The Sunset Club’s bartenders, “Big Joe” Turner, was widely accepted as the greatest blues singer in Kansas City, with his powerful voice and ability to improvise with the band. His career started by him singing or shouting from the bar to accompany Pete Johnson on piano and Johnson’s supporting band. Turner’s connection to The Sunset Club provided links to other blues and jazz greats such as Bennie Moten (Bennie Moten Orchestra), Count Basie, and Andy Kirk—all of whom he would later tour with.

One of the most well-known club owners in Kansas City was Milton Morris, who owned and managed many venues throughout the years—ranging from his



Kansas City, Missouri, in the 1920s. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

earliest venture, a “drugstore” that sold liquor “for medicinal purposes,” to the Hey Day Club, to Milton’s on Troost, which was made famous in Pee Wee Hunt’s song “Meet Me at Milton’s.”

Milton’s provided the stage for Kansas City’s “First Lady of the Blues,” Julia Lee, whose star climbed while there. Although Lee had much national success, she stayed local to the Kansas City area for almost her entire career, playing at Milton’s for many years with her brother’s band, George E. Lee and His Novelty Singing Orchestra, until she migrated to the Cuban Room in the 1950s. Lee belted out husky, soulful numbers such as “Come On Over to My House Baby,” “He’s Tall, Dark and Handsome,” and “Snatch and Grab It,” which sold more than 500,000 copies.

Other major venues in Kansas City during the heyday were The Panama Club at 18th and Forest, where Bennie Moten performed, and The Vanity Fair at 12th and Walnut, where Andy Kirk & His Twelve Clouds of Joy played.

Contemporary Blues Scene

Kansas Citians appreciate their place in history when it comes to blues and jazz traditions. So it is no surprise to see the blues club circuit still vibrant, with new acts surfacing out of the area. The downtown and Westport areas host local, regional, and national acts at clubs such as Blayney’s at Westport and The Grand Emporium, which has been twice voted the “Best Blues Club in America” by the Blues Foundation.

Dozens of local acts in the four-state region actively circulate through the clubs. “Fast Johnny” Ricker, Big John & the 39th Street Blues Band, Lee McBee & the Confessors, and the Lonnie Ray Blues Band are just a handful of acts that fuel the local scene.

One of Kansas City’s top annually attended functions is the famous Kansas City Blues and Jazz Festival, which, in 2002, metamorphosed into the Kansas City Blues and Heritage Festival. More than 100,000 attend the annual event, held the third weekend of each July, with center stage at Liberty Memorial.

The Kansas City Blues Society connects the venues, bands, and fans by promoting blues music in the community and offering shared resources, such as websites and sponsorship of local events. And, in the spirit of cultivating young musicians in the blues tradition, the Mayfield Towns Memorial, a committee of the Kansas City Blues Society, facilitates music education using blues music as its inspiration.

MEG FISHER

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KANSAS CITY RED

- b. Arthur Lee Stevenson, 7 May 1926; Drew, MS
d. 7 May 1991; Chicago, IL

Arthur Lee Stevenson was born in Drew, Mississippi, and owed his Kansas City sobriquet to a brief trip to that city after being rejected from the service in 1942. His first musical inspiration was David “Honeyboy” Edwards and by the early 1940s he was hanging around with Robert Nighthawk. One night the band’s drummer took ill right before a gig and he offered to fill in despite never having played drums before. He ended up playing drums for Nighthawk until around 1946. After his split with Nighthawk he briefly hooked up with Honeyboy Edwards. He had an uncanny knack for hustling gigs and began singing by this period. In the 1950s he formed a band with Earl Hooker and pianist Ernest Lane.

He moved to Chicago in the 1950s, occasionally sitting in with Muddy Waters. He formed a group with Walter Horton that included Johnny Young and Johnny Shines. During this period he played with Robert Lockwood Jr., Eddie Taylor, Jimmy Reed, Floyd Jones, Blind John Davis, Elmore James, and others. Starting with the Club Reno, he managed a number of Chicago bars and owned a couple as well. Through the 1970s and 1980s he held down stints at a number of Chicago clubs. His recorded legacy is slim with a handful of sessions for Barrelhouse, JSP, and Earwig. His last major engagement was at the 1991 Chicago Blues Festival where he finally received some overdue recognition. He died of cancer on his sixty-fifth birthday on May 7, 1991.

JEFF HARRIS

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KANSAS CITY RED

Discography

Old Friends (1993, Earwig 4902 CD).

See also **Chicago**; **Earwig**; **Edwards, David “Honeyboy”**; **Hooker, Earl**; **Nighthawk, Robert**; **Waters, Muddy**

KAPLAN, FRED

b. 23 April 1954; Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles pianist. As a child he first heard blues records at his father's furniture store. Lloyd Glenn was a mentor until his 1985 death. Kaplan was pianist for Hollywood Fats through the early 1990s. He has since recorded for Kim Wilson's Blue Collar label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Char Ham)

Discography: AMG (Char Ham)

KATZ, BRUCE

b. 19 August 1952; Brooklyn, NY

Blues organist. In the 1980s, Katz toured with Big Mama Thornton, Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, Jimmy Witherspoon, and Johnny Adams. After receiving a master's degree in jazz from the New England Conservatory, he worked with Ronnie Earl for nearly five years. Now an instructor at the Berklee College of Music, Katz continues to record with his own band.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

AMG (Char Ham)

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

Three Feet Off the Ground (2000, AudioQuest 1056).

KAZOO

Though it has commonly been regarded merely as a toy or novelty instrument, the kazoo has occasionally been used to great effect in popular music,

particularly in blues and jazz performances. The kazoo is a submarine-shaped instrument, about five inches in length and usually made of metal or plastic, that modifies and amplifies the human voice. In the top of the instrument is a small opening, over which a membrane (nowadays typically made of waxed paper or plastic) is held in place by a screw-on cap or similar mechanism. As the player hums or sings into the larger end of the kazoo, the membrane vibrates and produces a nasal, buzzing timbre. The instrument's pitch and volume is entirely determined by the player's voice. A number of special effects are achievable on the kazoo, and skilled players have often used it to imitate other instruments, such as the trumpet, saxophone, and clarinet.

The kazoo is a type of “mirliton,” a term for any device that makes use of a vibrating membrane to alter a sound. For centuries, voice-modifying mirlitons have been utilized in musical contexts in many cultures around the world. Notably, this includes a number of communities throughout West and Central Africa, where people have made use of mirlitons in various ritual ceremonies (often as a means of disguising or “masking” the voice and at times representing the voices of spirits). In view of the kazoo's precursors in Africa, it is interesting to note that the original design for the instrument was reportedly created in the 1840s by Alabama Vest, an African American. The kazoo's African connections perhaps account for its later acceptance as a folk instrument by African descendants in the United States, a fact that is also likely attributable to the instrument's buzzing effects, a feature commonly considered musically appealing throughout many African cultures.

In the early twentieth century, kazoos began to be manufactured in significant quantities in the United States, and the instrument became quite popular in the 1920s. It can be heard on a number of seminal blues and jazz recordings from the era. In particular, the kazoo was regularly featured on recordings of jug bands (see the *Jug* entry), in which it was often used in conjunction with the harmonica to emulate the brass and woodwind sounds of early jazz bands. Such recordings include those of the Memphis Jug Band (featuring Ben Ramey's remarkable kazoo playing) and Cannon's Jug Stompers (often including Hosea Woods or Elijah Avery on kazoo). The kazoo was also commonly included in washboard bands and skiffle groups, and it was occasionally featured on early jazz recordings, most famously those by the Mound City Blue Blowers (with Dick Slevin's kazoo and Red McKenzie's comb-and-tissue-paper instrument, essentially a homemade mirliton with a sound like that of the kazoo). Probably the most

renowned kazoo player in the blues is guitar legend Tampa Red, many of whose recordings throughout his career prominently feature the instrument, which he dubbed his “jazz horn.” Other notable blues musicians who have frequently played the kazoo include Hammie Nixon and Jesse Fuller. While the formation of new jug bands during the folk revival of the 1960s helped to reintroduce the kazoo to blues audiences, the instrument’s use in the blues idiom today is rare.

ANDREW LEACH

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K-DOE, ERNIE

b. Ernest Kador, Jr., 22 February 1936; New Orleans, LA

d. 5 July 2001; New Orleans, LA

Rhythm and blues singer whose highly intimate and emotional vocal delivery made him a local legend around New Orleans and the Louisiana Gulf Coast. Raised by his aunt, K-Doe competed in talent shows in his youth with the likes of Art and Aaron Neville and Danny White. By age fifteen he established his reputation as an up-and-coming star, moving to Chicago at seventeen to reunite with his mother. Here he continued to compete and win local talent shows, and he sat in at local clubs with classic vocal groups like the Moonglows and the Flamingos.

His first recording date was in 1953 with United Records, and in the same year he returned to New Orleans to form the Black Diamonds. The group managed to cut some sides for Savoy before disbanding. In 1955 he recorded a split single with then-unknown Little Richard Penniman, as well as stints with Ember and other small labels. Although his records sold moderately during these years, in New Orleans his live performances were considered must-see events.

His best work comes from his period of association with Allen Toussaint and Minit Records in 1960. His breakout hit was in 1961, “Mother-in-Law,” a comic number that topped the national rhythm and blues chart and propelled him to stardom. Its success was fleeting, as Minit went out of business, and stylistic tastes among rhythm and blues audiences were

changing. In the 1970s and early 1980s, K-Doe was performing to small audiences and recording to little sales, and he also was having problems with alcohol. In 1982, he began hosting a radio show in New Orleans and became well known for his on-air antics. He opened the Mother-in-Law Lounge in 1984, and he gathered civic recognition from then through the end of his life. He was inducted into New Orleans’s Hall of Fame in 1995.

JOHN OTIS

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Hannusch, Jeff. “Ernie K-Doe at the Center of the Universe.” *Living Blues* no. 153 (September/October 2000): 26–31.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

KEB' MO'

b. Kevin Moore, 3 October 1951; Los Angeles, CA

Singer, guitarist, and composer Keb' Mo' was born and raised in Los Angeles, performing and recording rock and rhythm and blues under his given name of Kevin Moore throughout the 1970s and 1980s (including a stint with Zulu, which often backed Papa John Creach). In the late 1980s, Mo' began studying and then devoting himself to the traditional rural blues of the Mississippi Delta and, on the strength of several popular recordings, became the best-known exponent of acoustic rural blues.

His first recording under the stage name of Keb' Mo', an eponymously titled album in 1994, garnered him significant public attention for his covers of several Robert Johnson tunes performed in a style similar to what Johnson himself had done. However, as with fellow rural acoustic blues performers Taj Mahal and Corey Harris (with whom he is most often compared), Mo' performs and records new songs as well as standards. Like Mahal and Harris, Mo's own compositions meld both the traditional styles and other, more contemporary influences.

Mo' won Grammy awards in 1997 and 1999, and had won nine W. C. Handy Awards through 2002. Mo' has also been active on stage and television. He portrayed bluesmen in a pair of Los Angeles-based productions in 1990; in 1992, he again played an acoustic bluesman in Mark Harelik's musical biography of Hank Williams, *Lost Highway*, when it traveled San Diego's Old Globe Theatre and Chic Street Man

KEB' MO'

was unable to continue the role. He has had guest spots on a number of popular television programs.

JIM TRAGESER

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AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin
Slaven, Neil. "Keb' Mo'." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 102
(September 1995): 9.

Discography: AMG

Keb' Mo' (1994, Epic 57863).
Just Like You (1996, Epic 67316).
The Door (2000, OKeh 61428).

KELLUM, ALPHONSO "COUNTRY"

b. 25 September 1943; Lakeland, FL
d. 24 March 2000; Rochester, NY

Bassist and guitarist best known for his years with James Brown. The "Country" nickname came from Brown bandmates who kidded Kellum for his ways acquired from growing up in Lakeland, Florida. He began playing guitar around age eight, and joined a small group, the Melody Hep Cats. In the late 1950s he traveled and worked in the northern United States as a migrant worker picking vegetables. In the early 1960s he performed in a few groups in Florida, occasionally backing in local guest appearances for Faye Adams and others. In 1963 James Brown hired him as a bassist. In 1965 he formed with Jimmy Nolen, a twin-guitar attack in Brown's Famous Flames. In 1970 he joined bandmates in leaving Brown over a dispute in pay, and he moved to Rochester, New York. He rejoined Brown from 1974 to 1977. Since then until his death, he worked and performed locally in Rochester, including a 1988 reunion of King Records musicians.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Crews, Nick. "There Was a Time." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 75
(January 1993): 10–11.

KELLY, JO ANN

b. 5 January 1944; London, England
d. 21 October 1990; London, England

British singer active from the 1960s until the late 1980s, with a vocal style reminiscent of pre-1940 Mississippi singers such as Memphis Minnie.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Chris Nickson); Larkin
Holland, M. "No Ordinary Jo." *Folk Roots* no. 71 (May 1989): 34–35.

Discography: AMG

KELLY, PAUL

b. 19 June 1940; Miami, FL

Songwriter-singer Kelly has recorded a handful of albums, but remains best known for songs he has written for others, mostly in the soul/R&B styles, including the Staples Singers, Irma Thomas, and Johnnie Taylor.

JIM TRAGESER

Discography

Gonna Stick and Stay (1992, Bullseye Blues 9523).

KELLY, VANCE

b. 24 January 1954; Chicago, IL

South Side Chicago electric guitarist. Self-taught, at age fifteen he was accompanying singer Mary Lane. A term with A. C. Reed in 1987–1990 brought him some exposure, as well as advice from B. B. King to use fewer tone effects. His music has been issued on the Wolf label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Sharp, Steven. "South Side Special." *Living Blues* no. 110
(July/August 1993): 29–35.

Discography: AMG

KELTON, ROBERT "BOB"

b. 1 January 1908; Kansas City, KS
d. 19 May 1996; Castro Valley, CA

Guitarist who joined Jimmy McCracklin's Blues Blasters in 1943. When McCracklin began to tour regularly, Kelton preferred to remain in the Bay Area and formed his own band. He recorded a session

for Aladdin in 1950 and one for Rhodesway in 1980, but mostly performed in local clubs.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: LSFP

See also Aladdin/Score; McCracklin, Jimmy

KEMBLE, WILL ED

Last name also spelled Kendall, Kendle. Talent scout in prewar Texas blues and hillbilly music, based at Kemble Brothers Furniture Company in Fort Worth, Texas, in the 1920s and 1930s. The store's record department stocked a wide range of music, including popular music, blues, jazz, and hillbilly. Bob Wills was among the white musicians influenced by the blues records offered there.

EDWARD KOMARA

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KENNEDY, JESSE "TINY"

b. Jesse Kennedy Jr., 20 December 1925; Chattanooga, TN

Came to initial fame as a blues shouter for Jay McShann in 1949. Two years later he was with the Tiny Bradshaw Orchestra. Kennedy recorded as a solo artist for Trumpet in 1951–1953, and for RCA subsidiary Groove in 1955. Activity since 1955 unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl), Larkin

Discography: LSFP

KENNER, CHRIS

b. 25 December 1929; Kenner, LA

d. 25 January 1976; New Orleans, LA

Chris Kenner was a convincing singer and brilliant composer ("I Like It Like That," "Land of 1000 Dances," "Something You Got") but a reluctant performer who proved incapable of building on his Allen Toussaint-produced hits. Many sources give January 25, 1976, as his death date, although his *Living Blues* obituary gives January 28, 1977.

JOHN SINCLAIR/EDWARD KOMARA

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"Obituaries." *Living Blues* no. 26 (1977): 8.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

KENT, WILLIE

b. 24 September 1936; Shelby, Sunflower County, MS

Willie Kent was first introduced to the blues as a child growing up in Mississippi. In 1952 his family relocated to Chicago where Willie was able to hear the blues played live in clubs. In 1957 he began working as a singer and started playing guitar the year after, though he switched to the bass in 1959. During the 1960s Kent worked with blues artists such as Hip Linkchain and Jimmy Dawkins and recorded a live album with Willie James Lyons in 1975 for the MCM label. The year 1989 brought the release of *I'm What You Need*, Kent's first release with his band The Gents.

ROBERT SORICELLI

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Discography: AMG

KEY TO THE HIGHWAY

With its simple but distinctive melody and evocative lyrics, "Key to the Highway" is near the top of the list of universally recognized blues standards. The vivid images ("when the moon peep over the mountain")

KEY TO THE HIGHWAY

and emotional urgency (“I got to leave here runnin’ because walkin’ is most too slow”) have inspired some of the most influential artists in blues and other genres to record and perform it.

The song’s origins are murky. It is often associated with Big Bill Broonzy, but it was first recorded by pianist Charlie Segar for Vocalion in February 1940. Jazz Gillum and Broonzy then played on each other’s recordings of it, Gillum (with Broonzy on guitar) for Bluebird in May 1940 and Broonzy (with Gillum on harmonica) for OKeh a year later. Broonzy told oral historian Studs Terkel that he had based the melody on one he had heard originally as a child in the South played on the banjo by his uncle, and credited Segar with composing new lyrics. Gillum maintained that he had written both words and music at the request of producer Lester Melrose, who then gave it to Broonzy. Broonzy’s powerful final version from his last recording session in 1957 reinforced his connection with the song. Despite the conflicting claims of authorship, the song carries an indelible association with the African American blues musicians born in the South who invoked their rural origins when they migrated North in the first decades of the twentieth century and recorded in urban centers such as Chicago.

Several prominent musicians recorded noteworthy versions of “Key to the Highway” in the years following World War II. When harmonica star Little Walter recorded it for Chess Records in August 1958, it became his last top ten hit, rising to number six on the *Billboard* charts. Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee produced numerous versions, and their 1952 recording for Jax in particular raised the song’s profile among a generation of blues fans internationally as it appeared on their multiple reissued collections in the 1960s. John Lee Hooker’s 1952 session for Modern features Eddie Kirkland on second guitar striving to replicate Broonzy’s phrases; Hooker also covered the song in later solo versions. Other artists who have recorded it include Clifton Chenier, Dinah Washington, Jimmy Witherspoon, Mance Lipscomb, and Freddie King.

The most widely known rendition of the song for general audiences came when Eric Clapton and Duane Allman included it on their best-selling 1970 album titled *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs*, performed by the short-lived band Derek and the Dominos. This established the song as a staple in the blues-rock repertoire, and Clapton’s many performances of it in succeeding decades have included a recorded duet with B. B. King. The song’s durability may be in some part a testament to its connection to famous performers, who themselves were honoring their artistic heroes, but its glimpses of a retreating figure who must “walk this highway until the break of

day” seem to resonate with any generation for whom a highway serves as a potent and ambiguous symbol.

ROBERT RIESMAN

Selected Recordings

Big Bill Broonzy: Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order, Vol. 11 (17 December 1940–6 March 1942) (1993, Document DOCD-5133).

Derek and the Dominos: Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs (Polydor CD 531820).

Jazz Gillum: Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order, Vol. 2 (16 December 1938–4 July 1941) (1993, Document DOCD-5198).

John Lee Hooker, The Complete, Vol. 5 (2004, Body & Soul CD BS 2500).

Little Walter: His Best (1997, MCA/Chess CHD9384).

Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee Sing the Blues (Sony Music Special Products CD A26430).

The Big Bill Broonzy Story (1999, Verve CD 314547555-2). Various artists (including Charlie Segar). *Piano Blues: Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order—Vol. 2 (1927–1956)* (1993, Document DOCD-5220).

See also Broonzy, Big Bill; Clapton, Eric; Gillum, Jazz; Hooker, John Lee; Little Walter; McGhee, Brownie; Terry, Sonny

KEYNOTE

Record label (New York, 1942–1947). Owner: Eric Bernay (Eric Bernstein, b. March 25, 1906, Odessa, Russia; d. November 2, 1968, New York City, NY). Artists included George Barnes, Marie Bryant, Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins, Milt Hinton, the Keynoters (with Nat King Cole), Willie Smith, Lester Young, Dinah Washington (“Evil Gal Blues,” “Salty Papa Blues,”), Josh White (“Hard Times Blues,” “House of the Rising Sun,”). The label was sold to Mercury Records in 1948.

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

KID STORMY WEATHER

- b. Edmond Joseph, place and date unknown
- d. Unknown

Barrelhouse pianist and vocalist from New Orleans who recorded only two sides, “Short Hair Blues” and the prison song “Bread and Water Blues,” for a Vocalion mobile field unit in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1935. Stated to have been an early influence on Professor Longhair and other New Orleans pianists, and

to have been active in the honky-tonks around South Rampart. Little is known about his life and career.

BOB HALL

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Discography: DGR

KILLING FLOOR (THE LEMON SONG)

The influential postwar blues song "Killing Floor" was written by Howlin' Wolf and recorded by the singer in 1964 for Chess Records. Driven by the dual guitars of Hubert Sumlin and Buddy Guy and the propulsive rhythm section of bassist Willie Dixon and drummer Sam Lay, the song exemplified Howlin' Wolf's raw vocal power and effective songwriting. Although its initial release did not make it to the R&B charts, the song went on to become one of Howlin' Wolf's most enduring compositions and was subsequently covered by many blues and rock musicians, including Jimi Hendrix, Albert King, Fenton Robinson, and Big Jack Johnson, as well as the blues-rock group the Electric Flag.

The term "killing floor" refers to the bloodstained area of a slaughterhouse where animals are put to death before being butchered. When someone is metaphorically placed "on the killing floor," they are in a dire, almost hopeless position. The use of this troubled expression in recorded blues dates back to 1928 when it was mentioned by singer and guitarist Arthur Petties in "Two Time Blues." Petties mournfully sings that his two-timing (or cheating) women are keeping him "on that killing floor." Son House also uses the phrase in his 1930 Paramount recording "Dry Spell Blues." Throughout the coming year, the term appeared in the title of two blues songs—Kansas City Kitty and Georgia Tom's "Killin' Floor Blues" and Skip James's "Hard Time Killin' Floor Blues." Both House and James used the phrase figuratively to describe the troubled times and hardships that accompanied the Great Depression.

Howlin' Wolf's use of the term follows Petties' example of relating it to a love affair that has gone bad and of the realization of the betrayal, but he also emphasizes his feelings of deep regret for initially not doing anything about it. In Howlin' Wolf's composition, the singer blames himself for not listening to his "first mind," or instincts, and not ending the relationship early on after the first signs of trouble.

Now he feels he is trapped in a disastrous affair with no way out.

The blues-influenced British rock band Led Zeppelin recorded "The Lemon Song" in 1969, which consisted mainly of lyrics taken directly from "Killing Floor." The song also used a similar, albeit slowed down, bass line like the one used in Howlin' Wolf's composition. "The Lemon Song" also borrowed a verse from Robert Johnson's "Traveling Riverside Blues," a sexually suggestive lyric that supplied the song its title. Released on the band's second album, writing credit for "The Lemon Song" was claimed by Led Zeppelin. ARC Music, which owned the publishing rights to Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor," sued the band for copyright infringement and the case was settled out of court in 1972 for an undisclosed sum of money.

GENE TOMKO

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KIMBROUGH, DAVID, JR.

b. 3 January 1965; Holly Springs, MS

Aka David Malone. Multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Kimbrough began playing music as a boy at the house parties of his father, guitarist David "Junior" Kimbrough. After serving a term in the Mississippi State Penitentiary, he was recorded by the Fat Possum label in 1994 and 1995 (as David Malone), updating his father's style with gospel, funk, and R&B influences. Further trouble with the law has hindered his career since.

DAVID NELSON

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KIMBROUGH, JUNIOR

b. David Kimbrough, Jr., 28 July 1930; Hudsonville, MS

d. 17 January 1998; Holly Springs, MS

KIMBROUGH, JUNIOR

One of the most idiosyncratic stylists in modern blues, Kimbrough's style of music was raw yet complex, traditional but up to date enough to draw crowds of dancers to the house parties and juke joints he ran in Marshall County, Mississippi, for close to forty years. He picked up the guitar as a youngster, influenced by his father, older brothers, and sister. Kimbrough supposedly learned some lessons from Fred McDowell as a boy, and his music was closely related to the modal style of north Mississippi guitarists McDowell and R. L. Burnside. He also grew up around and influenced rockabilly pioneer Charlie Feathers. An undercurrent of hillbilly music was apparent in his style, and his blues also carried traces of pre-blues string band and fife-and-drum music and had a distinctive West African feel.

By the late 1950s he had incorporated his highly personal style into a band format, adding drums, second guitar, and later electric bass. During the 1990s, a younger generation of north Mississippi musicians, including Kimbrough's sons David and Kent and several of Burnside's sons, gave Kimbrough's music a harder edge, with touches of funk and rock. Kimbrough became known to wider audiences through his appearance in the 1991 documentary *Deep Blues* and his 1990s recordings for the Fat Possum label. Since his death, his songs have been adapted by Buddy Guy and other blues musicians, as well as a number of prominent rock 'n' roll bands.

DAVID NELSON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP (as Junior Kimball)

KIMBROUGH, LOTTIE

Flourished 1920s–1930s

One of the most distinctive singers in Kansas City, Kimbrough recorded for four companies, including the short-lived and black-owned local label Meritt, sometimes under her married name of Beaman. A bizarre 1928 collaboration for Gennett with the entrepreneur and wannabe performer Winston Holmes yielded the poignant "Lost Lover Blues" and "Wayward Girl Blues" and the even finer "Going Away Blues" and "Rolling Log Blues," all exquisitely

accompanied by guitarist Miles Pruitt. The latter two titles, which she remade the following year for Brunswick, have been frequently recorded by later singers, among them Rory Block and Buffy Ste. Marie.

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

KING, AL

b. Alvin K. Smith, 8 August 1923; Monroe, LA
d. 21 January 1999; Oakland, CA

Vocalist and songwriter who became active in music in the Bay Area after the war, but first recorded after moving to Los Angeles in 1951 for the Recorded in Hollywood label. Two years later he recorded again with a vocal group, the Savoys, on Combo. The record sold well locally but the group broke up and Al went solo. In 1954, back in Oakland, he recorded for Music City and in 1957 for Irma (as Alvin Smith and the Angels). In the late 1950s duets with a female singer called Nettie appeared on Christy and Art-Tone. In 1964 he adopted the nom de disque Al King and made a single for Triad that Atlantic picked up and issued on Shirley and followed up with another single. His next recording (in 1965) was for his own label Flag. This was leased by the Sahara label in Buffalo, New York, and gave Al his only chart hit with "Think Twice Before You Speak," which reached number thirty-six in the R&B charts. Sahara issued a further four singles and then he moved to Modern who in 1968–1969 put out four singles (produced by Maxwell Davis) on Modern and Kent. In 1970 Ronn issued two singles, also Maxwell Davis productions. After that Al ceased to record and became a local artist, with club gigs and the occasional festival appearance. A CD for Forevermore in 1998 showed that he was singing as well as ever but his sudden death prevented a revival of his music career.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: LSFP

See also Combo; Davis, Maxwell; Geddins, Bob; Irma; Jewel/Paula/Ronn; Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM; Recorded in Hollywood/Hollywood/Cash/Lucky/Money

KING, ALBERT

b. 25 April 1923; Indianola, MS
d. 21 December 1992; Memphis, TN

Albert King was one the most influential contemporary electric blues guitarists.

Life

King was born in Indianola, Mississippi. His birth name is usually recorded as Nelson, although that was likely the surname of his stepfather, Will Nelson. King's birth name is probably either Blevins or

Gilmore, the two surnames recorded for his mother, Mary. Controversy also surrounds his birth date, which is recorded on his death certificate as April 25, 1923.

Around 1928, King's mother remarried and the family relocated to Forrest City, Arkansas. King was first introduced to the blues through Blind Lemon Jefferson, who he saw performing in nearby towns. King's stepfather played the guitar, but he would not let him play it. King would have to settle for a diddley bow that he made himself when he was about six years old. He later upgraded to a homemade cigar box guitar.

King did not own a proper guitar until he was eighteen. He later recalled that he practiced for five years before performing in public. Among the blues artists that influenced him at this time were Lonnie Johnson, Howlin' Wolf, and T-Bone Walker, who perhaps had the greatest influence on King. Although he wasn't yet ready to perform on the guitar, King sang in a local gospel group called the Harmony Kings.

Around 1950, King moved to Osceola, Arkansas. He worked days as a bulldozer driver and played guitar with the local group called Yancey's Band.



Albert King. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

He later performed with the In the Groove Boys, the house band for the T-99 club. About this time, he adopted the name “King,” likely a nod to the success of B. B. King.

King relocated to Gary, Indiana, in 1953, where he played drums for Jimmy Reed and John Brim. Later that year, King recorded for the Parrot label out of Chicago. The session produced five tracks including the release “Bad Luck Blues” and “Be on Your Merry Way.” King found little success with the single and returned to Osceola in 1954.

King moved to East St. Louis in 1956, where he worked the local clubs through the early 1960s. In the summer of 1959, he began recording with the St. Louis-based label Bobbin Records. The label leased some of King’s tracks to the more prominent King Records. The result was his first successful single, “Don’t Throw Your Love on Me So Strong,” which charted on the R&B charts in December 1961. In May 1964, King recorded for the Coun-Tree label out of East St. Louis, producing singles that found modest success in the Midwest.

The biggest break in King’s career came in 1966, when he signed with the Stax label. A year later, he released the landmark album, *Born Under a Bad Sign*. Backed by Stax’s superlative house band, Booker T. and the MGs, and the Memphis Horns, King perfected an influential hybrid of blues, soul, and R&B. In February 1968, legendary concert promoter Bill Graham invited King to open for Jimi Hendrix and John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers in a series of four shows divided between the Fillmore West and the Winterland. King was an immediate hit and became a regular at the Fillmore in the months that followed. His first headlining performance is preserved in his *Live Wire/Blues Power* album. With the combined success of *Born Under a Bad Sign* and his Fillmore gigs, King established himself as a crossover artist, reaching both the blues community and the young, primarily white, rock ‘n’ roll audience. Along with contemporaries such as B. B. King, Howlin’ Wolf, and Muddy Waters, he also became a principal musician of the 1960s blues revival.

Through the early 1970s, King continued to record for Stax, releasing *I’ll Play the Blues for You* in 1972 and *I Wanna Get Funky* in 1973. Backed by the Bar-Kays and the Memphis Horns, he continued to develop his soulful blues style, to which he now added elements of funk. King left Stax in 1974, when the label ran into financial troubles.

After stints on the Utopia and Tomato labels and a period of not recording, King signed with Fantasy Records in 1983. The move provided him with newfound success. His first record with Fantasy, *San Francisco ‘83*, was critically acclaimed and earned

him his first Grammy nomination. The following year, he released *I’m In a Phone Booth, Baby*, which also received a Grammy nomination.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, King continued to play the blues festival circuit and often toured internationally. King died in Memphis of a heart attack on December 21, 1992, at the age of sixty-nine.

Music and Influence

At an imposing 6 foot 4 inches, King was a commanding presence on stage. His guitar playing was equally powerful. Although he was left-handed, he played right-handed guitars upside-down without restringing. This helped create his distinctive sound, which emphasized long, dynamic string bends created by pulling down on the strings, rather than pushing up. A Gibson Flying-V named “Lucy” became his trademark guitar. King is best known for his guitar playing, but he also had a smooth, soulful vocal style, which allowed him to move gracefully into the genres of R&B and funk. He was also famous for his monologues, as captured in his live classic “Blues Power” and radio favorite “I’ll Play the Blues for You (Parts 1 and 2).” His warm, playful rapport with the audience made him a concert favorite.

The long reach of Albert King’s influence cannot be underestimated. His signature guitar licks have become staples of electric blues guitar. The impact of his most influential album, *Born Under a Bad Sign*, was as immediate as it was powerful. Months after its release, Eric Clapton and Cream were adapting King’s “Oh, Pretty Woman (Can’t Make You Love Me)” into “Strange Brew.” Other songs from the album, such as “Crosscut Saw,” “Laundromat Blues,” and the title track, became instant blues standards. In addition to Clapton, King influenced some of the finest modern blues and rock guitarists including Michael Bloomfield, Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, Robert Cray, and Johnny Winter. King’s influence, however, is most immediately present in the guitar playing of Stevie Ray Vaughan.

STEVEN GALBRAITH

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

Selected Recordings

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Albert King: The Ultimate Collection (1993, Rhino Records).

See also **Bloomfield, Michael; Bluesbreakers; Brim, John; Clapton, Eric; Cray, Robert; Cream; Hendrix, Jimi; Howlin' Wolf; Jefferson, Blind Lemon; Johnson, Lonnie; Oh Pretty Woman (Can't Make You Love Me); Reed, Jimmy; Vaughan, Stevie Ray; Walker, T-Bone; Winter, Johnny**

KING, BNOIS

b. 21 January 1943; Delhi, LA

Guitarist in electric jazz/blues style. Learned guitar on an instrument that his grandmother performed for herself to play sanctified religious music. Learned blues and jazz initially through jazz bandleader James Moody. Spent much of the 1960s performing jazz with Sonny Green, initially in Amarillo, Texas, then in Wichita Falls, Kansas. He switched between day jobs and music in the 1970s, eventually moving to Dallas, Texas, in 1979. He met Smokin' Joe Kubek in the mid-1980s, with whom he began writing blues songs and singing. His formative influences in blues include Jimmy Reed, Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and John Lee Hooker.

EDWARD KOMARA

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KING, BOBBY

b. 28 July 1944; LA

Vocalist Bobby King absorbed Cajun/zydeco and gospel influences around Lake Charles before moving to Los Angeles in 1962. Beginning in the mid-1970s, King, teamed with Terry Evans, provided vocal backups for Ry Cooder. King would later work with Bruce Springsteen, Lyle Lovett, and John Fogerty before resettling in Lake Charles where he currently performs exclusively gospel music.

JERRY ZOLTEN

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KING, CHRIS THOMAS

b. Chris Thomas, 14 October 1964; Baton Rouge, LA

Singer, guitarist, composer, actor. The son of swamp bluesman Tabby Thomas was on stage at his father's Baton Rouge, Louisiana, club at age nine, playing with big-name touring blues talent. A couple of decades later he was on the movie screen, portraying blues legends; first Tommy Johnson in *O Brother Where Art Thou?* and then Blind Willie Johnson in *The Soul of a Man*, director Wim Wenders's contribution to the Martin Scorsese PBS *Blues* series.

But the cinematic work of Thomas, who also appeared in several blues documentaries, was only the most publicly visible aspect of the creativity of one of the most eclectic and adventurous of modern bluesmen. Beginning with a roots simple debut on Arhoolie in 1986, his recordings included everything from classic acoustic standards to electrifying topical rock and blues hip-hop permutations.

Thomas's early travels, which took him full circle to Louisiana in 1996, included extended stints in Austin, Texas, Denmark, and Los Angeles. In each location he experimented with a different sound, often on a different record company. Most of the experimentation involved strong infusions of rock, rap, and hip-hop sensibilities, usually incorporated into traditional blues material.

After his return to Louisiana, Thomas continued to alternate back-to-the-basics blues releases like "Red Mud" with contemporary, politically charged recordings such as "Dirty South Hip-Hop Blues." In the wake of the success of the *O Brother Where Art Thou?* movie and subsequent tour, Thomas focused his attention on sweeping historical recordings that offered an overview of the evolution of blues. He plays only infrequent live dates although he did perform with his father at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

MICHAEL POINT

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AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin; Santelli

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Discography: AMG

KING CURTIS

b. Curtis Ousley, 7 February 1934; Fort Worth, TX
 d. 13 (or 14) August 1971; New York City, NY

Tenor, alto, soprano saxophones; R&B tenor saxophone great. One of the most influential R&B saxophonists, Curtis was known for his crisp, rapid-fire staccato approach—a style that was to cross musical genres. Son of a guitar player, Curtis got his first sax at age twelve. By the time he was thirteen, he was gigging around Fort Worth, Texas, and two years later had his own R&B band. He moved to New York City in the early 1950s after graduating from high school and quickly became part of that city's studio scene, playing on many of the R&B sessions from the mid-1950s through the 1960s. Curtis is featured on The Coaster's "Yakety Yak," Bobby Darin's "Splish Splash," and Ben E. King's "Spanish Harlem," as well as on recordings by Sam Cooke, the Drifters, and the Shirelles.

His long association with Atlantic/Atco began in 1958 as a session player. Curtis played on several of Aretha's finest recordings including the famous sax solo on "Respect." He had a number one R&B single in 1962 as a leader with his funky instrumental "Soul Twist" on the Enjoy label. In 1965, he signed with Atlantic/Atco as a bandleader. Curtis had hits with his songs "Memphis Soul Stew" and an instrumental version of "Ode to Billie Joe" (from his 1967 *King Size Soul* album). His band the Kingpins became Aretha's backing unit (captured live on the recording *Live at the Fillmore*—one set with Aretha, and one with his band). King Curtis was tragically murdered outside his New York City apartment in August 1971.

Bibliography

AMG (Bob Porter); Santelli; Larkin

Discography: AMG**KING, EARL**

b. Earl Silas Johnson IV, 7 February 1934; New Orleans, LA
 d. 18 April 2003; New Orleans, LA

Guitarist, pianist, singer, composer. King, involved in almost every aspect of the blues in a career that spanned five decades, was a cornerstone of the modern New Orleans scene. King held court—writing songs, dispensing wisdom, and arranging live shows and recording sessions—in the back of the Tastee Donuts

location at the corner of Prytania and Louisiana streets, a site later paid tribute to on his album *Glazed*. His importance to New Orleans music was so enormous and enduring that the parade of local legends dropping by for donuts made the shop look like a backstage area of the Jazz & Heritage Festival.

After winning several local talent contests King formed his first band, the Swans, when he was fifteen. After meeting and befriending his mentor Guitar Slim, King made his recording debut (as Earl Johnson) in 1953 with New Orleans songwriter Huey "Piano" Smith on piano, cutting the single "Have You Gone Crazy."

King, like most guitarists in Texas and Louisiana, was first and foremost a T-Bone Walker fan, but he was such a good student of his mentor that he was able to impersonate Guitar Slim on a 1954 tour after the guitarist was injured in an auto accident. He eventually developed his own admittedly eccentric guitar style, one that innovatively extrapolated aspects of both Walker's and Guitar Slim's work.

He signed with Specialty Records in 1954 where his name, intended to become the stage name King Earl, was inadvertently reversed through a pressing plant mistake. King kept the new name but changed record companies, signing with Ace where his debut "Those Lonely, Lonely Nights" became his first major national hit.

Armed with a hit record, King began to tour steadily, performing in package shows with New Orleans stalwarts Smiley Lewis, Gatemouth Brown, and bandleader/producer Dave Bartholomew. It was Bartholomew who would produce King's 1960 Imperial Records hit "Trick Bag," the song that would become his signature tune. He also put the Crescent City standard "Come On," which evolved into "Let the Good Times Roll," into circulation.

King devoted most of his attention to songwriting in the 1960s, composing a string of hits for Fats Domino, Professor Longhair, Johnny Adams, and Lee Dorsey, among others. He also went into the studio and did sessions for Motown that were never released.

After the 1983 Black Top Records release of *Glazed*, a collaborative effort with the big band Roomful of Blues that earned a Grammy nomination, King's career had an upswing and he began to play festival dates. *Sexual Telepathy*, in 1990, and *Hard River to Cross*, in 1993, were significant additions to his recording catalog. The European recordings *Street Parade* and *New Orleans Street Talkin'*, both rereleased in the United States in 2002, were recorded later in the decade.

In addition to his albums as a leader, King also appeared on numerous significant recordings by his

New Orleans peers, including “Runnin’ Partner” by bassist George Porter Jr., “Checkout Time” by James “Thunderbird” Davis, and several releases by the Meters, Nappy Brown, Professor Longhair, and others. His close connection with the Crescent City scene continued even after his death—he was laid to rest sharing a burial vault with New Orleans singer Ernie K-Doe.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

KING, EDDIE

b. Edward Lewis Davis Milton, 21 April 1938; Talladega, AL

Lead guitarist. Orphaned at age twelve, he came to Chicago in the 1950s and began playing guitar in local clubs. “Little” Mack Simmons, Detroit Jr., Willie Cobbs, and Koko Taylor are among the musicians with whom he worked. Since the early 1980s he has been based in Peoria, Illinois. He has recorded several CDs on his own, and as a member of the Burning Chicago Blues Machine.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne); Larkin

Discography: AMG (Eugene Chadbourne); Larkin

KING ERNEST

b. Ernest Leon Baker, 5 May 1939; Natchez, MS
 d. 5 March 2000; Santa Maria, CA

Soul-blues vocalist. In the 1960s, King Ernest recorded in New York for Barry and in Chicago for Sonic, Funk, Mercury, and Blue Soul. He then worked outside music in Los Angeles; on retirement he returned to music and recorded albums for

Evidence and Fat Possum, the latter being released posthumously.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

KING/FEDERAL/QUEEN

Formed in Ohio in 1943 by Sydney Nathan as a country label, King Records foundered after its first few releases and was relaunched in late 1944 from a new address on Brewster Avenue in Cincinnati. Nathan believed in total control, so the Brewster Avenue address housed a recording studio, record pressing plant, printing press, design studio, warehouse, and distributorship in addition to the label’s offices.

The label’s R&B subsidiary, Queen Records, was launched in 1945 with releases from Bull Moose Jackson, Slim Gaillard, Walter Brown, and Annisteen Allen; however, because Nathan did not really understand black music, some of the early R&B material was not recorded by Nathan, but brought in from other labels, mostly from J. Mayo Williams’s stable of small labels and from Sam Goody in New York City. Queen’s only real successes were Nathan’s own recordings by Bull Moose Jackson, so Nathan discontinued Queen in 1947 to concentrate on the main label, and all the R&B disks were reissued in the new R&B series of the King label proper.

King quickly established itself as a major independent record label, signing a succession of successful recording artists such as Lonnie Johnson, Earl Bostic, Ivory Joe Hunter, Wynonie Harris, Todd Rhodes, Tiny Bradshaw, Sonny Thompson, Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, and Bill Doggett in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Having his own complete setup in the Midwest, Nathan became a magnet for small labels who were eager for a distribution deal and, in this way, he was able to form partnerships with labels such as Gotham, Miracle, DeLuxe, and Sensation. This also left him in prime position to move in on any promising artists that these labels should discover, and to buy the struggling label for a good price when it began to go under.

Never really getting to grips with rock ‘n’ roll in the 1950s, King continued to aim its recorded product at an adult-oriented audience and when the veteran

A&R specialist Ralph Bass joined the company in 1950 he was given a new subsidiary, Federal Records, to manage from his base in New York City. Federal began by plundering the extensive King vaults for previously unissued material, but the label's first major new find was the vocal group the Dominoes, led by Billy Ward and featuring the soulful lead singing of Clyde McPhatter. King's major find in the 1950s was James Brown, who would become the "Godfather of Soul" in the 1960s, but who had trouble getting a release out of Nathan when he auditioned in 1955. He, nevertheless, went on to score major R&B chart hits on Federal between 1956 and 1960, and even greater success between 1961 and 1971 when he was switched to the main King label.

Nathan died in 1968 and six months later the record company that he had headed for a quarter of a century was sold to Starday Records. It is currently owned by Gusto Records Inc. of Nashville.

DAVE PENNY

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KING, FREDDIE

b. Freddie Christian, 3 September 1934; Gilmer, TX
 d. 28 December 1976; Dallas, TX

Guitarist and singer. He was born Freddie Christian, but later adopted his mother's maiden name as his professional name, styling himself Freddy until sometime in the mid-1960s, and thereafter Freddie. He claimed that his playing reflected both his country and city influences. At well over six feet and with a bulk to match, he cut an impressive figure on stage with his trademark Gibson guitars, and was a powerful and energized performer capable of generating immense excitement. His singing was less striking than his playing, but at his best he was able to invest a song with a raw emotional force. He was brought up in rural Texas, and by his own testimony began playing guitar at the age of six. He was familiar with

country blues styles and with artists like Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lightnin' Hopkins. Nonetheless, his own music tended to reflect the urban and electric influence of Chicago, where he took up residence after finishing school in 1950. He worked in a steel mill for a time while easing his way into in the West Side blues scene, and was befriended by Muddy Waters, Jimmy Rogers, Robert Lockwood, and other musicians in the city.

He began to perform, initially as a sideman and then as a leader of his own group. He cited Jimmy Rogers and Eddie Taylor as important influences in the evolution of his own mode of finger-picking. He developed a distinctive hard-hitting guitar style, using a combination of steel finger-pick and plastic thumb-pick. He made his recording debut in 1957 for the El-Bee label, but came to wider attention with his instrumental record "Hide Away" (sometimes referred to as "Hideaway"), made for King Records through their subsidiary, Federal Records, in 1960. The tune owed its name to Mel's Hideaway Lounge, a noted Chicago blues club. He acknowledged that the primary inspiration for the tune had come from a boogie shuffle by Hound Dog Taylor, which he had adapted to his own needs.

It provided his only top forty hit, and became a staple of the blues repertoire. He went on to record a number of albums for the label in both vocal and instrumental formats, working with pianist and arranger Sonny Thompson. Other significant recordings from his King/Federal albums include "Lonesome Whistle Blues," "Just Pickin'," "I'm Tore Down," "The Stumble," and "Have You Ever Loved a Woman." Some of his records for the label were unashamedly commercial rather than genuine blues recordings, and capitalized on the fad for novelties of the era, including boss nova and surfing.

He moved back to Texas in 1963, basing himself in Dallas. He left King Records in 1966, claiming later that he was tired of being told what songs to record. He continued to perform regularly, and signed to the Atlantic Records subsidiary Cotillion after a two-year recording hiatus. He turned out two records for the label, *Freddie King Is a Blues Master* (1969) and *My Feeling for the Blues* (1970), but complained that his guitar was overshadowed by the weight of the band arrangements.

It was an era when the admiring testimony and overt emulation of white blues and rock musicians helped propel many of their original influences back into the limelight, and brought their music to a new audience on the rock circuit. His career had been boosted by the praise of English musicians like Eric Clapton and John Mayall, and he began to appear

at major rock venues and festivals. He fared rather better in the studio when he left Cotillion and signed to Leon Russell's Shelter label, working with the American rock artist on arguably his best album, *Getting Ready...* (1971), and two subsequent disks, the live *Texas Cannonball* (1972) and the more patchy *Woman Across the River* (1973).

When Shelter faltered over both business and personal problems, it was Eric Clapton who persuaded the guitarist to sign for the RSO label run by his manager, Robert Stigwood, in 1974. The recordings he made for the label, *Burglar* (1974) and *Larger Than Life* (1975), revealed a greater pop and funk influence in his work. He seemed to be moving away from the bedrock blues that had sustained his music, although his live shows remained considerably more blues-rooted. Where that direction might have led became a moot point when he was taken unwell after a Christmas Day concert in Dallas and admitted to hospital. He was suffering from pancreatitis and bleeding ulcers, and subsequently heart failure. He died in hospital three days later at the age of forty-two.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Selected Recordings

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KING, "LITTLE" JIMMY

- b. Manuel Gales, 4 December 1964; Memphis, TN
 d. 19 July 2002; Memphis, TN

Born Manuel Gales, he fashioned his stage name from his influences Jimi Hendrix and Albert King. He was mentored by Albert King, with whom he toured in 1988–1991. He recorded four CDs as a solo artist, and one with his brothers as the Gales Brothers. He died unexpectedly of an apparent heart attack.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

KING, RILEY B. "B. B."

- b. 16 September 1925; Itta Bena (near Indianola), MS

B. B. King is the leading figure in the blues today, the music's best-known performer and its greatest ambassador. His trademark guitar fills, sharp and sweet at the same time, burst forth from trusty "Lucille," and the whole world responds. He sings in a melodious and soulful voice about the life he has led and the trials he has survived in love and in the music business he has been a part of for more than fifty years. He is intelligent and articulate, friendly and humble, knowledgeable in music and many other subjects, and one of the hardest working people in the business.

Awards have included honorary doctorates at Yale and Berklee College of Music, the 1990 Presidential Medal of the Arts, 1991 National Heritage Fellowship, and the 1995 Kennedy Center Honors. He was a founding member of the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center. He also cofounded the Foundation for the Advancement of Inmate Recreation and Rehabilitation (FAIRR). He has been awarded innumerable music industry honors: Grammy Awards, W. C. Handy Awards, NAACP Image Awards, and Downbeat Critics' Poll. The list goes on. No one else in the blues field has ever been so honored.



B. B. King in performance in Columbia, South Carolina, April 2003. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

Childhood

Riley B. King was born in the Mississippi Delta, and picked cotton throughout his youth. At age five his parents split up. He credits his schoolteacher, Luther Henson, as his first and perhaps most important influence because Henson gave him hope and let him know that there was a world beyond the cotton fields. The Reverend Archie Fair of the Elkhorn Baptist Church next to his school provided him with his first exposure to the guitar.

His mother died at age twenty-five, possibly of diabetes and lack of medical care. Riley—at age ten—began living alone in the sharecropper's cabin in the hills of Kilmichael where he had lived with his mother since she moved them from the Delta. He was very much a loner, and spent a lot of time listening to recordings of Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lonnie Johnson on his aunt's Victrola. Since no one read to him as a child, he became an avid moviegoer: cowboy-singer stars like Gene Autry and Tex Ritter provided him with a model he liked. More than just shooting straight, they sang and got the girl. His first guitar was a fifteen-dollar Stella.

King began his performing career as a gospel singer with three other boys as the Elkhorn Jubilee Singers, attempting unsuccessfully to imitate the Golden Gate Quartet. But he soon gravitated to the blues as a truer personal expression and because there was more money to be made. In his mid-teens

he heard T-Bone Walker for the first time on record. King himself says that his greatest musical debt is to Walker.

King married his first wife, Martha Lee, and did basic training in the U.S. Army in 1944, only to return to Indianola to work in the fields growing cotton.

After World War II, King went to Memphis, living with his cousin Bukka White. White played a primitive brand of Mississippi slide guitar blues, in contrast to what would become King's signature smooth and urbane style. But when King was younger, White performed in the farm country and talked to King about the guitar, the music, gambling, and life in the big cities beyond the Delta. After moving back home one last time for a year, King settled in Memphis in 1947.

Becoming a Professional

He got his first taste of the music business by approaching Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson," who played harmonica and had a radio show on KWEM in West Memphis, Arkansas. King convinced Williamson to allow him on the program. His singing and guitar playing were an immediate local hit. He then went on WDIA, the powerful Memphis station that played black music, first with a ten-minute daily spot performing blues and hawking an alcohol-based

tonic called Pepticon. The white ukulele-strumming radio host Arthur Godfrey, who had a relaxed manner and success with advertising, provided King with a prominent model for his career at this critical point.

In 1949, he became a full-time disk jockey on WDIA, known as the Beale Street Blues Boy (later shortened to "B. B.>"). He educated himself in blues and jazz by listening to the records at the station and by expanding his contacts in the thriving musical community to include Robert Lockwood and Bobby Bland. His recording career also began that year.

In 1951, he recorded his first number one R&B hit, "Three O'Clock Blues" for the Modern label. It was recorded at Sam Phillips's Sun Studio and stayed at number one for seventeen weeks in 1952. He toured based on this hit and performed at the New York's Apollo Theatre, among other prized venues on the black music circuit. He became a nationally known name on the circuit, considering himself an R&B artist like Fats Domino and Percy Mayfield.

King in Full Swing

Other hits followed. Most successful and acclaimed by critics were "Sweet Little Angel" and "Every Day I Have the Blues" from the mid-1950s. During this period King recorded for the Bihari Brothers in Los Angeles, who owned Modern and its subsidiaries: RPM, Kent, Crown, Flair, and Meteor. One of the professionals who was most supportive of King was Maxwell Davis, a Los Angeles-based arranger and producer who helped shape King's early sound and direction. Davis worked with King on many of his best records, providing simple but intelligent—and very bluesy—horn and rhythm charts that fit King's musical temperament perfectly.

King's career has been documented by numerous singles, LPs, and CDs from the 1950s to the present. The unique and profoundly influential characteristics associated with his music were already in evidence in his best-selling recordings from the first decade. His relationship with Lucille is a perfect example of call and response. Lucille is a thin hollow-body Gibson guitar that he plays with a flat pick. In his autobiography he says that there have been seventeen Lucilles. He doesn't play rhythm guitar in the conventional sense, accompanying himself as he sings. Lucille has her own voice, and from her come fills, biting or smooth, staccato bursts or long easy phrases, in response to B. B.'s heartfelt vocal pleadings. When he sings, the band plays, and Lucille is silent.

This is unlike most other guitarists who keep a steady chord or riff pattern going behind the vocal.

It is pure antiphony (the musical term for call and response), and is a characteristic that goes back to the African roots of this music and black culture in general. King doesn't consider himself a virtuoso guitarist. He sees himself learning new things all the time, and existing within technical limitations that some other players don't have. He's truly a modest person.

For years, indeed decades, King maintained a remarkably demanding schedule of touring. Often he played more than three hundred dates a year. The record is 342 in 1956. He has a reputation for treating his band and other employees very well.

After switching to ABC/Paramount in 1962, King made what is one of the greatest blues recordings ever, *Live at the Regal*, at the esteemed theater in Chicago. But as riveting as the performance was, it didn't move his career along as he expected it would.

The late 1960s brought King together with Sid Seidenberg, who was to be his manager from that point forward. Seidenberg connected King with Joe Glaser, Louis Armstrong's agent, and put things together for him in a better and more logical way than before. Seidenberg also came up with the idea of B. B. King performing for rock audiences and sharing the stage with his acknowledged disciples. These moves, accompanied by his success with "The Thrill Is Gone" in 1970, put King in the international limelight. He opened concerts for the Rolling Stones, among others, at the Fillmores East and West.

In 1988 he performed with U2 on Rattle and Hum to much acclaim. His featured vocal, "When Love Comes to Town," won an MTV Video Music Award. Although struggling with diabetes, weight, and other health problems for a number of years, he remains active concertizing, greeting fans at his nightclub in Memphis, and enjoying the interest in this music that he, more than anyone else, has done to create.

B. B. King has fifteen children, all by different mothers. In his own words, he is not a good father, "but no one has loved his children more than I have." He has led a very complicated but ultimately satisfying life on the road; he has never really stopped traveling the United States and the world performing for adoring crowds. His musical children number in the millions.

LENNY CARLSON

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Transcription Books

Note: There are a number of these; these are two more recent ones:

King, B. B., and Jeannette DeLisa. *King of the Blues*. Miami, FL: CPP/Belwin, 1993.

Rubin, Dave. *The Best of B. B. King: King of the Electric Blues Guitar*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1997.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Note: Because B. B. King is still alive and because there is such a surfeit of recorded material and other information about him, the following websites provide the best sources for a current discography:

Official B. B. King website, <http://www.bbking.com> (updated frequently). <http://www.worldblues.com> (original catalog numbers and dates listed; updated less frequently than preceding entry).

KING, SAUNDERS

b. 13 March 1909; Staple, LA

d. 31 August 2000; Los Angeles, CA

Guitar/vocal. As a child, King played piano, banjo, and ukulele in his preacher father's Oakland church. He switched to guitar in 1938 for NBC broadcasts with a gospel quartet, the Southern Harmony Four, in which he sang tenor, and took up electric guitar after hearing Charlie Christian. He was in Jake Porter's band before forming his own sextet in 1942 and recording with them for Rhythm. "S. K. Blues" (1942, Rhythm 3) entered the repertoire of many other singers. After war work with Special Services, he resumed bandleading and recording for Rhythm and later Specialty, Aladdin, and Flair in a musical idiom that mixed swing and jump/rhythm and blues and extensively featured his own blues singing. "Write Me a Letter Blues"/"Swingin'" (1946, Rhythm 206) and "St. James Infirmary Blues"/"Little Girl" (1949, Aladdin 3027) document the group's development. They continued to play, mainly around Los Angeles and San Francisco, into the early 1950s after which recording opportunities declined. His last session in 1961 included a remake of "S. K. Blues" (Galaxy 712), after which he retired, though he still played in church and occasional blues gigs. In the 1960s he held a long residency at a club in Sunnyvale, California. In 1979, he guested on an album by his son-in-law, the rock guitarist Carlos Santana.

HOWARD RYE

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Obrecht, Jas. "Saunders King." *Living Blues* no. 126 (March/April 1996): 46–55.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

KING SNAKE

Founded in 1983 (Sanford, Florida) and run by bassist/producer Bob Greenlee, the King Snake label issued quite a few stellar blues, swamp blues, R&B, and roots rock albums during the late 1980s through 2003. Artists such as Kenny Neal and Raful Neal had their first solo albums issued on King Snake, while Lucky Peterson, Bill Wharton, Noble "Thin Man" Watts, and Sonny Rhodes had some of their best releases come out on King Snake.

Greenlee founded the label after converting a carriage house on his property into a studio in 1983; the label's first release came in 1986: "Don't Let This Happen to You" by singer Root Boy Slim.

Largely the vision of Greenlee (who played bass on most King Snake releases), the label encompassed not only traditional and contemporary blues, but blues-influenced Southern rock and urban soul as well. Former Grinderswitch member Dru Lombar's Dr. Hector & The Groove Injectors found a home for their Southern boogie on King Snake, as did future Mavericks' guitarist Nick Kane, with his group Iko-Iko. On the soul side, King Snake issued sets by singers Erica Guerin, Chicago Bob Nelson, and Roy Roberts.

With Greenlee's death from cancer in February 2004, his family scaled back operations—continuing to support the existing catalog, and new releases from artists already in the King Snake fold.

JIM TRAGESER

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Kenny Neal. *Bio on the Bayou* (1987, King Snake 5).

Sonny Rhodes. *The Blues Is My Best Friend* (1994, King Snake 22).

KINSEY, LESTER “BIG DADDY”

b. 18 March 1927; Pleasant Grove, MS
 d. 3 April 2001; Gary, IN

Singer, slide guitarist, and harmonica player, Kinsey was a leading force on the Gary, Indiana, blues scene. His three sons—Donald, Ralph, and Kenneth—founded the Kinsey Report band in 1984, when Kinsey recorded *Bad Situation*, the first of his four albums. He recorded for Rooster Blues, Blind Pig, Verve, and Polydor. Kinsey so idolized Muddy Waters that he later became a featured attraction in a Muddy Waters tribute band that toured in the 1990s, and recorded his *I Am the Blues* album with former Waters band members.

JIM O’NEAL

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 Dahl, Bill. “Big Daddy Kinsey and the Kinsey Report.”
Living Blues no. 75 (1987): 16–20.

Discography: AMG**KINSEY REPORT**

Formed in 1984 in Gary, Indiana. The family band formed by the sons of Delta bluesman Lester “Big Daddy” Kinsey fused rock, reggae, and contemporary urban blues stylings. Guitarist/vocalist Donald, who, billed as B. B. King Jr., performed with his father as a thirteen-year-old and worked and recorded with Albert King in the early 1970s, also had an extensive career in reggae, including recording and touring with Peter Tosh and Bob Marley. Drummer Ralph, who joined Donald in the rock group White Lightning, and bassist Kenneth formed the core of the band. It made its recording debut in 1988 with *Edge of the City*.

MICHAEL POINT

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Living Blues no. 75 (1987): 16–19.

Discography: AMG**KIRK, ANDREW DEWEY “ANDY”**

b. 28 May 1898; Newport, KY
 d. 11 December 1992; New York, NY

Bandleader and bassist. He is best known for leading the Kansas City jazz band the Clouds of Joy, which included the remarkable pianist and arranger Mary Lou Williams, then at the beginning of her career.

EDWARD KOMARA

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 Kirk, Andy. *Twenty Years on Wheels*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989.

Discography: Lord**KIRKLAND, EDDIE**

b. 16 August 1928; Kingston, Jamaica

Singer, songwriter, and guitarist famous for his distinctive riffs and performance style. Kirkland began to play guitar in Dothan, Alabama, and was influenced by local bluesman Blind Murphy. He moved to the Detroit area in the 1940s, and toured and recorded with John Lee Hooker. He also toured briefly with Otis Redding and recorded with King Curtis. Kirkland is currently touring internationally in his own name.

DEBBIE BOND

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli
 Underwood, Tut. “Eddie Kirkland: The Energy Man.”
Living Blues no. 111 (September/October 1993): 14–21.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Note: Complete discography available at <http://www.eddiekirkland.com>.

KIRKLAND, LEROY

b. 10 February 1906; SC
 d. 6 April 1988; New York City, NY

Initially a guitarist, in the 1930s he emerged as an arranger and songwriter for Erskine Hawkins. During the 1940s he worked for the Dorsey Brothers, but also began writing arrangements for recording sessions for the Savoy, Okeh, and Mercury labels. Near the end of his life, he turned to gospel music.

EDWARD KOMARA

KIRKLAND, LEROY

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Larkin

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KIRKPATRICK, BOB

b. 1 January 1934; Haynesville, LA

Dallas and east Texas electric guitarist and singer. For many years he has chosen to stay at home with family, and so has been active mostly around Dallas. Through a brother he was booked at the Newport Folk Festival several times starting in 1970. His music has been recorded and issued by Folkways, JSP, and Red Lightnin'.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

Hutchinson, Billy. "Bob Kirkpatrick Gets That Home Feeling." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 127 (March 1998): 11.

KITTRELL, CHRISTINE

b. 11 August 1929; Nashville, TN

d. 16 December 2001; Columbus, OH

Singer who made her signature record "Sittin' Here Drinkin'" for Tennessee label in 1951. For the next fifteen years she worked at length with Dave Bartholomew, Memphis Slim, and Johnny Otis. In 1962 she recorded for Vee-Jay "I'm a Woman," which would be later covered by Peggy Lee and Koko Taylor. In 1966–1968 she performed in Vietnam. She retired to Columbus, Ohio, in 1968, but she made a local return to performing in 1991 until her death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

KIZART, LEE

Flourished 1920s–1970

Pianist active in the Mississippi Delta from the 1920s through 1967. He was interviewed and recorded by William Ferris in 1967 for the book *Blues from the Delta* (London: Studio Vista, 1970, revised 1978) and related articles and LP issues. Afterward he moved from Tutwiler, Mississippi, to Dallas, Texas.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

KIZART, WILLIE

b. Willie Lee Kizart, 4 January 1932; Tutwiler, MS

d. 2 September 1998; Dallas, TX

As electric guitarist for Ike Turner's Kings of Rhythm, Kizart is most well known as the guitarist on "Rocket 88," a number one R&B hit in 1951 by Jackie Brentson and His Delta Cats, actually Turner's band. "Rocket 88" was recorded by Sam Phillips at his Memphis Recording Service (later Sun) and leased to Chess. According to legend, Kizart's amp fell off the car on the way to the recording session, breaking its speaker cone, and giving the guitar a buzz tone that would make the record famous. Some scholars consider it to be the first rock 'n' roll recording.

OLIVIA CARTER MATHER

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K.O.B. (KINGS OF THE BLUES)

British record label active in the late 1960s that produced reissue LPs by Memphis Minnie, Leroy Carr, and Big Bill Broonzy.

HOWARD RYE

KODA, MICHAEL "CUB"

b. 1 October 1948; Detroit, MI

d. 1 July 2000; Chelsea, MI

Musician and writer. Koda's early fame was as the leader of the rock group Brownsville Station, and as composer of their 1973 hit "Smokin' in the Boys Room." Later he wrote articles about blues and rock music history and on record collecting for *Goldmine* and *DISCoveries* magazines. He also cowrote the *All Media Guide to Blues* and *Blues for Dummies*.

EDWARD KOMARA

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KOERNER, RAY & GLOVER

Minneapolis-based trio composed of "Spider" John Koerner, Dave "Snaker" Ray, and Tony "Little Sun" Glover. Leading figures in the urban folk-blues revival of the early and mid-1960s, they were known for a boisterous ensemble approach to traditional and original blues as well as solo work highlighting the iconoclastic personal styles of guitarist-singers Koerner and Ray. The members parted as a group in the late 1960s to pursue individual projects but reunited periodically for special performances in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

JOSEPH A. LAROSE

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Discography: AMG

KOKOMO

British record label, operated from Manchester by Trevor Huyton and devoted to the reissue of prewar blues. At least six anthologies were produced, the first in 1967. All were limited editions of ninety-nine copies.

HOWARD RYE

KOLAX, KING

b. William Little, 6 November 1912; Kansas City, MO

d. 18 December 1991; Chicago, IL

Chicago jazz and blues trumpet player and band-leader. He led a big band from 1935 to 1946, and then joined the famed Billy Eckstine band. In 1947, Kolax re-formed his big band, but by the following year he had reduced his ensemble to a combo. His first recording under his own name was with Opera in 1948. Beginning in 1951, Kolax and his band were used on a variety of blues and vocal group recording sessions, notably with Nature Boy Brown, Joe Williams, Johnny Sellers, Danny Overbea, Flamingos, and Grant Jones. A session for JOB in 1951 included first-rate work by his band with Dick Davis and Prentice McCary and a spectacular solo feature for his trumpet. Other sessions under his own name were recorded for Vee-Jay (1954 and 1955) and Top Rank (1955). By 1957 Kolax was beginning to have trouble finding work for his group. In the early 1960s, he worked as A&R man for a small Chicago label, Marvello Records, and recorded behind such soul artists as Jerry Butler and McKinley Mitchell and bluesman Otis Rush. Some late 1960s session included a Brother Jack McDuff session in 1966, Willie Mabon's last session in 1969, and a Gene Ammons session in July 1970. King Kolax played in his last recording session in August 1970 for Delmark, behind Roosevelt Sykes.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

KORNER, ALEXIS

b. 19 April 1928; Paris, France

d. 1 or 2 January 1984; London, England

Alexis Korner began his musical career in London's traditional jazz and skiffle scene. Korner joined the Chris Barber Band in 1949 where he met Cecil Davis. Korner and Davis directed their attention toward the American blues scene. Shortly after leaving the Chris Barber Band, Korner and Davis founded and ran the Thursday Night Blues and Barrelhouse Club in London in 1957. The club featured many American blues artists, including Sonny Terry, Big Bill Broonzy, and Brownie McGhee. In 1961, Korner and Davis formed Blues Incorporated, which became the resident

band of London's Marquee Club in 1962. In addition to Korner and Davis, the band featured numerous musicians who serve as a who's who of the early British R&B and rock scene, including Charlie Watts, Ron Wood, Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce, Mick Jagger, Long John Baldry, and Paul Jones. After the breakup of Blues Incorporated in 1966, Korner formed the short-lived Free at Last, followed by New Church and later CCS (Collective Consciousness Society), which proved to be the most commercially successful of his bands and gave Korner his first single on the charts.

In addition to his performances and recordings, Korner's television appearances and Sunday-night radio show on BBC Radio One also helped to promote the blues. Korner continued to perform and educate people about the blues until his death in 1984. His advocacy of the blues served as an inspiration for many young blues musicians in the United Kingdom, and his band Blues Incorporated served as a vehicle for the formation of bands such as Cream, the Yardbirds, the Rolling Stones, the Animals, and the Pretty Things.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

- Red Hot from Alex* (1964, Transatlantic).
Alexis' Blues Incorporated...Plus (1965, Decca/Ace of clubs).
Alexis' Blues Incorporated...Sky High (1967, Spot/Indigo).
Alexis Korner's All Stars Blues Incorporated (1969, Transatlantic).
New Church...Both Sides (1970, Metronome).
CCS ... First (1970, RAK).

KUBEK, SMOKIN' JOE

b. 30 November 1956; Grove City, PA

Guitarist. The precocious Kubek was playing with Freddie King at age fourteen and ultimately began leading his own band on the Dallas blues bar scene. His career took a major leap forward in the early 1980s when he entered into a musical partnership with singer/guitarist Bnois King of Monroe, Louisiana. The combination of Kubek's raw, hard-edged blues approach, both on guitar and vocals, and King's smooth and jazzy style gave the band an unusually well-rounded and expansive sound that it perfected through an almost nonstop schedule of live shows.

By the late 1980s Kubek had established the band as a steady touring attraction in the Southwest and it began to expand its regional popularity. *Steppin' Out Texas Style*, its 1991 debut recording, raised the group's profile and Kubek took the act on the road nationally. It rarely left the road for the next decade, touring incessantly and successfully through blues venues of all sizes in all locations.

The band continued recording, releasing well-reviewed albums such as *Texas Cadillac*, *Cryin' for the Moon*, and *Got My Mind Back*. Little Milton and Jimmy Thackery each added some guitar on *Take Your Best Shot* in 1998 but the group was heard to best advantage without outside involvement, such as on its 2003 *Roadhouse Research* release and on *Show Me Money*, with Anson Funderburgh as a guitar guest on only one track, which followed a year later.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

L

L + R

Record label of Horst Lippman and Fritz Rau, concert promoters who organized a series of American Folk Blues (& Gospel) Festivals for European tours during 1962–1972 and 1980–1983. Recordings from the concerts by such artists as Sonny Boy Williamson (Aleck Miller), Sunnyland Slim, Lightnin' Hopkins, Howlin' Wolf, and John Henry Barbee were among the label's most important. The label also notably acquired for general distribution two albums of politically oriented blues by J. B. Lenoir (1965/1966) and recorded similar material by Louisiana Red in 1983. The catalog has been available to Evidence for U.S. release in the twenty-first century.

HOWARD RYE

LACEY, RUBIN “RUBE”

b. 2 January 1901; Pelahatchie, MS
d. 14 November 1969; Bakersfield, CA

Last name sometimes shown as Lacy. Though under-recorded, guitarist and mandolinist Lacey was instrumental in shaping Mississippi prewar blues. After cutting four unissued sides for Columbia in 1927 and two for Paramount the following year, he became a Baptist preacher in 1932.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: DGR

LACEY, WILLIAM JAMES “BILL”

b. 25 February 1915; Selma, AL
d. 8 April 1977; Chicago, IL

Guitarist known mostly for his sideman work on the 1945–1953 RCA Bluebird recordings of Sonny Boy Williamson I (John Lee Williamson), Jazz Gillum, Roosevelt Sykes, and Tampa Red, among others. He also performed vocals and guitar as a member of the Brown Buddies in popular music and blues to white audiences in 1944–1955.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Wisner, Steve. “William James Lacey.” *Living Blues* no. 35 (November/December 1977): 39–40.

LAMBERT, LLOYD

b. 4 June 1928; Thibodeaux, LA
d. 31 October 1995; New Orleans, LA

Bassist, composer, bandleader. Lloyd Lambert, brother of pianist Phamous Lambert and grandfather

LAMBERT, LLOYD

of New Orleans bluesman Kipori Woods, played bass for Roy Brown, Ray Charles, and Wallace Davenport and led the Guitar Slim band in the 1950s.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

Dahl, Bill. "Lloyd Lambert." *Living Blues* no. 126 (March/April 1996): 61–62.

Discography: LSFP

LANCE, MAJOR

b. 4 April 1939; Winterville, MS
d. 3 September 1994; Decatur, GA

Chicago soul singer who for a few short years in the mid-1960s was one of the biggest R&B artists in the country. His thin but interestingly piercing vocals were perfectly showcased by producer Carl Davis, and the result was a series of sparkling and brassy dance records on OKeh Records that virtually defined the more energetic side of the Chicago sound in soul, notably "Monkey Time" (1963), "Um Um Um Um Um Um" (1964), and "Rhythm" (1964). Lance subsequently recorded for Carl Davis's Dakar label (scoring with "Follow the Leader" in 1968), for Curtis Mayfield's Curtom label (1970), Volt (1971–1972), Playboy (1973–1975), his own label Osiris (1975), Columbia (1977), and Motown's Soul label (1978). Lance recorded in England during 1972–1974, where his records had particular appeal for "Northern Soul" fans. His last recordings were made for Kat Family in 1982. Lance performed at the 1994 Chicago Blues Festival.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Pruter, Robert. "Major Lance: A Forgotten Star of Chicago Soul." *Goldmine* 3 (January 1997): 127ff.

LANDRETH, SONNY

b. 1 February 1951; Canton, MS

Louisiana-based rock and blues guitarist is best known among blues fans for his work backing John Mayall and Allen Touissant. His professional life began with a short stint with Clifton Chenier in the 1970s; his subsequent career has also taken in work with rock acts Jimmy Buffett, John Hiatt, Leslie West, and Mountain.

Most of his reputation in the blues world has come from his work with other artists. He has appeared as a guest guitarist for everyone from Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown to the Muddy Waters Tribute Band, Marcia Ball to Eddie Kirkland. His musical interests extend far beyond the blues, though, and he's also recorded with Cajun superstars Beausoleil, pop star Terence Trent D'Arby, Hawaiian slack-key legend Ledward Kaapana, and country icon Dolly Parton.

While revered among guitar fans as the ultimate session man—in much the same pantheon as Mark Knopfler or Ry Cooder—Landreth's work as a leader has been less successful. Veering between Cajun, country, rock, and blues, his own recordings have been criticized as uneven, and his singing is nowhere near the equal of his guitar playing. His first release was blues oriented, then came several that were more Cajun and rock, and in 2003, he returned to the blues for *The Road We're On*.

To this point, Landreth's career most resembles that of his late hero, Chet Atkins—a man whose work with others made his guitar prowess legendary, but who never really found his footing as a leader in his own right.

JIM TRAGESER

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AMG (Richard Skelly); Larkin

Discography: AMG

Blues Attack (1996, AVI 8001).
The Road We're On (2003, Sugar Hill 3964).

LANE, MARY

b. 23 November 1935; Clarendon, AR

Began singing in Arkansas with Robert Nighthawk around 1953. She sang with other blues musicians in an uncle's club in Brinkley, Arkansas. Lane moved to Chicago in 1957, then sang with Morris Pejoe in the 1960s, and with Junior Wells in the early 1980s. She has stayed active in the Chicago West Side clubs.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Sharp, Steven. "Chicago Special: Mary Lane." *Living Blues* no. 123 (September/October 1995): 38–39.

LANG, EDDIE

b. Eddie Langlois, 15 January 1936; New Orleans, LA
 d. 10 March 1985; Slidell, LA

Guitarist who was nicknamed “Little Eddie” for his short height while he was in Guitar Slim’s (Eddie Jones) band in 1952. Although he recorded for the Savoy and RPM labels in the mid-1950s, he spent most of his career in south Louisiana. *Food Stamp Blues* (Super Dome label) was a minor hit for him in 1973. He suffered a stroke in 1979, ending his career.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

LANG, JONNY

b. Jon Gordon Langseth, 29 January 1981; Fargo, ND

His powerful guitar playing and his rough singing made Lang the main representative of the 1990s youth generation of blues-rock. He has toured with B. B. King, Buddy Guy, and Aerosmith. His debut *Lie to Me* (1997, A&M) and the following *Wander This World* (1998, A&M) both went platinum.

THORSTEN HINDRICHS

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Discography: AMG

See also **Rock ’n’ Roll**

LANOR RECORDS

Active since 1960, with Bobby and Pat Murry as owners and producers. This label located in Jennings, Louisiana, specializes in blues, Cajun, zydeco, and bluegrass.

EDWARD KOMARA

Lanor Records website, <http://www.lanorrecords.com> (accessed September 27, 2004).

LARKIN, MILTON “TIPPY”

b. 1910; Navasota, TX
 d. 31 August 1996; Houston, TX

Trombonist, bandleader. Larkin’s popular Texas blues-based territorial band served as the launching pad for numerous international jazz careers, including those of saxophonists Illinois Jacquet and Arnett Cobb, as well as a training ground for bluesmen T-Bone Walker, Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, and others.

MICHAEL POINT

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LASALLE, DENISE

b. Denise Allen or Denise Craig, 16 July 1939; LeFlore County, MS

Southern-style soul singer. LaSalle grew up listening to country and western music and the blues, and at the age of thirteen moved to Chicago. Her first recorded success, albeit local, was on Billy “The Kid” Emerson’s Tarpon label, “A Love Reputation” (1967), using the stage name of Denise LaSalle. Subsequently she married Bill Jones and the couple formed their own record company (with the Goldstar, Parka, and Crajon imprints), recording herself, Bill Coday, and the Sequins. During 1970–1976, LaSalle joined Westbound, on which she became a national R&B star, recording the million-selling “Trapped by a Thing Called Love” (1971), “Now Run and Tell That” (1972), “Man Sized Job” (1972), and “Married, But Not to Each Other” (1976). All of her recordings were done in Memphis with Willie Mitchell as producer. She then recorded four LPs for ABC, three for MCA. Her last top ten hit was “Love Me Right” (1977) for ABC.

LaSalle divorced Bill Jones in 1974, and moved to Jackson, Tennessee, in 1977, and there reshaped her career as a blues singer, writing and recording in a genre that became known as soul-blues. She first joined the premier soul-blues label, Malaco, in 1983, and some of her notable albums were *Lady in the Streets* (1983), *Still Trapped* (1990), *Still Bad* (1994), and *Smokin’ in Bed* (1997). While she only hit once for Malaco on the single charts (the novelty song “My Tu-Tu” in 1985), her albums enjoyed solid success in the South with her combination of ballads sung in a

LASALLE, DENISE

gospel style and risqué blues. During 1999–2001, LaSalle recorded three gospel albums.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly and Al Campbell); Larkin; Santelli Nelson, David. "Denise LaSalle: Talkin' That Stuff." *Living Blues* no. 101 (January/February 1992): 20–24.

Discography: AMG

LASTIE, DAVID

b. 11 November 1934; New Orleans, LA

d. 5 December 1987; New Orleans, LA

Tenor saxophonist, composer, bandleader. David Lastie, member of a musical family that included Melvin and Walter Lastie and Jessie Hill, was featured soloist on many R&B recordings and led the popular bands The Gladiators and A Taste of New Orleans. Lastie worked with Dr. John, Jessie Hill, Harold Battiste, James Booker, and Snooks Eaglin.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Hannusch, Jeff. "David Lastie." *Juke Blues* no. 11 (Winter 1987/1988): 19.

LATIMORE, BENNY

b. Benjamin Lattimore, 7 September 1939; Charleston, TN

Benny Lattimore, usually billed simply as Latimore, came to national prominence on the soul-blues circuit in 1974 with his number one R&B hit, "Let's Straighten It Out," which has become a modern-day standard in many blues singers' repertoires. The song, a plea for understanding and reconciliation between lovers, also set the tone for the sensitive and sensual themes that have made Latimore a favorite among female audiences.

He has a harder blues side as well, which dates back to his early days in Tennessee, where his father played banjo and his mother played guitar. Latimore started singing in church, and sang with a vocal group, the Neptunes, when he attended Tennessee A&I College in Nashville. He landed a job as vocalist with Louis Brooks & His Hi-Toppers and then toured for two

years as a pianist with R&B singer Joe Henderson. In Nashville he played on a few country sessions and did an imitation of Henderson's 1962 smash "Snap Your Fingers" for Hit Records, an outfit that specialized in cover versions of current hits. One tour with Henderson took him to Miami, where he decided to stay, and where he has lived ever since.

In the mid-1960s he began recording for a series of labels owned by Henry Stone in Miami, including Blade, Dade, Dash, and finally Glades, scoring his first hit with a jazzy rendition of "Stormy Monday." Latimore cut six albums with Glades and did session work with most of the label's other artists as well. Between 1973 and 1979, thirteen of his Glades 45s made the Billboard charts. In 1982 he began another long and productive association, with Malaco Records in Jackson, Mississippi, where he recorded several albums on the Malaco, J-Town, and 601 Music labels. Although the hits were fewer, he maintained a solid following on the southern chittlin' circuit. Latimore began using the original spelling of his name—Lattimore—again after signing with fellow soul-blues artist Mel Waiters' Brittney label in 2003.

JIM O'NEAL

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Discography: AMG

LAURY, BOOKER T.

b. Lawrence Laury, 2 September 1914; Memphis, TN

d. 23 September 1995; Memphis, TN

Pianist who shared the same barrelhouse piano style with Mose Vinson and Memphis Slim, with whom he was friends since childhood. He stayed in Memphis his entire life, and recorded his first album in 1994 at age eighty, for the Bullseye Blues label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (John Bush); Larkin
Bonner, Brett J. "Booker T. Laury." *Living Blues* no. 124 (November/December 1995): 57–58.

Discography: AMG

LAWHORN, SAMUEL “SAMMY”

b. 12 July 1935; Little Rock, AR
 d. 29 April 1990; Chicago, IL

Sammy Lawhorn (often misspelled as “Langhorne”) became a solid band guitarist around Chicago from the time he arrived in the mid-1960s. He had stayed in the South until his late twenties, and his style drew heavily from Helena great (and former King Biscuit Boy) Houston Stackhouse. But Lawhorn had a modern sensibility, making him a player capable of bridging the rock-influenced blues with his own country blues roots. In Chicago, he was sought by younger players like Otis Rush and Junior Wells, which brought him to the attention of Roy Brown, Elmore James, and Muddy Waters. Lawhorn recorded with Muddy beginning in the mid-1960s, and is heard on classics like “My Dog Can’t Bark” and “Birdnest on the Ground.” He appears with Waters on the Canadian TV show *The Blues*. Lawhorn remained with Waters into the early 1970s, appearing on *Live* (at Mr. Kelly’s) and *The London Sessions*. The latter features Lawhorn and Waters doing an acoustic duet of “Walkin’ Blues.”

While leading his own band in Chicago, Lawhorn influenced others, including Elvin Bishop and John Primer, teaching them slide guitar in standard tuning. After leaving Muddy, Lawhorn became a regular on the stage at Theresa’s, a nightclub on Chicago’s South Side. The club was visited by many blues players, and Lawhorn handily backed all of them, comfortable in whatever their style. Despite his heavy drinking, he remained welcome there, often astounding fans in the early part of the evening, then passing out by the last set, asleep in a booth.

ROBERT GORDON

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Discography

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 Muddy Waters. *The London Sessions* (1972, Chess 60013).

LAWLARS, ERNEST “LITTLE SON JOE”

b. 18 May 1900; Hughes, AR
 d. 14 November 1961; Memphis, TN

Husband and performing partner of Memphis Minnie from the late 1930s until his death. Also recorded with Reverend Robert Wilkins in 1935.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP**LAWS, JOHNNY**

b. 12 January 1943; Chicago, IL

Chicago South Side singer and guitarist who learned from Jimmy Reed and Buster Benton. Style ranges from soul to postwar blues to the occasional country and western tune. A Chicago favorite, he released his first record through the Wolf label in 1995.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Jason Ankeny)
 Sharp, Steven. “Chicago Special: Johnny Laws.” *Living Blues* no. 110 (July/August 1993): 34–35.

Discography: AMG**LAY, SAM**

b. 20 March 1935; Birmingham, AL

Drummer Sam Lay is best known as the inventor of the “double shuffle” beat, which recreates the propulsive, overlapping hand-claps and tambourine slaps that he heard as a child in Birmingham’s Sanctified churches. A boyhood fan of Gene Krupa, Lay took drum lessons from W. C. Handy, Jr., and moved to Cleveland in 1954, where he played with several groups. In 1960, he relocated to Chicago, where he briefly backed Little Walter. In 1961, Lay joined the band of Howlin’ Wolf and enlivened Wolf’s hits such as “I Ain’t Superstitious,” “Built for Comfort,” “Love Me Darlin’,” and “Hidden Charms” with his pile-driving sticks and innovative brush work. Lay was one of the first blues drummers to use a cowbell, on Wolf’s “Shake for Me” and “Killin’ Floor.”

In 1965, he helped found the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, one of the first integrated blues bands, which recorded several influential albums. Lay played on

LAY, SAM

Bob Dylan's legendary electric folk-rock set at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival and on Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* album. In 1967, he played on the James Cotton Band's debut album, and in 1969 on Muddy Waters's *Fathers and Sons* album. In 1970, he became a sometime-member of the Siegel-Schwall Band. Since then, Lay has toured constantly and has released five albums as a singer and bandleader, playing drums, guitar, and Hammond B3 organ. He has also played drums on occasion behind John Lee Hooker, Hound Dog Taylor, Lightnin' Hopkins, Otis Rush, and many other blues stars.

MARK HOFFMAN/JAMES SEGREST

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Discography

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Live! (1996, Appaloosa 115).
Stone Blues (1996, Evidence 26081).
Rush Hour Blues (2000, Telarc 83482).

LAZY LESTER

b. Leslie Johnson, 20 June 1933; Torras, LA

Singer/songwriter, harpist, guitarist, and percussionist. The epitome of the laconic, laid-back Louisiana blues style, Lazy Lester kept himself very busy when involved with music. After playing club dates with Guitar Gable and Big John Jackson he met Lightnin' Slim on a bus and accompanied him to a recording session. When the harmonica player didn't show up he made his studio debut. He would spend much of his time in the following years in the studio, doing steady session work with Louisiana legends Slim Harpo, Katie Webster, Tabby Thomas, Carol Fran, and Lightnin' Slim. He also played on zydeco, country, and rock 'n' roll sessions, utilizing his multi-instrumental abilities to the fullest. Eventually he recorded a series of classic hit singles including "Sugar Coated Love" and "I'm a Lover, Not a Fighter" under his own name on the Excello label.

Lazy Lester quit music in 1960 and moved to Chicago in 1968. He returned to Louisiana in 1970 before relocating to Detroit and taking an auto industry job. He came out of retirement in 1987 to record *Lazy Lester Rides Again* in England with Blues 'N' Trouble, resulting in a W. C. Handy Award for best foreign release. He began an affiliation with Antone's

nightclub in Austin, Texas, appearing regularly at the famed blues venue and ultimately recording for its label. He first cut *Harp & Soul*, with longtime associate Kenny Neal, for Alligator Records in 1988. Several compilations of his early work, including *I Hear You Knockin'*, soon followed but Lazy Lester continued to record new sessions, releasing albums such as *All Over You* and *Blues Stop Knockin'*.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

LEADBELLY

b. Huddie William Ledbetter, 20 January 1888; Mooringsport, LA

d. 6 December 1949; New York City, NY

Singer, songster, twelve-string guitar player. Born to Sally and Wesley Ledbetter on a plantation near Mooringsport, Louisiana. Though his family was relatively comfortable, he dropped out of school while he was only twelve. In 1915, he learned to play guitar from Blind Lemon Jefferson. He later covered Jefferson's classic song, "Matchbox Blues."

Even though Huddie Ledbetter wanted to be a musician, he often was in dire circumstances and spent a part of his life in prison. In 1916, Ledbetter was jailed in Texas for assault; he managed to escape and lived for two years under the alias of Walter Boyd. Arrested again in 1918, he was sentenced to thirty years in prison for a murder in Texas. After seven years in jail, Ledbetter performed for the governor of Texas, Pat Neff, in 1925. He played a song he had composed, pleading for a pardon, which Neff granted. But in 1930, troubles found Leadbelly once more, and this time it meant another thirty-year sentence, this time at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, for an attempted murder.

It was musicologist John Lomax who "discovered" Huddie Ledbetter when he visited the notorious Angola Prison in 1933, while he was looking for field recordings for the Library of Congress. For an ethnomusicologist, prisoners were perfect witnesses of the culture of the past, since they were isolated from newer trends and musical styles. Through many sessions, Lomax and Leadbelly recorded dozens of songs.

John Lomax and his son Alan returned to the prison and helped Leadbelly to obtain his pardon,



Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter. (Image courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

this time from the Louisiana state governor. On August 1, 1934, Huddie Ledbetter was a free man, again. During the first months, Leadbelly worked as a chauffeur for the Lomaxes. He also recorded and took part in radio shows. The long friendship with John Lomax stopped abruptly in 1940, when Leadbelly threatened him with a knife. Though Leadbelly remained friends with Alan Lomax, he and John never spoke to each other again.

Leadbelly stayed in New York and pursued his career, touring in Europe. In 1949, Leadbelly was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease). He died on December 6, 1949.

Although Leadbelly’s records did not sell well during his lifetime, he became a celebrity from the mid-1930s, and a legend after his death, especially during the 1960s. Among the most famous songs attributed to Leadbelly are “Goodnight Irene,” “Cotton Fields,” and “The Midnight Special.” In 1969, American groups like Creedence Clearwater Revival and the Beach Boys covered some of these songs in rock versions.

YVES LABERGE

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

See also **Broonzy, Big Bill; Jefferson, Blind Lemon; Johnson, Robert; Lomax, Alan; Lomax, John Avery; Matchbox Blues**

LEADBITTER, MICHAEL ANDREW “MIKE”

b. 12 March 1942; Simla, India

d. 16 November 1974; Brook Hospital, London, England

Blues magazine publisher and editor, discographer, and author. Parents Nicholas and Joyce Leadbitter.

Married to Rose Davis, no children. He attended Bexhill County Grammar School for Boys, 1953–1958. Inspired by the R&B music of the rock ’n’ roll era, in 1962 he founded the Blues Appreciation Society and in April 1963 he launched *Blues Unlimited* magazine, both with Simon Napier, at Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, England (see the *Napier, Simon* entry). With Napier’s pre–World War II blues leanings, he transformed the stenciled fanzine into an internationally recognized magazine. He encouraged writers, experienced and young alike, to contribute and to expand their own research.

In 1967, he made his first trip to the United States, where he met record men, artists, and writers, thereby increasing his knowledge and understanding of the blues, R&B, and Cajun genres. In 1968, his seminal discographical work, *Blues Records 1943–1966* (with Neil Slaven), was published and has subsequently been revised and updated. In 1971, Leadbitter edited *Nothing But the Blues*, a compendium of *Blues Unlimited* articles. He wrote monographs for *Blues Unlimited* and trenchant pieces for U.K. journals such as *Melody Maker*, *Jazz & Blues*, and *Let It Rock*. He compiled and annotated many LP releases, notably the three-volume Genesis box set from Chess masters. In 1973 he became sole editor of *Blues Unlimited*. He had just completed the first draft of his unpublished Delta Blues manuscript in 1974 when he died from meningitis. The blues landscape worldwide is still touched by his extraordinarily visionary and productive research work.

JOHN BROVEN

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LEAKE, LAFAYETTE

- b. Ellis Leake, ca. 1920; Winona, MS
d. 14 August 1990; Chicago, IL

A versatile and highly respected pianist who established his career in the early 1950s in Chicago, Lafayette Leake recorded frequently for Chess and Cobra with most of that city’s famed blues musicians. In 1951 he replaced Leonard “Baby Doo” Caston

in Willie Dixon’s Big Three Trio, beginning an association that would continue for well over two decades before coming to an end with Dixon’s Blues All-Stars. Leake was a sought-after session pianist during that time, in part because of his connection with Dixon, but mainly because of his outstanding skill and taste in blues, jazz, and early rock and, according to Charles “Barrelhouse Chuck” Goering, his quickness in adapting to other musicians’ styles.

His uninhibited sweeping glissandi, virtuosic quick repeated figures, and glittering passagework perfectly compliment such exuberant performances as Chuck Berry’s “Johnny B. Good” and “Sweet Sixteen.” In his blues “Slow Leake,” on the other hand, he demonstrates greater reserve, while in “Wrinkles,” with its clarity of right-hand passagework, Leake reveals his compatibility with a jazzier, more up-tempo style. His ability to create seemingly impossible effects on the first try led Dixon to refer to his piano abilities as “miraculous.” A responsive yet very private individual with just a handful of close friends, few details about his life are known. His limited personal engagement with others may have contributed to the tragedy of his lying in a diabetic coma in his home for several days before being discovered and taken to Chicago’s Cook County Hospital, where he then died.

DANIEL M. RAESSLER

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Whiteis, David. “Lafayette Leake” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 97 (May/June 1991): 41–42.

Discography: LSFP

LEANER, GEORGE AND ERNEST

George Willis Leaner

- b. 1 June 1917; Jackson, MS
d. 18 September 1983; Chicago, IL

Ernest E. Leaner

- b. 15 August 1921; Jackson, MS
d. 17 April 1990; Kalamazoo, MI

Record distributors and record company executives. George and Ernest Leaner entered the record business

during the 1940s when they joined their sister Bernice in operating the Groove Record Shop in Chicago. The brothers were nephews of famed disk jockey Al Benson (whose real name was Arthur Leaner). George began working as an assistant to blues producer Lester Melrose in 1946, and both brothers joined M.S. Distributors in 1947. In 1949, they moved over to Monroe Passis's Chord Distributors. While at Chord, they formed Parkway Records and recorded eight of the greatest post-war bar band blues sides, notably Baby Face Leroy Trio's "Rollin' and Tumblin'," a number that included Little Walter and Muddy Waters. In 1950 the brothers formed United Distributors, the country's first major black-owned distribution firm.

George operated the One-derful/M-Pac/Mar-V-lus label complex from 1962 to 1968, recording such hard soul acts as McKinley Mitchell, Harold Burrage, Otis Clay, Five Dutones, Sharpees, Johnny Sayles, and Dorothy Prince, as well as huge dance record star Alvin Cash. Blues artists recording for the company included Lonnie Brooks, Big Daddy Rogers, and Andrew Tibbs. Following the closing of One-derful, Ernie Leaner teamed with his son Tony to form Toddlin' Town, which experienced moderate success recording such proto-funk acts as Bull and the Matadors and Thomas East before closing in 1971. The brothers shut down United Distributors in 1974, turning the operation into a one-stop, and opened up a chain of retail shops. However, by the end of the decade, both George and Ernie were largely out of the music business.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Pruter, Robert. "George W. Leaner." *Living Blues* no. 58 (Winter 1983): 46.

LEARY, S. P.

- b. 6 June 1930; Carthage, TX
d. 26 January 1998; Chicago, IL

Drummer S. P. Leary, raised outside Dallas, was friends with future Ray Charles saxophonist David "Fathead" Newman. Before they could drive, both were playing behind guitar great T-Bone Walker. Around 1955, Leary moved to Chicago. His neighbor, Sonny Boy Williamson II (Rice Miller), heard him practicing and enlisted him. Leary quickly became popular, drumming with guitarist Jimmy Rogers,

whose solo career was in its prime. Leary later played with both Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, as well as with Magic Sam, Morris Pejoe, and James Cotton. Leary's style was loose and jazzy; he could drum straight blues and also take chances, a slight jazz inflection. A warm personality with a propensity for drink, Leary would sometimes dance during stop-time songs, occasionally falling from the drum riser. He recorded with several Muddy alumni, including Mojo Buford (*Exciting Harmonica Sound of Mojo Buford*), Otis Spann (*Bottom of the Blues*), and James Cotton (*Chicago/The Blues/Today*) in their early solo years, and later with Paul Oscher (*The Deep Blues of Paul Oscher*). Leary was continually sought as a sideman by diverse artists, ranging from the 1960s blues-rock version of Fleetwood Mac to, in the 1990s, Yoko Noge. Leary remained active until his final years.

ROBERT GORDON

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O'Brien, Justin. "S. P. Leary" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 139 (May/June 1998): 52–53.

LEAVY, CALVIN

- b. ca. 1940–1942; Scott, AR

Birth years of 1940, 1941, and 1942 have been cited by researchers. Soulful vocalist Calvin Leavy made a hit with his semi-autobiographical moving blues "Cummins Prison Farm" in 1969 for the Soul Beat label. The song was picked up and heavily promoted by Nashville producer Shelby Singleton. This huge success led to Calvin playing throughout the southern states and recording prolifically with well-crafted modern blues such as "Going to the Dogs" and "Thieves and Robbers." Unfortunately, Leavy's troubles with the law continued, and he is now serving out a long sentence.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

- The Best of Calvin Leavy* (2000, Red Clay CD LLC 01).

LEAVY, HOSEA

LEAVY, HOSEA

b. 26 November 1927; Altheimer, AR

The older brother of Calvin Leavy, Hosea led a family band and recorded a single 45 in 1973 before settling in the Fresno area where he played his gutbucket style of blues, loud guitar, and smoky vocals. In the late 1990s, Hosea cut two of the most down-home blues albums of the period for producer Chris Millar.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

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Cold Tacos and Warm Beer (2000, Fedora FCD 5023; with Harmonica Slim).

LED ZEPPELIN

Active 1968–1980. After the British blues-rock group the Yardbirds disbanded in 1968, its guitarist Jimmy Page enlisted bassist John Paul Jones, drummer John Bonham, and vocalist Robert Plant and briefly toured as the New Yardbirds before adopting the name Led Zeppelin. Their self-titled debut album in 1969 was blues based and featured remakes of Willie Dixon's "You Shook Me" and "I Can't Quit You Baby" and of Howlin' Wolf's "How Many More Years" (as "How Many More Times"). Their second album, *Led Zeppelin II*, rapidly went to number one on the *Billboard* charts, and the incorporated remake of Willie Dixon's "You Need Love" as "Whole Lotta Love" went to number five on the singles charts. Every album following *Led Zeppelin II* was a commercial success; the untitled fourth album, nicknamed "Zoso" by rock critics and fans, contained the monumental "Stairway to Heaven," which remains the group's best-known song. Although pioneering in the development of British heavy metal, Led Zeppelin's sound is firmly grounded in earlier blues traditions. The band split up after John Bonham's death in 1980.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

Bibliography

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Selected Recordings

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Led Zeppelin II (1969, Atlantic).
Led Zeppelin III (1970, Atlantic).
Untitled (1971, Atlantic).
Houses of the Holy (1973, Atlantic).
Physical Graffiti (1975, Swan Song).
Presence; The Song Remains the Same (1976, Swan Song).
In Through the Out Door (1979, Swan Song).
Coda (1982, Swan Song).

LEDBETTER, HUDDIE

(See *Leadbelly*)

LEE, BONNIE

b. Jessie Lee Frealls, 11 June 1931; Bunkie, LA

First recorded for J. Mayo Williams after arriving in Chicago from Beaumont, Texas, in 1958. She made limited local singing appearances until Sunnyland Slim took her on tour and recorded her for Airway. Her career was again revived by Willie Kent who has backed her on CDs for Wolf (*I'm Good*) and Delmark (*Sweetheart of the Blues*).

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

Whiteis, David. "I Need Somebody's Hand: The Blues Life of Bonnie Lee." *Living Blues* no. 119 (January/February 1995): 44.

Discography: AMG

Sweetheart of the Blues (Delmark DE-676).

LEE, FRANKIE

b. Frankie Lee Jones, 29 April 1941; Mart, TX

Singer. A soulful and energetic singer whose gospel and R&B experience often overshadowed his blues sensibilities, Lee made his recording debut in 1963 with three singles for the Duke/Peacock label. Lee moved to Austin with Sonny Rhodes and was heard and hired by a visiting Ike Turner. He was on the road the next day and continued to tour and travel for the

rest of the 1960s, ultimately leaving Texas to tour with Albert Collins in 1965. He ended up in California and began working with his cousin Johnny Guitar Watson in 1971. He released a series of albums on different labels, beginning with his 1984 HighTone release *The Ladies and the Babies* and reunited with Rhodes for a Chicago Blues Festival appearance.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

LEE, JOHN ARTHUR

b. 24 May 1915; Mount Willing, AL

A country blues Alabama guitarist in the penknife slide style, Lee was known for many years for his 1951 Federal session including “Down at the Depot” and “Blind Blues.” Upon rediscovery in Montgomery, Alabama, by Gayle Dean Wardlow in 1973, Lee had an album issued by Rounder.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin
Wardlow, Gayle Dean. “Down at the Depot: The Story of John Lee.” *Blues Unlimited* no. 113 (May/June 1975): 12–13.

Discography: Larkin; LSFP

LEE, JULIA

b. 31 October 1902; Kansas City, MO
d. 8 December 1958; Kansas City, MO

Vocalist and pianist. Harris gives birth year of 1903 and birthplace of Booneville, Missouri. Majority of career spent in Kansas City. Began performing with brother, bandleader George Lee, but she went solo in 1935. Lee was known for her risqué songs including “Do You Want It” and “King Size Papa.”

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

Bibliography

Chilton; Harris; New Grove Jazz; Larkin; Southern Miller, Bill. “Julia Lee.” In *All Roots Lead to Rock*, edited by Colin Escott. New York: Schirmer, 1999.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

“Sit Down and Drink It Over”/ “I Didn’t Like It the First Time (The Spinach Song)” (1924, Vocalion 14795).
“Julia’s Blues”/ “When a Woman Loves a Man” (1946, Capital 320).
“I Was Wrong”/ “Snatch and Grab It” (1947, Capital 40028).
“My Man Stands Out”/ “Don’t Come too Soon” (1949, Capital 1111).

LEE, LOVIE

b. Eddie Lee Watson, 17 March 1909; Chattanooga, TN
d. 23 May 1997; Chicago, IL

Some sources give 1924 as birth year. Lee was nicknamed “Lovie” for hanging on his aunt’s neck. His father played piano and accordion, and his mother the church organ. He learned to play in his parents’ restaurant in Meridian, Mississippi, and was influenced by barrelhouse player “Cap” King.

At the Star Theater he played during intermissions, and later with his Swinging Cats he performed at local social and civic events, and once backed Little Walter on a visit. Lee took in harmonica player Carey Bell Harrington after he ran away from home, and ultimately included him in his band. (Lee and his wife helped nurture the musical Bell-Harrington clan including Carey’s son, Lurie Bell.) When Lee left for Chicago in 1957, Carey Bell accompanied him.

Chicago’s tough music scene forced Lee to work as an upholsterer—a job he held until retirement. On weekends he and his Sensationals played at Cinderella’s, the 1125 Club, Florence’s, and Porter’s. Carey Bell, Byther Smith, and Lee Jackson frequently appeared with him. Beginning in the 1970s he worked with his Hot Flames, which occasionally included Vance Kelly, Zora Young, and Vernon and Joe Harrington. On a recommendation from Mojo Buford in 1981, Muddy Waters offered Lee the keyboard spot in his band, a post he held until Waters’s death in 1983. Lee, given the chance to travel the world’s stages, often spoke with humility and gratitude of his experiences with Waters.

Lovie Lee’s slim recorded output includes four tracks with Carey Bell on Alligator’s *Living Chicago Blues, Vol. 3*, and one with Muddy Waters on Alligator’s *Blues Deluxe*, as well as self-produced 1970s and 1990s material, culled by Earwig to produce the well-received *Good Candy* in 1994.

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

LEE, LOVIE

Bibliography

- Brisbin, John Anthony. "I Can Entertain You." *Living Blues* no. 110 (August 1993): 23.
O'Brien, Justin. "Lovie Lee" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 135 (September/October 1997): 55–56.

Discography

Good Candy (Earwig 4928).

LEECAN, BOBBY

Flourished 1920s–1930s

A guitarist and banjoist as technically sophisticated as Lonnie Johnson, Leecan worked chiefly in New York and Philadelphia, both in a duet with the harmonica-player Robert Cooksey and in stringband formations such as the South Street Trio and his Need-More Band, playing blues, rags, popular songs, and original material.

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne); Larkin

Discography: DGR

LEFT HAND FRANK

- b. Frank Craig, 5 October 1935; Greenville, MS
d. 14 January 1992; Los Angeles, CA

Born Frank Craig and raised in Greenville, Mississippi, the left-handed guitarist learned the instrument as a boy, and often played blues for tips on the streets in nearby Shelby. Craig moved to Chicago while in his teens and worked mainly as a sideman throughout the 1960s and 1970s with many Chicago musicians, including Jimmy Rogers, Little Walter, Junior Wells, and Willie Cobbs. He recorded four songs as a leader for Alligator's *Living Chicago Blues* series in 1978, which showcased his intricate and highly distinctive guitar playing. Craig later relocated to California for health reasons and remained largely musically inactive until his death from heart failure in 1992.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

- AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin
O'Brien, Justin. "Left Hand Frank Craig." *Living Blues* no. 105 (September/October 1992): 44–45.

Discography

Various artists. *Living Chicago Blues—Volume 1* (1991, Alligator ALCD 7701).

LEGENDARY BLUES BAND

A hardworking Chicago-based blues band, the Legendary Blues Band formed in June 1980. The Legendary Blues Band grew out of the mid- to late 1970s Muddy Waters band. When the band first performed, Jerry Portnoy played harmonica, Louis Myers played guitar (and harmonica), Pinetop Perkins played piano, Calvin Jones played bass, and Willie Smith played drums. Smith, Jones, and Perkins had toured regularly with Muddy Waters for about twelve years. The personnel in the Legendary Blues Band have changed over the years, but two of the band's original members, Calvin Jones and Willie Smith, remain.

The Legendary Blues Band signed a contract on the Rounder label in 1981 and recorded *Life of Ease* in the same year. *Red Hot & Blue* followed in 1983. Perkins left the band in 1985, and was followed by Portnoy in 1986. The band had trouble getting steady work with its continuously fluctuating line-up. In 1989 the band was signed to Ichiban Records. That year, Jones and Smith recruited guitarists Smokey Smothers and Billy Flynn and harmonica player Mark Koenig. With this new roster, the Legendary Blues Band returned to the studio to record *Woke Up with the Blues*, which was nominated for a W. C. Handy Award. Since then, the band continues to record and perform regularly at clubs and festivals.

RYAN OLSEN

Bibliography

AMG (Jim O'Neal); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG

LEIBER AND STOLLER

Jerry Leiber (b. April 25, 1933; Baltimore, MD) and Mike Stoller (b. March 13, 1933; Queens, NY) formed one of the most successful songwriting teams of the 1950s and 1960s. They met as teenagers in Los Angeles, two Jewish transplants from the East Coast with a shared love of black music. They wrote collaboratively, with Stoller, a pianist, usually supplying the melody and Leiber the words. They also became producers, most famously for Atlantic Records from the mid-1950s to early 1960s, and launched two short-lived labels of their own (Spark in 1954 and Red

Bird in 1964). They achieved fame, fortune, and rock 'n' roll immortality through songs recorded by the Coasters ("Yakety Yak," "Charlie Brown," "Searchin"), Elvis Presley ("Jailhouse Rock," "Treat Me Nice"), the Drifters ("There Goes My Baby," "Save the Last Dance for Me"), Ben E. King ("Stand By Me," "Spanish Harlem"), Dion ("Ruby Baby"), the Clovers ("Love Potion No. 9"), and Jay & the Americans ("Only in America"), to name but a few.

As teenagers, the duo primarily wrote blues and blues-inflected R&B. Mentored by Lester Sill, a salesman with the blues-laden Modern label, they placed their first songs with Jimmy Witherspoon ("Real Ugly Woman") and Bobby Nunn & the Robins ("That's What the Good Book Says"), both for Modern in 1951. They scored their first R&B hit in 1952 with Charles Brown's recording of "Hard Times," followed by "Hound Dog," a 1953 R&B hit for Big Mama Thornton. Their "K. C. Lovin," cut by Little Willie Littlefield in 1952, became a smash later in the decade for Wilbert Harrison under the name "Kansas City." Other early 1950s Leiber–Stoller compositions include "Too Much Jelly Roll" (performed by Floyd Dixon), "Gloom and Misery All Around" (Roy Hawkins), "Hollerin' and Screamin'" (Little Esther), "Nosey Joe" (Bullmoose Jackson), and a vocal version of the jazz classic "Flying Home" (Amos Milburn).

After this auspicious start in R&B, Leiber and Stoller crossed over to pop big time in 1955–1956, when the Cheers entered the top ten with their teen-oriented "Black Denim Trousers"; Elvis went to number one with his cover of "Hound Dog"; and the Robins (soon renamed the Coasters) cut "Smokey Joe's Café," one of their many "playlet" songs, which were like three-minute comedy skits set to R&B melodies. The duo relocated to New York, where they wrote and produced for Atlantic Records and added Brill Building touches like strings and Latin rhythms to their songs. Their mid-1960s Red Bird label generated hits by girl groups like the Dixie Cups and the Shangri-Las. "Is That All There Is," their 1969 cabaret-style ballad for Peggy Lee, signaled a complete break from their R&B roots, although in 1973 they returned one last time to the blues, producing *Very Rare*, an ambitious but flawed double-LP starring an ailing T-Bone Walker backed by bloated arrangements. In 1987 they were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and in 1995 a musical celebrating their work, *Smokey Joe's Café*, opened on Broadway.

STEVE HOFFMAN

Bibliography

AMG (John Dougan); Larkin Palmer, Robert. *Baby, That Was Rock & Roll: The Legendary Leiber and Stoller*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1978.

Discography

Various artists. *The Leiber & Stoller Story, Vol. 1: Hard Times—The Los Angeles Years 1951–56* (2004, Ace [UK] CDH 1010).

LEIGH, KERI

b. 21 April 1969; Birmingham, AL

Singer in the Janis Joplin style, and guitarist in Austin blues-rock. Arrived in Austin in 1990 and soon had bookings from Antone's. Among her journalism credits are her Stevie Ray Vaughan biography *Stevie Ray: Soul to Soul* (Dallas: Taylor Books, 1993) and a column in *Blues Revue* magazine in the early 1990s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG

Discography: AMG

LEJEUNE, IRY

b. 28 October 1928; Pointe Noir, LA

d. 8 October 1955; Eunice, LA

Iry Lejeune was born in Point Noire, Louisiana. Almost blind, he devoted himself to the accordion, developing a style based on the singing and playing of Creole musician Amedee Ardoin. Lejeune's recordings remain the standard for all of Cajun music. His emotional, heart-wrenching singing full of blues notes and slurs is emulated by most Cajun singers. He recorded only twenty-five songs, all for Goldband Records.

JARED SNYDER

Bibliography

Broven, John. *South to Louisiana: The Music of the Cajun Bayous*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Press, 1983.
Savoy, Ann Allen, compiler and ed. *Cajun Music: A Reflection of a People, Volume 1*. Eunice, LA: Bluebird Press, 1988.

Discography

Iry Lejeune, Cajun's Greatest (1992, Ace CDCHD 428).

See also Ardoin, Amadie [Amede]; Goldband Records

LEMBO, KIM

b. 1967

Singer long based in Syracuse, New York, performing contemporary soul blues and West Side Chicago-style blues. Often performs with her band Blue Heat. Since 1994 she has recorded for the Blue Wave label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Birchmeier)

Discography: AMG (Jason Birchmeier)

LENOIR, J. B.

b. 5 March 1929; Monticello, MS

d. 29 April 1967; Urbana, IL

Born with a first name consisting of just initials, J. B. Lenoir (pronounced Lenore) grew up in the musical family of parents Dewitt Lenoir and Roberta Ratliff, both accomplished guitarists. Lenoir worked on the southern Mississippi family farm as a child and took guitar lessons from his father at age eight, being influenced initially by Blind Lemon Jefferson records and later by Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup and Lightnin’ Hopkins. He left home while still in his early teens to escape the hard and oppressive life of 1940s Mississippi, and by 1944 was living in New Orleans where he worked with Elmore James and Sonny Boy Williamson II.

In 1949, Lenoir moved to Chicago and worked for a meat-packing plant by day and spent his nights sitting in at various South Side clubs. His first important mentor in Chicago was Big Bill Broonzy, a well-known supporter of newly arrived musicians from the South. Lenoir also befriended and worked with Memphis Minnie, Big Maceo, and Muddy Waters throughout the next few years. His distinctive, high-pitched voice, boogie-styled guitar playing, and outgoing stage presence distinguished him early on from other blues performers. Lenoir’s penchant for brightly colored suits (often tiger-striped) and energetic showmanship made him a popular performer, and his “duck walk” stage moves would predate Chuck Berry’s by several years.

In 1951, after residing in Chicago for just two years, Lenoir had two singles appear on Chess—recordings that were leased from Joe Brown’s JOB imprint in which Lenoir recorded for until early 1953. Among these initial releases was his first of many

politically and/or socially conscious songs, the topical “Korea Blues.” Throughout his fifteen-year recording career, Lenoir would record only original compositions—a combination of up-tempo, frequently humorous, dance numbers mixed with thoughtful slow blues, often of social commentary. As on his first recordings, his later JOB sides included pianist Sunnysland Slim and drummer Alfred Wallace, but also featured saxophonist J. T. Brown as a soloist. This combination of a small rhythm ensemble of guitar/piano/drums coupled with lead saxophone evolved into Lenoir’s signature sound.

A 1953 JOB session produced one of Lenoir’s more popular numbers, “The Mojo” (aka “Mojo Boogie”), in which he used his fondness for New Orleans’s culture as a backdrop. From 1954 through 1955, Lenoir recorded for the Parrot label, and from these sessions came his only commercial success, the driving “Mama Talk to Your Daughter,” which peaked at number eleven on Billboard’s R&B charts in the summer of 1955 and became a blues classic. Controversy also marked Lenoir’s tenure at Parrot with the release of “Eisenhower Blues”—a critical look at the depressed economy that subconsciously linked the condition to the U.S. president in both title and refrain. The single was quickly pulled, presumably after fears of offending the wrong people, and reissued as “Tax Paying Blues,” a tamer reworking of the song. (Contrary to rumor, no evidence of a White House involvement in its removal has ever surfaced.)

Lenoir spent the next two years recording for Chess subsidiary Checker, and waxed such songs as the humorous “Don’t Touch My Head,” a satire on the current hair-process craze, and the boastful declaration, “Natural Man.” He left Checker in 1958, and during the next two years recorded for both Shad and Vee-Jay. By the 1960s, he moved to Champaign and began working as a kitchen helper at the University of Illinois to support his wife Ella Louise and their children. In 1963, he recorded several songs for USA, and developed a sound he called “African Hunch,” a polyrhythmic blues style that emphasized a stronger African percussion. Building on this new sound, Lenoir recorded two acoustic albums, *Alabama Blues* in 1965 and *Down in Mississippi* in 1966, produced by Willie Dixon for the CBS (Europe) and Polydor labels. Both albums featured a few reprises of earlier compositions, but more importantly they showcased Lenoir’s powerful songwriting of social consciousness, such as “Shot On James Meredith,” “Alabama March,” “Born Dead,” and the title cuts—all of which deal head-on with civil rights. Recorded in Chicago but intended for European release, Lenoir was free to speak out without fear of censorship. In 1965, he toured Europe as part of the American Folk

Blues Festival package and remained active on the Chicago club circuit. With his career on resurgence, Lenoir was involved in a serious automobile accident in April 1967, and died several weeks later from heart failure that resulted from his injuries. J. B. Lenoir was thirty-eight years old when he died.

GENE TOMKO

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 Broven, John. "J.B. Lenoir: Yet Another Forgotten Artist."
Blues Unlimited no. 15 (September 1964): 5–6.
 Oliver, Paul. *Conversation with the Blues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Discography: LSFP

J. B. Lenoir: Vietnam Blues: The Complete L+R Recordings
 (1995, Evidence ECD 26068-2).

LEONARD, HARLAN

b. 2 July 1905; Butler, MO
 d. 10 November 1983; Los Angeles, CA

Saxophonist and bandleader. After graduating from a Kansas City high school in 1923, he first joined George E. Lee's group before becoming a member of Benny Moten's Kansas City Orchestra, playing lead alto sax for the next eight years. Moten's band was the best in the city (Count Basie played with the group from 1929 until Moten's death in 1935) and Leonard played on the band's most popular records, 1925's "South" (OKeh 8194), 1927's "Kansas City Shuffle" (Victor 20485), 1928's "Moten Stomp" (Victor 20955), and a new recording of "South" for Victor in 1929 (38021). In 1931, Leonard and several other members of Moten's band left the group and joined trombonist Thamon Hayes to form the Kansas City Rockets; when Hayes resigned from the group, Leonard became its leader.

After the Rockets disbanded in 1937, Leonard started his own group, Harlan Leonard's Rockets, which became one of the leading bands in Kansas City. In 1940, the Rockets played the top ballrooms in Chicago (the Aragon) and New York (the Savoy and Golden Gate) and recorded two dozen songs for Bluebird, the best being "Rock and Ride" (10883) and "A la Bridges" (10899). The Rockets continued to play in the Midwest until 1943, when the group relocated to Los Angeles. The band broke up after the war and Leonard worked in a defense plant, then for the post office, and took a job with the Internal Revenue Service in 1949, where he worked until his

retirement and never played the saxophone in public again.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

Chilton; Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

"Let the Good Times Roll" transcends virtually every musical genre, with its distinctive New Orleans blues line and vocal delivery. The racy, yet clean-sounding rhythm and blues standard appears on hundreds of albums and has been recorded by dozens of artists, ranging from Molly Hatchet to Clifton Chenier to Caesar & Cleo (aka Sonny & Cher) to Tanya Tucker.

"Let the Good Times Roll" had humble beginnings, penned by two teenagers, Shirley Pixley Goodman and Leonard Lee—also known as the R&B duo Shirley & Lee.

Shirley & Lee, having had a number of hits such as "I'm Gone," had created a solid fan base that were accustomed to the romantic soap operas that unfolded in their songs, which were a series of linked solos of choruses and verses, not two-part harmonies.

Following that first bit of success, the full-length album version of *Let the Good Times Roll* was released, and the timing in the R&B music space was perfect by the middle of 1956 for them to achieve great commercial success.

The song had much richer tradition, though, than Shirley & Lee's modest origins. Although the young duo had written and performed the song, the framework for the song was familiar to their hometown of New Orleans.

Shirley & Lee took the basic line and kicked in a feisty New Orleans beat, adding Lee's smooth and Shirley's quirky blues voices. Working with the quintessential local writer, producer, and A&R genius Dave Bartholomew, he provided sound shape and recording verve to Shirley & Lee's core song delivery, backing it up with a legendary house band consisting of Allen Toussaint on piano, Frank Fields on bass, Earl Palmer on drums, and Lee Allen, Red Tyler, and Herb Hardesty on saxophone.

"Let the Good Times Roll" hit #2 on the R&B charts and #20 on the pop charts in 1956, and has sold more than one million copies.

This song, as a staple of both R&B and rock 'n' roll, continues to receive airplay on old rock 'n' roll radio stations. It also appears on motion picture

soundtracks such as *Stand By Me, Mighty*, and *Rage in Harlem* in its original presentation from Shirley & Lee.

MEG FISHER

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LEEVE BLUES

Levees are large earth embankments built along the banks of rivers for the intended purpose of flood control. An extensive system of levees exists along the banks of the Mississippi–Missouri River system that drains water from thirty-one states. Black men and women working as slaves and later as convicts constructed the levees of the lower Mississippi Valley. This experience of building levees informed the lyrics of blues music.

Levees first appeared in the early eighteenth century during the initial development of the city of New Orleans. Before the Civil War, levees extended up the Mississippi to secure better navigation of the river by commercial steamboats. In 1879 with the creation of the Mississippi River Commission, the federal government controlled the repair and building of levees. In the great flood of 1882, the Mississippi River ran over its banks and over the existing levees from Cairo, Illinois, to the mouth of the river. Floodwaters stretched seventy miles across at the widest point.

Responsibility for levee construction passed from plantation owners before the Civil War to state control during Reconstruction. Because of the debt load carried by the southern states most vulnerable to the flooding of the Mississippi, the federal government stepped in during post-Reconstruction to direct and build a more extensive levee system.

Involuntary labor built most of the levees in the lower Mississippi Valley in the late nineteenth century. Black men and women worked under the convict leasing system as they hauled dirt, trees, and stones into place along the new embankments. Their lives had little value beyond the labor they provided and many worked until they dropped dead on the construction sites. Their bodies were buried in the levees.

Each successive expansion of the levee system proved inadequate for flood control. The effort of the Mississippi River Commission that directed the

work after 1879 saw the devastating failure of the system in 1927. Floodwaters again raged along the river south of Cairo. The death and destruction of this flood affected many black families and their homes built next to the levees and on the low ground of the surrounding countryside.

Numerous blues songs deal with the work experience of building the levees. Big Bill Broonzy recorded "Levee Blues" in 1930; Thomas Dorsey recorded "Levee Bound Blues" in 1930; Son House recorded "Levee Camp Blues" in 1941; Ma Rainey recorded "Levee Camp Moan" in 1925; and the Hall Negro Quartette recorded "Levee Work Song" in 1936. Joe and Minnie McCoy recorded "When the Levee Breaks" in 1929. The song tells of the impending devastation promised by heavy rain and rising floodwater.

Huddie Leadbetter recorded "Go Down, Old Hannah" in 1935, 1938, and 1939. In the song, he takes the listener into his confidence as he relates the terrible and tragic conditions of building the levee. Only Judgment Day can revive a fallen worker like Old Hannah.

In another song by Leadbetter, "Red Cross Store Blues," recorded in 1940, he sings about the aftermath of the levee breaks and the 1927 flood. The singer confesses to his woman that he cannot go down to the Red Cross store until he gets a job. Even though the singer and his woman need beans and rice for a meal, they can only get these items from the Red Cross if they have money. The song calls attention to the corruption of local governing bodies that took relief items from the Red Cross and then sold them rather than distribute them, causing many without money to starve.

BILL GRAVES

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LEVY, LOUIS “LOU”

b. 29 November 1910; New York City, NY
 d. 31 October 1995; New York City, NY

Music publisher and founder of Leeds Music in 1939. His early career was as a dancer or “hooper,” even performing in blackface at the Apollo Theater in New York City. After establishing the Leeds Music office on Broadway, he acquired rights to many classic blues songs, including most of the songs of Leroy Carr and of Clarence Williams. Later he published the boogie-woogie masters Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis, and Pete Johnson, along with interwar pianist Sammy Price, Jay McShann, and Mary Lou Williams. In 1964 he sold his 12,000 song properties to MCA for \$4.5 million. He remained active in ASCAP, and assisted music publishing negotiations.

EDWARD KOMARA

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LEVY, MORRIS

b. 27 August 1927; New York City, NY
 d. 21 May 1990; Ghent, NY

The founder of rock 'n' roll label Roulette Records in 1956, Morris Levy (no relation to the author of this article) assembled a publishing empire that included the songs of Chuck Berry among others and often forced his name onto the songwriting credits of his acts' releases. He died awaiting appeal of a ten-year prison term for the extortion of a record wholesaler.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

AMG

LEVY, RON

b. Reuvin Zev ben Yehoshua Ha Levi, 29 May 1951; Cambridge, MA

Began playing piano in 1964, the day after attending a Ray Charles concert. Soon was gigging around Boston, backing up blues acts, learning the Hammond B3 organ, and developing a playing style that, while vigorous, muscular, and assertive, always retained a certain jazz groove and rarely veered toward the blues-rock favored by many of his peers.

Albert King took him on the road in 1968 and a year later he joined B. B. King's band, a remarkable feat for a white teenager. He stayed with B. B. for seven years. From 1976 to 1980, he played piano for the Cambridge-based Rhythm Rockers. He was organist and road manager with Luther “Guitar Jr.” Johnson from 1980 to 1983, then joined the dynamic jump-blues group Roomful of Blues in 1983, remaining with them through 1987. During his years with Roomful, he did side projects with Black Top Records of New Orleans, handling arrangements and keyboards for various sessions while also cutting two albums with his own group, Ron Levy's Wild Kingdom.

From 1987 to 1997, Levy was an important figure behind the scenes at Rounder Records, a leading indie label with a strong blues focus. He served as a Rounder producer and session player and in 1990 cofounded its Bullseye Blues & Jazz subsidiary, handling A&R and production duties for many releases. Leaving Rounder, he spent 1997 working with Minneapolis-based Cannonball Records, producing its Blues Around America series and other discs. Returning to the Boston/Cambridge area, he has recently devoted his energies to jazz, acid-jazz, and funk, touring on the Hammond B3 with his Wild Kingdom combo.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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 Ron Levy website, <http://www.levtron.com>.

Discography: AMG**LEWIS, BOBBY**

b. 17 February 1933; Indianapolis, IN

Birth year also reported as 1927. Rhythm and blues singer who had a rock 'n' roll hit with “Tossin' and Turnin'” in 1961. “One Track Mind” was a follow-up success. He has continued performing, including at rock “oldies” concerts.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: Larkin

LEWIS, FURRY

b. Walter Lewis, 6 March 1893; Greenwood, MS
 d. 14 September 1981; Memphis, TN

Country-blues singer, songster, and bottleneck slide guitar player. Born in Mississippi, Lewis spent almost all his life in Memphis, Tennessee. He was active in the 1920s, retired from the musical profession in 1930, and came back again from 1959 to the late 1970s.

Some sources have stated that bluesman Furry Lewis was born in 1900, but he himself confirmed that he was really born on March 6, 1893. The young Walter Lewis was called "Furry" by his childhood friends at school. He built his first guitar from a cigar box when he was only six years old. According to Pete Welding, Furry Lewis recalled that he was influenced by local bluesmen that he saw in his youth in Greenwood, such as Arthur Petties, Gus "Banjo Joe" Cannon, Funny Willie Polk (or Pope), and Landis Jackson.

Furry Lewis moved to Memphis with his family when he was fifteen or sixteen. He sang and played guitar for both black and white audiences, at picnics, fish fries, dances, medicine shows, or on the street, offering a wide repertoire that included ragtime, folk songs, ballads, serenades, and country blues. Although he mostly played unaccompanied, he sometimes joined other musicians or jug bands. Furry Lewis even played a few times with W. C. Handy, who once gave the young musician a high-quality acoustic guitar, a Martin six-string guitar that he kept for years.

At seventeen, Lewis nearly died while trying to hitch a train; he lost a leg and had to wear a prosthetic for the rest of his life.

When Lewis began recording in 1927, he had been playing as a songster for at least a decade. With the advice of his friend Jim Jackson, Furry Lewis auditioned for Vocalion Records during a short trip to Chicago, and recorded his first two sessions. Back in Memphis, he also recorded the following year for the Victor label and again for Vocalion. Among his twenty-three songs released between 1927 and 1929 are "Rock Island Blues" (1927), "I Will Turn Your Money Green" (1928), the two-part song "Kassie Jones" (1928), and in 1929, his trademark, a two-part song titled "John Henry (The Steel Driving Man)."

In about 1922, Furry Lewis was hired as a street sweeper for the Memphis Sanitation Department. During the Great Depression, Furry Lewis abandoned his musical career; he only sang and played music for his friends, until he was "rediscovered" by blues scholar Samuel Charters in 1959. During that thirty-year break, Lewis's music was not completely forgotten: Some of his Victor recordings from 1928

reappeared on three different ten-inch LPs of vintage blues and folk songs by various artists, released between 1947 and 1953.

Furry Lewis began the second phase of his career at the age of sixty-six, with the help of Charters; he recorded his songs and monologues for a Folkways LP, in 1959. At the moment of his rediscovery, Furry Lewis did not own a guitar anymore, but he still knew how to play and his voice remained strong and full of emotion.

During the folk-blues revival, Furry Lewis recorded two LPs for Prestige in 1961, *Back on My Feet Again*, followed by *Done Changed My Mind*, that were rereleased together on one CD by Fantasy Records, under the title *Shake 'Em On Down* (1992 [1961]). The first of these albums included blues standards like "Shake 'Em On Down" and "St. Louis Blues." He performed again on both albums some songs from his early repertoire (like "John Henry"), with the same open E tuning, bottleneck guitar style, using the lower strings as a rhythm basis, and the high strings for the melody and slide effects. Lewis's guitar remained clearly rooted in the Memphis tradition, with the vocals alternating with the instrumental parts as a kind of dialogue between the instrument and the voice. But Lewis was not the only musician from Memphis to have adopted that musical approach, mixing finger-picking and flat-picking interacting with the singing. Lewis's melodies in songs like "When My Baby Left Me" or his "Judge Boushay Blues" are similar to the chord structure used later by Robert Wilkins in his famous song "Prodigal Son (That's No Way to Get Along)."

Although he recorded more than ever before and played concerts on college campuses and festivals during the 1960s, Furry Lewis could still not live from his art, and had to keep his regular job at Memphis's City Hall. Among the many artists he played with during the 1960s are Sleepy John Estes and Bukka White.

Furry Lewis once opened for the Rolling Stones when the group played in Memphis; he appeared briefly in two films: playing the part of Uncle Furry in John G. Avildsen's comedy *W. W. and the Dixie Dance Kings* (1975), and in his own role for the biography *This Is Elvis* (1981), directed by Malcolm Leo and Andrew Solt. Furry Lewis's influence on the young Bob Dylan is clear on songs like "Casey Jones." Canadian singer Joni Mitchell composed a tribute song titled "Furry Plays the Blues" (1976). An artist whose production spanned more than half a century, Furry Lewis had two separate musical careers and lived until age eighty-eight.

YVES LABERGE

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

See also **Charters, Samuel Barclay; Films; Handy, William Christopher "W. C."; John Henry; Shake 'Em On Down**

LEWIS, JOHNNIE (JOHNNY)

b. 8 October 1908; Eufaula, AL

A finger-picking and slide guitar player in the regional Alabama style, Johnnie Lewis has only played music as a sideline, but played enough anyway to be featured in the 1970s film *Chicago Blues*. He then recorded an excellent album for the Arhoolie label in the company of harp player wizard Charlie Musselwhite.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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LEWIS, MEADE "LUX"

b. Meade Anderson Lewis, 4 September 1905; Chicago, IL
 d. 7 June 1964; Minneapolis, MN

Meade Anderson "Lux" Lewis was a seminal figure in boogie-woogie. His father was a porter on the Pullman coaches, and the family home was in Chicago on South La Salle near the New York Central line. Lewis

was one of five children, four boys and a girl. Lewis senior was a guitarist who had made a couple of recordings, and he arranged for his son to take violin lessons. The violin was apparently learned under suffering and Lewis switched to piano at the age of sixteen, shortly after his father's death.

The family did not possess a piano, but Lewis was able to practice in the home of his boyhood friend Albert Ammons, who was also destined to become famous as a boogie pianist. Both of Ammons's parents were musical and it is reputed that his father was an early boogie-woogie exponent. Another friend called Toy, who lived on 39th and State Street, also had a piano, and it was here in around 1923 that Lewis produced his first version of the train blues "Honky Tonk Train Blues," a composition with which he is forever associated.

The nickname "Lux" appears to have been short for "Duke of Luxembourg" and originated from a comic strip called Gaston and Alphonse that Lewis was fond of imitating. As a teenager, Lewis went to hear King Oliver at the Lincoln Gardens and is said to have modeled his whistling style, later heard on "Whistling Blues," on Oliver's cornet playing.

From around 1924, Lewis and Ammons worked for the Silver Taxicab company by day and played at house parties at night. The taxicab company employed a number of aspiring pianists and it is said that the owner installed a piano in the drivers' rest room so that there would be an incentive for them to return to base promptly. At the house parties Lewis encountered Jimmy Yancey, an older pianist who was to exert a lifelong influence on him. Around this time Lewis first heard "The Fives," a Hersal Thomas composition that was one of the earliest boogie-woogie pieces. According to a 1959 *Downbeat* interview: "This man played 'The Fives.' It was something new and it got Ammons and me all excited. (Sure wish I could remember his name.)"

Although younger, Ammons was the more confident of the two and was able to arrange jobs for both of them. He found Lewis work with a Chicago band but this did not last due to Lewis's inability to master more than two keys (C and G). However in 1926, through another of Ammons's contacts, Lewis landed a job in Detroit playing for house parties.

In 1927 Lewis and Ammons moved to South Bend, where Ammons was employed in the Paradise Inn and Lewis got a job as a pianist/brothel keeper. Both returned to Chicago the same year and took up residence in an apartment block at 4435 Prairie Avenue on South Parkway. Here they would be joined in the summer of 1928 by Clarence "Pine Top" Smith and his family. However, even before Smith cut his classic "Pine Top Boogie Woogie,"

Lewis had met a girl called Amelia who worked for a publishing company connected with Paramount Records. She arranged for Paramount to record "Honky Tonk Train Blues," a boogie-woogie composition in all but name. The session took place in a studio on Wabash Avenue in December 1927.

The Paramount recording was not released until 1929 and, perhaps due to the Depression, did not sell well. Lewis had a few more recording sessions, accompanying vocalist George Hannah, whose songs dealt with homosexual themes, and some hokum sides with Bob Robinson. He then endured a frustrating period of inactivity during which he spent some time on relief, working on a WPA shovel gang and also washing cars. He continued to play intermittently at rent parties, but was unable to obtain a permanent job until he moved to Indiana Harbour to play at the South Chicago club in the early 1930s. Here a patron told him of a job with free board and wage available in Muskegon Heights and together they rode freight trains to get there. For a time Lewis played in a local dance hall, eventually landing a better job entertaining at a brothel in Muskegon.

He made his way back to Chicago in 1934 and renewed his acquaintanceship with Ammons, who obtained work for him as a driver for a dress salesman. In 1935 he joined a trio that played at a club run by Doc Huggins on Champlain. This group was probably "Lux and His Chips," and had a line-up of piano, trumpet, and drums. In the same year, his luck finally changed. Columbia record executive John Hammond had been looking for Lewis since acquiring a copy of the Paramount recording in 1931, but it was not until a chance conversation with Ammons that he was directed to a local car wash where Lewis was working. Hammond arranged for him to rerecord "Honky Tonk Train Blues" for English Parlophone since Columbia would not take the commercial risk. Other sides, including "Yancey Special," followed in 1936 for Decca. The latter composition was a tune that Yancey had been playing since around 1915 and had Yancey's distinctive four-to-the-bar boogie bass. Another version of "Honky Tonk Train Blues" was also recorded for Victor in 1936. Around this time Lewis made a trip to New York seeking greater recognition, but despite the critical acclaim for his records, he failed to attract much of an audience. Lewis returned to Chicago and effectively retired from music.

In 1938, "Yancey Special" was a hit for the Bob Crosby Orchestra, and publishers Shapiro-Bernstein hurriedly advertised for Lewis to get in touch to sign a contract. Favorable articles about boogie-woogie now began to appear in the press and Lewis became musically active again. The turning point came when

Lewis and Ammons participated in the legendary "From Spirituals to Swing" concerts organized by Hammond at Carnegie Hall and became two of the leading exponents of the burgeoning boogie-woogie craze. These concerts in 1938–1939 featured a host of jazz and blues stars, but the highlight of the night was a spot by Lewis, Ammons, and Kansas City pianist Pete Johnson with vocalist Joe Turner. Lewis, Ammons, and Johnson were subsequently employed as the Boogie Woogie Trio in Café Society Downtown in New York, together with Turner, and achieved great success. Shortly after the first "From Spirituals to Swing" concert, the Trio were interviewed and recorded by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress and their first commercial recording, "Boogie Woogie Prayer Parts 1 & 2," was released on Columbia.

The reputation of the Boogie Woogie Trio was spread by regular live broadcasts from Café Society on NWB radio, and later from the Sherman Hotel in Chicago. At the height of their popularity, the members of the Boogie Woogie Trio often shared the bill with top-flight jazz musicians and also made guest appearances on the Camel Caravan Radio Show with Benny Goodman. During his time with the Trio, Lewis made some classic recordings for Solo Art and Blue Note, of which "Bass on Top," "Six Wheel Chaser," and "Tell Your Story" are perhaps the best known.

Lewis left the Trio in 1941 and moved to the West Coast for a long engagement at the Swanee Inn. He subsequently made his home in Los Angeles, from whence he continued to tour and perform as a solo artist. After a campaign by *Downbeat* magazine he was accepted for membership in ASCAP in 1942, an unusual feat for a black artist. In 1945 he moved his base to Randini's Club, on Hollywood Boulevard, and also made a notable series of recordings for the Asch label.

As the years passed, the public appetite for boogie-woogie waned and Lewis devoted an increasing amount of his program to jazz and pop standards. He was always an innovator, however, as his occasional whistling and forays on the celeste and harpsichord prove. He made some short films in 1944 and appeared with Louis Armstrong in the 1947 film *New Orleans*. He also appeared frequently on television during its early days. In 1952, together with Pete Johnson, Erroll Garner, and Art Tatum, he toured the United States in a series of concerts entitled "Piano Parade." By the late 1950s, however, good-paying jobs had become scarce and he was known to drive thousands of miles between engagements. He was ultimately killed in a car crash in Minneapolis in 1964.

Lewis advanced two explanations for the title of his most famous composition. According to one version, he was playing the piece at a house party when a guest asked him what it was called. “That’s a train blues,” answered Lewis. “Well,” replied the guest, “We’re all here together. You oughta call it the Honky Tonk Train Blues.” In the other, the title was suggested by the recording engineer at the session. To Lewis’s suggestion of “Freight Train” he replied, “Oh no, that sounds like honky tonk music. We’ll call it Honky Tonk Train.”

The eight-to-the-bar chorded bass and familiar melodic riffs of “Honky Tonk Train Blues” make it the most famous of boogie-woogie themes. The bass, revolving around the second inversion of the major triad, is one of a number of unique bass patterns created by Lewis. He was also the composer of some of the most memorable boogie-woogie themes, including “Yancey Special” and “Bearcat Crawl,” with their Yancey-inspired single-note boogie basses. A short, stocky man, with relatively small hands and podgy fingers, much of Lewis’s work shows a distinct chromaticism, resulting in part from his use of “crushed notes”—two adjacent notes played by thumb or fingers simultaneously. This is particularly noticeable at the faster tempos, for example, in the relentless, compelling 1954 version of “Hangover Boogie.”

BOB HALL

Bibliography

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 Silvester, Peter J., and Denis Harbinson. *A Left Hand Like God: A Study of Boogie Woogie*. London: Quartet, 1988.

Discography: DGR; Lord; LSFP

LEWIS, NOAH

b. 3 September 1895; near Henning, TN
 d. 7 February 1961; Ripley, TN

Noah Lewis was an influential blues harmonica player and an important figure in the Memphis jug band scene (see the *Jug* entry). His first recordings were made with Cannon’s Jug Stompers (see *Cannon*, *Gus* entry) in 1928 for Victor, and he recorded with that group on all of their sides from 1928 to 1930. In 1929 and 1930, Lewis also cut a few solo recordings as well as recordings with his own jug band, which included Sleepy John Estes and Yank Rachell. He later moved from Memphis to Ripley, Tennessee, and spent the remainder of his life there.

ANDREW LEACH

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

LEWIS, PETE “GUITAR”

Guitarist and harmonica player active in Los Angeles, associated especially with Johnny Otis through 1957. He performed on recording sessions with Otis, Little Esther Phillips, and on Big Mama Thornton’s 1952 Peacock recording of “Hound Dog.” He is believed to have died in Los Angeles in 1970–1972. He is not to be confused with the rock guitarist Pete “Guitar” Lewis of Moby Grape.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

LEWIS, SMILEY

b. Overton Amos Lemons; 5 July 1913; DeQuincy, LA
 d. 7 October 1966; New Orleans, LA

Singer, guitarist, composer. Smiley Lewis combined his big, soulful voice and lusty delivery with his sly, idiomatic compositions and the production genius of Dave Bartholomew to create an unparalleled body of work that epitomizes the golden age of New Orleans rhythm and blues in the 1950s. A master of jump-blues, the blues ballad, the Latin-tinged New Orleans blues shuffle, and virtually every aspect of the Crescent City R&B tradition, Lewis was a stablemate of Fats Domino at Imperial Records but never managed to match the Fat Man’s success with mass audiences and suffered sales of less than 100,000 copies for each of his excellent Imperial singles.

Three of Smiley’s most promising releases—“I Hear You Knocking,” “Blue Monday,” and “One Night (of Sin)” —instead provided hits for television star Gale Storm, Fats Domino himself, and Elvis Presley, whose bowdlerized version of “One Night (With You)” was a pop success. But Lewis’s artistic achievement remains of the highest order, and the four-CD collection of his complete works, *Shame*,

Shame, Shame, grasps the listener's attention from beginning to end.

Backed by Bartholomew's crack studio band, Lewis particularly excelled in a series of raucous, hard-driving shout-blues classics including "Dirty People," "Ain't Gonna Do It," "Bumpity Bump," "Down the Road," "Real Gone Lover," "She's Got Me Hook, Line and Sinker," and "Rootin' and Tootin'." Heartfelt blues ballads—"Lost Weekend," "Please Listen to Me," "One Night," "Someday"—were another Lewis forte, and his hard-hitting reworkings of folkloric material like "Tee-Nah-Nah" and "Down Yonder" are equally wonderful recordings. He worked with Dave Bartholomew, Tuts Washington, Lee Allen, Herb Hardesty, and Huey "Piano" Smith.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Complete recordings on *Shame, Shame, Shame* (1993, Bear Family).

LIBRARIES

This article surveys significant blues collections worldwide. The majority of these entries are institutional, and for reasons respective of privacy, only a few private collections are cited. The article also includes a few institutions whose collection strengths are in popular culture and ephemera. Because much of the nature of archival material in the field of blues music tends toward the ephemeral and is often intertwined in the local culture, I have included those collections here as well. Just as blues is an important building block of jazz music, blues collections are often part of the foundation of substantial jazz holdings. A number of these collection listings came from my own work with a similar article for the *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* (2nd edition, Macmillan, 2002), and I am grateful to Barry Kernfeld for permission to cite some of those here.

The listing is arranged alphabetically by country, and within each country by city. There are many other smaller or more localized collections throughout the United States that are not listed here but can be found at various Internet sites such as the following devoted to documenting the cultural history of the state of Mississippi: <http://www.arts.state.ms.us/heritage/AppendixA.htm>.

Canada

Etobicoke

Eugene Miller Collection
90 Prince George Drive
Etobicoke, Ontario M9B 2X8, Canada

Miller (b. 1928), a retired education consultant, is a collector of recorded and printed jazz and blues, New Orleans style, Chicago South Side, recorded ragtime, and obscure early white groups and performers.

York

Sound and Moving Image Library
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3, Canada

York houses the largest and most comprehensive collection of jazz, blues, and related sound recordings of any publicly accessible collection in Canada. The collection is fully cataloged and searchable through the web at <http://www.yorku.ca/blick/>. See also the Scott Library Website: <http://www.library.yorku.ca>.

Germany

Bremen

Archiv für Populäre Musik
Ostertorsteinweg 3
D-2800 Bremen 1, Germany

The archive holds forty thousand recordings of jazz, blues, and popular music (mostly LPs) and four thousand books, periodicals, and catalogs of record companies and newspaper clippings. The archive publishes the quarterly journal *Anschlaege: Zeitschrift des Archivs für Populäre Musik*.

Norway

Notodden

Europas Blues Bibliotek (Europe's Blues Library)
Storgt. 25-3670 Notodden, Norway
Phone: +47 35 01 32 00
Fax: +47 35 01 23 40
E-mail: ragnhild@NotBib.bib.syst.no.

The Europas Blues Senter [sic] Library and Museum was opened in August 1997, as a first step to becoming an important information and documentation center for blues in Europe. The Europas Blues Bibliotek has a significant collection of records, videos, and CDs. The center owns a "Lucille" guitar signed by B. B. King.

Switzerland

Wädenswil

Music of Man Archive
Holzmoosrütistrasse 11
CH-8820 Wädenswil, Switzerland

The archive holds materials on all styles of African American music, including jazz, blues, spirituals, gospel songs, and soul music. Some 1,150 LP recordings of music, thirty LP recordings of spoken material (lectures, interviews, etc.), and two hundred books are relevant to the study of jazz and blues.

United Kingdom

Cheltenham

The European Blues Association/Archive of African American Music
P.O. Box 347
Cheltenham GL52 2YA, United Kingdom
Phone: (+44) 01242 701 765
E-mail: info@euroblues.org
Website: <http://www.euroblues.org>

The European Blues Association, which incorporates the Archive of African American Music, hosts the annual Blues Week workshop at Exeter University. Providing a venue for research and study as well as live music performances. The association also performs educational outreach. According to their website they "have the pledge of the Paul Oliver Collection of African American Music and Culture" obtained from Paul Oliver.

United States

Bloomington

Archives of African American Music and Culture
Indiana University

2805 E. 10th Street
Smith Research Center, Suite 181
Bloomington, IN 47408
Phone: (812)855-8545
Fax: (812)855-8547
E-mail: afamarch@indiana.edu
Website: <http://www.indiana.edu/~aaamc>.

The archive contains a collection of general reference books on blues as well as a general collection of blues CDs, including compilations, box sets, and individual artists' recordings as well as a small collection of LPs, cassettes, and videos. Special collections materials cover blues music as well as other genres of African American music. These holdings include photographs, interviews, transcripts, and posters. The archive has oral history materials such as the William Barlow Collection of interviews and performances of blues musicians, and the Susan Oehler Collection of recorded interviews and material relating to her dissertation, "Aesthetics and Meaning in Professional Blues Performances: An Ethnographic Examination of an African American Music in Intercultural Context."

Bowling Green

Music Library and Sound Recordings Archives
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43402-0179

The collection was founded in 1967 in a then-new library building and has become an important worldwide resource for the study of popular recordings. It contains more than 650,000 recordings, with extensive holdings in blues, R&B, and jazz. Recording formats include LPs, 45s, 78s, CDs, cylinders, and cassette, open-reel, and eight-track tapes. There are also more than fifteen thousand items of sheet music, more than one thousand song folios, and an extensive reference book collection (especially discographies), as well as journals, dealers' catalogs, auction lists, pictorial materials, and printed ephemera.

Chicago

Chicago Public Library
Music Information Center
400 South State Street
Chicago, IL 60605

The Chicago Blues Archive (with more than six thousand items) contains documents, photographs, videos, oral histories, realia, and recordings.

LIBRARIES

Center for Black Music Research
Columbia College Library
600 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605

The Center for Black Music Research Library and Archives was founded in 1990 to support the work of the Center for Black Music Research, which is dedicated to the research, performance, and promotion of the music of people of African descent anywhere in the world.

The center's recorded sound holdings comprise more than 4,500 LPs, 200 45s, 300 78s, and 500 CDs. Sheet music comprises seventy-five jazz, sixty-five ragtime, and fifty-four blues titles. Additional blues-specific holdings include taped BBC programs on the blues, an oral history interview with Jack Owens, and an ongoing collection of videos and tapes containing interviews and live performances by the oldest surviving generation of blues musicians. The center's Seab Cary Collection consists of 78- and 45-rpm rhythm and blues, jazz, and important blues recordings.

Manuscript or printed scores of jazz and blues inflected classical compositions by composers such as David Baker, Arthur Cunningham, Andrew White, William Grant Still, Olly Wilson, and many others are also collected by the center. Additional archival materials include scrapbooks, clippings, correspondence, posters, and so forth.

The 2,600-volume Black Music Research Collection includes books and dissertations, of which about 1,100 are devoted to jazz, blues, or ragtime. In addition, the CBMR Library contains a number of blues-related periodicals and newsletters. The library also maintains an extensive vertical file of clippings, ephemera, and other research materials. The books, dissertations, scores, sheet music, recordings, and vertical file materials are all indexed in the CBMR database. Finding aids to archival collections are also available.

Chess Records/Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven
Foundation
2120 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL
Phone: (312)808-1286

This is an outreach organization for those seeking information on Chess Records, Willie Dixon, or the Blues Heaven Foundation.

Cincinnati

Art and Music Department
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

800 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone: (513)369-6955
Fax: (513)369-3123
E-mail: artmusichead@plch.lib.oh.us
Website: <http://www.cincinnati.library.org>

The Art and Music Department's sheet music collection contains more than fifty blues songs (arranged by title), and more than a thousand published books on blues, as well as a collection of approximately three hundred sound recordings (primarily CDs and audio-cassettes). The library also has clipping files on local Cincinnati musicians.

Clarksdale

The New Delta Blues Museum
1 Blues Alley
Clarksdale, MS 38614
Phone: (662)627-6820
Fax: (662)627-7263
Website: <http://www.deltabluesmuseum.org>

The museum's home is the former Yazoo and Mississippi River Valley Railroad Depot, and thus serves to inform the public of the cultural as well as musical heritage of the area. Exhibits from the museum's permanent collections feature photos, correspondence, musical instruments, and local artifacts. The museum houses a large collection of blues recordings, including CDs, LPs, and audiotapes, that are available for research, as well as a collection of blues research materials that includes videos, photographs, books, and international blues periodicals.

Cleveland

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum
One Key Plaza
Cleveland, OH 44114
Phone: (216)781-ROCK

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum's permanent collection includes items from early blues shouters as well as musical instruments, scores, and handwritten lyrics; recordings and equipment; stage clothes and stage props; and related memorabilia. Archival print material includes letters, correspondence, and ephemera.

Frederick

Joe Bussard's Vintage 78s
P.O. Box 3432

Frederick, MD 21705-3432
E-mail: joe@vintage78.com.

Longtime collector of blues 78-rpm recordings, Bussard (b. 1936) has been collecting since childhood. He began by acquiring private collections around his hometown of Frederick, Maryland, and into the surrounding rural areas of Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. His extensive collection of recordings includes country blues, old time country, gospel, and jazz 78s. In 1959, Bussard began making his collection known via his radio show called "Country Classics" on WELD in Fisher, West Virginia. Highlights of the Bussard Collection include Black Patti #8030, "Original Stack O' Lee Blues" by the Down Home Boys—Long Cleve Reed and "Little" Harvey Hull—the only known copy of the recording. He makes his collection available by selling custom-made tape recordings of material from his collections. These tapes are available via his website (<http://www.vintage78.com>).

Grand Rapids

Arnold's Archives
c/o Arnold Jacobsen
1106 Eastwood Avenue Southeast
Grand Rapids, MI 49506-3580

Arnold Jacobsen's private collection contains more than two hundred thousand recordings on disc and tape of popular songs; they are classified by subject, and catalogs of different groups of recordings (jazz, blues, dance-band music, etc.) are available.

Greenwood

Greenwood Blues Heritage Museum and Gallery
214 Howard Street
Greenwood, MS 38930

The museum holds a significant collection of audio and video materials and memorabilia documenting the life of Robert Johnson.

Helena

Delta Cultural Center
141 Cherry Street
Helena, AK 72342
Phone: (870)338-4350

The cultural center's permanent exhibits include "What Is the Blues," listening stations featuring

music of the delta, a video featuring the King Biscuit Blues Festival, and a new home for King Biscuit Time radio show.

Kansas City

BluEsoterica Archives
Jim O'Neal
3516 Holmes Street
Kansas City MO 64109
Phone: (816)931-0383
E-mail: bluesoterica@aol.com

The BluEsoterica Archives consists of extensive subject research files, more than two thousand tapes of interviews and music, negatives from fifteen hundred rolls of film (about forty thousand images), plus thousands of records, a comprehensive library of books and magazines, a poster collection, and other memorabilia. The archive's collection of blues, R&B, jazz, world music, and rockabilly serves as a lending library for various DJs in the Kansas City area. The staff assists in blues outreach and consults on various projects related to the blues.

University of Missouri—Kansas City
Miller Nichols Library/Marr Sound Archive
5100 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64110

The Marr Sound Archive includes more than 178,000 recordings. While the collection includes popular, blues, rock 'n' roll, folk, country western, spoken word, operatic, and classical recordings, the strength of the collection is in jazz. The original collection of forty-two thousand recordings was donated by Olga and Gaylord Marr in 1987, and the primary jazz collection of eight thousand recordings came from the estate of George Salisbury in 1987.

Memphis

The Blues Foundation
49 Union Avenue
Memphis, TN 38103
Phone: (901)527-2583
Fax: (901)529-4030
E-mail: bluesinfo@blues.org

The foundation holds some business and financial records relating to institutional events and includes signed contracts for performances by blues artists.

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Most of the foundation's holdings, however, document the annual Handy Awards, which include programs and posters (1980–), photographs, backstage oral history (video) interviews (1997–), and footage of the annual Lifetime Achievement Awards event in Los Angeles. The foundation holds a small research collection as well as memorabilia including autographed guitars and photographs.

Center for Southern Folklore
119 S. Main Street
Pembroke Square at Peabody Place
Memphis, TN 38103
Phone: (901)525-3655
Fax: (901)544-9965

The collections of the Center for Southern Folklore contain field recordings, oral histories, and film and video interviews from the late 1930s through the 1950s. The collection also documents local blues festivals. The center's photograph collection (ca. 1900–) documents local blues musicians. One of the center's major collections is that of the Reverend L. O. Taylor, a Memphis minister who documented the area's religious music. The center has a strong collection of local folk art depicting blues musicians.

Harry Godwin Collection
796 Reddoch Street
Memphis, TN 38117

This private collection includes two hundred 78-rpm records, twelve hundred other records of jazz and blues, and fifty tape recordings (consisting of interviews and privately recorded performances) by many jazz and blues musicians including W. C. Handy. Among other materials are several hundred items of printed sheet music dating from around 1910 to around 1925 (including twenty by Jelly Roll Morton, twenty by Handy, and some by Clarence Williams) and correspondence, scrapbooks, and memorabilia pertaining to Armstrong, Handy, and other jazz and blues musicians.

Minot

Fred Wolhowe Collection
Highway 52 East
Minot, ND 58701

This private collection contains twenty-five thousand 78-rpm recordings of New Orleans jazz, ragtime, and blues, as well as music of other genres. A large

number of musical items include some sheet music and dance-band arrangements of some interest to scholars of jazz. There are also about twenty catalogs of record companies from around 1915 to 1940. The collection is eventually to be donated to Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

Murfreesboro

Center for Popular Music
Box 41
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Phone: (615)898-2449
Fax: (615)898-5829
E-mail: ctrpopmu@mtsu.edu
Main website: <http://popmusic.mtsu.edu>
Databases: <http://popmusic.mtsu.edu/webmenu.htm>

Overall, within a large popular music research collection, materials on the blues figure strongly, and are a collecting priority. The Center for Popular Music also has a great deal of material on related music such as jazz and African American gospel music—particularly the latter.

The center maintains a noncirculating library of approximately nine thousand books on all genres of popular music in its reading room. Since the blues is a genre of primary interest for the center, it has most published books on the subject. Holdings are searchable through the MTSU Public Access Catalog (<http://voyager.mtsu.edu/>). Searches can be limited to only the center's holdings. Within a collection of approximately sixty-four thousand pieces of sheet music, 621 items contain the word "blues" in the title. The entire sheet music collection is searchable (by title, composer, publisher, date, etc.) via the center's website.

The center also subscribes to most blues periodicals, maintaining two separate collections: "General Periodicals" includes primarily those currently received, and for which it has substantial runs, and "Secondary Serials," which includes titles for which the center has only scattered copies. Databases for both of these collections are available for searching on the center's website. Currently there are nineteen titles within the General Periodicals collection and an additional thirty in Secondary Serials that are classed as "blues" by subject term.

The center has approximately 138,000 sound recordings, including 78 rpms (33,000 items), 45 rpms (28,000), 33 rpms (68,000), compact discs (6,000), and audiotapes (3,000). Recordings of blues

and related music comprise perhaps twenty-five to thirty percent of the total holdings. This includes reissues on LP and compact disc as well as original recordings in the various formats.

The center holds microfilm copies (originals held by the Library of Congress) of Columbia and Victor label catalogs from the companies' earliest days into the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, the center maintains a separate collection of trade catalogs (including recordings, instruments, and sheet music) for which a searchable database is available via the center's website.

The center has nine archival collections containing blues material (photographs, oral histories, sound recordings, and other items), and these collections are searchable via the center's website. Perhaps the most significant blues-related archival collection is the Gayle Dean Wardlow collection of audiotape field-recorded interviews. Gayle Dean Wardlow is an expert on early blues music and a record collector. He has published articles on the blues and coauthored *King of the Delta Blues: The Life and Music of Charlie Patton* with Stephen Calt. Wardlow loaned the original interview tapes to the center for copying. The interviews were recorded in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, and North Carolina between 1967 and 1969. Subjects include both blues musicians and early record company talent scouts. See <http://popmusic.mtsu.edu/archives/inventory/wardlow.htm> for a more complete description of the collection.

The center maintains clipping files on many subjects and individuals. There are fifteen "blues" files in the subject field and many more on individual artists. A searchable database for the clipping files is available to researchers only on-site in the center's Reading Room. The Center for Popular Music also maintains a separate collection of "Performance Documents" that includes posters, playbills, and programs. A database catalog of this collection is searchable via the center's website. It includes more than one hundred items with "blues" as a descriptor.

Nashville

Fisk University Library
17th Avenue and Jackson Street
Nashville, TN 37203

The Special Collections department of the library contains the following blues-related collections: the Langston Hughes Jazz and Blues Collection, bequeathed by Hughes and acquired in 1967; the

Howard Angel Record Collection, donated by Angel and acquired in 1975; the W. C. Handy Collection, donated by Charles E. Handy in 1979; and the J. C. Johnson Collection, donated by Julie Johnson Ross in 1981. The library's collections include more than four hundred recordings, twenty-eight hundred items of sheet music (jazz, blues, and ragtime), more than fifty photographs, miscellaneous correspondence, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, posters, publishers' contracts, awards, concert programs, and memorabilia. The Black Oral History Collection contains ten interviews with composers and musicians, and the Special Negro Collection of the library contains printed materials concerning black musicians.

New Orleans

Scott Saltzman, Photographer
134 South Pierce Street
New Orleans, LA 70119
Phone: (504)486-7222
E-mail: scott@barefootphotography.com
Website: <http://www.barefootphotography.com>

Scott Saltzman's photographic catalog contains more than ten thousand prints, nearly half of which are devoted to blues. His collection also contains a substantial jazz component that captures the local musical and social environment of New Orleans. His work also documents festivals and performances around the world. Saltzman makes his images available for sale on <http://www.barefootphotography.com>.

Tulane University
The Howard-Tilton Memorial Library Special
Collections Division
304 Joseph Merrick Jones Hall
6801 Freret Street
New Orleans, LA 70118-5682

The William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive's print holdings include 2,759 book titles and 575 serial titles. Recorded sound materials include phonodiscs, 45,604; phonocylinders, 142; audiotapes (Music), 4,102; audiotapes (oral history), 1,987; compact discs, 498. These recordings cover the areas of New Orleans jazz, big bands, pre-jazz popular song, some modern jazz, Martinique beguines, African field tapes, and commercial recordings, as well as New Orleans blues and rhythm and blues.

The oral history material (1,987 taped reels with transcripts and a cross-index) includes documentation on many New Orleans jazz pioneers, family members,

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and observers covering the period from 1865 to the present. Additional holdings of the archive comprise piano rolls (1,325) and sheet music/orchestrations (52,146 titles). Sheet music holdings include New Orleans imprints from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There are also popular, ragtime, and early jazz titles. The archive contains 10,398 photographs of New Orleans musicians, bands, and places, as well as 119 linear feet of vertical files and manuscripts. There are 383 videos on New Orleans music and related genres such as Cajun and zydeco, and 231 films, including the Michel Bastides Collection. There is an ample selection of films by Les Blank and Stevenson Palfi, Alan Lomax, and others, as well as newsreel footage from the 1920s and 1930s, Cox Communications/Jim Gabour Music City series (1980s), and New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park/National Park Service video interviews. Finally, there are scrapbooks of Nick LaRocca, Lil Hardin Armstrong, New Orleans Gospel (Elliot Beal), and the Boswell Sisters. The archive's reference materials include 2,759 books, including Victor, Columbia, Edison, Decca, and His Master's Voice catalogs and Soards and Polks City Directories.

Among the archive's extensive blues holdings are rare early blues 78s, such as Hambone Willie Newbern, "Roll and Tumble Blues" (OKeh 8679), oral history interviews with James Booker, Deacon John Moore, and Professor Longhair, among others, and a substantial amount of blues-related sheet music from the early twentieth century, including Anthony Maggio's "I Got the Blues," published by Cable Piano Company in New Orleans in 1908.

The Hogan Jazz Archive is open to the public and welcomes all researchers with an interest in New Orleans music.

New York

ARChive of Contemporary Music

54 White Street

New York, NY 10013

Phone: (212)226-6967

Fax: (212)226-6540

E-mail: arcmusic@inch.com

Website: <http://www.arcmusic.org>

The ARChive of Contemporary Music collects only commercially released sound recordings and attendant press kits and photos as issued by the recording companies. The ARChive's blues collection is titled the "Keith Richards Blues Collection." This collection is strictly limited to established blues styles. Musics with shared elements, such as nascent

jazz, rags, stride, and so on, are not included. The collection consists of approximately three hundred press kits, two hundred photos, and thirty videos. Blues sheet music holdings are minimal. Published books include forty general reference books on the blues, and eighteen titles dedicated to individual artists. Recorded sound holdings include sixty 78-rpm ten-inch discs, 2,160 33-rpm twelve-inch LPs, and 1900 five-inch CD recordings. All blues recordings are cataloged in great detail on an in-house electronic database. Collections of ephemera are minimal.

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Music Division

40 Lincoln Center Plaza

New York, NY 10023-7498

Phone: (212)870-1650

The music division has in its general holdings a comprehensive collection of books, scores, periodicals, and sheet music, as well as dissertations, published songbooks, song folios, and transcriptions relating to blues, rhythm and blues, and jazz. Of particular interest are early blues, spirituals, and slave song collections, as well as songsters. Manuscript collections that have blues content include more than four hundred arrangements used by Benny Goodman, as well as Sy Oliver's arrangements for Ellington, Lunceford Tommy Dorsey, and others. Lists for both of these manuscript collections can be found on the library's website (<http://www.nypl.org>). There is a collection of more than one hundred prepublication lead sheets of rhythm and blues titles from publishers whose offices occupied the Brill Building and other nearby offices in New York City during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The division's Iconography Collection includes photographs of most major blues performers and bands, particularly from the 1960s to the present. The division's clipping files also contain ephemeral material on many blues artists and groups, both local and international.

Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound

40 Lincoln Center Plaza

New York, NY 10023-7498

The nucleus of the sound archives is comprised of a considerable body of material donated in 1935 by Columbia Records that contains many jazz and blues recordings; twenty thousand of the archive's items (78- and 45-rpm recordings of jazz

and popular music dating from before 1967) were given to the library by radio station WNEW. The division's collection of recordings is supported by discographies and other printed materials documenting the history of sound recording in the United States and Europe. There is a collection of videotaped interviews (with performances) of contemporary blues artists entitled "The Bluestime Power Hour," produced and donated by Cinthea Coleman. The twenty-six videotapes include such artists as Country Pete McGill, Maria Muldaur, King Alex, Steve Gannon, Big John Amaro, Beverly Stovall, and Big Daddy's Blues Band. The sound archives contains a near complete collection of Folkways LPs, which would include a considerable amount of authentic and historical blues material. There are also substantial holdings of the Yazoo and Rounder labels, as well as OKeh 78-rpm recordings.

A small music video collection includes videos by such artists as Alberta Hunter, B. B. King, Sister Rosetta Tharp, Ruth Brown, Ida Cox, Lightnin' Hopkins, Howard "Louie Blueie" Armstrong, Muddy Waters, and others.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, NY 10037-1801

The Schomburg Center holds resources relating to all aspects of black American music. These holdings include a comprehensive collection of books, periodicals, sheet music, photographs, concert programs, posters, and printed ephemera, as well as an index to articles in black periodicals. Important blues-related archival holdings include a collection devoted to the career of W. C. Handy, as well as the papers of Alberta Hunter and Andy Razaf.

Newark

Institute of Jazz Studies
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
John Cotton Dana Library
Newark, NJ 07102

The Institute of Jazz Studies was formed as a research center by Marshall W. Stearns, a professor at Hunter College, New York, in 1952. The institute's resources constitute the most valuable collection of jazz and blues-related materials in the world. Its one hundred thousand music recordings include CDs, LPs, EPs, 78- and 45-rpm disks, V-disks, transcription disks made from radio broadcasts, audiotapes,

cylinders, and piano rolls; there are four hundred oral history tapes.

Holdings in the printed word include five thousand books, discographies, and catalogs of record companies (as well as original ledgers from some record companies). There is a large collection of periodicals (including the Harold Flakser collection) from the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and Australia (some on microfilm). There are several thousand files of newspaper clippings, concert programs, and promotional matter. Musical materials consist of more than seven thousand scores and band arrangements, including transcriptions of recorded performances, printed and manuscript arrangements, and a number of instrumental method books, and a large collection of sheet music. The collection also contains photographs, films, videotapes, various musical instruments.

Oxford

Blues Archive
John Davis Williams Library
University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677

The Blues Archive was established 1983–1984. Special collections include the Kenneth Goldstein collection of folk music and folklore (received in 1980). This collection comprises nine thousand books, five thousand LPs, and one thousand 78s. The Lillian McMurry/Trumpet Records collection (1985) contains the business papers as well as commercial and test pressings. The Ann Rayburn collection (1985) contains six hundred 78s. The B. B. King collection (donated by B. B. King in 1982) contains thirty-five hundred LPs and three thousand 78s. The *Living Blues* collection (donated by Jim O'Neal and Amy van Singel in 1983) contains more than three thousand LPs and three thousand 78s. The Sheldon Harris collection of commercial recordings, books, magazines, paper documents, and ephemera was received in 2004.

The archive contains more than thirty-three thousand commercial recordings (two thousand CDs, seven thousand 45s, sixteen thousand LPs, seventy-six hundred 78s, and four hundred cassettes): Mississippi blues (Delta, hill country, Gulf Coast), pre-World War I blues (all styles), post-World War II Chicago, Carolina blues (from all eras).

Notable labels include Trumpet (Jackson, Mississippi), Ora-Nelle (Chicago), and complete sets of Yazoo and Document reissues.

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Oral history material includes the Jas Obrecht collection (electric blues, seventy cassettes); Gayle Dean Wardlow collection (Mississippi acoustic blues, forty-five reels); Jim O'Neal and Amy van Singel collection (Chicago blues, one hundred cassettes). Sheet music holdings include a substantial number of tablature books and songbooks. Reference materials include seven hundred magazine runs, including *Blues Unlimited*, *Blues World*, *Living Blues*, *78 Quarterly*, and *Soul Bag*. In the area of photographic materials, the archive maintains a "Reference likeness file." Finally the blues archive contains approximately three hundred videotapes, club and festival posters (1970–onward), topical and biographical file of clippings, and the Mississippi Collection of correspondence conducted 1966–1975 regarding name and dates authorities for Mississippi blues musicians.

Providence

Rhode Island Black Heritage Society
45 Hamilton Street
Providence, RI 02907

The society holds seven hundred 78-rpm records of jazz and blues from the 1920s.

Seattle

Experience Music Project
2901 Third Avenue, #400
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (206)EMP-LIVE (206-367-5483)

The Experience Music Project music museum was founded by Paul G. Allen and Jody Patton. The museum's holdings grew out of Allen's private collection of material and memorabilia devoted to Jimi Hendrix. The current EMP collection includes more than eighty thousand artifacts. The varied collections of this music museum contain a substantial amount of blues material including LP recordings (many of which were formerly owned by guitarist Jimi Hendrix). The collection also contains 78-rpm recordings and CDs, periodicals, clipping files, and other ephemera. There are audio and video oral histories and transcripts of interviews with John Mayall, Buddy Guy, John Lee Hooker, and Hubert Sumlin; also photographs, posters, song folios, and ephemera. Finally, there are electric guitars once owned by Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker, and a collection

of handwritten letters, song lyrics, and music. The Experience Music Project has a substantial presence on the web at <http://www.emplive.com/>.

Southfield

Michael Montgomery Collection
17601 Cornell Road
Southfield, MI 48075

This private archive consists largely of piano rolls and related material. It comprises fourteen thousand piano rolls of jazz, blues, ragtime, and popular music by such musicians as Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Jimmy Blythe, Luckey Roberts, Eubie Blake, and J. Russel Robinson, catalogs and promotional material issued by piano roll companies, and several photographs of pianists and composers. The Montgomery Collection of sheet music is now held at the music library of the University of Michigan.

St. Louis

Western Historical Collection and State Historical Society Manuscripts
University of Missouri/Jefferson Library
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, MO 63121

The collection is part of the university's Joint Collection, held at its four campuses in Columbia, Rolla, Kansas City, and St. Louis. Of interest to scholars of blues are the oral history materials and musical recordings (mostly on reel-to-reel tape) accumulated in the course of the Jazzmen Project, which was devised and largely conducted by the director of the Joint Collection, Irene Cortinovis, during the 1970s. The oral history part of the project is devoted to the reminiscences of jazz and blues musicians connected with St. Louis, and transcripts of the interviews have been made.

Washington, DC

Library of Congress Music Division
Washington, DC 20540

The Library of Congress Music Division's comprehensive collection of blues-related material consists of published books, music, and periodicals.

Copyright deposits offer the only paper trail of such early jazz and blues composers as “Jelly Roll” Morton, Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, and Blind Lemon Jefferson.

American Folklife Center
101 Independence Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20540-4610
Phone: (202)707-1739
Fax: (202)707-2076

The American Folklife Center houses extensive collections on blues and blues-related paper-based and recorded material. The center’s holdings of recorded sound extend from recordings made by Robert W. Gordon in the 1920s to recent acquisitions of blues performed at various folk festivals. There are no available finding aids that survey these blues holdings. But the following bibliography contains sources that outline some of the collections at the Library of Congress in this area.

GEORGE BOZIWICK

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- Cowley, John. “Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song Recordings.” In *Blues & Gospel Records 1890–1943*, edited by Robert W. Dixon, John Godrich, and Howard Rye, 4th ed., pp. xl-xliii. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997 [and also the citations in this discography to LC].
- . “Don’t Leave Me Here: Non-Commercial Blues: The Field Trips, 1924–60.” In *Nothing But the Blues: The Music and the Musicians*, edited by Lawrence Cohn et al., pp. 265–311. New York: Abbeville Press, 1993.

LIGGINS, JIMMY

- b. 14 October 1922; Newby, OK
d. 18 July 1983; Durham, NC

Younger brother of Joe Liggins, Jimmy was a fine vocalist and raw and exciting guitarist who wrote all of his own material. A stint as his brother’s driver inspired him to emulate Joe’s success and he began writing songs and assembled a band, the Drops of Joy, which included tenor saxophonists Harold Land and Charles Ferguson and pianist Eugene Watson. In 1947 he persuaded Specialty Records to record him and he did regular sessions with them until 1953 (though he took a year out in 1949 as a result of being shot accidentally in the face). He had to recruit a new band after that; indeed he seems to have had great difficulty in holding a regular band.

He recorded a mixture of slow blues, jumping up-tempo numbers, and driving instrumentals and had chart success with “Tear Drop Blues,” “Careful Love,” “Don’t Put Me Down” and “Drunk.” In 1954 he moved to Aladdin Records for whom he made just one session. After that, although he continued in the music business as promoter, record distributor, and nightclub owner, as well as continuing to lead a band on and off, he made very few records. The few that he did make were for his own label Duplex, which he operated intermittently from various towns (Fayetteville, Tennessee; San Diego, California; Los Angeles, California; and Orlando, Florida, among others) from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s with a roster that included Ervin Rucker, Bobby Williams, and Delores Ealy, as well as various gospel artists.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

- AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin
McGarvey, Seamus. “Saturday Night Boogie Woogie Man—The Jimmy Liggins Story.” *Blues & Rhythm* no. 99 (May 1995): 4–9.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Aladdin/Score; Liggins, Joe; Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box**

LIGGINS, JOE

- b. 9 July 1915; Guthrie, OK
d. 31 July 1987; Lynwood, CA

With his band, the Honeydrippers, Liggins had a string of top ten rhythm and blues hits during the decade after World War II. His style was smooth and sophisticated, dominated by Liggins’s piano and relaxed tempos. Moving to San Diego in 1932, he studied music theory and wrote arrangements for bands, joining the Creole Serenaders in 1935. In 1939, he moved to Los Angeles, working for Illinois Jacquet, Cee Pee Johnson, and Sammy Franklin. When Franklin wouldn’t record Liggins’s song “The Honeydripper,” he broke with the band and formed his own combo in 1944. Signing with the Excelsior/Exclusive label, “The Honeydripper” sold two million copies and topped the rhythm and blues charts in

LIGGINS, JOE

1945. By 1949, Liggins charted nine other hits and became a prominent feature of the Central Avenue music scene in Los Angeles. When Excelsior/Exclusive folded, he moved to Specialty Records where his brother Jimmy Liggins was enjoying success. The group continued their good fortune through the early 1950s, with hits such as "Pink Champagne." Other band members included sax players Willie Jackson and James Jackson, and drummer Peppy Prince.

By the middle of the decade, Liggins's style appeared dated, and he was dropped by Specialty, disbanding the group. He moved to Mercury, then to Aladdin Records, and later recorded on his own label, Honeydrinker Records. He remained active in Los Angeles playing clubs into the 1980s. His songs have been recorded by Dr. John, Roosevelt Sykes, Jack McDuff, Big Joe Turner, Charles Brown, and many others.

JEFF WANSER

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin; Santelli
Dawson, Jim, and Propes, Steve. *What Was the First Rock 'n' Roll Record?* Boston: Faber and Faber, 1992.

Discography: AMG

See also **Excelsior/Exclusive; Liggins, Jimmy; Piano; Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box**

LIGGIONS, DAVE

b. 1913; Temple, TX
d. 22 February 1985; Dallas, TX

Singer, banjoist, and drummer who was active in Dallas jazz and blues from the 1920s into the mid-1980s. He also participated in the black Local 168 in the American Federation of Musicians union, later integrated into Local 137 in the 1960s.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Schuller, Tim. "Dave Liggions" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 66 (1985): 45.

LIGHTFOOT, ALEXANDER "PAPA GEORGE"

b. 2 March 1924; Natchez, MS
d. 28 November 1971; Natchez, MS

Born Alexander Lightfoot in Natchez, Mississippi, the highly inventive harmonica player taught himself the instrument as a child growing up in the Mississippi River town. Lightfoot earned a living early on shining shoes on the river docks but soon graduated to the more lucrative work of playing music for tips. His first opportunity to record came in 1949 in Houston for the Peacock label, but the two resulting sides were not issued. The following year he recorded as "Papa George" in Natchez for the tiny Sultan label, and in 1952 he recorded for the Aladdin imprint in New Orleans, which resulted in the rocking "Jumpin' with Jarvis." Lightfoot then worked with Champion Jack Dupree and toured and recorded with him through 1953. Lightfoot returned to New Orleans to record for Imperial in 1954 and produced the searing single "Wine, Women & Whiskey"/"Mean Ol' Train," which exemplified his rough-hewn vocal style and powerfully creative amplified harmonica work.

After an unissued date for Jiffy as "Little Papa Walter," he traveled to Atlanta for a rousing 1955 session for Savoy. It is theorized that two songs cut by "Ole Sonny Boy" for Excello in 1956 were actually by Papa Lightfoot, although no existing label documentation verifies it. He faded from the music scene in the late 1950s and was rediscovered and recorded by blues researcher Stephen LaVere in 1969. Lightfoot appeared at the 1970 Ann Arbor Blues Festival and was on the verge of an anticipated comeback when he died the following year of cardiac arrest at age forty-seven.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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LIGHTNIN' SLIM

b. Otis Hicks, 13 March 1913; St. Louis, MO
 d. 27 July 1974; Detroit, MI

Otis Hicks, known as Lightnin' Slim, grew up on a farm near St. Louis for thirteen years and then moved to St. Francisville, Louisiana, where he became the popular local musician at schools, picnics, churches, and country gatherings. In 1946, he moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and gained a following at gigs in local bars, playing with Big Poppa's Band. In the 1950s, he teamed with harmonica player Schoolboy Cleve, who accompanied Slim's naturally bluesy vocals over the Baton Rouge radio station. Slim befriended a local disk jockey, Ray "Diggy Do" Meaders, who got him an interview with J. D. Miller of the Feature label. Soon after, Slim's record "Badluck Blues" was cut in 1954. He recorded briefly with Ace Records and in 1955 began recording with the southern-based Excello label.

That same year he and harmonica player Lazy Lester founded a trio with any one of a variety of drummers. In 1959, his song "Rooster Blues" made the R&B charts, while he continued to record for Excello until 1966 when he moved to Detroit and joined Slim Harper's Band. In 1970, he again teamed up with Excello and began touring Europe, especially with American blues legends packages tours. He returned to the United States in 1973 and died shortly thereafter of cancer in 1974. Slim processed a natural, unaffected, unpolished, lazy blues that, along with his grainy voice, married him to the Louisiana blues style. Many of his guitar accompaniments used the same E-natural patterns over and over, with key changes between songs possible with a capo or by tuning down the guitar strings.

HEATHER PINSON

Bibliography

AMG; Harris; Herzhaft; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSPF**LINCOLN, CHARLIE**

b. Charlie Hicks, 11 March 1900; Lithonia, GA
 d. 28 September 1963; Cairo, GA

Singer and guitarist in prewar rural Georgia style. Brother of Barbecue Bob Hicks. He learned guitar from Savannah Weaver, mother of Curley Weaver. He made various records by himself and accompanying

his brother in 1927–1930. He continued performing into the 1950s, but a 1955 murder conviction and subsequent imprisonment effectively ended his musical career.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Ron Wynn); Larkin
 Bastin, Bruce. *Red River Blues*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Discography: AMG; DGR**LINKCHAIN, HIP**

b. Willie Richard, 10 November 1936;
 Jackson, MS
 d. 13 February 1989; Chicago, IL

Guitarist from Jackson, Mississippi, who spent the majority of his life in Chicago, after moving there in the early 1950s. Born Willie Richard, he was referred to as "Hipstick," after the nickname of his tall, logger father—"Long Linkchain." His father and brother both played guitar. As a youngster, Linkchain hitchhiked throughout the Delta to hear blues being performed by Elmore James, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Little Milton, and others. He acquired his first electric guitar when he moved to Chicago, and began playing local clubs with a number of musicians, such as Willie Foster and Lester Davenport. In 1959, he formed his own band, the Chicago Twisters, which included Tyrone Davis. As part of the Silver Dollar Lounge house band, Linkchain had the opportunity to perform with artists such as Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. In the 1960s, Hip cut several singles on the Sanns and Lola labels. In the 1970s he recorded for the MCM, JSP, Rumble, and Teardrop labels. He finally recorded his own album, *Change My Blues*, in 1981. His most well-known album, *Airbusters*, was recorded for the Black Magic label in 1984. It features solid playing and showcases ten original Linkchain compositions. Cancer claimed Linkchain's life in 1989.

GREG JOHNSON

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Discography: AMG

LIPSCOMB, MANCE

b. Bowdie Glenn Lipscomb, 9 April 1895;
Navasota, TX

d. 30 January 1976; Navasota, TX

Guitarist and singer. The rural musical storyteller, who did not travel outside Texas until he was in his sixties, was a throwback to nineteenth-century entertainment sensibilities. Lipscomb, who never viewed himself as a bluesman, was the last of the line of genuine Texas “songsters”; entertainers, often itinerant, who, much in the manner of West African griots, served as cultural depositories for the rural communities they frequented. Blues was part of the show but so was any and everything else, including waltzes, ballads, rags, folk tales, political songs, and spirituals.

Lipscomb’s fascinating autobiography *I Say Me for a Parable*, published posthumously in 1993, recounts his experiences as the son of an Alabama slave growing up in fertile farmland of the Brazos River. The award-winning book is told mostly in deep East Texas dialect transcribed from more than



Mance Lipscomb. (Photo by Tom Copi, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

a decade of oral history tapes made by Lipscomb disciple Glen Alyn.

Lipscomb, who dropped his given name early in his life in favor of Mance, a shortened version of Emancipation, the name of an old family friend who died, began playing music when he accompanied his fiddler father at country dances as a child. He learned the traditional tunes by playing them live and picked up guitar licks from observing casual front porch picking sessions. His brothers were guitarists and an uncle played banjo so music was a pervasive part of his upbringing. By the time he first met Lightnin’ Hopkins in 1938 in Galveston he was an experienced musician, highly proficient in finger-picking and slide styles.

Lipscomb, no stranger to hard work and a hard life, brought unquestionable authenticity to his songs. Beginning at age sixteen, he toiled as an East Texas sharecropper, supporting his family for the next four decades with work in the fields. He had moved on to become a truck driver briefly before settling into a job as the foreman of a highway-mowing crew in what were assumed to be his retirement years. To Lipscomb it was, as the title of Les Blanks’s documentary states, *A Well Spent Life* with which he had few regrets.

On the advice of Hopkins, who promised to help him find musical employment, Lipscomb had given big city life a brief shot in 1956, moving to Houston where he worked in a lumber mill by day and played the blues bars at night. Hopkins, however, jealously guarded his jobs and Lipscomb couldn’t establish himself on the scene. But his stay did have a positive result when he was able to return to Navasota and finally buy his own farm with a cash settlement from an on-the-job injury.

A few years later the blues scene came to him when folklorists Mack McCormick and Chris Strachwitz sought him out in Navasota in 1960, ultimately getting him into the recording studio and on to concert stages far beyond East Texas. Strachwitz would start his Arhoolie label with a Lipscomb recording and release another half dozen of his albums. Lipscomb would play for forty thousand fans at the 1961 Berkeley Folk Festival and enjoy a dozen years of belated recognition before bad health confined him to nursing homes and hospitals until his death.

MICHAEL POINT

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Lipscomb, Mance, and Glen Alyn. *I Say Me for a Parable*.
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Discography: AMG; LSFP

LISTON, VIRGINIA

b. 1890

d. June 1932; St. Louis, MO

Singer in black vaudeville from 1912 through 1929. She recorded mostly for OKeh in 1923–1926. A few sessions were with her first husband, pianist Sam Gray, but her more celebrated recordings were those with pianist Clarence Williams, cornetist Louis Armstrong, and soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet. Her 1932 death date is unconfirmed.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Uncle Dave Lewis); Harris

Discography: DGR; Lord**LITERATURE, BLUES IN**

In 1925 Alain Locke announced the arrival of a “New Negro” as if in response to W. E. B. DuBois’s plea two decades earlier in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) to educate the “talented tenth.” Men like these intellectuals, along with James W. Johnson, Countee Cullen, Arna Bontemps, and others, the vanguard of the Harlem Renaissance, frowned upon the blues. The New Negro had come out of the masses and this elite class accepted responsibility for defining the black aesthetic. The blues classics being recorded during the same era by women like Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Ida Cox were considered licentious, tawdry, and unrestrained by the Renaissance writers along with a majority of the new black middle class who decided such music was antithetical to the cause of racial uplift. Black art, it seemed, had to be political.

During this rebirth of African American culture, few authors were courageous enough to risk association with the blues, this music of the common folk. Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Sterling Brown were notable exceptions. Much of Hughes’s work is influenced by the rhythm and cantor of the blues. Not only did the blues influence Hurston’s writing, but Hurston also served as guide for Alan Lomax’s expedition to record rural blues. Sterling Brown’s emphasis on folk literature is likewise credited for bringing black academia shoulder to shoulder with unlettered blues people.

The Great Migration, the largest mass movement of any single group of people in the nation’s history, played a significant role in disseminating the blues. It began in earnest around 1917 and some scholars date

the conclusion of the migration well past World War II. Migrants left the rural South and moved northward and to a lesser degree westward in search of liberties that they were denied in the Jim Crow South. The migration was met first with open resistance from white, southern planters who depended on African Americans as a cheap labor force until the mechanization of agriculture gradually reduced their reliance on these workers. Northern laborers came offering free tickets for a train ride north to anyone agreeing to return with them to work. Northern factories paid higher wages than the field hands received in the South. African Americans beheld the gilded specter of the northern city (Harlem and Chicago in particular) painted by the *Chicago Defender*, DuBois’s *Crisis*, the literature produced by the Harlem Renaissance authors, and other publications targeted to a black audience and believed they would find opportunity there. They took buses or rode packed together in cars, but most often they took the train. More than anything else, the train symbolized for the migrants the sorrow of that which was left behind and the promise of that which was yet to come. Blues people recorded this sentiment in their songs. The migrants left the South but they brought their music with them.

Musicians were faithful to their craft, however, for a time, authors remained torn between the influence of lyrical blues expressions and the demand that literature be socially uplifting. Often as a result, the sentiment of the blues was buried in literature under the weight of anger. Migrants flooded into the northern city and found themselves crowded into ghettos and living under unsanitary conditions. Claude Brown captures the mood of the time just following the Great Migration in his autobiography, *Manchild in the Promised Land*:

It seems that Cousin Willie, in his lying haste, had neglected to tell the folks down home about one of the most important aspects of the promised land: it was a slum ghetto. ... There were too many people full of hate and bitterness crowded into a dirty, stinking, uncared-for closet-size section of a great city. ...

The children of these disillusioned colored pioneers inherited the total lot of their parents—the disappointments, the anger. To add to their misery, they had little hope of deliverance. For where does one run to when he’s already in the promised land? (p. viii)

Even Hughes asks, “What happens to a dream deferred?” Despite the fact that the blues was born of similar conditions that produced authors like Claude Brown, many writers refused to mask their frustration with the blues.

The blues seemed too passive an expression for authors like Richard Wright who chose, instead, to

write social realism. Wright's most acclaimed novel, *Native Son* (1940), tells the tragic story of Bigger Thomas, a young man driven to murder due to his hopeless circumstances. After he suffocates the young socialite, Mary Dalton, he briefly seeks refuge with his girlfriend, Bessie. Once Bigger confides in her about the murder, Bessie is distraught and expresses her misery through the sentiment of the blues:

God only knows why I ever let you treat me this way.
I wish to God I never seen you. I wish one of us had died
before we was born. (p. 215)

Even without the traditional A A B stanzas, we recognize Bessie as an agent of the blues. She translates the tragic circumstances of her life into a somebody-gone-and-done-me-wrong song typical of the blues. Bigger knows the truth of Bessie's words, but he views the fact that she responds to the situation with the blues as a vulnerability. The blues are no more valuable to Bigger than alcohol, dancing, or religion. After hearing Bessie's "song," Bigger knows that he will kill her too because she is not fit to bring with him on his flight from the police nor is she fit to leave behind.

Despite his claims to the contrary, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1947) bears the influence of Wright. There are, however, significant differences. Unlike Wright, Ellison does not dismiss the blues because it lacks an obvious social agenda. Ellison openly criticized Wright's lack of insight about black music, which was evidenced by the shameful fact that Wright could not dance. From Ellison's perspective, music is the thread that binds African American people together; without it, one is hopelessly disconnected from a vital artery that feeds the very heart of African American people. So while Bigger is without music and the wisdom it engenders, Ellison's invisible man finds his roots in the blues.

Louis Armstrong's recording of "Black and Blue" (1929) is playing in the background as the narrator explains his "invisibility" to the reader in the Prologue of *Invisible Man*. The song serves as the subtext that introduces us to both the protagonist and the circumstances leading up to this declaration. The Prologue ends with the narrator invoking the music as he introduces the novel proper, "But what did I do to be so blue? Bear with me" (p. 14). Albert Murray describes what follows as "the literary extension of the blues." Murray suggests that in *Invisible Man*, Ellison arranges an orchestral score from a common twelve-bar blues. Ellison aptly draws on the subtle politics of the blues that so many of the black intelligentsia overlooked.

At the time of its publication, Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) was excoriated by critics

including Alain Locke and Richard Wright who saw little value in a work that seemed too happy to be in step with the times. During the early part of the century, the legacy of slavery was still fresh and the black intelligentsia was preoccupied with how African Americans were represented. They were still battling to overcome the stereotypes of the African American as Sambo, Jezebel, Uncle Tom, and Mammy. Nothing in Hurston's novel about a black woman's quest for self-fulfillment seemed innovative. In his critique of *Their Eyes*, Wright accuses Hurston of performing minstrelsy.

Wright's slur against Hurston suggests that she is an entertainer, working to reinforce racial stereotypes. Wright and other male critics found it easy to claim that *Their Eyes* was apolitical because they chose to overlook the gender politics. Too often the efforts of the black intelligentsia to manage African American cultural productions turned into a policing of black women's bodies. Both the blues and Hurston's novel resist male dominance in order to gain control of black female sexuality. Vaudeville performers like Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Ida Cox were the first generation of black female artists who declared through their performances, "It's my thing and I'll shake it if I want to." They flaunted their sexuality shamelessly as part of their acts.

The *petit bourgeois* had so repressed female sexuality that African American women found few viable outlets for their latent desires. In *Quicksand* (1928) Nella Larsen depicts Helga Crane's slow descent into death in her marriage to an ignorant, southern preacher as the alternative to rebellion against middle-class values. The tragic mulatta, Helga succumbs to social norms rather than express her sexual longings. On the other hand, in *Their Eyes*, Hurston chooses to represent a journey that takes her protagonist to the horizon of her own physical and emotional desires. Ultimately, Jane Crawford becomes like a blues performer who is able to achieve a catharsis by sharing her experiences with a friend who, in turn, is able to identify with both Janie's joy and her loss. Even the structure of the novel that takes us through Janie's three marriages, mirrors the A A B structure of the blues.

Once the blues shifts from the musical form to literature it takes on countless permutations: from the literal, as we see in Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* (1975), the story of blues singer Ursa Corregidora who must find a way to "leave evidence" of her great grandmother and grandmother's tragic past even while she struggles to testify about her own lived experiences, and that way is the blues, which become her record; to the symbolic, as in Jones's

Eva's Man (1976), which draws on the structure and the sentiment of the blues to tell the story of Eva, who has been incarcerated for murdering her lover and, subsequently, castrating him with her teeth.

African American women writers emerging in the wake of the civil rights era continue the tradition established by writers like Hughes and Hurston. They claim the blues as a viable means of expression. Ntozake Shange announced "i live in music" (1978) in a poem by that title and declared that she "walk[s] round in a piano like somebody / else / be walkin on the earth." Nearly a decade later, Toni Morrison builds a house in *Beloved* (1987) on Blues/tone Road. That house of women, of course, is haunted by an angry ghost of the past. The story that unfolds from that address is a blues narrative. In *Beloved*, Morrison uses blues tones and composes Sethe's tale. The blues becomes a narrative form that is able to honestly represent a system that perverts humanity to the point that infanticide can seem a reasonable alternative to life.

During the 1990s, publishers began to tap into the neglected African American market that was hungry for books by and about black people. As the publishing industry began to cater to this audience, the blues emerged as a common theme in popular fiction. Authors were publishing novels like Bebe Moore Campbell's *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine* (1992), Arthur Flowers's *Another Good Loving Blues* (1993), and Walter Mosley's *RL's Dream* (1995), about an aging bluesman's encounter with the legendary Robert Johnson. However, as Campbell suggests in *Your Blues*, the blues is ground out of personal tragedies and the peculiarly black origins of the blues are transcended by the truth they speak about the human condition. Rising interest in literature with blues themes reflected by publishing trends in the 1990s mirrored the rise of popular interest in the blues more generally. Just as white musicians crossed over to become blues performers, white authors like Ace Atkins in his series of Nick Travers mysteries, *Crossroad Blues* (1998), *Leavin' Trunk Blues* (2000), and *Dark End of the Street* (2002), have begun claiming the blues as their own.

At Hampton University's 2002 President's Lecture, Walter Mosley declared, "All of existentialism is in the blues" and he named Robert Johnson as one of the world's greatest philosophers. As a philosopher, Johnson's devotion is first to the common people. Following Johnson's lead, scholars like Houston A. Baker, Jr., in his seminal text, *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (1984), demonstrate how the blues transcends the limitations of a musical form to function as an ideology that informs literary production and

interpretation. Baker locates the blues at the southern, rural railway junction. However, the blues is larger than the junction. Baker, of course, does not intend to simplify the blues. Yet, even with its options, the railway junction is too flat to contain the blues as it appears in literature. Certainly Baker captures the potential and the motion but the junction limits the blues to a plane of two dimensions. Even as the blues resists stability and flat dichotomies, the blues in literature becomes a shelter with not only length, width, and depth, but also height.

VALERIE SWEENEY PRINCE

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LITTLE, BOBBY

b. Ronald Bluster

Drummer active since the late 1950s. Raised in the Bay area of California. Began playing drums after arriving in Chicago in the late 1950s after armed forces service. Received instruction from Fred Below and Odie Payne, and gained experience in West Side clubs. From 1961 through 1967 he toured with Earl Hooker. Became active in radio as a DJ in Mississippi in 1967. As of 1991 he was based in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

EDWARD KOMARA

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LITTLE BUSTER

b. Edward Forehand, 28 September 1942; Hereford, NC

Guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Edward “Little Buster” Forehand moved to Long Island, New York, to pursue an R&B career after losing his sight. Buster’s mid-1960s releases on Jubilee/Josie, including the hit “Young Boy Blues,” established him professionally. Buster worked locally until a 1995 CD release, *Right on Time*, revitalized his touring career.

JERRY ZOLTEN

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Discography: AMG

LITTLE CHARLIE

b. Charlie Baty, 10 July 1953; Birmingham, AL

Harmonica player-turned-guitarist Little Charlie (Charles Baty) teamed up with singer-harmonica player Rick Estrin in 1976 in forming the four-piece Little Charlie & the Nightcats. The multifaceted group, their sound a mix of Chicago blues, West Coast jump-blues, and early rock ‘n’ roll, worked for about a decade around Sacramento and San Francisco until a record deal with Alligator Records brought them to national and international notice. Little Charlie’s guitar playing points to jazz guitarist Charlie Christian and bebop horn players as well as to Freddie King and Albert King, these and a myriad of other influences are wrapped up into a strikingly original guitar sound.

FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

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AMG (Steve Huey)

Discography: AMG

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That's Big! (2003, Alligator 4883).

LITTLE MIKE

b. Michael Markowitz, 23 November 1955;
 Queens, NY

New York City–based harmonica player and keyboardist in postwar Chicago blues styles. With his backing group The Tornados, he has recorded for Blind Pig, Flying Fish, and Wild Dog labels. He has also been a producer for CDs by Hubert Sumlin and Pinetop Perkins.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

LITTLE MILTON

b. James Milton Campbell, 7 September 1934;
 near Inverness, MS

Born on Duncan Plantation in Sunflower County, Mississippi, to Milton Campbell and Pearl Tardin, Campbell later dropped the “James.” While an infant, Campbell moved to Magenta, between Stoneville and Greenville. Saving money from agricultural labor for over a year, Campbell ordered his first guitar (“a little Gene Autry–type guitar”) from Walter Fields when he was twelve years old. Campbell’s powerful singing owes much to his early experiences in church.

Campbell’s first professional engagements were playing locally with guitarist Eddie Cusic’s combo. Influenced by the Grand Ole Opry, they mixed country and western standards with their typical blues program when playing segregated white venues. In Greenville, in the early 1950s, Campbell apprenticed with a group of older musicians: pianist Willie Love, harmonica player Sonny Boy Williamson II, and especially guitarist Joe Willie Wilkins. Campbell also studied the recordings of T-Bone Walker. Backing Willie Love, Campbell made his recording debut for the Trumpet label in 1951. By this time, Campbell had his own band and was broadcasting over Greenville station WGVM.

Ike Turner introduced Campbell to Sun Records in Memphis where he recorded as leader (and sideman

with Houston Boines) in 1953–1954. Campbell cut a session for Meteor in Memphis in 1956. Willie Love’s stepson Oliver Sain accompanied Campbell on the Meteor session and continued to work with him after he moved from Greenville to East St. Louis in 1955 and began recording for Bobbin in 1958. At Bobbin, Campbell also worked in A&R and as a sideman recording behind Sain (including the Earthworms), Leo Peterson, and Fontella Bass.

Campbell began recording for the Chess subsidiary, Checker, in 1961. In early 1962, “So Mean to Me” reached the fourteenth spot on the national R&B chart. It was the first of seventeen Checker singles that charted for Campbell, including his top-ranked 1965 hit “We’re Gonna Make It.” In 1967, Campbell moved to Chicago. In 1970, he participated in a gospel session with the Harold Smith Majestic Singers.

From 1971 until its demise in 1975, Campbell recorded for Memphis’s Stax label, producing seven nationally charting hit records and appearing in the 1972 film/concert *Wattstax*. Between 1976 and 1983, Campbell recorded for Glades, MCA, Mier, Golden Ear, and Isabel and behind Jackie Ross and Big Voice Odum. Since 1984, Campbell has recorded exclusively for the Jackson, Mississippi, label Malaco, which has released fifteen albums by Campbell, including the critically acclaimed *Cheatin’ Habit*. Campbell also backed Artie White and Campbell’s nephew Charles Wilson on Ichiban. Campbell and wife Pat own Camil Productions, which books Campbell and other artists, and Trice Publishing.

Winner of numerous awards, Campbell is devoted to his core African American audience, the “chitlin circuit.” Often compared to contemporaries B. B. King and Bobby Bland, Campbell is a unique and versatile vocal and guitar stylist who prefers continued growth as an artist performing for his traditional and demanding audience rather than stagnating, endlessly playing his old hits for better-paying crossover appeal.

FRED J. HAY

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LITTLE MILTON

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LITTLE MISS CORNSHUCKS

b. Mildred Cummings Jorman, 26 May 1923;
Dayton, OH
d. 11 November 1999; Indianapolis, IN

A nightclub performer of the postwar “after-hours” blues era, Little Miss Cornshucks, born Mildred Cummings, developed a substantial following as a colorful singer of jump-blues, torch ballads, and proto-R&B in nightclubs and theaters from Central Avenue Los Angeles to Harlem. She enjoyed a long residency at Chicago’s Club DeLisa singing with the Red Saunders and Fletcher Henderson orchestras.

Her intimate yet dramatic singing style bridged 1920s vaudeville, 1940s swing blues, and 1960s soul music, influencing such diverse performers as Ruth Brown, LaVern Baker, Johnny Ray, Judy Garland, and Aretha Franklin. Atlantic’s Ahmet Ertegun cites her as sparking his interest in recording.

As the comic Cornshucks character, a forlorn down-home country girl new in town, she had particular impact with urbanized African Americans of the Great Migration. She developed the persona as a teenager while singing as one of the Cummings Sisters, a Dayton gospel act.

Throat polyps occasionally added nasality to ballads and jump-blues she recorded effectively for varied labels between 1946 and 1951, with the Marl Young–arranged “So Long” on Sunbeam, the Maxwell Davis–produced “In the Rain” for Miltone, and the soulful “Try a Little Tenderness,” backed by Benny Carter on Coral, being the most notable. She performed in the 1948 Monogram Pictures film *Campus Sleuth*. After recording a string-laden attempted “comeback” LP for Chess in 1960, she slipped into obscurity. Married to Cornelius Jorman of Indianapolis as her solo career began, she was mother to two daughters and a son.

BARRY MAZOR

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Discography: LSFP

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Los Angeles, 1948

Little Miss Cornshucks with the Blenders. Miltone 242: “Keep Your Hand on Your Heart”/“He’s Funny That Way” (rereleased as DeLuxe 3186). 243: “Cornshuck’s Blues”/“In the Rain” (also DeLuxe 3178). 246: “Why Was I Born”/“True.” Plus “You Don’t Love Me,” one side of DeLuxe 3192.

Los Angeles, 1949

Little Miss Cornshucks & Her All-Stars. Aladdin 3034: “You Turned Your Back on Me” b/w rerelease of Miltone “Keep Your Hand on Your Heart.” 3126: “Time After Time”/“Waiting in Vain.”

Los Angeles 1950–1951

Little Miss Cornshucks with Benny Carter & His Orchestra. Coral 65045: “Papa Tree Top Blues”/“Rock Me to Sleep.” 65077: “So Long”/“Cause I Lost My Helping Hand.” 65090: “Try a Little Tenderness”/“Don’t Marry Too Soon.”

Chicago 1960

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LITTLE RICHARD

b. Richard Wayne Penniman, 5 December 1932;
Macon, GA

Success is sometimes measured in the number of titles, nicknames, and pseudonyms a performer has to his credit. If that is the case here, Little Richard is near the top of the list as the “Originator, Emancipator and Architect of Rock and Roll,” the “Georgia Peach,” the “Wild Man of Rock ‘n’ Roll,” and, literally, dozens of others.

Little Richard helped to craft the transition of R&B to rock ‘n’ roll in the mid-1950s, helped to pave the way for rock music videos with early film performances, and set the stage for a level of flamboyance fans hadn’t dreamed of before. He artfully blended his southern gospel background with the hard-driving rockabilly agenda and laid the foundation for a whole new art form. In addition to its strong, urban beat, feelings of country western, folk,

and white pop music can be sensed in Richard's early works. His sense of style might have been influenced by Bill Wright, a flamboyant New Orleans musician known for his elegant coiffure and flashy clothes, whom Richard met in 1952, and Esquerita, who gave Richard some piano style pointers in Atlanta.

Richard, born in Macon, Georgia, in 1932, grew up in the poverty of the black rural South and gained his musical background from church choirs, his neighborhood, and the radio. Richard sang in the Penniman Singers and Tiny Tots Quartet, two area gospel groups. Later, in Macon, he performed with Sugarfoot Sam's Minstrel Show.

In 1951, Richard won a talent contest in Atlanta, signed with RCA, and released four unnoticed singles, including "Taxi Blues." After his contract with RCA expired, Richard recorded two singles for Peacock Records in Houston without success. He returned to Macon to perform at the Tick Tock Club by night and wash dishes at the Greyhound Bus Depot by day.

But Little Richard was undaunted. He continued to write and practice and, in 1955, sent demos to Specialty Records, at the suggestion of Lloyd Price, a Specialty artist. He recorded several tracks at Cosimo Matassa's J&M Studio in New Orleans with producer Robert "Bumps" Blackwell and a group of talented musicians from the New Orleans area and Little Richard had the chance he had long awaited.

Initially, the material did not showcase Richard's talent and the sessions looked gloomy. But, during a break, Richard began an impromptu performance at the Dew Drop Inn and Blackwell saw his wild, uninhibited performance of "Tutti Frutti, Good Booty." Blackwell instantly realized Richard's true potential and called in lyricist Dorothy LeBostrie to revamp Richard's song into something more commercial for 1950s audiences.

"Tutti-Frutti" was the first hit from those sessions. Elvis covered "Tutti Frutti" on national TV twice in 1956; Richard's biggest hit, "Long Tall Sally" topped the R&B chart for eight weeks and was number six on the pop chart that year; "Slippin' and Slidin'" and "Rip It Up" surged onto R&B and pop charts; and at the end of a very memorable year, the last of his original session material was released with "Good Golly Miss Molly," "Jenny Jenny," and "The Girl Can't Help It."

Richard appeared in two films in the 1956–1957 period. The first was *Don't Knock the Rock*, with Alan Dale and Patricia Hardy. Richard delivered two over-the-top numbers, "Long Tall Sally" and "Reddy Teddy." Other rock 'n' roll performers included Bill Haley & the Comets and the Treniers. "The Girl Can't Help It" was the title song of the other Hollywood film starring Jayne Mansfield and Tom Ewell. Richard

performed "The Girl Can't Help it," "She's Got It," and "Rip It Up" in the film. Other rock 'n' roll stars (the Platters, Fats Domino, Gene Vincent & the Blue Caps, and Eddie Cochran) performed as well. Virtually overnight, Little Richard became an icon to thousands of teens who had never heard of him before.

In 1957, Richard toured Australia with Vincent and Cochran but, after an airplane scare, abruptly abandoned his rock 'n' roll career in the middle of this successful, sold-out tour. He enrolled at the Oakwood Theological College in Huntsville, Alabama, to become a minister. For another year, Specialty continued to release singles from his earlier sessions. Richard filed a lawsuit against Specialty, accusing them of underpaying his royalties.

In 1959, Richard signed with a booking agency, entered into a contract with Gone Records, and began a career as a gospel performer. He released several poorly received gospel albums and, in 1962, Richard returned to secular music with tours of England and Europe. During his European tour, his opening act was the Rolling Stones. Later in 1962, Richard returned and signed with Vee-Jay Records. Richard continued touring during this period, but success was mediocre.

In 1967, Specialty released *Little Richard's Greatest Hits* on the Okeh label. This collection was live tracks of his older material and became the first Little Richard album to make the charts in years. Richard was reborn to a new audience of young R&B fans. During this period, rock 'n' roll revivalism became a major influence in the market. The trend saved Richard's career. He had produced very little new material in the past few years and needed a new audience to discover his unique style. However, by 1968, Little Richard's album sales totaled more than thirty-two million copies.

But success was short lived when Richard again abandoned his career for a higher calling. He was ordained as a minister in 1970 and preached and released a few secular albums for the next few years. He became a Bible salesman, embraced Charismatic Christianity, and released another gospel album during this period.

Finally, in 1986, a character part in the film *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* brought Richard another round of fame and success. He released an album of children's songs, starred in a Disney benefit album for charity, and performed in numerous videos, television spots, and concerts throughout this period.

In the period from 1980 through 1997, Richard received numerous accolades, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, induction into the Rock

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and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987, and the Rhythm and Blues Foundation's Pioneer Award.

TOM FISHER

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LITTLE SONNY

b. Aaron Willis, 6 October 1932; Greensboro, AL

Harmonica, vocals, composer. Little Sonny, named after mentor Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller), has been a mainstay of the Detroit blues scene since the early 1950s. He was dubbed "New King of the Blues Harmonica" on his recordings for Stax.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

LITTLE WALTER

b. Marion Walter Jacobs, 1 May 1930;

Marksville, LA

d. 15 February 1968; Chicago, IL

Seminal blues singer, harmonica player, and guitarist
Marion "Little" Walter Jacobs was born in Marksville,

Louisiana, to Adam (Bruce) Jacobs and Adam's sister-in-law Beatrice Leveige. Shortly after his birth, Walter was sent to live with his uncle Samuel Jacobs and his aunt Dawn in Alexandria. By the time a twelve-year-old Walter was reunited with his mother in Marksville, he had been playing harmonica for four years, influenced by white country harmonica player Lonnie Glosson and the Cajun music he heard around him. He had also established his lifelong personality as a wild and restless loner. Accusations of arson prompted Walter to leave for New Orleans around 1943, where he performed both on the streets and in clubs. Later that year he received advice on harmonica playing from Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller) in Helena, Arkansas, perhaps appearing on "Mother's Best Flour Hour" on KFFA in 1945. There he also met future bandmates Jimmy Rogers and Robert Lockwood. The years 1943-1951 found Walter traveling back and forth to various towns in the South and to St. Louis and Chicago, playing in venues with both past and future blues heavyweights.

By 1946 Walter's Chicago base was on Maxwell Street. Walter began playing with the stars of the previous and emerging generation of Chicago blues, including Memphis Slim, Bill Broonzy, and Tampa Red, and met one of his early harmonica influences, John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. Walter made his earliest recordings for the Ora-Nelle label run by a Maxwell Street radio store owner, Bernard Abrams.



Little Walter. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Where John Lee Williamson had taken the comping and chording of the previous generation of harmonica players and bridged to a style that mixed chords and single note runs, Walter's Ora-Nelle recordings as leader, with Othum Brown and Jimmy Rogers, show him moving even further from the chording and more toward riffing in the vein of saxophonists like Louis Jordan, though with a raucous individual style and phrasing adapted to the harmonica. Subsequent sessions for Tempo Tone in 1948 (with Muddy Waters and Sunnyland Slim), Regal in 1949, and Parkway in 1950 show Walter advancing in technique and power without losing the deep feeling of his southern blues roots, particularly on his ferocious playing on Baby Face Leroy's 1950 recording "Rollin' and Tumblin', Parts 1 and 2." By that time Walter had been playing in Muddy Waters's band for two years, though it wasn't until August 1950 that Walter recorded with Muddy and Jimmy Rogers (and in October with Johnny Shines) for Chess Records.

His next major recorded advance on the harmonica took place at a July 11, 1951, Waters session on which he played in his distinctive amplified style, cupping his harmonica onto a microphone and playing directly through his own amplifier, on "Country Boy." Here Walter reveals one of the styles he established for postwar amplified harmonica, with powerful, drawn-out, swooping lines that emphasized the bedrock beat and then suddenly darted around the beat in rhythmic glee, and using the amplification to play tender notes with a soft yet authoritative touch. This was a style that Walter frequently used on Muddy's slow blues, but on the up-tempo numbers he was playing with Muddy's band as they traveled Chicago blues clubs as the "Head Hunters" taking on all competition, Walter was clearly generating another style. This one was closer to the Louis Jordan jump style, but made unique use of the trilling and tremolo effects, and was finely attuned to the various sustain, distortion, and reverberation possibilities that amplification offered with regard to emotional shading. Although other harmonica players such as Walter Horton and Snooky Pryor had experimented previously with amplification, Little Walter was its first and greatest master. He also played with an unflagging melodic invention, for many listeners unsurpassed before or since by any other blues harmonica player. Most remarkable of all, as one of the earliest amplified harmonica stylists, Walter still presented a fully formed, mature style that not only helped initiate the style, but advanced it further than anyone else has been able to do. A May 12, 1952, session that produced the swinging "Juke" is one of the most significant blues sessions of all time for introducing a new amplified style to the world. When it hit

number one on the R&B charts, Walter left Muddy's band (though he continued to record with Muddy) and went on the road with his Night Cats/Jukes band behind the recordings he made for Chess during the next eleven years.

Between 1952 and 1959, Walter had fifteen R&B chart hits, including "You're So Fine" and "My Babe," but even those that weren't hits continued to demonstrate his remarkable genius, admirably supported by band members like guitarists Louis and Dave Myers, jazzy virtuosos Robert Lockwood and Luther Tucker, bassist Willie Dixon, and drummers Fred Below and George Hunter. In addition to his other stylistic innovations on the harmonica, Walter also pioneered the use of third position on the diatonic harmonica, playing it in a "chromatic" harmonica style on songs such as "That's It," "I Got to Go," "You Gonna Be Sorry," and "One of These Mornings," supplementing the "straight" or first position and "crossed" or second position techniques favored by previous blues harmonica players. Walter was also the first blues harmonica player to make extensive use of the chromatic harmonica, once again forging an entirely original style, at times awash in amplification that created a moody atmosphere for his stark, frighteningly evil-sounding solos on tunes like "Lights Out" and "Blue and Lonesome." Additionally, Walter occasionally switched from one harmonica to another on songs such as "Blue Light" and "Thunderbird," where he played both diatonic and chromatic harmonicas, and on John Brim's "Be Careful," where he played both straight and cross harp, to achieve the sounds he desired. Sometimes underappreciated are Walter's exemplary vocals, which were direct and heartfelt, never flashy, as on the moving "Last Night" and the sensitive "Everybody Needs Somebody," garnering the attention of John Lee Hooker, who called Walter his favorite singer.

During the time Walter was making his own groundbreaking recordings, he also worked as a studio musician, providing brilliant accompaniments to artists such as those mentioned earlier and also Floyd Jones, Memphis Minnie, and Bo Diddley (who returned the favor on Walter's breathtaking "Roller Coaster") at Chess, and for Otis Rush at Cobra Records in 1957. He toured extensively, appearing in such major venues as the Apollo in New York City, the Regal Theatre in Chicago, Alan Freed's Diddley Daddy Package Show, and the Hippodrome Ballroom.

After his heyday as a hit "Race record" artist ended in 1959 with "Everything's Gonna Be Alright," Walter began a career with a new audience when he traveled to Britain in September 1964 and played accompanied by Long John Baldry's band, the Groundhogs, and other groups, and in 1967 accompanied by American

LITTLE WALTER

Folk Blues Festival musicians, including Hound Dog Taylor. In the meantime he recorded a couple of unsuccessful sessions for Chess in 1966 and 1967, one an abortive "Super Blues" session, and even did a live recording with author/cartoonist Shel Silverstein. Volatile until the end, he died in Chicago on February 15, 1968, of coronary thrombosis brought on by injuries sustained in a street fight, and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, Evergreen, Illinois. When he died, the blues lost the man Muddy Waters called the best harmonica player in the business, an imaginative and technical genius who transformed the harmonica's role and sound through his endlessly daring performances. Harmonica players in the blues, jazz, country, and rock genres today acknowledge the mastery of Little Walter.

STEVEN C. TRACY

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LITTLEFIELD, "LITTLE" WILLIE

b. 16 September 1931; El Campo, TX

Blues singer and pianist. Willie Littlefield's great-great grandmother was an Apache Indian. He was raised by his mother in Houston's Third Ward. He was influenced by his grandparents' C&W music, his mother's gospel music, and his aunt's blues. He taught himself how to play the guitar when he was six, and it was not long before his mother bought her musical son a piano as well. Charles Brown and Amos Milburn became his heroes. At high school he formed

his first band and they enjoyed considerable success. The great trio of boogie-woogie pianists, Albert Ammons, Meade "Lux" Lewis, and Pete Johnson, now had a tremendous influence on him.

Willie made his first recordings for Eddie's in Houston in 1948, when he was only seventeen years old. The boogies he recorded at his first session are cherished collectors items now, but Willie prefers his present-day work: "I have more experience now, you can hear that in the changes. You have to take your time. It is like a kid growing up. You learn to control more. At that time I just played boogie-woogie and blues, but now I play everything I want to play." While still a teenager Jules Bihari asked Willie to record for Modern. His big hit with them was "It's Midnight," which reached number three and stayed in the Billboard R&B charts for thirteen weeks. Its piano triplets strongly influenced Fats Domino. For his third Modern session Willie teamed up with Pee Wee Crayton and the photos made of that session clearly show the fine interaction between Pee Wee (age thirty-four) and Willie (just eighteen years old). In 1999 the first CD reissue of Willie's Modern recordings appeared: *Kat on the Keys* (Ace CDCHD 736).

In 1952 Willie switched to Federal where he recorded with Little Esther Phillips and made recordings under his own name. "K. C. Loving" became one of the biggest hits ever when it was recorded as "Kansas City" by Little Richard, Wilbert Harrison, Fats Domino, the Everly Brothers, the Beatles, and dozens of other artists. Although Willie wrote the song himself, the composer credit of Federal 12110 is to "Stoller–Leiber." In 1957 Willie signed with Rhythm Records and "Ruby-Ruby" became a hit again. During the next few years Willie performed in Kansas City and California. In 1975–1976 Willie recorded for the Blues Connoisseur label, and although the results were rather poor, the records revived interest in him by European collectors. In 1978 Willie came to Europe where he fell in love with a Dutch woman. In 1981 they married and settled in the Netherlands where they are still living. He made many records in Europe, especially for the Dutch Oldie Blues label. Willie played most of the big international festivals, performed in the film *Love in Limbo*, and was a favorite artist at prestigious international events. After fifty-five years on the road he retired. Willie Littlefield is still a consummate showman and a proficient pianist.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

LITTLEJOHN, JOHN

b. John Wesley Funchess, 16 April 1931; Learned, MS
d. 1 February 1994; Chicago, IL

Born John Wesley Funchess on a farm near Jackson, Mississippi, the singer/guitarist who became known as Johnny Littlejohn developed an interest in blues around age twelve upon hearing it played at local fish fries. Littlejohn began playing the guitar a few years later. In the late 1940s, he moved north and worked day jobs around Gary, Indiana. While there, he started playing music professionally and occasionally gigged throughout the Midwest, including Chicago. Littlejohn returned to Jackson in the early 1950s and recorded two unissued sides for Ace Records in 1952. He fronted his own band around Jackson with harmonica player Sam Myers and also played occasionally with Elmore James, absorbing the influential slide guitar player's style.

Littlejohn settled in Chicago in the mid-1950s, but would travel back to Mississippi often during the following years to perform. He cut various singles for small labels throughout the 1960s and recorded what is generally considered his finest work in 1968, the *Chicago Blues Stars* LP for Arhoolie. The recording featured Littlejohn's exemplary slide and lead guitar playing and haunting vocals in the 1950s Chicago blues tradition. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he recorded albums for ABC-BluesWay, Black & Blue, Wolf, and Rooster Blues. Littlejohn continued to lead his own band for much of the rest of his life, toured Europe, and remained a mainstay on the Chicago blues scene until the early 1990s when he was plagued by illness. Johnny Littlejohn died in Chicago at age sixty-two, the result of several recurring heart attacks and a stroke.

GENE TOMKO

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LOCKWOOD, ROBERT, JR.

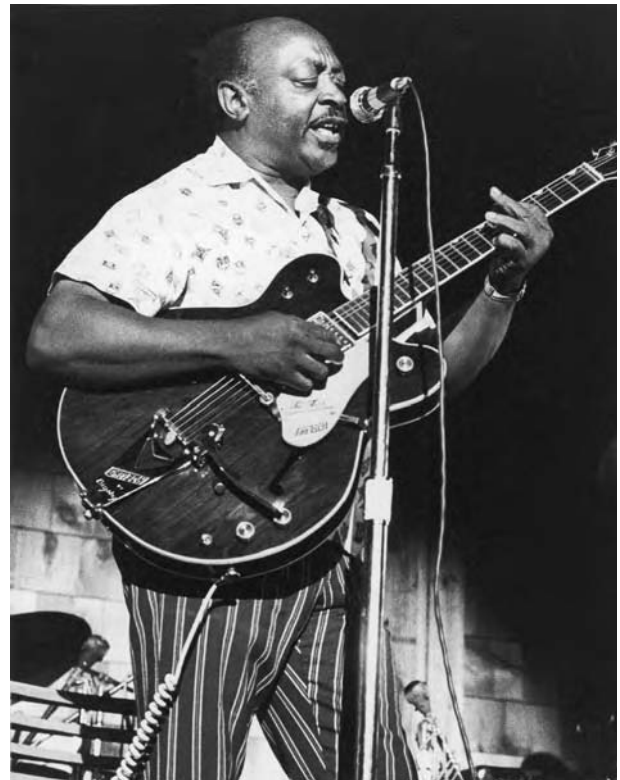
b. 27 March 1915; Turkey Scratch, AR

Robert Lockwood, singer and guitarist of both Delta blues and Chicago blues. His father, Robert

Lockwood, Sr., was not a musician; he disappeared while his son was very young. Later, Robert Jr.'s mother began seeing another, younger suitor: Robert Johnson. Robert Lockwood and Robert Johnson did not have a stepson/stepfather relationship—they were only four years apart in age. Robert Johnson did, however, introduce Lockwood to the guitar and his own, unique technique; they played live together on many occasions.

In 1941, Robert Lockwood made his first recordings for Bluebird, Mercury, and JOB; sometimes as a sideman, sometimes under his own name, up into the 1950s and 1960s, especially for Chess Records. Since the 1970s, he has recorded for Delmark and Trix. He also recorded in France a tribute album to Robert Johnson, titled *Robert "Jr." Lockwood Plays Robert & Robert* (1982). This album showcases Robert alone with his electrified twelve-string guitar: Half of the songs are his, the other half are covers of "Rambling on My Mind," "Sweet Home Chicago," and "Little Queen of Spades." The album ends with a fine version of a blues standard, "C. C. Rider." After that French release, Lockwood did not record again until 1996.

Robert Lockwood was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Hall of Fame (1989) and has received two honorary doctorates in Cleveland, in 2001 and 2002. At age eighty-nine, Robert Jr. Lockwood's CD



Robert Lockwood. (Photo by Tom Copi, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

LOCKWOOD, ROBERT, JR.

Legend Live (2004) proves that he can still reinvent and revisit some of Robert Johnson's classics, like "Sweet Home Chicago," "Love in Vain," "Ramblin on My Mind."

YVES LABERGE

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

See also C. C. Rider; Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet; Johnson, Robert; Shines, Johnny; Sunnyland Slim; Townsend, Henry; Williamson, Sonny Boy II (Rice Miller)

LOFTON, "CRIPPLE" CLARENCE

b. 28 March 1887; Kingsport, TN
d. 9 January 1957; Chicago, IL

Aka Albert Clemens. An early boogie-woogie originator, along with his fellow contemporaries Cow-Cow Davenport, Meade "Lux" Lewis, Pine Top Smith, and Jimmy Yancey, he helped popularize the style in Chicago in the early 1920s. His nickname stemmed from a congenital lameness in his leg that made him walk with a pronounced limp. This did not inhibit his style, as he was an all-around entertainer who sang, tap-danced, snapped his fingers, and played the piano. He was an eccentric, undisciplined but powerful pianist who would begin playing a new chorus before the last one was finished, showing little regard for the standard twelve-bar pattern.

Born in Tennessee he lived most of his life in Chicago, becoming a fixture on the Chicago nightlife scene. He owned his own nightclub called the Big Apple where he ran his own boogie school teaching youngsters the art form. Between 1935 and 1943 he cut close to forty sides for Vocalion, Swaggie, Solo Art, and Session including exuberant pieces such as "Brown Skin Girls," "Policy Blues," "Streamline Train," and "I Don't Know," the latter a number one R&B hit for Willie Mabon in 1952. The bulk of these were solo sides with guitarist Big Bill Broonzy adding support for two sessions. In addition Lofton provided accompaniment to Red Nelson, Sammy Brown, Al Miller, and Jimmy Yancey.

Lofton remained on the scene cutting sides for the Gennett, Vocalion, Solo Art, Riverside, Session, and Pax labels. He stayed around Chicago until his death in 1957 from a blood clot in the brain.

JEFF HARRIS

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See also Chicago; Davenport, Cow-Cow; Lewis, Meade "Lux"; Mabon, Willie; Smith, Clarence "Pine Top"; Yancey, James Edward "Jimmy"

LOGAN, JOHN "JUKE"

b. 1940s; Los Angeles, CA

Southern California-based harmonica player's first fame came playing with Leon Russell and then Dave Alvin. Has a bright, energetic tone on harp, and crosses easily from rock to blues and even country.

JIM TRAGESER

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LOMAX, ALAN

b. 15 January 1915; Austin, TX
d. 19 July 2002; Safety Harbor, FL

Lomax is the most celebrated folklorist of the twentieth century. Over the course of almost seven decades he combined careers as ethnomusicologist, folk music

popularizer, folk song collector, performer, and writer, excelling in each of these areas. His work has had a unique impact on blues culture, as well as on a vast range of other folk music from around the world.

Lomax was the son of the folklorist John A. Lomax and his first wife Bess Brown. A precocious talent, Alan began studies at the University of Texas at the age of fifteen (he would graduate in 1936). Alan's career began in 1933 when he accompanied his father on the first of a series of pioneering field trips recording folk music for the Library of Congress. In 1937, still only twenty-one, he was appointed director of the Archive of American Folk-Song at the Library of Congress. By the end of the decade, he had acquired a reputation nationally as the preeminent figure in his field and his career continued to develop throughout the 1940s. In 1950 he moved to England following blacklisting in the United States for his political views. In England, Lomax further enhanced his status making important field trips and becoming a pivotal force behind major folk music revivals in both Britain and Europe. By the time he returned to America in 1958, he was regarded as probably the most influential living figure in folk music. From the 1960s on, in addition to continuing to make field recordings and promote folk music, he became actively involved in academia, being associated with Columbia University between 1962 and 1989 and Hunter College from 1989 until his death.

Lomax's contribution to folk music is diverse and extensive. It falls into three broad categories: preservation, dissemination, and theorizing.

In terms of preservation, his focus was field recordings. His basic aim was to root out folk music removed as far as possible from the homogenizing effect of mainstream culture. To this end, Lomax focused on isolated communities such as prisons, lumber camps, and cowboy ranches. This approach was remarkably successful and by the end of the 1930s the Lomaxes had already collected more than three thousand recordings. Many thousands more were to follow. Although Lomax's initial focus was North America, his scope became international after a 1936 trip to Haiti and he later collected extensively in the Caribbean, Britain, Spain, and Italy. All the major material from Lomax's field trips, including film footage and photographs as well as audio recordings, is now housed in the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress.

Much of Lomax's energy was put into disseminating the material he had uncovered. The first commercial issue of his field recordings was the 1939 Leadbelly album, *Negro Sinful Songs*, and there have been numerous other releases since. The culmination is the Alan Lomax Collection on Rounder

Records, begun in 1997, which will eventually comprise more than one hundred CDs of Lomax-related material. As well as records, Lomax also published several seminal printed collections of folk songs beginning with *American Ballads and Folksongs* in 1934, coauthored with his father. Starting in the 1930s, Lomax extensively popularized folk song through radio and later television. In addition, he used his influence to promote the careers of folk musicians often raising them from complete obscurity to stardom by organizing media appearances, concert tours, and recordings.

Lomax was a leading theorist of folk music. His central interest was the interconnectedness between global folk cultures, resulting in a wide-ranging cross-cultural comparison of folk music (cantometrics) and folk dance (choreometrics). Although this part of Lomax's work is less well known than his other activities, it is no less important.

Throughout his career, Lomax had a close relationship with the blues. He recorded the genre extensively on his field trips in the South in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1960s. In the process, he unearthed two major blues talents: Leadbelly, found in a prison in Angola, Louisiana, in 1933; and Muddy Waters, who Lomax recorded for the Library of Congress in 1941 and 1942. Other notable blues musicians recorded by Lomax include Memphis Slim, Big Bill Broonzy, Son House, Blind Willie McTell, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Jelly Roll Morton. With these artists, as with all the musicians he recorded, Lomax was a consummate interviewer, always able to coax the best from his performers. The result is a series of recordings as musically and historically important as any in the canon of traditional blues. Lomax's early encounters with blues musicians are described in his 1993 book *The Land Where the Blues Began*.

PETER MUIR

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LOMAX, JOHN AVERY

b. 23 September 1867; Goodman, MS
d. 26 January 1948; Greenville, MS

Pioneer folklorist. The son of a Confederate army veteran, Lomax was raised in Texas. After teaching in public schools, he attended the University of Texas in 1895, majoring in English literature. In 1903, he was offered a post as English teacher at Texas A&M University. He first gained national attention with *Cowboy Songs and Other Ballads* in 1910, the first published collection of such material. He remained in academia until 1917, gaining a master's degree from Harvard in 1908. From 1917 to 1931 he worked as a banker, first in Chicago and Dallas, except for the years 1919–1925, when he was an administrator at the University of Texas.

The Depression was a turning point for Lomax: For the rest of his life, he was at the forefront of the dissemination and preservation of American folk music. In 1932, after embarking on a series of lecture tours, he formed a ten-year relationship with the Library of Congress, in which he undertook a series of epic field trips, the first in 1933 with his son Alan. In total, Lomax made some thousands of field recordings, including many of folk blues and related styles. His aim was to preserve traditional music before it disappeared or became irretrievably corrupted by commercial influences. In 1933, in Angola prison, Louisiana, he made perhaps his greatest single discovery, the singer Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter). Lomax recorded Leadbelly extensively and was instrumental in the promotion of his career. Along with his recordings, Lomax is noted for his published folk song anthologies, particularly *American Ballads and*

Folksongs (cowritten with Alan Lomax), a seminal collection that includes many traditional blues and blues ballads.

PETER MUIR

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LONDON

(See *United Kingdom and Ireland*)

LONDON-AMERICAN

From 1951 U.K. Decca used this label name on material made by small American companies to which they had acquired the British rights. These included Savoy, Atlantic, Chess, Specialty, and Imperial. Singles from the more popular R&B artists including Ray Charles and Fats Domino appeared alongside issues from Chess by Muddy Waters, Little Walter, and Howlin' Wolf, which ultimately influenced the direction of British popular music. The LP catalog included the *Origins of Jazz* series of ten-inch LPs drawn in association with Riverside from defunct American labels. The sixty-five issues made up to 1959 were the largest reissue project to that date and included three albums by Blind Lemon Jefferson.

HOWARD RYE

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See also Decca

LONESOME SUNDOWN

b. Cornelius Green, 12 December 1928;
Donaldsonville, LA
d. 23 April 1995; Gonzales, LA

Lonesome Sundown was an extremely versatile stylist and underrated songwriter whose impact was felt in almost every genre of Louisiana music. Sundown excelled at stomps, laments, sweet ballads, novelty fare, and bristling, energetic pieces. An outstanding

contributor to pivotal sessions as a guitarist, he eventually emerged as a prolific bandleader and solo artist. Sundown's introduction to the guitar came from a cousin who taught him during the evenings, following rigorous days spent in the Donaldsonville, Louisiana, fields. Sundown escaped that life in 1953, moving to the oil fields in Beaumont, Texas. An offer to sit in one night from the legendary King of Zydeco Clifton Chenier at the Blue Moon Club forever changed Lonesome Sundown's life.

After working in Chenier's road band as second guitarist alongside Phillip Walker, Sundown relocated with a new bride to Opelousas. Subsequently he scored a regional hit with "Lost Without Love," which Sundown recorded for famed producer J. D. Miller at his studio in Crowley. The staples of his playing and singing approach were honed during his years with Miller. These included crisp, direct leads, stinging guitar riffs, and pointed, humorous asides and storylines. Sundown's late 1950s and early to mid-1960s recordings, many of them issued on Nashville's Excello label, were steady sellers among Southern black listeners despite never appearing on industry charts.

Sundown abandoned secular music for the church in 1966. There were comeback attempts in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He suffered a stroke in 1994.

RON WYNN

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Discography: AMG; LSF

LONG, JAMES BAXTER "J. B."

b. 25 December 1903; Mint Hill, NC

d. 25 February 1975; Burlington, NC

Talent scout, producer, A&R for Columbia, ARC (American Recording Corporation). James Baxter Long, a store manager for the United Dollar chain first in Kinston, then in Durham, North Carolina, backed into a second career as a scout for the American Record Corporation (ARC). He eventually became manager to Blind Boy Fuller, and under his guidance many prominent Piedmont bluesmen (Blind Boy Fuller, Blind Gary Davis, Bull City Red, Brownie McGhee, Sonny Terry, Buddy Moss, Floyd Council, and others), as well as Mitchell's

Christian Singers and Lake Howard, made their first recordings.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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LORNELL, CHRISTOPHER "KIP"

b. 13 February 1953; Denver, CO

Christopher "Kip" Lornell began conducting blues research while still in high school. As an undergraduate in New York and North Carolina he interviewed and recorded local blues artists, resulting in articles in *Living Blues* and other periodicals and albums on the Flyright, Trix, and Rounder labels. Among his most important discoveries were the cousins Joe and Odell Thompson, practitioners of African American pre-blues styles on the banjo and fiddle. In 1983 Lornell received his Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Memphis State (now University of Memphis); his dissertation was published as "*Happy in the Service of the Lord*": *Afro-American Gospel Quartets in Memphis* (Urbana Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

Lornell served for four years as the staff folklorist/ethnomusicologist at Ferrum College's Blue Ridge Institute, where his work included compiling/annotating four albums documenting Virginia vernacular traditions. He also edited *Virginia's Blues, Country, and Gospel Records: 1902-1943—An Annotated Discography* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989). Lornell's academic work has addressed a wide variety of vernacular music, and he has published extensively on blues, pre-blues, early country music, jazz, go-go, gospel quartets, singing evangelists, and the early recording and broadcasting industries. He coauthored, with Charles Wolfe, *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly* (New York, HarperCollins, 1992), which received the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award. In 1997 Lornell received a Grammy for his work on the boxed set *The Anthology of American Folk Music* for Smithsonian/Folkways. In recent years Lornell has worked as a lecturer at George Washington University and as a researcher at the Smithsonian Institution.

SCOTT BARRETTA

LOUIE BLUIE

(See Armstrong, Howard "Louie Bluié")

LOUIS, JOE HILL

b. Leslie or Lester Hill, 23 September 1921;
Raines, TN
d. 5 August 1957; Memphis, TN

Acquired “Joe Hill Louis” moniker after winning a boxing match. He was a one-man band singing and playing guitar, harmonica, and foot-drum. Recorded for various labels including Sun and Meteor. Louis died of tetanus from a cut on his thumb.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

LOUISIANA

History and Overview

The state of Louisiana occupies one of the most strategic positions in the United States: the mouth of the Mississippi River. The Mississippi served as a major transportation and commercial artery for the country—whoever controlled the river dominated trade in the interior. As a result, many groups have migrated to Louisiana for economic opportunity and nations have struggled to control the region, producing a rich and turbulent history and culture.

Founded by the French in 1699, the Louisiana colony was initially meant to protect the territory claimed by the explorer Robert de LaSalle. The colony sprawled from the Appalachians to the Rockies, but the French never adequately settled the region and the colony struggled to survive. Most of the settlements clung closely to the Gulf Coast or to interior areas favorable to planting sugar cane. The French recruited settlers from Germany and Switzerland, and imported slaves from West Africa and the West Indies. Recent historical research has indicated that the majority of slaves imported during the French period (1699–1763) originated in the Senegambia and came from the Mande culture. During the French period, slaves often outnumbered European immigrants and this has led some historians to view Louisiana as the most African of all North American colonies.

In 1763 France transferred Louisiana to Spain as a result of the Seven Years War. Under the Spanish, the Louisiana colony prospered. Diverse immigration patterns continued with groups of exiled Acadians, Canary Islanders (Islenos), and refugees from the Haitian rebellion constituting the major waves. Anglo-Americans and black slaves from the United States also moved into the northern part of the colony. Spanish laws regarding slavery were remarkably lenient compared to French and American laws. Slaves could purchase their freedom or be granted it if they performed activities beneficial to the government. As a result, the population of free people of color grew during the Spanish regime. For the most part these Free People were of mixed racial ancestry (French, Spanish, and African) and began to forge a new identity as Creoles. Many became skilled artisans, were highly educated, and purchased slaves themselves. At the time of the American acquisition of Louisiana the free population had reached nearly 1,800. In 1800 France forced Spain to cede the colony, but never fully regained control.

In 1803 the United States purchased the Louisiana territory from France. In 1812 Louisiana was formally admitted into the union as the eighteenth state. During the antebellum period, racial divisions sharpened and the free Creoles created a distinctive culture that included a cultivated musical community. Creoles favored European-style classical and light classical music and a large number of highly trained Creole musicians worked in New Orleans. Such light classical and café-style composers as Edmund Dede and the Lambert family rose to prominence in international circles.

A certain cultural latitude was also granted to slaves. During the antebellum period, African cultural traditions such as drumming and dance persisted throughout Louisiana. In New Orleans, Congo Square was set aside for slaves to gather and perform on Sundays. In 1856 the New Orleans council passed an ordinance outlawing slave drumming and dancing.

Louisiana witnessed a great deal of military action during the Civil War due to its strategic location. The war devastated the state, pushing it to the bottom of the American economic structure. African Americans were the hardest hit of Louisiana citizens. In 1890 the Louisiana legislature began passing a series of Jim Crow laws restricting the activities of African Americans. *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the case that eventually legitimated the “separate but equal” idea, originated as a case challenging these laws. Following the collapse of the interracial Populist movement in 1898, Louisiana entered a period of draconian measures during which white elites held both black and white farmers and laborers down.

During the 1920s, the dynamic politician Huey P. Long broke the power of the Bourbon elite and provided some relief for the lower classes both black and white. Following the Second World War, black Louisianians began to press for civil rights. Though not without incident, the transition in Louisiana was not as volatile as in other parts of the South, perhaps due to the state's long history of ethnic diversity. The 1970s saw an economic boom period with rising oil prices, but the subsequent crash of industry in the next decade cast a pall over the state from which it has yet to recover.

Culturally and geographically, Louisiana can be divided into three regions. New Orleans represents an urban southern city with much ethnic diversity. Acadiana, often referred to as Southwest Louisiana or the "bayou region," stretches from the Atchafalaya Swamp west to Texas, with its northern boundary about one hundred miles below the city of Alexandria. Cajun culture dominates this region. "North Louisiana" is an area extending from the northern limit of Acadiana to Arkansas and includes the area around Baton Rouge and the parishes north of Lake Pontchartrain (usually referred to as the Florida Parishes). North Louisiana was settled primarily by Anglo-Celtic Americans, slaves, and freed people from states such as Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and the Carolinas. The main economic activities in North Louisiana consist of growing cotton, the lumber and oil industries, and subsistence farming. This region of Louisiana is most like other parts of the Deep South.

African American music in North Louisiana generally followed the same patterns established in the Deep South. The string band tradition dominated the musical scene until the late 1890s or early 1900s. Unfortunately, little of the black Louisiana string band tradition survived to be recorded, though recordings made by the folklorist Harry Oster during the 1950s and 1960s give some indication of this vital form. Oster recorded Butch Cage, Willie B. Thomas, and others demonstrating the fiddle-led string band style. Oster also did extensive field recording at Angola State Penitentiary. Angola gained a reputation as one of the hardest prisons in the United States, though it was founded as a way of reforming the older chain gang system. Robert Pete Williams was serving time in Angola when he was discovered by Oster. During the 1930s John Lomax located Leadbelly in the same prison.

The spread of the lumber and oil industries through western Louisiana during the early years of the twentieth century provided opportunity for entertainers because laborers received wages in either cash or script, and companies often built dance halls

and bars in their company towns for their workers' entertainment. Most frequently these clubs featured piano players such as Will Ezell and Little Brother Montgomery. These "professors" worked a circuit of clubs often accompanied by female singers or horn players, such as Charlie Love, who played the newly emerging jazz style.

Shreveport emerged as a major center for black music during the early twentieth century. "St. Paul's Bottoms," a good-time district, provided opportunities for black musicians interested in perfecting their craft and earning a living playing music. The Bottoms (and an adjacent area called the "Blue Goose") was a training ground for such Louisiana bluesmen as Leadbelly, Will Ezell, Oscar Woods, the Black Ace, and the Thomas brothers Willard and Jesse. The Bottoms also saw interaction between black and white musicians. The country singer and future Louisiana governor Jimmie Davis often visited the Bottoms and used Woods and Eddie "Dizzy Head" Schafer on some of his early blues recordings.

Baton Rouge grew as a center of blues activity during the post-World War II era. Major clubs such as the Carousel Club and, later, Tabby's Blues Box were venues that featured blues musicians. Buddy Guy, Little Walter, Guitar Gabriel, Slim Harpo, Tabby Thomas, Lazy Lester, and Henry Gray all perfected their styles in the clubs around Baton Rouge. Several of these bluesmen relocated to Chicago and played dramatic roles in the development of that scene. Many of these artists recorded for the famed producer J. D. Miller of Crowley and gained national exposure through releases on major labels such as Excello and Specialty.

The blues community of North Louisiana continues to be vibrant. Much of the activity is linked to families, a powerful tradition in Louisiana. The Neal family, led by patriarch Raful, includes his sons Kenny and Lil Ray, daughter Jackie, and grandson Tyree. Baton Rouge's elder blues statesman Tabby Thomas shares the spotlight with his son Chris Thomas King, who recently gained exposure through the film *O Brother Where Art Thou?* For many years the Thomas family ran Tabby's Blues Box, the premier blues club in Baton Rouge.

The market for blues in North Louisiana remains primarily within the African American community. Tourists who visit Louisiana tend to focus on the jazz clubs of New Orleans or the Cajun and zydeco dance halls of Acadiana. While this may translate into fewer dollars for the artists, the situation keeps the performers rooted in the culture of Louisiana. Thus this vital form, often overlooked in the state, maintains its richness and earthiness and reflects the rich cultural diversity of Louisiana.

New Orleans

The major city in Louisiana, New Orleans enjoys one of the richest cultures of any urban area in the United States. The city has served as an incubator for a wide array of music, including jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, and zydeco.

New Orleans was founded in 1718 by the French-Canadian explorer Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville. The city is positioned near the mouth of the Mississippi River and has served as a major port since its founding. As a port city, New Orleans attracted a diverse population of citizens throughout its history, all of whom have left a mark on the city's unique culture. French culture dominated the early years of the city and continued as a main influence during the era of the Spanish occupation (1763–1803) and well into the American period. New Orleans also established strong ties to the Caribbean, most notably Haiti and the cities of Havana and Tampico.

In terms of population, early New Orleans was the most ethnically diverse city in the South. Initially the settlement was composed of French and French-Canadian migrants who were soon joined by large numbers of slaves from the Senegambia and the West Indies. During the French colonial period, Swiss and German migrants also moved to the city. After the Spanish established control of the colony in the 1760s, the government in Madrid encouraged the migration of Spanish, Canary Islanders (Islenos), and people from other parts of the broad Spanish empire. A notable influx of refugees from the Haitian rebellion arrived in the 1790s, bringing with them slaves and the folk religion of voodoo. In the nineteenth century, New Orleans saw waves of immigration from Ireland, Germany, China, Italy, and eastern Europe. The twentieth century saw major migrations of Filipinos and Vietnamese. To this ethnic gumbo must be added immigrants from the surrounding rural areas of Louisiana and Mississippi who came seeking employment in New Orleans industry and along the docks. Despite common belief, New Orleans has never had a significant Cajun population. That group resides mainly in the rural areas of southwestern Louisiana.

A significant portion of the New Orleans population is Creoles. The word “Creole” simply means “native,” but it has taken on a variety of meanings. Initially the term applied to the children of French or Spanish parents born in the new world. In this sense Creole came to mean the white cultural elite of the city. A second definition emerged to designate people of mixed French, Spanish, and African heritage who were generally free before the Civil War. These

Creoles were also known as *gens de couleur libres* (free people of color). “Creole” has also been used as an adjective to describe products such as tomatoes and hot sauce, the particular cuisine of New Orleans, and the language spoken by the *gens de couleur libres*.

Creoles of color constituted a major element of the New Orleans population throughout the city's history. The product of interracial unions between French and Spanish men and freed black women, the Creole population grew in the late eighteenth century as a result of liberal Spanish manumission laws. The Creoles created a complex society based around family, civic associations, and a militia system. They generally practiced skilled trades such as iron working and carpentry. Creoles also reveled in their French heritage. Their children were often sent to be educated in France; they imported French musicians and developed a cultivated music tradition based on French opera and classical music. Creoles used these cultural connections to distance themselves from the slaves during the antebellum period and from the freedmen following the Civil War.

Slaves in New Orleans were granted an unusual amount of freedom, especially on Sundays. Beginning during the French colonial period and lasting until the 1850s, slaves gathered at Congo Square (now Armstrong Park) to dance, sing, and play drums. Benjamin Latrobe left an extensive account of the performances in Congo Square, thus providing a rare glimpse into slave recreation. Latrobe records slaves playing drums and early banjos and dancing the bamboula. In Congo Square, slaves of various African ethnic origins met and exchanged ideas and in the process helped lay the foundations of African American culture in New Orleans. Street performers were also common in New Orleans. The most famous of the antebellum street performers was known only as “Old Corn Meal.” The songster tradition established by Old Corn Meal persisted into the twentieth century, with Richard “Rabbit” Brown being the only New Orleans street songster to record.

Nineteenth-century New Orleans musical culture was extremely diverse. In addition to African American styles, there were Irish and German singing clubs, society dance music for balls, and military music for parades. Art music also flourished. Opera was performed in the city as early as 1796 and continued with great popularity until the twentieth century. Concert music was supported by both the white and Creole communities. The city also welcomed touring entertainers such as Jenny Lind, Ole Bull, and Henri Vieuxtemps. The first serious American classical composer, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, was born in New Orleans and drew heavily on Creole traditions and American popular culture in composing his pieces.

A central element to New Orleans music traditions was the brass band. Military-style bands were used in parades throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Brass bands performed at funerals as early as 1819, and militia companies regularly employed musicians for their drills. The Union Army bandmaster Patrick Gilmore was stationed in the city during the war and furthered interest in brass bands with massive concerts, one of which featured more than five hundred musicians. Black brass band traditions began in earnest following the Civil War. Numerous black fraternal and social aid societies were created and these groups hired brass bands to play for social events, political rallies, and funerals. By the late nineteenth century, brass band musicians started experimenting with ragtime and improvisation. Their repertoire expanded to include religious music, ballads, reels, and the blues. The most famous bands experimenting with these trends were the Excelsior, the Onward, and the Tuxedo. White brass bands, such as that led by "Papa" Jack Laine, also incorporated ragtime and blues into their performances.

The brass band tradition led directly to jazz. Jazz fused the brass band music with blues intonation and appealed largely to working class blacks. The origins of jazz are murky, but most authorities tend to credit Buddy Bolden as the leader of the first mature jazz band, and it is known that he had a particular affinity for the blues. Most Creoles tended to look down on the style, though some, such as Jelly Roll Morton, openly embraced jazz. Country blues styles had little impact on jazz, but the classic blues style represented a merger of jazz and blues song.

New Orleans produced several important blues singers during the 1920s and 1930s. The most important of these were female performers such as Lizzie Miles, Lela Bolden, Ann Cook, Esther Bigeou, and Blue Lu Barker. All performed in the classic blues style of female vocalists backed by a jazz band. They differed little from other classic blues singers, though Miles often sang in Creole French. Papa Charlie Jackson and Willie Jackson worked the black vaudeville circuit and incorporated blues into their stage acts. Guitarist Lonnie Johnson and pianist Champion Jack Dupree, both New Orleanians, left the city and made their careers in the North and Europe. In doing so, they brought with them the fluid, technically stunning blues style of New Orleans.

Blues and jazz remained intertwined until the influx of rural blacks into the city during World War II. These migrants demanded their own style of blues, and clubs catering to this clientele blossomed in the 1940s and 1950s. Artists like Smiley Lewis moved to the city and began performing a country style of blues. The blues bands soon included horns and

slowly moved toward the rhythm and blues style. One major figure in this transformation from rural sounds to a more urban identity was the eccentric pianist Henry "Professor Longhair" Byrd. Longhair fused jazz, blues, boogie-woogie, and calypso into a hypnotic mix accentuated by flourishes and trills. Still no distinctive New Orleans blues style coalesced. But an active scene developed along Rampart Street, a region ruled by the pianists Tuts Washington, Robert Bernard, and Sullivan Rock. As music historian Jeff Hannusch noted, individuality, not a definitive style, became the hallmark of New Orleans blues.

Several important New Orleans blues guitarists emerged in the 1950s. Boogie Bill Webb was the strongest of the rural sounding bluesmen in New Orleans. He was heavily influenced by Tommy Johnson who often played for Webb's mother's fish fries. Eddie "Guitar Slim" Jones gained great fame with his "The Things I Used to Do," perhaps the most important blues song to come from New Orleans during the period. Closely associated with Guitar Slim was Earl King, a dynamic guitarist who added much to the New Orleans funk sound. Snooks Eaglin spent many years as a sideman until discovered by Dr. Harry Oster. Eaglin built a strong following playing the blues, but his repertoire is diverse and classes him as a latter-day songster.



Professor Longhair, a major figure in New Orleans blues. (Photo by Tom Copi, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Smiley Lewis possessed a rich singing voice and became the most popular blues vocalist in the city. Sugar Boy Crawford attracted a wide local following and was poised for stardom when police brutality cut his career short. Despite these artists' success, New Orleans during the 1950s was a rhythm and blues town, and many bluesmen found regular work in the bands of such favorites as Fats Domino, Lee Dorsey, and Ernie-K-Doe.

The years after World War II opened many avenues for New Orleans musicians. The club scene rapidly expanded in the prosperous postwar years and included clubs such as the Dew Drop Inn and the Tiajuana. The city had long been a center for music publishing and one of the earliest black music publishers and A&R men, Clarence Williams, came from New Orleans. Following in Williams's footsteps, bandleader Dave Bartholomew became an A&R man for Imperial Records. Bartholomew was the catalyst for the burgeoning New Orleans rhythm and blues scene, introducing artists such as Fats Domino, Smiley Lewis, and Tommy Ridgely to the wider world. New Orleans also became a major recording center with the founding of Cosimo Matassa's recording studio. Matassa recorded such artists as Little Richard, Fats Domino, Big Joe Turner, and Lloyd Price. But New Orleans failed to mature as a recording center and by the early 1970s had lost its stature in the recording arena.

By the late 1960s the golden years of New Orleans blues were fading. The style persisted in local clubs in neighborhoods such as Shrewsbury, but the city fathers officially adopted jazz as the music of New Orleans and little of the tourist dollars trickled into the pockets of bluesmen. Clubs such as Dorothy's Medallion were off the beaten path and catered to a local clientele. Dorothy's Medallion was a typical New Orleans black club, with a funky atmosphere made all the more surreal by the presence of a 350-pound go-go dancer named Big Linda. Dorothy's provided a breeding ground for blues musicians though. Perhaps the most famous bluesman to emerge from the club was Walter "Wolfman" Washington, who still performs regularly in the city. Many blues artists also spent time performing in funk and rock groups that were popular at the time.

Though the blues retreated to neighborhood clubs in the 1970s and 1980s, the sound reemerged in the 1990s. Clubs such as the Howlin Wolf, Muddy Waters, and the Maple Leaf began scheduling blues acts such as Washington, Katie Webster, Marva Wright, Keb' Mo', Kipori "Baby Wolf" Woods, and Mem Shannon. A wildly popular performer, Wright carved a place for herself as the "queen" of the New Orleans blues scene. Several white artists gained

strong reputations during this time, including Anders Osborne and Sonny Landreth. These artists also attract a large tourist following, which helps ensure gigs and a stable income. Many established and younger artists gain valuable exposure at the annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, a two-week-long musical extravaganza celebrating the varied musical styles of the city and the state of Louisiana.

New Orleans blues artists never firmly created a "sound" that is readily identifiable to the city. Instead they focused on developing individual styles and personas. In essence they are participating in the old New Orleans tradition of improvisation and funkiness.

Bayou Region

Few regions of the American South hold the mystique of Acadiana, the broad region of Louisiana that extends from the Atchafalaya swamp in the east, through the bayous of the Teche country, and then through the prairie land stretching west from Opelousas and Lafayette. Often thought of as a land of bayous, the topography of the region varies and includes swamps, broad river bottoms, pine barrens, and rich prairie land. Like the rest of Louisiana, the southwest is ethnically diverse but dominated by the Cajuns, the descendants of exiled French settlers from Nova Scotia.

Southwest Louisiana is generally known as Acadiana after the major group of migrants to the area. In 1755 the French settlers of Acadia (now Nova Scotia) were expelled from their homeland by the British military who feared that the Acadians would rebel against them during the French and Indian War. The British dispersed the Acadians throughout the Atlantic British colonies and the West Indies. A few moved temporarily to France. The Acadians had developed a strong sense of family and community identity during their years in Acadia, and the desire to reunite resulted in a gathering of the exiles in southern Louisiana. They settled in family groups along the Mississippi River and soon began to move out along the bayous and prairies of the southwest, centering on the towns of Opelousas and Vermillionville (now Lafayette). The Acadians developed a tight-knit culture based on family, Catholicism, the French language, and a fierce defense of their culture. They were also largely tolerant of other cultures and easily assimilated outsiders into their community. Largely subsistence farmers, the Acadians also engaged in extensive livestock raising. Never as isolated as generally believed, the Acadians interacted with the outside world yet managed to preserve their unique

culture. Not until World War II did the process of Americanization begin in earnest, and since the 1950s a strong cultural preservation movement has motivated the Cajun community.

Alongside the Cajuns existed communities of free people of color generally called Creoles. The descendants of interracial unions between blacks and French settlers, the Creole community shared much in common with their Cajun neighbors. Both groups stressed the importance of family, Catholicism, the French language, and community solidarity. They also emphasized land ownership and personal independence. During the nineteenth century, rural Creoles tended to live in isolated communities such as Frilot Cove and L'Anse de 'Prien Noir (Black Cyprien's Woods). The latter community became an incubator for rural Creole music because it was the home of the musically prominent Ardoin and Fontenot families.

Cajuns and Creoles experienced fairly good relations for most of their history, though lines were drawn. Although each group shared cultural similarities and some regional pride, they tended not to identify with each other. Creoles also separated themselves from "black Creoles," Francophone blacks who had no French blood and had been enslaved before the Civil War. This distinction was so tightly drawn that when some Creoles left in the Great Migration of the 1930s, they moved in groups and settled the same area. This created pockets of Creoles in such places as California. These "exiled Creoles" retained close ties to Louisiana and often imported musicians from home for celebrations. Creoles and black Creoles also consciously avoid the term "black Cajun" preferring to define themselves apart from the dominant Cajun culture.

Though they may have chosen to separate themselves from each other, Cajuns and Creoles engaged in extensive cultural exchange. In no area is this exchange more pronounced than in music. The standard musical ensemble of Acadiana in the early twentieth century was composed of a fiddle and accordion. German immigrants introduced the accordion to the region in the mid-nineteenth century. Early Cajun and Creole musicians preferred the small diatonic accordion (usually referred to as a *'tite noir*). Rhythm was often produced using a metal triangle (*'tite fer*) or a washboard (*frottoir*). Early Cajun and Creole music styles are remarkably similar, and white and blacks musicians often played together. Even the names for both styles, "fais do do" for Cajun and "la la" for Creole, referred to house dances where small children were put to bed before the dance started in earnest.

The seminal figure in early Creole music was Amédé Ardoin. A gifted accordionist, Ardoin fused

blues into the "la la" sound. He proved remarkably popular and was in great demand for white dances. He was the second Creole artist to record, the first being his relative, Douglas Bellard. Both came from the Ardoin-Fontenot family of Evangeline Parish. Ardoin's influence reached Cajun musicians as well and can be heard in the blues-tinged playing of Nathan Abshire and Iry Lejeune. Ardoin's rural blues style persisted in the Creole community through the music of his relatives Bois-Sec Ardoin, Canray Fontenot, and their extended family, which includes current star Sean Ardoin.

The postwar period saw rapid advances in the music of the prairies. Clifton Chenier fused rhythm and blues into Ardoin's style and produced the driving sound of zydeco. Chenier included saxophones and drums in his band and began playing the piano accordion. He also sang many of his lyrics in English, reflecting not only the bilingual nature of Creole society but also the growing fan base among non-French speakers. Chenier was a remarkable blues performer and the revival of his career in the early 1960s did much to expand the popularity of zydeco.

One of the hot beds of zydeco lay outside Louisiana. The region of southeast Texas from Orange to Houston experienced a heavy Cajun and Creole migration during the war years. South Louisianians often jokingly refer to the area as "Cajun Lapland" because Cajuns "lapped" over into Texas. Houston nightclubs provided a venue for the development of zydeco, particularly the more rhythm and blues style. In Acadiana an older, more rustic sound dominated, perhaps best illustrated by the highly percussive and syncopated work of Boozoo Chavis. Chavis regularly participated in zydeco trail rides in which groups of mounted ranchers and farmers rode through the countryside and then held a party at the end of the ride. Band battles are also common between zydeco musicians. Following the death of Clifton Chenier, Chavis and his archrival Andrus "Beau Jocque" Espre often competed for the title of "King of Zydeco."

Innovation is a basic element of zydeco. Just as Chenier added rhythm and blues elements, Beau Jocque mixed funk into the zydeco gumbo. Younger musicians, such as Keith Frank, experiment with rap and soul elements. Zydeco has also been friendly to female performers. Queen Ida, centered in the expatriate community in California, was an early female star. With Rosie Ledet, zydeco found its first sex symbol. Easily fusing blues, zydeco, and soul, Ledet presented a smoldering image on stage and readily turned old male images on their head.

Both zydeco and Cajun music experienced a revival at the end of the twentieth century. Locals

and tourists still fill the dance floors at clubs spread throughout Acadiana, such as Richard's Club (Lawtell), the Y-Ki-Ki (Opelousas), and El Sid O's and Hamilton's Place (both Lafayette). Zydeco can also be heard in New Orleans at the Maple Leaf and the Rock-And-Bowl.

With strong bases in both the local and tourist crowd, zydeco, the blues of the bayou, is vital and growing. That is a testament not only to the power of the music, but to the Creole community that produces it as well.

KEVIN S. FONTENOT

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LOUISIANA RED

b. Iverson Minter, 23 March 1936; Bessemer, AL

Guitarist and singer Louisiana Red, born Iverson Minter, apparently had a difficult childhood as his mother died shortly after he was born, and his father was lynched by the Ku Klux Klan. Harriet Dorsey, Red's grandmother, took the three-year-old in at her home in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Here, Red learned a little music from his grandparents and from playing the harmonica and guitar. While growing up, he was sent to Philadelphia and California but eventually ended up Pittsburgh in the late 1940s, which proved crucial to his musical development. The radio stations WLAC and KDKA played blues and R&B, which taught Red a great deal about Jimmy Reed, Muddy Waters, and Lightnin' Hopkins.

Although Red was not offered a record deal of his own, the Chess brothers extended an invitation for Red to record with Muddy Waters and his band under the stage name "Rocky Fuller." In 1953 at age seventeen, Red entered the U.S. Air Force and was not discharged until 1958. Upon his release, he moved to Newark and played gigs in New York. Red came back to the blues scene in Chicago and recorded his first album, *Lowdown Back Porch Blues*, in the early 1960s for the Roulette/Vogue label. In 1971, he recorded the album *Louisiana Red Sings the Blues* with the Atco record label but was rejected after the record did not sell. Also in the 1970s, Red formed his own blues band called The Bluesettes and played in clubs in Georgia. Despite his considerable rejections in the United States, Red has enjoyed some success in Europe where he often toured. He has learned to combine the musical style of Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters with his own crying harmonica and wailing guitar to create a down-home, high-grooving blues.

HEATHER PINSON

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Millennium Blues (1999, Earwig CD 4943).

LOVE, CLAYTON

b. 15 November 1927; Mattson, MS

Mississippi-born singer/pianist Clayton Love recorded in the early 1950s for Trumpet, Aladdin, and Modern before joining Ike Turner's Kings of Rhythm in 1956 as featured vocalist. Clayton relocated to St. Louis and recorded for Bobbin in 1958, cutting the powerful blues ballad "Limited Love." He continued to be a prominent member of the St. Louis blues scene.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP**Selected Recording**

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LOVE, COY "HOT SHOT"

b. Coy Love Jr., 9 September 1914; Clarkendale, AR
d. 4 June 1980; West Memphis, AR

Sign artist, harmonica player, and well-known Beale Street character. Recorded for Sun (1954) and Mr. Bo Weevil (1973).

FRED J. HAY

Bibliography

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LOVE, PRESTON

b. 26 April 1921; Omaha, NE
d. 12 February 2004; Omaha, NE

After inheriting a saxophone from his older brother "Dude," Preston Love got his first professional gig in 1940. Subsequently, he started taking lessons with Illinois Jacquet's brother, Julius. Love began playing regularly with Lloyd Hunter, Nat Towles, and Snub Mosely. One of Love's earliest influences

was saxophonist Earle Warren who played in the Count Basie band, in which Love briefly replaced Warren in 1943. Love gigged with Lucky Millinder in 1944 and rejoined the Basie Band from 1945 to 1947. After his three-year stint with Basie, Love played occasionally with his friend Johnny Otis and led an orchestra in his own name. Preston Love and His Orchestra had a few recording sessions in the 1950s that were released on such labels as Federal, Chicago, and Spin.

Love moved to California in 1962, where he became a sought-after session player and joined Ray Charles's band in 1966. In 1968, Preston Love and His Orchestra returned to the studio to record Preston Love's *Omaha Bar-B-Q*, which featured Johnny Otis and Shuggie Otis. The album, with such tunes as "Chicken Gumbo" and "Pot Likker," was recorded on the Kent label. During his last years, Love lectured on African American music at universities and wrote for local newspapers, as well as maintained a busy performance schedule including concerts in Europe.

RYAN OLSEN

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Love, Preston. *A Thousand Honey Creeks Later: My Life in Music from Basie to Motown*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997.

Discography: Lord; LSFP**LOVE, WILLIE**

b. 4 November 1906; Duncan, MS
d. 19 August 1953; Jackson, MS

Popular singer/pianist who played throughout the Delta from the 1930s through the early 1950s, often with Sonny Boy Williamson II. Love recorded many excellent sides for Trumpet from 1951 to 1953 that epitomized the vibrant Mississippi juke-joint sound of the time, including "Take It Easy, Baby" and "Nelson Street Blues." He died of alcoholism soon after his last recording session.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

LOWE, SAMMY

LOWE, SAMMY

b. 14 May 1918; Birmingham, AL

d. 17 February 1993; Birmingham, AL

Trumpet player, bandleader, and arranger. Lowe's early career through 1955 was with trumpet player Erskine Hawkins. Through 1961 he participated in many rhythm and blues and rock recording sessions, and it is believed he guided the arrangements of doo-wop sessions for Onyx Records. From 1962 through the end of the decade he was arranger for James Brown's King label sessions.

EDWARD KOMARA

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LOWERY, ROBERT "BOB"

b. 1932; Shuler, AR

Guitarist in the style of Lightnin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, Robert Johnson, and Muddy Waters. Began playing guitar in Arkansas, but moved to Santa Cruz, California, in 1956. Played some on weekends, including a few performances behind Big Mama Thornton in the early 1960s. Since 1987 he has performed concerts and festivals with harmonica player Virgil Thrasher.

EDWARD KOMARA

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LOWRY, PETER B. "PETE"

b. 1 April 1941; Montclair, NJ

Record producer and collector, teacher, writer, historian, researcher, and photographer. Lowry is best known in the blues world for his Trix record label (1972–1978) and his field research in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia from 1969 to 1980. After graduating from Princeton with an A.B. in biology, he pursued medical and biological studies at Rutgers, Columbia, and Université Libre de Bruxelles before immersing himself in blues research. He obtained M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in folklore and

folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. He has also published as William Bentley.

Since 1964, Lowry has given lectures and seminars at many universities around the world, including Yale; written articles for a multitude of music publications, including *Blues Unlimited* as contributing editor; produced albums for Atlantic, Savoy, Jazz, and his own Trix label; and wrote liner notes for blues releases on Atlantic, Columbia Records/Sony, Biograph, Muse, Savoy, and Trix.

Lowry received a U.S. National Endowment grant for the Folk Arts Division in 1978. He worked with Alan Lomax on the folk music collection at the Library of Congress in 1979–1980. This work eventually produced a release for the series "Deep River of Song" for PBS and the Rounder CD collection devoted to Lomax. From 1985 to 1987, he taught courses on African American music at the University of Pennsylvania.

Lowry's personal collection consists of more than twelve thousand records in various formats and genres, hundreds of interviews, five thousand still photographs, and hundreds of unreleased field recordings along with hundreds of books with a focus on blues and jazz. He has several pending books, including *Keep on Truckin', Blues of the Southeast in Context, Piedmont Views and Portraits—A Photographic Foray, Happy Am I: Elder Lightfoot Michaux*, and an historical overview of blues music in Australia.

Lowry resides in Australia where he has been granted Distinguished Artists Residency.

GAILE WELKER

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LUANDREW, ALBERT

(See *Sunnyland Slim*)

LUCAS, WILLIAM "LAZY BILL"

b. 29 May 1918; Wynne, AR

d. 12 December 1982; Minneapolis, MN

Pianist. Son of a farmer who bought a piano with the proceeds from the sale of a pig. He began playing blues piano seriously after hearing Big Joe Williams in 1940. He moved to Chicago the next year, where in 1954 he recorded for the Chance label. He moved to

Minneapolis in 1964 where he continued performing until his death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

LUMBER CAMPS

Lumber camps first appeared across the South in the nineteenth century and continued as the principal labor system for the emerging timber industry. Blacks comprised a significant portion of this labor force as the lumber industry clear-cut old growth forests throughout the region and removed the milled trees by rail for use in industry and home building. Blues music developed from the experience of living and working in these lumber camps.

The early lumber industry in the South grew out of the abundance of cypress trees found in the lower Mississippi Valley at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The industry expanded in 1803 when steam-powered saws began milling the first logs. Slave labor cut and hauled the trees out of the forests. Saw mills in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Natchez, and Vicksburg processed the lumber that slaves rafted down the river from logging areas.

Following the Civil War, railroads replaced the river as the primary source for transporting lumber. Lumbermen bought large tracks of land and constructed their own rail lines into timber areas. Workers and their families lived in towns or camps constructed and controlled by the lumber companies. The workers traveled to and from work on company trains and wagons. Families shopped for their essentials in the company store and the children of white workers went to a company school. Everyone lived in company housing areas known as quarters.

Blacks and whites lived in segregated quarters and often performed different roles in the logging process. In some of the camps, the white workers cut the trees, sharpened the blades, and measured and hauled the logs out of the forest. The black workers laid and repaired the company's railroad track, loaded the logs on the flatcars, cleaned the logging area, and carried the water.

Accounts vary about the quality of life in lumber camps. Some lumber companies leased convict labor, while others resorted to peonage. Although the federal government outlawed peonage in 1867, some

lumbermen continued its practice in parts of the South. Workers in some lumber camps found that their pay fell short of covering their living expenses. The cost of goods purchased at the company store as well as the rents charged for housing exceeded the pay for the work performed. Workers could spend their lives in endless debt. Companies controlled the roads and rail lines in and out of the logging areas and prevented the escape of anyone who tried to break out of this involuntary servitude.

In other parts of the South, the company compensated workers at a level above peonage. Some companies attracted black and white families who stayed on in the lumber camps for more than one generation. Even with the dangerous work and harsh living conditions, some blacks found the available work and facilities of the camps to be a better option than sharecropping.

The living conditions in lumber camps, however, were separate and unequal. Companies paid black workers less than white workers and provided black families with inferior housing. Companies also provided a school and teachers for the white children while they ignored black children and their education. Blacks in most cases provided their own teachers. Whites expected blacks to be subservient according to the law of Jim Crow. White men also made uninvited amorous forays into the black quarters. Racial tensions, hostilities, and violence often erupted between the two groups. The company quarter boss made the peace in the camp in most cases rather than local law enforcement.

In the western parts of the lower Mississippi Valley and East Texas, most lumber camps celebrated June 19, Emancipation Day in Texas. Companies gave all workers the day off and provided blacks with food and drinks for lunch. Other forms of entertainment and social events took place in the lumber camps. In many camps, blacks crowded around a piano in their quarters on a Saturday night as the player made music until the small hours. Men and women danced to a blues style of piano playing that later became boogie-woogie.

Lumber camp life inspired a number of blues songs, many of which indicate the ambivalence felt by a black worker in the lumber camp. Lumber camps also inspired Ma Rainey's "Log Camp Blues" recorded in 1928, Robert Hill's "Lumber Yard Blues" recorded in 1936, and Elzadie Robinson's "Sawmill Blues" recorded in 1926.

BILL GRAVES

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- Oliver, Paul. *Blues Fell This Morning*. New York: Horizon Press, 1960.

LUPINE

Detroit label run by Robert L. West (1912–1983) in 1962–1964. Notable artists include Mack Rice, the Falcons/Ohio Untouchables with guitarist Robert Ward, and the Primettes, who would go to Motown and become the Supremes.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: McGrath

LUSK, "PROFESSOR" EDDIE

- b. 21 September 1948; Chicago, IL
d. 26 August 1992; Chicago, IL

Both of Lusk's parents were ministers in the Pentecostal Church (his mother had been the first woman ever to be ordained as a minister in the Pentecostal faith), and they ran the Lusk Bible Way Center in Chicago. His family moved to Chicago after an unidentified arsonist burned their Arkansas home to the ground. He played piano in his church as a young boy, but he was more attracted to the blues that he heard played in Pepper's Lounge, which at the time was one of Chicago's most well-known blues clubs. At Pepper's, Lusk was exposed to the likes of Buddy Guy, Howlin' Wolf, and Junior Wells.

After earning a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University in business administration, Lusk became the music director at the Shiloh Academy, a private school run by the Seventh Day Adventists, which is where he earned the nickname "Professor" given to him by Professor Longhair. For three years, Lusk performed regularly with Luther Allison. In the 1980s, Lusk recorded with Fenton Robinson, Syl Johnson, Buddy Guy, and Michael Coleman. Also, he toured with Jimmy Dawkins, Phil Guy, and Otis Rush. Lusk recorded one solo album entitled *Professor Strut* with his group Professor's Blues Revue for the

Delmark label. Featuring vocalist Karen Carroll, this album demonstrates the influence of blues, soul, and gospel. Lusk, being diagnosed first with AIDS and subsequently with colon cancer, took his own life in 1992 by jumping into the Chicago River.

RYAN OLSEN

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LUTCHER, JOE

- b. Joseph Woodman, 23 December 1919;
Lake Charles, LA

Alto saxophonist and occasional vocalist who moved to Los Angeles in 1942 and later formed his own band, the Society Cats. Recorded in a style straddling jazz and blues for Specialty, Capitol, Modern, and other labels between 1947 and 1952 before abandoning secular music for religion in the mid-1950s.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

- AMG (Richie Unterberger); Larkin

Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

See also **Capitol; Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM; Specialty/Fidelity/Juke Box**

LUTCHER, NELLIE

- b. 15 October 1915; Lake Charles, LA

Singer and pianist from musical family. Signed by Capitol in 1947 after performing one song on radio. Lutchler scored big crossover R&B/pop hits with "Hurry on Down" and others in 1947–1948. Lutchler cultivated an individual style and delivery, but performed only intermittently after the mid-1950s.

KENNY MATHIESON

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LYNCHING AND THE BLUES

The cruelest horror of American life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the occasion of mob violence that murdered thousands of people outside any rule of law or moral standard. These acts of vigilante injustice most often involved the public lynching, or illegal hanging, of individuals only suspected of committing crimes. In the South, mobs lynched many blacks for no other reason than their having acted outside the harsh social restrictions of Jim Crow (see the *Racial Issues and the Blues* entry).

Historic records at the Tuskegee Institute indicate that from 1882 until 1932 more than thirty-three hundred blacks were lynched in the United States with most of these murders taking place in the South. These numbers included men, women, and children. As frightening as these recorded numbers appear, which average more than one lynching a week for a half century, they are incomplete. The actual numbers for mob violence are higher when other forms of murder, including shootings and riots, are considered.

Lynching provided post-bellum society with a way to control free blacks. Lynching predominated in rural areas and occurred most often during periods of economic hardships. The racist belief that white southerners falsely maintained was that lynching protected white womanhood from black rapists. A much more complex motivation existed, however, because many instances of white men raping and sexually harassing black women went unchallenged. Should a black man defend a black woman, he too would face an angry lynch mob.

Lynching was gruesome. Often the victims were first mutilated and castrated while pleading their innocence. Their body parts were exhibited as souvenirs much like the parts of a fox after a hunt. Then they were strung up by a rope. While still alive, these individuals were shot with bullets and then set on fire while hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of local citizens gathered for the spectacle. Local law enforcement documented that these victims died “at the hands of parties unknown.”

Anti-lynching activists worked courageously during this period of American history. Journalist Ida B. Wells grew up in Holly Springs, Mississippi,

and published her articles in *Free Speech* in Memphis until an angry group of whites destroyed her newspaper in 1892. She moved onto New York before eventually settling in Chicago. She challenged the myth that rape was the cause of lynching in the South. She also organized foreign opinion that came to challenge American mob violence.

Jesse Daniel Ames of Texas worked through a group known as the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, a group of white women organized in Atlanta. Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP, worked tirelessly to challenge the injustice and false arguments that supported lynching. In spite of their efforts, Congress failed to pass any anti-lynching legislation.

The New Deal programs of the 1930s helped rescue the impoverished South and lynching began to decline. More importantly, white business leaders in the South came to understand that outside investors were reluctant to bring their capital into such a violent region that tolerated lynching. Even after this decline, however, blacks still suffered incidents of lynching throughout the twentieth century.

Paul Oliver notes that the fear of lynching was very real for early blues artists living in the Jim Crow South. Louisiana-born James “Boodle-It” Wiggins had completed a number of blues recordings in Chicago and Richmond, Indiana, in 1928 and 1929. Upon a return trip back home to Bogalusa in 1929, a white woman took offense when he failed to step aside for her on a public street. A local mob lynched him immediately and also shot him four times. Wiggins was a man of great strength and was actually still alive when his rope was cut down from the tree. While he survived the ordeal, he never sang about the incident.

Adam Gussow maintains that the subject of lynching remained unmentioned by a great many blues artists. The fear of an angry response from white listeners was all too real and vivid for them. They compensated for this dodge by coding lyrical references to “lynching blues” in a number of songs. He notes Bessie Smith’s recording of “Blue Spirit Blues” in 1929 and Little Brother Montgomery’s “The First Time I Met You” recorded in 1936 as two such examples.

A spare number of blues songs were recorded about hanging and lynching. Bertha Hill recorded “Hangman Blues” in 1928 and Blind Lemon Jefferson recorded “Hangman’s Blues” in the same year. Joshua White recorded “Strange Fruit” in 1941. “Strange Fruit” gave a graphic description of the lynching landscape. It was written by a New York schoolteacher, Lewis Allen, and first recorded by

LYNCHING AND THE BLUES

Billie Holiday in 1939. Holiday showed great courage in recording "Strange Fruit" as she deflected questions about its meaning and controversy for the rest of her career.

BILL GRAVES

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LYNN, BARBARA

b. Barbara Lynn Ozen, 16 January 1942; Beaumont, TX

Although commercial success has come to her primarily as an R&B singer and songwriter, Barbara Lynn's musical roots are deep in the blues. Trained as a pianist in her childhood, the sounds of early rock 'n' roll led her to switch to the guitar in her early teens; early influences on her playing style include Guitar Slim and Jimmy Reed. Shortly thereafter she formed her first group, Bobbie Lynn and the Idols. Though technically too young to be allowed into bars and clubs, she and her groups began playing in such venues regularly anyway and soon attracted the attention of producer Huey P. Meaux, who arranged for her to record at Cosimo's recording studio in New Orleans.

Her breakout hit came in 1962, with an original song entitled "You'll Lose a Good Thing." Hit singles and albums followed throughout the 1960s, and she was picked up by the Atlantic label in 1967. In the early 1970s she quit the music business to focus on raising her children, though she continued to tour occasionally. Lynn returned to active music-making in the early 1980s, embarking on a successful Japanese tour in 1984. Throughout the 1990s she continued recording and playing live shows, making

several well-received albums for such prestigious labels as Bullseye Blues and Antone's. A collection of notable recordings from her late 1960s and early 1970s work with Atlantic was released by Ichiban in 1994. *Hot Night Tonight*, an album recorded for Antone's in 2000, featured two rap performances by her son Bachelor Wise.

RICK ANDERSON

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Discography: AMG

LYNN, TRUDY

b. Lee Audrey Nelms, 8 August 1947; Houston, TX

Vocalist and songwriter. Lynn first performed as a teenager with Albert Collins, followed by stints in several Houston bands. Recorded singles and CDs for various labels, including Sinett, Crazy Cajun, JamStone, Ichiban, Ruf, and Jus' Blues.

ROGER WOOD

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Discography: AMG

LYONS, LONNIE

b. Unknown
d. Unknown

Pianist, singer. Known for his three 1949 sessions for the Freedom label, and one for *Sittin' in With* in 1950, all recorded in Houston. Valued for his frenetic piano solos in boogie-woogie style.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

M

M & O BLUES

“M & O Blues” was first recorded on June 12, 1930, by Walter Davis for Victor Records (issued on Victor V38618). A twelve-measure blues with an AAB lyric scheme, its melody makes a distinctive leap from the upper octave tonic to the minor third above it and back, then the same leap in the second measure. “M & O” in the title refers to the railroad. Davis’s song was a hit popular enough that he made a sequel “M & O Blues no. 2 (My Baby’s Come Back)” in 1931 (Victor 23302) and a “no. 3 (My Baby Called the Police)” in 1932 (Victor 23333). He would also record for Victor the same tune to the L&N Railroad in 1933. His “M & O Blues” should not be confused with the 1930 blues of the same title but different melody of Mississippi Delta bluesman Willie Brown.

The Davis tune was adapted to new words by other bluesmen. The piano accompanist on Davis’s original 1930 recording, Roosevelt Sykes, would use it on his “Mr. Sykes Blues” in 1932 (Vocalion 02950). St. Louis guitarist Teddy Darby used it for his “Low Mellow” in 1933 (Bluebird 5412).

The most notable treatment of the melody for guitar was devised by Mississippi Delta bluesman Robert Johnson. “Rambling on My Mind” (1936, Vocalion 03519) employs the alternating or “rocking” boogie bass beat with bottleneck-slide licks picked on the guitar’s treble strings, a remarkable and rare combination of rural-slide and urban-boogie characteristics. His “When You Got a Good Friend” (1936) uses a “walking” piano boogie bass but with plucked

piano-style ornaments; this version would not be released until 1961.

Hence, of the two Johnson treatments, “Rambling on My Mind” would be copied by post-1945 bluesmen such as Boyd Gilmore of Arkansas (1952, Modern), Johnson protégé Robert Lockwood with pianist Otis Spann (1960, Candid), Big Joe Williams (1964, Milestone), and Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup (1967, Delmark).

The tune in its Johnson incarnations also entered the rock repertoire. In 1966 Eric Clapton, performing as a member of John Mayall’s Bluesbreakers, performed “Rambling on My Mind” for his first-ever solo vocal recording. The less likely “When You Got a Good Friend” was included on Johnny Winter’s LP *Johnny Winter And* (1969, Columbia).

EDWARD KOMARA

MABON, WILLIE

b. 24 October 1925; Hollywood, TN

d. 19 April 1985; Paris, France

Chicago blues singer and pianist Willie Mabon was born in the Memphis suburb of Hollywood. His first musical instrument was the harmonica, which he began playing at the age of eight. He developed an interest in playing the guitar, but due to the loss of a finger in an accident at home, he started teaching himself the rudiments of piano on an upright owned by his neighbor. After the death of his mother, his

MABON, WILLIE

family moved to Chicago in 1941 where he received formal piano lessons.

Mabon served with the Marines during World War II and returned to Chicago in 1946. He began associating with various jazz and blues pianists, including Cripple Clarence Lofton, Big Maceo Merriweather, Roosevelt Sykes, and Sunnyland Slim, all of whom had an enormous impact on his piano style.

By the late 1940s, he was gigging regularly throughout the city with the Blues Rockers. Through Sunnyland Slim, Mabon made his first recordings in 1949, which were then issued on Apollo under the name Big Willie. Later that year, he recorded a handful of sides with the Blues Rockers for Chicago deejay Al Benson, who then sold the material to Aristocrat. A second recording session for the label followed before Mabon departed to pursue a solo career.

In 1952, he recorded his signature hit, "I Don't Know," for Benson's newly formed Parrot label. Inspired by Lofton's 1939 recording, the song showcased Mabon's sly vocal delivery and jazz-inflected blues piano style. Unable to provide proper distribution, Benson subsequently sold the record to Chess and it became an immediate sensation. The influential song would remain on the R&B charts for nineteen weeks and eventually reach number one. Mabon's sophisticated approach contrasted with much of the rougher-edged Chicago blues being recorded at the time. His music employed piano and saxophone as the main lead instruments, as opposed to the guitar- and harmonica-dominated Chicago blues of the early 1950s.

Mabon used this successful formula a second time to reach number one on the R&B charts in 1953 with the release of "I'm Mad," a song that shared the sarcastic humor and stop-time structure of "I Don't Know." The recording's popularity even inspired a hit answer song, Mitzi Mars's "I'm Glad" on Checker. Mabon continued to record for Chess for several more years, and enjoyed his last major hit in 1954 with the humorous boast "Poison Ivy," which peaked at number seven. He also recorded the original Willie Dixon-penned "The Seventh Son" for Chess in 1955, which went on to become a blues standard.

Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, Mabon recorded for Federal, Mad, Formal, and USA, and had a few regional hits, including the insinuating "Got to Have Some." He worked outside of music during much of the late 1960s, except for occasional gigs with Howlin' Wolf in Chicago and a few national package tours.

Shortly after returning from a successful European tour, Mabon decided to relocate to Paris, France, in 1972, a move spurred on by the existing lackluster American blues scene. He continued to perform and record frequently abroad, and remained very popular

throughout Europe. Mabon died in Paris at the age of fifty-nine after a lengthy illness.

GENE TOMKO

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Whitburn, Joel, *Top R&B Singles: 1942-1999*. Port Washington, WI: Record Research, 2000.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

MACK, LONNIE

b. Lonnie McIntosh, 18 July 1941; Harrison, IN

Lonnie Mack grew up in rural Indiana where he listened to musicians as diverse as George Jones, Merle Travis, and Bobby Bland. He began playing guitar as a child, citing local bluesman Ralph Trotts as a primary influence. In 1958, Mack purchased a Gibson Flying V guitar, which became a personal trademark. At that time, he was playing the roadhouse circuit around Indiana and Kentucky in groups such as Lonnie and the Twilighters, and by 1961 he was in the Troy Seals Band. Session work followed for the King label with Mack performing with various artists including Freddie King. He began an association with the Fraternity label and in 1963 he released the instrumental single "Memphis," a rendition of the Chuck Berry song. Featuring Mack's fiery intensity, the single went to number five on the *Billboard* charts. During this period he showed his abilities as a rhythm and blues singer. Despite his success on the Fraternity label, he signed with the Elektra label in 1968 after an appreciative profile by Al Kooper was published in *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Although he recorded the guitar solo to the Doors' "Roadhouse Blues," his association with Elektra produced some lukewarm recordings, and he broke away from the record industry for several years. He returned to recording in 1977, this time with Capitol Records, but the inattention to his two country music-tinged albums led to another seclusion from recording. Stevie Ray Vaughan, a longtime fan, persuaded Mack to move to Austin, whereupon Mack built a following in the local club scene. His first release on Alligator, *Strike Like Lightning* released in 1985, was produced by Vaughan, and it featured

Mack playing with flashpoint intensity. A follow-up release on Alligator in 1987 was less stimulating. In 1988 Mack moved to Epic Records, which resulted in an undistinguished studio album. His last recording to date is an enervating live recording from 1990, titled *Attack of the Killer V*.

JOHN OTIS

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Discography: AMG

MacLEOD, DOUG

b. 21 April 1946; New York City, NY

Singer/guitarist whose lyrics often wax philosophical. Plays acoustic guitar in a distinctly percussive manner, influenced by guitarist Ernest Banks who he met while serving in the Navy in Norfolk, Virginia. MacLeod moved to Los Angeles in 1974, where he did pop and jazz session work. He formed the Doug MacLeod Band (electric) in 1978, recording for HighTone and Volt, and backing numerous blues legends on West Coast gigs. In 1993, MacLeod returned to solo, acoustic guitar, favoring a National Tricone (resonator) for both straight picking and slide. He was signed by AudioQuest in 1994. As of 2004, MacLeod had released eleven albums for various labels. He also writes for *Blues Revue* and hosts a weekly blues program on KKJZ-FM in Long Beach, California.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: AMG

MACON, ALBERT

b. 15 February 1920; Society Hill, AL
d. 12 May 1993; Society Hill, AL

Acoustic guitarist who performed mostly in east Alabama and west Georgia, with an occasional tour

of Holland and Europe. From the early 1950s until his death, he teamed up with guitarist Robert Thomas. His day job for forty years was as a school bus driver. His sudden death was from kidney failure following treatment for a bullet wound.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MACON, JOHN WESLEY "MR. SHORTSTUFF"

b. 1933; Crawford, MS
d. 28 December 1973; Macon, MS

Harris gives birth year of 1923. Singer/guitarist Macon was introduced to the blues audience by his cousin and fellow Crawford resident Big Joe Williams. His insistent rhythmic figures give him some stylistic kinship with north Mississippi players such as R. L. Burnside. He made several albums in the 1960s, usually partnered by Williams, but returned to obscurity.

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

MACON, Q. T.

b. 17 March 1934; Bolivar, TN
d. 12 April 1994; East St. Louis, IL

Singer and guitarist whose early influences were Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Lightnin' Hopkins. Macon moved to St. Louis in the early 1950s and formed his own band in the early 1960s. His 1988 Pulsar record "Blow Wind" was a local hit, even becoming a performance standard during his last years.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MACY'S

Macy Lela Henry, who, with her husband C. D. Henry, owned Macy's Record Distributing Company in Houston, Texas, created the Macy's label in July 1949, giving it the slogan "Queen of Hits." In its two and a half years of operation, Macy's produced about sixty releases of country music, mostly by honky-tonk, Western swing, and Cajun artists, the most famous being the singer/fiddler Harry Choates and the singer Jim Reeves, then at the start of his career. The label's blues list, though smaller, boasted regional hits like Lester Williams's "Wintertime Blues" and Clarence Garlow's "Bon Ton Roula," as well as releases by Smokey Hogg, jump-blues singer Hubert Robinson, and other artists based in southeast Texas. Most of Macy's sessions were held in Houston's ACA Studios, engineered by Bill Holford, and supervised by Steve Poncio, originally a clerk in the distribution company, who went on to produce blues artists for other Texas labels.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: McGrath

See also Garlow, Clarence "Bon Ton"; Williams, Lester

MAD/M&M

Chicago jazz and blues label of the 1950s and 1960s. The label was founded by tenor saxophonist Tommy "Madman" Jones (1922–1993), who started the label in 1957 initially to record himself. Other acts included blues artists Willie Mabon, Honey Brown, Billy (The Kid) Emerson, and Piney Brown; instrumental acts and combos Tony Smith and His Aristocrats, Lefty Bates, and Red Holloway; and doo-wop groups The Equallos and Willie Logan and the Plaids. Jones's company afforded jazz artists Oscar Brown Jr., E. Parker McDougal, and Clarence Wheeler and the Enforcers their first recording opportunities under their own names. During 1959–1962, the Mad label was part of a combine that included the Apex and Dempsey labels. In 1960, Jones opened a subsidiary

called M&M, which he reserved for jazz-oriented efforts. By the 1970s, M&M had turned into a label of sporadic LPs featuring Jones himself. Jones's last effort was a retrospective CD that he released in 1991.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath**MAGHETT, SAMUEL GENE "MAGIC SAM"**

- b. 14 February 1937; Grenada, MS
d. 1 December 1969; Chicago, IL

Magic Sam was generally acknowledged as among the most brilliant of the young up-and-coming guitarists on a crowded Chicago blues scene in the 1950s and 1960s. Along with players like Otis Rush and Buddy Guy, Maghett helped introduce a more modern sound on electric guitar to the blues. He also was a gifted, expressive singer who was certainly capable of producing music with crossover appeal, much as B. B. King had done. But a bad heart felled him in 1969 at the age of thirty-two, just as a defining performance at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival earlier that year was starting to earn him a reputation beyond his Chicago base and possibly a lucrative new record deal with Stax.

Growing up in a farming family in the delta, young Sam Maghett made his own primitive instruments from cigar boxes and wire, and taught himself to play the songs he heard on the radio. When he was thirteen, the family moved to Chicago. Within a few years, Maghett was playing gigs around town in Homesick James's band. By the time he was eighteen, Maghett was leading his own band under the stage name of Good Rockin' Sam.

By age twenty, Magic Sam had both his new, permanent stage name and his first recording session, for the Cobra label. That first session produced "All Your Love," which for many years was his signature song (the melody of which was, by most accounts, reworked into quite a few of his other songs as well). Sam recorded several other 45s for Cobra during the next few years, finding local success with "21 Days in Jail" and "Easy Baby."

Cobra, however, folded in 1960. Around the same time, Maghett was drafted into the Army. Several of his biographies report that he went AWOL and returned home to Chicago. Some biographers report he received some time in the brig before a less than honorable discharge from the service. Whatever the details of his time in the military, by the early 1960s Maghett was again active performing around Chicago as Magic Sam. He had recorded a handful of tracks for the Chief label in 1960, but apparently did not record again until 1966, when he recorded for the Crash and Delmark labels.

In 1967, Magic Sam began a period of artistic inspiration and professional success that lasted until his death. The 1967 release of the album *West Side Soul* on Delmark brought Maghett renewed attention for his modern-sounding blues—a music as accessible as the popular rock of the period. He even traveled to San Francisco to play at the Winterland and Fillmore clubs, which were generally associated with the top rock bands of that era. In 1968, he recorded his second Delmark album, *Black Magic*, which met with similar success on its release in 1969.

In August 1969, Maghett gave what was reportedly the performance of his life at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival—a performance to rival that of Janis Joplin’s at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival, a performance that could lift an artist from regional favorite to national star. (His Ann Arbor performance was later released as *Magic Sam Live* by Delmark.) Stax Records was reportedly negotiating with Maghett at the time of his death of a heart attack on December 1, 1969.

As a record of his impact, he left the two polished Delmark albums, the Cobra and other assorted 45s, and a legend as one of the most potent blues guitarists of his generation. Magic Sam was posthumously inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in 1982.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG; LSF

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MAGIC SLIM

b. Morris Holt, 7 August 1937; Torrance, MS

Veteran Chicago blues singer and guitarist Magic Slim was born Morris Holt and was raised in Torrance, Mississippi, a small rural community outside of Grenada. Holt’s first musical experience was singing in church, where he attended regularly with his family. A fan of country and western music, he also developed an interest in piano and took lessons from the church pianist. After losing a finger in a farming accident, he switched to a homemade guitar, which he made using wire from his mother’s broom. His father later bought him his first store-bought guitar as a reward for working hard at picking cotton.

Holt moved to Chicago in 1955 with the hopes of playing music professionally. While in Chicago, he developed a deep interest in the blues and reunited with childhood friend Magic Sam, who gave him the moniker Magic Slim and began giving him pointers on guitar and bass. Not yet the accomplished musician he would later become, Slim found it difficult to break into Chicago’s competitive blues scene with his limited skills. Although Magic Sam occasionally allowed him to play bass, he was routinely denied the opportunity to sit in with many musicians such as Howlin’ Wolf and Otis Rush.

Frustrated by his failure to make it as a Chicago musician, Slim returned to Mississippi in the late 1950s, where he worked outside music for the next several years. During this time, he taught his brother Nick to play bass and his brother Baby Lee to play drums, and the trio performed on weekends at area juke joints throughout the next five years.

Slim moved back to Chicago in the early 1960s as a much more seasoned musician and began playing with singer and bass player Robert “Dancin” Perkins’s band, Mr. Pitiful and the Ter-Drops. Perkins eventually turned the band over to Slim, who altered the spelling and used the band’s name throughout his career. Brother Nick moved to Chicago to replace Perkins as bass player and remained with the Teardrops for three decades.

The band made a couple of recordings for the small Chicago label Ja-Wes in 1966 and continued to gig relentlessly in the South Side clubs. Their stripped-down, hardcore approach to Chicago blues developed a strong local following and Slim became a favorite guest at Hound Dog Taylor’s popular Sunday afternoon gigs at Florence’s Lounge. When Taylor

MAGIC SLIM

decided to leave this coveted gig in the early 1970s, he tapped Slim to replace him. His stinging, vibrato-drenched guitar playing, powerful vocals, and seemingly endless repertoire of blues songs combined with the Teardrops driving shuffle sound exemplified the very spirit of modern Chicago blues.

Slim gained national attention in 1979 when the band recorded for Alligator's Living Chicago Blues series, and the group continued to record numerous solid releases for a variety of labels, including Rooster, Blind Pig, Wolf, and Storyville. The band went through several lineup changes in the 1990s, including the departure of brother Nick and longtime guitarist John Primer, but Magic Slim and his Teardrops continued to be a powerful force on the national and international blues scene.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

MAIDEN, SIDNEY

b. 1923; Mansfield, LA

A smoky singer and a harp player, strongly rooted in the John Lee Williamson style, Sidney Maiden went to California during the war years, playing and recording with K. C. Douglas, Mercy Dee, and Cool Papa Sadler from the late 1940s to the early 1960s when he drifted into obscurity.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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MAISON DU SOUL

The founding of the Maison du Soul record label came as a response to the number of requests Floyd Soileau, the owner of Floyd's Music Shop in Ville Platte, Louisiana, received for zydeco recordings in

his store. Having already experienced some success with both Cajun and swamp pop records, Soileau was ideally suited to enter the market. Soileau's first major success was to sign Boozoo Chavis. Chavis had had a huge hit with "Paper in My Shoe" in the 1950s, but had grown frustrated with the music business and retired to train horses. Soileau saw Chavis's popularity picking up in the local clubs and hired him. His raw, rural-based zydeco was far from the more blues-oriented style Clifton Chenier was playing, but became immensely popular. Soileau also signed Sidney Simien who was attempting to resurrect his career as a zydeco singer after his long career in R&B and swamp pop. The phenomenal million-selling "My Toot Toot" made the label a zydeco mecca for local groups. Maison du Soul has had moderate success as a blues label, publishing records by Tabby Thomas and Walter Washington, but its forte has been and continues to be zydeco.

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: McGrath

See also Chavis, Boozoo; Chenier, Clifton; Simien, "Rockin" Sidney; Soileau, Floyd

MAKE ME A PALLET ON YOUR FLOOR

American folk song of probable black origin. The song most likely dates from the end of the nineteenth century. Its earliest known appearance is in the 1908 piano ragtime composition "Southern Rag Medley No. 1" by black concert pianist Blind Boone. The other early musical source is also a piano rag, "10th Street Rag" by white Texas folk pianist Euday L. Bowman (1914, unpublished). The lyrics first appear in a 1911 article by folklorist Howard Odum who had transcribed them from a performance he had heard in Mississippi a few years before. The first recording to quote the melody was a 1917 Columbia disk by W. C. Handy's band of "Sweet Child," a song by Stovall and Ewing. It was Handy who first published a song version of "Make Me a Pallet" in 1923 with words by Dave

Elman and retitled “Atlanta Blues.” This version was recorded by blues singer Sara Martin and others.

In the later 1920s, “Make Me a Pallet” appeared in blues recordings by Ethel Waters, Virginia Liston, Lillian Glinn, and Mississippi John Hurt (under the title “Ain’t No Tellin”). It also occurs as part of a medley in a historically important recording by Henry Thomas titled “Bob McKinney.” Other important pre-war recordings were made by Jelly Roll Morton and Jimmy and Mama Yancey. Postwar recordings include those by Gus Cannon, Little Brother Montgomery, Brownie McGhee, Mississippi John Hurt, and Odetta.

“Make Me a Pallet” has always enjoyed popularity among white as well as black folk musicians. Early recorded versions include those by hillbilly groups such as the Leake County Revelers, the Stripling Brothers, the Dixie Ramblers (“Franklin County Blues”), and performers such as Woody Guthrie (“Bed on the Floor”) and Cisco Houston.

Although often described as a blues, “Make Me a Pallet” is an example of a proto-blues, predating the emergence of the fully integrated blues style by a number of years. In fact, the song has little in common musically with regular blues. It has a sixteen-measure structure, which, in the key of C, typically runs as follows:

F/	F/	C/	C/
F/	F/	C/	C/
C/	E ⁷ /	Am/	Fm ⁶ /
C/	D ⁷ G ⁷ /	C/	C/

Particularly unusual is the F to C (IV–I) movement played twice in the first eight measures which, perhaps more than any other single feature, gives a distinctive character to the music. Most performances of the song just use this sixteen-bar structure repeated as necessary to changing text, although some precede it with a verse (for example, Ethel Waters’s 1926 recording and Handy’s “Atlanta Blues,” which adds both a verse and a patter chorus).

Only one stanza of the lyrics is standard. Typically this runs:

Make me a pallet on the floor [TWICE]
 Make it soft, make it low,
 Make it so my good girl won’t know,
 Just make me a pallet on the floor.

Other stanzas are drawn from a wide pool of floating folk lyrics.

It seems likely that the song has over time undergone a metamorphosis in terms of expression and manner of performance. Originally it was probably performed quite fast and light, as is evidenced by its appearance in early ragtime instrumentals and by the performances of early bluesmen such as Mississippi

John Hurt, Gus Cannon, and Henry Thomas. The slower, bluesier style of performance—exemplified by Mama Yancey—is most likely a later development.

PETER MUIR

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MALACO/WALDOXY

Record label founded in 1969 in Jackson, Mississippi, by Tommy Couch and Gerald “Wolf” Stephenson, initially to record and lease singles of the artists they handled through their booking agency. Its first national success was “Misty Blue” by Dorothy Moore in 1975. Through Dave Clark, who arrived to the label

in 1980, Malaco with its subsidiary Waldoxy built a first-rate group of soul-blues artists including Z. Z. Hill, Denise LaSalle, Latimore, and Marvin Sease. Hill's 1982 "Down Home Blues" was a success on single and album, selling 500,000 copies. The label also rejuvenated the career of Bobby "Blue" Bland, whose first Malaco album delivered his hit "For Members Only," and that of Little Milton. In 1985 it bought the Muscle Shoals Studio, incorporating its sound into its releases. It has also had the gospel labels Savoy and Blackberry. It remains one of the largest labels of contemporary black Southern music today, and on its thirtieth anniversary in 1999, it released a box-set retrospective titled *The Last Soul Company*.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: McGrath

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MALLARD, SAX

b. Oett Mallard, 2 October 1915; Chicago, IL
d. 29 August 1986; Chicago, IL

Jazz and blues saxophonist and clarinetist. He toured with many swing bands and combos, including Nat King Cole, Andy Kirk, and Duke Ellington during the 1930s and early 1940s. After World War II, he joined the Jump Jackson combo and became an active session man in the Chicago blues recording industry, employing his smooth alto sax blowing behind Big Bill Broonzy, Washboard Sam, Roosevelt Sykes, Eddie Boyd, Tampa Red, Arbee Stidham, Rosetta Howard, and Dinah Washington, among others. Mallard recorded as a leader for Aristocrat (1947) while also backing Andrew Tibbs and the Dozier Boys. He switched to tenor sax around 1950, and recorded as leader for Chess (1951–1952) and Mercury (1952). During the 1950s, he was busy in recording sessions accompanying Mitzi Mars, Coronets, Bobby Prince, Guitar Slim, and the Moonglows. In the 1960s he recorded behind Earl Hooker and Sunnyland Slim, and in 1970 Delmark used Mallard on a Roosevelt Sykes session. His last notable appearance was with the Blind John Davis Jump Band at the Chicago Jazz Festival in 1981.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP

MALO, RON

b. 29 August 1935; IL
d. 15 August 1992; Burbank, IL

Audio engineer best known for his tenure at Chess Records from 1960 through 1975. He is credited with upgrading the sound at the label's 2120 South Michigan Avenue studio, and for engineering most Chess sessions during that time.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MALONE, DAVID

(See *Kimbrough, David, Jr.*)

MALONE, JOHN JACOB "J. J."

b. 20 August 1935; Decatur, AL
d. 20 February 2004; Maui, HI

Vocalist, pianist, and guitarist. His group, the Rhythm Rockers, recorded a single in Fresno in 1962; when the band broke up in 1966 he moved to Oakland. He recorded singles for Galaxy/Fantasy and Stephens (1969–1974) and albums for Red Lightnin', Cherrie, Eli Mile High, Fedora, and Blues Express.

RAY ASTBURY

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See also Fedora; Oakland; Red Lightnin'

MAMA TALK TO YOUR DAUGHTER

Originally recorded in 1954 by J. B. Lenoir, a blues artist of the 1950s and 1960s, this song has been recorded by quite a few other major blues artists: Magic Sam, Magic Slim, Robert Nighthawk, John Lee Hooker, Johnny Winter, Lonnie Brooks, and John Mayall. Lenoir is also usually given the song-writing credit, though sometimes credit is also attributed to Lenoir's alto saxophone sideman Alex Atkins. As a fast-paced boogie, it is one of the most infectious with a groove that can be augmented by various rhythms and counter-rhythms and by numerous lyrical variations. This song was a tune well known by Chicago bluesmen and audiences: Robert "Mojo" Elem's version of the song occurs on the soundtrack to the documentary *And This Is Maxwell Street* and Robert Nighthawk's version is on his album *Live on Maxwell Street*, the latter version purportedly featuring vocals by Lenoir though the liner notes question whether it is in fact Lenoir singing. The guitar lines in Lenoir's own version are basic twelve-bar blues accompanied by a horn section in addition to the usual bass-drums rhythm section. Lenoir wrote a couple of variations on this song: "Mama What About Your Daughter" and "Daddy Talk to Your Son."

On Magic Sam's 1967 *West Side Soul* version, the combined rhythms of Sam and Mighty Joe Young's rocking guitar riffs along with the bass and drums produce a relatively fast-paced, high-energy boogie. Coupled with Sam's intense vocal delivery and enthusiastic "Yay-hays," the song was transformed into a classic tune of a younger generation of bluesmen. Sam keeps Lenoir's original first verse, but adds a riveting second verse, both of which combine to depict a very intense kind of love but one that the "daughter" better take seriously, or it'll cost her life if she "does [him] wrong"—a curious verse for Sam, who was a very amiable musician by most accounts. Whatever Sam's lyrical intentions, he and his band helped to make this blues number a standard among blues musicians.

Magic Slim and the Teardrops' 1993 version is also an up-tempo boogie but is extended with additional lyrics. Slim, a prodigy of Magic Sam, keeps Lenoir/Sam's first verse intact but then adds his own word play to several verses and an alternate chorus. The last line of the chorus as well as Slim's fourth verse might be a variation of Lenoir's line "she looks good to me," or just a new addition altogether, adding another variation to a classic blues song.

JUSTIN WERT

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MAMLISH RECORDS

1970s reissue label owned by Don Kent, specializing in pre-World War II southern blues. At least fourteen album issues were released, some containing the music of one artist such as Ed Bell (after whose "Mamlish Blues" the label was named), Barbecue Bob, Lonnie Johnson, and the Mississippi Sheiks.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MANDOLIN

Though it is more commonly perceived as a bluegrass or country music instrument rather than as a blues instrument, the mandolin has in fact played a role in the history of the blues. It evolved from the lute family in Renaissance Italy, and the present form of the instrument—with its short neck, metal frets, and four pairs of metal strings (generally tuned to G–D–A–E and played with a pick)—was developed in Naples in the early eighteenth century. It was brought to the United States primarily by concert musicians and Italian immigrants.

In the 1880s, a foreign group called the Spanish Students (and subsequent groups using the same name) caused a sensation in the United States playing their native mandolin-like bandurrias, contributing to a substantial rise in the mandolin's popularity. Mandolin clubs and mandolin orchestras soon appeared throughout the country, and by the end of the nineteenth century, significant numbers of mandolins were being produced. Later, as new popular music styles emerged after World War I, interest in the instrument began to wane in urban areas,

and many people subsequently disposed of their mandolins. Because this made large numbers of the used instruments accessible at much lower prices than ever before, the mandolin began to make its way more and more into the hands of Southern rural musicians. By the 1920s, companies such as Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Montgomery Ward were also contributing to this trend by making inexpensive mandolins available through mail-order catalogs, better enabling those in rural areas to obtain them. Southern rural musicians widely embraced the mandolin because of its capacity as a lead instrument, and it is likely that the instrument's similarities to the fiddle contributed to its broad acceptance as well. In addition to having a common tuning, the mandolin and the fiddle also share some performance characteristics, and since the technique of mandolin picking is similar to that of the guitar, many non-fiddle-playing musicians were able to emulate the sound of the fiddle to a certain extent by the use of double stops and sustained tremolo picking on the mandolin.

Evidence of the mandolin's use by African Americans appears primarily on commercial recordings, chiefly those from the 1920s and 1930s. While this was not strictly limited to the blues idiom (as illustrated by recordings of the black ragtime guitar/mandolin tradition, for example), the instrument was employed on a number of blues recordings. These include several by black string bands, such as the Dallas String Band (featuring the mandolin work of Coley Jones) and the Mississippi Blacksnakes (an offshoot of the Mississippi Sheiks that showcased the playing of mandolin great Charlie McCoy). Jug band recordings (see the *Jug* entry), such as those of the celebrated Memphis Jug Band (often with Charlie Burse or Vol Stevens on the mandolin), commonly feature the instrument as well. Additionally, the mandolin can be heard as an accompanying instrument on recordings by solo blues artists from the era. McCoy's mandolin, for example, was featured on recordings by seminal blues performers such as Tommy Johnson and Memphis Minnie, and the mandolin accompaniment of the legendary Yank Rachell can be heard on the early recordings of bluesmen Sleepy John Estes and John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson.

As record companies segregated Southern rural music into the "race" (black) and "hillbilly" (white) categories and the solo guitar emerged as the predominant instrument in the country blues, string bands came to be primarily associated with "hillbilly" music. Consequently, the mandolin practically disappeared from "race" recordings during the 1930s. Still, a few African American performers continued to play the instrument, and in the 1960s, an increasing interest in the blues among whites

brought about a renewed awareness of the mandolin in the genre. In particular, Yank Rachell and Johnny Young, perhaps the two best-known blues mandolin players, achieved success during the 1960s. Both performers, in fact, regularly utilized the electric mandolin and successfully incorporated the instrument into the more contemporary Chicago blues style. In the early 1970s, Howard Armstrong and Carl Martin (both of whom played the mandolin as well as a number of other instruments) teamed up with guitarist Ted Bogan and enjoyed acclaim as one of the last remaining black string bands. At the time of this writing, Armstrong is the only major blues mandolin player still living and performing, though younger musicians such as Rich DelGrosso and Andra Faye McIntosh continue to keep the blues mandolin tradition alive.

ANDREW LEACH

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MAPLESHADE RECORDS

Label owned and operated by Pierre Sprey in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, with assistance from musical director and pianist Larry Willis. Sprey opened his recording studio in 1986, established the label in 1990, and gained national distribution in 1993. Mapleshade is well known for its jazz roster featuring Willis, baritone saxophonist Hamiet Bluiett, and tenor saxophonist Clifford Jordan. Its blues releases have been eclectic, including Piedmont blues masters Archie Edwards, Drink Small, and John Dee and Fris. Other CDs have featured acts in the Washington, D.C., area such as guitarist/singer Ben Andrews with the Nighthawks' harmonica player Mark Wenner, the J Street Jumpers, Bad Influence, and Midnight Blue. From Maryland are contemporary blues shouter and drummer Big Joe Maher of the Dynafloes, and honky-tonk saxophonist Joe Stanley. An early release was of Sunnyland Slim performing in Washington, D.C. There are also two gospel releases, The Angels recorded at the Morris Brown A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and the Addicts Rehabilitation Center Gospel Choir at the Kelly Temple

Church of God in Christ on 130th Street in New York City.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MARDI GRAS

Mardi Gras is the celebration of Shrove Tuesday, the massive blowout on the Catholic calendar that precedes Ash Wednesday and the commencement of Lenten austerity. In New Orleans Mardi Gras inspires a carnival similar to those of Latin America with masked participants, bands, and large floats. Smaller parades in black neighborhoods are the domain of the Mardi Gras Indians, social clubs that dress in wild, brightly colored costumes inspired by American Indian dress who accompany their call-and-response singing with hand percussion as they march through the streets. Several of the tribes, namely, the Wild Tchoupitoulas and Wild Magnolias, have successfully recorded their chants with contemporary accompaniment. A whole genre within New Orleans music has developed around the music of Mardi Gras from popular songs about Mardi Gras to the tunes brass bands play in the parades.

Although popularly known for the celebration in New Orleans, Louisiana also celebrates Mardi Gras in the rural Cajun towns west of the city. Cajun and Creole groups of masked riders visit outlying homes requesting a donation for a dinner cooked that evening in return for a dance performed by the riders. The riders assemble that evening for a dance where a large gumbo is prepared.

JARED SNYDER

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Rural Creole Mardi Gras

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See also **Dr. John; King, Earl; Professor Longhair**

MARGOLIN, BOB

b. 9 May 1949; Boston, MA

Guitarist, singer. A seven-year stint with Muddy Waters's blues band introduced Margolin to the blues world, where he spent the next twenty-five years with a solid solo career. Originally inspired by Chuck Berry, he began playing guitar at age fifteen and soon was performing with a succession of blues and blues rock bands around Boston. He signed on with Muddy Waters in 1973, subsequently touring internationally as well as playing on the 1975 Grammy Award-winning *Muddy Waters Woodstock Album*, appearing in the 1976 Martin Scorsese film of The Band's "Last Waltz" concert, and performing at the White House for Jimmy Carter in 1978.

Margolin, now sporting his "Steady Rollin'" nickname, left both the Muddy Waters band and the road in 1980, playing only low-profile East Coast club dates until 1989 when his first solo album, *The Old School*, was released on the regional Powerhouse label. *Chicago Blues*, with Jimmy Rogers, Pinetop Perkins, Kim Wilson, and Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff, followed in 1991. *Down in the Alley*, released on Alligator Records in 1993, reintroduced Margolin to an international audience, and a 1994 Muddy Waters band reunion effort, *You're Gonna Miss Me* on Telarc, affirmed his status as a creative keeper of the flame. Margolin, who also established his journalistic credentials with music magazine articles and columns, recorded again with Muddy Waters veterans on *All-Star Blues Jam* (2003), working with pianist Pinetop Perkins and drummer Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, in addition to Howlin' Wolf guitarist Hubert Sumlin.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

MARKETING

The Business of Blues

The manner in which blues has been conducted as a business over the course of the last century can be described as a process that began with incomprehension and has come around to a position of perplexity at the present time. The music industry has never fully comprehended what blues is or exactly how to market it and, therefore, success with the public has been intermittent outside the core audience that has sought out the genre since its first appearance.

The blues could be considered to be a form of cultural entrepreneurship when musicians first sought to make their living by playing it. On street corners or in juke joints or at rent parties or picnics, blues performers sold their wares on an individual or small group basis. Their repertoire was governed by the audience at hand, both what they wanted to hear and, equally important, what could lead them in dance.

It was one such performer that W. C. Handy heard at the Tutwiler, Mississippi, station in 1903. A "lean, loose-jointed Negro" whose face had "some of the sadness of the ages" was playing a guitar with a knife pressed along its strings. The song came across to the technically trained Handy as "the weirdest music I had ever heard." For a time, he kept it locked up in his memory, for though he could discern its similarity to elements in the commercial mainstream, such as the lamentably titled "coon songs" of the period, it could not readily translate into a viable product. It was in 1912 that Handy formulated a more commercially accessible facsimile of that lone musician with "Memphis Blues," but it was not until 1914 and the publication of "St. Louis Blues" that this new form of expression captured the public imagination.

The recording industry picked up on the genre almost instantaneously. The Victor Military Band cut "Memphis Blues" in 1914. Three years later, David Wondrich asserts, the first black artist recorded a blues: clarinetist Wilbur Sweatman's version of Handy's "Joe Turner Blues." The barrier to mass merchandising of the form, however, did not fall until 1920, when the African American songwriter Perry Bradford convinced Fred Hager of OKeh Records to cut Mamie Smith singing "Crazy Blues." His conviction that "the country was waiting for the sound of the voice of a Negro singing the blues with a Negro jazz combination playing for him or her" proved more than prescient. Quickly, other labels

followed in kind, releasing what Ralph Peer of OKeh dubbed "Race records." Their numbers grew exponentially, from fifty in 1921 to more than five thousand in 1927.

At first, the most successful artists in the genre were women, most notably Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, the latter the most popular race artist of the decade. Solo country blues by male musicians took off in 1926 with Blind Lemon Jefferson's work for the Paramount label. Advertised as a "Real Old-Fashioned Blues Singer," the promotion copy for his releases, and that of other performers, not only played on racial stereotypes but also featured demeaning associations about rural life. The fiscal arrangements between artists and companies were equally onerous. Each received a one-time payment, as little as fifteen dollars, and no rights to the copyright for their work or remuneration for copies sold.

The Depression temporarily eroded the commercial appeal of blues, yet the industry recovered during World War II, as blacks and others migrated to urban centers for work connected to the military. Available income led to a newfound desire for recorded music, and a wealth of independent companies entered the scene. Representative among them is Chicago's Chess Records, run by the brothers Phil and Leonard, who gravitated to the city's South Side and its vibrant musical culture. Artists such as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Little Walter were signed. Their livelihood was further benefited by the formation of Broadcast Music Inc. in 1940, which allowed them to benefit from the performance rights system of compensation for the public use of their material. Greater public dissemination of blues over radio and through the sale of recordings broadened the appeal of the genre outside the African American community of its origin, and sales increased when songs crossed over to the pop charts. This process was, however, temporarily curtailed by the advent of rock 'n' roll, which overwhelmed the nation's emerging youth culture.

Some young people failed to be satisfied by the offerings of the commercial music industry, and they sought in the music of the nation's past something they considered more unique and authentic. The ensuing folk revival encompassed blues, and collectors emerged who sought out 78s from the past and, later, any of the surviving artists who played on them. Notable in this regard was the "rediscovery" of figures like Son House, Skip James, and Mississippi John Hurt, who went on to make new recordings as well as see their early material reissued. These men also become fixtures on the festival and coffee house circuit connected to the folk revival.

The Original Race Records 

My, this is a page of Okeh Stars! Lonnie Johnson, Sara Martin, Henryette Davis and Wiley and Wiley. And everyone sings a ravishing Blues.

Sara Martin is leaving for Cuba—there she will moan to glory her famous Blues. You won't see her for some time—so of course you will want to have her latest songs. They are Nos. 8374 and 8394.

Wiley and Wiley gain special mention—they are a vaudeville team—and know how to drip mean woe into music. No 8385 is a deluge of fun, and sentimental harmony.



Lonnie Johnson

A 1926 advertisement for the Okeh “race records” line. (Image courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Simultaneously, when the leading figures of rock 'n' roll, most notably the Rolling Stones, drew attention to their influences in blues, other musicians gained a broader audience and saw their records achieve distribution into the commercial mainstream. Figures such as B. B. King and Albert King played at major rock venues. Younger white musicians, like Paul Butterfield and Mike Bloomfield, studied with these men and went on to found blues ensembles of their own, which drew the attention of major commercial labels. Blues developed greater visibility in the process, although some believed it diluted its substance by accommodating mass tastes. Others also pointed to the fact that, in the wake of the political evolution of young African Americans, blues became associated with racial attitudes of the past incompatible with the advocacy of Black Power.

As the political fever of the 1960s gave way to the complacency of the following decade, blues fell off the public radar and began more and more to take on the role of one among many niche genres. Each of these possesses a limited but avid core audience, yet, except for the occasional charting single, such as B. B. King's “The Thrill Is Gone” in 1972, the music failed to find a mass audience consistent with guaranteed sales. Major labels consequently pulled away from the material, and, once again, independents, like Alligator and Rounder, filled the gap. Younger African Americans took on the mantle of their predecessors, like Robert Cray and Keb' Mo', and paid tribute to their influences while accommodating the genre to the demands of the twenty-first century.

In recent years, the blues seems to possess increased commercial viability. National chains of clubs devoted to the music, such as House of Blues and B. B. King's,

draw audiences, though some argue they profess an interest in the music more in theory than practice. Many musicians look to the festival circuit, now numbering several hundred annually, for their livelihood, and find as well that interest in the blues abroad sometimes seems equal if not superior to what they find at home. Many look too to the commercial consequences of the declaration of 2003 as the “Year of the Blues” and the multi-part PBS documentary series to help codify an indelible commitment to that “weird music” W. C. Handy heard in Tutwiler a century ago.

The Reception of Blues

The reception of blues follows a historical arc typical of many vernacular forms of American music: What begins as a form of indigenous expression arising out of and responding to a determined community transforms into one of many niche genres angling for a share of the entertainment dollar.

Long before the blues was codified in the form of sheet music or recordings, the music possessed a communal dimension. It was played person to person, before a defined community of the performer’s peers. Either at juke joints, roadhouses, rent parties, or around the home, blues answered to the needs and pleasures of the African American community. Musicians picked their material based on their knowledge of that body of individuals, and more often than not chose songs that would both take their minds off everyday cares as well as entice them to dance. Some form of remuneration was expected to follow, whether money or food or liquor or all of these, yet musicians thought of themselves as serving a need, not simply creating a product.

Outside the warm support of that community, blues musicians were forced to fare on the basis of their wits, musical and otherwise. Playing out on the streets as they hoboed across country necessitated keeping at arm’s length any representative of authority and playing whatever song the audience at hand wanted to hear. This led blues musicians to think of genres as porous phenomena, necessitating that they know material that came from their community of origin as well as the hit parade of the day. This led many of them to engage in the kind of heterogeneity of repertoire that we affiliate with the “songster”: musicians who could act as virtual human jukeboxes so that the coins continued to fill their hat and feed their hunger.

The impact of the transformation of the blues into a recorded product starting in the 1920s was

phenomenal. Performers had to learn to think of their repertoire not as part of a communal pool of expression but, instead, as unique creations. Only if they were able to convince the kind of gatekeepers like H. C. Speir, who “discovered” Charley Patton among others, of their other than ordinary abilities would they be able to reach a record company. Once there, songs had to be tailored not to the dance floor, but recording equipment. The length of songs necessarily was altered and often so were the words so as not to upset or confuse their employers. Recordings allowed audiences to develop a cannon of favorite artists and songs, which playback equipment allowed them to listen to at their leisure and as often as they wished. The “aura” of immediacy was inevitably diluted, although for musicians, the availability of recordings permitted them to charge more for live labor.

Other technologies similarly transformed the reception of blues. Early radio may not have featured many African American individuals playing this music, but occasions sometimes arose that presented a chance to diffuse blues culture. Aleck Miller, aka Sonny Boy Williamson II, elevated his position when he became the featured artist on KFFA’s King Biscuit Time broadcast from Helena, Arkansas. In addition, as disk jockeys proliferated and playlists manifested the diversity of American music, blues reached an even wider audience. Black broadcasters like those on Memphis’s WDIA featured ample amounts of blues on the air, and soon white broadcasters with wide ears, like Dewey Phillips of Memphis and Hunter Hancock of Los Angeles, were bringing the music to a more expanded audience.

Over the course of time, consumers became interested not just in the music of their contemporaries but in the work of the past. The interest in vernacular forms that arose in the wake of the folk revival affected blues as well. Record collectors began to put out bootlegged collections of long unavailable 78s, as in the groundbreaking *Anthology of American Folk Music* assembled by Harry Smith for Folkways Records in 1952. Soon, the major record companies recognized a financial incentive in promoting their back catalog. The jacket copy and cover illustrations often did not call attention to the communal origins of blues but built up the artists as heroic individuals, poets, and loners who could be made to resemble the creative heroes admired by the emerging rock ’n’ roll generation. Striking evidence of this perspective can be observed in the celebration of Robert Johnson. The sense that blues was a part of an entire lived culture became diminished if not lost altogether in the process.

The desire to market blues performers in the heroic mode was influenced as well by the increasing

emphasis on technical expertise, particularly as regards solo skills on the guitar. Following the deification of white guitar heroes like Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Keith Richards, many of whom trained themselves to play through blues recordings, practitioners of the genre were shown on album covers or in promotional photographs with their instrument in hand, engaging in the virtuosic display of their technique. A number of live recordings penetrated the general public by playing up this angle, like B. B. King's 1965 *Live at the Regal* or Albert King's 1968 *Live Wire Blues Power*, recorded at Bill Graham's rock venue the Fillmore Ballroom. For some, this process led to a profusion of graceful displays of skill, whereas for others, it amounted to little more than excessive grandstanding in pursuit of crossover demographics.

At the present time, blues struggles simply to retain a degree of the public's widely divided attention in a media-glutted environment. The virtual abandonment of blues on either radio or television illustrates the pervasive homogenization of the airwaves. Furthermore, even if younger audiences were able to gain access to blues, the genre struggles against the pervasive stereotype of its being a litany of complaint. The companies that market and manage blues artists look to the proliferation of festivals to augment their audience and hope as well that isolated tributes like the 2003 PBS Martin Scorsese-produced series on the blues not only keep the music alive, but also permit it to flourish and respond to the circumstances of the twenty-first century.

The Retailing of Blues

The presentation of the blues to the public in a commercial context has historically presented a conundrum to those in the culture industry: How is the blues to be defined and how does one constitute its audience?

With the success of Mamie Smith's recording of "Crazy Blues" in 1920, the music industry recognized two things. First, African Americans desired to hear blues performed by their own people and, second, an appropriate language was needed in order to perpetuate that audience into the future. Although information on purchasing patterns at the time remains anecdotal, consumers were drawn to their favorites or, alternately, enticed to purchase something novel by advertising. Unsurprisingly, the illustrations featured perpetuated what Jeff Tilton has called "plantation stereotypes" that recycle material to be found

earlier on sheet music, most notably the "coon songs." More unusual and equally disturbing is the manner in which the black figures are coded as rural, not urban. This permitted the record industry simultaneously to ignore emerging black urban society but also to titillate that audience by mocking their country cousins. Furthermore, in so doing, they implied a degree of naiveté to the artists that their material never possessed.

In the aftermath of World War II, when the black community gained in economic status through employment in the military effort, numerous independent record companies emerged. A number of the owners began as record merchants and devised their catalogs based on audience desires. Representative in this regard was the Cincinnati, Ohio-based King Records, founded by Syd Nathan in 1944. Among his black blues artists were Wynonie Harris, Roy Brown, Lonnie Johnson, and Freddie King. Unique among his peers, Nathan also hired Henry Glover, an African American songwriter-arranger, as an A&R man, writer, and producer. Labels like King aggressively marketed to a black audience by appealing to the mainstream tastes of the community. At the same time, while some blues artists occasionally crossed over to the pop charts, more often their material was successfully recorded by white artists, as in the case of Elvis Presley's "cover" of Harris's "Good Rockin' Tonight." As a publisher, Nathan benefited in all cases, but with the growth of the teenage market and the increasing segmentation of audiences, blues became more and more a minority taste. Blues artists remained stars in their own orbit, and their lives were tethered to the chitlin circuit rather than the national arena.

Circumstances altered in the 1960s when the folk revival elevated the historical significance of American vernacular music for a portion of the public unimpressed by the mainstream appeal of rock 'n' roll. They sought in older artists and recordings some evidence of a more authentic and unmediated form of cultural expression that superseded what to them was ersatz in contemporary culture. In the process, a number of acoustic musicians from the 1920s and 1930s, like Son House, Skip James, and Mississippi John Hurt, were "rediscovered." They made new recordings and toured on the festival and coffee house circuit and gathered in their wake a body of acolytes. A number of new independent labels devoted to vernacular forms, including Arhoolie, Delmark, and Testament, met the needs of this small but militant audience.

Simultaneously, rock 'n' roll musicians pointed to the influence on their material of the electrified blues artists of the postwar generation, who found

themselves on national television or at rock-oriented venues playing to a new generation unfamiliar with their material. The record labels who recorded giants in the genre like B. B. King, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, and Howlin' Wolf began to advertise in youth publications and, in some cases, coaxed their artists either to record with white rock musicians or more radically modify their material in order to satisfy a diverse constituency. The later case led notoriously to the 1971 Chess release *Electric Mud*, on which Muddy Waters collided with period psychedelic sounds.

In addition, blues recordings heretofore only available to collectors began to reenter the market in the form of reissues. Some were sheer bootlegs with no acknowledgment of the present-day owners of the materials, while others, like the 1961 *King of Delta Blues Singers* featuring Robert Johnson, appeared above ground from the major labels. Audiences in the process were able not simply to read about but hear blues history, and they were equally able to compare the emerging "covers" of classic tunes by rock bands. In some cases—Cream's "I'm So Glad" and Canned Heat's "Goin' to the Country"—acoustic acorns took on new life and climbed the record charts.

While some artists, like B. B. King and John Lee Hooker, become synonymous in the public mind with the blues, many, many more musicians never seemed to elevate themselves out of a musical ghetto. The major labels kept a small number of blues artists on their rosters, and, typically, those individuals achieved the greatest success when they either modified their sound or featured major stars from other genres on their albums. Recent examples in this latter category are Hooker's 1989 *The Healer*, featuring Keith Richards and Bonnie Raitt, and B. B.'s 2000 *Riding with the King*, accompanied by Eric Clapton.

Hosts of other individuals found a birth on small labels devoted to blues and other roots genres, yet with the narrowcasting of music on all media, radio and television especially, the mass public were not given an opportunity to hear the music and discover its diversity. In the vacuum left by these circumstances, a label like the Mississippi-based Fat Possum kept the music going by recording some of the most skilled practitioners, like R. L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough, who had escaped the corporate radar. A concerted effort in the marketing to draw attention to the primitive, raw, and often violent element of these individuals' lives and material was viewed by some as exploitation in the name of an artistic agenda, yet the company cannot be faulted for retaining the spark of the music at a time when virtually all forms of

culture seem identical in their appeal to the common denominator.

DAVID SANJEK

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MARS, JOHNNY

b. 7 December 1942; Laurens, SC

Harmonica player living in England since 1972. Early influence was Little Walter Jacobs, but more decisive was Jimi Hendrix, whose guitar style Mars sought to emulate on the harmonica. He performs mostly in Europe, with occasional U.S. appearances such as at the 1992 San Francisco Blues Festival.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- AMG (Richard Skelly)
- Hodgett, Trevor. "'I Have a Pedal Board, I've Got a Heavy Metal, I've a Digital Pitchshifter, I've a Flanger,' Says the Blues Harp's Answer to Jimi Hendrix. Do The Purists Not Like That!'" *Blueprint* no. 61 (April 1994): 12.

Discography: AMG

MARTIN, CARL

b. 1 April 1906; Big Stone Gap, VA
d. 10 May 1979; Pontiac, MI

Carl Martin, whose primary instruments were the fiddle, mandolin, and guitar, had a long musical association with Howard Armstrong and Ted Bogan. Their prewar era string band was known under names that included the Four Keys and the Tennessee Chocolate Drops. Credited as the latter, he and Armstrong recorded with Martin's brother Roland in 1930 for Vocalion. Martin also made a few solo recordings from 1934 to 1936. In the 1970s, he reunited with Armstrong and Bogan, and the group achieved fame touring and recording as Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong.

ANDREW LEACH

Bibliography

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Welding, Pete. "An Interview with Carl Martin." *78 Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1968): 29–33.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong (1974, Flying Fish 003).
That Old Gang of Mine (1978, Flying Fish 056).

MARTIN, "FIDDLIN'" JOE

b. 8 January 1900; Edwards, MS
d. 21 November or 5 December 1975; Walls, MS

Recorded with Son House (1941—mandolin and washboard) and on all Woodrow Adams's recordings (drums). Martin also worked with Charlie Patton and Howlin' Wolf.

FRED J. HAY

Bibliography

Harris
Hay, Fred J. "Fiddlin' Joe Martin." *Living Blues* no. 26 (March/April 1976): 10.

Discography: DGR; LSFP**MARTIN, SALLIE**

b. 20 November 1895; Pittsfield, GA
d. 18 June 1988; Chicago, IL

Proclaimed as "The Mother of Gospel" by the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses.

A singer from a Pentecostal religious background, in 1932–1940 Martin assisted Thomas A. Dorsey as performer and entrepreneur. From 1940 she went solo; Dinah Washington (known then as Ruth Jones) was a piano accompanist to her for several years. She continued in business and was a contributor to charitable causes.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG (Jason Ankeny)**MARTIN, SARA**

b. Sara Dunn, 18 June 1884; Louisville, KY
d. 24 May 1955; Louisville, KY

Singer active in vaudeville from 1915 through 1931, and an Okeh label artist from 1923 through 1928. In addition to the typical piano accompaniment, Martin's records also featured her with guitarist Sylvester Weaver, and on others with Clifford Hayes's jug band. After her musical career ended, she ran a Louisville nursing home and was active in her church.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; New Grove; Santelli
Swinton, Paul. "Sara Martin: 'A Piece of the Copyright.'" *Blues & Rhythm* no. 116 (February 1997): 10–14.

Discography: DGR**MATCHBOX**

Blues label of Saydisc Records, founded at Badminton, England, in 1965 by Gef and Genny Lucena. A series of reissues of vintage blues in the late 1960s and early 1970s was followed by a hiatus, after which issues in a new Matchbox Bluesmaster series programmed by Johnny Parth began in 1982. Five related CDs using the Matchbox name were issued by Document in Austria in the early 1990s.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

Oliver, Paul. "John Saw a Number: 'In Chronological Order.'" *Blues & Rhythm* no. 38 (August 1988): 12–14.

MATCHBOX BLUES

This song is usually associated with Blind Lemon Jefferson, who recorded three versions of it in 1927, one in March for OKeh (for which he is credited as the composer) and two in April for Paramount. Jefferson's original lyrics present one of the most popular blues formulas, which was in fact first used on record by Ma Rainey in her "Lost Wandering Blues" (1924). However, Jefferson's slightly altered lyrics would later be reprised by many pre- and postwar blues and non-blues and by black and white artists. Though liable to other interpretations, Jefferson's ironic metaphor within the song has been best explained by Oster and by Titon, who states, "The singer possesses so few clothes that he asks whether a suitcase the size of a matchbox might not hold them; then he announces that he has a long journey ahead." As Jefferson's three versions of "Match Box Blues" contain significant textual and musical differences, Oster's and Titon's analyses provide an interesting insight into his technique of composition, which in his early recordings (1926–1927) is based on the main stanza or stanzas and melody around which a number of floating verses revolve.

The vast popularity of this song and of its formulaic stanza is evident from the many subsequent versions. The other prewar African American recordings bearing this title were cut by Leadbelly (1934 and 1935; two versions), Big Bill Broonzy (1936), a piano version by Black Ivory King (1937), and Jack Meredith (1941). Possibly trying to cash in on Jefferson's acclaimed stanza and commercially successful composition, no less than seven prewar bluesmen in the short space of two and a half years made use of the unsighted musician's formulaic stanza in songs with different titles. The main postwar black recordings were made by Joel Hopkins (1959 and 1965), Otis Webster (1960), Robert Pete Williams (1960, with the title "Highway Blues," 1970), J. T. Adams (1961), John Lee Hooker with the title "Matchbox" (1962), John Jackson (1965, 1967, 1969, 1978), Roosevelt Holts (1969), Tom Shaw (1970s), Yank Rachell (1973), Roy Dunn with the title "Roy's Matchbox Blues" (1974), and others. Whether pre- or postwar, what is particularly relevant about the majority of later versions is that, even when explicitly paying a musical and/or stylistic tribute to Jefferson, the interpreters of this song limited themselves to inserting the "matchbox" stanza into completely different texts, sometimes curiously joining it to verses drawn from other Jefferson recordings.

As described by Evans [2000, pp. 92–93], Jefferson's "Match Box Blues" exemplifies many of the musical innovations in his repertoire: "He plays a variant of a

common eight-to-the-bar piano boogie-woogie bass figure . . . , followed by a common three-against-four piano ragtime figure." While this figure did not achieve popularity until Pine Top Smith's "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie" in 1928, the Jefferson recording was done nearly two years previously.

The song's influence on white music is witnessed by Larry Hensley's 1934 cover of Jefferson's blues. More prewar versions, both in 1935 and for Decca, were recorded by the Shelton Brothers and four months later by Joe Shelton, but only the latter was issued. Three years later Roy Newman & His Boys cut a "Match Box Blues" for Vocalion, while in 1939 they recorded this title for Bluebird. Carl Perkins's 1957 recording of "Matchbox" for Sun and the Beatles' 1964 homonymous version for EMI/Capitol contributed to spread its fame in rock 'n' roll circles. Other versions were recorded by Tom Shaka (1992), Tab Benoit (1995), Matchbox Bluesband (2001), and David Evans (2001).

LUIGI MONGE

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MAXWELL, DAVID

b. 10 March 1950; Waltham, MA

Boston-based pianist much influenced by postwar Chicago masters Otis Spann, Sunnyland Slim, and Pinetop Perkins. Most of his work since the late 1960s has been as sideman to Freddie King, Bonnie

Raitt, James Cotton, and Otis Rush. He recorded a CD as leader for Tone Cool label in 1997.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

MAY, ROOSEVELT

b. 26 February 1915; Halifax, NC

d. October 1978; Moonlight, NC

Harmonica player associated with Peg Leg Sam. He recorded a session with Hub Records, a North Carolina label, in 1968.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

“Obituaries.” *Living Blues* no. 41 (November/December 1978): 41.

Discography: LSPF

MAYALL, JOHN

b. 29 November 1933; Macclesfield, England

Singer, harpist, keyboardist, guitarist. The prime English popularizer of American blues introduced the music to a European audience while also introducing numerous future rock stars, including Peter Green, Eric Clapton, Mick Fleetwood, Jack Bruce, John McVie, and Mick Taylor, to American fans. Although he spent the bulk of his career living in California, his early, almost evangelical, efforts to gain fans for the music definitely qualified him to be regarded as the “Father of the English blues scene.”

Mayall, while possessing solid blues sensibilities, was not an especially strong singer or instrumental soloist, but he recognized and recruited such abilities in others, making him an unusually enlightened and effective bandleader. His group, which served as an advanced training academy for the cream of England’s aspiring blues musicians, was the focal point of British blues activity. The attention it generated through its surprising success on the English record charts spilled over to other British blues acts, as well as to

some of its overlooked American influences, such as J. B. Lenoir and Otis Rush.

The thirty-year-old Mayall, originally working in a more R&B mode, moved to London from Manchester in 1963 and assembled an ever-evolving Bluesbreakers band, a group that would go through more than a dozen editions by 1970. The band’s first single came out in early 1964 and its debut album later in the year. Clapton joined in 1965 and in the next few years the band, with and without Clapton, made its most memorable music. *Bluesbreakers* in 1966, *A Hard Road* with Green on guitar in 1967, and *Crusade*, released in the same year, created Mayall’s reputation and remain his most accomplished recordings. He released a steady flow of subsequent albums, including the oddities *The Blues Alone* where he played all instruments himself and *Bare Wires*, a rare big band recording, complete with an extended jazz suite.

Mayall immigrated to California in 1969, celebrating the relocation with the release of *Blues from Laurel Canyon*. After *The Turning Point*, a live acoustic set from 1969 utilizing the sax and flute work of John Almond, he released *Back to the Roots*, the first of several alumni albums as Clapton, Taylor, and fellow guitarist Harvey Mandel joined saxist Almond, violinist Sugar cane Harris, and other Mayall exes. The 1980s were essentially a lost decade but the 1990 release of *A Sense of Place*, featuring Sonny Landreth on slide guitar, changed things when it became a radio favorite that served to reintroduce Mayall to a new generation of blues fans. *Wake Up Call* in 1993, *Spinning Coin* in 1995, and *Padlock on the Blues*, with a guest appearance from John Lee Hooker, kept his name in circulation, and another all-star recording in 2001, *Along for the Ride*, reinforced the attention as it assembled guitarists Billy Gibbons, Otis Rush, Jonny Lang, Steve Miller, and Jeff Healy in the service of Mayall’s music.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

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Thompson, D. “John Mayall: The Legends of the London Years.” *Goldmine* 24 (July 3, 1998): 16–20.

Discography: AMG

MAYES, PETE

b. 1938; TX

Pete Mayes grew up in the all-black community of Double Bayou, a tiny hamlet of independent

sharecroppers on the border between Texas and Louisiana. Though isolated, the town had a dance hall owned by Mayes's uncle, Manuel Rivers, that was the hub of social activity on weekends. Little more than an oversized corral with a tin roof, the dance hall nonetheless attracted some of the biggest names in blues including Big Joe Turner and Gate-mouth Brown. Mayes was allowed to attend the shows in the company of his uncle. Watching the musicians with keen interest, he would later rig up pieces of wire and pretend to play guitar. His uncle encouraged his interest, introducing him to the various musicians who ran the circuit. Another uncle, Earl Rivers, bought Mayes his first guitar when the boy turned fourteen, and took him to a T-Bone Walker performance at Club 90 in Ames, Texas, in 1951. In 1954, Mayes played his first show at Double Bayou Dancehall, and by 1956 he was playing Club 90. In that year, Mayes met and sat in with Walker at a gig in Crosby, Texas. By 1959 Mayes and the Texas Houserockers, a quintet of bass, drums, piano, alto saxophone, and guitar, had a regular spot on Van's nightclub in Houston. A small but groundbreaking tour of South America backing Gate-mouth Brown followed; upon returning to the United States, however, Mayes found that he had been drafted into the army.

After his army service ended in 1963, Mayes re-formed the Texas Houserockers, but dissolved it again in 1966 to tour with Junior Parker; they toured the chitlin circuit until Parker's death in 1970. Mayes played on Parker's 1968 sessions for Mercury/Blue Rock, and cut his first single on Ovide in 1969. After Parker's death, Mayes considered regrouping the Houserockers, but accepted an offer to front Grady Gaines and his Texas Upsetters instead. In 1972, Mayes again re-formed the Houserockers, and in 1974 entered a long and fruitful association with Bill Doggett, who introduced Mayes to an adoring European audience. A tour of Europe in 1978, and the popularity of a documentary film about T-Bone Walker featuring Mayes led to an appearance at Holland's Utrecht Festival in 1984. Mayes recorded two albums while with Doggett in Paris, and released two albums on the Dutch Double Trouble label. In recent years, complications from diabetes have caused Mayes to curtail his performance schedule, though the Houserockers still exist with some of the players having been members for thirty years. Mayes operates the Double Bayou Dancehall where he started more than forty years earlier; he took it over after his uncle passed away in 1983.

JOHN OTIS

Bibliography

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Howard, Aaron. "Pete Mayes' Double Bayou Dancehall."
Living Blues no. 116 (July/August 1994): 38–43.

Discography: LSFP

MAYFIELD, CURTIS

- b. 3 June 1942; Chicago, IL
d. 26 December 1999; Roswell, GA

Singer, guitarist, songwriter, and producer. Mayfield began singing in gospel groups. His soulful falsetto vocals launched many hits with the Impressions in 1958–1970. His songwriting reflected his passion for racial and social justice, and opened the way for more socially conscious directions in black music. *Superfly* (1972) achieved a near-perfect blend of music and message. Mayfield adapted to funk in the 1970s, and continued to make albums that reflected his social concerns. He produced albums for Aretha Franklin, the Staple Singers, and others. Mayfield moved to Atlanta in the early 1980s and re-formed the Impressions in 1983. Although paralyzed in a freak stage accident in 1990, he continued to compose and record.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Werner, Craig. *A Change Is Gonna Come*. New York: Plume, 1998.

Discography

With the Impressions

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People Get Ready (1965, Paramount 505).

Solo

- Curtis* (1970, Curtom 8005).
Curtis Live! (1971, Curtom 8008).
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Superfly (1972, Curtom 8014).
Back to the World (1973, Curtom 8015).
Got to Find a Way (1974, Curtom 8604).
There's No Place Like America Today (1975, Curtom 5001).
Sweet Exorcist (1976, Curtom 8601).
Never Say You Can't Survive (1977, Curtom 56352).
Take It to the Street (1990, Curtom 2008).
New World Order (1996, Warner Brothers 46348).

MAYFIELD, PERCY

b. 12 August 1920; Minden, LA
 d. 11 August 1984; Los Angeles, CA

Singer, songwriter. Mayfield created some of the genre's most emotionally evocative songs. His expressive voice frequently explored the dark side of romance, dwelling on the pain and suffering of lost and/or unrequited love. The sensitivity of his lyrics and the deep emotion he infused into his singing made Mayfield's music unusually popular with both sexes, a fact affirmed by its place at the core of the modern blues ballad repertoire.

Mayfield was based in Houston in his early music business endeavors but the lure of the West Coast recording industry caused him to relocate to Los Angeles in 1942. He was determined to be heard as a vocalist but it was his songwriting abilities that initially attracted record company attention. Upon his arrival in California he was in almost immediate demand as a composer, yet was unable to get into the studio to perform his own material. His recording break finally came when Supreme Records let him do a song, "Two Years of Torture," he had written for Jimmy Witherspoon to sing.

Once Mayfield was heard singing his own material, his true potential as a recording artist was obvious and a minor bidding war broke out for his services. Mayfield ultimately signed with Specialty Records and the potential was rapidly transformed into success. Mayfield's poignant renditions of his original ballads, featuring multilayered horn arrangements, became radio favorites as he released seven top ten hits in three years, including the classic "Please Send Me Somebody to Love" in 1950 and "Lost Love" a year later.

But Mayfield's considerable career momentum was brought to a sudden and tragic halt in 1952 when an auto accident left him with serious injuries and a disfigured face. He eventually continued recording, moving on to the Imperial and Chess labels in the mid- to late 1950s, but the hits were harder to come by. With his live performances severely curtailed, Mayfield devoted much of his time in the 1960s to writing for Ray Charles, composing a series of hit songs, including the crossover pop success "Hit the Road Jack," for the bandleader. He also recorded several sessions for Charles's Tangerine record label.

Mayfield's songs remained in circulation on blues bandstands and recording sessions even as he retreated from public view. As succinctly stated by New Orleans vocalist Johnny Adams, who recorded *Walking on a Tightrope*, a Mayfield tribute album, "Percy's music will always be on the scene." In his last years Mayfield did perform around the San

Francisco area in the early 1980s, making several festival appearances and doing a series of live radio broadcasts for keyboardist/deejay Mark Naftalin that were later released on CD.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli
 Shurman, Dick. "Living Blues Interview." *Living Blues* no. 50 (Spring 1981): 12-25.

Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP**MAYS, CURLEY**

b. 26 November 1938; Maxie (Acadia Parish), LA

Popular Texas guitarist (now retired) whose career was spent primarily as a touring performer and club act throughout the soul-blues circuit in America's South. Nephew of Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Mays is a self-taught musician whose skills as an electric blues guitarist are augmented by a broad performance repertoire (including blues, soul, rock, country and western, and Spanish selections) and such show-stopping techniques as playing his instrument with his toes. By extension, May's guitar style, while grounded in Texas blues, reflects a number of popular influences. Growing up in Beaumont, Texas, Mays began performing in clubs both locally and in Houston as a teenager. From 1959 to 1963, he toured with the Etta James Revue throughout the United States. Subsequently, Mays continued to work as a touring sideman for other bands and acts throughout the 1960s, including the Tina Turner Show, the James Brown Show, and the Five Royales. In later years, he continued to perform club dates in the Houston and San Antonio areas of Texas.

DAVID BEAUDOUIN

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<http://www.sanantonioblues.com/curleymays/>.

MAYWEATHER, "EARRING" GEORGE

b. 27 September 1927; Tilly's Mills, AL
 d. 12 February 1995; Boston, MA

MAYWEATHER, "EARRING" GEORGE

Mayweather learned harmonica as a boy in Montgomery, Alabama. Moving to Chicago in the early 1950s, he began playing with J. B. Hutto and the drummer Porkchop, and made a significant contribution to the six sides that the trio recorded for Chance in 1954. After further years on the Chicago club circuit, during which time he received his "Earring" nickname from the deejay Big Bill Hill, he moved to Boston, where he flew the flag for Chicago-style blues and cut a backward-looking but sturdy album titled *Whup It! Whup It!* (1992, Tone-Cool).

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

McCain, Jerry "Boogie"

b. 19 June 1930; Gadsden, AL

A lifelong resident of Gadsden, Alabama, musician and songwriter Jerry McCain began playing the harmonica at age five, inspired by his uncles and the recordings of John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson and Brownie McGhee. He was later influenced by the amplified harmonica style of Little Walter, and sat in with the innovative musician during a Gadsden gig around 1953. McCain caught the attention of Lillian McMurry of Trumpet Records after submitting a demo to the label. Two recording sessions followed in 1953 and 1954 that resulted in two singles under the name Jerry "Boogie" McCain. A brief association with Trumpet label-mate Aleck "Sonny Boy Williamson II" Miller while recording in Jackson, Mississippi, provided him with further inspiration. From 1955 to 1957, McCain recorded for Excello and produced such exciting blues rockers as "That's What They Want" and "My Next Door Neighbor."

He recorded his best-known composition, "She's Tough," in 1960 for the Rex label, which was popularized by the Fabulous Thunderbirds when the group covered it twenty years later. The song was typical of McCain's engaging blues style of combining witty and often humorous lyrics punctuated by his fat-toned, amplified harmonica work. He recorded throughout the next two decades for a number of labels including Okeh, Jewel, Continental, and Gas. From the late 1980s through the turn of the century, McCain continued to perform both in the United States and

internationally, and had releases on Ichiban, Jericho/Cello, and his own Boogie Down label, each featuring his prolific songwriting skills on topical themes ranging from drug abuse to the benefits of Viagra.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

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Nelson, David. "Jerry McCain: I Got to Sing the Blues." *Living Blues* no. 113 (February 1994): 8–19.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Jerry McCain: Good Stuff! (1999, Varese Vintage CD VSD-6022).
This Stuff Just Kills Me (2000, Jericho/Cello CD 90005-2).

McCall, Cash

b. Morris or Maurice Dollison, Jr., 28 January 1941; New Madrid, MO

McCall began his music career as a gospel singer performing under his birth name with a variety of different gospel acts, including the Gospel Songbirds with Otis Clay. After relocating to Chicago, he began performing and recording secular R&B material in the early 1960s, and took his stage name in 1966—scoring his only real hit that same year with "When You Wake Up." In the years since, McCall has expanded from R&B to also perform straight-ahead electric blues, and has stayed active as a guitarist/singer and songwriter, performing frequently as a member of the Chicago Rhythm & Blues Kings.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

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Cash Up Front (1987, Stony Plain 1945).

McClain, Mary "Diamond Teeth"

b. Mary Smith, 27 August 1902; Huntington, WV
d. 4 April 2000; St. Petersburg, FL

Classic-era gospel and blues singer; half-sister of Bessie Smith. Played in minstrel shows, nightclubs, and USO tours. Relaunched career with a series of recordings in the 1990s; continued performing until shortly before her death.

JIM TRAGESER

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 Tilling, Robert. "Amazing Grace: The Life and Times of Diamond Teeth Mary." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 97 (1995): 9.

Discography

- If I Can't Sell It, I'm Gonna Sit on It* (1993, Big Boss Records 91003).

McCLAIN, "MIGHTY" SAM

b. 15 April 1943; Monroe, LA

Early on showing an aptitude for singing at Baptist church services and at children's parties, McClain left home as a young teenager to surround himself with music on the Deep South juke-joint circuit, initially as a valet and then as a vocalist with guitarist Little Melvin Underwood's band. After parting ways with Underwood, Good Rockin' Sam (as he called himself) was a favorite of audiences as part of the Dothan Sextet and as a featured performer at Abe's 506 Club in Pensacola, Florida. Unexpectedly, national acclaim greeted him when his soulful recording of country artist Patsy Cline's "Sweet Dreams" sold into six figures in 1966. Two years of R&B stardom followed, with appearances at Harlem's Apollo Theatre highlighting the giddy time. After record sales and his stock plummeted, McClain worked outside the music business for almost two decades. He recharged his career in the mid-1980s when he recorded with New Orleans producer Carlo Ditta, and he journeyed to Japan with former Bobby Bland guitarist Wayne Bennett for well-received concerts. McClain's rise to present-day eminence as a purveyor of soul-blues gained impetus in 1991 upon moving to Boston and hooking up with producer Joe Harley and the AudioQuest label in California. McClain has recorded on a regular basis ever since, mostly for AudioQuest and Telarc, and he has made countless performances around the country and in Europe. Ever the individualist, McClain boasts his own production and management companies, and in 2003 he started up his own record label called Mighty Music.

FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG

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Sledgehammer Soul & Down Home Blues (1996, AudioQuest 1042).
Papa True Love—The Amy Sessions (2000, Sundazed 11083).
One More Bridge to Cross (2003, Mighty Music 101).

McCLENNAN, TOMMY

b. 8 April 1908; Yazoo City, MS

d. Date unknown; Chicago, IL

Surprisingly little is known of the life of this unique singer and guitarist who recorded forty songs for Bluebird, plus a duet with his partner Robert Petway.

His contemporaries have recorded stories of him wandering and playing for local functions and bars when he occasionally teamed up with David "Honeyboy" Edwards for dances. He seems to have met Petway in the late 1930s and they moved to Chicago around 1939. There he recorded for Bluebird in five long sessions, while his friend Petway, who played in a more restrained style, had two sessions. Their style of collaboration can be heard on "Boogie Woogie Woman" by Petway in which McClennan is obviously the second singer.

Big Bill Broonzy recalled Tommy in his ghosted autobiography, *Big Bill Blues*, in which McClennan refused to change the lyrics of his "Bottle Up and Go," which recounted:

The nigger and the white man
 Playing Seven-Up
 Nigger beat the white man
 Scared to pick it up.

Broonzy warned Tommy that "nigger" was not acceptable in the north but McClennan insisted on singing it at a party, was nearly lynched, and had to escape through a window.

Yet McClennan remains one of the few instantly identifiable singers on record, with a voice similar to Charley Patton's. He rarely sang—instead he shouted, roared, laughed, and battered the lyrics, offered conversational asides, and accompanied it all with an equally eccentric guitar style that relied on heavy rhythmic patterns and repeated single notes high up the fret. He sang a number called "I'm a Guitar King"

that was truly ironic—"The guitar is out of tune both with itself and with his vocals" wrote Mary Katherine Aldin. But such confidence—arrogance perhaps—was a very part of the image of a boastful, wild braggart that McClennan encouraged through his music.

His "Whiskey Head Woman" was such a big success that he created a follow-up entitled "Whiskey Head Man"—

just like me and all you other whisky headed men.

He also adapted popular blues of the day such as "Sweet Home Chicago" ("Baby Don't You Want to Go" in his version) or Bukka White's recent "Shake 'Em On Down" in which he virtually copied the guitar break but instilled it with enough of the particular McClennan style to justify its retitling as "New Shake 'Em Down."

The controversial but successful "Bottle Up and Go" shows him leaving the last line of each verse to the guitar alone as Fred McDowell was to do so successfully a generation later.

In the end, McClennan was dropped by his label, Bluebird, because of his drinking. While there is a picture of him in Chicago with Elmore James, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Little Walter in 1953, it is believed he ended his life as a derelict.

DAVID HARRISON

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Brisbin, John Anthony. "Honeyboy Edwards Remembers
Tommy McClennan." *Living Blues* no. 104 (July/August
1992): 18–23.

Discography: DGR

McCLINTON, DELBERT

b. 4 November 1940; Lubbock, TX

Exposed to blues and R&B in the 1950s, McClinton was soon working the Texas club scene, backing the likes of Howlin' Wolf and Jimmy Reed. After recording a few local hits, he reached the national charts, providing the harmonica for Bruce Channel's 1962 hit, "Hey Baby." While touring with Channel, McClinton taught the Beatles a few harmonica licks.

In the mid-1960s he had a group called the Ron Dels that produced one minor single, and later in the decade he worked the Texas bar circuit. In the early 1970s he recorded two albums with Glen Clark, and went on to secure a solo contract in 1975. Several

critically acclaimed albums followed, and one of his songs, "B Movie Boxcar Blues," was recorded by the Blues Brothers.

Shortly after scoring his first major hit in 1980, "Giving It Up for Your Love," McClinton's record label dissolved, and he was soon devoting his time to touring. The year 1989 brought *Live from Austin*, an album that earned him his first Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Blues Album. He won a Grammy in 1991 for his duet with Bonnie Raitt, "Good Man, Good Woman," and his album *Nothing Personal* won the Grammy in 2001 for Best Contemporary Blues Album. His 2002 album, *Room to Breathe*, also earned a Grammy nomination.

McClinton's successful combination of roadhouse blues, R&B, and country, which has been developed and refined over several decades of touring, continues to please critics and blues fans alike.

JOHN J. THOMAS

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

Delbert and Glen (1972, Clean); *Subject to Change* (1973, Clean); *Victim of Life's Circumstances* (1975, ABC); *Genuine Cowhide* (1976, ABC); *Love Rustler* (1977, ABC); *Second Wind* (1978, Capricorn); *Keeper of the Flame* (1979, Capricorn); *The Jealous Kind* (1980, Capitol); *Plain from the Heart* (1981, Capitol); *Live from Austin* (1989, Alligator); *I'm with You* (1990, Curb); *Never Been Rocked Enough* (1992, Curb); *Delbert McClinton* (1993, Curb); *Honky Tonkin' Blues* (1994, MCA); *One of the Fortunate Few* (1997, Rising Tide); *Nothing Personal* (2001, New West Records); *Room to Breathe* (2002, New West Records).

McCLURE, BOBBY

b. 21 April 1942; Chicago, IL

d. 13 November 1992; Los Angeles, CA

Soul singer who began in gospel quartets and doo-wop groups in the 1950s. Much of his career was in association with Oliver Sain in East St. Louis, whether in his revue or singing for his Vanessa label. His first recording and only hit was his Checker label duet with Fontella Bass in 1965, "Don't Mess Up a Good Thing." For some years he worked outside music,

including a job as corrections officer at an Illinois prison. In the late 1980s he moved to Los Angeles to revive his career, but the return was short lived due to a fatal brain aneurysm.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Greg Prato)
Greensmith, Bill. "Bobby McClure." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 76 (February 1993): 16–17.

Discography: AMG; Larkin

McCOY, CHARLIE

b. 26 May 1909; Jackson, MS
d. 26 July 1950; Chicago, IL

Guitarist/mandolinist Charlie McCoy was a sideman on a number of seminal blues recordings in the 1920s and 1930s, and he was one of the few important mandolin players in blues. Recordings on which McCoy's accompaniment can be heard include some by Tommy Johnson, Ishman Bracey, Memphis Minnie, and the Mississippi Mud Steppers (an offshoot of the Mississippi Sheiks). McCoy also made a few of his own recordings, and he and his brother Joe McCoy played and recorded with the Harlem Hamfats in the late 1930s.

ANDREW LEACH

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

McCOY, GEORGE AND ETHEL

McCoy, George

b. 11 December 1921; Booneville, MS
d. 27 April 1988; Belleville, IL

McCoy, Ethel

b. 14 September 1923; Booneville, MS
d. 18 September 1991; St. Clair County, IL

Brother and sister rural blues duo who were raised in Memphis and East St. Louis. Their uncles were Joe McCoy and Charlie McCoy. Their repertory consisted of prewar blues and other African American songs. Recordings of them appeared on the Library of Congress, Adelphi, and Swingmaster labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

McCOY, "KANSAS" JOE

b. 11 May 1905; Raymond or Jackson, MS
d. 28 January 1950; Chicago, IL

Guitarist Joe McCoy is best known for his work as an accompanist on a number of prewar blues recordings. He made numerous recordings with his wife Memphis Minnie from 1929 until 1934, and the duo were instrumental in helping to establish the urban blues style of the 1930s. After the couple divorced, McCoy played and recorded with the Harlem Hamfats (also featuring his brother Charlie McCoy) in the late 1930s. He later worked with his groups, Big Joe and His Washboard Band and Big Joe and His Rhythm, until the mid-1940s. Other pseudonyms under which McCoy recorded include Kansas Joe and Mississippi Mudder.

ANDREW LEACH

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

McCOY, ROBERT EDWARD

b. 31 March 1910; Aliceville, AL
d. 1978; Birmingham, AL

Pianist who was part of the circle of Birmingham musicians who recorded in the 1930s. He recorded as accompanist in 1937 in ARC label sessions for Charlie Campbell, Guitar Slim, and Peanut the

McCOY, ROBERT EDWARD

Kidnapper. He continued to perform until his death, and he recorded in sessions supervised by Birmingham collector Pat Cather.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Alex Henderson); Harris; Larkin
Eagle, Bob. "Obituaries: Robert McCoy." *Living Blues* no. 43 (Summer 1979): 49.

Discography: AMG; DGR (as accompanist); LSFP

McCOY, ROSE MARIE

b. 1922

Rose Marie McCoy is one of the most prolific rhythm and blues songwriters and, more importantly, one of the few successful women. With more than seven hundred songs to her credit, she was most successful on the charts in the 1950s, several times in collaboration with the equally successful and prolific Charles Singleton. Together, they penned "Mambo Baby" for Ruth Brown (1955) an "If I May" for Nat King Cole (1955). McCoy also created hits for Nappy Brown, "Don't Be Angry," and one of the signature pieces of material for Big Maybelle, "Gabbin' Blues" (1953). On the latter piece, McCoy interjected sharp-tongued rejoinders to the assertive lyric performed by the vocalist.

She wrote for rock acts as well, particularly Elvis Presley, who performed her "I Beg of You" on his *Stereo '57* album.

DAVID SANJEK

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

McCOY, VIOLA

b. ca. 1900; Shelby County, MS

d. ca. 1956; Albany, NY

Singer. McCoy appeared in revues and clubs in the 1920s. Sixty-three issued records (1923-1929), including "I'm Savin' It All for You"/"Papa, If You Can't

Do Better" (1926, Cameo 1066), show her among the finest vaudeville-blues singers. She retired in 1938.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: DGR

McCRACKLIN, JIMMY

b. 13 August 1921; St. Louis, MO

Expressive and distinctive vocalist, pianist, and occasionally harmonica player, as well as prolific songwriter, McCracklin showed a remarkable ability throughout his career to adapt his style to prevailing fashions without losing his identity. He was greatly influenced by Walter Davis and also cites Roosevelt Sykes and Memphis Slim as contributors to his style. His earliest recordings (1945-1948) were for small Los Angeles labels like Globe, Excelsior, W & W, and Courtney and by and large he only sang, leaving piano duties to men like J. D. Nicholson. A move to Richmond led to a meeting with Robert Kelton and the formation of his first band, the Blues Blasters. Contact with Bob Geddins led to recordings for Cava-Tone (one of which was picked up by Aladdin), Down Town, and Trilon (1948). Through Geddins McCracklin was signed by the Bihari brothers in Los Angeles and from 1949 to 1950 he appeared on their RPM and Modern labels and gained wider recognition. In 1951 he gained a new guitarist in Lafayette Thomas and moved to the Swing Time label and then (from 1952 to 1954) he was with Peacock Records of Houston. The year 1954 saw him back with Modern and in 1956 he recorded for Hollywood and then for the small Irma label.

His career seemed to be heading downward but he bounced back in the next year, joining Chess/Checker in Chicago, and in 1958 achieved his first chart hit with the novelty dance number "The Walk," which was a hit on both the R&B and pop charts. He continued to record for Chess but no more hits were forthcoming and after a session for Peacock he switched to the Mercury label for whom he recorded from 1958 to 1960 without any great success. Another retreat to the small Oakland labels led to recordings in 1961 for Gedinson's and his own Art-Tone and Premium labels. This yielded two more chart hits

with “Just Got to Know” and “Shame, Shame, Shame.” The former was picked up by Imperial and, after a Chess session in 1962, McCracklin became an Imperial and later Minit and Liberty artist, recording prolifically from 1962 to 1970 and having hits with “Think,” “My Answer,” and “Come on Home.”

His career continued thereafter on a lower level, but he still performed and recorded when the opportunity arose. Albums for Stax in 1971, JSP (recorded by Lunar Records), and Leon Haywood’s Evejim label (1988), as well as singles on his own Voice and Oak City labels, kept his name before the public, and then he joined the Bullseye Blues label, which issued two albums (1990 and 1994). Finally in 1997 a Gunsmoke album issued some new tracks along with some reissues. His songwriting talents should not be ignored—he wrote much of his own material, showing perceptive understanding of the human condition as well as great wit, and also provided hits for others, notably “Tramp,” which put Lowell Fulson, Otis Redding and Carla Thomas, and Salt-n-Pepa into the charts.

RAY ASTBURY

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Notini, Per, and Ulf Carlsson. “Living Blues Interview: Jimmy McCracklin.” *Living Blues* no. 62 (Winter 1984): 2–13.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

See also Aladdin/Score; Big Town; Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet; Davis, Walter; Duke/Peacock/Back Beat; Excelsior/Exclusive; Fulson, Lowell; Geddins, Bob; Imperial; Irma; JSP; Memphis Slim; Mercury/Fontana/Keynote/Blue Rock; Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM; Nicholson, James David “J. D.”; Oakland; Stax/Volt; Swing Time/Down Beat; Sykes, Roosevelt; Thomas, Lafayette Jerl “Thing”; Trilon

McCRAI, LARRY

b. 5 April 1960; Magnolia or Stephens, AR

Guitar, vocals, composer. Larry McCray learned guitar and the blues from his sister Clara, who brought him to Saginaw, Michigan, in 1972. McCray emerged as a national attraction in 1991 with his powerful, emotive guitar, vocals, and compositions. He worked

with John Snyder, Mike Vernon, John Primer, James Cotton, Lucky Peterson, and Derek Trucks.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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- AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin; Santelli
Barclay, Robert. “Larry McCray.” *Living Blues* no. 120 (March/April 1995): 60–63.

Discography: AMG

McDANIEL, CLARA “BIG”

b. 26 November 1953; Pontiac, MI

Singer. Learned piano as a child, with early exposure to blues and sacred music through her family. Moved to St. Louis in 1966. In the 1970s she performed with Albert King, Big Bad Smitty, and Big George Brock. In 1997 HighTone released her CD *Unwanted Child* (HighTone 1002).

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- Gilmore, Lea. “Clara McDaniel.” *Blues Access* no. 32 (Winter 1998): 20–25.

McDANIEL, FLOYD

b. 21 July 1915; Athens, AL
d. 22 July 1995; Chicago, IL

Jump guitarist and vocalist who appeared at the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair and Harlem’s Cotton Club. With the Four (and Five) Blazes he recorded for Aristocrat and United (reissued on Delmark), which yielded the 1952 hit “Mary Jo.” In the 1990s, he recorded remarkable comeback CDs for Delmark backed by Dave Clark’s Blues Swingers, and Dave Specter.

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

Bibliography

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Brisbin, John Anthony. “A Tribute to Floyd McDaniel.” *Living Blues* no. 123 (September/October 1995): 45.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

- Floyd McDaniel and the Blues Swingers. *Let Your Hair Down* (Delmark DE-671).
The Four Blazes. *Mary Jo* (Delmark DE-704).

McDANIEL, HATTIE

McDANIEL, HATTIE

b. 10 June 1895; Wichita, KS
d. 26 October 1952; Hollywood, CA

Vocalist. Best known as a film star, especially for *Gone with the Wind* (1939), she recorded blues for Meritt, OKeh, and Paramount (1926–1929), including “Quittin’ My Man Today”/“Brown-Skin Baby Doll” (1926, Meritt 2202). Occasionally sang with jazz bands in the 1940s.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

Harris; Southern

Discography: DGR

McDOWELL, FRED

b. 12 January 1904; Rossville, TN
d. 3 July 1972; Memphis, TN

Country blues singer, guitarist, and songwriter who recorded mostly during the 1960s. Although he was nicknamed Mississippi Fred McDowell, this bluesman was born in Tennessee, and lived in Memphis for more than thirty years before moving to Como, Mississippi. He worked at various factories and farms, and played guitar at weekend dances.

Fred McDowell was discovered by folklorists Alan Lomax and Shirley Collins in May 1959. Fred McDowell learned bottleneck guitar from his uncle; he played slide with a rib steak’s bone, and later with a real piece of glass taken from a bottle. Fred McDowell usually played on an acoustic guitar and covered blues standards like “Baby Please Don’t Go,” “Good Morning Little School Girl,” “Shake ’Em On Down.”

McDowell’s song “You Gotta Move” was covered by the Rolling Stones on their 1971 album *Sticky Fingers* and appeared in their film *Gimme Shelter* (1970) as well as on their *Love You Live* album (1977). Jazz singer Cassandra Wilson also covered “You Gotta Move” on her CD *Belly of the Sun* (2002). McDowell himself recorded three versions of the song: acoustic (1965), electric (1971), and with the Hunter’s Chapel Singers of Como, Mississippi (1966).

Fred McDowell died of cancer on July 3, 1972.

YVES LABERGE

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli; Southern
Welding, Pete. “Fred McDowell Interview.” *Blues Unlimited* no. 24 (July/August 1965).

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Lomax, Alan; Rolling Stones; Shake ’Em On Down

McGEE, CLEO “BIG BO”

b. 9 October 1928; Green County, AL
d. 3 March 2002; Eutaw, AL

Raised by his grandmother Emma G. Williams, the ten-year-old Bo McGee made his performance debut playing harmonica at Kid Hall, in Electric Mills, Mississippi. McGee credited his grandmother as being his greatest mentor. His other major early influences included Little Walter, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Eddie Arnold, Tex Ritter, and Jimmy Rogers.

DEBBIE BOND

Discography

Moody Swamp Blues (1995, Alabama Blues Project).
Blues from the Heart of Dixie (2002, Taxim Records).
Live at the Train Station (Vent Records Compilation).
To the Blues (Vent Records Compilation).

McGEE, REVEREND F. W.

b. Ford Washington McGee, 5 October 1890; Winchester, TN
d. 1971

Drummer and preacher. Raised in Hillsboro, Texas. McGee converted to the Church of God in Christ and began preaching in 1920. His activity included establishing congregations in Kansas, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Illinois. He made several energetic sanctified music recordings in 1927–1930, initially with pianist Arizona Dranes, later with his own group, and he also made sermon records. He remained active in the church for the rest of his life.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: DGR

McGHEE, BROWNIE

b. Walter Brown McGhee, 30 November 1915; Knoxville, TN
d. 16 February 1996; Oakland, CA

Brownie McGhee was an East Coast acoustic guitar player and singer, who teamed with harmonica player Sonny Terry during four decades.

McGhee's father, George "Duff" McGhee, was a carpenter during the day and a musician by vocation. There were four other children besides Brownie. McGhee contracted poliomyelitis at the age of four; consequently, his right leg was shorter than the left. He played a five-string banjo, a ukulele, and even studied piano, but he focused on the acoustic guitar. Brownie McGhee left school at age thirteen. From his debut, Brownie had occasionally played with his brother, guitarist Granville "Sticks" McGhee, who is remembered because he composed the famous boogie song "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee."

McGhee met harp player Sonny Terry in 1939; a few months later they formed a prolific acoustic blues duo that would last four decades. Under the name Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee (and sometimes the other way round), they recorded and toured extensively. Their light, exuberant, funny songs were a popular alternative to the deep blues. They borrowed from country blues, Piedmont blues, folk, and sometimes R&B. The artists that influenced them include Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, and Big Bill Broonzy.

In 1941, Brownie McGhee began his recording career as a successor to Blind Boy Fuller (who had just passed away). Fuller's manager, J. B. Long, nicknamed McGhee "Blind Boy Fuller #2" and identified him as such on posters and recordings; he even wanted his "Blind Boy Fuller #2" to play with the former's old guitar in order to keep the same sound.

From the mid-1940s to the late 1950s, McGhee recorded for Folkways, either with or without Sonny Terry, sometimes with other musicians. Since McGhee simultaneously signed exclusive contracts for two or more competitive labels, he sometimes recorded under various pseudonyms, including Spider Sam, Big Tom Collins, Tennessee Gable, Tennessee Gabriel, Brother George, Henry Johnson, and Blind Boy Williams.

In 1973, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee released an LP featuring many musicians (plus drums and piano) and "polished" arrangements, titled *Sonny and Brownie*, which had exceptional visibility, due to wide distribution by A&M Records. At that time, it was one of the only blues records that could be found in department stores. Among the guests were Arlo Guthrie (on Randy Newman's "Sail Away"), John Mayall, and John Hammond.

In 1982, the duet broke up, after years of conflicts, sometimes occurring on stage. Both artists went their separate ways, with McGhee recording with other musicians such as harp player Sugar Blue. Brownie McGhee died of cancer on February 16, 1996, in

Oakland, ten years after Sonny Terry. Both McGhee's solo efforts as well as the joyful music and fine vocal harmonies in his work with Terry helped bring the Piedmont blues to a wider audience.

YVES LABERGE

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 Elmes, Barry. "Living Blues Interview: Brownie McGhee." *Living Blues* no. 13 (Summer 1973): (with Sonny Terry) 14–18; (by himself) 18–23.
 McGhee, Brownie. *Blues & Rhythm: The Gospel Truth* no. 105 (December 1995).

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

See also Fuller, Blind Boy; Leadbelly; McGhee, Granville "Sticks"; Terry, Sonny

MCGHEE, GRANVILLE "STICKS"

- b. 23 March 1918; Kingsport, TN
 d. 15 August 1961; New York City, NY

Singer of blues and R&B, whose 1949 rendition of "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee" was a hit that helped to establish the fledgling Atlantic label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

MCGILL, ROLLEE

- b. 29 December 1934; Kingstree, SC
 d. 11 October 2000; Philadelphia, PA

Tenor saxophonist whose most famous solo was that heard in the Silhouettes' "Get a Job" in 1958. As a singer himself, he had a hit with "There Goes That Train" for Piney Records in 1955. He performed

McGILL, ROLLEE

through the 1980s. The Bear Family label collected his solo material for reissue in 1999.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Eder)

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

McGUIRT, CLARENCE "CANDYMAN"

b. 25 January 1925; Boley, OK

d. 23 July 1979; San Francisco, CA

McGuirt took up the piano after he moved to the Bay Area in 1942 and formed his own band in the early 1950s. He had residencies at various clubs until he retired from music in the 1960s. He made one single for Irma in 1955 with vocals by Geneva Vallier.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

Nations, Opal Louis, and Frank McCowan. "The Story of the Candyman McGuirt Band." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 182 (September 2003): 4–7.

Discography: LSFP

See also Irma; Oakland

McILWAINE, ELLEN

b. 1 October 1945; Nashville, TN

Slide guitarist and singer. Began her professional career in Atlanta in 1966, played in New York City where she encountered Jimi Hendrix and Richie Havens, then in Atlanta and Connecticut. McIlwaine is now active in Toronto. Several of her albums were recorded in collaboration with bassist Jack Bruce.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Ellen McIlwaine website, <http://www.ellenmcilwaine.com/>.

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

McKUNE, JAMES

b. ca. 1910

d. 1971; New York City, NY

White collector who since 1943 pioneered the record collecting of 1920s and 1930s Southern blues and black sacred music. Many of his want lists appeared in the 1940s in *Record Changer*, a magazine that was mostly devoted to jazz and classic women blues singers. He was a mentor to Pete Whelan and Bernard Klatzko, both of whom would build extensive collections of prewar blues and establish important reissue labels in the 1960s.

EDWARD KOMARA

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McMAHON, ANDREW "BLUEBLOOD"

b. 12 April 1926; Delhi, LA

d. 17 February 1984; Monroe, LA

Bassist and vocalist McMahon accompanied many Chicago blues artists including Howlin' Wolf (1960–1973). In 1973 "Blueblood" cut an album for Dharma Records to launch a solo career but failed. He also recorded for MCM in 1976.

LUIGI MONGE

Bibliography

Harris

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O'Neal, Jim. "Andrew 'Blueblood' McMahon." *Living Blues* no. 59 (Spring 1984): 40.

See also Howlin' Wolf

McMULLEN, FRED

Flourished 1930s

Bottleneck slide guitarist believed to have been from Georgia. His 1933 ARC label recordings by himself and with Buddy Moss and Curley Weaver are cherished by slide guitar listeners.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: DGR

McNEELY, CECIL JAMES "BIG JAY"

b. 29 April 1927; Watts, CA

Tenor saxophone. McNeely's paint-peeling squealing and honking tone made him the torch bearer of the R&B and early rock 'n' roll scene of the 1950s and 1960s. Known for his showmanship—blowing torrid solos while on his knees or on his back, strolling through the audience, or playing a fluorescent painted saxophone that glowed in the dark. McNeely was a fixture on the Los Angeles Central Avenue scene, made his recording debut in 1948 for Savoy Records. He had his first hit in 1949 with "Deacon's Hop." In the 1950s McNeely recorded for the Exclusive, Imperial, and King's Federal subsidiary labels. In 1959 he was back on the charts with "There Is Something on Your Mind." From the 1960s to the 1980s he withdrew from music taking a job with the post office. In the 1980s, Europe's fascination with early R&B heroes brought McNeely back on the music scene. He now splits his time between living in Europe and the United States keeping an active touring and recording schedule.

DENNIS TAYLOR

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Discography: AMG; Lord

McPHATTER, CLYDE LENSLEY

b. 15 November 1932; Durham, NC

d. 13 June 1972; Teaneck, NJ

Singer, composer. McPhatter's sublime high tenor and sacred music training took R&B to new heights in the 1950s. His gospel background was a given since his father was a Baptist preacher and his mother a church organist. He formed his first gospel group in New Jersey in 1945 before joining the popular Mount Lebanon Singers in New York City.

In late 1950 McPhatter teamed up with Billy Ward in the Dominoes and they scored a major hit with "Sixty Minute Man" in 1951. But after three years with the group McPhatter left the band and was signed to Atlantic Records by the label's president Ahmet Ertegun. The Drifters were built around McPhatter and the hits, such as the 1954 smash "Money Honey," proliferated. McPhatter was drafted but when he was posted in the

United States he managed to keep working with the Drifters.

When McPhatter received his military discharge in 1955 he left the Drifters as well. His first solo effort was actually a duet with Ruth Brown and it became an R&B success. He hit the pop charts on his own in 1956 with "Treasure of Love" while also releasing two albums during the year. He scored his biggest hit, "A Lover's Question," in 1958 but his career appeared to peak with its success and things slid downhill afterward. He moved to England in the mid-1960s to capitalize on the popularity of classic American R&B music but returned in the early 1970s when he did his final album, *Welcome Home* for Decca.

MICHAEL POINT

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McPHEE, TONY "T. S."

b. 22 March 1944; Humberstone, UK

Singer and guitarist in British blues-rock music. Inspired by Blues Incorporated's 1962 performance at the Marquee Club, London, he joined the Dollar-bills, which then renamed themselves the Groundhogs, and patterned their music after John Lee Hooker, who they assisted on tour in 1964–1965. The Groundhogs began switching to soul music in 1965 but soon disbanded. McPhee then co-led Herbal Mixture in 1966–1967, then played briefly in the John Dummer Blues Band in 1968. That year, at the invitation of United Artists' British division, McPhee re-formed the Groundhogs and recorded five LPs through 1972. He continues to lead his band today, mostly in the United Kingdom and the European continent.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Bruce Eder)

Discography: AMG (Bruce Eder)

McSHANN, JAMES COLUMBUS "JAY"

b. 12 January 1916; Muskogee, OK

Pianist, singer, and bandleader, known as "Hootie." McShann's powerful and percussive piano playing

was deeply rooted in blues and boogie-woogie. Self-taught, he later attended Tuskegee Institute in the early 1930s. He performed in Kansas City from 1936, where he worked with saxophonist Buster Smith and others, then formed his own sextet and big band (the latter included Charlie Parker). McShann's first recordings were made in 1941 and featured blues singer Walter Brown, although he often sang in blues style himself. He made his New York debut with his band in 1942, then served in the Army from 1943 to 1944. He re-formed his big band on his return to New York, and performed at the Savoy and other clubs.

McShann moved to California in the late 1940s, where his small group included Jimmy Witherspoon. Upon his return to Kansas City in the early 1950s, he continued to perform throughout the Midwest, and on jazz and blues festival circuit in the United States and Europe from the late 1960s. He performed as a solo pianist and in small groups and ad hoc settings at festivals. He toured and recorded from 1979 with pianist Ralph Sutton, bassist Milt Hinton, and drummer Gus Johnson as "the last of the whorehouse piano players." He toured in 1989 with a re-creation of the music of his original big band, with arrangements by Ernie Wilkins, and performed at the opening of the Kansas City jazz museum in 1997.

McShann recorded frequently in the 1970s and 1980s on several labels in Europe, Canada, and elsewhere, both in band settings and as a solo pianist. He is featured in several documentary films, including *Hootie's Blues* (1978), *The Last of the Blue Devils* (1979), and *Confessin' the Blues* (1987).

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

Selected Recordings

- "Dexter Blues" (1941, Decca 8583); "Hootie Blues"/"Confessin' the Blues" (1941, Decca 8559); "Swingmatism"/"Vine Street Boogie" (1941, Decca 8570); "The Jumpin' Blues" (1942, Decca 4418); "Sepian

- Bounce" (1942, Decca 4387); *McShann's Piano* (1966, Capitol ST2645); *Confessin' the Blues* (1969, Black and Blue 33022); *The Man from Muskogee* (1972, Sackville 3005); *The Last of the Blue Devils* (1977, Atlantic 8800); *Swingmatism* (1982, Sackville 3046); *Airmail Special* (1985, Sackville 3040); *Hootie's Jumpin' Blues* (1996, Stony Plain 1237); *Still Jumpin' the Blues* (1999, Stony Plain 1254).

McTELL, BLIND WILLIE

b. William Samuel McTell, 5 May 1901; Happy Valley, Thomson, GA

d. 19 August, 1959; Milledgeville, GA

Willie Samuel McTell was the most important Georgia bluesman to be recorded. He was a songster of wide repertoire and as fine a twelve-string guitarist as ever lived. The dexterity of his playing was extraordinary, and his voice was an unusually smooth tenor. The interplay between voice and guitar also brought into the equation McTell's intelligence and wit, and it was the fusion of all of these elements that led Bob Dylan to write in a 1983 tribute song that

no-one can sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell.

McTell explodes every stereotype about blues musicians. He is no roaring primitive, no Robert Johnsonesque devil-dealing womanizer. He didn't lose his sight in a juke-joint brawl or hopping a freight train. He didn't escape into music from behind a mule plow in the Delta. He didn't die violently or young. Instead, blind from birth but never behaving as if handicapped, this resourceful, articulate man became an adept professional musician who traveled widely and talked his way into an array of recording sessions.

He never achieved a hit record, but he became one of the most widely known and well-loved figures in Georgia. Working clubs and car-parks, playing to blacks and whites, tobacco workers, and college kids, Blind Willie McTell, human jukebox and local hero, enjoyed a modest career and an independent life.

He recorded prolifically from the early days of blues recording and laid down a masterpiece on his first day in a studio, in 1927. In the mid-1930s, as the Depression gripped, he dropped from sight. In 1940 John Lomax's wife spotted him playing in Atlanta, and he was recorded singing and talking for the Library of Congress. He was paid a dollar and his taxi fare and dropped from sight once more: just another blind singer, and now turning forty.

He survived, and managed a return to commercial recording in 1949-1950, with sessions for Atlantic Records and Fred Mendelson's small label Regal.



Blind Willie McTell. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

By now there was no market for his prewar acoustic blues style. Muddy Waters had already electrified Chicago. McTell disappeared once again. He was recorded, privately, one more time, in 1956 (by which time rock 'n' roll was shaking up the blues in yet another way) and he died in obscurity in 1959—the very year his “Statesboro Blues” became a “discovery” of the new folk and blues revival movement. It would become a million-selling hit by the Allman Brothers Band (also from Georgia) in the 1970s.

No inferior shellac crackle dooms Blind Willie McTell to the ranks of the almost unlistenable. His prewar recordings, like his diction, are clear as a bell, while the best of his lyrics show him to be an inspired individual composer within a milieu of shared, communal composition. Even where his lyrics are commonstock, the early voice is quietly pained and intimate.

This is evident on “Mama ‘Tain’t Long fo’ Day,” the gem from McTell’s debut day in the studio, October 18, 1927. Early on, McTell tended to make songs more by putting together stock couplets of blues lyric

poetry than by conscious composition. Yet here, though the great opening lines of verses 1, 3, and 4

Wake up mama, don’t you sleep so hard,
Blues grabbed me at midnight, didn’t turn me loose till
day,

and

The big star falling, mama ‘tain’t long ‘fore day

derive from early vaudeville women performers and Blind Lemon Jefferson, he reworks them into a song of real individuality, made unforgettable by his voice and playing. A universe of communication seems held in tension between the exquisite keening of his bottleneck guitar and the vulnerable, edgy hope in his voice.

It’s easy to hear too why “Statesboro Blues” became much loved: This 1928 recording is so rock ‘n’ roll. The lyrics are full of expressions baby boomers will recognize from Jerry Lee Lewis records and the like:

Sister got ‘em . . . brother got ‘em. . .

and

hand me my travelin’ shoes.

In truth these come from old hokum songs and gospel, but McTell propels them forward with fresh exuberance. The record’s abrupt start signals its restlessness. It is as if McTell had begun before the machinery was ready and the first notes of the tumbling opening phrase are missing.

Woody Mann wrote of McTell’s idiosyncratic genius on the twelve-string guitar: “He treats each phrase of his music as a separate entity with its own rhythmical and melodic nuances. . . . As McTell’s musical stream-of-consciousness wanders, so do his bar structures; he may follow a verse of ten bars with another of fourteen.” It’s debatable whether McTell represents a Piedmont “school” of guitarists, but there’s no doubting his distinctive mastery of a difficult instrument. His is always uncannily well tuned, evincing a great sense of pitch, and he can make it do anything—on “Atlanta Strut” he has it imitate mandolin, bass, cornet, and trombone. He also played other instruments: harmonica and accordion. Later he experimented with electric guitar, and still owned one at the time of his death.

McTell mastered a number of styles and he could adopt a different accent for a particular recording. When he cut “Motherless Children Have a Hard Time” for Atlantic Records in 1949, he made it a memorial to his long-dead friend Blind Willie Johnson by a sustained imitation of both Johnson’s voice and the distinctive atmosphere of Johnson’s recordings. On “Hillbilly Willie’s Blues” in 1935 he

indulged his penchant for wry impersonations of the hillbilly singers who lived in the Appalachian hills above his native Georgia plains: a talent first glimpsed on his debut session's "Stole Rider Blues," the finest record Jimmie Rodgers never made.

McTell attended to white musicians as well as singers. "Warm It Up to Me" (1933) may have been a rewrite of any one of a number of similar songs, but noticeably it resembles white veteran guitarist Jimmie Tarleton's "Ooze Up to Me," cut in Atlanta eighteen months earlier.

As well as being a friend of Blind Willie Johnson and good friends over a long period with fellow Georgians Curley Weaver and Buddy Moss, with whom he recorded, McTell reportedly knew Leadbelly, Blind Blake, Lemon Jefferson, Georgia Tom, and sometime partner Tampa Red. Their hit "It's Tight Like That" was adapted on record by McTell and Weaver as "It's a Good Little Thing," as was "You Can't Get Stuff No More," while their "Beedle Um Bum" was remembered by McTell nearly thirty years later at his "last session." He also knew and heard many performers who never recorded—among them the guitarist brothers Jonas and Hollis Brown from Atlanta.

For McTell it paid to be able to perform different sorts of material at different sorts of gigs, but he took pride in being a songster, knew all about the history of his material and felt deep affection for many kinds of song. Equally, he felt entitled to reshape them. As he says of "Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues," "I had to steal music from every which way to get it to fit." He also said, of others' songs he performed, like Blind Blake's "That Will Never Happen No More," "I jump 'em from other writers but I arrange 'em my way."

Few documents exist about McTell, and some that do, such as his marriage and death certificates, contain false or misleading information. His very surname dissolves and re-forms as it is scrutinized. His father's name was McTear or McTier, and members of his family swapped between these spellings. His professional pseudonyms included Pig 'n' Whistle Red, Hot Shot Willie, Georgia Bill, Barrelhouse Sammy, and Blind Sammie. Among friends he seems to have been known as Willie in Atlanta but in Thomson and Statesboro as Doog or Doogie.

Early on, he ran away from home: "I run away and went everywhere, everywhere I could go without any money. I followed shows all around till I begin to get grown . . . medicine shows, carnivals, and all different types of funny little shows." His recorded songs mention seven towns in Georgia, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, East St. Louis, Florida, Lookout Mountain, Memphis, Newport News, Niagara Falls,

New York, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia. He also knew New Orleans. Kate McTell says he once took her to Oakland, California, and in 1935 the two of them recorded in Chicago.

Willie told Kate: "Baby, I was born a Rambler. I'm gonna ramble till I die." However, McTell's romantic rambling spirit has probably been overstressed, and it seems clear now that McTell spent the very great majority of his time within Georgia, and that his traveling was mainly following the tobacco markets—he had grown up in Statesboro, an important tobacco town—and playing to winter tourists in Florida. Late in life his traveling routine centered around church concerts in the patches of Georgia he knew best and where he had relatives with whom he stayed recurrently throughout his life. He was a member of churches in Atlanta, Statesboro, and Happy Valley, and often performed at church concerts, sometimes with gospel quartets. At WGST in Atlanta he sang spirituals on the air in the early 1950s, as he did for WEAS in nearby Decatur.

His country-gospel sides can delight: "Pearly Gates" (Atlantic), "Hide Me in Thy Bosom," and "Sending Up My Timber" (Regal) make a thrilling trio. McTell was alive with conviction for these performances, while his Library of Congress session gives us a fond reminiscence about "those old-fashioned hymns" his parents used to sing around the house before going out to work in the fields. McTell sings material like "I Got to Cross the River Jordan" without melodrama and with great simplicity.

For all his efforts, and the extraordinary quality of his talent, Blind Willie McTell's career was doomed. By the time he was fifty, to the extent that he was known at all, it was as an old Atlanta street musician. McTell does not seem to have become embittered, though he drank, at times heavily, and suffered health problems.

Helen Edwards, with whom McTell had lived for at least fourteen years—far longer than with Kate, who has received all the attention by having survived to be interviewed in the 1970s—died in November 1958. The following spring McTell had a stroke, and moved back to Thomson to live with relatives. For a while his health improved and he played guitar again. But suddenly in summer his health deteriorated again and he was admitted to Milledgeville State Hospital (a mental hospital). He died there one week later, on August 19, 1959, of "cerebral hemorrhages."

He was buried at Jones Grove Baptist Church, in Happy Valley, south of Thomson. Kate McTell learned of the funeral too late to fulfill his request that one of his guitars be buried with him. This was not the only slip-up. The stonemason mixed up the name of the person who'd commissioned it with that of the person it was to commemorate, so Blind

Willie's gravestone offered us one last pseudonym. It read EDDIE McTIER 1898–AUG 19 1959 AT REST.

The Jones Grove Baptist church has now been rebuilt in concrete, and David Fulmer, who directed the documentary film *Blind Willie's Blues*, has paid to replace McTell's gravestone with a new one, with a large picture of a guitar below the inscription BLUES LEGEND 'BLIND WILLIE McTELL' BORN WILLIE SAMUEL McTIER MAY 5, 1901 DIED AUGUST 19, 1959.

Since his death the reemergence of his many recordings has shown that McTell was one of the blues world's consummate artists. Little of his influence shows in contemporary music. Unlike some of the Delta stars, he is not a father of rock 'n' roll, but points backward into an earlier world. Nevertheless, a well-kept secret among blues and folk fans in Britain and America since the 1950s, Blind Willie McTell is the last unrecognized superstar of the blues. His biography, *Hand Me My Travelin' Shoes*, by Michael Gray, is due out in 2006. It represents the first new research into his life since work by David Evans and his family in the 1970s, and will yield new information about McTell's life.

MICHAEL GRAY

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McVEA, JOHN VIVIAN "JACK"

- b. 5 November 1914; Los Angeles, CA
d. 27 December 2000; Los Angeles, CA

Saxophonist. First performed with his father, banjoist Isaac "Satchel" McVea. Took up saxophone at Jefferson High School in Los Angeles. Active in

heyday of Central Avenue in 1930s and 1940s, working with many major names, including T-Bone Walker, Jimmy Witherspoon, and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown. He was a very accomplished swing tenor player in jazz settings, but favored jump and rhythm and blues styles with his own bands. He had a huge hit with "Open the Door, Richard" in 1947. His band toured into the 1950s. He later led a band in Las Vegas and then led a trio on clarinet at Disneyland (Anaheim) from 1966 to 1992.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: LSFP

Selected Recordings as Leader

- "New Worried Life Blues" (1944, Rhythm 207).
"O-Kay for Baby" (1945, Apollo 761).
"Ooh Mop" (1945, Black and White 750).
"Bulgin' Eyes" (1946, Black and White 791).
"Open the Door, Richard" (1946, Black and White 792).
"Mumblin' Blues" (1947, Exclusive 270).

MEAN MISTREATER MAMA

"Mean Mistreater Mama" is credited to Leroy Carr and was likely composed sometime in 1933 or early 1934 during the height of the Great Depression and the economic blackout of recording. It is a twelve-measure blues using an AAB lyric scheme. The piano accompaniment is a pulsing bass beat on the fifth scale degree of the prevailing chord. An antecedent may be Carr's "Prison Bound Blues" (Vocalion 1241) recorded on December 20, 1928, and released early the following year. Carr, with guitarist Scrapper Blackwell, first recorded it on February 20, 1934, for Vocalion Records, their first session in nearly two years even though they had been a best-selling recording duo since 1928. In apparent confidence of the new song becoming a hit, the two men recorded a "Mean Mistreater Mama No. 2" during the same session.

The following day, February 21, 1934, Carr used the melody as the primary theme of "Blues Before Sunrise," which also used the AAB lyric scheme. He recorded two takes, the first of which was released as the flip side of "Mean Mistreater Mama" (Vocalion

MEAN MISTREATER MAMA

02657); the second take would not be released until a Document CD issue in the early 1990s. Notable on this performance is the secondary or alternate theme sung in a high register for the second chorus. The lyrics here are of a despondent, brutal nature, conveying the singer's resolve to shoot his girlfriend.

The melody was quickly adopted by other blues recording artists. Josh White with Carr and Blackwell's assistance recorded "Mean Mistreater Mama" for the ARC labels (including Banner 33148) on August 13, 1934.

Additional treatments by Bumble Bee Slim (Amos Easton) were recorded and issued. As early as 1931 he had reworked Carr's "Prison Bound Blues" into "Chain Gang Bound" (Paramount 13109). After Carr's "Mean Mistreater Mama" appeared, he appropriated the melody for "Cruel Hearted Woman Blues" Parts I and II (Decca 7021) on September 6. The following day for Vocalion he did a less disguised version of his model as "New Mean Mistreater Blues" (Vocalion 02829); on this performance he imitates Carr's "Mean Mistreater Mama" practice of opening an internal chorus with an eighth-note phrase in the first four measures, then resuming the previously established melody. Easton would reuse this distinctive device on another "Mistreater" version, "Cold Blooded Murder" (Vocalion 02865), and to a different melody altogether on "Climbing on Top of the Hill" (Decca 7031).

Robert Johnson's "Kindhearted Woman Blues" (Vocalion 03416), recorded in November 1936 but released the following year, seems based on Easton's "Cruel Hearted Woman" with reference to title, lyrics, and melody, with the eighth-note opening at the third chorus. Johnson's falsetto at the words

Oh babe, my life feels all the same

in the third chorus is a new distinctive touch. His guitar accompaniment is in the stationary pulsing bass manner of Carr's pianism, and the guitar solo in the first take is the only one Johnson recorded among his surviving recordings. Other Johnson treatments of the melody include "Dead Shrimp Blues," "Phonograph Blues" (take 1 only), and "Honeymoon Blues." In 1941 Robert Lockwood recorded "Black Spider Blues" (RCA Bluebird 8877), using the "Mistreater" melody; in later years Lockwood revealed that he learned the lyrics and music from Johnson before the latter's 1938 death.

Today the melody is associated most with Johnson, due to the availability of his recordings since 1961 and the performances by Lockwood, David "Honeyboy" Edwards, and Johnny Shines. Rock versions of "Kindhearted Woman Blues" have tended to be respectful renditions on acoustic guitar, such as that

by George Thorogood on his debut LP (Rounder Records, 1977).

EDWARD KOMARA

MEAUX, HUEY P.

b. 10 March 1929; Kaplan, LA

Producer, promoter. The colorful and controversial "Crazy Cajun" was a shameless self-promoter who was instrumental in recording and gaining exposure for a wide array of Gulf Coast artists. Meaux's family moved to East Texas when he was twelve. He played drums for his father's band but he later stated he had neither aptitude nor enthusiasm for the life of a musician. But Meaux loved the music business and even as he held a day job as a barber he was working as a deejay (with the Big Bopper) in Beaumont, staging dances and ultimately producing records for local acts.

Meaux had his first hit single in 1959 with Jivin' Gene's "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do" but it was the success of Beaumont teenager Barbara Lynn's "You'll Lose a Good Thing" that brought him to national attention. Meaux relocated to Houston and set up shop at Sugar Hill studios, recording a series of low-budget swamp pop hits fueled by innovative production and aggressive promotion techniques. He soon branched out stylistically, working with zydeco founder Clifton Chenier, soulman Chuck Jackson, and Houston blues star Johnny Copeland, among many others. His biggest commercial successes were even more eclectic as they came with his invention of the ersatz British Invasion act the Sir Douglas Quintet, the Tex-Mex combo Sunny and the Sunliners, and bilingual balladeer Freddy Fender. When the hits quit coming, Meaux eventually resumed his deejay career, playing vintage swamp pop favorites on KPFT in Houston.

MICHAEL POINT

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MEDWICK, JOE

b. Joseph Medwick Veasey, 22 June 1933; Houston, TX

d. 12 April 1992; Houston, TX

Singer and songwriter who co-composed many of Bobby Bland's early Duke/Peacock hits including

“Farther Up the Road.” Medwick often wrote in collaboration with pianist Teddy Reynolds. His later practice of selling slightly altered or retitled versions of one song to different record labels led to virtual exclusion from the music business. He made a return as featured vocalist with Grady Gaines and the Texas Upsetters in 1988.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MELODEON RECORDS

Label owned by Dick and Louisa Spottswood in the Washington, D.C., area in 1964–1967. Important blues issues were the Blind Willie McTell sessions for the Library of Congress in 1940, and the Skip James sessions recorded by the Spottswoods shortly after his rediscovery in 1964. Other Melodeon albums featured jazz and country music.

EDWARD KOMARA

MELOTONE

Label first issued in November 1930 as a cheap label subsidiary to Brunswick. Initially devoted mainly to commercial popular music, it became from November 1932 one of the five “dime-store” labels of the American Record Corporation (ARC), with which Brunswick had come under common management in December 1931. The same issue numbers were used for the dime-store labels after September 1935 and they shared an important Race catalog, including Lucille Bogan and Walter Roland, Big Bill (Broonzy), Sam Collins, Georgia Tom (Dorsey), Blind Boy Fuller, and Pinewood Tom (Josh White). All of the dime-store labels were withdrawn in April 1938.

HOWARD RYE

Discography: DGR; Sutton

- Dixon, Robert M. W., and John Godrich. *Recording the Blues*. London: Studio Vista, 1970; reprinted in Paul Oliver et al., *Yonder Come the Blues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
 Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

MELROSE, LESTER

- b. 14 December 1891; Olney, IL
 d. 12 April 1968; Lake County, FL

As a record producer, music publisher, and talent scout, Lester Melrose was a central figure in shaping the sound of the blues recorded in Chicago from the end of Prohibition through World War II. Born on a farm in southern Illinois, he played semipro baseball and worked as a railroad man before serving in Europe in World War I. He began his career in the music business by opening a music store in 1922 on Chicago’s South Side with his brother, jazz pianist Frank Melrose. He soon expanded into music publishing, specializing in blues, and he also organized recording sessions for jazz artists such as Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver’s New Orleans Jazz Band with Louis Armstrong. After selling his portion of the music store to his brother, Melrose recorded blues artists including Georgia Tom (later the Reverend Thomas A. Dorsey) and Big Bill Broonzy in the early 1930s for the various “dime-store” labels of the American Recording Company.

In 1934 Melrose identified himself to RCA Victor and Columbia, the dominant forces at the time in blues recording, as the key person to arrange recording sessions in Chicago. Their response was swift and enthusiastic, and Melrose’s claim that until his retirement in 1951 he “recorded at least 90 per cent of all rhythm-and-blues talent” for the two companies is difficult to dispute. The list includes many of the best-known musicians of the prewar era: Broonzy, Tampa Red, Lonnie Johnson, Leroy Carr, Memphis Minnie, John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, Lil Green, Bumble Bee Slim, Washboard Sam, Jazz Gillum, Johnny Temple, Big Boy Crudup, Roosevelt Sykes, Big Maceo Merriweather, Peter “Doctor” Clayton, Big Joe Williams, Walter Davis, Tommy McClennan, Memphis Slim, and Victoria Spivey.

A hallmark of Melrose’s approach to recording blues was to use a consistent set of studio musicians. He designated Tampa Red’s South Side house as the prerecording session rehearsal center, where the songs could be perfected in advance. Some commentators have been critical of the similarity in the many records Melrose produced for Bluebird (RCA Victor’s discount label); this view was memorably expressed by Samuel B. Charters’ observation that “[t]he Bluebird blues, with few exceptions, was a stereotyped product” [1975, p. 183]. Other observers have noted in response that several significant guitar/piano partnerships, such as Tampa Red and Big Maceo, flourished under the artistic stability that

Melrose's system provided; that his sessions produced many enduring and influential songs; and that his philosophy of establishing a distinctive musical identity for a record label proved successful for later companies such as Chess, Motown, and Stax/Volt.

A key indicator of Melrose's business savvy was his decades-long involvement in two publishing companies, Wabash and Duchess Music, which provided him with ongoing sources of revenue. Accounts differ over how fairly he treated the musicians he recorded, because some artists expressed bitterness at being taken advantage of while others recalled him more favorably. What is universally acknowledged is the clout he wielded in the Chicago blues world for nearly twenty years.

ROBERT RIESMAN

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MEMPHIS

When the city of Memphis was founded in 1819, the handful of original investors foresaw a great commercial metropolis springing forth on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River to fuel the growing westward expansion of their young country. However, in spite of its ancient history as a crossroads and trading nexus for earlier civilizations, this site on the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff witnessed sixty years of near-lawlessness, Civil War, and epidemics, before manifesting those early dreams after 1880. By that time, most of the rich farmland and forests surrounding the community in all directions for a hundred miles were settled and producing lumber and cotton for nationwide consumption; railroads were built to transport these commodities to the major industrial markets of the United States; and the city became the commercial and professional center for a region encompassing parts of seven states.

The last Federal Census (1860) prior to the South's secession revealed a population of 22,623, of whom 3,382 or seventeen percent were of African descent. The majority of these black city dwellers were slaves engaged in household service, construction, and hauling, but a few free men of color were already operating

businesses on and around the main thoroughfare of South Memphis known as Beale Street. The first of these entrepreneurs established saloons, barbershops, and repair businesses to serve the bustling river traffic.

With the end of the Civil War, thousands of newly freed blacks streamed into Memphis in search of employment and opportunity. Instead, shortages in housing, food, and jobs confronted the postwar influx, estimated at 15,000 to 20,000 people in 1866. Initially, these men and women lacked education and social structures to aid their transition to urban life, but missionary groups, charities, self-help organizations and a fledgling minority middle class soon transformed the landscape, adding schools, churches, social clubs, and a full range of commercial and professional services catering to the African American population.

Memphis developed into a major railroad hub, enhanced, in 1892, by the only bridge over the Mississippi between St. Louis and New Orleans. Most roads serving the region led to the city, and, when combined with river and rail traffic, Memphis became a transportation bottleneck, absorbing thousands of new residents each year, while hosting tens of thousands of migrant laborers and visitors from the surrounding countryside. As levee construction transformed the Mississippi Delta from swamps to fertile soil, hundreds of thousands of farmworkers moved there from the exhausted lands of Georgia and the Carolinas. Memphis provided the goods, services, and entertainment that rounded out their lives, and they came to Memphis by the wagonload.

The growth of the city did not follow a typical pattern for the times, however. A series of yellow fever epidemics, culminating with the deadliest outbreak in 1878, altered permanently the course of its development. Many prominent families moved away, taking with them the demands of a ruling elite. Ethnic enclaves were broken up and dispersed throughout Memphis, leading to a more homogeneous environment, one without a "China Town" or "Little Italy," for example. And, while residential segregation existed between black and white Memphians, it took shape as a multitude of proud little neighborhoods scattered about the growing city. By way of contrast, most towns and cities of the South were divided into distinct halves, with a railroad or thoroughfare creating a fixed line of demarcation between the races.

In spite of urban expansion, commerce remained concentrated "downtown" along the river bluff, and Beale Street became the business and entertainment district for black residents and visitors. By day, Beale Street offered legal and medical help, dry goods, food, drugstores, repair shops, tailors, barbers, funeral homes, and, after 1906, banks owned and operated

by black businessmen. But when the workday ended, the so-called sporting crowd took to the street, engaging in the drinking, drug use, gambling, prostitution, and voodoo practices that had long flourished in this river town.

Beale Street drew its cast of characters and their audience from an enormous geographic region, and the unique personality of the street was fixed in the public imagination by the late nineteenth century. While some of the details have likely been embellished over time, the accidental collision of an Italian immigrant with a dice game best illustrates the early history and color of Beale Street and the blues.

According to Beale Street historian and novelist Lt. George W. Lee, Virgilio Maffei arrived in Memphis from New York with ten cents and no prospects. Maffei, known as “Pee Wee” for his small stature, wandered the streets of the city, hungry but reluctant to part with his meager resources for a meal. He stumbled upon a crap game in an alley off Beale and was invited to join the dice shooters. Although Pee Wee scored big and cleaned out the competition, he also won new friends among the group and decided to set up shop in the black community. By the turn of the century, his Beale Street enterprise, known as “P. Wee’s Saloon,” was neighbor to more fashionable and elite black-owned establishments, but Maffei filled a special need within the musical community, and his bar became a landmark and sometimes lifeline among musicians.

When bandleader William Christopher Handy settled in Memphis in 1907, he learned that, in addition to serving drinks and providing gambling and live entertainment, Pee Wee and his staff took messages for patrons on the bar’s pay phone. This complimentary service made P. Wee’s Saloon the central gathering spot for the growing entertainment industry. Street singers, bandleaders, and members of touring minstrel and vaudeville shows made daily stops there, often receiving welcome news about possible gigs or locating replacement personnel to keep the show going. Since the doors never closed, the bar was a virtual home away from home for many touring performers and a prime spot for the exchange of musical styles. By Handy’s own account, he wrote the first score of “The Memphis Blues” on the cigar machine at P. Wee’s from snatches of a melody he heard on the street.

“Home of the Blues”

The twelve-bar refrains with lyrics expressive of the full range of human emotions seemed to drift

into town from the surrounding countryside. By popular demand, mainstream orchestras, like those of Handy, Charles Bynum, and Love’s Mail Carriers, began incorporating some of this “blues” music into their sets, alongside the sophisticated strains of Tin Pan Alley and European classical music, which were the standard dance fare of the time. The burgeoning black vaudeville circuit, evidenced by three theaters operating in Memphis at the turn of the century, also pioneered the introduction of the blues to urban audiences and contributed to its growing recognition as a musical genre outside of the South. However, the 1912 publication of Handy’s “The Memphis Blues” remains the defining moment in popular history for recognition of this primarily Southern and African American art form.

Aside from giving written permanence to the blues’ oral tradition through his publishing, W. C. Handy, an educated black man, made this rural art form accessible and acceptable to an enormous urban audience through effective promotion of his sheet music. As evidence of his success in the white world of the 1910s, the most popular stars of Broadway incorporated Handy’s songs into their repertoires, and successive printed editions of “St. Louis Blues” and “Beale Street Blues” bore cover pictures of well-known singers from Schubert’s *Gaieties* of 1917 and the *Ziegfeld Follies* of 1919, for example.

In their first business endeavor, Handy and partner Harry Pace established the Pace and Handy Music Company in 1913 on Beale Street. The astute businessmen began employing the phrase “Home of the Blues” in national advertising as early as 1915, and they retained the tagline in their logo after moving first to Chicago and then to New York. This epithet was immediately embraced by the general public, and Memphis has retained the “motherland” distinction since that time.

Although Handy’s lyric description in “Beale Street Blues” remained accurate for nearly half a century, the street itself underwent a series of social and demographic changes. Most of the earlier generation of Beale Street denizens felt that the thoroughfare had lost much of its joy and charm by the First World War. Many reasons contributed to this perception. Just as their white counterparts did, well-to-do black Memphians moved out to the spacious and clean suburbs, distributing professional services and social activities among various neighborhoods from their former concentration on “Black America’s Main Street.” This left the cultural influence of Beale Street in the hands of a steady stream of newcomers, including a number of uneducated men and women drawn to the area by such varied factors

as the 1915 Boll Weevil epidemic, war industry employment, and harsher Jim Crow practices in rural areas. The departure of black entrepreneurs, some of whom lost their businesses during the Depression, left a void filled by immigrants, so that in 1934, Lt. George W. Lee would describe the area as “Beale Street, owned largely by Jews, policed by the whites, and enjoyed by the Negroes. . . .” Thus, beginning in the 1920s, Beale Street lost much of its refined element and began to acquire the earthy character that is still attached to its name in the popular imagination.

Just as the sheet music industry was enriched by its Beale Street connections, the recording revolution of the 1920s enjoyed substantial success exploiting performances by Beale Street artists. Initially, record company executives were stunned to learn that a market for black music existed among the black public. Ralph Peer of OKeh Records re-created the epiphany in an interview for *Collier's Weekly*, April 30, 1938. According to Peer, the first popular blues recording artists were drawn from talent living near New York City, but soon the record companies recognized the need to travel to the source for more material to satisfy both the white hillbilly and black blues record buyers. Thus they began the era of field trips to Southern cities, including Atlanta, New Orleans, Dallas, and Memphis, where advertisements and word of mouth beckoned musicians to the sessions.

The handful of companies that came to dominate the “Race record” field did so because of the far-flung talent they employed. Artists not necessarily associated with Memphis—Mississippi John Hurt, Lonnie Johnson, and Blind Boy Fuller—were recorded during sessions held in the city, alongside well-known Beale Street talent like the Memphis Jug Band, Furry Lewis, and Robert Wilkins. The best-known and best-selling artists from the Memphis scene were often recorded in the better facilities of New York and Chicago, including Memphis Minnie and Jim Jackson, whose “Kansas City Blues” was rumored to have sold more than a million copies.

With widespread Depression, the boom in record sales enjoyed during the 1920s appeared to be over, and most of these field recording trips were canceled during 1932 and 1933, as the companies adjusted to a new financial reality. Only a few musicians demonstrated economic drawing power in the early 1930s, but this select crowd was still dominated by artists with strong ties to Memphis, notably the Mississippi Sheiks with their vast extended family, whose members included Bo Carter, Joe McCoy and wife Memphis Minnie, Charlie McCoy, and, somewhat later, Memphis Slim. After dropping the retail sales price of

records to less than half that of 1929, the industry began to recover, and a couple of the leaner, more efficient and consolidated businesses returned to Memphis and the South or sent train fare to Southern artists for formal recording sessions, but not until the 1950s would so many Memphis-honed voices be heard again in such number and variety around the world.

Although pawn shops and second-hand clothing businesses began to dominate the storefronts of Beale, the lively nighttime scene remained the stuff of legend. Occasionally, political candidates would promise to clean up the area, but it was widely acknowledged that the unofficial “sin taxes” paid by club owners and madams financed the local political machine. Although popular singers lamented “Beale Street’s gone dry,” Prohibition only affected the quality of liquor consumed in the area, not the quantity, and a sustained and successful effort to rid Memphis of vice and violence was not made until the late 1930s, drawing attention from the national press. On June 10, 1940, in an article appropriately titled “Memphis Blues,” correspondents for *Time* magazine noted the crackdown on gambling and prostitution and its subsequent removal across state lines. By the 1940s, as reflected in popular songs, north Mississippi and West Memphis, Arkansas, were the acknowledged spots for people to “barrelhouse all night long.” But Beale Street and Memphis were merely taking a break before letting loose the next revolution in sound.

“Battle of the Bands,” Radio, and Recording in Memphis

From the 1930s through the mid-1960s, the black schools of Memphis attracted a number of highly educated musicians to their teaching staffs. As educational incentive, these men inspired intense rivalries among their marching bands, which, by continually raising the yardstick, produced some of the finest musical talent of the twentieth century. For two generations, these Battle of the Band contests galvanized the black communities of Memphis, generating pride, excitement, and much needed revenue for neighborhood schools, which under segregation were separate but distinctly unequal in city funding. Many of the best-known graduates of this competitive environment (Hank Crawford, George Coleman, Sonny Criss, and Andrew Love) excelled on the saxophone, an instrument first introduced to popular music and the blues by W. C. Handy years before. The wailing and honking of saxophones became a hallmark of Memphis-flavored blues, jazz, and R&B.

The educated young musicians found Beale Street irresistible, sneaking into shows by stars like Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, and Count Basie at the Palace and the Hippodrome, and hanging out with touring R&B artists at Sunbeam Mitchell's Club Handy. The kids picked up showmanship techniques from the veteran performers, but the musical exchange was not one sided. For example, teenage virtuosos Phineas Newborn, Jr., and brother Calvin Newborn taught Howlin' Wolf to read sheet music in the late 1940s. Such interactions kept the music alive and intense. All that was lacking was a technological infrastructure to capitalize on this wealth of musical ability.

In the late summer of 1948, a small local radio station decided to create programming by and for black Memphians, in a last ditch effort to achieve financial success. Starting with one well-known and much respected member of the African American community as on-air talent, WDIA gradually expanded during the course of the next two years to full-time content featuring jazz, R&B, and gospel music hosted by black entertainers. That first black voice to greet listeners at 4:00 p.m. on October 25, 1948, belonged to Nat D. Williams, a history teacher, newspaper editorial writer, and long-time emcee of *Amateur Night* at the Palace Theater on Beale Street. The Professor's extensive connections in the world of black music enabled the white station owners to expand their roster quickly, keeping pace with the highly lucrative market they had stumbled upon. Williams recruited capable and popular musicians like B. B. King and Rufus Thomas to host shows on WDIA, and also added community interest programming and commentary from the black point of view to the lineup. The station soon overran the top-rated white station, WREC, and collected the highest premiums paid in Memphis for local and national radio advertising. In 1954, the owners succeeded in implementing a boost in signal strength from 250 to 50,000 watts and converting from a daytime-only FCC license to unlimited programming. By this time, promotional brochures claimed that WDIA was "first in the hearts" of ten percent of America's black population, an exaggeration perhaps, but one that was taken quite seriously by ad agencies and record companies.

From 1949 through 1954, while WDIA signed off at dusk, another local station began a nighttime program with the intent of capturing many of the black listeners WDIA had "discovered" by offering an off-beat mix of country music, blues, and gospel hosted by one of the most unique on-air personalities in radio history. Fast-talking Dewey Phillips hosted "Red, Hot, and Blue" on WHBQ, from 9 p.m. until

midnight, introducing his audience to the latest in non-mainstream recorded music. WHBQ did not succeed in stealing the loyal black audience from WDIA for Phillips's show, but, to their amazement, ratings suggested that one hundred thousand white kids were tuning in each night to hear rhythm and blues.

In January 1949, a white Alabama native and sound engineer for rival station WREC, Sam Phillips, opened the Memphis Recording Service at 706 Union Avenue, a few blocks from Beale Street, and advertised his willingness to record "anything, anywhere, anytime." Among the first takers for this proposition were a number of black blues artists, who recognized the positive financial impact of radio and jukebox play on their public appearance fees. Phillips caught the wave of talent passing through Memphis and sold early recordings by such seminal artists as Howlin' Wolf, Ike Turner, and Rosco Gordon to nationally distributed independent record labels like Chess of Chicago and Modern/RPM of Los Angeles. Within a couple of years, Phillips created the Sun label and jump-started the rock 'n' roll phenomenon.

Equipment at WDIA was put to use in similar fashion to record deejay and entertainer B. B. King's first release for Nashville's Bullet Records. Then, seeing the market for such material, the station's program director, David James Mattis, started the Duke imprint and captured the first performances of young talent streaming into WDIA, artists like Johnny Ace, Bobby Bland, and Earl Forest. Once again, the sounds of Memphis were heard around the world, although this time, because of the inherent freedom of the airwaves, the appreciative audience included people of all colors, especially around the Memphis area.

From hearing black music on the radio, the next step was sneaking into Beale Street clubs and area juke joints to see the performers in person. The most famous of the white blues fans from Memphis was Elvis Presley, whose early career was propelled by his grasp of black phrasing and movement, but other young people from the area were also influenced, including Charlie Musselwhite, Steve Cropper, and Duck Dunn. Musselwhite's understanding of the blues was so genuine that he was adopted by the Chicago blues crowd. Cropper and Dunn were recruited for work at the innovative Stax recording studio, which drew black and white talent together for a decade-long reign at the top of the charts. Featuring the best songwriters, arrangers, and instrumentalists in the South, the Stax roster, including Sam and Dave, Otis Redding, Albert King, Isaac Hayes, and Eddie Floyd, gained international recognition for Memphis once again.

Interest generated by collectors of old 78-rpm recordings stimulated a revival in the roots of the blues during the 1960s, and fans headed to Memphis in search of the men and women who had contributed to that first recording boom of the 1920s. Thus while artists like Little Milton created contemporary blues classics at Stax, the old acoustic players enjoyed a last round of applause. Through efforts such as the Memphis Blues Caravan, organized by music historian Steve LaVere in 1971, Sleepy John Estes and Hammie Nixon, Sam Chatmon, Furry Lewis, and Bukka White were introduced to college and festival audiences around the world.

Desegregation removed the necessity for Beale Street by the late 1950s, and urban renewal destroyed many of its landmarks a short time later, but the spirit of Beale Street retained its powers of attraction, drawing thousands of visitors each year to stare through construction fencing at the shells of old buildings. In the 1980s, repairs began in earnest on the crumbling structures, and by the end of the twentieth century, bars and gift shops lined the blocks from Second to Fourth Streets, recalling an exciting and free-wheeling past.

Meanwhile, Memphians wait for the next big wave in music to hit, as happened when W. C. Handy and his successors expressed the collision of urban and rural cultures in the 1910s and 1920s or when Sun Studios and Stax Records captured the sonic meltdown between black and white musicians in the 1950s and 1960s. Whatever follows will be built on the traditions of the past, and as B. B. King explained with a nod to the jazz and soul musicians surrounding him at the 1977 Beale Street Music Festival, "The blues is the mother tree, and many branches have sprouted from it."

DENISE TAPP

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MEMPHIS BLUES, THE ("MAMA DON' 'LOW" OR "MISTER CRUMP")

An instrumental composition (1912) by W. C. Handy, later a song. It supposedly originated in a 1909 campaign song for Edward Crump, successful mayoral candidate in that year, later the long-time political boss of Memphis. "Mister Crump," in turn, with its refrain

We don't care what Crump won't allow, we gonna
barrelhouse anyhow, Mr. Crump can go and catch
hissself some air

seems to derive from a folk song called "Mama Don' 'low," which bears the same refrain minus Crump. Given that there is no early printed or recorded version of "Mama Don' 'low" or of "Mister Crump" it is probably now impossible to untangle the origins of the piece in any of its version. The 1927 Frank Stokes record titled "Mister Crump Don't Like It" may well be the best source we have for the early history of this song family.

As originally published, "The Memphis Blues" was a piano solo in three sections. Handy was persuaded the song had limited commercial potential, and he sold it, for fifty dollars, to music publisher Theron Bennett. Bennett took the song back to New York's Tin Pan Alley where, outfitted with clever words by George Norton (of "Melancholy Baby" fame), it became a runaway hit in 1913. The lyrics mentioned Handy and his band, but this publicity was

the only benefit he gained from his composition for the next twenty-eight years. After this misadventure, Handy founded his own music publishing firm, and began fitting his own lyrics to his own compositions. “The Memphis Blues” passed to other publishers, but Handy was able to gain control of the copyright when it came up for renewal in 1940. Because the piece, like “St. Louis Blues,” “Beale Street Blues,” and his other standards, was still ripe for revival in new arrangements, Handy was able to make a good deal of money off of it in the final decades of his life.

“The Memphis Blues” is not actually a blues at all, but a fairly straightforward piece of piano ragtime, although Handy was later able to retrofit traditional blues lyrics to the song, such as

You want to be my man, you got to give me forty dollars down.

This juxtaposition is only partially successful, however. The 1913 Norton lyrics are superior, although they have nothing to do with the blues. “The Memphis Blues” became highly important as an influence on early jazz in two ways. First, it contained one of the earliest free-floating interpolated “riffs” to become popular, pointing toward an important jazz building block. Secondly, it is supposed to have been used in the creation of the first fox-trot, when James Reese Europe played the piece on the piano, at a slow tempo, for his employers, the renowned social dancers Vernon and Irene Castle. However, its primary importance for blues was in helping kick off the fad for compositions with “blues” in the title, and it put Memphis on the map as the music’s home.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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Selected Recordings

As “The Memphis Blues”

- Various artists including Esther Bigeou, Monette Moore, and Memphis Slim.
 Brass bands including Victor Military Band, Prince’s Band, Jim Europe’s 369th Infantry “Hell Fighters” Band, and Tim Brymn and His Black Devil Orchestra.
 Jazz and dance bands including Lanin’s Southern Serenaders, The Virginians, Handy’s Orchestra, Ted Lewis, Isham Jones, Original Memphis Five, Original Indiana Five, Ben Pollack and His Orchestra, The Six Hottentots,

Al Bernard, Fletcher Henderson, Ambrose and His Orchestra, Benny Carter, Will Bradley, Henry Levine, Harry James, and many, many others.

Also miscellaneous pop and novelty artists, such as Johnny Marvin.

As “Mister Crump”

Last Chance Jug Band.

As “Mister Crump Don’t Like It”

Frank Stokes.

As “Mama Don’t Allow” (or one of several other variants of the title)

Tampa Red, “Cow Cow” Davenport, Fred McDowell, Mance Lipscomb, Alvin Youngblood Hart (blues); Mound City Blue Blowers, Frankie “Half Pint” Jaxon, Boswell Sisters, Nat Gonella, Ted Wallace, Billie and De De Pierce (jazz); Milton Brown and His Brownies, The Stanley Brothers (country music).

MEMPHIS JUG BAND

The Memphis Jug Band was one of the most popular African American musical groups of the late 1920s and early 1930s and arguably the most important jug band (see the *Jug* entry) in the history of the blues. The founder and central figure of the Memphis Jug Band was Will Shade (also known as Son Brimmer), who primarily played the guitar and harmonica. After performing around Memphis and touring with medicine shows for a few years, Shade formed the group in the mid-1920s after being inspired by the records of the influential Louisville jug band, the Dixieland Jug Blowers. Between 1927 and 1934, the Memphis Jug Band made recordings for Victor, Champion, and OKeh, achieving considerable fame and commercial success.

The lineup of the Memphis Jug Band changed constantly throughout its career, both inside and outside the recording studio. While the core members of the group were Shade and Charlie Burse, several additional musicians from the Memphis blues scene recorded and performed with them, including Tewee Blackman, Robert Burse, Jennie Clayton (Shade’s wife), Laura Dukes, Hattie Hart, Jab Jones, Hambone Lewis, Charlie Nickerson, Charlie Pierce, Charlie Polk, Ben Ramey, Milton Roby, Vol Stevens, and Dewey Thomas. Some better-known Memphis musicians who recorded and performed with the group included Big Walter Horton, Furry Lewis, Memphis Minnie, and Casey Bill Weldon. The personnel were always loose knit, with the combination of musicians often varying from one performance to the next, depending on who was available on a given date.

Like most of the jug bands in Memphis that came after them, the Memphis Jug Band played in a

MEMPHIS JUG BAND

more rural, blues-oriented style than the heavily jazz-influenced approach of the jug bands in Louisville. Nevertheless, the group's repertoire drew from a variety of musical sources in addition to blues, including popular hits, minstrel songs, dance tunes, waltzes, and rags. The Memphis Jug Band's stylistic diversity helped it to gain a great deal of popularity among both black and white audiences. As a result, the group's live appearances took place in various settings, from picnics, fish fries, restaurants, and street corners to country clubs, private parties, and political rallies.

The Memphis Jug Band's success sparked a jug band craze that brought about the formation of numerous jug bands in Memphis in the late 1920s and early 1930s, including the legendary Cannon's Jug Stompers (see *Cannon, Gus* entry) and Jack Kelly's South Memphis Jug Band. By the mid-1930s, however, the popularity of jug band music had begun to wane considerably as the Great Depression drastically diminished record sales and as newer and more urbane musical styles emerged. Consequently, the Memphis Jug Band's live engagements became less frequent, and the group could no longer get recording dates after 1934. Still, the group occasionally performed in and around Memphis for years after that, and in 1956, Will Shade and Charlie Burse made a few recordings for the Folkways label (credited as the Memphis Jug Band). Shade recorded a handful of songs for other labels in the early 1960s before his death in 1966.

Over the years, the influence and appeal of the Memphis Jug Band have proven to be long lasting. During the folk revival of the 1960s, several new jug bands were formed, largely replicating the style of the Memphis Jug Band and the other Memphis groups. Today, several groups still perform in this style.

ANDREW LEACH

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSF

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MEMPHIS MINNIE

b. Lizzie Douglas, 3 June 1897; Algiers, LA

d. 6 August 1973; Memphis, TN

One of the foremost country blues singer/guitarists and one of the few women to achieve such status. Performing as Memphis Minnie (McCoy, or later, Lawlars), she became a major personality on the Chicago blues scene of the 1930s and 1940s.

Memphis Minnie was born in Algiers, Louisiana, in 1897, the oldest child of Abe and Gertrude Douglas. When Minnie was seven, the family moved to Walls, Mississippi. Minnie soon abandoned farm life in favor of playing her guitar on Beale Street in nearby Memphis. She also rejected the name Lizzie and began calling herself "Kid" Douglas.

Minnie traveled and played throughout the Delta, landing at the Bedford plantation west of Lake Cormorant and taking up with bluesman Willie Brown, her virtuoso guitar work immediately establishing her as head of the new partnership. Minnie had already played in a few traveling shows, building a diverse repertoire. Female blues singers tended to be associated with the vaudeville and jazz tradition, while the country blues guitar/vocal role was usually filled by males. Minnie's role as a female country blues guitarist (and later as an urban one) helped shatter these stereotypes of gender-based role performance.

In 1929, with a new partner, husband Joe McCoy, Minnie made her first records. Christened Kansas Joe and Memphis Minnie (as their names were to appear on record labels), their first session produced several influential works: "Frisco Town," "When the Levee Breaks" (vocals by Joe McCoy), and the best-selling "Bumble Bee." Minnie was a talented songwriter, and her songs often took up themes of rural life in the 1920s. "When the Levee Breaks" was inspired by the 1927 Mississippi River flood. "Soo Cow Soo" and "If You See My Rooster" are songs with other familiar themes.

By early 1930, Minnie and Joe began to record for Vocalion and the records they made in the next three years contain what many believe to be Minnie's greatest work. Minnie and Joe also recorded with the Memphis Jug Band and Jed Davenport's Jug Band during this period.

As the Depression eased, Minnie and Joe began to record for Decca, but their partnership soon came to an end. Minnie continued to record for Decca throughout 1934, switching to Victor's Bluebird



Memphis Minnie in 1940. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

label in 1935 where she was accompanied by Big Bill Broonzy and Casey Bill Weldon. Weldon was once thought to be her first husband, but no evidence for this relationship has ever surfaced.

Throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, Minnie recorded for the Vocalion/OKeh/Columbia group of labels, under the direction of Lester Melrose, usually with some combination of guitars, piano, drums, and occasionally a trumpet. She was an active participant in the Chicago blues world, one to whom many other artists—Big Bill Broonzy, for example—turned for advice and counsel. In the late 1930s, she began to partner with Little Son Joe (Ernest Lawlars), and he became her second husband in 1942. They played the 708 Club and other local spots, often participating in blues contests and usually winning them, sometimes against Big Bill Broonzy and later against Muddy Waters. In 1941, Minnie and Son had their biggest hit, “Me and My Chauffeur Blues.” The reverse side, “Black Rat Swing,” was sung by Son Joe and became a blues standard as well.

Minnie’s last issued record was a powerful postwar issue for JOB called “World of Trouble.” Indeed, hers were just beginning. Son’s health declined and they moved back to Memphis in 1958. Son died in 1961, and Minnie’s health deteriorated so much that she was confined to a wheelchair. Eventually she entered a nursing home. She died August 6, 1973.

Minnie played lead guitar in all of her partnerships and she has been hailed as a skilled guitarist with few equals. In “What’s the Matter with the Mill” Minnie plays in open G or “Spanish” tuning while capoed at the fifth fret, while Joe is capoed at the third fret and plays in standard tuning. The intricate interplay of the two guitars is compelling and inspired Muddy Waters to record the tune decades later. Minnie also played in standard tuning; “Drunken Barrel House Blues” was performed in the key of G and “Soo Cow Soo” is in the key of D.

The new smoother sounds of the 1930s, for which the trends had already been set in the late 1920s by Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, gave Minnie less opportunity to record her dexterous picking style, although occasionally her earlier style would manifest itself on a song like the 1939 “Call the Fire Wagon.”

Not one to be daunted by such changes in audience demand, Minnie became one of the first performers to adopt the new electric guitar. Her “Me and My Chauffeur Blues” became a blues standard in many Chicago repertoires, just as her “Bumble Bee” had captured the imagination of singers as diverse as Bertha Lee Patton, Johnny Shines, Bo Carter, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, and even the Rolling Stones.

“I’m Talking About You” was recorded by country and western performers like Milton Brown as well as blues artists like Big Joe Williams. Led Zeppelin’s version of “When the Levee Breaks” carried her work to a still wider realm.

Minnie’s musical career spanned a forty-year period, leaving a legacy of more than 180 issued sides. Hailed as one of the greatest blues singers of all time and elected to the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame in the first year of the W. C. Handy Awards, Minnie continues to be held in high esteem. In 1996, a handsome marble monument was installed at her grave in Walls, Mississippi, where she began her musical journey so many years before.

PAUL GARON

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

“Bumble Bee” (1930, Vocalion 1476).
“I’m Talking About You” (1930, Vocalion 1476).
“Me and My Chauffeur Blues” (1941, OKeh 06288).

MEMPHIS PIANO RED

MEMPHIS PIANO RED

b. John Williams, 16 April 1905; Germantown, TN
d. 5 February 1982; Memphis, TN

Barrelhouse pianist, usually played solo but also with Barber Parker's Silver Kings, Woodrow Adams, and others. First recorded for Blue Thumb (1969).

FRED J. HAY

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Discography: LSPF

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MEMPHIS SLIM

b. John Chatman, 3 September 1915; Memphis, TN
d. 24 February 1988; Paris, France

Memphis Slim achieved and sustained success as a singer, pianist, bandleader, accompanist, and songwriter over a nearly sixty-year recording and performing career. Born John Chatman (sources give either Len or Peter as middle name) in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1915, his early exposure to blues and boogie-woogie came from his father, Peter Chatman, who sang, played piano and guitar, and operated juke joints. The list of artists who influenced him through their recordings includes Clarence Williams, Leroy Carr, Lonnie Johnson, and Bessie Smith, an education he supplemented by watching Roosevelt Sykes and Speckled Red, as well as other local Memphis pianists. He spent most of the 1930s performing in honky-tonks, dance halls, and gambling joints in Memphis, Arkansas, and southern Missouri.

In the late 1930s he moved to Chicago, where his first recording session for the Okeh label in 1940 was credited to "Peter Chatman." Later that year he recorded two songs for Bluebird that became part of his repertoire for decades, "Beer Drinking Woman" and "Grinder Man Blues," which were released under the name "Memphis Slim," given to him by Bluebird's powerful producer, Lester Melrose. Slim became a regular session musician for Bluebird, and his piano talents supported established stars such as John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, Washboard

Sam, and Jazz Gillum. In particular, many of Slim's recordings and performances until the mid-1940s were with guitarist and singer Big Bill Broonzy, who had recruited Slim to be his piano player after Josh Altheimer's death in 1940. After encouraging Slim to transform his piano technique from one that imitated Roosevelt Sykes to something that was distinctively his own, Broonzy gave him a memorable graduation speech: "You's good enough now to go on your own. You don't need Big Bill or no other blues singer with you. Just get you some good musicians to play with you and you'll be Memphis Slim just like I'm Big Bill." Slim's assessment two decades later was that "Big Bill was the greatest that I have known."

Starting in the mid-1940s, Slim led a series of bands that, reflecting the popular appeal of jump-blues, generally included saxophones, bass, drums, and piano. As Slim described it for the British magazine *Jazz Journal* in 1961, "I saw things changing quite a bit, so I grabbed me a band and laid it on, and started to try and keep up with the trend, and I did pretty good." During this fertile and successful period for Slim, he recorded many of the songs with which he was associated, including "Messin' Around" (which reached number one on the R&B charts in 1948), "Harlem Bound," and, most notably, "Nobody



Memphis Slim in Chicago, 1940. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Loves Me.” This song—later recorded and performed as “Every Day I Have the Blues” by Lowell Fulson, Joe Williams, and B. B. King—is often credited to Slim, but, because a version of it appeared in 1935, he in all likelihood was not the original author.

In 1947, the day after producing a concert by Slim, Broonzy, and Williamson at New York City’s Town Hall, folklorist Alan Lomax brought the three musicians to the Decca studios and recorded their unrehearsed discussion, along with musical interludes, many featuring Slim’s piano and vocals. Lomax presented sections of this recording on BBC radio in the early 1950s as a documentary titled *The Art of the Negro*, and later released an expanded version as the LP *Blues in the Mississippi Night*, although he did not identify the performers by name until 1990. Described by music writer Greil Marcus as “a brutal and poetic prehistory of the civil rights movement,” the session presented compelling stories and images of the experiences of blacks in the South to audiences within and beyond the United States.

Slim’s collaborations in the late 1950s and early 1960s illustrated his ability to adapt to varying musical tastes. His recordings with guitarist Matt “Guitar” Murphy such as *Live at the Gate of Horn* presented a powerful rhythm section of three saxophones and an assertive lead guitarist in Murphy combining for a sound likely to appeal to black audiences. During the same period, with an eye on the emerging white audience eager for music rooted in folk traditions, he made a series of records that included live performances with folksinger Pete Seeger, as well as sessions featuring older blues standards with musicians such as Jazz Gillum and guitarist Arbee Stidham. In addition, as he recorded solo sessions for Folkways of boogie-woogie piano pieces, he often introduced the songs with a description of their background or composers, adopting the style that Broonzy had used successfully to entertain white American and European audiences.

Slim first appeared outside the United States in 1960, touring with Willie Dixon, with whom he returned to Europe in 1962 as a featured artist in the first of the series of American Folk Blues Festival concerts organized by Dixon and promoter Horst Lippmann that brought many notable blues artists to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. He moved permanently to Paris in 1962, and his engaging personality and well-honed presentation of playing, singing, and storytelling about the blues secured his position as the most prominent expatriate blues artist for nearly three decades. He appeared on television in numerous European countries, acted in several French films and wrote the score for another, and performed regularly in Paris, throughout Europe, and on return visits to the United States. His status was recognized by

France, which awarded him the title of Commander of Arts and Letters, and by the U.S. Senate, which in 1978 named him Ambassador-at-Large of Good Will. By the time of his death in Paris in 1988, he had recorded for nearly forty different blues record labels.

BOB RIESMAN

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

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The Bluebird Recordings 1940–1941 (RCA 07863 66720-2).
Blues in the Mississippi Night (Rykodisc RCD 90155).
The Folkways Years (Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40128).
Memphis Slim: I’ll Just Keep Singin’ the Blues (32 Blues 32193).
Memphis Slim: Life is Like That (King KCD 6006).
Memphis Slim: Rockin’ the Blues (Charly Blues Masterworks Vol. 21 CD BM 21).
Raining the Blues (Fantasy FCD-24705).

MERCURY/FONTANA/KEYNOTE/ BLUE ROCK

Founded in 1945 in Chicago by Berle Adams and Irving Green as a division of the Mercury Radio & Television Corporation, the Mercury label’s first A&R person devoted to black music was noted Chicago pianist and composer Richard M. Jones, who arranged sessions for Albert Ammons, Sippie Wallace, the Cats ’n’ Jammers, and the Four Jumps of Jive. The label quickly expanded to cover jazz, polka, and country music, but blues and R&B, too, remained a large part of Mercury’s schedule, with important recordings by T-Bone Walker, Dinah Washington, Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, Big Bill Broonzy, Robert Lockwood, Sunnyland Slim, and Memphis Slim. Once the label had established itself as an important black music record label, other locations yielded rich material: Los Angeles gave the Johnny Otis Orchestra; New York, the Buddy Johnson band; New Orleans provided Roy “Professor Longhair” Byrd; and in Houston, Lightnin’ Hopkins, Smokey Hogg, and Elmo Nixon were recorded.

In 1947, Irving Green incorporated the Mercury Radio & Television Company and all the other peripheral businesses of the company into the Mercury Record Corporation, turning the thriving independent into a major record label. Continuing to expand,

in the early and mid-1950s, Mercury inaugurated the Wing label for pop and R&B releases, the Emarcy subsidiary (originally under the management of Bob Shad) for jazz, and also acquired several labels, including Harry Lim's Keynote Records. The company was eventually purchased in 1961 by the Dutch multinational Philips, leading to the creation of US Philips and US Fontana. These labels were brought under the umbrella of the established Mercury label together with other new subsidiaries such as Lime-light (for jazz recordings), Cumberland (folk and country), and Blue Rock (rock and blues).

DAVID PENNY

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Discography: McGrath

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The Mercury Blues 'n' Rhythm Story 1945-1955 (1996, Mercury CD 528292-2).

MERITT

Record label founded in 1925 by Winston M. W. Holmes at his music store at 1704 18th Street, Kansas City, Missouri. Six known issues, all by African Americans, including blues by Hattie McDaniel and Lena and Sylvester Kimbrough, were pressed in very small quantities and sold only in Holmes's store. Holmes is also believed to have recorded Julia Lee but the results were not issued. Other companies used his studio to record in Kansas City. The label ceased trading in 1929, in which year Winston Holmes himself recorded blues for Paramount. Meritt was the only black-owned label to record outside the major northern centers before the 1940s.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: DGR; Sutton

MGM (55000 R&B SERIES)

Founded in Hollywood in 1946 as a division of the major motion picture corporation, MGM launched a short-lived R&B series in 1954 that lasted less than two years and included mainly New York City-based artists such as "Jimmy Newsome, Baby Dee, and Claude Cloud & His Thunder-Claps" (in reality Leroy Kirkland's band of session musicians). In 1972 the MGM label was sold to Polydor Records, now a part of the Universal group.

DAVE PENNY

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Ruppli, Michel. *The M-G-M Labels*. 3 vols. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998.

Discography: McGrath

MICKLE, ELMON "DRIFTING SLIM"

b. 24 February 1919; Keo, AR
d. 15 September 1977; Los Angeles, CA

Harmonica player who later learned drums and guitar. His early harmonica influence was John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson through records and personal meetings in the 1930s. He performed in Arkansas in the 1940s, including radio shows on KDRK and KGHI. In 1951 he formed a band with guitarists Baby Face Turner, Crippled Red (Junior Brooks), and drummer Bill Russell, with which he recorded for the Bihari brothers' labels Modern and RPM. Later he learned drums and guitar to perform as a one-man band.

In 1957 he moved to Los Angeles, working day jobs but still performing at house parties and other informal occasions. Through 1966 he recorded for small R&B labels, but that year he was discovered by Frank Scott, Henry Vestine, and Pete Welding. He then recorded for the Blue Horizon and Milestone album labels in sessions supervised by Welding. Afterward he performed at college campuses and folk festivals into the early 1970s. His last years were hampered by illness, and he died of cancer. His date of death has been reported variously as September 14, 15, or 17, 1977.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Larkin
 Scott, Frank. "Driftin' Slim (Elmon Mickle)" [obituary].
Living Blues no. 35 (November/December 1977): 39.

Discography: AMG; LSFP**MIGHTY CLOUDS OF JOY**

Formed in 1959 in Los Angeles, California. The innovative vocal group created by Joe Ligon and Johnny Martin was the primary pioneer of popularizing gospel music as it assimilated mainstream concepts to modernize the genre. The group made its recording debut in 1960 on Peacock with the single "Steal Away to Jesus." Its first album, *Family Circle*, was released the next year. It enlarged and upgraded the gospel format, using a full band and embellishing the vocals with slick choreography in live performance. As the years progressed, the group, the first gospel unit to appear on the *Soul Train* television program, incorporated elements of funk and disco into its sound. It remained active for four decades after its founding, headlining its own shows while opening concerts for everyone from Marvin Gaye to the Rolling Stones.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Larkin

Discography: AMG (Jason Ankeny); Larkin**MILBURN, AMOS**

- b. 1 April 1927; Houston, TX
- d. 3 January 1980; Houston, TX

An R&B singer, piano player, and sometime composer, Amos Milburn began his career in Houston and continued it on the West Coast, after being discharged from his Navy service in the Philippines during World War II. He first played in Houston clubs and specialized in boogie-woogie ("Amos Boogie," "Aladdin Boogie"), barrelhouse, up-tempo, and sometimes very slow blues.

At only age nineteen, Milburn recorded Don Raye's classic boogie "Down the Road Apiece" (1946), later covered by Chuck Berry as well as the Rolling Stones and Manfred Mann. Milburn's "Chicken Shack Boogie" went to number one in R&B charts in 1948 and sold a million copies for

Aladdin Records. Influenced by Louis Jordan, the song "Chicken Shack Boogie" remains one of the few hits that Milburn wrote himself, though he had the assistance of talent agent Lola Anne Cullum.

Amos Milburn admired pianists such as Pete Johnson, Albert Ammons, and Meade "Lux" Lewis, but also Ivory Joe Hunter and his lifetime friend Charles Brown (who also recorded for Aladdin). A skilled musician, Amos Milburn could create sensual moods with slow blues, often with a languorous saxophone backing, similar to Charles Brown's early style, such as in "Operation Blues," "Cinch Blues," "Money Hustlin' Women," "Sad and Blue," and "Mean Women." In 1949, Milburn also recorded a version of Brown's classic, "Drifting Blues." After many successful 78s, Milburn released his first ten-inch album, *Party After Hours*, in 1952.

From 1949 to 1955, Amos Milburn and his Aladdin Chickenshakers performed many memorable songs, with themes often related to alcohol: "Bad, Bad Whisky" (number one in R&B charts in 1950), "Thinking and Drinking" (number eight in 1952), "Let Me Go Home, Whisky" (number three in R&B charts in 1953), "Good, Good Whisky" (which went number five in R&B charts in 1954), "Milk and Water" (1954), and "Vicious, Vicious Vodka" (1954). By the time Amos Milburn issued "Rum & Coca Cola" (1957), his alcoholism had become severe. His career began to fade, at a time when rock 'n' roll could have brought him more successes.

In that same vein, Amos Milburn released in 1953 what remains his best known song: "One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer," composed by Rudy Tooms. The song was later covered by John Lee Hooker, Alfred Brown (who did a ska version in the late 1960s), and George Thorogood and the Delaware Destroyers.

From 1963, Amos Milburn worked briefly for Motown Records, King, and United Artists, but health problems confined Milburn to a wheelchair in the early 1970s. He continued recording until 1979, when one of his legs was amputated. Amos Milburn passed away on January 3, 1980. His influence was strong on piano players from Fats Domino to Nat King Cole. He remains a reference for blues and rock 'n' roll pianists.

YVES LABERGE

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; LSFP; Santelli

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Aladdin/Score; Brown, Charles; Rolling Stones**

MILES, JOSEPHINE “JOSIE”

MILES, JOSEPHINE “JOSIE”

b. ca. 1900; Summerville, SC
d. ca. 1953–1965; Kansas City, MO

Singer who moved to New York City in the early 1920s and was quickly hired in black musical theater and revues. She recorded for various blues labels including Black Swan in 1922–1925. In 1928, she recorded sacred music in two Gennett sessions. Thereafter she turned more to church activity, especially in Kansas City, where she reportedly died in a car accident.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

MILES, LIZZIE

b. Elizabeth Mary Landreaux, 31 March 1895; New Orleans, LA
d. 17 March 1963; New Orleans, LA

Vocalist. Half-sister of Edna Hicks; Miles was her first husband's name. Worked with early jazz bands and in minstrel shows and circuses from 1909 to 1921, when she moved to New York and began recording blues. Her “You're Always Messin' Round with My Man” (1923, Victor 19083) is cited as the first blues record issued in Britain (HMV B1703). Inactive through illness from 1931 to 1933, she worked in Chicago and New York clubs from 1935 to 1938, then retired to New Orleans. She returned to Chicago in 1939, recording with Melrose Stompers, including “Stranger Blues”/“Twenty Grand Blues” (1939, Vocalion 05392). She again retired in 1942, but after 1950 began a second career performing blues and vaudeville songs with New Orleans jazz bands, notably with Sharkey Bonano and George Lewis. In this period she specialized in singing in Creole French as well as English, often in the same song. *Moans and Blues* (ca. 1954, Cook 1182) showcases the blues side of this repertoire.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: DGR; Harris; Lord; LSFP

MILES, LUKE “LONG GONE”

b. 8 May 1925; Lachute, LA
d. 22 or 23 November 1987; Los Angeles, CA

A disciple and protégé of Lightnin' Hopkins, country blues vocalist Miles recorded four sides with his mentor for Tradition (1959). A session for Mercury (later issued on Sundown) and a full-length LP for World Pacific followed. After playing Newport in 1966, Miles disappeared into obscurity.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: LSFP

See also Williamson, Sonny Boy II (Aleck Miller)

MILLER, CLARENCE HORATIO “BIG”

b. 18 December 1922; Sioux City, IA
d. 9 June 1992; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Jazz and blues singer in the Kansas City styles of Big Joe Turner, Jimmy Rushing, and Walter Brown. Among his tour credits were singing with the bands of Jay McShann (1949–1954), Duke Ellington (1955), Lionel Hampton (1949), and Count Basie (1962). He also had many credits in American and Canadian radio and television.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: Lord

MILLER, JAY D. “J. D.”

b. 5 May 1922; Iota, LA
d. 23 March 1996; Crowley, LA

A prolific producer and recording engineer who captured the full spectrum of South Louisiana music at his Crowley studio, J. D. Miller ran his own modest regional labels, supervised sessions for other local start-ups, and leased some of his most memorable material to larger labels for national distribution.

Miller launched his first label, Fais Do Do, in 1946, followed by Feature in 1947, operating out of an electric repair shop he ran with his father. Initially aiming for the Cajun and hillbilly markets and forging links with Nashville, he became active in blues after the success of his first record in that genre, “Bad Luck” by Lightnin’ Slim, a down-home bluesman from the Baton Rouge, an area that Miller soon mined for other blues talent, including Slim Harpo, Lazy Lester, Lonesome Sundown, and Silas Hogan. He developed a long-standing relationship with Nashville-based Excello, which released many of his productions between 1955 and 1966. Sparse production, stripped-down instrumentation, and natural reverb gave Miller’s guitar and harp-based blues recordings a distinctive, gloomy sound, sometimes called “swamp blues.”

Other Miller recording artists included Guitar Gable, King Karl, Katie Webster, and Warren Storm, who played in the New Orleans R&B-influenced “swamp pop” style, characterized by horn sections and triplet piano. He also cut rock ’n’ roll, R&B, Cajun, zydeco, and comedy for his own Rocko, Zynn, Kajun, and Cajun Classics labels, and devoted his Rebel label, with its Confederate flag logo, to country music with overtly anti-civil rights, anti-Great Society lyrics. In the late 1960s, he largely turned over the music business to his son Mark, who operated his newly opened Master-Trak studio, ran the Blues Unlimited label, and recorded younger artists like Buckwheat Zydeco and Wayne Toups & ZydeCajun.

Miller was also a songwriter of note, penning country hits like “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels” and using the pseudonym Jay West when publishing blues tunes.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Selected Recordings

- Various artists. *The Sound of the Swamp: The Best of Excello, Vol. 1* (1990, Rhino CD 70896).

MILLER, POLK

b. 2 August 1844; near Burkeville, Prince Edward County, VA

d. 20 October 1913; Richmond, VA

Miller, a white man, spent much time in the company of slaves on his father’s plantation and was consequently fascinated by black culture and learned to play the banjo during the 1850s in an “old time” pluck-and-strum style. He served in the Confederate Army and established himself as a pharmacist in Richmond after the Civil War was over. He continued to collect Southern folk tales and songs, did some composing, and, in 1892, debuted at a benefit concert. A year later, at age forty-nine, he decided to abandon his drug business and embark on a career as an itinerant “darkey dialectician” and “banjoist.” For the next five years he toured the United States extensively as a solo performer, but from about 1899 he began touring with a black vocal group from the Richmond community, known as the Old South Quartette. This pioneering racially mixed group appeared “in the most exclusive social clubs in New York, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh and Cleveland.” The personnel changed frequently (about twenty individuals in total). In 1912, due to racial discrimination, Miller had to separate from the quartette, which continued to perform in the New York area.

Miller’s repertoire included Negro spirituals as well as white hymns, folk and popular banjo tunes, and plantation melodies, interwoven with lectures about life in the South in which he defended the institution of slavery, often in racist terms. Late in 1909 the group consisting of Randall Graves (first tenor), James L. Stamper (bass), unidentified (second tenor), (baritone), and Polk Miller (banjo and vocal) recorded a series of seven Edison cylinders—four spirituals and three secular songs. “The Watermelon Party” (written by James Stamper) is a roaring plantation melody, the lyrics are a litany of black country foodstuff. “Jerusalem Morning” is a camp meeting song and probably the catchiest of the seven numbers, the group renders it as a popular, minstrel-bastardized version [Seroff]. In 1928, fifteen years after the death of Miller, the quartette recorded the same songs again for the QRS label in Long Island City, New York, in the very same style. However, the historical importance of Miller and the quartette lies in the fact that their preservationist tendencies also document the underexposed black secular folk music (“The Laughing Song”). The entire output has been reissued on CD (Document DOCD 5061).

RAINER E. LOTZ

MILLER, POLK

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Seroff, D. “Polk Miller and the Old South Quartette.” *78 Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1988): 27–41.

Discography: DGR (under Old South Quartette)

MILLET, McKINLEY “LPL”

- b. 25 October 1935; New Orleans, LA
d. 29 June 1997; New Orleans, LA

Vocalist, composer. Li'l Millet & His Creoles created an R&B classic with “Rich Woman” for Specialty Records in 1955 but left music and faded into obscurity until reappearing on the New Orleans music scene in the mid-1990s.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Discography: LSFP

- “Rich Woman” (1955, Specialty Records).
Creole Kings of New Orleans (Specialty).

MILLINDER, LUCKY

- b. 8 August 1900; Anniston, AL
d. 28 September 1966; New York City, NY

Bandleader. Began performing as dancer and compère in Chicago under name Lucius Venable. A bandleader from 1931, Millinder moved to New York in 1932. He led the Blue Mills Rhythm Band from 1934 to 1938, changing its billing to the Lucky Millinder Orchestra in 1937. He led Bill Doggett’s band in 1938–1939, and made a significant contribution to development of rhythm and blues in a notable big band he led from 1940, which featured many important instrumentalists, and singers Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Wynonie Harris. Millinder never read music, but had an excellent ear and memory for arrangements, as well as a flair for showmanship. He led bands into the 1950s. Later pursuits included being a disc jockey for a time.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Shaw, Arnold. *Honkers and Shouters: The Golden Years of Rhythm and Blues*. New York: Macmillan, 1978.

Discography: DGR; Lord; LSFP

Selected Recordings

- “Ride, Red, Ride” (1935, Columbia 3087D); “Algiers Stomp” (1936, Columbia 3158D); “Big John Special” (1936, Columbia 3162D); “Jammin’ for the Jackpot” (1937, Variety 634); “Trouble in Mind” (1941, Decca 4041); “Mason Flyer/Little John Special” (1942, Brunswick 03406); *Savoy* (1942, Decca 18353); “Shout, Sister Shout” (1942, Decca 18386); “Shipyard Social Function” (1943, Decca 18674); “Let It Roll” (1947, Decca 24182).

MILTON, ROY

- b. 31 July 1907; Wynnewood, OK
d. 18 September 1983; Los Angeles, CA

Drummer/vocalist. He led a band in Tulsa, Oklahoma, about 1929 before joining Ernie Fields in 1931, initially as a singer. He moved to the West Coast in 1933, and formed his own band in Los Angeles in 1938. By 1941, long-stay members Camille Howard and Hosea Sapp had joined and during the war he had his own club, Roy’s Night Spot. By 1946, the name Solid Senders had been adopted. Recording began in 1945 for Hamp-Tone and Juke Box, moving to his own Roy Milton label in 1946 and to Specialty in 1947. The Solid Senders played innovative jump/R&B, featuring the leader’s singing and swinging drumming, Howard’s superb blues piano, and a succession of tenor saxophonists, including Lorenzo “Buddy” Floyd, then William Gaither (1947–1948), Benny Waters (1949–1950), and Eddie Taylor (from 1950). On trumpet, Sapp was replaced by Arthur Walker (1949–1950), then Charles Gillum. “Burma Road Blues” (1945, Hamp-Tone 104); “Milton’s Boogie” (1945, Roy Milton 103); “Roy Milton Blues”/“Groovy Blues” (1946, Roy Milton 105), and “I Have News for You”/“T-Town Twist” (1951, Specialty 407) are good examples of their work. Milton left music in the 1960s, but launched a comeback with an appearance on the Johnny Otis Show in 1970. He toured France as a vocalist in 1977 and recorded for Black & Blue.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

MILTONE

Incorporated in Los Angeles in 1946 under the aegis of jump-blues singer and drummer Roy Milton, the Roy Milton Record Co. and its successor, Miltone, sported distinctive cartoon-styled labels drawn by William Alexander. Specifically issuing records by Milton's band before Milton was signed to an exclusive contract with Specialty Records in 1947, subsequently the label issued 78s by other West Coast-based performers such as Jimmy Grissom, Effie Smith, Peppy Prince, and Jesse Price. In 1948 a distribution deal was signed with DeLuxe Records of Newark, New Jersey, resulting in Miltone recordings appearing on DeLuxe and vice versa. The Miltone masters were bought by Gotham Records of Philadelphia in 1950.

DAVE PENNY

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Discography: McGrath

The Chronological Roy Milton 1945–1946 (2002, Classics 5041).

MINNER, D. C.

b. 28 January 1935; Rentiesville, OK

Guitarist and teacher Minner was raised in his grandmother's whiskey joint. After U.S. Army service, he performed as a sideman with Lowell Fulson, Freddy King, and Eddie Floyd. In the mid-1970s he met and married Selby, a professional bassist. They own and operate the Down Home Blues Club in Rentiesville, Oklahoma, and participate in blues in the schools programs.

EDWARD KOMARA

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D. C. Minner website, <http://www.dcminnerblues.com/> (accessed February 11, 2005).

MIRACLE/PREMIUM

Chicago blues label of the post-World War II years. The company was started by Lee Egalnick and Lew Simpkins in 1946, and quickly became Chicago's most successful independent label. Miracle prospered on a slew of hits by blues singer and pianist Memphis Slim (notably "Messin' Around," 1948, and "Blue and Lonesome," 1949), jazz singer Gladys Palmer ("Fool That I Am," 1947), tenor saxophonist Eddie Chamblee ("Back Street," 1949), and pianist Sonny Thompson (notably "Long Gone" and "Late Freight," 1948). An alliance with New York-based Sunrise during 1948–1949 added hitmaker Al Hibbler ("Trees," 1948). Miracle's roster also included gospel singers Brother John Sellers and Robert Anderson, and blues singers Johnny Temple and Lillie Mae. Inexplicably Miracle failed in 1950. Egalnick and Simpkins quickly launched a successor label, Premium, recording with some success sax blowers such as Lynn Hope ("Tenderly," 1950) and Tab Smith, as well as such Miracle acts as Memphis Slim ("Mother Earth," 1951) and Robert Anderson. Premium was defunct by late 1951, but subsequently Simpkins built a new label, United, with many of the Miracle/Premium artists, notably Tab Smith, Memphis Slim, and Eddie Chamblee.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Red Saunders Research Foundation website, <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~campber/miracle.html> (accessed June 27, 2003).

Discography: McGrath

MISS RHAPSODY

b. Viola Gertrude Wells, 14 December 1902; Newark, NJ

d. 22 December 1984; Belleville, NJ

Longtime singer of blues and jazz in the cabaret style. Active since the 1920s, she retired in the late 1940s for family life. In the early 1970s she returned to performing by joining Clyde Bernhardt's Harlem Blues and Jazz Band. Her nickname came from a 1930s writer who noted her singing "Rhapsody in Rhythm" and "Rhapsody in Song."

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: Lord; LSPF

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi was admitted to the United States as the twentieth state on December 10, 1817. From 1861 until 1865 it was one of the Confederate States of America. After the end of the Civil War levees were built along the Mississippi River, and the Mississippi Delta was drained and cleared for farmland.

Mississippi may be said to have five regions: the northern hill country; the central piney woods region with the state capital, Jackson; the Mississippi Delta in the northwest portion of the state, between the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers; the eastern strip alongside the border with Alabama; and the Gulf Coast.

Much of the history of Mississippi blues has been central to the development of American blues. The specific artists and trends that have been prominent in that development are described in the *Blues* entry. The Mississippi Delta has been where many of the most distinctive and accomplished blues guitarists and singers came from. The hill country fife-and-drum music is reflected in the guitar rhythms of Fred McDowell and R. L. Burnside. The cotton crossroads of Bentonia are where Henry Stuckey, Skip James, and Jack Owens developed and performed their distinctive minor-scale blues. Jackson and the Gulf Coast have had several excellent pianists in addition to guitarists and singers. Although many black Mississippians have moved for better opportunities of many kinds, others, for whom Mississippi blues in its ever-changing ways continues to be performed, have stayed.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Nicholson, Robert. *Mississippi: The Blues Today!* New York: Da Capo, 1998.

See also Blues; Levees**MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND**

Recording group at the 1936 Hattiesburg, Mississippi, sessions held by the ARC labels and supervised by the talent scout H. C. Speir. Its members consisted of singers/guitarists Roosevelt Graves and his brother Uaroy (or Aaron), and pianist Cooney Vaughan. Their recordings are valuable in part as they are the only recordings of Vaughan, a celebrated pianist of that time. In 1976 critic Robert Palmer cited these recordings as having "fully formed rock and roll guitar and a stomping rock and roll beat."

EDWARD KOMARA

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See also Graves, Roosevelt**MISSISSIPPI MATILDA**

b. Matilda Witherspoon, 27 January 1914; Hattiesburg, MS

d. 15 November 1978; Chicago, IL

Born Matilda Witherspoon, the Mississippi blues singer married singer/guitarist Eugene Powell (aka Sonny Boy Nelson) in 1935. The couple recorded for Bluebird the following year, with Matilda cutting four

songs as vocalist, including the stirring “Hard Working Woman.” She separated from Powell in 1952 and moved to Chicago, where she spent her remaining years singing in the church.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: DGR

Selected Recordings in Reissue

Various artists. *Louisiana Blues: Sonny Boy Nelson with Mississippi Matilda & Robert Hill* (no date, Wolf Records WSE 109 CD).

MISSISSIPPI SHEIKS

Lonnie Chatmon

b. 8 November 1890 or June 1888; Greenville, MS
d. 1942 or 1943; near Bolton, MS

Walter Vinson

b. 2 February 1901; Bolton, MS
d. 22 April 1975; Chicago, IL

Armenter “Bo” Chatmon (also known as Bo Carter)

b. Listed as 8 November 1890; 21 March 1893; or January 1894
d. 21 September 1964; Memphis, TN

Sam Chatmon

b. Listed as 10 January 1897; 10 January 1899; or 29 August 1900; Mississippi
d. 2 February 1983; Hollandale, MS

The Mississippi Sheiks were the most commercially successful black string band of the prewar era, and their music illustrates a wide range of African American music of the period. The steadiest lineup

of the group, which made nearly one hundred recordings between 1930 and 1935, consisted of fiddler (see *Fiddle* entry) Lonnie Chatmon and singer/guitarist (see *Guitar* entry) Walter Vinson. The duo was also occasionally joined on their recording dates by Lonnie’s brothers, Armenter “Bo” Chatmon (who also had a successful solo career as Bo Carter) and Sam Chatmon. Along with Charlie McCoy, this group of musicians also recorded in a few different instrumental combinations and under several pseudonyms, including the Mississippi Blacksnakes, the Mississippi Mud Steppers, Chatmon’s Mississippi Hot Footers, the Chatman [sic] Brothers, Walter Jacobs & Lonnie Carter, the Jackson Blue Boys, and the Down South Boys. They also provided accompaniment on recordings by solo blues artists, including some by Bo Chatmon himself.

The Mississippi Sheiks grew out of a string band formed by members of the highly musical Chatmon family, who resided on the Gaddis and McLaurin plantation just outside the small town of Bolton, Mississippi. The father of the family was Henderson Chatmon (1850–1934), a sharecropper of mixed racial origins who had been a fiddler since the days of slavery. With his wife Eliza, he reportedly had thirteen children, eleven of which were sons who all played musical instruments. From around 1910 until 1928, seven of them formed a string band known as the Chatmon Brothers, and they performed at country dances, parties, and picnics.

The central figure of the group was Lonnie, an accomplished fiddler who was equally skilled at country breakdowns, blues, jazz, and popular tunes. By the time of World War I, he had learned to read music and was purchasing sheet music in nearby Jackson and teaching popular tunes to his brothers. Lonnie’s proficient playing and professionalism and the fact that the group drew from a variety of musical sources helped the Chatmon Brothers gain a great deal of popularity among both black and white audiences. Performing for listeners on both sides of the color line enabled the group to develop a wide-ranging repertoire that included square dance music, waltzes, ragtime, country blues, and Tin Pan Alley tunes.

Around 1921, Lonnie recruited the Chatmons’ neighbor, Walter Vinson, to play with the group. By 1928, the seven-piece Chatmon Brothers had basically dissolved (apparently in part because of Lonnie’s regular habit of keeping more than his share of the group’s profits), and Lonnie and Walter began performing regularly as a duo. In 1930, the two men were discovered by Polk Brockman of OKeh Records, and he signed them to the label. At their first recording session on February 17, 1930, in

MISSISSIPPI SHEIKS

Shreveport, Louisiana, when Brockman asked the musicians for the name of their group, Walter suggested the name Mississippi Sheiks (most likely after “The Sheik of Araby,” a hit song of the era).

The group’s two most successful recordings were made at this first session. “Sitting on Top of the World” was their biggest seller, and it spawned a number of cover versions and became a standard among blues, Western swing, and bluegrass artists (see *Country Music* entry). The group’s other big hit, “Stop and Listen Blues,” was derived from Tommy Johnson’s “Big Road Blues” and illustrates Walter’s outstanding skills as a blues guitarist (a talent he frequently restrained when accompanying Lonnie’s fiddling). Interestingly, two of the songs recorded at the Sheiks’ first session (“The Sheik Waltz” and “The Jazz Fiddler”) were listed in OKeh’s hillbilly catalog and marketed to white listeners.

During the next five years, the Mississippi Sheiks made recordings for OKeh, Paramount, and Bluebird, and they continued to play for audiences, touring extensively throughout the South and beyond. The Sheiks’ personnel for live engagements was apparently more loose knit than on their recording dates, with other Chatmon family members still often joining the group for appearances at dances and parties.

Though the Mississippi Sheiks never quite matched the success of their first recordings, they were able to maintain a significant level of popularity throughout their recording career. By the time of the Sheiks’ last recording session in 1935, however, the harder sounds of urban bluesmen had become more fashionable among blues audiences than the country-based styles associated with the Sheiks. Along with Sam, Lonnie cut his last recording session on October 15, 1936, and the pair were credited as the Chatman [sic] Brothers. Soon after, Lonnie moved near the town of Anguilla and later back to the area around Bolton, where he suffered from heart problems until his death in 1942 or 1943.

Bo continued to make recordings until 1940; a few years later, he moved to Memphis, where he died in 1964. Walter moved to Chicago in 1940, recorded there the following year, and subsequently retired from music for the most part. In 1961, he made some recordings for the Riverside label with a group of musicians who were credited as the Mississippi Sheiks, though he was actually the only original member of the group. A decade later, he teamed up again with Sam (as well as with string band veterans Carl Martin and Ted Bogan) to record an album called *The New Mississippi Sheiks* that was released on the Rounder label in 1972. Walter passed away in 1975, and Sam, who achieved much fame throughout the

1960s and 1970s performing in clubs and at festivals, died in 1983. Among the albums Sam recorded in the early 1970s was one on the Blue Goose label called *The Mississippi Sheik*.

ANDREW LEACH

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

MITCHELL, BOBBY

b. 16 August 1935; Algiers, LA

d. 17 March 1989; New Orleans, LA

Vocals, trumpet, composer. Bobby Mitchell & the Toppers were a popular 1950s New Orleans R&B group whose Imperial recordings were produced by Dave Bartholomew. Mitchell left music, worked as an X-ray technician, and hosted a show on WWOZ-FM. He worked with the Toppers (Lloyd Bellaire, tenor; Joseph Butler, tenor; Willie Bridges, baritone; Frank Bocage, bass; Gabriel Fleming, piano), Dave Bartholomew, and Dr. John.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

AMG (Bruce Eder); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

“I’m Crying,” “Rack ‘Em Back,” “Try Rock ‘n’ Roll,” “I’m Gonna Be a Wheel Someday” (1953–1957, Imperial). *I’m Gonna Be a Wheel Someday* (Bear Family/Night Train International; reissue).

MITCHELL, GEORGE

b. 1944; Atlanta, GA

Inspired by Samuel Charters’ book *The Country Blues*, Atlanta high school student George Mitchell and several friends traveled in 1961 to Memphis,

where they recorded Will Shade of the Memphis Jug Band. On subsequent visits to Memphis, Mitchell documented Sleepy John Estes, Furry Lewis, Gus Cannon, and Charley Burse, and back in Atlanta he “rediscovered” prewar recording artists Buddy Moss and Peg Leg Howell. In 1963 Mitchell moved to Chicago, where, together with Mike Bloomfield, he booked and recorded traditional artists at the North Side club the Fickle Pickle. In 1967 and 1968 Mitchell made the debut recordings of North Mississippi artists including R. L. Burnside and the fife-and-drum musicians Napoleon Strickland and Othar Turner; he also recorded Mississippi Joe Callicott, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Johnny Woods, Houston Stackhouse, and Robert Nighthawk.

This fieldwork was documented in Mitchell’s book of photographs and prose *Blow My Blues Away* (Louisiana State University, 1971) and two similarly titled LPs on Arhoolie Records. Mitchell recorded blues, old-time, and gospel artists in Georgia and Alabama from the late 1960s through the 1980s, and produced in Atlanta the Georgia Grassroots Music Festival (1976–1979) and the National Downhome Blues Festival (1984). Mitchell’s recordings have been issued on the Southland, Rounder, Flyright, Revival, and Swingmaster labels, and through two CDs accompanying his book *In Celebration of a Legacy: The Traditional Arts of the Lower Chattahoochee Valley* (Columbus Museum, 1981; 1998). In 2002 the Fat Possum label acquired more than sixty hours of Mitchell’s recordings and initiated a reissue series.

SCOTT BARRETTA

MITCHELL, “LITTLE” WALTER

b. 19 March 1919; Pickens, AR
d. 10 January 1990; Toledo, OH

Singer and harmonica player. Served in the U.S. Army during World War II, after which he moved to Detroit. With his cousin, guitarist L. C. Greene, Mitchell recorded for the JVB and Dot labels in 1948 and 1952, respectively, whose issues of his music are invaluable documents of postwar Detroit blues. He continued to perform in the Detroit–Toledo area until illness in his last years.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

MITCHELL, MCKINLEY

b. 25 December 1934; Jackson, MS
d. 18 January 1986; Chicago Heights, IL

Chicago rhythm and blues artist whose distinctive raspy vocals built his career singing hard soul and blues. Mitchell’s first recording was for the small Boxer label, the explosive “Rock Everybody Rock” (1959), which was supported by the great Willie Johnson on guitar. In 1962, Mitchell recorded the deep soul ballad, “The Town I Live In,” which became a national hit on the One-derful label. His other notable releases on One-derful were “All of a Sudden” (1962), “I’m So Glad” (1962), and “A Bit of Soul” (1963). Mitchell left One-derful in 1964, and recorded in the blues vein for Willie Dixon during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In 1976, for Bill Collins’s Big 3 label, Mitchell recorded “Trouble Blues.” When it subsequently became a hit in the South, he moved to the South. There he built a considerable career recording for two Jackson, Mississippi, labels, Malaco and Retta. At Malaco, which had picked up “Trouble Blues” for its Chimneyville imprint, Mitchell recorded a fine LP, *McKinley Mitchell*, and a number of fine blues and hard soul singles, notably “The End of the Rainbow” (1977), a national chart record. At Retta, owned by James Bennett, Mitchell during 1982–1983 recorded some of the hardest blues of his career, notably “Road of Love,” and came out with one album, *I Won’t Be Back for More*. Mitchell moved back to Chicago in 1985, and made one more record for Bill Collins before his death.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

MITCHELL, WILLIE

b. 23 March 1928; Ashland, MS

Best known as recording producer. His initial work was as a Memphis studio session musician from the late 1950s through the 1960s, especially as the leader of the house band at Hi Records. In 1970 he became president of Hi Records, developed the 1970s Hi Records sound with heavy bass and drums and the Memphis Horns group, and with that sound he

MITCHELL, WILLIE

produced hit records with singers Al Green, Ann Peebles, and Syl Johnson. He left Hi in 1979. He continues to work in music as a producer.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MODERN BLUES RECORDINGS

Label owned by Daniel Jacobovitch in Pearl River, New York. Well known for its reissues of early recordings by Freddy King and Albert King, it has also produced new releases for singer Tommy Ridgley and harmonica player Little Hatch.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MODERN/FLAIR/METEOR/KENT/RPM

Founded in Culver City, California, in 1945 by brothers Jules, Joe, and Saul Bihari, originally as Modern Music Records, the label was formed as a showcase for local Los Angeles singer/pianist Hadda Brooks. The initial releases by Brooks and Howard McGhee were well received, and in 1946 the label added Johnny Moore's Three Blazers and Gene Phillips to the roster. By 1947 the label was reborn as, simply, Modern Records and a wider market began to be exploited with pop, country, jazz, and blues releases. In the latter category the label saw success with Lightnin' Hopkins, Smokey Hogg, and, particularly, Pee Wee Crayton and John Lee Hooker who both topped the *Billboard* R&B charts in the late 1940s with "Blues After Hours" and "Boogie Children," respectively. With the sudden increase in fortunes, the R&B subsidiary RPM was launched in 1950, and almost from the start, the label was dominated by Memphis-based blues artists such as Howlin' Wolf, Rosco Gordon, and, especially, B. B. King.

The success of these issues persuaded the brothers to undertake several field trips in the early 1950s to capture other southern bluesmen, and to dedicate another offshoot label, Meteor, founded in Memphis in 1952 specifically to be managed by younger brother Lester Bihari, to tap into the rich musical heritage of that city and its surrounds. Lester recorded Elmore

James, Rufus Thomas, and Little Milton and a host of country and rockabilly acts before Meteor's demise in 1957. Another subsidiary, Flair Records, was inaugurated in 1953 in Joe Bihari's name, and although it was to last just two years, it too issued important sides by Elmore James and Little Johnny Jones, Mercy Dee Walton, and James Reed.

By 1957, the popularity of white rock 'n' roll was beginning to take its toll on the small independent labels that specialized in black blues and R&B, so the Biharis discontinued most of their imprints and made a fresh start with Kent Records to concentrate on the popular vocal groups and the perennial B. B. King. Around the same time, they revived their old pop label, Crown Records, and relaunched it as a budget LP line, thereafter occasionally recording specifically to LP, but mainly reissuing their valuable back catalog.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography: McGrath

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The Modern Down Home Blues Sessions #1 (2003, Ace CDCHD 876).

MOLTON, FLORA

b. 1908; Louisa County, VA

d. 31 May 1990; Washington, DC

Sacred singer who often accompanied herself on slide guitar in open D tuning. Near blind, she began as a preacher in 1925. She learned guitar in 1943, about the time she moved to Washington, D.C., and began performing on the streets. From 1963 on, she appeared on the folk music circuit. In time, she was regarded as one of the last of the Washington street singers.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: LSFP

MONTGOMERY, EURREAL “LITTLE BROTHER”

b. 18 April 1906; Kentwood, LA
d. 6 September 1985; Chicago, IL

Eurreal “Little Brother” Montgomery was one of the last of a generation of all-round pianists who traveled the Southern states, working for the crowds who frequented the speakeasies, dance halls, and bars of the townships, logging camps, and lumber camps of the region. Little Brother could play jazz, popular songs, and even Irish ballads with great facility, but it is as a bluesman that he has earned a place in history.

He was born in Kentwood, Louisiana, on April 18, 1906, one of ten children. The Montgomery family sang in the nearby Temple Chapel Baptist Church and nearly all of them could play an instrument. Little Brother himself started to play piano around the age of five and early on dropped out of school. His father owned a honky-tonk, and Little Brother derived much inspiration from visiting pianists booked at his father’s club, including Cooney Vaughn, Loomis Gibson, and Jelly Roll Morton. At eleven he began to earn his living from music, first in small towns in Louisiana and later in Vicksburg and New Orleans. By the age of fourteen he had left home and was on the road as a professional musician. He worked sometimes solo, or with guitarists such as Big Joe Williams, and sometimes with bands, including Sam Morgan’s and Buddy Petit’s Rhythm Aces.

In 1928 he toured the Midwest with Clarence Desdune’s Joyland Revellers, finally settling in Chicago the same year. While there he met Bob (Alexander) Robinson who gave him his first formal piano lessons. Robinson and his wife Aletha Dickerson owned a music store, and it was perhaps through them that Little Brother was introduced to Art Laibley of Paramount Records. Little Brother made his first solo recordings for Paramount in 1930, and also accompanied other singers such as Minnie Hicks and Irene Scruggs. In 1931, with the onset of the Depression, he traveled South to New Orleans and thence to Jackson, Mississippi. In Jackson he formed his own band, the Southland Troubadours, with whom he played dances and radio shows for the rest of the decade. This band, whose varied material included both jazz and blues, made extensive tours of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan in 1932. Little Brother, however, never lost contact with his roots, and in 1935–1936 recorded a number of blues for Bluebird both as a soloist and accompanist. He returned to Chicago when the United States entered World War II and continued working both as a solo act, and with

jazz bands such as those led by Kid Ory and Franz Jackson through to the 1950s. Continued success led to further recordings for a variety of labels, and 1960 saw his first visit to England. For the next twenty years he appeared in innumerable jazz and blues festivals, and visited Europe several times to great acclaim. After a long and full life he died in Chicago on September 6, 1985.

Little Brother’s blues piano style is firmly rooted in the Louisiana tradition relying on a flexibility and sparseness reminiscent of early gospel music. There are also influences in his playing from ragtime and early jazz. He had a huge repertoire, which included many compositions he had heard performed by other artists, so that his recordings are also an archive of the styles of some influential early pianists who were not fortunate enough to be recorded themselves.

According to Little Brother, he first heard a rudimentary piano blues called “The Forty-Fours” when he was a teenager in Ferriday, Louisiana. Then, together with two barrelhouse pianists, Long Tall Friday and Dehlco Roberts, he developed it into his best-known composition. The 44 Blues theme, though always associated with Little Brother, was first recorded by Roosevelt Sykes in 1929, and indeed it was the blues with which both men chose to make their recording debut. Sykes had apparently learned it from Lee Green, who in turn had been taught the theme by Little Brother in Soudheimer, Louisiana. Though he was not the first to record the 44 Blues theme, there can be no doubt that Little Brother’s 1930 Paramount recording, entitled “Vicksburg Blues,” is one of the definitive versions. A high-pitched searing vocal is featured over a piano accompaniment employing a rumbling bass line and a double-time right-hand pattern, which, as Little Brother says, is “the hardest barrelhouse blues of any blues in history to play because you have to keep two different times going in each hand.” “No Special Rider,” the only other side recorded at this session, is a compelling eight-to-the-bar boogie, again featuring his slightly nasal vocal, demonstrating how an accomplished blues pianist can break up the rhythm of a boogie pattern to add interest and excitement.

A further session in Chicago for Vocalion in 1931 produced the outstanding, rolling slow blues “Louisiana Blues” and the eight-to-the-bar “Frisco Hi-Ball Blues.” In the latter, the lyrics refer to the Santa Fe and Missouri-Pacific lines, and the term “hi-ball” referred to a “proceed” signal on the railroad, in which a hand or lantern was raised or swung above the head as a command to the engineer to start the train. The song features a tough vocal and the scintillating solo passages are quite outstanding, ranking with the very best of recorded blues piano.

MONTGOMERY, EURREAL "LITTLE BROTHER"

Little Brother did not record again for four years, but in the mid-1930s he produced some of his finest work. A first short session for Bluebird in New Orleans in 1935 was followed by a second longer one in 1936, the latter taking place at the St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans. This session, in which Little Brother recorded no less than twenty-three titles in a single day, of which eighteen were solo performances, included remakes of his earlier "Vicksburg Blues" and "Louisiana Blues" together with many new blues and three superb piano solos. Of these, "Farish Street Jive" is based on an older composition entitled "Dudlow Joe," also recorded by Lee Green; "Crescent City Blues" is a number Little Brother learned from Loomis Gibson, who called it "Loomis Gibson Blues"; and "Shreveport Farewell" is a ragtime-influenced piece having a delicately picked stride bass with echoes of Jelly Roll Morton.

The St. Charles Hotel session was perhaps the artistic pinnacle of Little Brother's blues recording career, although he continued to record throughout the postwar years, adapting his style to diverse rhythm and blues groups and Dixieland lineups with equal facility. A consummate artist, Little Brother richly deserves the accolade that he was one of the finest blues soloists and accompanists of all time.

BOB HALL

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

MONTGOMERY WARD

Record label started in 1933 by the eponymous mail-order company, drawing its pressings and material from RCA-Victor, except from September to December 1935 when Decca was the source. From June 1937 to mid-1939, both Decca and RCA-Victor were used, after which records were sourced from Varsity until the label returned to RCA from mid-1940 until withdrawal in 1941. Most of the label's blues repertoire comes from Victor and includes issues by Leroy Carr, Walter Davis, Tampa Red, and Washboard Sam.

HOWARD RYE

Discography: DGR; Sutton

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MONTOYA, COCO

b. Henry Montoya, 2 October 1951;
Santa Monica, CA

Former drummer for Albert Collins, Montoya learned electric guitar from Collins, and added singing to transform himself into a front-line blues festival favorite. It was on an emergency fill-in gig as drummer for Collins in the mid-1970s that Montoya first began playing blues after a few years of playing rock 'n' roll. Five years of touring with Collins led not only to Montoya learning lead guitar, but also to a long-standing job playing guitar in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers band for most of the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1995, he stepped out as a solo act, and has been busy touring and recording under his own name since.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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Ya Think I'd Know Better (1996, Blind Pig 5033).
Just Let Go (1997, Blind Pig 5043).
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MONTRELL, ROY

b. 27 February 1928; New Orleans, LA
d. 16 March 1979; Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Roy Montrell, a dominant guitarist in the New Orleans music scene during the 1950s and 1960s, long anchored the Fats Domino band, contributed to scores of recordings, and created the R&B classic "That Mellow Saxophone." He worked with Fats Domino, Dave Bartholomew, Paul Gayten, Bobby Mitchell,

Roy Milton, Lloyd Price, Clarence "Frogman" Henry, Allen Toussaint, Art Neville, and Dr. John.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Discography: LSPF

MOONEY, JOHN

b. 3 April 1955; East Orange, NJ

Mooney grew up in Mendon, near Rochester, New York, and began playing guitar at age ten. Influenced by his grandfather who played mandolin and banjo and made some 78s in the 1920s, Mooney took an early interest in older music, especially prewar blues. At fifteen he was playing with Joe Beard. Beard introduced him to Son House then living in Rochester. House befriended Mooney, showing him Delta slide guitar techniques. Soon Mooney was performing in public, first alone, then later with Brian Williams on upright bass. In 1976 Mooney moved to New Orleans, where he came under the influence of Professor Longhair. Mooney's unique style resulted: New Orleans "second-line" rhythms combined with percussive Delta slide.

Mooney recorded his first album, *Comin' Your Way*, for Blind Pig in 1979. In 1981 he formed the Bluesiana Band. After *Telephone King* in 1983, a series of albums followed with small labels. After a live recording, *Dealin' with the Devil*, issued by Ruf, he returned to Blind Pig in 2000 where he recorded two well-received albums, *Gone to Hell* and *All I Want*.

Over the years Mooney has performed with numerous blues notables, among them Professor Longhair, Albert King, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, and Bonnie Raitt; he has recorded with Junior Wells, Jimmy McCracklin, and Jimmy Thackery.

DANIEL BEAUMONT

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Discography: AMG

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MOORE, ALEXANDER "WHISTLIN' ALEX"

Late Last Night (1990, Bulls Eye/Rounder).
Testimony (1992, Domino).
Against the Wall (1996, House of Blues/Ruf 1019).
Dealin' with the Devil (1997, Ruf 1057).
Gone to Hell (2000, Blind Pig 5063).
All I Want (2002, Blind Pig 5704).

MOORE, AARON

b. 11 February 1928; Greenwood, MS

Influenced by Roosevelt Sykes and Memphis Slim, Moore played piano with many Chicago blues luminaries, declining gigs and tours to protect his career with the City of Chicago. After retirement, he appeared on Brewer Phillips's *Homebrew* for Delmark and returned to record two well-received CDs of all-original compositions, *Hello World* (1996) and *Boot 'Em Up!* (1999).

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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Discography: AMG

MOORE, ALEXANDER "WHISTLIN' ALEX"

b. 11 November 1899; Dallas, TX
d. 20 January 1989; Dallas, TX

Pianist in 1920s and 1930s barrelhouse style, and a colorful public figure. Based in Dallas his whole life, he came to be regarded as a patriarch of local blues. He made his first records in 1929 for Columbia, then again in 1937 for Decca, and in 1951 for RPM. He came to national prominence with the blues revival of the 1960s, including a series of records with the Arhoolie label. He remained an active performer up until his 1989 death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSPF

MOORE, ALICE “LITTLE”

MOORE, ALICE “LITTLE”

b. 1904; Tennessee

d. ca. 1950; St. Louis, MO

Alice Moore was a St. Louis blues singer who recorded from 1929 to 1937 for Paramount and Decca. She was a gutsy vocalist who was accompanied by notable piano players Henry Brown, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Roosevelt Sykes.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Bibliography

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Discography: DGR

MOORE, DOROTHY

b. 13 October 1946; Jackson, MS

Soul blues singer whose 1975 hit version of “Misty Blue” helped to establish Malaco Records. Early singing was in church, then in the pop group The Poppies in 1965–1967. In addition to blues and soul, she has recorded gospel music.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

MOORE, GARY

b. 4 April 1952; Belfast, Northern Ireland

After achieving worldwide popularity as a hard rock guitar virtuoso, Moore made a sudden shift to the blues with the release of *Still Got the Blues* (1990, Charisma). Guest appearances by Albert Collins and Albert King, and Moore’s still impressive way of guitar playing made the album his biggest success. His following four blues albums were highly esteemed by critics, especially *Blues for Greeny* (1995, Charisma), a tribute to Peter Green, but none of them could keep up with the success of Moore’s 1990

hit record, nor could his collaboration with Cream’s Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce in 1994.

THORSTEN HINDRICHS

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AMG (Greg Prato); Larkin Aagaard, Rene, and Finn K. Jensen, eds. *The Gary Moore Bio-Discography 1969–1994*. Soeborg (Denmark): Bidstrup, 1996.

Discography: AMG

MOORE, JOHNNY

b. 1 September 1940; West Point, MS

Chicago hard soul singer and songwriter of the 1960s. Moore helped put Chicago on the map as a soul center by both recording deeply sung soul music and by composing a large body of songs for the city’s harder breed of soul singers, notably Tyrone Davis. Much of the audience for his music was the same African American audience that bought blues. Moore was raised in Mississippi, but in 1960 moved to Chicago, where he began his career in music singing in local clubs. He was signed by Willie Barney’s Four Brothers/Bright Star label complex in 1966, and under producer Jack Daniels got a subtle hard soul hit with “Your Love’s Got Power,” on Bright Star. Moore continued to record for a variety of labels until 1972, at which time he entered the liquor business. He had much greater success as a cowriter with Jack Daniels of songs for such singers as Syl Johnson (“We Did It”), Tyrone Davis (“Turn Back the Hands of Time”), and Jackie Wilson (“This Love Is Real”).

ROBERT PRUTER

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MOORE, JOHNNY B.

b. 24 January 1950; Clarksdale, MS

Aka Johnny Belle Moore. Singer/guitarist Johnny B. Moore, the son of a Baptist minister, was raised on a plantation near Clarksdale, Mississippi. Moore’s father began teaching him gospel songs on the guitar at age seven, but soon the aspiring musician was

sneaking off to local juke joints to catch performances by John Lee Hooker, Robert Nighthawk, and Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson II." In 1964, Moore moved to Chicago to join his father, who had relocated there several years earlier. He started playing in a local gospel group but was once again drawn to the blues and began playing in various West Side clubs, inspired greatly by celebrated neighborhood singer/guitarist Magic Sam. Throughout the 1970s, Moore worked with a variety of Chicago musicians, including Mighty Joe Young, Willie Dixon, and Koko Taylor, and appeared on Taylor's 1978 Alligator LP *The Earthshaker*. In 1977, he made his first trip to Europe as part of the high-profile package tour "The New Generation of Chicago Blues." Moore continued to play overseas occasionally and formed his own band in Chicago, where he worked steadily. His tough, unpolished singing voice, masterful guitar playing, and vast live repertoire of both postwar and prewar blues songs made him one of the most promising young exponents of traditional Chicago blues. Moore's solo recording debut appeared in 1987 on the B.L.U.E.S. R&B label, and was followed by multiple releases on Wolf and Delmark. Moore continued to be a mainstay on the Chicago blues scene until being partially paralyzed by a stroke in 2003, after which he underwent rehabilitation to regain his ability to perform.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

Live at Blue Chicago (1996, Delmark DE 688).
Born in Clarksdale, Mississippi (2001, Wolf 120.804 CD).

MOORE, KEVIN

(See *Keb' Mo'*)

MOORE, MONETTE

b. 19 May 1902; Gainesville, TX
d. 21 October 1962; Garden Grove, CA

Singer who adapted from "classic blues" to later blues and jazz styles during a forty-year career. She spent the early part of her career in black theater and revues, and recording for various Race labels including

Paramount. In the early 1940s she moved to California, occasionally recording, but also appearing in films, television, and at the Disneyland theme park.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR; Lord; LSFP

MOORE, OSCAR

b. 25 December 1916; Austin, TX
d. 8 October 1981; Las Vegas, NV

Guitarist. Birth year given as 1912 or 1916. Moore formed a guitar duo with his brother, Johnny Moore, and was with the Nat "King" Cole Trio from 1937 to 1947. He also recorded with Lionel Hampton, Art Tatum, Lester Young, and others. He was with the Three Blazers from 1947 until the mid-1950s; also recorded as leader. He performed intermittently thereafter. Moore's fluent style incorporated blues elements.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord

Selected Recordings as Leader

The Oscar Moore Quartet (1954, Tampa 10).
Tribute to Nat King Cole (1965, Surrey 1013).

MOORE, REVEREND ARNOLD DWIGHT "GATEMOUTH"

b. 8 November 1913; Topeka, KS
d. 19 May 2004; Yazoo City, MS

Blues shouter and gospel personality Moore started his career in Kansas City in the late 1920s, singing in several jazz and blues bands and itinerant shows, such as Ida Cox's "Darktown Scandals Revue" and the

MOORE, REVEREND ARNOLD DWIGHT “GATEMOUTH”

Rabbit Foot Minstrels throughout 1930s, and also learning from Ma Rainey and Bertha “Chippie” Hill. In the 1930s Moore made his debut as a gospel singer on WIBW, a radio station in his hometown. Later he joined the Walter Barnes band, miraculously escaping death in the 1940 Natchez Rhythm Club fire (see *Topical Blues: Disasters* entry). Moore cut the first two versions of “I Ain’t Mad at You, Pretty Baby” and “Did You Ever Love a Woman?” for Gilmore’s Chez Paree label. In 1945 “Gatemouth” (so nicknamed by a drunk woman in the audience) remade his two warhorses and other titles for National, and two years later he extensively recorded for King.

After temporarily losing his voice during a show, Moore stopped singing secular songs and devoted himself to sacred music, working as a religious deejay and performer, and recording a few gospel singles for Aristocrat/Chess, Artists, and Coral, as well as two albums for Audio Fidelity (1960) and BluesWay (1973). In 1977 Moore recorded an R&B album for Blues Spectrum, where he tried to reconcile sacred and secular music. Reverend Moore was a featured character in *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning* (1996), and appeared in the Bertrand Tavernier-directed feature film *Mississippi Blues* (1986) and in the Richard Pierce-directed *The Road to Memphis* (2003).

LUIGI MONGE

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Slaven, Neil. Notes accompanying *Hey Mr. Gatemouth: Complete King Recordings* (2000, Westside WESF 100).

Discography: LSFP

MOORE, SAM

(See *Ironing Board Sam*)

MOORE, SAMUEL DAVID “SAM”

b. 12 October 1935; Miami, FL

Singer with high, tensile voice who was in the popular Sam and Dave duo for Stax and Atlantic labels in the 1960s. Moore’s early singing was in gospel, singing in his father’s church and later performing with the Melonaires. He met and began singing with Dave Prater in 1961. From 1962 through 1964 they recorded

for Roulette Records. But it was for Stax in 1966–1968 in Memphis that they made their most popular and influential records, “Hold On I’m Comin’,” “Soul Man,” and “I Thank You.” In 1970, after strained relations between the two singers, Moore and Prater split. Subsequent efforts at reuniting were short lived; then Prater died in a 1988 car accident. Sam has maintained his solo career since, with an occasional appearance on television and film, prominently in the movie *Tapeheads* (1989).

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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See also Prater, Sam

MOORE, WILLIAM “BILL”

b. 3 March 1893; Georgia

d. 22 November 1951; Fauquier County, VA

William Moore appears as card number one on the Yazoo set “Heroes of the Blues,” illustrated by underground artist Robert Crumb, and this honor reflects his popularity among 78-rpm record collectors and guitar revivalists in the 1960s and 1970s. His ragtime-inspired playing was captured by a Paramount session held in Chicago circa January 1928, from which eight songs were commercially released of sixteen that received a copyright. Some of the issued recordings bear the name “Bill Moore.” Moore was born in Georgia on March 3, 1893, the son of Harriet and Frank Moore. The 1900 census lists the family in Dover, Screven County, Georgia, with Moore’s father farming rented land. It is not known when Moore migrated to Virginia and when he took up the guitar, but his playing fits into the syncopated East Coast style that was common in both states.

Moore’s “Old Country Rock” is a fine example of a country dance tune, with a caller imploring various family members and fellow dancers to “rock,” before telling them to “step back and let me rock.” The song’s narration refers to the Rappahannock River and the town of Tappahannock in Essex County, where Moore worked as a barber and farmer. Moore crossed the river to reach Warsaw in Richmond County where he reportedly also worked as a barber. No doubt he was well known in the rural areas and towns near his home, playing at social occasions and at his shop. “Barbershop Rag” testifies to both his skilled ragtime playing and to his profession.

Virginia audiences would have also appreciated his twelve-bar blues songs, such as "Midnight Blues," and the references to Ford motor cars and banking problems in "Ragtime Millionaire," a variation on Irving Jones's novelty composition.

Moore lived next to the First Baptist Church in Tappahannock and residents of the town recall him performing also on the piano and violin. Moore reportedly moved in with one of his sons in the 1940s in Fauquier County, Virginia. He died in that county on November 22, 1951, and is buried in the Warrenton Cemetery.

GREGG KIMBALL

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MORELLO, JIMMY

Active since the 1970s. Drummer and singer in blues shouter style. In the late 1970s Morello and his band Cold Steel toured the northeastern United States with Louisiana Red. He spent the 1980s with the Blue Flames in Sacramento, California, then 1989–1993 with the Rocket 88s and guitarist Pat Boyack in Phoenix, Arizona. Since then he has performed and recorded as bandleader or with Pat Boyack.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

MORGAN, MIKE

b. 30 November 1959; Dallas, TX

Lead guitarist for Mike Morgan & the Crawl, the Texas-born and -raised Morgan plays an accessible

electric blues-rock style that combines the raw Lone Star sensibilities of Johnny Winter and Stevie Ray Vaughan with a more swinging, R&B-imbued approach indebted to Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and T-Bone Walker. Morgan's working band, the Crawl, has featured vocalists Darrell Nulisch and Lee McBee, although Morgan began singing as well as the new century began. Morgan has released a string of well-received albums for Black Top and Severn beginning in 1990, and became a mainstay of the blues festival circuit throughout the 1990s and beyond.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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Mighty Fine Dancin' (1991, Black Top 1064).

Full Moon over Dallas (1992, Black Top 1080).

Texas Man (2002, Severn 14).

MORGAN, TEDDY

b. 8 July 1971; Minneapolis, MN

Singer and electric guitarist in blues and blues-rock. He has played professionally since age seventeen; his early experience includes a stint with James Harman. Through Kim Wilson he met Clifford Antone, who has provided him with performing opportunities in his club and on his label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

MORGANFIELD, "BIG" BILL

b. 19 June 1956; Chicago, IL

Big Bill Morganfield started playing the guitar relatively late in his life. It wasn't until 1983, when his father McKinley Morganfield (Muddy Waters) passed away, that Bill decided to pursue a musical career. During the next few years of his late twenties

MORGANFIELD, "BIG" BILL

and early thirties, he learned to play guitar and perform blues standards. After honing his skills, he released his first album, *Rising Son*, in 1999. The album, which features several former members of his father's band, garnered much acclaim for Morganfield. In 2000, he received a W. C. Handy Award for Best New Blues Artist. Bill is now based out of Atlanta, Georgia, and performs regularly around the world.

GREG JOHNSON

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Tipaldi, Art. "Big Bill Morganfield: Still Waters." *Blues Revue* no. 55 (March 2000): 15–17.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

- Rising Son* (1999, Blind Pig).
Ramblin' Mind (2001, Blind Pig).
Blues in the Blood (2003, Blind Pig).

MORGANFIELD, MCKINLEY

(See *Waters, Muddy*)

MORISETTE, JOHNNY "TWO-VOICE"

- b. 1 July 1935; Brazil
d. 1 August 2000; San Francisco, CA

Morisette sang in gospel groups in Mobile, Alabama, and became known for his ability to switch between his natural voice and an otherworldly falsetto. Morisette signed with Sam Cooke's SAR Records, which released eight singles, including "Meet Me at the Twisting Place" (SAR S126). After Cooke was killed, Morisette moved to Dallas and then San Francisco, making a few recordings and live appearances before his death in 2000.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

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Schuller, Tim. "The Johnny 'Two-Voice' Story." *Living Blues* no. 49 (Winter 1980), 20–26.

Discography: LSFP

Sam Cooke's SAR Records Story (1994, ABKCO 2231-2).

MORTON, JELLY ROLL

- b. Ferdinand Joseph Lamothe (or Lemott, La Menthe), 20 October 1890; New Orleans, LA
d. 10 July 1941; Los Angeles, CA

Baptismal certificate gives 1890 as birth year, but cited birth years commonly vary among several years between 1885 and 1895. As pianist, composer, arranger, bandleader, and vocalist, Morton is regarded as a seminal figure in jazz history. Professionally active from before 1905, his surviving work vividly documents the transition from ragtime to jazz. Blues had a major influence on his music from the outset (he heard his first in 1902, performed by Mamie Desdoumes, a New Orleans prostitute). This is most evident in his instrumental blues compositions, many of which have become jazz standards. The earliest of these was "Jelly Roll Blues," which was published in 1915, but which was allegedly written as early as 1905. Like most of Morton's blues, it combines ragtime and blues elements in a highly sophisticated manner, being multisectional, and using the twelve-bar form throughout. The work also makes extensive use of a *habanera* bass-line pattern (two dotted quarters and a quarter), an example of what he later referred to as the "Spanish tinge." This device is found in many of Morton's other blues and its use shows his remarkable ability to forge an individual style by the synthesis of diverse musical influences. Other important instrumental blues by Morton include "New Orleans Blues," "Dead Man Blues," and "London Blues." All of these were recorded by him either as piano solos and/or with his band the Red Hot Peppers during 1923–1930. Morton also recorded a number of blues solos late in his career, mostly traditional material such as "C. C. Rider," "Hesitation Blues," and "Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor."

PETER MUIR

Bibliography

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Discography: Lord

As Unaccompanied Soloist

"New Orleans (Blues) Joys" (1923, Gnt 5486); "Wolverine Blues" (1923, Gnt 5289); "Bucktown Blues/Tom Cat Blues" (1924, Gnt 5515); "Jelly-Roll Blues" (1924, Gnt 5552); "Jelly Roll Blues" (1924, Vocalstyle 50505; piano roll); "London Blues" (1924, Rialto unnumbered); "London Blues" (1924, Vocalstyle 50479; piano roll); "Thirty-Fifth Street Blues" (1924, Puritan 12216); "Tom Cat Blues" (1924, Vocalstyle 12983; piano roll); "Dead Man Blues" (1926, QRS 3674; piano roll); "Alabama Bound" (1938, Cir 67-68); "Buddy Bolden's Blues" (1938, Cir 77-78); "Low-Down Blues" (1938, Cir 57, 87-88); "Mamie Desdoumes' Blues" (1938, Cir 49); "See See Rider" (1938, Cir 12-13); "The Winin' Boy" (1938, Cir 60); "Buddy Bolden's Blues" (1939, Gnl 4003); "Don't You Leave Me Here" (1939, Gnl 4005); "Mamie's Blues" (1939, Gnl 4001); "Michigan Water Blues" (1939, Gnl 4002); "Winin' Boy Blues" (1939, Gnl 4004).

As Leader

"London Blues" (1923, OK 8105); "Muddy Water Blues" (1923, Pm 12050); "Weary Blues" (1924, Auto 607); "Cannon Ball Blues" (1926, Vic 20431); "Original Jelly-Roll Blues" (1926, Vic 20405); "Sidewalk Blues/Dead Man Blues" (1926, Vic 20252); "Smoke-House Blues" (1926, Vic 20296); "Wild Man Blues"/"Jungle Blues" (1927, Vic 21345); "Wolverine Blues" (1927, Vic 21054); "Blue Blood Blues" (1930, Vic 22681); "Harmony Blues" (1930, Vic V-38135); "Don't You Leave Me Here" (1939, BB B-10450).

MOSAIC

Founded 1983; located in Stamford, Connecticut. Mosaic specializes in lavishly produced, audiophile-quality compilation box sets issued in hand-numbered, limited editions. While the label is primarily focused on jazz, it has issued a handful of blues collections, as well as quite a few crossover artists with appeal to both jazz and blues listeners. Because of its licensing agreements with the labels owning the master tapes, Mosaic releases are only available for purchase by mail order or on the Internet, and generally remain in print for only a short time (although out-of-print editions can often be found for sale second-hand on the Internet).

JIM TRAGESER

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The Complete Roulette Studio Count Basie (1993, MD10; 149).
The Complete Aladdin Charles Brown (1994, MD5-153).

MOSS, EUGENE "BUDDY"

b. 16 January 1914; Jewel, GA
 d. 1 October 1984; Atlanta, GA

Buddy Moss was an innovator of the Piedmont style of acoustic blues. His talents bridge the gap between Blind Blake and Blind Boy Fuller, and have influenced East Coast folk blues greatly. His family sharecropped in rural Georgia where he worked the fields from age eight. Self-taught on the harmonica, Moss cut his first recorded sides in 1930 with Barbecue Bob Hicks and Curley Weaver, learning the guitar under these two men. His natural ability on the instrument shone through, soon eclipsing those of his mentors. Recording dates in 1933 cemented his reputation as a masterful player, and led to working associations with Josh White and Blind Willie McTell.

Moss continued to record, enjoying a lucrative success that ended abruptly in 1935. A conviction on charges that he murdered his wife landed him with a substantial prison term despite many appeals. Though released on good behavior in 1941, Moss found it difficult to revitalize his career. A chance meeting with Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee at Elon College offered a handful of recording dates, though nothing permanent. Moss shelved his music career to pursue various jobs for the next twenty years. In 1964, he attended a performance by former colleague Josh White, causing a minor sensation among the blues fans attending. With rediscovery came new opportunities; Moss rode the folk blues revival well into the 1970s with appearances at well-known festivals.

JOHN OTIS

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AMG (Bruce Eder); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli Springer, Robert. "So I Said 'The Hell with It': A Difficult Interview with Eugene 'Buddy' Moss." *Blues Unlimited* no. 117 (January/February 1976): 18-21.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP**MOTEN, BENJAMIN "BENNIE"**

b. 13 November 1894; Kansas City, MO
 d. 2 April 1935; Kansas City, MO

Bandleader and pianist. His band, which recorded prolifically between 1923 and 1931, was taken over by Count Basie on Moten's untimely death during a

MOTEN, BENJAMIN “BENNIE”

tonsils operation. Through its emphasis on riffs and blues progressions, it became a major influence on later developments such as rhythm and blues.

PETER MUIR

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Russell, Ross. *Jazz Style in Kansas City and the South West*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Schuller, Gunther. *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Discography: Lord

“Crawdada Blues” (1923, OK 8100); “Tulsa Blues” (1924, OK 8184); “Harmony Blues” (1926, Vic 20406); “Vine Street Blues” (1924, OK 8194); “Harmony Blues” (1926, Vic 20406); “Muscle Shoals Blues/White Lightning Blues” (1926, Vic 20811); “Yazoo Blues” (1926, Vic 20485); “New Tulsa Blues” (1927, Vic 21584); “Hot Water Blues” (1928, Vic V-38012); “Sad Man Blues” (1928, Vic V-38048); “Every Day Blues” (1929, Vic V-38144); “Jones Law Blues” (1929, Vic 23357); “Moten’s Blues” (1929, Vic V-38072); “New Vine Street Blues” (1929, Vic 23007).

MOTLEY, FRANK JR.

b. 30 December 1923; Cheraw, SC

d. 31 May 1998; Durham, NC

Trumpeter and bandleader. Joined the U.S. Navy after earning a degree in mechanical engineering from South Carolina State College, and entertained troops in the Pacific as part of the Navy Band during World War II. After the war he pursued his musical interests first in New York City jazz circles, then as a bandleader in Washington, D.C. Motley recorded extensively in Washington for Lillian Claiborne’s DC label, beginning in 1951. Most of the material was jump-style blues and rhythm and blues, though some was clearly jazz—notably “JC’s Theme” with Gene Ammons on sax. Recordings from the early 1950s appeared at the time on DC and on labels that had licensed the material, including Big Town, Gem, and Hollywood. Other recordings from the period did not appear until much later—in the 1960s on the Grand Prix and Design labels, and in the 1980s on the Fly-Rite and Collector’s labels.

Motley played in Hamilton, Ontario, in a band that also featured singer-drummer TNT Tribble in 1952. In 1955 he took his longer-lived group, Frank “Dual Trumpeter” Motley and His Motley Crew, to Hamilton, Toronto, and Montreal. The group—which might be considered a “revue” because of the multiple-singer, stage-managed nature of its performances—was so well received that the base of

operations was shifted to Toronto almost immediately. Nevertheless, the recording relationship with the DC label in Washington continued well into the 1960s, with DC releasing records in the United States and leasing material (including some recorded years before) to Canadian labels such as Quality, Sparton, ABC Teen Life, Star-lite, Arc, and Star Shot. The group also recorded directly for Sparton and Barry. Motley’s greatest success, “Any Other Way,” was recorded in 1963 in Boston for a small local label, Cookin’, and then licensed to the important Sue label. The record, sung by Jackie Shane, met with some success in the United States, and with huge success in Canada—particularly Toronto, where it climbed to number two on the local pop chart.

Upon the demise of the Motley Crew in 1966, Motley put together a new group in Toronto, the Hitch-Hikers, featuring Jackie Shane and then Earle “The Mighty Pope” Heedram. Following a parting of the ways with the group in 1970, Motley continued to gig with various lineups, most notably as Frank Motley and the Bridge Crossing. In 1985, in declining health and with club work having dried up, Motley returned to the United States to be near his daughters in Durham, North Carolina. However, he maintained his interest in music, and continued to play in local dance bands. Frank Motley passed away in Durham on May 31, 1998.

BILL MUNSON

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

MOTOWN

The Motown slogans “The Sound of Young America” and “Hitsville, USA” were no idle boast in the 1960s and 1970s, when the company was a hit-making factory churning out million-selling, infectious R&B and soul with huge pop crossover appeal. Named after the Motor City, Detroit, its home from 1959 to 1973 (when it moved to Los Angeles), Motown also recorded a small number of blues artists.

The only Motown hit (a minor one at that) in a blues vein was 1960’s “Who’s the Fool” by Singin’ Sammy Ward (on its Tamla subsidiary). Pianist Amos Milburn’s *Return of the Blues Boss* was released on Motown in 1963 but failed to reestablish the former

star's waning popularity. Earl King was part of an entourage of New Orleans artists who cut sides for Motown in 1963 that remained unissued until a 1996 CD compilation. The 1969 LP *Switched On Blues* on Motown subsidiary Soul has become a collector's item; its ten tracks feature Ward, Milburn, Gino Parks, Mabel John, and Stevie Wonder ("I Call It Pretty Music But the Old People Call It the Blues"). The most promising of Motown's blues signings was Luther Allison, a young, fiery, and ambitious Chicago bluesman. Allison at the time was tearing up stages at colleges and festivals throughout the Midwest, but although popular with blues fans, his three albums on Motown's Gordy label (1972, 1974, 1976) were mere blips on the corporate radar screen, and Motown never again dabbled in blues.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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MR. BO

(See Collins, Louis "Mr. Bo")

MR. GOOGLE EYES

(See August, Joe "Mr. Google Eyes")

MR. R&B RECORDS

Record company formed in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1976 by record-dealer Jonas Bernholm to reissue "forgotten but essential recordings of Rhythm & Blues" from the 1940s and 1950s. The operation took advantage of the absence of any mechanical copyright protection in Sweden at that time to license material directly from the artists, some of whom received royalties for the first time. The resulting contacts facilitated a very high standard of documentation, frequently extending to inserted booklets that often remain the major reference source on the artists concerned. Among those whose work

benefited from this exposure on the main Route 66 label were Floyd Dixon, Roy Brown, Wynonie Harris, Paul Gayten & Annie Laurie, Roy Hawkins, "Little" Willie Littlefield, Ruth Brown, Jimmy Liggins, Amos Milburn, Calvin Bose, and Joseph August.

Much of the material had never previously been reissued. An unusual item was the issue of a 1951 Hunter Hancock *Blues & Rhythm Midnight Matinee*. Subsidiary labels included Mr. R&B, for distinctively 1950s styled artists such as Nappy Brown, Margie Day, and Varetta Dillard; Jukebox Lil, for artists with jazz roots like Joe Liggins, Roy Milton, Johnny Otis, and Todd Rhodes; Saxophonograph for instrumental R&B; Blues Boy for guitarists, including B. B. King and Pee Wee Crayton; and Crown Prince for "straight blues" artists, including Eddie Boyd, Mercy Dee, and Lowell Fulson. Jukebox Lil also had a "Sepia Series" for artists from the more popular end of R&B including Nellie Lutcher, Martha Davis, and Hadda Brooks. Early recordings by Johnny Copeland appeared on Mr. R&B. The Whiskey, Women and ... label was produced jointly with the eponymous American research magazine to tie in with its articles and included albums by Doc Pomus, Helen Humes, and Sam Price. The Stockholm label, directed by Per "Slim" Notini, recorded Mr. R&B artists who toured Sweden under its auspices, including Charles Brown, Ruth Brown, and Eddie Boyd. Another subsidiary label, Dr. Horse, was intended for doo-wop but included two albums by the Big Three Trio. The enterprise suddenly ceased trading in spring 1989 for personal reasons.

HOWARD RYE

MURPHY, MATT "GUITAR"

b. 29 December 1927; Sunflower, MS

Guitarist, singer. Although best known to the general public for his participation in the movie comedy *The Blues Brothers*, Murphy had a serious role in the evolution of modern blues, performing and recording with a series of significant figures for more than a half century. His jazz-inflected guitar lines, more inspired by saxists such as Arnett Cobb and Gene Ammons than by fellow guitarists, sparkled behind some of the best-known blues and most successful performers and recording acts in the music's history.

Murphy's birth year is often given as 1929 as well as 1927. His family, which included guitarist brother Floyd, who is heard on Junior Parker's "Mystery

MURPHY, MATT "GUITAR"

Train," moved to Memphis when he was a small child. Murphy was working with the music's biggest names from the start, playing live shows with Parker, Howlin' Wolf, and Ike Turner as a teenager and getting his first major recording session work behind Parker and Bobby "Blue" Bland on Modern Records shortly afterward.

In 1952 he joined Memphis Slim's House Rockers to create one of the most musically satisfying blues partnerships of the era. Murphy's jazzy guitar stylings proved to be the perfect counterpart to Memphis Slim's earthy piano work and their interplay dazzled and delighted audiences until the pianist emigrated to Europe at the beginning of the 1960s. Murphy opted to stay in the United States but a 1963 American Folk Blues Festival tour of Europe allowed him his first taste of solo stardom.

Murphy's stylish guitar work was always in great demand in the studio and his ability to creatively complement and embellish the sound of even the most idiosyncratic star resulted in him getting the call for numerous noteworthy recording sessions. He recorded two albums with Chuck Berry, backed Koko Taylor on her 1969 Chess debut, was involved in a series of Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson II" albums, played on Buddy Guy's classic "I Left My Blues in San Francisco," and appeared on recordings by Otis Rush, Etta James, and countless others.

Murphy's second major musical partnership came about when he combined forces with hard-blowing Chicago harpist James Cotton in the 1970s, recording more than a half dozen albums and touring steadily. The combination of fire and finesse provided by the frontmen made the band one of the most crowd-pleasing blues acts of its time. Comedians John Belushi and Dan Akroyd were part of such an audience at a New York City show in 1977 and they immediately recruited Murphy to be part of the Blues Brothers touring band, as well as part of the movie, where he played the musician/cook husband of Aretha Franklin's character.

After the 1980s were consumed with making *The Blues Brothers* movie and the subsequent albums and tours it generated, Murphy also began an affiliation with Austin-based Antone's organization, performing, often with bandmates like Cotton, regularly at its club and in 1990 recording his *Way Down South* album, with brother Floyd helping out, on its record label. Murphy added to his recording catalog with *Blues Don't Bother Me* in 1996, reprised his session star past with work on the Joe Louis Walker *Great Guitars* album in 1997, and recorded *Lucky Charm* under his own name in 2000.

MICHAEL POINT

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Tipaldi, Art. "Matt 'Guitar' Murphy: What the Blues Is All About." *Blues Revue* no. 23 (June/July 1996): 44-51.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

MURPHY, WILLIE

b. Minneapolis, MN

Pianist active in Minneapolis, Minnesota, bars and clubs. Earlier in his career he worked with Spider John Koerner, Bonnie Raitt, and Isaac Hayes, then led his own band Willie and the Bees.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- AMG (Dan Heilman)

Discography: AMG; Lord

MURRAY, BOBBY

b. 9 June 1953; Nagoya, Japan

Guitarist. Attended high school in Tacoma, Washington, with Robert Cray, with whom he booked Albert Collins for their school's graduation party. After years of playing in clubs in Oakland and San Francisco, he was hired by Etta James as sideman in 1988. He released his debut CD in 1996.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

MUSSELWHITE, CHARLIE

b. 31 January 1944; Kosciusko, MS

Harmonica player and singer. Born in Mississippi, he grew up in Memphis, one of a few white residents of its African American community. Charlie Musselwhite

was introduced to blues in the early 1960s by Will Shade, the founder of the Memphis Jug Band. He spent most of the 1960s in Chicago and went to San Francisco in 1970. Among various LPs in some thirty years, he has published a formative manual for beginners: *The Harmonica According to Charlie Musselwhite* (1979).

Musselwhite explores the blues as well as other musical genres and trends: electric and acoustic blues, gospel, Cuban, jazz, Tex-Mex, Tejano, and country music (in his album *One Night in America*, 2002).

YVES LABERGE

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Discography: AMG

MUSTANG SALLY

Written in 1965 by Detroit songwriter Mack Rice, "Mustang Sally" quickly became one of the most covered songs in R&B history. Among the legion of artists who have recorded the song are bluesmen Buddy Guy (with Jeff Beck), Albert Collins, Snooks Eaglin and Magic Slim; rock/pop group the Young Rascals; bluegrass great John Cowan; reggae legend U-Roy; and soul stars Rice, Wilson Pickett, Rufus Thomas, Sam and Dave, Willie Mitchell, and the Mar-Keys. The song was also featured prominently in the films *The Commitments* and *Road Scholar*. The success of the former helped make "Mustang Sally" one of the most popular karaoke songs ever in the United Kingdom.

Born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, in the 1940s, Mack Rice moved with his family north to Detroit as his father pursued a job in the then-burgeoning automotive industry. Already fascinated with music, the teenage Rice first recorded as a member of a doo-wop ensemble known as the Five Scalders. After serving the requisite two-year hitch in the service, in 1957 Rice answered a newspaper ad and became a member of the Falcons. At the time the group included future soul star Eddie Floyd. Wilson Pickett would join the group in 1961.

After the Falcons disbanded in 1963, Rice embarked on a solo career. It was while staying at Della Reese's home in New York that he began working on what became "Mustang Sally." Apparently Reese had a habit of giving her backup musicians Lincoln automobiles on their birthdays. When Rice mentioned to her drummer that, as his birthday was coming up, he would most likely be the proud recipient of a brand new Lincoln, the drummer protested that what he really wanted was a Mustang.

Incredulous that anyone would want "a little old car like a Mustang as opposed to that house-size Lincoln" [*Living Blues*, May/June 1993, p. 33], Rice started joking and eventually began playing with the words "mustang mama." Back in Detroit, Aretha Franklin's future husband Ted White told Rice that he wanted to make a record with him. Jumping at the opportunity, Rice mentioned his new song called "Mustang Mama." Rice and White stopped by Aretha Franklin's house and asked her to play piano while Rice sang a demo of the song that could be used by the session musicians when it came time to record.

"I was singing, 'Mustang Mama, Ride, Sally, Ride,'" recalled Rice in an interview with *Living Blues* writer Christine Child. "Aretha said, 'Mack, you should name this song 'Mustang Sally'.' I said, 'Why?' She said, 'Because that's what you're saying: 'Ride, Sally, Ride.' Call it 'Mustang Sally'.' I said, 'That's a good idea.' I don't know if she knows today that she did that. She probably forgot."

Rice's version of the song was recorded shortly thereafter in Chicago and apparently started out in a groove similar to that of Tommy Tucker's "High-Heeled Sneakers." It was producer and R&B artist Andre Williams who suggested that Rice attempt the song with a funkier groove. Released in the spring of 1965 on the Mercury subsidiary Blue Rock, Rice's version made it to #15 on the R&B charts, narrowly missing the pop Hot 100. A year and a half later Wilson Pickett covered the song on Atlantic in what has become the definitive version. Cut at Fame Studio in Muscle Shoals, Pickett's recording sported a more polished but virtually identical arrangement and soared to #6 R&B while having to settle for #23 pop.

Structured as a twenty-four-bar blues, "Mustang Sally" has a number of hooks including breaks at bars 19–20 of each section, a descending horn turnaround (first heard in Pickett's version), and a call-and-response chorus. It is the latter section where lead singer and background vocalists (in concert, lead singer and audience) engage in an extended call and response consisting of

MUSTANG SALLY

All you want to do is ride around Sally
answered by
Ride, Sally, ride
that has made the song a barroom staple for four
decades.

ROBERT BOWMAN

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Child, Christine. "Sir Mack Rice: Anything I See I Can Write On." *Living Blues* no. 109 (May/June 1993): 32–37.

MY BLACK MAMA (WALKING BLUES)

"My Black Mama" (alternate title: "Walking Blues") was improvised and recorded by Eddie "Son" House Jr. in summer 1930. The alternate title "Walking Blues" has been used to other melodies recorded by House, so the chosen base version is "My Black Mama" parts I and II released by Paramount in 1931. The musical form is a twelve-measure blues. The lyric scheme is AA (4 + 8), where all of the lyrics are declaimed in the first four measures, the first half of the lyric repeated in the second four measures, and the second half in the remaining four measures. Some lyrics may be discerned from other records of the time, especially Bessie Smith's "Work House Blues," but one characteristic is the "death letter" stanza that occurs in the second chorus of part II. In the 1960s, House acknowledged learning the melody from James McCoy, an unrecorded musician from Lyon, Mississippi, near Clarksdale. House's field-holler style singing of this melody is heard in his beginning each phrase after a silent, presumed axe-fall; in transcription, this first beat of the phrase would be notated as a silent rest, and the second beat is where the vocal melody begins. In addition to these features, House's 1930 "My Black Mama" performance is noted for the ascending bottleneck slide-fretted riff that is played between lyric phrases and choruses. Upon House's return to the Mississippi Delta from the Paramount recording session in Grafton, Wisconsin, and on the record's release, "My Black Mama" or, as we will call it here, "Walking Blues (1)," was quickly adopted and imitated by other Delta bluesmen.

While in Grafton, House with another guitarist, likely Willie Brown, recorded a blues modeled melodically and in part lyrically after Blind Lemon Jefferson's "Lonesome House Blues." This tune, labeled here "Walking Blues (2)," is a twelve-measure AAB lyric blues, its melody closer to Jefferson's "moan" blues

than to "Walking Blues (1)." The performance was unreleased until 1988, when Document Records issued it as "Walking Blues" on Document DLP 532 (*Delta Blues, Vol. 1, 1929–1930*).

In August 1941 in Robinsonville, Mississippi, House recorded a version of "Walking Blues (1)" (matrix LC 4780-B2) during a Library of Congress field recording session under Alan Lomax's supervision. This time House performed with a group consisting of guitarist Willie Brown, mandolinist "Fiddlin'" Joe Martin, and harmonica player Leroy Williams.

The following year (1942) House would record another performance (matrix LC 6607-B3) titled "Walking Blues" numbered here as (3). This one had a melody different from those in (1) and (2), to an AAB lyric scheme and different words. From the interview conducted on the same day, House appears to refer to this piece as "Girl I Love Is Dead."

"Walking Blues (1)" or "My Black Mama" would be the version picked up by younger musicians. Robert Johnson recorded "Walking Blues" in 1936 (Vocalion 03601). He had likely learned it from House's performances in the Mississippi Delta in the early 1930s. He also likely taught the melody to Jackson, Mississippi, bluesman Johnny Temple, who would record "Lead Pencil Blues" in 1935 (Vocalion) to that melody.

Another musician who knew tune (1) from House was Muddy Waters, who recorded it several times in his early career: as "Country Blues" for Lomax and the Library of Congress in 1941; as "Feel Like Going Home" in 1948 toward his first commercial release under his own name (Aristocrat 1305); and as "Walkin' Blues" for Chess Records (1426) in 1950.

Upon being rediscovered after several decades of musical inactivity, House recorded a version of tune (1) for Columbia Records, emphasizing the "death letter" lyrics of "My Black Mama." That track, titled "Death Letter Blues," served as the lead track on side A of House's LP *Father of the Folk Blues* (1965).

Various versions of "Walking Blues" were made by Paul Butterfield, Taj Mahal, and Johnny Winter, among others. Each may be assessed according to the classic performances of House, Johnson, and Waters.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MYERS, BOB

b. 2 May 1925; Byhalia, MS
 d. 1 May 1983; Chicago, IL

Harmonica player, and older brother of Louis and Dave Myers. He was most active in Chicago in the late 1940s and 1950s; later his days were filled with full-time jobs. He is considered an excellent exponent of the John Lee Williamson (Sonny Boy Williamson I) style. Examples of his playing were issued on the Advent LP *Chicago Blues at Home*.

EDWARD KOMARA

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MYERS, DAVE "THUMPER"

b. 30 October 1926; Byhalia, MS
 d. 3 September 2001; Chicago, IL

Bassist/guitarist who helped define the electric Chicago blues sound. Dave Myers's parents both played guitar—his mother at home and his father at house parties. As teenagers, Dave and his brother Louis performed some around the region, but moved to Chicago in 1941. It was in Chicago that Myers really learned to play guitar. Guitarist Lee Cooper took the Myers brothers under his wing and taught them some basic blues guitar techniques. They also often had the opportunity to listen to Cooper's neighbor, Lonnie Johnson, play. Myers, along with his brother and Junior Wells, founded the Three Aces, which became one of the first electric blues bands in Chicago and gained quite a following. The group played blues with a sophisticated jazz approach. In 1950, the group added drummer Fred Below and changed their name to the Four Aces. Myers later performed with the Jukes, headed by harpist Little Walter Jacobs and consisting of the former Aces, minus Junior Wells. With the Jukes, Dave recorded "Mean Old World," "Off the Wall," and others. In 1970, Dave and Louis reunited with Fred Below as the Aces for a brief reunion tour. Myers later joined forces with Robert Jr. Lockwood, Kenny Smith, and Kim Wilson to form the New Aces. Myers recorded his first true solo project *You Can't Do That*, on the Black Top label, in 1998.

Dave Myers was one of the first blues musicians to utilize the electric bass. His percussive technique garnered him the name "Thumper." Myers played bass for numerous recording sessions during the

1950s. He also played guitar, though he played it with a rhythmic bass role in mind.

GREG JOHNSON

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 Moon, D. Thomas. "Dave Myers: Somebody Has to Live It First." *Living Blues* no. 142 (November/December 1998), 32–41.

Discography: AMG**See also Bass****MYERS, LOUIS**

b. 18 September 1929; Byhalia, MS
 d. 4 September 1994; Chicago, IL

Myers is remembered as a hard-swinging, Chicago-based blues guitarist and harmonica player. A frequent performer at house parties and small clubs when he arrived in Chicago in the early 1940s, Myers played in a band with his brother Dave Myers on second guitar and a youthful Junior Wells on harmonica. When Fred Below joined the band on drums, the band, then known as the Four Aces, established an aggressive jump-blues style and quickly gained notoriety. The Aces, with a particularly innovative sound and style, brought Little Walter into the spotlight with such hits as "Juke." Myers and the Aces (known at various times as the Four Aces, Little Walter and the Night Cats, and the Jukes) toured extensively with Little Walter, playing such venues as the Apollo Theatre, which rarely booked Chicago blues performers. In the 1950s, the group was partially disbanded, and Good Rockin' Charles sometimes filled in for Wells on harmonica. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Louis Myers began gigging steadily under his own name. Myers reformed the Aces in 1970s, and they performed successful reunion dates as "living legends" to a younger generation of blues fans at festivals and concerts around the world. Although primarily remembered as a jazz-influenced guitar player, Myers demonstrated the influence of Little Walter in his refined and skillful harmonica playing.

RYAN OLSEN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

MYERS, SAM

b. 19 February 1936; Laurel, MS

Harmonica player, vocalist, drummer, composer. Sam Myers, the eloquent harmonica stylist and gruff, expressive vocalist from the Mississippi Delta, began his long career with King Mose & the Royal Rockers in the early 1950s. Myers's Ace single "Sleeping in the Ground" (1957) is a blues classic, and his harp work with Elmore James on "Look on Yonder Wall" and other 1961 recordings for Fire Records is exemplary. After a period of dormancy, Myers reemerged in the 1980s with the Mississippi Delta Blues Band and in 1985 joined Texas guitarist Anson Funderburgh and His Rockets, who continue to feature his harmonica and vocals before ever-growing audiences.

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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"Sad, Sad Lonesome Day" (1960, Fury).
"Look on Yonder Wall" (1961, Fire; with Elmore James).

As Sideman

Anson Funderburgh & the Rockets. *My Love Is Here to Stay* (1985, Black Top); *Sins* (1987, Black Top); *Rack 'Em Up* (1989, Black Top); *Tell Me What I Want to Hear* (1991, Black Top); *Live at the Grand Emporium* (1995, Black Top); *That's What They Want* (1997, Black Top); *Change in My Pocket* (1999, Black Top).
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N

NAFTALIN, MARK

b. 2 August 1944; Minneapolis, MN

A keyboard player and producer, Naftalin was instrumental in the blues revival of the late 1960s and remains a respected, influential, and active musician to this day. As a student at the University of Chicago in the early 1960s, he met, and occasionally played with, singer and harmonica player Paul Butterfield and guitarist Elvin Bishop, core members of what would become the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Moving to New York in the mid-1960s to attend the Mannes College of Music, Naftalin reunited with Butterfield; a one-off recording session that included guitarist Mike Bloomfield led to Naftalin's joining the Butterfield Band for a two-and-a-half year stint that culminated in four albums, including the critically acclaimed recording *East-West*.

In the late 1960s Naftalin relocated to San Francisco, doing sessions and live work (with figures such as James Cotton, John Lee Hooker, and Otis Rush), concert promotion, and production while touring with Bloomfield in both duo and band situations. In 1979 he launched *Mark Naftalin's Blue Monday Party*, an award-winning weekly radio show featuring both local and national blues talent; its follow-up, *Mark Naftalin's Blues Power Hour*, fared equally well. In the early 1980s Naftalin produced a number of events, including the Marin County Blues Festival and the Monterey Jazz Festival's Blues Afternoon, as well as *Poet of the Blues*, a video documentary of the pianist Percy Mayfield. In 1988, Naftalin founded

Winner Records, an independent label whose releases include two live albums by the Paul Butterfield Blues Band as well as selected live performances from the *Blue Monday Party* radio broadcasts.

DEAN A. MASULLO

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AMG (Michael Erlewine)

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With Canned Heat: *Hallelujah* (Liberty 7618).

With Duane Allman: *Anthology, Volume II* (Capricorn 0998).

With James Cotton: *The Best of the Verve Years* (Verve 314527371-2); *Cotton in Your Ears* (Verve 3060); *From Cotton with Verve* (Black Magic 9001).

With John Lee Hooker: *The Best of John Lee Hooker, 1965–1974* [from ABC 768] (MCA 10539); *Born in Mississippi, Raised Up in Tennessee* (ABC 768); *Endless Boogie* (ABC 720); *Never Get Out of These Blues Alive* (ABC 736).

With Michael Bloomfield: *Analine* (Takoma 1059); *The Best of Michael Bloomfield* (Takoma TAKCD-8905-2); *Between the Hard Place and the Ground* (Takoma 7070); *Bloomfield, a Retrospective* (Columbia CZ-37578); *Count Talent and the Originals* (Clouds 8805); *Essential Blues 1964–1969* (Columbia/Legacy CK 57631); *I'm with You Always* (Demon Fiend 92); *It's Not Killing Me* (Columbia 9883); *Live at the Old Waldorf* (Legacy CK 65688); *Living in the Fast Lane* (Waterhouse 11).

With Otis Rush: *Mourning in the Morning* (Cotillion 9006); *Right Place, Wrong Time* (Bullfrog 301, HighTone 8007).

With the Paul Butterfield Blues Band: *An Anthology: The Elektra Years* (Elektra 62124-2); *East-West* (Elektra 315); *East-West Live* (Winner 447); *Golden Butter*

NAFTALIN, MARK

(Elektra 2005); *In My Own Dream* (Elektra 74025); *The Original Lost Elektra Sessions* (Rhino R2 73505); *The Paul Butterfield Blues Band* (Elektra 294); *The Resurrection of Pigboy Crabshaw* (Elektra 74015); *Strawberry Jam* (Winner 446).

With Percy Mayfield: *Percy Mayfield Live* (Winner 445).

With Ron Thompson: *Just Like a Devil* (Winner 444).

NAPIER, SIMON

b. 31 October 1939; Manchester, England

d. 1 December 1990; Little Common, Sussex, England

Blues magazine publisher and editor, record label owner, and distributor. In 1962 he formed the Blues Appreciation Society and in April 1963 he launched *Blues Unlimited* magazine, both with Mike Leadbitter, at Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, England (see *Leadbitter, Michael Andrew "Mike"* entry). Napier's own preferences were pre-World War II blues, old-time, and hillbilly music. Combined with his natural business instincts, plus Leadbitter's research zeal for the postwar blues, he transformed the blues fanzine (with an initial run of two hundred copies), into an internationally recognized magazine. Following Leadbitter's death in 1974, Napier built up Swift Distributors, including Flyright Records, with Bruce Bastin and Robin Gosden. With Leadbitter, he was a founder of modern blues journalism.

JOHN BROVEN

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Leadbitter, Mike, and Napier, Simon, eds. *Blues Unlimited* nos. 1–102 (1963–1973).

NAPPY CHIN

b. Clarence Richard Evans, 8 February 1935

d. 8 March 1972; Dallas, TX

Electric guitarist active in Dallas, most often associated with singer/dancer/comedian Finney Mo (Leslie Finney, October 23, 1929–1984). His career was interrupted around 1958 to 1963 as a result of an arrest for drug possession. Reputedly an excellent guitarist, it appears he recorded only as sideman to Finney Mo for Duchess Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

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NARDELLA, STEVE

b. 26 June 1948; Providence, RI

An Ann Arbor, Michigan–based blues and rockabilly musician, originally from Providence, Rhode Island. He first recorded with Detroit bluesman Bobo Jenkins, playing the harmonica. Steve is also a guitarist and vocalist. In the 1970s he was in the Boogie Brothers band with Sarah Brown, Fran Christina, and John Nicholas. They backed Johnny Shines at the 1972 Ann Arbor Jazz & Blues Festival (which later came out on Atlantic). Next, he started the Silvertones with George Bedard, recording one album for Blind Pig. In the 1980s he founded the Steve Nardella Band (then featuring Mr. B. on piano). In 1995 the Steve Nardella Band did a tour of Scandinavia backing Eddie Burns. Today, in addition to leading his own band, Steve is also a member of Jack Scott's band.

R. J. SPANGLER

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AMG (Cub Koda)

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

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It's All Rock & Roll (1979, Blind Pig).

Daddy Rollin' Stone (1993, Schoolkids Records).

In Bands

The Vipers (1974?, Blind Pig; 45 rpm; the *first* recording ever released by Blind Pig!).

The Silvertones. *One Chance with You* (1977, Blind Pig).

As Sideman

Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival (1973, Atlantic).

Bobo Jenkins. *Here I Am a Fool in Love Again (The Green Album)* (1975, Big Star).

John Mooney. *Comin' Your Way* (1979, Blind Pig).

Little Tino & The Hawaiians. "Crazy 'Bout Those Tigers/Bleacher Boogie" (198?, Teenage Records; 45 rpm).

Prime Chops, Vol. 2 (1993, Blind Pig; compilation).

Please Mr. Foreman: Motor City Blues (1994?, Schoolkids Records).

Motor City Blues. *Total Energy* (1998).

NASHVILLE

Nashville's blues days centered around three or four nightclubs on or near Jefferson Street, three large mail-order record firms that all had late night programs on WLAC (a fifty-thousand-watt clear channel station), and a ballpark that housed major blues and R&B

shows in the off season and when the hometown team was on the road. One major blues label, Excello, was owned by one of the record firms, Ernie's Record Mart. Randy Wood, famous for Randy's Record Shop, forty miles out of Nashville in Gallatin, owned another label, Dot Records, which became a major contributor to pop music. WLAC had two disc jockeys, John Richbourg (known as "John R") and Bill "Hoss" Allen, who popularized many Nashville blues artists. Another important record firm in town was Buckley's.

The clubs most noted for blues entertainment were the Club Baron, the Stealaway, the Elks Club, the Del Morocco, and the House on the Hill, all in the Jefferson Street area. On Charlotte Avenue Etta James recorded a live album (*Etta James Rocks the House*, 1963, Chess label) at the New Era, and nearly every blues or R&B star would do an after-hours show there, once their performance was over at the ballpark, which was known as Sulphur Dell, because it was built on top of an old sulphur spring in Nashville.

Some of the blues artists that lived in and around Nashville at one time or another were Jimi Hendrix and his world renowned bass player Billy Cox, Bobby Hebb, Gene Allison, Edwin Starr, Roscoe Shelton, Earl Gaines, and Johnny Jones. Songwriters include Ted Jarrett and Bob Holmes. Additionally, legendary figures such as James Brown, Ray Charles, Little Richard, and Sam Cooke have worked with numerous horn players from Tennessee State University.

The building of Interstate 40 in the late 1950s and early 1960s cut right through the center of Jefferson Street and had a devastating effect on the local blues scene. However, signs are good that the blues scene in Nashville is on a return path. Recent blues festivals have been very popular, and new blues clubs have sprung up with great success.

PHIL EARHART

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NEAL, KENNY

b. 14 October 1957; New Orleans, LA

With his engaging songs, charismatic presence, and energetic live shows, Kenny Neal was tagged early on as "the next big thing" by the blues press almost as soon as his first album was released in 1987. Neal seems to have accepted this designation with good humor and grace—and although the early predictions

of crossover appeal and pop music stardom have yet to prove true, Neal has created a memorable body of blues recordings that places him among the most influential blues musicians of his generation.

He emerged as an important blues artist in his own right during the late 1980s after stints backing his father, Raful Neal, and Buddy Guy. Born into a musical family, son of a blues harmonica player, Kenny Neal was immersed in the blues from birth. At age thirteen, he was playing bass in his father's band in gigs around Baton Rouge. At seventeen, he joined Guy's band as bassist.

In his twenties, he switched to guitar and set off on his own, settling in Toronto in a band with several of his brothers. He returned stateside in the late 1980s, and in 1987 recorded his first album as leader for Bob Greenlee's King Snake label. That album, *Bio on the Bayou*, generated glowing reviews and positive feedback from radio stations. The much larger Alligator label quickly bought the album from King Snake, reissuing a slightly modified version (a couple of songs from the same session were swapped) as *Big News from Baton Rouge*.

With his soulful, baritone singing voice and fluid, melodic guitar and harmonica playing, Neal arrived on the international stage in full artistic blossom. By the time he began recording as a leader he was already thirty and had had the time to develop a distinctive style and unique musical voice. In addition to playing guitar and harmonica and singing, Neal can also play keyboards and drums, as well as bass. On guitar, he is as comfortable on acoustic as electric, and is a highly expressive slide player. Furthermore, he is a prolific composer, writing nearly all of his own songs.

A string of albums on Alligator in the late 1980s through mid-1990s combined with a busy touring schedule established Neal as a mainstay of the festival circuit and blues radio playlists. In 1991, he made his mark on stage as well, starring in the New York musical *Mule Bone* (which was composed by Taj Mahal), winning a Theater World Award for his efforts.

In the late 1990s, he left Alligator for Cleveland's Telarc label, and released a string of albums that were more polished affairs than the rough-hewn, swamp blues of his Alligator releases. These new albums continue to be among the most popular recordings in the blues world.

JIM TRAGESER

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NEAL, KENNY

Discography: AMG

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Walking on Fire (1991, Alligator 4795).
Hoodoo Moon (1994, Alligator 4825).
Homesick for the Road (1999, Telarc 1123; with Debbie Davies and Tab Benoit).
One Step Closer (2001, Telarc 83523).

NEAL, RAFUL

b. 6 June 1936; Baton Rouge, LA

In many ways, the career of harpist Raful Neal is a mirror of that of jazz pianist Ellis Marsalis: Both men are gifted instrumentalists who spent most of their careers in the role of sidemen until the rising fame of their offspring allowed them the opportunity to record and tour as leaders.

In Neal's case, he flirted with fame in the 1950s, playing in a band with Lazy Lester and, later, Buddy Guy. In 1957, musical hero Little Walter played in Baton Rouge and after hearing Neal's band play, invited them to move to Chicago. Guy followed up on that advice, but with him and his new wife about to start a family, Neal decided to stay in Louisiana. The next year, he did issue a 45, "Sunny Side of Love," on Don Robey's Peacock label. He continued playing local gigs while also holding down a day job, and issued intermittent 45s through the years. As his young family began growing up, many of his children—including Kenny, Noel, and Raful Jr.—took seats in his band. Today, nine of his children play the blues professionally.

It was only when son Kenny began to make waves in the late 1980s, though, that Raful really got the chance to step forward on a national stage. A 1987 release on King Snake Records, *Louisiana Legend*, was warmly received by the media and was picked up by Alligator Records. A follow-up on Ichiban also did well, and Raful Neal has been a regular fixture on the blues festivals circuit in the years since, although he has not been as active in the studio.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Louisiana Legend (1987, King Snake; reissued 1990, Alligator 478).

I Been Mistreated (1991, Ichiban 9004).
Old Friends (1998, Club Louisianne 1111).

NEELY, "LITTLE" BOBBY

b. 20 November 1931; Jackson, TN

d. 15 January 2002; Chicago, IL

Saxophonist/vocalist. As a youth, Neely admired jazzmen like Illinois Jacquet, and he took up the saxophone in his teens. He worked locally in Chicago, and occasionally toured with blues and jump-blues bands during the 1950s to 1980s. Neely led his own band, Spice, around the 1970s to 1990s.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Discography: LSFP

NEGRO ART

French record label active in the late 1960s that pioneered the reissue of down-home blues and R&B recordings from the 1940s and 1950s. Fourteen LPs were issued, all anthologies produced in very limited editions in plain white sleeves.

HOWARD RYE

NELSON, CHICAGO BOB

b. Robert Lee Nelson 4 July 1944; Bogalusa, LA

Harmonica player and singer. Initially began performing in Louisiana, learning from regional "swamp blues" musicians Lazy Lester and Slim Harpo. From the early 1960s through 1976, Nelson lived in Chicago, where Muddy Waters conferred his nickname. From 1965 until 1976 he performed with Luther "Snake Boy" Johnson. Since 1977 he has lived in Atlanta, and he has recorded for the High Water and Ichiban labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Santelli

NELSON, JIMMY “T-99”

b. 7 April 1919; Philadelphia, PA

Singer. Jimmy Nelson was born in Philadelphia; 1919 and 1928 have been cited as his birth years. He hopped a freight to California, landing in Oakland in 1941. An encounter with blues shouter Big Joe Turner inspired him to become a singer. He began entering talent contests and playing local clubs and eventually joined Johnny Ingram’s band. With the band he began gigging at San Francisco’s Long Bar Showboat meeting artists like Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, and T-Bone Walker.

He made his recording debut in 1948 with a single for Olliet and in 1951 signed with Modern/RPM cutting his first sides at Oakland’s Clef Club, backed by the Peter Rabbit Trio. The song “T-99 Blues,” named after a Texas highway, became a hit, landing at number six on the R&B charts. Nelson toured the country before heading back to the studio. Despite worthy follow-ups, including the oft covered “Meet Me with Your Black Dress On,” he failed to repeat his prior success. Nelson settled in Houston in 1955. After his stint with RPM he cut singles for Music City, Kent, and Chess during the 1950s and later for All Boy, Paradise, and Home Cooking before taking a lengthy hiatus from music. In 1999 he released his first full-length record, *Rockin’ and Shoutin’ the Blues* on Bullseye Blues, which won a W. C. Handy Comeback of the Year award. His follow-up, *Take Your Pick*, was released in 2002.

JEFF HARRIS

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Discography: AMG**Reissues**

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Cry Hard Luck: The RPM and Kent Recordings 1951–61 (2003, CDCHD 976)

See also Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM; Oakland; San Francisco; Texas; Turner, Joseph Vernon “Big Joe”

NELSON, ROMEO

b. Iromeio Nelson, 12 March 1902; Springfield, TN
d. 17 May 1974; Chicago, IL

Pianist whose 1929–1930 Vocalion recordings show him influenced by Pine Top Smith and Clarence Williams. At age six he moved with his family to Chicago, then at thirteen to East St. Louis, where he learned to play the piano. From the 1920s into the 1940s, he performed at house rent parties, but seldom in clubs and taverns. He supplemented his performing income through gambling. His Vocalion sessions came about through an association with guitarist Tampa Red. His “Head Rag Hop” is based on Pine Top Smith’s “Pinetop’s Boogie Woogie,” and it has been frequently included on LP and CD anthologies of blues piano. From the late 1940s he worked days as a construction worker, custodian, or elevator operator, and he performed occasionally and privately. In 1972 he suffered a heart attack, then became blind and bedridden. He was interviewed by Jim O’Neal and Eric Kriss in 1974. Shortly afterward he died from kidney failure.

EDWARD KOMARA

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O’Neal, Jim. “Romeo Nelson” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 36 (January/February 1978): 10–11.

Discography: DGR**NELSON, SONNY BOY**

(*See Powell, Eugene*)

NELSON, TRACY

b. 27 December 1944; French Camp, CA

Singer and pianist. With a big voice and a dramatic singing style, Nelson successfully melded soul, country, blues, and even a little psychedelia into her recorded work and live performances. She began performing around Madison, Wisconsin, as a teenager and made her recording debut in 1965 with the acoustic folk blues *Deep Are the Roots*. She relocated to California and formed the self-described “flower power blues band” Mother Earth in 1968 and a year later moved the band to Nashville, where it lasted three more years.

Nelson’s subsequent solo career found her recording regularly in the 1970s, but only occasionally after that. Her eponymous post–Mother Earth debut in 1974 was followed by *Sweet Soul Music* in 1975 and

NELSON, TRACY

Time Is on My Side the year after, solidly establishing her as one of the strongest voices on the female rock-ing roots scene. Her albums became less frequent and even more eclectic as time went by as she delved deeper into country and gospel.

She joined Irma Thomas and Marcia Ball for the collaborative *Sing Out* sessions in 1998 and in 2002 Nelson went behind bars to record the first live album of her career, *Live from Cell Block D*, for Memphis International Records.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn and Stephen Thomas Erlewine); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG

NETTLES, ISAIAH

Flourished 1930s–1960s, Mississippi

Known as “The Mississippi Moaner,” Nettles was an archaic barefoot tap dancer and intense singer who recorded four songs in 1935 and was reported to still be performing in the 1960s.

DAVID HARRISON

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Discography: DGR

NEVILLE BROTHERS

Formed in 1977 in New Orleans, Louisiana, the multitalented first family of New Orleans music dominated the Crescent City scene for a half century, beginning with keyboardist/vocalist Art’s 1954 anthem “Mardi Gras Mambo.” The angelic-voiced Aaron had his biggest solo hit in 1966 with the classic “Tell It Like It Is,” while saxist Charles worked on the jazz scene. Singer/percussionist Cyril brought a worldbeat flavor to the group when it finally began working as the Neville Brothers in 1977. The release of *Fiyo on the Bayou* in 1981 and the live set *Neville-Ization* three years later established the band

internationally as the most popular and authentic purveyor of the modern New Orleans sound.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

NEW ORLEANS

(See *Louisiana*)

NEWBERN, WILLIE “HAMBONE WILLIE”

Active 1920s–1940s

Singer and guitarist. From what little is known about him today (mostly from Sleepy John Estes), he performed in medicine shows around the Mississippi–Arkansas–Tennessee area. He is most regarded today for recording (for OKeh in 1929) the earliest known rendition of the blues standard “Roll and Tumble Blues.”

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

See also Estes, John Adam “Sleepy John”

NEWBORN, CALVIN

b. Edwin Calvin Newborn, 27 April 1933; Memphis, TN

Guitarist based in Memphis, brother of pianist Phineas Newborn, Jr. T-Bone Walker, Oscar Moore, and Wes Montgomery were formative influences. In the early 1950s he recorded with B. B. King, and in clubs he was engaged in guitar “battles” with Pee Wee Crayton and Gatemouth Brown. His jazz work

included terms with his brother, Earl Hines, and Lionel Hampton. He is as capable of producing solos in gutbucket blues style as in modern jazz.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord; LSPF

NEWBORN, PHINEAS, JR.

b. 14 December 1931; Whiteville, TN

d. 26 May 1989; Memphis, TN

Phineas, brother of Calvin Newborn, grew up in a musical family and studied piano (his principal instrument), music theory, and several brass instruments in high school. Starting in 1945, he played rhythm and blues in local Memphis bands including those of his father, the drummer Phineas Newborn, Sr., during the years 1948–1950. He also appeared on early B. B. King recordings in 1949. Newborn entered college in 1950 as a music major at the Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University, Nashville. He dropped out in 1952 after his father refused, for unknown reasons, to let his talented son transfer to the Julliard School in New York City. He then studied at Lemoyne College in Memphis where he added vibraphone and three types of saxophone to his array of instruments, though piano was still his principal instrument.

Newborn rejoined his father's group after getting experience playing with Willis "Gator" Jackson in 1953 and in a military band from 1953 to May 1955. By late 1955, however, he was able to establish his own band in Philadelphia. In 1956 Newborn moved to New York and began performing at Basin Street with his brother Calvin, George Joyner (who later became known as Jamil Nasser), and Kenny Clarke. He soon made his first album as a leader (with Oscar Pettiford replacing Joyner) and would continue recording and performing as a leader during the next few years. He formed a duo with Charles Mingus and the two would accompany the poet Langston Hughes at the Village Vanguard in February 1958. Also in 1958 Newborn would join Roy Haines at Birdland and the Five Spot, and would tour Europe in the show "Jazz from Carnegie Hall." In 1959 his collaboration with Mingus would continue on the soundtrack for the film *Shadows*.

Afterward Newborn's career would decline severely due to mental illness and alcoholism. He moved to Los Angeles in 1960 where his personal problems

would destroy two marriages and lead to long periods of hospitalization. He was still able to record in 1961 with Teddy Edwards and Howard McGhee and release two albums as a leader in 1961–1962. Also, in October 1962, he got a performance spot in an episode of the television series *Jazz Scene USA* and made further recordings as a leader in 1964 and 1969.

While Newborn enjoyed moderate success as a touring artist throughout the 1970s, his career would never reach the height it had previously enjoyed. Further illness prevented him from working during most of the 1980s and in 1988 doctors discovered a lung tumor. He died the following year.

ROBERT SORICELLI

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

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Discography: Lord

NEWELL, "LITTLE" EDDIE

b. 29 August 1930

d. 24 April 1981; St. Louis, MO

Chicago-based blues harmonica player and vocalist. Newell, performing as Little Eddie in a Jimmy Reed drawling style, primarily made his impact as a club performer, recording only two sessions. His first session, for Tommy Jones's Mad label, yielded one single—"Teddy Bear Blues," a routine twelve-bar blues, where Newell's vocals are undermixed. At a later session for the Big Beat label, he recorded four more sides, which had the virtue of being done more professionally. Commercially, the recordings remained obscure.

ROBERT PRUTER

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NICHOLSON, JAMES DAVID "J. D."

b. 12 April 1917; Monroe, LA

d. 27 July 1991; Los Angeles, CA

A pianist from Louisiana heavily influenced by Walter Davis, J. D. Nicholson made his way to the West

Coast where he has recorded since the late 1950s behind numerous artists (Jimmy McCracklin, Ray Agee, George Smith, Pee Wee Crayton, Big Mama Thornton, Rod Piazza). He recorded only a handful of sides under his own name where one can appreciate his nasal voice and laid-back delivery.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: LSFP

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NIGHTHAWK RECORDS

Began as a blues reissue label in 1976, but St. Louis-based Nighthawk Records decided in 1980 to concentrate its efforts on Jamaican music, most notably reggae as well as ska and rocksteady. The company has released classic and contemporary reggae material by such performers as the Itals, Winston Jarrett, and Leonard Dillon, aka The Ethiopian.

RON WYNN

NIGHTHAWK, ROBERT

b. Robert McCollum, 30 November 1909; Helena, AR
d. 5 November 1967; Helena, AR

Robert Nighthawk was one of three children of the musically inclined Ned and Mattie McCollum. Joe Willie Wilkins's one-time wife Margaret was said to be Nighthawk's sister but, according to Nighthawk biographer Jeff Harris, neither was biological kin. Nighthawk learned the harmonica from Louisiana musician Johnny (or Eddie) Jones in 1924. As a youth, Nighthawk began his rambling; he never stopped.

Performing various agricultural jobs by day and playing music at night, Nighthawk was working the Hollandale, Mississippi, area in 1931 when he learned guitar from Houston Stackhouse. Stackhouse, who claimed to be Nighthawk's cousin, was a multi-instrumentalist who had learned to play guitar from fellow Crystal Springs natives Tommy Johnson and his brothers. It is their style, featuring rhythmically sophisticated Delta guitar with the incorporation of falsetto yodels, that Stackhouse conveyed to

Nighthawk. Nighthawk's recorded repertoire includes several Tommy Johnson songs.

Nighthawk's travels took him throughout the Delta and beyond where he performed with Sonny Boy (John Lee) Williamson, Sleepy John Estes, Yank Rachel, Hammie Nixon, Big Joe Williams, Will Shade, John Lee Hooker, and others. He was playing guitar in the orchestra of the Dan Hildrege Show in East St. Louis, in the early thirties, when he met one-time girlfriend, singer, and dancer Little Laura Dukes from Memphis, teaching her to play the ukulele.

Nighthawk was well known in the lower South so that, in 1935, after becoming involved in a shooting, he fled north to St. Louis to escape prosecution. There he adopted his mother's maiden name and became Robert Lee McCoy.

Nighthawk first recorded (never released) accompanying pianist Jack Newman in October 1936. In St. Louis, he worked regularly with John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson and Big Joe Williams and they accompanied him on his first recording session as a leader, in Chicago on May 5, 1937 (Bluebird). Included in the six records he cut was his composition “Prowling Night-Hawk”; years later he adopted it as his surname. Twenty-one songs were released, under the name Robert Lee McCoy or Rambling Bob, by Bluebird between May 1937 and December 1938. In June 1940, in Chicago, Nighthawk recorded four songs for Decca. On these records, released as being by “Peetie's Boy”—a reference to St. Louis musician Peetie Wheatstraw—Nighthawk was joined by vocalist Ann Sortier.

During the late thirties and early forties, Nighthawk frequently recorded as accompanist, playing guitar and/or harmonica, behind Sonny Boy Williamson, Big Joe Williams, Sleepy John Estes, Walter Davis, Speckled Red, Henry Townsend, Peetie Wheatstraw, and others.

Although still a rambler, Nighthawk moved his base of operations to Chicago in 1940. It was apparently during this time that Nighthawk came under the influence of slide guitar master Tampa Red, adding some of his songs to his repertoire and blending Red's smoother, more delicate slide style with that of the Crystal Springs sound and creating the distinctive single-string slide playing for which Nighthawk became famous.

In 1942, Nighthawk was back home in Helena where he landed a spot on radio station KFFA advertising Bright Star Flour. Sometimes he was accompanied by guitarist Joe Willie Wilkins and pianist Pinetop Perkins and, by 1946, by his teacher (and later student) Houston Stackhouse. During the forties, Nighthawk and Stackhouse tutored the young Earl Hooker on guitar.

The year 1948 found Nighthawk, now playing electric guitar, in Chicago, where his old friend Muddy Waters—himself influenced by Nighthawk’s slide innovations—helped arrange a recording session for the Chess brothers. This session resulted in one release and another one, in 1949, produced an Aristocrat single featuring two Nighthawk standards: “Black Angel Blues” and “Annie Lee Blues” (thirteen on the national R&B chart), both songs previously recorded by Tampa Red. Following a third Chess session and second Aristocrat single in 1950, Nighthawk recorded (1951–1952) eleven numbers for the United and States labels. His postwar popularity was based on these late 1940s and early 1950s recordings; Nighthawk did not record again until 1964.

Nighthawk returned to the Helena/Friar’s Point area and continued rambling, following the crops south to Florida, or working his way north to St. Louis or Chicago. Reports from his contemporaries indicate that he played regularly throughout the Delta region, often performing with his son Sam Carr on drums and Frank Frost on harmonica.

In 1964, Nighthawk made one of his infrequent trips to Chicago. That year he recorded for Decca, Chess, and Testament, and participated in a documentary for Swedish radio. He was also recorded live, with a small combo on Maxwell Street—partially released on LP in 1979 and in the 1965 documentary *And This Is Free* (1995).

Nighthawk, by 1965, was back in the Helena area, broadcasting over KFFA and playing local gigs. His last recordings in the company of Houston Stackhouse, James “Peck” Curtis, and Carey Mason were made in the field, in 1967 in Dundee, Mississippi, by George Mitchell. In poor health at the time, he died several months later on November 5. Nighthawk told friends that his illness was the result of having been either poisoned or conjured. The official cause of death was congestive heart failure. He was buried in Helena’s Magnolia Cemetery.

Nighthawk entered many relationships with women and reportedly had several children. By his first wife Mary Griffen he had two children, Ludie and musician Sam Carr. With another wife, drummer Hazel Momon, he had three children: Geni, Robert, and Marianne.

The late Pete Welding described Nighthawk’s “slide work” as “simply masterful—delicate, smooth, perfectly controlled, full of sustained invention.” His singing, whether mournful or jubilant, was the perfect accompaniment to his playing and together they created a unique feel and tone that only the greatest artists achieve. Pinetop Perkins said: “Nobody else could play a slide like him. They think they can but they

can’t . . . It’s wailin’ man.” Nighthawk’s influence is evident in the playing of nearly every postwar slide guitarist as well as many, including B. B. King, who do not play in the slide style.

FRED J. HAY

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

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And This Is Maxwell Street (1999, P-Vine CD 5527/28).
Prowling Nighthawk (2000, Catfish CD).

NIGHTHAWKS

Self-described “white boy blues band,” formed in 1972 by harpist Mark Wenner (b. 1948) and guitarist Jimmy Thackery (b. 1953), with bassist Jan Zukowski (b. 1950) and drummer Pete Ragusa (b. 1949) joining two years later. All four hailed from the Washington, D.C., area, and the group was a big part of the vibrant 1970s DC roots-rock scene. Wenner had heard recordings by bluesman Robert Nighthawk, listened to soul deejay Bob “Nighthawk” Terry on DC radio, and knew a friend who called his truck “the nighthawk.” All three were sources of the band’s name. Edward Hopper’s painting *Nighthawks* graced the cover of the band’s second album, *Open All Night* (1976).

Starting with a Chicago blues repertoire, the Nighthawks incorporated R&B, soul, rock, and rockabilly while forging ties with blues veterans such as Muddy Waters (sharing the stage with him more than one hundred times). After expanding their fan base north and south along the East Coast, they began touring nationally around 1978. During their years of peak popularity, they played more than

NIGHTHAWKS

three hundred gigs a year, often as headliners (future stars Stevie Ray Vaughan and Robert Cray opened for them). Artistic differences with their record label in the mid-1980s and Thackery's departure for a solo career in 1987 were setbacks, but the band persevered, with guitar duties handled in succession by Jimmy Nalls (1988–1990), Danny Morris (1990–1994), Pete Kanaras (1994–2004), and Paul Bell (2004 to present). Johnny Castle replaced long-time bassist Zukowski in 2004. The heart and soul of the group has always been front man Wenner, whose in-your-face style of harp recalls James Cotton, whose vocals convey blue-eyed soul, and whose tattoo-covered body and biker attire exemplify the group's blue-collar attitude. The Nighthawks discography includes more than twenty albums for a variety of labels. Most of their best-received recordings are of live performances, the format in which this well-greased, hard-working band excels.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: AMG

See also **Thackery, Jimmy**

NIX, WILLIE

b. 6 August 1922; Memphis, TN
d. 9 July 1991; Leland, MS

Southern Delta-style blues singer of the post-World War II era. Nix's recorded work includes only a handful of titles, but it is all first rate, in which his insinuating vocals are put to excellent use on cleverly written lyrics. He began his career as a tap dancer at age twelve, joining the Rabbit Foot Minstrels at the age of sixteen, in 1938. He toured with the group for five years, in an act that combined dancing and cracking jokes, and then performed for the Royal America Show for another three years. During World War II he served in the Army. After the war, Nix joined Sonny Boy Williamson's band, where he was taught to play drums for the group. After Williamson left the group, Nix and the other members, singer Willie Love and guitarist Joe Willie Wilkins, formed a group that was featured on a radio show on KWEM in West

Memphis, Arkansas. Nix took over the lead spot in 1950 after Willie Love left. His show lasted more than a year. In 1951 Sam Phillips heard Nix and recorded him, with sides going to RPM (1951), Checker (1952), and Phillips's own Sun label (1953), the latter released under the name of Memphis Blues Boy.

In 1953, after Nix committed a murder in Arkansas under unclear circumstances, he moved up to Chicago, where he stayed five years, drumming behind such blues greats as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Elmore James, Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson," and Sunnyland Slim. On rare occasions he fronted his own group in the clubs, notably at Smitty's Corner. Nix recorded two singles for Art Sheridan for his Chance and Sabre labels. His best side was on Sabre called "Just Can't Stay," based on a classic Mississippi country blues, "Catfish." In 1958, Nix returned to Arkansas to settle his legal problems from the murder (he ended up serving more than four years, according to Floyd Jones). After leaving prison he never returned to the music business.

ROBERT PRUTER

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O'Neal, Jim. "Willie Nix: The Memphis Blues Boy of Mississippi." *Living Blues* no. 43 (Summer 1979): 9–13.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

NIXON, ELMORE

b. 17 November 1933; Crowley, LA
d. 11 December 1973; Houston, TX

Houston pianist who participated as sideman for Gold Star, Peacock, Mercury, Savoy, and Imperial sessions in 1949–1955. His own recordings are in the 1940s jump band style. In the 1960s he assisted Clifton Chenier and Lightnin' Hopkins in recording sessions. He was inactive in music after surgery in 1970.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

NIXON, HAMMIE

b. Hammie Nickerson, 22 January 1908; Brownsville, TN

d. 17 August 1984; en route from Brownsville to Jackson, TN

Harmonica, kazoo, jug, and guitar player Hammie Nixon's importance in blues goes far beyond his recordings as accompanist of guitarist Sleepy John Estes. He was a fully developed and very entertaining artist in his own right as well as a major influence on John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. Nixon was orphaned at a very young age and raised by a white family, who bought him harmonicas and kazoos. At about age eleven his life would change when at a picnic he met Estes, with whom Nixon would off and on form one of the longest musical partnerships in the history of the blues. Hammie's last wife was Estes's daughter. Nixon also played with guitarist Hambone Willie Newbern, a cousin of Estes, and learned some tricks on harmonica from Noah Lewis. Alongside playing with Estes in the Brownsville area, Hammie often plied between the South and Chicago from the 1930s to the early 1960s. He claimed to have recorded for Victor with Estes in Memphis in 1929, but this was not confirmed by Estes. In any case, Nixon did record on harmonica and jug with Son Bonds from Brownsville for Decca in 1934 and with Estes for Champion in 1935, both times in Chicago. Two years later, Nixon cut more sides with the latter partner in New York City, again for Decca. At the same session he accompanied Charlie Pickett (from Brownsville) on harmonica and Lee Green on jug. Sometime in the 1930s he also toured with Dr. Graham's Medicine Show.

Apart from working outside music in Memphis and in Chicago until 1962, Nixon accompanied Estes in his *Ora Nelle* and *Ebony* recordings in Chicago in the 1940s. Following Estes's rediscovery in the 1960s, Nixon's musical career received a new boost. Whether as a duo or with other musicians, Nixon and Estes recorded a series of albums for Bob Koester's Delmark Records and did a session for *Bea&Baby*. They toured extensively in the United States and Canada, playing at the Newport Folk Festival in 1964. In Europe, they performed as part of the package known as the American Folk Blues Festival, also recording albums for Fontana and Storyville. Not until 1972, however, did Nixon record his first album, for the Italian label Albatros. Many concerts with Estes ensued, among the most important of which were tours with the Memphis Blues Caravan and appearances at the Newport Jazz Festival and the Festival of American Folklife. The

seventies also saw Estes and Nixon tour Japan (Hammie's favorite country) twice, where they recorded LPs for Trio-Delmark. After Estes's death in 1977, Hammie thought about retiring from music but was convinced by David Evans to join a jug band featuring his harmonica playing and till then under-rated singing. In this formation and just with David Evans on guitar, Nixon played gigs and festivals in his local area, and made several national and two overseas tours. Before dying in 1984, Nixon cut a 45-rpm record and his second album under his own name for High Water Recording Company.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: AMG; DGR (as accompanist); LSPF**NOLAN, LLOYD**

b. Nolan Lloyd, 15 February 1939; Chicago, IL

d. 21 May 1997; Chicago, IL

A Chicago R&B singer from the early 1960s. Nolan, whose name was turned around at the behest of his first record company, recorded his inaugural record in 1962, "What's Happenin' in Here," which had a Fats Domino flavor. The record was picked up by King, which gave the record Midwest distribution, and Nolan toured off its success. Nolan recorded twice more, releasing another single on King, "I Don't Know About You," which had a Little Willie John flavor. His last single on Daran (1936) was unsuccessful, at which point he retired from the recording business.

ROBERT PRUTER

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NOLEN, JIMMY

b. 3 April 1934; Oklahoma City, OK
 d. 17 December 1983; Atlanta, GA

Although relatively unrecognized for his innovative contributions to modern guitar stylings, guitarist Jimmy "Chank" Nolen is considered by many to be, in the words of his former bandleader Johnny Otis, "the founder of the funk guitar." Nolen's rhythmic, staccato guitar break, resembling a chopping action, was his signature invention, and has since been widely imitated by rock and funk musicians, including Jimi Hendrix and George Clinton.

Growing up on an Oklahoma farm, Nolen was first inspired to play after hearing T-Bone Walker and Lowell Fulson on the radio. In 1952, he joined and recorded with his first band, J. D. Nicholson & His Jivin' Five. Following the band to California in 1955, Nolen soon became involved in the thriving West Coast blues scene. By 1957, he had joined the Johnny Otis Band and begun actively working as a studio session guitarist, contributing to Otis's major hit, "Willie and the Hand Jive." During this same period, he recorded under his own name for the first time, through a contract with Federal Records, a subsidiary of the King label. In 1960, Nolen formed his own band, which was much in demand as a backup group for major blues artists such as B. B. King when they performed in Los Angeles. Joining James Brown's band, the J.B.'s, in 1965, Nolen had the opportunity to perfect his rhythm guitar style, which was first widely heard on the 1965 Brown hit, "Poppa's Got a Brand New Bag." Although Nolen's sound was immediately popular, he himself remained largely anonymous as a member of Brown's band. Except for a two-year hiatus in 1970–1972, Nolen remained in the J.B.'s until his sudden death from a heart attack at age forty-nine in 1983.

DAVID BEAUDOUIN

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Discography: LSFP

Selected Recordings

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NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS

Some groups perpetuate a family tradition, but few achieve the goal with the degree of panache balanced with a reverence for tradition embodied by the North Mississippi Allstars. Formed in 1996, this group brought together bassist Chris Chew with guitarist/lead vocalist Luther Dickinson and his percussionist sibling Cody. The brothers inhaled a broad range of vernacular and progressive musical influences from their father Jim Dickinson, the celebrated songwriter/keyboard player/producer whose credits range from the Rolling Stones to the Replacements. He raised his sons in the hill country of Northern Mississippi, where they apprenticed themselves to such local musical legends as the guitarists R. L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough as well as the fife player Othar Turner. The trio launched their first release, *Shake Hands with Shorty* (2000), with the blues-affiliated independent label Tone Cool. The group's live extended improvisations attracted the rock-oriented jam band constituency and expanded their audience beyond its initial blues base. Subsequently, the Dickinson brothers established a temporary affiliation, the Word, with the popular jazz organist John Modeski and the sacred steel virtuoso Robert Randolph. The trio then regrouped with the addition of R. L. Burnside's grandson Dwayne and released *Polaris* (2003) and *Hill Country Revue: Live at Bonnaroo* (2004), the latter a family affair with their father, Jim, three generations of Burnside's, and Othar Turner's grandson.

DAVID SANJEK

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Discography: AMG

NORWOOD, SAM

Flourished 1920s–1940s

"Peg Leg Sam" Norwood, aka R. D. Norwood, was a familiar figure in the 1940s on Chicago's Maxwell

Street, where he was held in some regard as a guitarist by men like Moody Jones and Johnny Williams. His only recordings, made in Mississippi in 1930, were four gospel duets with singer/guitarist Lucien "Slim" Duckett.

TONY RUSSELL

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

NULISCH, DARRELL

b. 14 September 1952; Dallas, TX

Singer and harmonica player. His singing is based on soul singers Otis Redding, Al Green, and Bobby

Bland. He was a founding member of Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets through the 1980s, then he began his solo career in 1991. His harmonica work is regarded as highly as his singing, and he enjoyed stints with Ronnie Earl and James Cotton. His recent CDs have been for the Severn label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bradley Torreano)

Discography: AMG (Bradley Torreano)

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OAKLAND

Although there were night clubs in Oakland before World War II—Slim Jenkins’s Place on Seventh Street opened its doors in 1933—they mainly presented jazz and nothing is known of any local blues talent before the forties. The employment needs of local defense factories, especially the shipyards, led to a huge influx of blacks into the Bay Area (mainly from Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana). The black population of Oakland rose from 8,462 in 1940 to 37,327 in 1945 and it has continued to grow—by 1980 almost half the residents of Oakland were black.

The presence of a large number of relatively well-paid workers looking for entertainment and with musical tastes formed in the South led to the growth of clubs and the appearance of musicians to cater to them. Artists like Saunders King and Ivory Joe Hunter appealed to those with more sophisticated tastes, but there was a demand too for music of a more down-home style. One of the earliest bands of this type of which we know was Count Otis Matthews’s West Oakland Houserockers, which included Vallejo-born Johnny Otis on drums. But such artists were not being recorded until Bob Geddins came onto the scene. Saunders King and Ivory Joe Hunter had already appeared on record but it was Geddins who during the ten years after the end of the war almost single-handedly (though we should not overlook the efforts of the Trilon and Olliet labels) revealed the amount of local blues talent. Artists like Lowell Fulson, Jimmy McCracklin, Roy Hawkins, Jimmy Wilson, and Johnny Fuller were able to build on the

beginnings laid by Geddins and obtain wider reputations; others benefited only by securing their local popularity. But with a broad network of clubs (such as Esther’s Orbit Room and the Clef Club) regularly featuring both local and visiting artists; large venues like the Oakland Auditorium bringing in package shows with the latest stars; and radio stations like KWBR (later KDIA), with deejays Jumping George Oxford, Bouncin’ Bill Doubleday, and Don Barksdale spreading the word, the fifties were a boom time for blues in Oakland.

The sixties were less successful. Changes in musical taste, seen first in the popularity of vocal groups and then in the rise of soul music, combined with the devastation of Seventh Street by “urban renewal” led to a decline in the blues market and also to a redefinition of the blues—the “Oakland sound,” as created by Geddins, gave way to a more eclectic kind of blues, influenced both by the blues of other regions, especially Chicago, and by soul music. Nonetheless, there was still a local blues scene, even though many of the artists had day jobs and only played during weekends. Bob Geddins was still recording and giving visibility to artists like Al King, Sugar Pie DeSanto, and Tiny Powell; Galaxy Records in nearby Berkeley issued many singles by Little Johnny Taylor and Rodger Collins, and also gave Sonny Rhodes, J. J. Malone, The Right Kind, and others the chance to present themselves to a wider audience. Other labels such as Music City, Bay-Tone, and Loadstone, although primarily concerned with the more popular forms, gave occasional opportunities to blues artists,

especially those who were able to update their styles by incorporating aspects of soul music. And a host of tiny labels at least gave the artists something to show to potential employers or to sell to club audiences. But, although there were still blues artists in Oakland, they were essentially local performers working for a neighborhood audience—the names of Eugene Blacknell, Johnny Talbot, Jesse James, and Eddie Foster will serve to represent this period.

The blues “revival,” which began in the sixties, had little immediate effect, focused as it was on acoustic country blues on the one hand (which did boost the career of Oakland resident Jesse Fuller) and electric Chicago blues on the other, but by the end of the decade attention began to be paid to other forms and regions of blues. A significant moment came in 1979 when J. J. Malone and Troyce Key took over Eli’s Mile High Club on the death of Eli Thornton who had founded the club in 1974. With a regular parade of both local and visiting musicians, the club began to attract an audience both from within Oakland and from outside and to serve as a focus for a renewed interest in Oakland blues. But with the death of Key in 1992 the momentum flagged and once again the blues in Oakland largely became music by locals for locals. Nonetheless there is a surprisingly large number of active musicians in the Oakland area, still playing, albeit sporadically, and still recording, either for small labels or producing their own CDs. The work of Ronnie Stewart and the Bay Area Blues Society has been significant too. Acoustic blues is represented by Elmer Lee Thomas and Alvin “Youngblood” Hart; more modern styles by artists like harmonica player Birdlegg, pianist Beverly Stovall, female singers like Lady Bianca, Brenda Boykin, Ella Pennewell, E. C. Scott and Sista Monica, as well as Fillmore Slim, Freddie Hughes, Bobby Reed & Surprise, Alvon Johnson, Jackie Payne, Craig Horton, and many others. Those who wish to seek it out can still find and hear blues in Oakland—at clubs like Jimmie’s, Yoshi’s, Dotha’s Juke Joint, and the Continental Club.

RAY ASTBURY

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See also **Big Town; Boykin, Brenda; Douglas, K. C.; Fantasy/Prestige/Bluesville/Galaxy/Milestone/Riverside; Fuller, Johnny; Fulson, Lowell; Garrett, Vernon; Geddins, Bob; Heartsman, Johnny; Hunter, Ivory Joe; Irma; James, Jesse; Kelton, Robert “Bob”; King, Al; King, Saunders; Malone, “John Jacob” J. J.; McCracklin, Jimmy; McGuirt, Clarence “Candyman”; Otis, Johnny; Rhodes, Sonny; Rhythm; Robinson, L. C. “Good Rockin”; Sadler, Haskell Robert “Cool Papa”; San Francisco; Scott, E. C.; Sista Monica; Talbot, Johnny; Taylor, Johnny Lamar “Little”; Thomas, Elmer Lee; Thomas, Lafayette Jerl “Thing”; Trilon; Valentine, Cal; Waters, Mississippi Johnny; Willis, Robert Lee “Chick”; Wilson, Jimmy**

ODEN, “ST. LOUIS” JIMMY

b. James Burke Oden, 26 June 1903; Nashville, TN
d. 30 December 1977; Chicago, IL

James Burke Oden, better known as St. Louis Jimmy, was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1903 and was orphaned at an early age. He left home for St. Louis around 1917 and taught himself piano in the mid-1920s. He worked with Big Joe Williams and Roosevelt Sykes, singing at house parties, local bars, and clubs until 1933, when trouble with the authorities occasioned a move to Chicago. From 1932 he was a regular visitor to the recording studios and was the composer of many blues standards including “Going Down Slow,” “Sitting Down Thinking Blues,” and “Soon Forgotten.” His easy, half-sung, half-spoken delivery and original lyrics made him a popular recording artist for many years.

Although a capable pianist in the St. Louis tradition, on most of his recordings he was accompanied by Sykes, with whom he also toured widely, and later by Sunnyland Slim. While in Chicago he recorded for Decca, Bluebird, Victor, Black & White, Columbia, Bullet, Miracle, Aristocrat, JOB (of which he was a cofounder), Mercury, Apollo, Savoy, Herald, Opera, Parrot, Bluesville, and Delmark. He also cut a few tracks for the Bullet and Duke labels. In the forties he co-owned a blues club in Indianapolis together with Memphis Minnie and worked as manager for the Eddie Boyd Band in the fifties. A serious car accident in 1957 curtailed his musical career, although he continued as a songwriter until his death in 1977. From the late 1950s he roomed in Muddy Waters’s house and was closely associated with the modern Chicago blues sound. He died in 1977.

BOB HALL

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

ODETTA

b. Odetta Felious Gordon, 31 December 1930; Birmingham, AL

Odetta received classical vocal training and sang in the 1947 Broadway production of *Finian's Rainbow* before deciding on a career in folk music. Her blues singing was initially in the Bessie Smith tradition, but it evolved as her guitar skills and folk music repertoire broadened. Odetta recorded folk music and blues for the Tradition and Riverside labels in the 1950s, recording such standards as "House of the Rising Sun," and "Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor." By 1960 she moved to the Vanguard label where she enjoyed critical and commercial success, especially with her live albums taped at New York Town Hall and Carnegie Hall. She remains today a powerful performer of traditional African American music.

ROBERT SORICELLI

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**ODOM, ANDREW "BIG VOICE"
"LITTLE B. B."**

b. 15 December 1936; Denham Springs, LA
d. 23 December 1991; Chicago, IL

Vocalist from southern Louisiana, well versed in the soul and Chicago blues sounds. His voice has often been compared favorably to that of Bobby "Blue" Bland and/or B. B. King; some felt his voice was even more powerful. Out of admiration for B. B. King, Odom took the nickname "B. B." Others called him "B. B. Junior" or "Little B. B." Later on, he acquired the nicknames "Big Voice" or simply "Voice."

As a boy and young man, Odom sang in his small Louisiana church. In the mid-1950s, he moved near

St. Louis, where he worked with a number of blues performers, including Albert King. Here, using the name Little Aaron, Odom cut a single for the Marlo label. In 1960, he moved to Chicago and sang with Earl Hooker's band until Hooker's passing ten years later. Odom often performed with Buddy Guy and Magic Slim, and sang on a number of recording sessions with Jimmy Dawkins and others. He recorded several of his own albums, including *Farther on the Road* for the BluesWay label in 1969 and *Goin' to California* with the Gold Tops in 1976 for the Flying Fish label, but not released until 1992. Like a number of other blues musicians, he often felt pulled to stop performing in clubs and go sing for the church, though he never did give up singing the blues.

GREG JOHNSON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Singing; Soul

OFFITT, LILLIAN

b. 4 November 1938; Nashville, TN

Singer in blues shouting style. Birth year also given as 1933. The success of her first Excello single, "Miss You So" (1957), was successful enough for her to begin a full-time career. In 1958 she was featured singer with Earl Hooker in Chicago and recorded for the Chief label through 1961. Activity since 1974 unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

OH PRETTY WOMAN (CAN'T MAKE YOU LOVE ME)

"Oh Pretty Woman (Can't Make You Love Me)" was composed by A. C. Williams, and it was recorded by Albert King for Stax on August 3, 1966, appearing on the Stax single 197 (backed with "Funk-Shun" recorded the same day), and on the Stax/Atlantic LP 8213 *Born Under a Bad Sign*. The song is a sixteen-measure blues, really an (8 + 8) measure verse-and-refrain blues. The eight-measure verse is split into two four-measure verses, each of which is further split into two more two-measure rhyming pairs ("sun"—"none," "bone"—"alone" as heard in the first chorus). The eight-measure refrain lyrics stay constant to the title words "pretty woman" and "can't make you love me." An odd, perhaps coincident trait are two similarities to the lyrics of Son House's "My Black Mama" parts one and two (1930), which had been reissued in 1962 on the Origin Jazz Library LP *Really the Country Blues*. The opening chorus words "oh," "sun," "and powder," and "help [her] none" may also be heard in part one, chorus four, of the House recording in the corresponding points in lyric chorus, the refrain lyric "what's the matter with you" and "what I do" may be heard in part one, chorus one, of the House performance. Furthermore, King sings the song in the same axe-fall phrasing, that is, with the same eighth-rest delay as House sings in 1930.

King's guitar solo is in twelve measures, based in the key of G with its upper solo pitches hovering over D above high C. A broad antecedent to this solo may be heard in King's 1962 recording "I Get Evil" (released on Bobbin 135), in turn a treatment of Tampa Red's "Don't You Lie to Me" for Victor Bluebird in 1940. King's 1962 solo occurs in the opening chorus, while the band is playing a rhumba beat pattern. The 1966 version of "Oh Pretty Woman" would be copied note-for-note by Eric Clapton on Cream's song "Strange Brew," which appeared on the 1967 LP *Disraeli Gears* (Atco SC 33-232) and which was played on mainstream radio beginning that year.

EDWARD KOMARA

OJL (ORIGIN JAZZ LIBRARY)

Bill Givens and Pete Whelan founded this premier reissue label in 1960 as a repository for classic blues sessions from the 1920s and 1930s. The company's releases initially focused on Delta and other prewar styles. Their first title spotlighted Charlie Patton, while others later featured included Henry Thomas, Lonnie Johnson, and Crying Sam Collins. Eventually, there were several various artists' anthologies, plus other lines delving into piano blues and even traditional

jazz. Origin Jazz Library established meticulous standards that were subsequently duplicated by other companies in terms of quality sound reproduction and extensive, exhaustive liner notes about previously overlooked and/or obscure performers and musicians. After Whelan's departure in 1966, the company began cutting back on titles. Givens died in 1999, but the company continued thanks to the efforts of radio broadcaster and author Cary Ginell and engineer/remastering guru Michael Kieffer. An ongoing series devoted to legendary jazz trumpeter Bix Biederbecke issued its fourth volume in 2003.

RON WYNN

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OKEH

Record label started in September 1918 by the General Phonograph Corporation, directed by Otto Heinemann, an affiliate of Carl Lindstrom's German company Odeon. In February 1920, Perry Bradford persuaded Okeh A&R man Fred Hagar to record Mamie Smith, launching the first blues boom and ensuring Okeh's initial lead in the field. In summer 1921 the 8000 Race series was established, though it was called the Colored Catalog until 1923. Daisy Martin and Gertrude Saunders were among the earliest blues artists featured. Mamie Smith herself remained in the general series. With A&R in New York supervised by Clarence Williams, in Chicago by Richard M. Jones, and on some trips to St. Louis by Lonnie Johnson, it became one of the most significant catalogs of African American music, ending at 8966 in 1934, the longest surviving Race series.

Okeh's blues stars included "Texas" Alexander, Butterbeans & Susie, Bo Carter, Lonnie Johnson, Sara Martin, Sippie Wallace, and the Mississippi Sheiks. Okeh also made the first recordings of Lucille Bogan (1923) and Roosevelt Sykes (1929) and the final sessions by the Memphis Jug Band (1934). Other important Okeh artists included Esther Bigeou, Chippie Hill, Hattie McDaniel, and Sylvester Weaver. Regular southern field trips were made from 1923 to 1931. The haul in Atlanta included extra-contractual recordings by Blind Lemon Jefferson in 1927 and Blind Willie McTell in 1931.

These activities were little affected by a takeover by Columbia in 1926 because Heinemann continued to run the reorganized Okeh Phonograph Corporation

as an independent subsidiary. Only in 1929–1931 did OKeh and Columbia run joint field trips. In August 1934 control passed to ARC-BRC, which dropped the OKeh name at the end of the year. After CBS took over in 1938, it was revived, continuing ARC-BRC's Vocalion numerical series as an outlet for blues artists including Big Bill (Broonzy), Champion Jack Dupree, Blind Boy Fuller, Bill Gaither, Merline Johnson (the Yas Yas Girl), Brownie McGhee, and Memphis Minnie. Better-selling earlier items from the Vocalion catalog were repressed with OKeh labels. The label was discontinued in 1942.

After 1949, the label was revived as CBS's rhythm and blues label and enjoyed some success under the A&R direction of Danny Kessler (from 1951). The most prominent featured artists were Larry Darnell, Big Maybelle, Chuck Willis, and "Jumpin" Joe Williams. Screamin' Jay Hawkins was on OKeh in 1956–1957. More recently the name has occasionally been used by CBS's successors for reissues of earlier material.

HOWARD RYE

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OLD SWING-MASTER/MASTER

Chicago post-World War II blues label. The label was opened in early 1949 by Egmont Sonderling (1906–1997), who owned a pressing plant and a recording studio. Serving as frontman and A&R chief was Chicago deejay Al Benson (1908–1978), whose broadcast handle gave the label its name. Benson did no new productions for Old Swing-Master, whose modus operandi was to issue masters obtained from other independents. Most of its releases were acquired from small Chicago operations such as Planet (Snooky & Moody, Man Young) and Marvel (Floyd Jones), or extinct operations such as Sunbeam (Little Miss

Cornshucks), Rhumboogie (T-Bone Walker), and Vitacoustic (Kitty Stevenson, Howard McGhee). Under a truncated Master name, the label released Miracle sides by Memphis Slim and Sonny Thompson. When Sonderling moved into radio in 1950, he closed his label.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

OLD TOWN

New York City label owned by Hy Weiss from 1953 to 1966. Many releases were by vocal groups, but important blues artists were Arthur Prysock, Bob Gaddy, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, and Riff Ruffin. Subsidiaries included Barry, Munich, Paradise, Rome, Whiz, and Weiss.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "Old Town Album Discography." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/oldtown.html> (accessed December 19, 2004).

OLDIE BLUES

Dutch record label started in 1974 by Martin van Olderen and issued through Munich Records of Bennekom, later Utrecht. Mainly a reissue label, emphasizing pianists, but OL2804 by Big Joe Williams included unique material and a book on the artist. Trading continued until ill health forced the label's closure in 2000.

HOWARD RYE

OLIVER, PAUL

b. 25 May 1927; Nottingham, England

Paul Hereford Oliver is widely regarded as the foremost scholar of the blues, the author of numerous essential works that helped establish the current interpretive framework for the music.

Born on May 25, 1927, in Nottingham, England, Oliver first heard blues in 1942 at a U.S. airbase site in Suffolk, and became a devoted fan, collector, and researcher. Oliver's first article on black music was published in 1952, and he soon became a prolific author, over the next decades writing for publications including *Blues Unlimited*, *Blues & Rhythm*, *Music Mirror*, *Jazz Monthly*, *Melody Maker*, and *The Jazz Review*, and contributing liner notes for labels including Arhoolie, CBS, Decca, Document, Fontana, Heritage, Magpie, Matchbox, Phillips, Polydor, Riverside, Seventy-Seven, and Storyville. Many of these writings are reprinted in the book *Blues Off the Record: Thirty Years of Blues Commentary* (Tunbridge Wells: Baton, 1984).

As a graphic artist, Oliver contributed artwork to many jazz and blues issues as well as the line drawings to Big Bill Broonzy's autobiography *Big Bill's Blues* (London: Cassell, 1955).

Oliver's first book was the monograph *Bessie Smith* (London: Cassell, 1959), followed by *Blues Fell This Morning: Meaning in the Blues* (London: Cassell, 1960), a thorough analysis of the relation of blues lyrics to African American culture. Oliver's 1960 trip through the southern United States together with his wife and collaborator Valerie and Arhoolie Records' Chris Strachwitz yielded many recordings and interviews, many of which were broadcast in a BBC series and appeared in *Conversation with the Blues* (London: Cassell, 1965).

The topically oriented *Screening the Blues: Aspects of the Blues Tradition* (London: Cassell, 1968) can be seen as complementing *Blues Fell This Morning*. Notably, the loosening of censorship laws in the interim allowed a more candid analysis of sexual issues. The sweeping and unparalleled *Story of the Blues* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, The Cresset Press, 1969) was the first major history of the genre, and grew out of an exhibition Oliver created for the American Embassy in London.

Savannah Syncopators (1970) assesses the roots of the blues in Africa, and was one of eleven blues monographs Oliver edited for Studio Vista (United Kingdom). The book, together with two others in the series, was reprinted in *Yonder Come the Blues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

During the 1970s Oliver dedicated more of his time to his professional career as a professor of vernacular architecture, another field in which he is a leading expert. *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) examines religious and secular music parallels to blues, including the repertoires of "songsters," blackface minstrel routines, and sermons. Oliver coauthored the reference works *The*

Blackwell Guide to Recorded Blues (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989; a "new" version with John Cowley in 1996) and *The New Grove Gospel, Blues and Jazz: With Spirituals and Ragtime* (London: Macmillan, 1986, 1997), and compiled *The Early Blues Songbook* (London, New York: Wise Publications, 1982).

At the time of writing, Oliver is working on a book tentatively titled *Blues the World Forgot*, which addresses neglected aspects of blues and related traditions. His collection, currently housed at Exeter University, will occupy its own building in central Gloucester as The Archive of African American Music (<http://www.euroblues.org>). The site also contains an essay by Oliver on his career and collection (<http://www.euroblues.org/poaindex.htm>).

SCOTT BARRETTA

OMAR AND THE HOWLERS

Formed 1970

Kent Dykes was born on January 24, 1950, and raised in McComb, Mississippi. He picked up the guitar at an early age, and by his early teens was a fixture in local blues clubs. After adopting the stage name Omar, Dykes formed the Howlers with bassist Bruce Jones and drummer Gene Brandon in 1970 and moved the band to Austin in 1976; there the group honed its blues-rock fusion sound and released its first album, *Big Leg Beat*, in 1980. Although they spent a brief period on a major American label, Omar and the Howlers have had significantly more commercial success in Europe.

RICK ANDERSON

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Discography: AMG

ONE TIME BLUES/KOKOMO BLUES (SWEET HOME CHICAGO)

"One Time Blues" was recorded in March 1927 by Blind Blake for Paramount Records (Paramount 12479). A twelve-measure blues with an AAB lyric scheme, its melody has unknown, perhaps folk, antecedents; Freddie Spruell had sung it as an alternate

theme to end his record "Milk Cow Blues" on June 25, 1926 (OKeh 8422). A direct reworking of Blake's record was "Two Time Blues" by Arthur Petties of Mississippi, later of Chicago, in February 1928 for Victor (Victor 21282).

Several groups of blues were to use this melody. The most prominent was "Kokomo Blues," first recorded by Madlyn Davis in November 1927 (mistitled "Kokola Blues," Paramount 12615), with a second treatment by guitarist Scrapper Blackwell in June 1928 (Vocalion 1192). "Ko Ko Mo Blues" (sic) parts 1 and 2 by Jabo Williams for Paramount (released on issue number 13127) in 1932 features outstanding piano boogie playing, a 4 + 8 verse-and-refrain lyric scheme, and the introduction of the numerical lyrics "one and one is two ..." to the melody. Other "Kokomo" treatments may be found on blues recorded through 1935, by Lucille Bogan (1933, ARC labels, unissued), Charlie McCoy (as "Baltimore Blues," 1934, Decca 7009), Kokomo Arnold (1934, Decca 7026), who retains the "one and one is two" game lyrics from the Williams version, Freddie Spruell (1935, Bluebird 5995), and Big Boy Knox (as "Eleven Light City," 1937, Bluebird).

Meanwhile, a separate lyric concept about "The Honey Dripper" was being applied to the same melody. Edith North Johnson sang two renditions for Paramount in September and October 1929. Her piano accompanist on the first recording, Roosevelt Sykes, later used the melody to new lyrics, "In Here with Your Heavy Stuff" (sung by his wife Isabel Sykes, 1933, Bluebird 5170), and "Big Legs Ida Blues" (1933, Bluebird 5323), then sang his own version of the "Honey Dripper" in 1936 on Decca release numbered 7164. Additional recordings of the Honey Dripper concept were made by Georgia White (1935) and Son Montgomery (1936, unreleased).

A third lyric inspiration for the melody was the Red Cross stores that dispensed surplus food during the Great Depression. Five such "Red Cross" blues to the "One Time/Kokomo/Honey Dripper" tune were recorded by Lucille Bogan, pianist Walter Roland, and guitarist Sonny Scott for the ARC label in July 1933. It should be noted that lyrics about the Red Cross were sung to other melodies on records, such as Walter Davis's "Red Cross Blues" for Bluebird in 1933.

Other records using this melody include Sleepy John Estes's "Lost John" (1930), Willie McTell's "Savannah Mama" (1934), and Blind Boy Fuller's "Painful Hearted Man" and "Meat Shakin' Woman" (both 1938).

The set of lyrics with which the tune has long flourished is "Sweet Home Chicago," first recorded by Robert Johnson in November 1936. The lyrics are

from the "Kokomo" group of antecedents, including the opening

Baby don't you want to go?

AAB lyric chorus, and the subsequent 4+8 measure verse and refrain choruses of the numerical game from the Williams and Arnold records. Johnson's guitar-played boogie bass has since been taken up by later guitarists, blues groups, and rock bands. In 1976, Bob Groom listed twenty-four versions of "Sweet Home Chicago" from 1939 through 1976. Among them were two versions of "Sweet Home Chicago" by Roosevelt Sykes (1954, Imperial 5347; 1961, Folkways FS-3827). Among the younger West Side Chicago electric guitarists who took up the song was "Magic" Sam Maghett, who included it on his 1967 *West Side Soul* LP for Delmark. Also, at the 1969 Ann Arbor Blues Festival, Maghett acknowledged during his stage performance that he learned the song from Sykes (as may be heard on *Magic Sam Live*, Delmark DE-645). "Sweet Home Chicago" has remained a blues repertoire staple, as may be heard on the extended twenty-minute performance by Alligator label musicians to close the label's 20th anniversary concert in 1992.

EDWARD KOMARA

O'NEAL, WINSTON JAMES "JIM"

b. 25 November 1948; Fort Wayne, IN

M.S. in Journalism, Northwestern University, 1974. Editor, writer, publisher, record producer, and one of the United States' most active and knowledgeable blues authorities. With his wife Amy van Singel, he was a founding editor of *Living Blues* in 1970 and coauthor of *Voice of the Blues* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

O'Neal and van Singel published *Living Blues* from 1970 until 1983 when it was acquired by the University of Mississippi. O'Neal moved to Oxford to assist in 1986, and relocated to Clarksdale in 1988, where he could locate and interview blues performers. He continued to write many liner notes and articles for magazines as diverse as *Rolling Stone*, *Down Beat*, and the *Chicago Tribune*, but he now devotes more time to recording for his Rooster Blues label many of the blues artists who lived throughout Mississippi.

O'Neal has been very active as a lecturer, consultant, and freelance producer. He was a key participant in the Liege, Belgium, conference on Charley Patton in 1984, a speaker at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1998, and has appeared on television throughout the United States and in Japan. All of the major TV networks, as well as

the BBC, have used O'Neal as a consultant, as have stations in Holland and France. He has also been active as a consultant for film production and blues festivals throughout the world.

The Blues Foundation honored O'Neal with W. C. Handy Awards for publishing *Living Blues* and for producing four award-winning albums.

PAUL GARON

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ONE-DERFUL/M-PAC/MAR-V-LUS/ TODDLIN' TOWN

Chicago soul and blues label of the 1960s. The company was founded by George Leaner (1917–1983) in 1962 specifically to record the hard soul sounds of the city. With his brother Ernie Leaner (1921–1990), he had been operating a distribution firm, United Distributors, since 1950. Leaner recorded his acts in One-derful's house studio at 1825 South Michigan, using such producer talents as Monk Higgins (Milton Bland) and Andre Williams, and such songwriting talent as Otis Hayes, Eddie Silvers, and Larry Nestor. The One-derful label, and its associated M-Pac, Mar-V-Lus, and Midas imprints, achieved notable national hits with McKinley Mitchell's "The Town I Live In" (1962), the Five Dutones' "Shake a Tail Feather" (1963), Harold Burrage's "Got to Find a Way" (1965), and Otis Clay's "That's How It Is" (1967). The company's most successful artist, however, was a dance act that could not sing, Alvin Cash and the Crawlers, which hit with "Twine Time" (1965) and "The Barracuda" (1965). Blues acts recorded by the company included Lonnie Brooks, Big Daddy Rogers, and Andrew Tibbs. Gospel acts were recorded on the Halo subsidiary. The One-derful complex folded in 1968, but brother Ernie Leaner and nephew Tony Leaner continued the family's involvement in the record business by founding the Toddlin' Town label, signing some of the artists who had previously been on One-derful. It lasted until 1971.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

OPERA

Chicago boutique blues and jazz label of the late 1940s. The label was opened in the fall of 1947 by entrepreneur Joe Brown (1897–1976) and blues pianist and singer James Oden (aka St. Louis Jimmy, 1903–1977). Just five releases are known on Opera—by nightclub pianist and singer Byllye Williams, jazz and blues trumpeter King Kolax, and blues artists St. Louis Jimmy and Sunnyland Slim (the latter appearing under the pseudonym Delta Joe). Joe Brown rather quickly shut down the Opera label, unloading six Byllye Williams masters to Savoy before closing down the operation in October 1948. In August 1949 he and Oden were back in the business with JOB, which was most active in the early 1950s, but continued to function until 1974. In 1952, Brown sold the "Delta Joe" sides to Chance, which reissued them.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Pruter, Robert, Robert L. Campbell, and Tom Kelly. "The Opera Label." *Blues & Rhythm: The Gospel Truth* no. 169 (May 2002): 16–17.

Discography: McGrath

ORA NELLE

Label founded in 1947 by Bernard Abrams (1919–1997), operated out of Maxwell Radio shop on West Maxwell Street in Chicago. Two 78-rpm records were released, including Little Walter Jacobs's debut recording, "I Just Keep Lovin' Her" (Ora Nelle 711); the label name supposedly came from Jacobs's girlfriend. Additional recordings of Jimmy Rogers, Johnny Temple, and John Estes were made but not released during the label's brief lifetime.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

"Other Deaths" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 139 (May/June 1998): 54.

Discography: McGrath

ORIOLE

The record label of McCrory's stores introduced in the early 1920s and drawing its repertoire mainly from the Plaza group. There were few blues releases in the

1920s, but after Plaza's labels were merged into the new American Record Corporation (ARC) in August 1929, it became one of the five "dime-store" labels that shared an important Race catalog, including Lucille Bogan and Walter Roland, Big Bill (Broonzy), Sam Collins, Georgia Tom (Dorsey), Blind Boy Fuller, and Pinewood Tom (Josh White). A common catalog series was used after September 1935. All of the "dime-store" labels were withdrawn in April 1938.

HOWARD RYE

Discography: DGR; Sutton

Dixon, Robert M. W., and John Godrich. *Recording the Blues*. London: Studio Vista, 1970; reprinted in Paul Oliver et al., *Yonder Come the Blues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

ORIOLES

One of the pioneers of rhythm and blues vocal harmony, establishing themselves as one of the original "bird" groups along with the Ravens. The original group consisted of lead Sonny Til (Earlington Carl Tilghman), tenor Alexander Sharp, baritone George Nelson, bass Johnny Reed, and guitarist Tommy Gaither. Formed in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1947, the group launched its career with the quiet ballad, "It's Too Soon to Know" (1948). The formula of Til's impassioned tenor lead with sleepy vocal support and almost invisible instrumental accompaniment was followed on subsequent hits, notably "Tell Me So" (1949), "Forgive and Forget" (1949), "Crying in the Chapel" (1953), and their last chart record, "In the Mission of St. Augustine" (1953). In 1955 the Orioles broke up. Til formed a new Orioles group from members of another group, the Regals, but could not revive the fortunes of the Orioles.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Goldberg, Marv. "Odds and Ends on the Orioles." *Discographies* no. 84 (May 1995): 44-47.

ORLEANS

Early 1980s 45-rpm single label known for Mighty Sam McClain ("Pray"/"Dancin' to the Music of Love," Orleans 4278).

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

OSCHER, PAUL

b. 5 April 1950; Brooklyn, NY

Paul Oscher was a teenager with a full tone on the harp when he became the first white member of Muddy Waters's band in 1968. He toured and recorded with Waters for three years, returning occasionally thereafter. He began releasing solo albums in the 1990s, proving himself a songwriter of note, and as accomplished and passionate on guitar as harp.

ROBERT GORDON

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG

As Leader

The Deep Blues of Paul Oscher (1996, Blues Planet 1427).

OTIS, JOHNNY

b. John Alexander Veliotis, 28 December 1921; Vallejo, CA

Vocalist, drummer, vibraphonist, pianist, bandleader. The son of Alexander Veliotis, a grocer in an African American district of Berkeley, California. Otis, of Greek heritage, adopted an African American identity as a teenager. He married Phyllis Walker in 1941.

Otis began his career as a drummer in 1940 with Count Otis Matthews and his West Oakland House Rockers. He worked in the territory jazz bands of George Morrison (1941), then Lloyd Hunter (1942). He began a lifelong association with Preston Love at the Barrel House in Omaha, Nebraska (late 1943), and then joined Harlan Leonard at Club Alabam, Los Angeles, where he led his own big band in 1945. Their first recording session included "Harlem Nocturne," backed with "Jimmy's Round-the-Clock Blues," on which Jimmy Rushing sang (1945, Excelsior 142). This achieved some commercial success, leading to touring.

In 1947 Otis reduced his band to a small jump/R&B group. In 1948, he opened the Barrel House Club, and in 1949 discovered "Little Esther" Phillips, who became the star singer of what became the Johnny Otis Rhythm and Blues Caravan, backed by recordings on Savoy (1949-1951) including "Double Crossing Blues" (1949, Savoy 731). An accident to his hand in 1949 led him to concentrate on piano and

vibes. Otis recorded for Mercury (1951–1952), then Peacock (1953–1955), before starting his own label, first named Ultra, later Dig (1956–1957). Records for Capitol (1957–1959) were aimed at the new rock 'n' roll market. "Willie and the Hand-Jive" (1958, Capitol 3966) had some success and provided a continuing crowd-pleaser for live shows.

After records for King (1961–1962), his career wound down until in 1968 he recorded an acclaimed blues album, *Cold Shot* (Kent 534), featuring his son Shuggie Otis. Thereafter, he formed a new band aimed in part at preserving the sound of 1940s jump/R&B. An appearance at the 1970 Monterey Jazz Festival can be seen in the film *Play Misty for Me* (1971) and worldwide touring followed. This career pattern has continued into the twenty-first century. His Blues Spectrum label (1974–1977) gave renewed recording opportunities to Louis Jordan, Joe Turner, and Jimmy Liggins among others. His J & T record label (from 1996) has featured a mix of R&B stars, including Barbara Morrison, with jump instrumentalists and performers from the "retro-swing" movement. His commitment to a blues-based African American sound has never wavered. In the 1970s and 1980s he was pastor of his own Landmark Community Church. He has also been active as a painter and sculptor and has taught courses on black music.

HOWARD RYE

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 Stolder, Steve. "Nobody Said I Was a White Man—I Was Just There." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 101 (August 1995): 4.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

- "New Orleans Shuffle"/"Blues Nocturne" (1949, Savoy 743).
 "Dreamin' Blues" (1950, Savoy 748).
Snatch & The Poontangs (1968, Kent KST557X).
Cuttin' Up (1969, Epic BN26524).
The Johnny Otis Show Live at Monterey! (1969, Epic 30473).
Great Rhythm and Blues (1974, Blues Spectrum BS103).

OTIS, SHUGGIE

b. John Alexander Veliotis, Jr., 30 November 1953; Los Angeles, CA

Guitarist and son of Johnny Otis who appeared on his father's album *Cold Shot* at age fifteen. His performance led to his debut album and recordings with Al Kooper and Frank Zappa. Brother Johnson's cover of Otis's "Strawberry Letter 23" reached the top of the R&B *Billboard* chart in 1997.

STEPHANIE POXON

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Discography

- Here Comes Shuggie Otis* (1970, Epic BN 26511).
The New Johnny Otis Show with Shuggie Otis (1981, Alligator 4762).

See also **Otis, Johnny**

OVERBEA, DANNY

b. 3 January 1926; Philadelphia, PA
 d. 11 May 1994; Chicago, IL

Chicago rhythm and blues guitarist and singer influential in the rise of rock 'n' roll. After first recording in 1950 as a vocalist on an Eddie Chamblee side, Overbea first recorded under his own name for deejay Al Benson in 1953. The session produced his two best known songs, the blues hit "Train Train Train" and the jump "40 Cups of Coffee," both of which were released on Chess Records' Checker subsidiary. "Train Train Train" was covered by Buddy Morrow, and "40 Cups of Coffee" was covered by Ella Mae Morse and Bill Haley and His Comets. Rock 'n' roll deejay Alan Freed featured Overbea many times in his early rock 'n' roll revues in Cleveland and in Brooklyn; his acrobatic back bend to the floor while playing the guitar behind his head was always a highlight of the shows. Overbea was also a talented ballad singer (in the mode of Billy Eckstine), having the most success with "You're Mine" (also recorded by the Flamingos). Overbea made his last records in 1959 and retired from the music business in 1976.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

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Discography: **LSFP**

OVERSTREET, NATHANIEL “POPS”

b. 27 July 1928; DeKalb, MS

Singer and acoustic guitarist active in Houston, Texas, since 1963. Began playing guitar while living in Michigan in the 1950s. In the mid-1960s in Houston he received some informal tips from Lightnin’ Hopkins on how to play a few Hopkins songs.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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OWENS, CALVIN

b. 23 April 1929; Houston, TX

Trumpeter, bandleader, composer, and record producer—best known for his earlier association with guitarist B. B. King and for his more recent work directing the Calvin Owens Blues Orchestra.

As a teenaged trumpeter Owens first traveled professionally with the minstrel show called Leonard Duncan and His Harlem Revue, followed later by a tour with the Brown Skin Models. During this era, he also performed in several prominent Houston bands, including those led by Ed Golden and Amos Milburn. Following a three-year stint (1950–1953) in the house band of the Eldorado Ballroom, Owens affiliated with Bill Harvey, who was then forming the first major touring ensemble backing guitarist and singer B. B. King.

From 1953 through 1957, Owens played trumpet on tour with King. Twenty-one years later Owens returned to King to perform not only as lead trumpeter but also as bandleader and music director, a position he maintained from 1978 through 1984.

Between those two terms of high-profile employment with King, Owens worked back in Houston as a session musician and producer for Duke and Peacock Records and other labels. He also recorded for Memphis-based Klondike Records.

Following his 1984 retirement from employment with King, Owens settled in Belgium. There he founded Sawdust Alley Records and produced the first two albums featuring his own big band with various guest artists. In 1996 Owens moved back to Houston, where he has subsequently produced numerous additional Sawdust Alley CDs highlighting his trumpet playing, arranging, songwriting, and collaborations with other featured performers.

ROGER WOOD

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Wood, Roger. *Down in Houston: Bayou City Blues*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

OWENS, JACK

b. L. F. Nelson, 17 November 1904; Bentonina, MS
d. 9 February 1997; Yazoo City, MS

Guitarist Jack Owens (his mother’s family name) was one of the last original performers of the style of Mississippi blues known as Bentonina Blues. Unlike “Skip” James from the same town, Owens did not record in the prewar period, thus remaining unknown to the public outside his area. In the 1940s Owens played with Elmore James and Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II,” but made ends meet working as a farmer, running a juke joint, and making corn whiskey.

Owens was traced by scholar David Evans, who recorded him in 1966 and 1970–1971. A portion of the latter session, with the accompaniment of harmonica player Benjamin “Bud” Spires, was originally released on Testament. Italian researcher Gianni Marcucci’s 1978 field recordings of Owens were released on Albatros. The following year Alan Lomax featured him in the documentary film *The Land Where the Blues Began*. Further 1980s cuts appeared on Wolf. It was not until 1988, however, that Owens toured the United States thanks to blues writer and promoter Jim O’Neal.

In 1993 the Mississippi musician received the National Heritage Award from President Bill Clinton. Well into his nineties, Owens made his first trips to Europe accompanied by his discoverer Evans. Compared to James’s, Owens’s approach to blues presents typical features such as falsetto and “high melismatic singing ..., minor-keyed, intricately picked guitar parts, and haunting, brooding lyrics dealing with such themes as loneliness, death and the supernatural” (Evans, 1971), but is also more musically than lyrically oriented and contains seemingly unrelated repeated stanzas as in “It Must Have Been the Devil.”

LUIGI MONGE

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O’Neal, Jim. “Jack Owens: A Remembrance.” *Living Blues* no. 137 (January/February 1998): 30–37.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

OWENS, JAY

OWENS, JAY

b. Isaac Jerome Owens, 6 September 1947; Lake City, FL

Began singing in church where his mother was minister, and began playing guitar in high school. During the 1970s and 1980s he played in many Tampa Bay and St. Petersburg area bands of blues and soul. In 1975–1976 he was lead guitarist for singer Zemula on two RCA Victor LPs. On his solo CDs, he performs a large number of his own compositions.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Lazar, Helen Doob. “Jerome ‘Jay’ Owens.” *Living Blues* no. 82 (September/October 1988): 64.

Discography: AMG

OWENS, MARSHALL

b. 2 December 1890; Talbotton, GA

d. 1 May 1974; Bessemer, GA

Singer and guitarist. Birth date from Social Security Death Index; birth years cited elsewhere include 1880, 1892, and 1895. Learned guitar during World War I, and at the same time moved to the Birmingham, Alabama, area. He recorded for Paramount in 1931, showing influences of recordings by Charley Patton, William Harris, and Clifford Gibson. In the early 1930s he developed a blues on Red Cross stores, which may or may not be the same as the “Red Cross Man” tune within the “One Time Blues” song group. He continued performing until illness overtook him in the late 1950s.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

P

PAGE, ORAN THADDEUS “HOT LIPS”

b. 27 January 1908; Dallas, TX
d. 5 November 1954; New York, NY

Trumpeter, singer. Billed as the “Trumpet King of the West,” Page backed vocalists Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey; played on “Baby, It’s Cold Outside,” the breakout hit for a young Pearl Bailey; and was a key component of several seminal blues-based big bands, including those of Bennie Moten, Walter Page, and Count Basie. Page formed his own orchestra in New York City in 1937, but was only able to keep the band going for a couple of years. He moved on to a series of showcase roles in other bands, including that of a featured sideman with Artie Shaw’s Orchestra in 1941–1942.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; New Grove Jazz; Santelli; Southern Chilton, John. *Who’s Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*. 4th ed. London: Macmillan; New York: Da Capo, 1985.

Discography: Lord; LSFP

PALM, HORACE M.

Vocalist and pianist active in Chicago in the 1940s and 1950s. Participated in Aristocrat and Vee-Jay

sessions as piano sideman, as well as those for small independent labels led by Al Smith. Recorded examples of Palm’s singing are comparatively rare, but include Duke Groner’s “Dragging My Heart Around” (released 1948, Aristocrat 1801) and a 1959 single under his own name for the Apex label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

Discography: LSFP

PALMER, EARL

b. 25 October 1924; New Orleans, LA

Earl Palmer’s ambiguous relationship with the blues can be summed up by an anecdote told in the biography *Backbeat*. Part of Guitar Slim’s act involved running a long cord out to the sidewalk and entertaining passers-by while the band kept playing back inside the club. Palmer told his biographer Tony Sherman that once Slim went outside the band would unplug him and start playing bebop. Regardless of his personal taste in music, it is Palmer’s inspirational drumming that drives almost every important R&B and rock ‘n’ roll record made in New Orleans in the 1950s. Assessing Palmer’s effect on the

PALMER, EARL

blues comes from his ubiquitous presence on some of the most influential and popular records of the 1950s and not from direct participation on blues recordings.

Born into a vaudeville family, Palmer performed as a tap dancer as a child. His career as a drummer began in 1947 with his association with musician/producer Dave Bartholomew. Palmer appeared on the early hits for Smiley Lewis, Fats Domino, and Lloyd Price produced by Bartholomew. The success of these records guaranteed Palmer's role on everything Bartholomew produced, including the hits of Little Richard. By the late 1950s Palmer's drumming began appearing on R&B hits not associated with New Orleans like Johnny Otis's "Willie and the Hand Jive" and Percy Mayfield's "Please Believe Me." His fame brought him to Los Angeles for sessions like "Come On, Let's Go" and "Donna" by Ritchie Valens. In Los Angeles, Palmer became a very successful session drummer and also headed the musicians union.

JARED SNYDER

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Sherman, Tony. *Backbeat: Earl Palmer's Story*. New York: Da Capo, 2000.

Discography: AMG; Lord

See also Allen, Lee; Bartholomew, Dave; Little Richard

PALMER, ROBERT

b. 19 June 1945; Little Rock, AR

d. 20 November 1997; Valhalla, NY

Writer, record producer, musician. As early as age fourteen, he played clarinet in southern roadhouses. In the late 1960s he was a member of the Memphis band Insect Trust. He assisted in the founding of the 1969-1970 Memphis Country Blues Festivals, and in Rolling Stones' Brian Jones's trip to Tangier to record the master musicians of Jajouka. Since the early 1970s he was a contributing editor for *Rolling Stone* magazine, and from 1976 he wrote on popular music for the *New York Times*, serving as chief popular music critic from 1981 to 1988. His chief contribution to blues literature was *Deep Blues* (New York: Viking, 1981), an influential if somewhat romanticized narrative of Mississippi and Chicago blues history.

His other books covered Memphis and New Orleans, Jerry Lee Lewis, Leiber and Stoller, and the Rolling Stones. From 1991 through 1995 he produced several highly regarded CDs for Fat Possum Records, including Jr. Kimbrough's *All Night Long* (1992), R. L. Burnside's *Too Bad Jim* (1993), and Dave Thompson's *Little Dave and Big Love* (1995). He consulted and narrated the documentary film *Deep Blues* (directed by Robert Mugge, 1992), and oversaw the book and PBS series *Rock and Roll: An Unruly History* (1995).

EDWARD KOMARA

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Gordon, Robert, et al., "Robert Palmer" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 138 (March/April 1998): 77-78.

PALMER, SYLVESTER

b. Unknown

d. Unknown

Sylvester Palmer, from St. Louis, made four sides for Columbia in 1929. According to Henry Townsend, who was at the session, Palmer accompanied himself on piano. The sprightly, barrelhouse *Do It Sloppy* is probably Palmer, but aurally, the moody, idiosyncratic boogie piano accompaniment on *Mean Blues* and *Broke Man Blues* resembles Wesley Wallace. It is believed Palmer died shortly after making these recordings.

BOB HALL

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PARAMOUNT

The principal record label of the New York Recording Laboratories of Port Washington, Wisconsin, dating from 1917. Lateral-cut discs were first issued in 1919. Paramount's first "blues" artist, vaudeville blues singer Flo Bert (which might be a pseudonym for the concert singer Florence Cole Talbert), was recorded in late 1920 and issued in the general series. Two releases by Lucille Hegamin were leased from Arto during 1921 and Paramount recorded her themselves in 1922.

The 12000 Race series was initiated in August 1922 and is among the most important bodies of African American music of the era. It had reached 13156 by the time it ended in 1932 after more than eleven hundred releases. The series was supervised until 1927 by J. Mayo Williams, who also managed the associated Chicago Music, which published many compositions used by Paramount's artists. Art Satherley, who later worked with the American Record Corporation, took over the A&R work when Williams left to form Black Patti, but he in turn left to join QRS in January 1928.

Alberta Hunter and Trixie Smith are the dominant blues artists among the earliest issues. Paramount's most important female singer, Ma Rainey, made her debut on Paramount 12080. The number block from 12100 was allocated to reissues from Black Swan when that company leased its masters to Paramount, including important work by Josie Miles, Trixie Smith, and Ethel Waters. It seems these reissues did not sell well and numbers 12190 to 12199 were never used. Among female blues artists appearing later in the series, Elzadie Robinson, Monette Moore, and Edmonia Henderson may be singled out. Male blues artists began to be important from 1924 when the vaudevillian Papa Charlie Jackson was recorded. Blind Blake and Blind Lemon Jefferson joined him in 1926 and all three logged substantial sales.

Because it did a large part of its business by mail order, Paramount was well placed to service rural customers and with Jefferson was the first company substantially to exploit country blues. Walter "Buddy Boy" Hawkins, Bo Weavil Jackson, Frank Stokes, and Ramblin' Thomas are among the major artists recorded. Pianists Will Ezell and Charlie Spand had several issues each, and in late 1927 Paramount recorded Meade "Lux" Lewis's first version of "Honky Tonk Train Blues" (12896) but issued nothing more by him.

At the end of the decade and especially after recording activities were moved from Chicago to Grafton, Wisconsin, in 1929, Paramount began to rely on artists brought in by talent scouts. Henry C. Speir of Jackson, Mississippi, brought in Skip James and Charley Patton (who in turn brought Son House), ensuring for the label an enduring fame not reflected in contemporary sales. The company ceased operations in 1932. In the mid-1930s a few Race issues, including one by Huddie Ledbetter, appeared in a Paramount 9000 series produced by ARC. John Steiner, a record collector, issued a Paramount 14000 series in 1949–1950 that included reissues of Ma Rainey and others.

HOWARD RYE

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PARKER, CHARLIE

- b. 29 August 1920; Kansas City, KS
d. 12 March 1955; New York City, NY

Alto saxophonist, known as "Yardbird" or more commonly "Bird." One of the seminal figures in jazz history, and the subject of much myth-making by fans and writers. Parker had deep roots in blues and swing in Kansas City; he made early recordings with Jay McShann, Tiny Grimes, Slim Gaillard, and others. Parker emerged along with Dizzy Gillespie as a figurehead of the new bebop genre in mid-1940s New York. His genius as an improviser proved inspirational to players on all instruments, although his addictions to drugs and alcohol exerted a negative influence on many. Parker was in his artistic prime in the late 1940s. Collected recordings for the Dial, Savoy, and Verve labels are cornerstones of modern jazz, with many classic improvisations on blues material.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Discography: Lord

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“Billie’s Bounce”/“Now’s the Time” (1945, Savoy 573).
“Koko” 1945, Savoy 597).
“Ornithology” (1946, Dial 1002).
“Yardbird Suite” (1946, Dial 1003).
“Cool Blues” (1947, Dial 1015).
“Donna Lee” (1947, Savoy 652).
“Parker’s Mood” (1948, Savoy 936).
“Au Privave” (1951, Clef 11087).

PARKER, HERMAN, JR. “LITTLE JUNIOR” “JUNIOR”

b. 27 March 1932; West Memphis, AR

d. 18 November 1971; Blue Island, IL

Some researchers have ascribed a Mississippi birthplace, either Clarksdale or Bobo. Influenced by Sonny Boy “Rice Miller” Williamson, this blues performer also performed with Howlin’ Wolf and was a member of the famous Memphis-based B. B. King and the Beale Street Boys including Bobby Bland and Roscoe Gordon. In addition to his skilled harmonica playing, Parker was also a vocalist, bandleader, and composer. He led two famous groups during that period: the Blue Flames and Blues Consolidated, a touring band in the late fifties and early sixties.

Parker formed the Blue Flames in 1951. Other performers included Auburn “Pat” Hare, a local guitarist of some regard. During this period, Parker recorded for Modern Records label’s Joe Bihari and Ike Turner. It was those recordings that led to his discovery by Sam Phillips of Sun Records. Parker’s song “Mystery Train” was covered by Elvis Presley in 1954’s famous Sun sessions. He recorded and toured with much success during the fifties and sixties and recorded many blues standards during that period. In 1952, his song, “Feeling Good,” made it to number five on national R&B charts.

In 1954, Parker moved to the Duke label and released hits such as “Driving Wheel,” “Barefoot Rock,” “Annie Get Your Yo-Yo,” and “Next Time You See Me.” After his stint with Duke, Parker also recorded for Mercury, Minit, United Artists, and Capitol. Parker continued to record and perform throughout the sixties, but succumbed to a brain tumor during surgery in 1971. He made invaluable contributions as a founding voice of American R&B.

TOM FISHER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Driving Wheel (1960, Duke DLP-76).
Barefoot Rock and I Got You (1961, Duke DLP-72; with Bobby Bland).
Like It Is (1967, Mercury 61101).
Honey Drippin’ Blues (1969, Blue Rock 64004).
I Tell Stories, Sad and True (1971, United Artists 6823).
Sometime Tomorrow My Heart Will Die (1973, BluesWay 6066).
Best of... (1974, Duke DLPS-83).

PARKER, MONICA

(See *Sista Monica*)

PARKER, SONNY

b. 5 May 1925; Youngstown, OH

d. 7 February 1957; New York City, NY

Vocalist, dancer, drummer. Raised by Butterbeans & Susie. Parker led a band in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1948 with King Kolax. From 1949, he was a blues-shouter in Lionel Hampton’s band until his career was ended by a cerebral hemorrhage on stage at Valenciennes, France, in May 1955.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

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PARKWAY

Chicago blues label of the post–World War II years. The label operated in 1950 and was owned by brothers George and Ernie Leaner and Monroe Passis, who ran the Chord record distributorship. Parkway produced only ten known sides—four by the Baby Face Leroy Trio, four by Little Walter Trio, and two by Robert Jenkins—but what extraordinary sides they

were. The Baby Face Leroy (featuring singer Leroy Foster) and Little Walter sides were recorded in one session. Most outstanding was the Baby Face Leroy release, the two-part “Rollin’ and Tumblin’,” which ranks as one of the most exhilarating products of the Chicago postwar bar-band blues explosion (Muddy Waters and Little Walter were both in the band). The notable Little Walter Trio release featured blues harpist Little Walter on “I Just Keep Lovin’ You” and “Moonshine Blues.” Two of the Little Walter sides were leased to Regal and not released on Parkway.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

PARR, ELVEN “L. V.”

b. 1925; Osceola, AR
d. 15 May 1997; Seattle, WA

Began professional career as a guitarist as a member of the “In the Groove Boys” on KOSE radio in Osceola, Arkansas. He recorded with Eddie Snow for the Sun label in 1952–1956, with additional studio sessions for Duke in Memphis. He moved to Seattle in 1959 and continued performing in local clubs through the 1980s.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography

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PATHÉ

Record label originally established in France by brothers Charles and Emile Pathé in 1894. An American branch, managed by Russell Hunting, followed in 1914 and issued lateral-cut disks, first labeled Actuelle, later Pathé Actuelle, from September 1920. Their 7500 Race series, launched in 1926, notably featured Rosa Henderson, and was entirely

duplicated by the cheaper Perfect 100 series. American Pathé merged with Cameo in 1928, then with Plaza in 1929 to form ARC, which dropped the Pathé label in the United States in March 1930. It remained in use elsewhere, French EMI using it for significant blues reissues in the 1980s.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: DGR; Sutton

PATT, FRANK “HONEYBOY”

b. 1 September 1928; Fostoria, AL
d. 10 December 1985; Los Angeles, CA

The writer of the powerful “Bloodstains on the Wall,” a minor West Coast blues classic, singer and sometimes bassist Honeyboy Patt unfortunately only recorded a handful of brilliant sides, earning his living outside of the music business.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: LSFP

Bloodstains on the Wall (1994, Ace CD 576).

PATTERSON, BOBBY

b. 13 March 1944; Dallas, TX

Soul singer, songwriter, and producer. Early record performing, writing, and producing experience was gained at labels Abnak (1964–1969) and Jewel/Paula (1970–1973). Turned to promotion in the 1970s, first as an independent and then on contract with Malaco Records. He returned to recording as an artist in 1996.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Schuller, Tim. "The Second Coming of Bobby Patterson." *Living Blues* no. 139 (May/June 1998): 36–39.

PATTMAN, NEAL

b. 10 January 1926; Madison County, GA

Harmonica player. Early taste in style formed by listening to Sonny Terry and Blind Boy Fuller. From the 1950s through the 1970s, Pattman worked various day jobs but performed occasionally at clubs and folk music festivals. In the early 1990s, after about ten years' hiatus, he resumed performing blues in public, including "Mama's Whoopin' Blues," an audience favorite.

EDWARD KOMARA

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PATTON, CHARLEY

b. April 1891; Edwards, MS

d. 28 April 1934; Heathman Plantation near Indianola, MS

Charley (or Charlie) Patton was the first Mississippi blues performer to commit a significant body of music to recordings. His music has become emblematic of the genre called Delta Blues, representing the black American experience during the Jim Crow era in one of the country's most racially divided places. It is a voice from an underclass that struggled to survive systematic exploitation, droughts, floods, discrimination, and economic depression. On a personal level, it is the voice of one man translating experience into song, making it meaningful to others living alongside him. Charley's voice—raw, urgent, and uncompromising—summed up the blues of his life and times, setting the pace for other Delta voices that emerged in his wake.

During the final five years of his life, Charley recorded fifty-two titles for Paramount (1929–1930) and Vocalion (1934). In addition, there are a handful of surviving outtakes and tracks on which he accompanied others. His basic performance mode was in the simple voice and guitar format. He recorded several older pieces like "Frankie and Albert," "I'm Alabama Bound" (as "Elder Greene Blues"), a

singular "Mississippi Bo Weevil Blues," and some traditional hymns. However, most of Charley's output consisted of original blues, assembled on the spot by weaving traditional lines and stanzas together with elements of his own to produce finished songs for phonograph records. Creative, complex guitar accompaniments supplied the final touches, revealing him as an accomplished musician, notwithstanding a superficially primitive veneer.

Though his records received only limited national distribution, they were in continuous demand back home in the Mississippi Delta and in a few other areas of the Deep South, where they inspired contemporary and succeeding generations of musicians. Bukka White, Tommy Johnson, Willie Brown, Po Joe Williams, Roebuck Staples, Eugene "Son" House, Reverend Booker Miller, David "Honeyboy" Edwards, Robert Johnson, Johnny Shines, and Howlin' Wolf were all indebted to Charley Patton in varying degrees. Most of them knew him at least casually. They and other musicians either admired him or viewed themselves as his competitors and none was indifferent to his art.

Legal documents and other sources have offered various years for Patton's birth date, though 1891 seems most likely. He was listed in the 1900 census report as the nine-year-old son of Bill and Annie Patton, residents of Will Dockery's cotton plantation where Charley would live, off and on, for most of his life. His family made the most of its economic and social situation and became relatively prosperous over the years. Charley learned music in his teens from older hands like Henry Sloan and Earl Harris. He became a sought-after performer as an adult, working at juke joints, plantation frolics, and other places where workers gathered for social diversion. Demand for his services was such that he traveled widely, went through a succession of girlfriends and wives, and performed manual labor as infrequently as possible. He was afflicted with a congenital heart disease that eventually took his life, and was probably rejected because of it when he registered for the draft in 1917.

Though he made music with casual guitar-playing partners like Booker Miller and Willie Brown, Patton preferred to work alone, both to avoid splitting an evening's take and because he enjoyed more improvisational freedom as a soloist. As his records reveal, Charley could happily expand or contract a typical four-bar blues phrase as inspiration of the moment dictated, and would rarely sing anything the same way twice. He constructed intriguing and sophisticated guitar accompaniments, building on and varying musical patterns as one verse succeeded another. Often his voice and guitar created their own counterpoint as Charley's singing emphasized certain beats in

a phrase while his guitar stressed others. He frequently snapped his bass strings and thumped on the guitar to create additional percussive effects. Curiously, he played few solo passages on his records, preferring to present his voice and guitar in steady synchronicity.

His signature tune was recorded several times with various sets of lyrics. It has been called both “The Jinx” and “Maggie.” The guitar melody featured a distinctive descending bass run, and his verses were typically enhanced with spoken asides. Charley played it in several keys, and it formed the basis for “Screamin’ and Hollerin’ the Blues” (1929), “Moon Going Down” (1930), “Love My Stuff” (1934), and his epic “High Water Everywhere” (1929).

“High Water” was Patton’s best-selling record. It documented an April 1927 Mississippi River flood that inundated vast portions of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, destroying fields, homes, and local infrastructures. Charley’s impassioned first-person account dealt with his efforts to survive, and the flood’s tragic effects in several small towns. The song made a deep impact on traumatized Delta listeners and flood victims, even though the record wasn’t released until nearly three years after the event.

Other Patton blues also dwelt on personal events and local circumstances. “Dry Well Blues” (1930) centered on residents of Lula, Mississippi, and their immediate reaction to a severe drought that occurred after they invested in a community well. “Mean Black Moan” (1929) described hard times experienced by affected families during a 1922 railroad shopworkers strike. “Tom Rushen [i.e., Rushing] Blues” (1929) dealt with an arrest for bootlegging. Charley’s “High Sheriff Blues” (1934) resurrected both the tune and theme, applying it to a more recent arrest.

Charley tended to allude to events rather than documenting them in journalistic fashion, as white ballads normally did. As a result, the specifics of his songs were rarely clear to outsiders. If you heard him sing:

Big Jim Lee up the river, backin up an down,
And the side wheel knocking, Lord, I’m water boun

you’d need to learn on your own that he was singing about the Mississippi riverboat James Lee when it got stuck on a sandbar.

When he asked:

Where were you now, baby, Clarksdale mill burned
down?

and received the answer:

I were way down Sunflower wi’ my face all full of frown

Charley tacitly assumed that his listeners would be familiar with the locales and events he cited, and would have no trouble understanding details missing

from his sketchy account. His informally constructed songs had no perceived intrinsic commercial value and were never copyrighted. They simply appeared on record without being stripped of local references or otherwise retooled for potentially larger audiences. Listeners encountering Charley’s records decades later appreciated their authentic qualities, but stumbled over local references, and would often wonder what, when, and whom he was singing about. Because Patton’s dialect was heavily regional and personally idiosyncratic, he can be hard to understand. Consequently, his words are often unclear and ambiguous to the casual listener, and even dedicated Patton scholars can disagree on what they hear.

Because the Patton records were produced as ephemera, no one thought of them as historically valuable documents. They weren’t collected or placed in libraries and archives, since no one expected them to become an important part of American music history. The records were played and enjoyed by Charley’s contemporaries, who casually handled and broke them, throwing them away when they no longer provided pleasure. Not until blues collectors “rediscovered” Charley, a generation after his death, did anyone assign value to them. Today, even worn and damaged copies of his 78-rpm disks consistently fetch four-figure prices when they are sold.

Charley also sang gospel songs and his discography includes several sacred releases. His last wife, Bertha Lee, was a member of the choir at the First Baptist Church in Lula, and she may well have brought him closer to his faith in his final years. Charley could and did preach, as he did on his recording, “You’re Gonna Need Somebody When You Die.” His preference was for older camp-meeting pieces with repetitive elements that were memorized easily and could be sung without hymn books. He usually played slide guitar for sacred pieces, making his instrument imitate a second human voice. Charley Patton was nearly killed in a knife attack a few months before making his first records in 1929. His voice and energy level seem strong enough on those records but, over succeeding years, his health went into decline. A congenital heart condition was a major factor, but Depression economics, Charley’s erratic income and lifestyle, liquor, and poor food contributed to his increasing weakness. He died of heart failure on April 28, 1934, only three months after he sang:

It may bring sorrow, Lord, and it may bring tear
Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, spare me to see a bran’ new year
“34 Blues,” recorded January 31, 1934

Today Charley Patton’s place in history seems secure. His recordings have been collected and extensively discussed in a record and book set, *Screamin’ and*

PATTON, CHARLEY

Hollerin' the Blues (Revenant 212). Bob Dylan has composed a popular tribute “High Water (for Charley Patton).” Other contemporary performers such as Alvin Youngblood Hart, Rory Block, Paul Geremia, Jo Ann Kelly, and Carlos del Junco have kept Charley’s repertoire and elements of his style alive.

RICHARD SPOTTSWOOD

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Wardlow, Gayle Dean. *Chasin' That Devil Music*. San Francisco: Miller Freeman, 1998.

Discography: DGR

PAYNE, JOHN W. “SONNY”

b. 29 November 1925; Helena, AR

Radio announcer, host of the “King Biscuit Time” program on KFFA, Helena, Arkansas. Payne began working at KFFA when the station went on the air in 1941 but did not assume regular “King Biscuit Time” duties until the 1950s. In recent years he has hosted the broadcast from the Delta Cultural Center in Helena. Though a big fan of Helena’s Sonny Boy Williamson, Payne favored big band music during his own performing career away from Helena, playing upright bass for short stints with the bands of Charlie Spivak and others, as well as with cowboy singer Tex Ritter. Payne estimates that he has hosted more than 13,000 “King Biscuit Time” broadcasts.

JIM O’NEAL

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O’Neal, Amy. “King Biscuit Time 1971.” *Living Blues* no. 5 (Summer 1971): 4–5.

PAYNE, ODIE JR.

b. 27 August 1926; Chicago, IL
d. 1 March 1989; Chicago, IL

One of the founders of modern blues drumming, Payne spanned the Bluebird-to-Chess-to-Cobra generations of Chicago blues and was known for his blazing foot work, whip cracking shuffles, precision tattoos and rolls, double shuffles, and also his cowbell (see *Drums* entry).

Payne studied drums under Captain Walter Dyett at DuSable High, and later at the Roy C. Knapp School. To see drummers firsthand, he attended live theater shows and snuck into burlesque houses. Payne’s first professional gig was in 1949 with Tampa Red with whom he also recorded thirty-nine sides from 1949 to 1954. In addition, of the older generation, Payne backed Memphis Slim, Eurreal “Little Brother” Montgomery, Big Maceo Merriweather, Sunnyland Slim, and Blind John Davis, and appeared with Memphis Minnie and Son Joe. Through the 1950s and 1960s he frequently worked local night spots with Henry Gray, the Aces, Willie Dixon, Earl Hooker, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Magic Sam, Otis Rush, and Little Walter, with whom he also traveled in the South.

During two and a half years with Elmore James and his rocking Broomdusters, Payne recorded on at least thirty-one tracks—some of James’s greatest numbers—between 1952 and 1959, adding woodblock and tom-tom rumbas, unobtrusive fills, and spit-and-polish sign-offs.

Payne recorded eight titles under his own name for Chess in 1954, and Willie Dixon recommended him for further Chess work including a 1956 session that yielded Muddy Waters’s “Don’t Go No Further,” and 1963–1964 sessions behind Chuck Berry that produced nineteen issued tracks including the crossover rock ’n’ roll teen hits “Nadine,” “Lonely Schooldays,” and “No Particular Place to Go.”

Other session work produced classic 45s by young turks Magic Sam, Otis Rush, and Harold Burrage for the Cobra label, Buddy Guy’s first Chicago recordings for Artistic, and Junior Wells’s first for States. In the 1960s Payne appeared on landmark Delmark LPs by Junior Wells and Magic Sam.

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

PAYTON, ASIE

b. 12 April 1937; Washington County, MS
 d. 19 May 1997; Holly Ridge, MS

Singer/guitarist. A lifelong farmer, Payton died of a heart attack while driving his tractor. In 1999, Fat Possum released *Worried*, a disk culled from demo tapes, including some recorded at Junior Kimbrough's juke in Chulahoma, Mississippi, in 1994. *Just Do Me Right*, also assembled from various demo tapes and informal recordings (some enhanced with contemporary electronica), appeared on Fat Possum in 2002.

DAVID WHITEIS

Discography: AMG (Heather Phares)**Selected Recordings**

Worried (1994, Fat Possum).
Just Do Me Right (2002, Fat Possum).

PEEBLES, ANN

b. 27 April 1947; Kinloch, MO

Southern-style soul singer popular in the 1970s. Under the production aegis of Willie Mitchell, Peebles consistently hit the charts from 1969 to 1979 singing deep soul songs and blues with a pumping beat. With her husband, songwriter Don Bryant, she wrote many of her biggest hits, including her only top forty crossover hit, "I Can't Stand the Rain" (1973). Two of her more notable hits were soul-style remakes of blues classics, Little Johnny Taylor's "Part Time Love" (1970) and Bobby Bland's "I Pity the Fool" (1971). Other outstanding hits were "Breaking Up Somebody's Home" (1972), "I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down" (1973), and "I Didn't Take Your Man" (1978). She recorded seven LPs for Hi, her *Part Time Love* (1971) and *Straight from the Heart* (1972) being the most outstanding. Following the end of Hi, in 1981 Peebles took a long hiatus from the music business, but returned in 1989 to record a disappointing album for Willie Mitchell's Waylo label. She recorded three albums under producer Ron Levy for the Bullseye label—*Full Time Love* (1992), *Fill This World with Love* (1996), and *How Strong Is a Woman* (1998). Peebles, like many classic soul singers, during the 1990s developed new audiences on the soul-blues circuit and on the roots music scene.

ROBERT PRUTER

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PEEPLER, ROBERT

Flourished 1920s

Obscure singer (and possibly guitarist) with a pleasant, relaxed tenor voice, recorded in 1929 in the company of Henry Brown, Ike Rogers, Mary Johnson, and Wesley Wallace. A St. Louis background for him may therefore be assumed. He made two sides backed by Brown and three with Wallace (one unissued). "Fat Greasy Baby," with Brown accompanying, is typical of his unhurried delivery.

BOB HALL

Discography: DGR**PEG LEG SAM**

b. Arthur Jackson, 28 December 1911; Jonesville, SC
 d. 27 October 1977; Jonesville, SC

Harmonica player, dancer, comedian, storyteller Arthur Jackson, aka Peg Pete or Peg Leg Sam after losing the lower part of his right leg as a result of a train accident, was one of the last original medicine show entertainers. At about age nine he started to teach himself harmonica in the "accordion" style and soon ran away from home, doing an incredible number of jobs, including being an itinerant musician at picnics, fairs, and so forth.

From Elmon "Shorty" Bell, Peg Pete learned how to play the "modern" style of harp and two harmonicas at the same time and toured the United States with different medicine shows for thirty-five years. At one of these he met Pink Anderson and under his tutelage he soon qualified for the position of "drag man." In the 1960s and 1970s, Jackson often played at local parties and festivals with Henry Johnson. Only late in his career was Peg Leg Sam's art waxed and filmed. In 1972 in Pittsboro, North Carolina, Jackson was immortalized in what was likely one of the last medicine shows in the United States, featuring Anderson and Jackson working for the legendary Potawatomi Indian Chief Thundercloud. This event was later issued on a Flyright double LP. Further recordings by Peg Pete include one session for Trix in 1972—where his eclecticism can be appreciated in songs as diverse as "Skinny Woman Blues,"

PEG LEG SAM

“Reuben,” and “Fast Freight Train”—and one for Blue Labor three years later. A clip of Jackson dancing can briefly be seen in the successful feature film *Amélie* (2001, directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet).

LUIGI MONGE

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Lowry, Pete. Notes accompanying *Peg Leg Sam: Kickin’ It!* (2000, 32 Blues 32211).

Discography: AMG; LSFP

PEJOE, MORRIS

b. Morris Pejas, 11 April 1924; Palmetto, LA
d. 27 July 1982; Detroit, MI

Chicago-based blues singer and guitarist of the 1950s. Pejoe sang down-home blues with a bit of New Orleans bounce, reflecting his heritage, but never recorded a hit and never achieved more than a bit of recognition in Chicago blues clubs. He began his career on the violin, but after moving to Beaumont, Texas, in 1949, he switched to guitar. In 1951 Pejoe moved to Chicago, and began performing with pianist Henry Gray. During 1952–1953 he recorded three sessions for Checker, followed by a session for United (1954), which the company kept in the can. He recorded one session with Vee-Jay (1955), which released “You Gonna Need Me Baby.” His next session, for Abco (1956), was one of his best, producing the driving “Screaming and Crying.” Four years later a session for Atomic-H (1960) produced an excellent homage to “She Walks Right In.” An obscure session with Kaytown in 1969 ended his recording career. He provided guitar accompaniment for his wife, Mary Lane (“Little Mary”), on one session around 1966. Pejoe performed regularly in the clubs during the 1950s, but club dates grew increasingly infrequent during the 1960s. Pejoe left Chicago in the early 1970s and moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he played occasional dates until his death.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSFP

PERFECT

Record label established in June 1922 by the American branch of Pathé as a lower-priced product operated by the nominally independent Perfect Record Company. The Race series, the Perfect 100s, began in July 1926 with issues by Rosa Henderson and Mary Stafford. All issues were duplicated in Pathé’s own 7500 Race series. Vaudeville singers continued to predominate in the blues output. The series had reached 140 when Pathé’s labels were merged in to the American Record Corporation (ARC) in August 1929, and was continued after a brief interval, resuming at 147, with a 0 prefix from 200 onward. Perfect became one of ARC’s “dime-store” labels, sharing its repertoire with Banner, Oriole, Romeo, and after late 1932 also with Melotone. The Famous Hokum Boys and similar artists figure largely in the Depression Era output with noteworthy issues by Big Bill Broonzy as Sammy Sampson. This parallel issue arrangement was formalized in September 1935 with the adoption of a common numerical series for the dime-store labels, which shared a major Race catalog. All the “dime-store” labels were discontinued in April 1938 following the acquisition of ARC by the Columbia Broadcasting System.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: DGR; Sutton

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PERIODICALS

Introduction

Before assessing the coverage of blues in periodicals, its relation to black sacred music and jazz as an American musician trinity should be reviewed:

- Vocal black sacred music (*Spirituals* rooted in psalms, hymns, and Old Testament/Bible,

underground until 1865, followed later by new songs inspired by the New Testament and cross-influenced by blues from the mid-1890s and by blues jazz afterward), with gospel music formulated by Thomas A. Dorsey and Sallie Martin in the 1920s and 1930s.

- *The blues* as the *vocal* and secular counterpart of the religious music, rooted in word games and work songs, sung/played from a time thought to be around the 1890s, with direct antecedents in the 1870s and 1880s.
- *Jazz* as an *instrumental* style, eager to imitate human voice with wind instruments, a melting pot of rags, spirituals, gospel songs, blues, marches, ballads, and so on, appearing at the turn of the twentieth century (voice was added to the band later), but bound to become the most well known of the three styles, even overshadowing the other two in the view of mainstream American culture and of the rest of the world.

Focusing on the blues only, it must be said that musicologists, collectors, and historians of both the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries paid scant regard to a black popular music seen as too primitive and inferior to the spirituals that symbolized the best value in black culture. Blues was also tied to obscenity, lost love, poverty, violence, drugs, and vulgarity; before publishing them, early white collectors and field researchers carefully edited obscenity from blues lyrics that have remained largely invisible to white America until World War II. Moreover, many scholars and collectors thought that blues was just a very primitive precursor of jazz, interesting but unfinished and of the most minor interest. Unhappily, this conception grew, and is still a misjudgment today among many people.

Blues in Print: The “Long March” from Books to Magazines

Books: Fiction

In the *Historiography* entry, Paul Garon surveys the story of the blues in books. He listed the academic works that paid interest to the blues and its lyrics, but it should be remembered that disregard was the rule in fiction until the Harlem Renaissance (1920s–1940s) when the eloquence of the blues and its persistence as the voice of the black community inspired a couple of white writers and plenty of black writers (see the *Literature, Blues in* entry). Later, the trend continued to grow with black writers such as Richard

Wright, James Baldwin, Gayl Jones, Ralph Ellison, LeRoi Jones, Margaret Walker, Chester Himes, Maya Angelou, and, more recently, Ishmael Reed, Toni Cade Bambara, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, August Wilson, Ernest J. Gaines, Charlotte Carter, Walter Mosley, and countless others, including white fiction writers such as Ace Atkins—all of them writing blues-inspired novels, poems, thrillers, plays, and short stories.

Periodicals Pre-1950

As far as newspapers, magazines, and academic journals or periodicals are concerned, the pre-1950 period is barren for the blues with the exception of music trade papers and some daily black newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* that ran advertisements in doubtful taste for blues records (Race records) throughout the 1920s. Early articles of the 1920s and 1930s tried to transcribe chosen lyrics and to answer questions concerning the social aspects of a music that the white intelligentsia was just beginning to discover, but the biographies and day-to-day life of the blues performers was not a priority at all. This is emphasized in periodicals such as *The Journal of Negro History, Crisis, Black Scholar, Black World*, which were indexed by Frederick W. Faxon, Mary E. Bates, and Anne C. Sutherland, editors, in *Cumulative Magazine Subject Index 1907–1949: A Cumulation of the F. W. Faxon Company’s Annual Magazine Subject Index* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co, 1964; xvi, 951; x; 935 pages). This book indexes articles that appeared in 175 periodicals during the first half of the twentieth century with entries such as “Negro Music,” “Folk Songs,” “Jazz,” and so forth. There are other cumulative indexes of interest, including *Indexed Periodicals: A Guide to 170 Years of Coverage in 33 Indexing Services* by Joseph V. Marconi (Ann Arbor, MI: Pierian Press, 1976; xxvi, 416 pages). This publication covers approximately eleven thousand periodicals, serial titles, and cross references. Of great interest too are *Music Periodicals Literature: An Annotated Bibliography of Indexes and Bibliographies*, by Joan M. Meggett (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Books, 1978) and *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature: An Author and Subjects Index* (40 vols. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1944), with each volume counting approximately 1750 pages.

1950–Today

The amount of information on blues gathered before 1950 represents only a small fraction of what was

collected after 1950 and is available today either in books, records, sleeve notes, and on the Internet or in magazines and more elusive printed sources (such as flyers, programs, newsletters, and so on). A little before but mostly after World War II, interest in the blues and R&B as musical genres found its way into music trade papers and jazz magazines, as well as publications devoted to folk music, rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, soul music, and pop or entertainment, even if it was pushed in the background and/or in short columns.

Blues bibliographies give evidence of this, for instance, the ones mentioned by Paul Garon in the *Historiography* entry and also *Bibliography of Black Music*, 4 volumes, by Dominique-René De Lerma (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981). *Black Music in the United States—An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Reference and Research Materials*, by Samuel A. Floyd Jr. and Marsha J. Reisser (White Plains, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1983, 234 pages), and *Jazz-Bibliography: International Literature on Jazz, Blues, Spirituals, Gospel and Ragtime Music with a Selected List of Works on the Social and Cultural Background from the Beginning to the Present*, by Bernard Hefe (Muenchen, Germany: Saur, 1981, 368 pages).

Commercial papers and newspapers were good vehicles for information related to African American music in general and, marginally, to blues and R&B in particular, especially from 1950 onward. This was displayed prominently in the work of researcher Galen Gart (Big Nickel Publications) who started in the late 1980s and early 1990s to compile and edit news, stories, editorials, advertisements, lists of releases, and gossip that he found in music trade and daily papers. He organized the information chronologically in a series called *First Pressings* that today counts ten volumes under the title *The History of Rhythm & Blues*, with a special 1950 volume and nine others, each covering one year (1951–1959). An eleventh volume deals with *R&B in Cleveland—1955 Edition*, from the same sources. The whole series is highly valuable with just one drawback: The sources are never given and although some information can be traced (*Billboard* is a leading example), most of it cannot.

Many newspapers, such as the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Sun Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* in the United States and *Le Monde* in France, occasionally reported on the blues and have continued doing so (see the *Black Newspaper Press* entry).

Black-oriented publications, such as *American Visions—The Magazine of Afro-American Culture*, and those coming from the Johnson Publishing Company in Chicago enter into the scope of this

entry even if the blues content of *Ebony*, *Jet*, *Sepia*, *Black World*, *Black Stars*, and so on is rather low. *Ebony* magazine began publication in November 1945 and continues today. Kimberly R. Vann and colleagues wrote an interesting guide in a series published by the CBMR (Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College, Chicago) and titled *CBMR Monographs No. 2: Black Music in Ebony: An Annotated Guide to the Articles on Music in Ebony Magazine, 1945–1985*. This author has since updated the guide to 1995, but it remains unpublished.

On an academic level and since the early 1980s, the CBMR is also publishing a *Black Music Research Journal*, a CBMR Newsletter and, since the late 1990s, *Lenox Avenue – A Journal of Interarts Inquiry*. From 1973 to 1990, Eileen Southern (Harvard University) and her husband produced *The Black Perspective in Music: Foundation for Research in the Afro-American Creative Arts*. There are many more academic periodicals in the USA like *Ethnomusicology*; *Journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology*; *MAWA Review: Middle Atlantic Writers Association Press*; *Melus: The Journal of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*; *American Music – A Quarterly Journal devoted to all Aspects of American Music and Music in America*, etc. . . and abroad; *Jazz Forschung-Jazz Research (Graz-Austria)*; *Les Cahiers du Jazz-Presses Universitaires de France*; and others. Every one of them is open to blues history, biographies of performers, and analysis of blues genres and lyrics.

Other musical and nonmusical magazines such as *Entertainment Weekly*, *Vibe Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* in the United States, *Melody Maker* and others in the United Kingdom, *Rock et Folk* and others in France have or had regular or occasional blues columns that are worth a search, but no guides or indexes are generally available.

After World War II, folk music magazines such as *Sing Out (The Folk Song Magazine)*, *Broadside* (1962–1992; founded by Agnes “Sis” Cunningham and Gordon Friesen), and others in the United States, *Old Time Music*, *Keskidee*, *Musical Traditions*, and *Old Time Country* in the United Kingdom are also reliable sources for occasional blues information.

The first in-depth information and analysis of the blues came out in jazz magazines. As early as 1936 an English publication, *Rhythm on Record*, listed Gus Cannon’s Jug Stompers recordings (with a photograph of Gus Cannon); in the 1940s and 1950s, pioneers in the United Kingdom, such as Albert McCarthy (later editor of *Jazz Monthly*) and Max Jones (later writer of a blues column in the weekly *Melody Maker*), were active in the research of blues in *Jazz Music* (with *A Tribute to Huddie Ledbetter* in

1946), *Jazz Tempo*, *Just Jazz*, and so on. In the United States, tentative blues criticism appeared in *Jazz Information*, a short-lived magazine, while *The Record Changer*, well distributed in the United Kingdom, provided classified advertisements for records wanted and/or to trade while maintaining a strong feature of jazz criticism and, occasionally, blues criticism. Also in the United Kingdom, critic Yannick Bruynoghe described the Chicago blues scene in *Just Jazz* in 1956, and in 1958, Derrick Stewart-Baxter started his blues page in *Jazz Journal*.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, *Jazz Journal* and *Jazz Monthly* had blues columns thanks to many people, including Paul Oliver, who also wrote features for *Music Mirror* in the mid-1950s and later for *Jazz News*, *Jazzbeat*, and *Jazz Reviews*. Blues records were also reviewed by James Asman (coeditor of blues booklets for the Jazz Appreciation Society) in the pop weekly *Record Mirror*. In the mid-1960s, *Rhythm & Blues*, an American publication under the editorship of Jim Delehant, laid great emphasis on genuine blues as did other American jazz magazines such as *Jazz Report* (published in St. Louis by Bob Koester), which later gave birth to *Blues News* (from Chicago), and in 1964 *Jazz Report* was combined for a short time with *Music Memories* (Birmingham, Alabama). Throughout the 1960s the biweekly jazz magazine *Down Beat* carried a blues column by Pete Welding, and *Record Research* published in New York by Len Kunstadt and Bob Colton had, from 1959 onward, a companion magazine *Blues Research* managed by Anthony Rotante and Paul Sheatsley. From then until today, many jazz magazines in the world had a blues column (*Jazz Hot*, *Jazz Magazine*, *Jazzman*, etc., in France; *Le Point du Jazz*, *Jazz in Time*, *Swingtime*, *Jazz Around*, *Jazz Halo*, etc., in Belgium, and so forth).

Blues Magazines

Ironically, when blacks were rejecting the genre in the 1960s for understandable reasons (old-time music, reminiscences of slavery and bad times, poverty, poor education, bad housing, promiscuity, Uncle Tomism, and so on), blues met a growing interest in the United States and in Europe—and some time later in the rest of the world. Pioneers such as Yannick Bruynoghe and Georges Adins (Belgium), Jacques Demêtre and Marcel Chauvard (France), and Samuel Charters, Mack McCormick, and Chris Strachwitz in the United States documented blues and wrote about it in books and periodicals.

The time came, at last, for an era of blues magazines dealing strictly with that musical style. The era

started in the late 1950s/early 1960s, on the wave of the blues revival, in Belgium with *R&B Panorama* (Serge Tonneau, Brussels, 1960–1965), in the United Kingdom with *Blues Unlimited* (Mike Leadbitter, London, 1963–1987) and *Blues World* (Bob Groom, 1965–1974), followed later in the United States by *Living Blues* (Jim and Amy O’Neal, Chicago, 1970–) and then by many others in Europe, still in print (*Soul Bag*, *Blues & Rhythm*, *Jefferson*, *Block*, *Rollin’ & Tumblin’*, *Juke Blues*, etc.), or out of print (*Talking Blues*, *Pickin’ the Blues Blues Link*) in the United States (*Whiskey*, *Women And. . .*, *78 Quarterly*, *Blues Revue*, *Blues Access*, *Offbeat.*), in Japan (*Blues*), in Australia (*Crazy Music*, etc.) and many more, everywhere.

A detailed list of periodicals can be found in the Bibliography.

A last word: While many publications are scattered in archives and libraries around the world—and among dozens of individual collectors—unfortunately, they are too often unavailable to the average researcher and/or collector. It is also difficult to obtain complete runs of the most ephemeral publications, especially the bluesletters and flyers. However, a thorough search will usually turn something up, and specialized websites such as <http://www.bluesworld.com> may also help.

ROBERT SACRÉ

Bibliography

Note: This list was begun in 2002 by Edward Komara and Ace Atkins, with thanks to the staff of the Blues Archive, J. D. Williams Library, at the University of Mississippi. Robert Sacré added the European titles, and organized the list into three categories: (1) periodicals, (2) newsletters and fanzines, and (3) additional serial publications.

Category 1 is cited with title, publisher and/or location, and years of publication; notes on title changes, frequency of publication, and number of issues of a ceased title may be added when available. The publications in Categories 2 and 3 may have incomplete citations, but are included in the list for the sake of documentation and inclusion in some form.

Periodicals

- A.B.S. Magazine* (Arvern’ Blues Society, Chateaugay, France) (2003–); quarterly.
- Acoustic Blues* (Lancaster, UK) (1993–1997).
- Acoustic Guitar* (San Anselmo, California) (1993–); monthly.
- Alley Music—Australia’s Blues Magazine* (Chadstone Centre, Victoria, Australia) (1967–1971).
- American Folk Music Occasional* (Berkeley, California) (1964–1970); 2 nos.
- American Music* (Sonneck Society & The University of Illinois Press) (1983–); quarterly.
- American Visions: The Magazine of Afro American Culture* (Washington, D.C.) (1986–).

PERIODICALS

- Les Amitiés Louisianaises* (Liège-Vottem, Belgium) (1987–1996); quarterly; 38 issues.
- Arhoolie Occasional* (Arhoolie Records, Berkeley, California) 1971–1973; 2 nos.; later *The Lightning Express* (incorporating the *Arhoolie Occasional*) (1973–1976); 3 nos.
- Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies* (formerly the *Kansas Quarterly*) (Arkansas State University) (1970–). *Audience* (West Peterborough, New Hampshire) (1991–1992); later the *Blues Audience* (1992–).
- Austin Blues Monthly* (Austin, Texas) (1994–).
- Australian Blues Society* (Canberra City, ACT, Australia) (1973–1974).
- Back Beat* (Oklahoma Blues Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) (June 1990–October 1999); unnumbered.
- Back to the Roots Blueskrant*; later *Back to the Roots—Magazine voor Blues en Aanverwanten* (Zedelgem, Belgium) (1995–); bimonthly.
- Bay Blues Monthly* (San Francisco, California) (1988?–).
- B. B. Review—British Blues Review, The Official Journal of the British Blues Network* (London, UK) (1988–); bimonthly.
- BBR Boogie* (London, UK) (1990–); monthly.
- Big City Blues* (Detroit Blues Society, Royal Oak, Michigan) (1994–); continues as *Detroit Blues Magazine*; bimonthly.
- Billboard* (New York City, New York; Los Angeles, California) (1896–); weekly (originally *Billboard Advertising*, Cincinnati, Ohio); website: <http://www.billboard.com>.
- Black Echoes* (London, UK) (April 21, 1979–April 11, 1981); weekly; unnumbered issues.
- Black Music Research Journal* (Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois) (1980–); semiannual.
- Black Perspective in Music—Foundation for Research in the Afro-American Creative Arts* (Cambria Heights, New York) (1973–1990); 18 volumes.
- Black Stars* (incorporating *Tan Magazine*)—A Johnson Publication (Chicago, Illinois) (1971–).
- Bleu Banane—Jazz, Blues, etc.* (Stavelot, Belgium) (November 1997–Spring 2000); 4 issues.
- Block—Tijdschrift voor Blues* (Almelo, Holland) (1975–); quarterly.
- Blue Flame* (Wilmette, Illinois) (1969–1972); 17 nos.
- Blue Notes—A Supplement to Jazz in Time* (Liege, Belgium) (April 1990–April 1993); 10 issues.
- Blue Sky Review* (San Francisco, California) (1974–1977).
- Blues (International Jazz & Blues)* (Brussels, Belgium) (1970–1971); 5 issues.
- The Blues* (Japanese Blues Society, Tokyo, Japan) (1970–1980s).
- Blues Access* (Boulder, Colorado) (1990–2002); quarterly.
- Bluesboarder* (Tourcoing, France) (1995–); monthly.
- Blues Feeling* (Pont du Château, France) (1997–2003); quarterly, 22 nos.
- Blues Forum* (Berlin, Germany) (1980–1987); 20 nos.
- Blues Gazette* (Sinai, Belgium) (1995–1996); 4 nos.
- Blues Life* (Vienna Blues Fanclub) (Vienna, Austria) (1974–1988), 44 nos.; later *Blues Life Journal—Österreichische Fachzeitschrift für Bluesmusik* (1989–1995); 25 nos.
- Blues Link* (Barnet/Hitchin, UK) (1973–1975); 6 nos.
- Blues Magazine* (Toronto Canada) (1975–1979).
- Blues News: Das Deutsche Bluesmagazin* (Altena, Germany, 1995–).
- BN—Blues News—Afro-Amerikkalaisen Musiikin Aanenkannettaja* (Helsinki, Finland) (1975–1980s); monthly.
- Blues Power Magazine* (Dirmstein, Germany) (1992–1994).
- Blues Research* (Record Research, New York City, New York) (1959–1967); 16 nos.
- Blues & Rhythm—The Gospel Truth* (Morley, UK) (1984–); monthly.
- Blues Revue Quarterly* (West Union, West Virginia); later *Blues Revue* (1991–); quarterly.
- Blues & Soul Records* (Blues Interactions, Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) (early 1980s–).
- Blues To-Do's* (Seattle, Washington) (1992–); monthly.
- Blues Unlimited* (London, UK) (1963–1987); 149 nos.
- Blues Unlimited Collectors Classics* (Bexhill-on-Sea, UK) (1964–1966), 14 nos.
- Blues Wire—All the Blues in New England* (Bedford, Massachusetts) (1993–); monthly.
- Blues World and Blues World Booklets* (Knutsford, UK) (1965–1974).
- Blues World Digest* (Chicago, Illinois) (1994).
- Bone Music Magazine* (Nashville Tennessee) (1986–).
- Boogie Woogie en Blues Collector* (Amsterdam, Holland) (1970–1973).
- Broadside* (New York City, New York) (1962–early 1990s).
- Bulletin du Cercle du Jazz Hot* (Verviers, Belgium) (1949–).
- Bulletin du Hot Club de France* (Montauban, France) (October 1950–).
- Cadence: The American Review of Jazz and Blues* (Redwood, New York) (1976–); monthly.
- Les Cahiers du Jazz (Jazz Magazine, Paris, France)* (1959–1961); quarterly; 4 issues; later *Les Cahiers du Jazz—Presses Universitaires de France* (1994–1996); quarterly; 12 issues.
- Cashbox: The International Music-Record Weekly* (New York City, New York) (1942–); weekly.
- Chicago Blues Magazine* (Chicago, Illinois) (1992–).
- Come for to Sing: Folk Music in Chicago and the Midwest* (Chicago, Illinois) (January 1975–Autumn 1985); 11 volumes.
- Crawdaddy* (New York City, New York) (1966–1978); 91 issues.
- Crazy Music—The Journal of the Australian Blues Society* (Canberra City, Australia) (June 1974–December 1977); 11 issues.
- Creole Magazine* (Lafayette, Louisiana) (December 1990–); monthly.
- Detour: Country Folk and Blues Music Magazine* (North Humberstone, UK) (1990–).
- Detroit Blues* (Detroit Blues Society) (1995–1997); continues as *Big City Blues* (1997–).
- Downbeat* (Chicago, Illinois) (1934–); monthly.
- The Downtowner* (Memphis, Tennessee); (1991–).
- Ebony, Jet* (Johnson Publishing Co., Inc., Chicago, Illinois) (1945–).
- Ethnomusicology: Journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology* (Middletown, Connecticut; since 1973 in Ann Arbor, Michigan) (1953–); currently 3 issues per year.
- Feelin' Good* (Milan, Italy) (October 1985–December 1990); 31/32 nos.
- Frets* (Saratoga, California; later Cupertino, California) (1979–1989); 126 issues in 11 volumes.
- Folk Roots* (Farnham, UK) (1979–); monthly; originally *Southern Rag* (1979–1985).
- German Blues Circle* (Frankfurt, Germany) (1976–).

- Goldmine* (Iola, Wisconsin) (1974–); bimonthly until 1977, monthly since 1977.
- Guitar Player* (Los Gatos, California) (1967–); monthly; originally published in Saratoga, California, 1967–1971.
- Guitare et Claviers* (Paris, France) (1982–); monthly.
- Guitarist* (Boulogne-Billancourt, France) (1989–), monthly.
- Hot Buttered Soul* (Minster, UK) (1971–1975).
- Il Blues* (Milano, Italy) (1983–); quarterly.
- International Jazz Archives Journal* (University of Pittsburgh, International Academy of Jazz, Hall of Fame, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) (1993–).
- Jazz and Blues* (London UK) (1971–1973); monthly; 3 volumes; merged with *Jazz Journal*.
- Jazz Around* (Liège, Belgium) (1995–); quarterly.
- Jazz Beat* (George H. Buck [GHB] Jazz Foundation, New Orleans, Louisiana) (1989–).
- Jazz Blues & Co.* (Paris, France) (1976–1986); 81 nos.
- Jazz Forum—The Magazine of the International Jazz Federation* (Vienna, Austria) (1966–); bimonthly.
- Jazz Halo* (Torhout, Belgium) (1997–); quarterly.
- Jazz Hot* (Paris, France) (1937–); monthly.
- Jazz in Time* (Neupré, Belgium) (1989–1995); 61 nos.
- Jazz Journal* (London, UK) (1948–); monthly; later *Jazz Journal International* (London, UK) (since 1977).
- Jazz Magazine* (Paris, France) (1950–); monthly.
- Jazz Monthly* (London, UK) (1950–1960s); monthly.
- Jazz One More Time* (Geneva, Switzerland) (1978–); monthly.
- Jazz Podium* (Stuttgart, Germany) (1951–); monthly.
- Jazz Report* (Ventura, California) (1955–1980); 15 volumes.
- Jazz South* (Atlanta, Georgia) (1990–1996).
- Jazz Times* (Washington, D.C.) (1961–); monthly since 1973.
- Jazz: Unterhaltungs- und Informationszeitschrift für Jazz, Blues, Gospel and Spirituals, Rhythm & Blues, Soul, Country & Western* (Zürich, Switzerland) (1974–1978).
- Jazz Zeitung* (Germany) (1998–).
- Jazzforschung—Jazz Research* (Graz, Austria) (1968–); annual.
- Jazzman* (Paris, France) (1995–); monthly.
- Le Jazzophone* (Paris, France) (1978–1984); 17 nos.
- Jefferson* (Stockholm, Sweden) (1968–).
- Jet* (A Johnson Publication; Chicago, Illinois).
- Jet City Blues Review* (Bellevue, Washington) (1994–1996).
- Juke Blues* (London, UK) (1985–); quarterly.
- Juil's Halo* (Heist-op-den-Berg, Belgium) (1999–).
- Keskidee: A Journal of Black Musical Traditions* (Rochford, UK) (1986–1993); 3 nos.
- King Biscuit Time* (Flower Mound, Texas) (2004); monthly.
- The King Biscuit Times* (Helena, Arkansas) (1992–1999).
- Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry* (CBMR, Chicago, Illinois) (1999–2002); 5 nos.
- Living Blues: A Journal of the African-American Blues Traditions* (Chicago, Illinois; later Oxford, Mississippi) (1970–).
- Magic Blues Magazine* (Chicago, Illinois) (1991–); quarterly.
- Maple Blues* (Toronto Blues Society, Toronto, Canada) (1984–).
- MAWA Review: Middle Atlantic Writers Association Press* (Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland) (1986–); semiannual.
- Melody Maker* (London, UK) (January 1926–May 1933); monthly (initially *Melody Maker* and *British Metronome*; renamed *Melody Maker* in October 1931); weekly from May 1933 until cease in 2000. No significant jazz or blues content since circa 1970.
- Melus: The Journal of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* (University of Southern California, Los Angeles) (1974–); quarterly.
- Micrography* (Deventer, Alphen aan der Rijn, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) (1968–1989); 78 issues.
- Musica Jazz* (Milano, Italy) (1945–); monthly.
- Muziekkrant* (Grimbergen, Belgium) (1979–1980).
- Naird* (National Association of Independent Record Distributors and Manufacturers) *Notes* (1988–); *Naird Newsletter* (1983–1989).
- New Komotion* (Wembley, UK).
- New Musical Express* (1952–); weekly; continued from *Accordion Times and Musical Express* (1946–1948) and *Musical Express* (1948–1952). Has had no significant jazz or blues content since circa 1970.
- Offbeat: New Orleans & Louisiana's Music & Entertainment; later Offbeat: America's Roots Music Magazine* (New Orleans, Louisiana) (1987–); monthly.
- The Original Chicago Blues Annual* (Chicago, Illinois) (1989–1994); annual; 6 issues.
- Pickin' the Blues* (West Lothian, UK) (January 1982–June 1984); 25 nos.
- Le Point du Jazz* (Brussels, Belgium) (1969–1986); 20 nos.
- Prologue: Opera* (Liège, Belgium) (1969–1992); monthly; 249 nos.
- R & B Monthly* (Kenley, Surrey, UK) (1964–1966); 24 issues.
- R & B Scene* (Manchester, UK) (1964–? [ending 1965 or later]).
- Real Blues* (Victoria, Canada) (1996–1999).
- Record Changer* (Fairfax, Virginia; Washington, D.C.; New York City, New York) (1942–1957); 15 volumes.
- Record Exchanger* (Anaheim, California) (1969–1982).
- Record Research* (Brooklyn, New York) (1967–); bimonthly.
- Record Research* (Harlow Essex, UK) (1960–1986).
- Rhythm & Blues Panorama* (Brussels, Belgium) (1960–1965); 43 nos.
- Rollin' and Tumblin'* (Luxembourg, G.D. Luxembourg) (1997–); quarterly.
- Sabam* (Brussels, Belgium) (1995–); quarterly.
- Sailor's Delight* (London, UK) (1978–1984); 16 nos.
- 78 Quarterly* (Key West, Florida) (1967–1968 vol. 1, nos. 1 & 2; reprint 1992; 1992–).
- Solo Blues* (Madrid, Spain) (1980s–1990s).
- Soul Music* (1967–1968); later *Shout* (Chiselhurst, UK) (1968–1977); 112 issues.
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EDWARD KOMARA
 ACE ATKINS
 ROBERT SACRÉ

PERKINS, AL

b. 8 January 1932; Brookhaven, MS
 d. 13 February 1983; Detroit, MI

Singer, promoter/manager, and radio personality. Raised in Leland MS, and moved to Chicago. In the 1960s he sang blues and soul music for various Chicago labels. Later he worked with Little Milton and Lillian Offitt as producer or promoter. He was a radio personality on WJLB-FM in Detroit from 1968–1978. He was found dead in his Detroit office and presumed murdered.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSPF

PERKINS, JOE WILLIE “PINETOP”

b. 7 July 1913; Belzoni, MS

Pianist, singer. Perkins, who began his career as a guitarist, became the most honored blues pianist of the late twentieth century, winning the W. C. Handy Award as the genre's top keyboardist for ten consecutive years from 1992 to 2001. Perkins, whose first American album was released when he was seventy-five years old, initially came to international attention when he replaced Otis Spann in the Muddy Waters Band in 1969 but by then he had been deeply involved in the blues for more than a quarter century.

Perkins's guitar-playing days were curtailed in the wake of a mid-1940s incident in Helena, Arkansas, where an irate chorus girl attacked him with a knife, severing tendons in his left arm. Perkins was in Helena as an accompanist to slide guitar ace Robert Nighthawk, with whom he would record in 1950. Nighthawk and Perkins performed on a popular blues radio program but in time the pianist changed allegiances and began working with Sonny Boy Williamson on the legendary “King Biscuit Time” program.

The Nighthawk affiliation made it possible for Perkins to tour widely when guitarist Earl Hooker, a protégé, if not outright disciple, of the seminal slide star, hired him for his active touring band. While on tour with Hooker, Perkins made a stop in Memphis in 1953 and recorded his signature song “Pinetop's Boogie Woogie” for the first of many times. The song, despite its title and Perkins's affinity for its rambunctious rhythms, wasn't his composition nor was his recording the first time it had been heard. But it didn't matter because Perkins made it his own, eventually totally eclipsing the version and memory of its originator, Clarence Smith.

Perkins tired of the road and settled down in southern Illinois before returning to Chicago. He was fifty-five and it appeared his career had concluded when Hooker came calling again, this time to involve Perkins in an Arhoolie recording session. Perkins's return to action coincided with the piano slot in the Muddy Waters Band being vacated by Spann and in a matter of weeks he had been hired, effectively going from semi-retirement to working with the best-known name in blues.

Perkins became a core component of the Muddy Waters Band for the next decade, a period during which the Chicago legend was discovered by a young, white rock audience. He also developed a close relationship, both musical and personal, with his bandmates and he went along in 1980 when they staged the biggest defection in blues history, leaving

PERKINS, JOE WILLIE "PINETOP"

the employ of Waters to form their own group, the Legendary Blues Band.

Stepping out of Muddy Waters's considerable shadow allowed Perkins to exhibit his vocal talents on a couple of early 1980s releases by the Legendary Blues Band, *Life of Ease* and *Red Hot 'n' Blue*. Perkins apparently enjoyed it and he very belatedly, but quite energetically, embarked on a solo career, releasing *After Hours*, his American debut as a leader, in 1988. He probably hit his recording peak in 1992 with, of course, *Pinetop's Boogie Woogie*, an album where he received seasoned and sympathetic support from Jimmy Rogers, James Cotton, Kim Wilson, Duke Robillard, and other accomplished veterans. Perkins, who won the W. C. Handy acoustic album award for *Portrait of a Delta Bluesman* in 1994 and the 1995 Handy for best traditional male artist, continued to regularly tour and record into his nineties.

MICHAEL POINT

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Perkins, Pinetop. "Pinetop's Boogie." *Living Blues* no. 97
(May/June 1991): 10–16.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

PERRY, BILL (MISSISSIPPI)

b. Mississippi

Guitarist of soul/blues and gospel, active since the early 1960s. In the early 1990s he established in Oxford, Mississippi, his family band The Perrys, performing blues with funk and rap touches. In 2003 the Perrys participated in a session for Buddy Guy's *Blues Singer* CD for the Jive label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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PERRY, BILL (NEW YORK)

b. Chester, NY

Singer, guitarist, and songwriter active since the 1980s. Raised in upstate New York, he began playing guitar at age six, and in high school he led his own bands. During the 1980s he was guitarist in Richie

Havens' band. He formed his own group in the early 1990s, and in 1995 he signed with Pointblank/Virgin label. His recent work, combining jazz, folk, rock, and blues, has been for Blind Pig Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

PERRY, OSCAR LEE

b. 12 May 1943; Lake Jackson, TX

d. 4 August 2004; Houston, TX

Songwriter, singer. Moved to Houston, Texas, in 1956. Through the 1960s he recorded for various labels including a regional hit "Treat Me Like Your Only Child" for Duke/Peacock in 1968. He wrote new songs for Duke/Peacock label and later for producer Huey Meaux. His own labels were Perrytone and TSOT.

EDWARD KOMARA

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PERRYMAN, RUFUS

(*See Speckled Red*)

PERRYMAN, WILLIE

(*See Piano Red*)

PETERSON, JAMES

b. 4 November 1937; Russell County, AL

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter James Peterson was exposed to the blues through his father and grew up singing gospel music in his church. James taught himself guitar and eventually landed in Buffalo,

New York, in 1955, to find success in the blues society. Upon arrival, James played in several bands, and ten years later he opened his own blues club, the Governor's Inn. Doing so allowed other blues musicians the opportunity to play the blues in the New York scene, including his son, Lucky Peterson. In 1970, James recorded his first album *The Father, Son, and the Blues*, but it is James's latest release, *Don't Let the Devil Ride*, that demonstrates his ability as a songwriter and experienced gospel singer to capture the essence of the blues.

HEATHER PINSON

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AMG (Richard Skelly)

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Discography: AMG

PETERSON, LUCKY

b. Judge Kenneth Peterson, 13 December 1964; Buffalo, NY

Lucky, born Judge Kenneth Peterson, learned the blues at an early age from his father James Peterson, who was a blues singer in his own right. His father owned a blues club and often invited surrounding musicians to perform. Lucky learned the drums and organ at age three, and at age five he drew instant fame from his hit single, "1, 2, 3, 4" produced by Willie Dixon. Lucky soon appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson, and *What's My Line*. With the encouragement of his father, Lucky had the privilege of playing in clubs at an early age. He eventually learned the guitar and began to sing.

At age seventeen, Lucky was already playing the organ with Little Milton Campbell and later joined Bobby "Blue" Bland. By this time Peterson had also become an accomplished guitarist and had relocated in Florida, where he met Alligator record producer Bob Greenlee and recorded his first two solo albums, *Lucky Strikes!* in 1989 and *Triple Play* in 1990. He also became a top studio musician for Kingsnake and played on albums by Kenny Neal with *Big News from Baton Rouge* and Rufus Thomas on *That Woman Is Poison*.

Lucky's skills are primarily in demand as a keyboard player, but Lucky is equally skilled as a guitarist

and vocalist. He plays with a mixture of blues, rock, R&B, and soul and continues to perform and record.

HEATHER PINSON

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AMG (Dahl); Santelli

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Discography: AMG

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PETWAY, ROBERT

b. Perhaps 1908; J. F. Sligh Farm near Yazoo City, MS

Activity unknown since 1940, Chicago, Illinois. Little biographical information is available on Robert Petway. He was the first to record "Catfish Blues," which became a blues standard, and may even have composed the song. Big Bill Broonzy reported to researcher Paul Oliver that Petway played with Tommy McClennan and that the two grew up together as kids. McClennan was born and raised on the J. F. Sligh farm about ten miles north of Yazoo City in 1908 and it seems likely from Broonzy's recollection that Petway was about the same age and raised on the same farm.

McClennan was an influence on David "Honeyboy" Edwards, who learned songs like "Catfish Blues" and "Bullfrog" from him. In another account Edwards states that he learned "Catfish Blues" in person from Petway. McClennan was stylistically similar to Petway because the two played together often. McClennan and Petway would play at house parties, and in the juke joint at Three Forks crossroads, famous now as the place where Robert Johnson was reportedly poisoned. In 1939 McClennan moved to Chicago and had three successful recording sessions by the time Petway had his first. It seems likely that McClennan sent for Petway to come to Chicago and record.

Petway recorded eight sides for Bluebird Records in 1941 and followed those up with eight more in 1942 both with Alfred Elkins on string bass. Like McClennan, Petway possessed a deep, gravelly voice, a hard attack on the guitar, and a tendency to

PETWAY, ROBERT

talk between lines, either to himself or his audience. “Catfish Blues,” from the first session, was a big hit and became a standard that was recorded by everyone from John Lee Hooker to Jimi Hendrix. Muddy Waters later borrowed some of the lyrics, transforming it into “Rollin’ Stone.” Petway’s second session was held immediately after a session by Tommy McClennan (McClennan’s last) with two numbers not released. A highlight of this session was “Boogie Woogie Woman” with McClennan joining in on vocals.

According to Honeyboy Edwards, Petway may have moved to Arkansas then come back to Chicago. It is unknown what became of him.

JEFF HARRIS

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Discography: DGR

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See also **Bluebird**; **Chicago**; **Edwards, David** “**Honeyboy**”; **McClennan, Tommy**; **Catfish Blues**

PHELPS, KELLY JOE

b. 5 October 1959; Sumner, WA

Contemporary fingerstyle and lap-style slide guitarist and vocalist heavily influenced by Delta blues masters Robert Pete Williams and Fred McDowell. His first three albums were based in the country blues, while *Skyy Like a Broken Clock* (Rykodisc, 2001) and *Slingshot Professionals* (Rykodisc, 2003) featured all-original ensemble compositions.

JOE C. CLARK

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Discography: AMG

See also **McDowell, Fred**; **Williams, Robert Pete**

PHELPS, WALTER

b. 5 June 1896; Laurens, SC

d. 4 February 1983; Asheville, NC

Living Blues obituary lists 1899 as birth year. Phelps had a jug band in Asheville in the 1930s; in the 1970s he played at the Asheville Junction Coffeehouse with his wife Ethel. He was born in the same locale as Gary Davis and knew him in childhood and later in Asheville. Phelps made a few attempts at recording, but nothing was issued.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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PHILLIPS INTERNATIONAL

(See *Sun/Phillips International/Flip*)

PHILLIPS, BREWER

b. 16 November 1924; Youngsburg, MS

d. 30 August 1999; Chicago, IL

A guitarist of razor-sharp intensity, Brewer Phillips made his name as a member of Hound Dog Taylor’s Houserockers. Raised in Coila, Mississippi, he grew up playing guitar alongside friends such as Goldie Taylor. Phillips cherished his mother, Estelle, who taught him to read and to sing. He moved to Tunica where he pumped gas and worked the juke joints, earning stints with Roosevelt Sykes and Joe Willie Wilkins. After moving to Memphis, Phillips met Memphis Minnie in a pawnshop, and he was for a time her student, until he moved to Chicago. During his first encounter with Hound Dog Taylor, Phillips had suspected Taylor of stealing Phillips’s guitar. This odd first meeting signaled the beginning of a sometimes stormy working relationship until Taylor’s death in 1975. In between they recorded four Houserockers albums for the fledgling Alligator label, and in later years they enjoyed many college gigs in addition to their regular stand at Florence’s Lounge in Chicago. Phillips’s involvement in music dwindled after 1975, but it included short tours with J. B. Hutto, a little work with Cub Koda, and an occasional album or CD for the JSP, Prestige, and Delmark labels.

JOHN OTIS

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Discography: AMG

See also Taylor, Hound Dog

PHILLIPS, EARL

- b. 25 April 1920; New York City, NY
 d. 20 November 1990; Chicago, IL

Phillips took up drums in school before moving from Nashville to Chicago in 1940. He accompanied Little Walter, J. T. Brown, Jody Williams, and others, and in 1954 Muddy Waters asked him to help out Howlin' Wolf who'd just arrived from Memphis. Phillips backed Wolf on thirty-eight issued titles including such classics as "No Place to Go," "Smokestack Lightning," "Moanin' for My Baby," "Tell Me," "Who's Been Talking," "Forty-Four," and "Evil." He also played on more than sixty issued Vee-Jay sides, most notably the recordings of Jimmy Reed and Billy Boy Arnold. A specialist in bludgeoning backbeats and rumbas as well as deft brush work, Phillips was one of a core group of drummers who brought a modern beat to blues, and ultimately to rock 'n' roll.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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Discography: LSFP**PHILLIPS, GENE**

- b. Eugene Floyd Phillips, 25 July 1915; St. Louis, MO
 d. 10 January 1990; Lakewood, CA

Jump-blues singer and guitarist who recorded for Modern and other West Coast labels from 1947 to 1954 as session leader and sideman.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP**PHILLIPS, LITTLE ESTHER**

- b. Esther Mae Jones, 23 December 1935; Galveston, TX
 d. 7 August 1984; Carson, CA

Discovered by Johnny Otis, "Little" Esther Phillips was a fourteen-year-old sensational addition to the Johnny Otis Revue in 1947. Her unique voice and mature style delighted her audiences, especially on *Down Memory Lane with Little Esther*. She had the phrasing of a much older performer, the vitality of youth, and a sultry sophistication like that of Dinah Washington or Sarah Vaughn. She had an intriguing, almost falsetto, voice combined with an obvious youthful delivery of mature material. Little Esther could be sentimental and soft, but she could also rock the house.

Drug and health problems limited her career and, for a while, she retired to Houston in the late 1950s. She returned to her career in 1962. Her switch to Atlantic Records produced a wonderful selection of tracks from the mature Esther Phillips, and her work took on a much broader appeal with jazz and country western appeal. As her career and voice matured, she produced some excellent tracks for Atlantic; they are featured on *And I Love Him* and *Esther*.

Phillips had a hit in 1966 with "When a Woman Loves a Man," an answer to the Percy Sledge classic. During this period, Phillips produced some collaborative efforts with the Dixie Flyers. In her later years, Phillips's production was limited, but the quality was not. Her two albums on Kudu reflect a seasoned, extraordinary performer with full control of her performance. Sadly, health problems cut short her career and she died in 1984.

TOM FISHER

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PHILLIPS, LITTLE ESTHER

Lenox 227); *And I Love Him* (1966, Atlantic SD-1565); *Burnin' Live at Freddie Jett's Pied...* (1970, Atlantic SD-1565); *Alone Again Naturally* (1972, Kudu KU-09); *Capricorn Princess* (1974, Kudu KU-31); *Performance* (1974, Kudu KU-18); *Bad Baad Girl* (Charly CRB-1100).

PHILLIPS, WASHINGTON

b. George Washington Phillips, 11 January 1880; Teague, TX

d. 20 September 1954; Teague, TX

Black preacher active in Teague, Texas, and sacred music singer who recorded eighteen titles for Columbia from 1927 through 1929. He accompanied himself on an instrument that produced high, soft, tinkly tones. Some believe that the instrument he used was a dulcicola, a rare type of keyboard-zither; others believe he simply used an autoharp type of zither. His "Denomination Blues" was an antecedent to Sister Rosetta Tharpe's "That All" (1938).

GUIDO VAN RIJN/EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

PIANO

History and Technical Description

Heavy, unwieldy, expensive, requiring expert tuning and maintenance, the piano is an unlikely blues instrument. Nevertheless, throughout blues history, the piano has been second only to the guitar in popularity. Despite having a keyboard lacking quarter tones and the capability for tone bending, its unique quality of being both percussive and melodic has enabled generations of blues pianists to coax a blues feeling from the piano by dint of an inspired combination of slurred notes and crushed chords.

The reason for the widespread availability of the piano can probably be found in the popularity of ragtime in the late nineteenth century, which encouraged many households, public venues, and nightspots to acquire an instrument. Early statistics

for piano ownership are not available, but at a starting price of around one hundred dollars it was not beyond the reach of an average middle-class household. Although the cost may have deterred low-income black families from having a piano at home, it is likely that there was relatively easy access to an instrument in the neighborhood church or bars.

African Antecedents

Some authorities have sought to establish a direct link between piano blues and African music, citing the rhythmic similarities of the music with African drums and the xylophone. However, the relationship is not as clear-cut as sometimes assumed. If there were surviving memories of African traditions through dance, and in the playing styles of instruments such as the banjo, the later emergence of a piano blues style seems more to have been an evolution from ragtime, itself a hybrid music, and early jazz, followed by heavy record company promotion.

The European Tradition

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, American music predominantly followed the prevailing European traditions. Two black classical pianists whose names have survived from the period are Blind Tom (Bethune) from Columbus, Georgia, who was said to be semi-idiotic but could reproduce any piano composition after only one hearing, and the conservatory-trained Blind Boone from Missouri. The latter had a successful concert career, but was not above occasionally disappearing into the St. Louis sporting district to soak up the local atmosphere. In the 1890s Boone published *Boone's Rag Medleys Nos. 1 and 2*, which included *Make Me a Pallet on the Floor* and *I'm Alabama Bound*, surely a pair of proto-blues.

In New Orleans, up until the 1880s, the black community was permitted to dance in La Place Congo every Sunday, to the accompaniment of drums, horns, and other instruments. The rhythm of the dance was captured by the composer Louis Gottschalk in his piano opus *La Bamboula—Danse des Negres*, written in 1847. However, while Gottschalk had a serious interest in African music as performed in New Orleans, Americans everywhere experienced parodies in the form of the popular coon songs and minstrel shows. The minstrel shows presented a caricature of the black person, which was on the one hand sympathetic, but on the other highly demeaning. Nevertheless, the syncopated banjo music that they featured

heavily would eventually metamorphose into ragtime, the first truly all-American music.

Ragtime

Ragtime combined the syncopation of African American banjo styles with the stride bass of European music. Its revolutionary feature was the way the pianist opposed right-hand syncopations (or accents on the weak and normally unaccented second and fourth beats of the bar) against a precise and regularly accented left-hand bass. The name “ragtime” first appeared in print in a Chicago paper of 1897, but the music had already been around for a few years by then and was formerly known as “jig” piano. Its emergence coincided with the rise in popularity of the cakewalk, a dance that was eminently suited to be performed to a ragtime accompaniment. Ragtime, and the cakewalk, swept the nation in the late 1890s.

Ben Harney always claimed to be the originator of ragtime, and his *The Rag Time Instructor* was published in 1897. He was, however, beaten into print by William Krell, a Chicago bandleader, whose *Mississippi Rag* was published a few months earlier. The first rag by a Negro composer was Tom Turpin’s *Harlem Rag*, published in December of the same year.

Although there were many ragtime “professors,” its preeminent composer was Scott Joplin, born circa 1868 and raised in Texarana, Texas. As a boy, Joplin studied the piano with a German piano teacher, but left home in his early teens to begin a career as an itinerant musician. He arrived in St. Louis in 1895 and found work in the clubs and bars of the Chestnut Valley district. He stayed in the area for eight years and it is probable that the elements of ragtime were conceived during this time, in clubs such as the Silver Dollar. In 1894, after a sojourn in Chicago for the World’s Columbian Exposition, Joplin moved to Sedalia and there, in 1899, he met John Stark. They met at the Maple Leaf Club, and there, Stark, a local music store owner, heard Joplin play the *Maple Leaf Rag*. The next day Stark bought the publishing rights and within six months the tune was a hit. Stark moved to St. Louis and other Joplin standards such as *Elite Syncopations* and *The Entertainer* followed in 1902. St. Louis remained a center for ragtime, and pianists used to congregate at the Rosebud, Tom Turpin’s place on Market Street.

In addition to those mentioned above, other outstanding ragtime pianists included James Scott, Joseph Lamb, Eubie Blake, Louis Chauvin, and Tony Jackson.

The First “Blues” Popular Songs

Long before the blues settled into the twelve-bar form in which it is usually played, there were “blues” songs published that were simply the popular songs of the day. Several eyewitness accounts mention hearing blues lyrics around the turn of the twentieth century, but the first published blues titles were “Dallas Blues,” “Baby Seals Blues,” and “Memphis Blues,” all in 1912. Bandleader W. C. Handy claimed to have written the latter in 1909, under the title “Mr. Crump,” as a campaign song for Jesse Crump in the mayoralty race of that year. Of the three, only “Dallas Blues” was successful at the time, but two years later Handy published “St. Louis Blues,” which was a hit and made his fortune in sheet music sales. Although few of his compositions were what would now be considered blues, Handy did much to publicize the name and his biography, published in 1941, was entitled *Father of the Blues*.

New Orleans Jazz

Perhaps because of its reputation as the birthplace of jazz, New Orleans is hardly recognized as a center of blues activity. Two fine pianists, Jelly Roll Morton and Tony Jackson, graduated from playing in joints in the tenderloin district to achieve fame elsewhere, but the only information available about their New Orleans contemporaries and the music they played is in Morton’s Library of Congress recordings made some thirty years later. Both Morton and Jackson played with a regularly accented left hand, although Morton’s style had more flexibility and jazz influence than the ragtime pianists of his generation. Morton, who left New Orleans in 1909, was a trained musician and played mostly in white establishments. Notwithstanding, he was also popular among the prostitutes, according to Bunk Johnson, for his ability to play the blues. Morton remembered two other blues pianists from the Garden District red light area, Game Kid and Buddy Carter, but neither made records.

Boogie-Woogie

A particular form of blues piano, in which an ostinato rolling bass figure features strongly, is called “boogie-woogie.” The origins of boogie-woogie are unknown. One theory is that it originated in the turpentine and lumber camps of East Texas and Louisiana around

the turn of the twentieth century and, according to pianist Sammy Price, was originally known as “fast western.” To keep the loggers in camp at weekends, musical entertainment, in the form of itinerant pianists, was provided by the camp bosses. The shacks in which they played had walls lined with barrels of beer and moonshine whiskey, which gave these joints (and the piano style that grew up there) the name “barrelhouse.” However, not all barrelhouse piano is boogie-woogie, and it must be presumed that the pianists would also be required to play the popular tunes of the day.

It also seems likely that boogie-woogie sprang up in more than one area. Eubie Blake remembered pianist Will Turk playing a boogie-woogie bass in Baltimore in the 1890s, and Jelly Roll Morton claimed to have heard it in New Orleans in 1900. Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter) learned to imitate on the guitar a boogie-woogie bass he picked up from a pianist called Pine Top in Shreveport, Louisiana, around the same time. Also in Louisiana, Stavin’ Chain was beating out boogie-woogie in dance halls in Donaldsville, and Charlie Mills was playing it on the Mississippi riverboats. In 1909, W. C. Handy heard a pianist playing boogie-woogie in the Monarch Saloon on Beale Street.

Transition

Probably the earliest boogie bass, the walking octave bass, in which the left hand proceeds to run up and down the notes of the chord in broken octaves, appears in early ragtime compositions such as *New Orleans Hop Scop Blues* by George Thomas, published in 1916 but written in 1911. The first recorded piano solo in which a boogie-woogie bass appears is “The Rocks” by Clay Custer and dates from 1923. “Clay Custer” is widely believed to be a pseudonym for George Thomas. Thomas himself was a theater pit pianist and music publisher, born around 1885, in Houston, Texas. By 1923 he had moved to Chicago, bringing with him his younger brother Hersal, a child prodigy who recorded two fine piano solos, “Suitcase Blues” and “Hersal Blues,” and also played with Louis Armstrong, before his untimely death at the age of sixteen.

Among the first notable pianists to record blues and boogie were Charles Cow-Cow Davenport, from Anniston, Alabama, and Jimmy Blythe, from Lexington, Kentucky. Davenport was born into a religious family in 1894. He initially attended Alabama Theological Seminary, but was expelled and soon gravitated to working as a pianist in honky-tonks in

Birmingham, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia. In his teens he worked in various traveling minstrel shows and carnivals, and also had a spell as a brothel pianist in the Storyville district of New Orleans. He had his greatest success in vaudeville, accompanying such singers as Dora Carr and Ivy Smith on the TOBA circuit, and reputedly touring Europe in the mid-1920s. He had a particularly strong left hand, which is evident in his best known composition “Cow Cow Blues.” When performing boogie-woogie, Davenport used a characteristic version of the walking octaves bass, with the accent on the first note of each couplet. A true transition figure, Davenport also included classic ragtime in his repertoire, for example, “Atlanta Rag,” which is a version of Scott Joplin’s “Pineapple Rag,” published in 1908.

Jimmy Blythe was born in Keene, Kentucky, in 1901 and probably moved to Chicago around 1918. He studied under Clarence Jones, a well-known pianist and orchestra leader, and by the early twenties was making piano rolls, of which he ultimately made more than two hundred. Blythe recorded all kinds of music, including waltzes and popular songs, but it is for his hot jazz, blues, and boogie that he will be remembered. “Chicago Stomps,” from 1924, is widely regarded as the first full boogie-woogie piano solo on record. His 1928 sides with the Dixie Four, including pianist W. E. Burton, have a good claim to be the first R&B records issued. Both “Five O’Clock Stomp” and “Kentucky Stomp” feature drummer Clifford “Snags” Jones playing the 2/4 backbeat that was not to become commonplace until the 1950s. In his short life Blythe influenced many other pianists including, conspicuously, Albert Ammons.

Blues Recording

Mamie Smith’s rendition of “Crazy Blues” in 1920 set the pattern of blues recording for much of the decade. The classic blues singers were popular vaudeville and cabaret performers, almost exclusively female, whose material was usually written by professional songwriters. In most cases their repertoire was a mixture of twelve-bar blues and popular songs. Sometimes their accompaniment was just a pianist; on other occasions a small jazz group was used. The pianists were essentially trained studio musicians, and included in their ranks Clarence Williams, James P. Johnson, Fletcher Henderson, and Porter Grainger. Sometimes the accompanist was also the composer of the song. These pianists played predominantly stride piano, an East Coast style that developed from ragtime and retained the regular beat of the left hand with a greater

freedom of right-hand improvisation. Foremost among the classic blues singers were Bessie Smith, Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Clara Smith, Alberta Hunter, and Sara Martin.

Impact of Records

Until the advent of the record industry, the primary means of dissemination of piano styles was by sheet music sales. Although individual self-taught pianists could exchange ideas in person, for the mass market it was essential to get those ideas down in print. This required that both composer and purchaser be musically literate and put a premium on sight reading. All this was changed at a stroke by the gramophone record. Compositions could be learned by ear by repeated playing and new styles could easily be assimilated by pianists across the country. Fueled by the record industry’s desire for novelty, and its concentration on blues music for the African American market, a new generation of self-taught blues pianists came to prominence whose styles were highly individual and owed little to the previous legitimate training. The trend started in Chicago, one of the first major recording centers.

Boogie—The First Wave

The first piano record title to mention boogie-woogie was Clarence “Pine Top” Smith’s 1928 recording of “Pine Top’s Boogie Woogie.” Smith was born in Troy, Alabama, in June 1904 and in his teens moved to Birmingham, which at that time had a strong blues piano tradition. As a pianist, he was soon proficient enough to appear on the TOBA circuit, accompanying such artists as Butterbeans & Susie, Ma and Pa Rainey, and Coot Grant and Sox Wilson. Around 1924 he moved to Chicago where, with his wife and two children, he shared a house on South Parkway with fellow pianists Meade “Lux” Lewis and Albert Ammons. In 1928 he was contacted by record executive Mayo Williams, who arranged for him to record the songs and piano solos for which he is justifiably famous. Two months later he was dead, shot in a disturbance at a dance hall. The origin of the term “boogie” (“woogie” is a reduplication) is obscure, but at this period it certainly had sexual connotations. Although he was far from the first to play in this style, Smith’s record firmly associated the word in the public’s mind with the insistent eight-to-the-bar bass. It is alleged that the melody itself first

appeared in sheet music form in Axel Christensen’s “Symphonic No. 4” published in 1925, and its double-handed trill introduction closely resembles the Hersal Thomas intro to “Special Delivery Blues” by Sippie Wallace (1926). Easily his best-known work, “Pine Top’s Boogie Woogie” is played with a light, deft touch. The single-note eight-to-the-bar bass has a terrific swing and the commentary shows that this was music for dancing as well as listening.

Another seminal boogie-woogie record was the 1927 “Honky Tonk Train Blues” by Meade “Lux” Lewis. His father was a porter on the Pullman coaches, and the family home was on South La Salle near the New York Central line. His first instrument was the violin, but at the age of sixteen he met the great blues and boogie pianist Jimmy Yancey and switched to piano, by practicing in the home of his boyhood friend Albert Ammons, who was also destined to become famous as a boogie pianist. From around 1924, Lewis and Ammons worked at house parties at night and for the Silver Taxicab company during the day. Around 1927 Lewis also worked in South Bend as a pianist/brothel keeper. In the same year he returned to Chicago and was invited to record “Honky Tonk Train Blues,” his most famous composition. The eight-to-the-bar chorded bass and familiar melodic riffs of “Honky Tonk Train Blues” make it the most famous of boogie-woogie themes, and this first recording ranks among the best of his many versions. The bass is practically unique in the blues in revolving around the second inversion of the major triad.

Other classic boogie-woogie recordings from 1929 include Romeo Nelson’s “Head Rag Hop” and Arthur “Montana” Taylor’s “Indiana Avenue Stomp.”

Blues in Other Major Cities

In the early days of recording, the record companies simply signed well-known artists who were appearing in theaters and cabaret in New York and Chicago. It soon became apparent that demand was exceeding supply, however, and the companies turned to talent scouts in other major cities to fill the gap. These men were often record dealers or distributors, whose own tastes, and those of their customers, no doubt influenced their selection. In this way certain cities acquired a recognizable style. Of these perhaps the best known is St. Louis, where the major talent scout was Jesse Johnson, owner of the De Luxe Record Shop.

The St. Louis area was home to Roosevelt Sykes, Walter Davis, Henry Brown, Peetie Wheatstraw,

PIANO

Wesley Wallace, and Aaron “Pinetop” Sparks, all very individual blues pianists, but whose collective work is characterized by a hollow-sounding, vibrant quality and a consistent 4/4 chorded bass. Sykes, Davis, and Wheatstraw composed and sung their own blues songs, and were prolific recording artists throughout the thirties.

Other cities that produced notable early blues pianists include Birmingham, Alabama (Jabo Williams, Walter Roland), Detroit (Charlie Spand, Speckled Red), Indianapolis (Leroy Carr, Montana Taylor), and the seaports of Houston and Galveston, Texas (Rob Cooper, Andy Boy).

Rural Blues Piano

In the twenties and thirties accessibility dictated which artists were recorded and doubtless many fine musicians working in remote places were never discovered. An exception was Eurreal “Little Brother” Montgomery, from Kentwood, Louisiana, whose father ran a local barrelhouse. At an early age he dropped out of school to earn his living as a musician, first in small towns in Louisiana, and later in Vicksburg and New Orleans. He settled in Chicago in 1928, but then in 1931 he moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where he formed his own band, the Southland Troubadours, with whom he played dances and radio shows for the rest of the decade. An accomplished, versatile pianist, Little Brother’s blues piano style was firmly rooted in the Louisiana tradition, relying on a flexibility and sparseness reminiscent of early gospel music. Other rural pianists who achieved some reputation were Will Ezell, who played the same Louisiana dance halls and logging camps as Little Brother, eventually becoming virtually the house pianist for Paramount; Louis Johnson, who lived on Joe Kirby’s plantation near Claxton, Mississippi, and recorded some fine sides in 1930; and Lee Green, a fine pianist and singer, also from Mississippi.

Prewar Recordings

The Urban Sound

The thirties saw the rise of blues recording stars, artists whose records sold consistently enough for them to be regular visitors to the studios. Of the blues pianists, the best known were the talented songwriter Leroy Carr (who died in 1935), the technically

brilliant Roosevelt Sykes, the idiosyncratic Walter Davis, and the ebullient Peetie Wheatstraw. A later addition to this stellar galaxy was Big Maceo, a pianist/singer from Georgia, whose outstanding piano work would influence many later artists including Johnny Jones and Otis Spann. In addition to the singers, there were many fine blues piano accompanists of this period including Joshua Altheimer, Blind John Davis, Black Bob, and Myrtle Jenkins.

Boogie, the Classic Period

The popularity of boogie-woogie owes much to the work of John Hammond, a New Yorker who worked for Columbia Records. Hammond rediscovered Meade “Lux” Lewis in 1936 and persuaded English Parlophone to release a new version of “Honky Tonk Train Blues.” Later, in 1938–1939, Hammond organized the celebrated “From Spirituals to Swing” concerts at Carnegie Hall, which brought together Lewis, Ammons, and the Kansas City duo of Pete Johnson and Joe Turner. Lewis, Ammons, and Johnson were billed as the Boogie Woogie Trio. Playing boogie-woogie with up to six hands on two pianos, they were an overnight sensation. Recordings, radio work, and a long residency at Café Society in New York followed. Soon the popular big bands entered the field and the inevitable commercialization followed. Throughout the boom years Ammons and Lewis remained primarily solo performers, but Pete Johnson was also an accomplished blues accompanist and his duets with Joe Turner such as “Roll ‘Em Pete” were highly influential in the R&B movement that followed.

The boogie-woogie craze also led to the welcome discovery and recording of two talented older Chicago pianists, Jimmy Yancey and “Cripple” Clarence Lofton.

Postwar Recordings

R&B Piano

By the end of World War II, the age of the solo blues pianist was practically over, although it was given a brief fillip by the success of Cecil Gant’s “I Wonder” in 1945. As the big bands gave way to small saxophone-led jump and R&B outfits, the piano was increasingly subsumed into the rhythm section. The transition was led by Louis Jordan’s Tympani Five, whose one-time pianist Bill Doggett was later to

switch to Hammond organ and create one of the greatest R&B instrumentals of all time, “Honky Tonk.” Some pianist/vocalists, such as Houston-based Amos Milburn and Charles Brown on the West Coast, remained popular and Johnson and Turner were still active, as was Camille Howard with Roy Milton’s Orchestra, but there was a wind of change in the air.

Amplification

In the late forties, increasingly the electric guitar was becoming the instrument of choice for many younger artists. As the volume rose, so the technical problems of the piano increased. Its broad sounding board made it difficult to amplify effectively and soon only the treble could be heard above the electric instruments. Other changes also took place. Previously, bands played in piano keys such as C, F, and G, or in brass keys such as B \flat and E \flat . Now, on the principle that the loudest instrument calls the tune, guitar players began to dictate the keys in which the bands played. In the guitar keys of E, A, and D it is not possible to slide between the minor and major third on the piano to create a “blue” note. Blues pianists therefore turned to the slide between the minor and major fifth to get the “blue” effect, thereby curiously echoing a similar change brought about in jazz by the rise of bebop, though for a completely different reason.

In Chicago, the rise of the independent record labels, and particularly Chess, saw an explosion of recordings by Southern migrants such as Muddy Waters and Chester “Howlin’ Wolf” Burnett. The pianists whose sparkling treble phrases helped to create the Chicago blues sound included Sunnyland Slim, Henry Gray, Johnny Johnson, and, above all, Otis Spann. Spann, from Jackson, Mississippi, is considered by many to be the outstanding postwar blues pianist, and his percussive, elegant accompaniments to Muddy Waters’s recordings are some of his best work.

New Orleans R&B

New Orleans was one outpost that did not succumb to the dominance of the electric guitar. Here pianists such as Roy Byrd (Professor Longhair), Allen Toussaint, Antoine “Fats” Domino, and Huey “Piano” Smith continued to make delightful hit records in Cosimo Matassa’s primitive studio at the corner of Rampart and Dumaine. The New Orleans sound is

very distinctive. As established by Professor Longhair, for example, in “Mardi Gras in New Orleans” (1949), it involves complex two-handed polyrhythmic patterns and a beat that may evoke the drum rhythms of La Place Congo fifty years earlier.

Soul

For most of the first fifty years of blues music, a sharp distinction was maintained between the styles of blues and gospel piano. This barrier was abruptly broken by the emergence of Ray Charles in the mid-1950s. Charles, who began as a lounge pianist in Florida, created his own style of gospel-tinged blues piano and singing, and ultimately went on to become an international superstar. The amalgam of jump-blues with tight horn sections and gospel-styled vocals became known as soul. In another development, small groups such as Booker T and the MGs in Memphis and the Bill Doggett Combo in New York established the Hammond organ as a blues instrument and created many soul and R&B hits.

Conclusion

Blues piano faces an uncertain future. Although the arrival of the electric piano has solved the amplification problem, there are very few new young blues pianists on the scene, and, outside of Germany and Austria, not much interest in classic boogie-woogie. It is to be hoped that the renaissance of interest in acoustic blues guitar among younger players will spark a similar revival in the fortunes of the piano.

BOB HALL

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PIANO C. RED

PIANO C. RED

b. James Wheeler, 14 September 1933; Montevallo, AL

Learned piano in Montevallo, Alabama, from local performer Fat Lilly. Red moved to Chicago in 1956. His notable day job has been as a cab driver, but he has worked steadily as a blues pianist and composer. Recorded “Slow Down and Cool It” for Checker in 1963, and the CD *Cab Drivin’ Man* for the Big Boy label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

PIANO RED

b. William Lee Perryman, 19 October 1911; Hampton, GA

d. 25 July 1985; Decatur, GA

Popular pianist and brother of Speckled Red (Rufus Perryman). He was also known as Doctor Feelgood. He enjoyed record hits in 1950–1951 with “Rockin’ with Red” and “Red’s Boogie.” The Beatles recorded his “Mr. Moonlight” in 1964.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

PIAZZA, ROD

b. 18 December 1947; Riverside, CA

Harmonica player Rod Piazza melds the post–World War II West Coast R&B swing sound defined by Joe Turner and Johnny Otis with the driving electric harmonica blues of Chicago’s Little Walter into a unique, powerful, and personal style. His up-tempo work (particularly on the chromatic) is fresh, brassy, and bold, while his slow numbers create a feeling of tension and suspense that is both rich and soulful.

Piazza made his first recordings at age eighteen with his Los Angeles–based group the Dirty Blues Band on ABC/BluesWay. In 1968 he teamed with harmonica player and mentor George “Harmonica” Smith to form the group Bacon Fat. Piazza played and recorded with Smith until 1973 when he formed the Chicago Flying Saucer Band with pianist Honey Alexander. (Piazza and Alexander married in 1989.) In 1977 the couple formed their current band, the Mighty Flyers, and by 1980, the band began to tour regularly. The first recordings featuring the Mighty Flyers, *Blues in the Dark* and *Alphabet Blues*, were released in 1991 and 1992, respectively, on the Black Top label.

Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers have been a consistent draw at major clubs and festivals around the world. Their 1999 release *Here and Now* on the Tone-Cool label recombines the group’s unique ingredients of blues, swing, jump, and R&B into a fresh approach to the genre. In 1998 Piazza won a W. C. Handy award for “best instrumentalist, harmonica,” and the Mighty Flyers have been three-time winners of the W. C. Handy Award for Band of the Year, most recently in 2002.

GEORGE BOZIWICK

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Discography: AMG

PICCOLO, GREG

b. 10 May 1951; Westerly, RI

Rhode Island–based bandleader, vocalist, and tenor saxophonist. Member of the Roomful of Blues from 1970 to 1994. Piccolo performed session work for numerous artists, including Colin James, Big Joe Turner, and the Fabulous Thunderbirds. He released several solo albums that cover multiple genres, including jazz, R&B, acid-jazz, and rock ’n’ roll.

JOE C. CLARK

Bibliography

AMG (Michael Erlewine)

Discography: AMG

See also **Fabulous Thunderbirds; Roomful of Blues; Turner, Joseph Vernon "Big Joe"**

PICHON, WALTER G. "FATS"

b. 3 April 1906; New Orleans, LA
d. 26 February 1967; Chicago, IL

Pianist and vocalist who recorded mostly jazz with King Oliver, Henry Red Allen, and Luis Russell. Pichon made a 1929 blues recording with Teddy Bunn and worked riverboats in the early forties. His band was eventually taken over by Dave Bartholomew in 1941 when Pichon left for a regular gig at the Absinthe House in New Orleans.

TOM MORGAN

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Discography: DGR; LSFP**PICKENS, BUSTER**

b. Edwin Goodwin Pickens, 3 June 1916; Hempstead, TX
d. 24 November 1964; Houston, TX

Pickens was one of the clique of itinerant singer/pianists who played for workers in the sawmills, turpentine camps, and oil towns of Texas in the 1920s and 1930s, but, unlike contemporaries such as Black Boy Shine and Son Becky, he did not have the opportunity to make records at that time. Fortunately he outlived most of the musicians in that high-risk profession and was able to document pieces from their common repertoire like "The Ma Grinder" and "Hattie Green" on an album, and record a few accompaniments to Lightnin' Hopkins, before he was murdered.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: LSFP

See also **Shaw, Robert**

PICKETT, DAN

b. James Founty, 31 August 1907; Pike County, AL
d. 16 August 1967; Boaz, AL

For years James Founty, known professionally as Dan Pickett, was a mystery man. Field trips in the early 1990s have solved most mysteries although most of the research remains unpublished. He recorded five singles for Gotham plus four that were unreleased in 1949. Pickett's repertoire was derived almost exclusively from 1930s recordings synthesizing those styles into a unique sound of his own.

JEFF HARRIS

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Discography: AMG; LSFP**Selected Recordings**

Dan Pickett, 1949 Country Blues (1990, Collectables VCL 5311).

See also **Alabama; Gotham/20th Century**

PIEDMONT (LABEL)

Label operated by Dick and Louisa Spottswood in 1963-1964, with occasional issues through 1966. Best known for issuing rediscovery recordings of Mississippi John Hurt and of Reverend Robert Wilkins, including the latter's "Prodigal Son" on his eponymous album on Piedmont 13162.

EDWARD KOMARA

PIEDMONT (REGION)

Piedmont Blues, sometimes called "East Coast Blues," takes its name from the Appalachian foothills and plateau of the southeastern United States, a narrow strip of alluvium stretching from New

PIEDMONT (REGION)

Jersey to Alabama, spreading from the base of the Appalachian chain toward the Atlantic coast until the fall-line of the region's rivers mark the beginning of the coastal plain. Actually, the style can be found from the northeastern urban corridor through eastern Pennsylvania to northern Florida; from the Tidewater area of Maryland through Virginia and the Carolinas into Georgia, falling off through eastern Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama.

On record, it became a relatively homogeneous guitaristic tradition that swept over this vast geographical area during the late 1920s and early 1930s, sublimating older or more local styles. Musically, it is similar to what is known on the white side of the color line as "Travis picking" (which has its roots in black Kentucky guitar playing), a style that uses the index finger of the picking hand to play melody on the higher strings while the thumb sets a complementary rhythmic bass pattern on the lower ones. The fretting hand deals with both melody and rhythm, following the chord changes in a sprightly fashion. This thumb and forefinger picking approach has some of its roots in an earlier picked banjo style; most Piedmont artists played thusly, but not all—some used more than one finger to pick the melody.

Complex patterns emerge in this blues guitar style and it is often compared to Harlem "stride" piano playing with a regular alternating bass and a relatively complex repeated chord structure against which melodic figures fairly bounce in syncopation. This is logical, since both forms of music have firm roots in earlier ragtime; Reverend Gary Davis pointed out many times that he and other such guitarists were playing the guitar like a piano. Encompassing and distilling elements of many different vernacular musics (ragtime, minstrel and medicine show music, old-time white country singing and dancing, string bands, and so on) in the southeast led to a highly danceable black music, something lively for the Saturday night function!

Where the vast plantations of the Delta and central South had been tightly supervised places of both work and residence, blacks in the southeast could maintain family and friendship connections slightly more readily, and even travel, though there was little hope of elevating one's life chances. In the Piedmont, cultural boundaries began to blur within music rather faster than through any fight for civil rights. Blacks and whites in the region, having lived in some intimacy for some three hundred years, borrowed tunes and instruments from each other with such frequency that it is often difficult to decide who's borrowing from whom! And a good picker was acknowledged as a good picker, regardless of race!

Furthermore, wages in the tobacco towns (and in the mines), plus a certain distance from one's employer, gave blacks the opportunity to seek other than local avenues for entertainment and to reach a spending power vaguely approaching that of their almost equally poor white neighbors. A certain amount of that money was spent on records, on traveling shows or local black theaters, or on musical instruments. Communities in the 1920s were still generating much of their own musical entertainment—that was to change with the emergence in the 1920s of the "Race" record business, oriented exclusively toward black pocketbooks. In one example, on paydays at the tobacco barns in Durham, North Carolina, workers streamed out of the factories past the barbecue stands and street musicians who had set up expressly to attract their custom; for some musicians, it was enough to survive until the next payday.

Weekend house parties or juke joints also helped shape the blues legacy throughout the Piedmont region. Some residences were equipped with pianos, or even jukeboxes (known locally as "piccolos"). Most parties boasted local musicians, along with free-flowing alcohol, food, and dancing. Community musicians, whether busking or "house," were rarely paid outright for their performances and took their "wages" in tips, food, and liquor. In both the rural and urban settings, Piedmont musicians later maximized their potential income by learning the latest recorded ragtime-influenced popular numbers. Its popularity had one root cause. As a dance music, the Piedmont blues is second to none, and can accompany either running set or couple dancing—very versatile, indeed.

The tobacco cities and towns of North Carolina and Virginia, plus the textile-based ones of South Carolina and Georgia, loom importantly in the history of Piedmont blues. Musicians followed the money during the tobacco harvest and auctions. The Durham market, for example, lasted three to four months, ending in December. It was a rowdy scene replete with medicine shows and buskers in the auction warehouses, all amplified by flowing dollars and bootleg whisky. Generally an all-male bailiwick, the markets were no place for women unless they had their own wares for sale. A medicine show's "route" would often follow the sales as they moved slowly north through the region—music was always a part of this maelstrom of commercial activity!

The earliest commercially successful exponent of the Piedmont guitar style, and a major influence on all who followed, was a "Geechie" man from Florida possibly named Arthur Phelps, but professionally known as Blind Blake. With music being one of the few occupations available to a poor, blind black man,

Blake seemingly based his playing style on ragtime piano players. Possibly from St. Petersburg or Jacksonville, Florida, little is yet known of Blake's history, but his legacy of about fifty recordings made between 1926 and 1932 amply justifies his reputation as a sportin' guitar player. He was the first performer in this style to sell a lot of recordings to a black audience, including "Police Dog Blues," "West Coast Blues," and "Diddie Wa Diddie," all on the Paramount label.

Atlanta-based Blind Willie McTell may be best known as the author of "Statesboro Blues," covered by the Allman Brothers Band, or as an inspiration for Bob Dylan, but he was an important black musician as well. He made commercial recordings during four decades, beginning in 1927, played a stunning twelve-string guitar, and was a well-regarded figure in and around Atlanta, Georgia. He was often accompanied by Curley Weaver, from Newton County, east of Atlanta. Weaver shows well on his records how the thumb-and-forefinger ragtime-based style of guitar playing took hold. His records before 1932 echo the style taught him by his mother (Savannah Weaver—she also taught Barbecue Bob [Robert Hicks] and Laughing Charley Lincoln [Charley Hicks], two brothers from Newton County who also recorded; this was a frailed style in open-chord tuning, often with a slide, that owed much to clawhammer banjo playing). By his next session in 1933, he had taken on the "new" ragtime-based approach, possibly from exposure to McTell, Blake's records, or in response to the requests of his new urban audience in Atlanta. Peg Leg Howell was another recorded Atlanta area musician who played in an older style, often in a string band context—Howell and the Hicks brothers ceased recording after 1930, due to many factors.

The one Atlanta musician to "take hold" of the public was Buddy Moss, a "running buddy" to Weaver, McTell, and Hicks. Moss made some seventy sides between 1933 and 1941, and his musical star was on the ascendant until a murder conviction in 1935 stopped it in its tracks. He was a big seller and had great influence in that short time (and later), especially considering that it was in the teeth of the Depression and records were expensive. One of his best-known numbers was the prophetic "Ride to Your Funeral in a V-8 Ford": Buddy made a short-lived comeback session in 1941 after a decade in prison, and his folk circuit career in the 1960s was at best sporadic, due to his orneriness.

The region around Spartanburg and Greenville, South Carolina, gave rise to many important musicians in the Piedmont style. The most influential was probably Blind Willie Walker, about whom little is

known. He and Blind Gary Davis (later Reverend) were the region's best remembered guitarists; both were technically stunning and each had his own way of using his technique, and each played alone or with a string band at one time or another. Pink Anderson (the source of half of the name of rock group Pink Floyd!) was another guitarist from Gary's hometown of Laurens; he recorded with Blind Simmie Dooley in 1928 in the Piedmont style, and played medicine shows for most of his life. Davis moved north to North Carolina; Walker taught the most successful South Carolina blues performer, Josh White (who described Walker as the Art Tatum of blues guitar—Spartanburg's Baby Tate said that Walker played in all the keys with all his fingers!). White's career as a black performer selling records to a black audience began in 1932 and overlapped with that of Buddy Moss (in fact, they recorded together in 1935) until a hand injury kept him out of the studio for five years. His influential records such as "Blood Red River" and "Low Cotton" were usually issued under the name "Pinewood Tom"; "Joshua White, the Singing Christian" was reserved for his sacred records. White later found a useful career on the "folk music" circuit in New York City beginning in the 1940s, and lasting until his death in 1969.

The imprisonment of Moss and the injury to White left the field wide open, and it was quickly filled by Blind Boy Fuller, an extremely popular artist from the standpoint of record sales and his influence on other guitarists. He truly set the standard for the later Piedmont guitar style and was massively influential throughout the region because of his records. Born Fulton Allen in Anson County, North Carolina, he became blind as a teen, learning to play and sing as a consequence. James Baxter Long "discovered" him playing on the streets of Durham in the early 1930s. As a department store manager, Long sold records and made small fees scouting talent for the American Record Corporation; with no Moss or White records to sell to blacks, he knew that there was an empty niche and he filled it with Fuller. In 1935, he took Fuller, Blind Gary Davis (somewhat of a mentor to Fuller), and Bull City Red (washboard player George Washington) to New York for their first sessions in July. The renamed Blind Boy Fuller ultimately recorded 130 sides by 1940, many being big hits: According to Long, Fuller's record of "Step It Up & Go" sold more than half a million copies—not bad for a black artist in 1940! Other of Fuller's hits were "Truckin' My Blues Away," "Mamie," "Little Woman You're So Sweet," and "Lost Lover Blues." Recording in the latter days of the Depression, he was in the recording studio on a regular basis until just before his death in 1941. A stylistic synthesizer rather

than an originator, Fuller's influence was felt across the color line, and as far away as Oklahoma and Texas, his tunes even being covered by Western swing bands.

Fuller also had a band consisting of himself on guitar, Bull City Red on washboard, and "Sonny Terry" on harmonica, and it set the norm for similar southeastern combos. Born Saunders Terrell in Greensboro, Georgia, Sonny met Fuller on the streets of Wadesboro, North Carolina, and they hooked up in Durham as a result of that meeting. He could punctuate for the guitarist, or solo wildly on his own, and was one of the masters of the French harp from the southeast. Like Josh White, he later had a second career as an actor and a "folk" artist, hooking up with guitarist/singer Brownie McGhee in New York during the 1940s. They were joined there by Reverend Gary Davis who was now a New York City street and storefront preacher—the folk revival was good to them all and provided a secondary market after they all fell out of favor with black record buyers.

The final link in the "Piedmont Chain," from the standpoint of black commercial recording, was Brownie McGhee. Walter Brown McGhee was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1915 into a musical family. As a young polio victim, he was not very mobile and music was his only outlet. He was later one of the first beneficiaries of the March of Dimes, and an operation allowed him to walk. Eventually he lived in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where he formed a band with harmonicist Jordan Webb and washboard player Robert Young (aka Washboard Slim). With the death of Fuller, Long needed another Piedmont player to send to ARC; hedging his bets, he got Buddy Moss out of jail, and took on Brownie and his band, taking them all to New York City to record in 1941, along with the remnants of Fuller's band. By that time, the war was on and the shellac for records was rationed so that production diminished, and musical tastes changed within the black marketplace. The hits were few and far between and "Fuller-esque" success was not to be. Fortunately, folklorist Alan Lomax offered an option, and Brownie and Sonny headed north for good to enter into the "folk" realm, while still attempting to make records there to sell to blacks. The former market eventually took over and they became world-renowned figures playing for a white audience.

Durham had been particularly rich with talented musicians—Arthur Lyons, Floyd Council (the other half of the Pink Floyd name), brothers Willie and Richard Trice—but it, like other southern cities, changed as blacks moved to the urban north and the music scene changed forever; jazz, R&B, and so on had taken over as the music that blacks generally wanted to dance to. As mentioned, the folk revival,

beginning in the 1940s, brought a new outlet for some players from the Piedmont; besides McGhee & Terry, White, and Davis, Gabriel Brown, Alec Seward, and later John Jackson, Archie Edwards, and John Cephas & Phil Wiggins did well in that niche. Lesser-knowns such as Pernelle Charity, Guitar Gabriel, Henry "Rufe" Johnson, Etta Baker, Peg Leg Sam, Moses Rascoe, Baby Tate, Tarheel Slim, Doug Quattlebaum, and Blind Connie Williams made a few recordings and had varying degrees of recognition among folk/blues patrons.

Today the Piedmont blues tradition is carried on by a diminishing list of black practitioners (John Dee Holman, Cootie Stark, Neal Pattman, Algia Mae Hinton, George Higgs, Richard "Big Boy" Henry, Drink Small, Warner Williams, and others), but it is no longer an African American-oriented music. The Piedmont guitar style has permeated folk music both here and abroad, as well as being a "root" influence on early rockabilly, then rock 'n' roll, and later rock music. Once a major and long-lived factor in the Race record business (mid-1920s to mid-1940s), the music remains active mainly as a diminishing memory tradition, practiced by few blacks. The relatively younger practitioners today who learned from the older black musicians are mostly white (for instance, Roy Book Binder, Paul Geremia, and "Lightnin'" Wells).

Historians including Paul Oliver, Sam Charters, Kip Lornell, Peter B. Lowry, George Mitchell, Bruce Bastin, Gayle Dean Wardlow, Larry Cohn, and Glenn Hinson have devoted considerable time and effort to preserving and publishing the details of the Piedmont blues history. Recent markers erected in Durham and in Wadesboro, Fuller's birth city, celebrate the contribution of Piedmont-style blues players in general, Fuller especially. Also, thanks to organizations like the Music Maker Relief Foundation and numerous blues societies, we can still hear this wonderful and lively music—and it still "lives" on the many recordings that are available to us on CD.

GAILE WELKER WITH PETER B. LOWRY

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- Davis, Reverend Gary: *Complete Early Recordings* (Yazoo 2011).
- Davis, Reverend Gary, and Pink Anderson: *Gospel, Blues & Street Songs* (Original Blues Classics OBC 524).
- Fuller, Blind Boy: *1935–1938* (JSP Box 7735; 4 CDs); *Blind Boy Fuller, The Essential* (Classic Blues CBL 200012; 2 CDs); *Trucking My Blues Away* (Yazoo 1060).
- McGhee, Brownie: *Complete Okeh Recordings, 1940* (Sony/Legacy 52933; 2 CDs).
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PIERCE, BILLIE

- b. Wilhelmina Goodson, 8 June 1907; Marianna, FL
d. 29 September 1974; New Orleans, LA

New Orleans pianist and singer. Pierce played jazz and blues with her cornetist husband Dede, with whom she recorded and toured extensively in the 1950s and 1960s. Her style is a potent mixture of barrelhouse, boogie-woogie, and ragtime.

PETER MUIR

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Billie and De De and their Preservation Hall Jazz Band (1966, VPH/VPS-3).

PIERSON, EUGENE

- b. 6 December 1934; near Forrest City, AR
d. 24 August 1977; Chicago, IL

Guitarist active in Chicago from 1953 until his death. He had long working relationships with Sunnyland Slim and Robert Lockwood, and in 1958–1964 he was in a group with drummer Eddie Payne and trumpet player Lester Davenport. While he didn't record as leader, his solos may be prominently heard on records made by Eddie Boyd and Lee Jackson.

EDWARD KOMARA

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PIERSON, LEROY

- b. 22 October 1947; St. Louis, MO

Guitarist, vocalist, record producer. Owner of Nighthawk Records, noted Reggae discographer, loyal friend to Henry Townsend. Pierson produced several blues festivals while at Beloit College in the sixties. Played with many older bluesmen in those years, all on tape. Lives in St. Louis, MO.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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PING

Chicago rhythm and blues label of the 1950s. The label was founded in late 1956 by record storeowner Frank Evans, whose operation was run out of the back of his record store (4648 South Cottage

PING

Grove). Its tiny catalog of eight releases included gospel preaching and congregational singing (Deacon Leroy Shinault), doo-wop (the De'bonairs), and jazz (the Porter Kilbert ensemble and the Andrew Hill trio and quintet). One bluesman, Shakey Jake, was recorded but the sides remained unreleased. Ping had only one mildly successful record, the De'bonairs' "Mother's Son" (1956), before going out of business in mid-1957.

ROBERT PRUTER

Discography: McGrath

Campbell, Robert L., and Leonard J. Bukowski. "The Ping Records Discography." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 129 (May 1998): 4-5.

PINSON, REVEREND LEON

b. 1919; near New Albany, MS
d. 10 October 1998; New Albany, MS

Reverend Leon Pinson combined his position as a minister and his talents as a musician to form a unique blend of blues-based gospel music. He was often found playing his slide guitar with friend Elder Roma Wilson on the harmonica.

HEATHER PINSON

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PITCHFORD, LONNIE

b. 8 October 1955; Lexington, MS
d. 8 November 1998; Lexington, MS

Traditional blues multi-instrumentalist Lonnie Pitchford was born on the eastern rim of the Mississippi Delta near Lexington, Mississippi. His guitarist father, W. D. Pitchford, played in area juke joints but didn't allow son Lonnie to play his instrument. Undeterred, six-year-old Pitchford made his own one-string diddley bows with bailing wire and snuff cans on the side of his house. By his early teens, he was practicing on his brother Charles's guitar and within a few years played in various blues and gospel groups. A chance meeting in 1971 with ethnomusicologist Worth Long, who was amazed by Pitchford's

talent of making and playing the one-string guitar, led to many prestigious festival appearances across the country. Through Long he met mentors Robert Lockwood and Eugene Powell, two veteran guitarists who greatly shaped Pitchford's music. Lockwood taught him the intricacies of Robert Johnson's style, and Pitchford soon established himself as one of the greatest practitioners of Johnson's music. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, he lived in Kansas City and Chicago and often worked as a carpenter to support himself. German blues enthusiasts for L+R Records recorded him in Lexington in 1980, and the success of these recordings led to several European tours. Pitchford appeared in the 1992 film *Deep Blues* and he released his only domestic album in 1994 for "Rooster Blues," the aptly titled *All Around Man*, on which he excelled on many instruments and blues styles. Lonnie Pitchford died of AIDS at the age of forty-three and is buried at Newport Community Cemetery near Ebenezer, MS, near one of his biggest influences, Elmore James.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

Pitchford, Lonnie. *All Around Man* (1994, Rooster CD R2629).

PITTMAN, SAMPSON

Flourished 1930s

Acoustic guitarist believed to have come from Blytheville, Arkansas, who moved to Detroit, Michigan. In 1938 he and Calvin Frazier recorded for Alan Lomax and the Library of Congress, making perhaps the earliest recordings of migrated southern blues in Detroit.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh has long had a reputation as a rough-and-tumble town with a large population of blue-collar workers. In the early 1970s the steel mills began to close, drastically depressing the city’s economy. Blues was an easy fit considering the financial situation of the region. Most rock acts were blues based, and this became the prevailing music of choice for most of the club scene.

During this period many local musicians began to enjoy national attention. Bands like the Snake Stretchers toured and recorded with Roy Buchanan, including the critically acclaimed album *That’s What I’m Here For*. They recorded five LPs with Polydor, and two with Atlantic records during their six-year stint. Red, Hot and Blue played many nights at the legendary Gene’s Blues Bar on Route 51 with Warren King and Gil Snyder who went on to form the Mystic Knights. The Brick Alley Band played the Decade in Oakland and Fat City in Swissvale, and eventually went on to become the Iron City Houserockers. It is not unusual to see local bands share musicians within their line-ups. Building on momentum from East Coast tours, the Silencers, the Iron City Houserockers, the Mystic Knights, and Norm Nardini all garnered national attention, as well as recording contracts with CBS and MCA.

Mike Sallows and the Rockin’ Reptiles were holding regular blues jams at a small club called the Penn Cafe. One night in 1985, several of the musicians in attendance decided to form the Pittsburgh Blues Society, with the intention of educating and entertaining, while keeping the tradition of blues alive. Those present that night included Mike Sallows, Fred McIntosh, Randall Troy, Lucy Van Sickle, The Gabig Brothers, Kevin Kelly, Duane Stackhouse, D. C. Fitzgerald, and Emory Early. Over the years, the Pittsburgh Blues Society has worked with a vast array of talented musicians such as Gil “Duke” Snyder, “Memphis” Mike Metzger, and Chuck Owston. As the Pittsburgh Blues Society All-Stars, Mike Sallows led the band through most of its finest moments, including headlining at the McKean County Blues Festival, and the All-Stars final performance at the very first Pittsburgh Blues Festival at Sandcastle amusement park in Homestead.

Pittsburgh has always been a blues friendly town. However, events such as those of September 11, 2001, and the fear of other terrorism caused a drop in attendance at shows. However, with two new sports arenas and a new convention center, the area is attempting to become a technology center. It is hoped that the

entertainment industry—and blues scene—will benefit as well.

FRED R. MCINTOSH II

PLUNKETT, ROBERT

b. 19 October 1931; Benton, MS

d. 1 or 3 May 2004; Chicago, IL

Drummer. Arrived in Chicago in 1946. Plunkett began playing drums behind harpist Little Arthur Duncan, around the early 1950s and eventually worked with Freddie King, Aron Burton, Howlin’ Wolf, Eddie Shaw, and others. He also appeared on the 1998 anthology *Blues Across America* (Cannonball).

DAVID WHITEIS

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POMUS, JEROME “DOC”

b. Jerome Solon Felder, 27 June 1925; Brooklyn, NY

d. 14 March 1991; New York City, NY

Jerome “Doc” Pomus’s career was a testament to music’s universal appeal, the resiliency of the human spirit, and his own remarkable testimony. Pomus was crippled by polio as a child and he was a white vocalist/songwriter/instrumentalist who loved and preferred blues and R&B to pop. Pomus’s tunes were sometimes sentimental, sometimes funny, but always elegant and immediately appealing. Pomus was also savvy enough to realize that he was only a marginal vocalist but an exceptional composer. He abandoned performing in the 1950s, and began a historic collaboration with pianist Mort Shuman. Their joint efforts resulted in such classics as “Save the Last Dance for Me,” “This Magic Moment,” “Sweets for My Sweet,” and a host of tunes that Elvis Presley made rock standards. The list of Presley successes includes “Little Sister,” “Viva Las Vegas,” and “Suspicion,” and he would record more than twenty Pomus/Shuman tunes.

But Pomus later found a second partner in Mac Rebennack (Dr. John), and this new team would craft hits for several blues and rock acts, among them B. B. King, Roomful of Blues, and Mink Deville. The R&B and blues world treasured Pomus, and he was the first white artist awarded the Rhythm and

POMUS, JEROME “DOC”

Blues Foundation Pioneer Award. Sadly, he later died that year of cancer at age sixty-five. He was subsequently inducted into the Rock and Roll and Songwriting Halls of Fame, as well as the blues and New York equivalent institutions. His works remain among the most played and enjoyed in modern popular music history.

RON WYNN

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Larkin

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POONANNY

b. Joe P. Burns, 6 January 1940; Birmingham, AL

Singer, comedian. “Poonanny” was a childhood nickname. Inspired as a youth to become a drummer after seeing the movie *The Gene Krupa Story*; also influenced by comedian Pigmeat Markham. In the 1960s and 1970s, Poonanny led bands in which he played drums, emceed, and did comedy from behind his drum set. In the early 1980s he re-created himself as a lead singer, focusing increasingly on comedy. Specializes in risqué routines set to soul/blues melodies and rhythms.

DAVID WHITEIS

Bibliography

AMG (Andrew Hamilton)

Discography: AMG

POPA CHUBBY

b. Theodore Joseph Horowitz, 1960; Bronx, NY

Came to national prominence upon winning the 1992 Long Beach Blues Festival talent competition. Had a national radio hit “Sweet Goddess of Love and Beer” in 1995. His subsequent work has revealed strengths in songwriting, guitar soloing, and topical lyrics.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Bays, Kenneth. “Popa Chubby: Blues-Rocker at Large.” *Blues Revue* no. 78 (October/November 2002): 9–16.

Discography: AMG

PORTER, DAVID

b. 21 November 1941; Memphis, TN

Singer-songwriter and producer. With his partner Isaac Hayes, Porter wrote songs for and produced several acts for Stax Records, most notably Sam & Dave (“Hold On! I’m Coming” [Stax 189] and “Soul Man” [231]). He made several attempts to start a career as a soul singer, including recording for Stax, but achieved little success.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

Guralnick, Peter. *Sweet Soul Music*. New York: Harper & Row, 1986.

PORTER, JAKE

b. Vernon Porter, 3 August 1916; Oakland, CA

d. 1 April 1993; Los Angeles, CA

Learned trumpet in school, and through the 1930s he performed in various big bands. Served in the U.S. Army in 1942–1943, and was discharged after a leg injury. He spent the remainder of the 1940s assisting in jazz and rhythm and blues package shows and in Los Angeles area recording sessions. He owned and operated Combo Records in the 1950s and early 1960s. Became active in the 1960s with the Los Angeles chapter of the American Federation of Musicians union. A revival of his performing career came with the 1989 Broadway production of *Black and Blue*.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

PORTER, KING

b. James A. Pope, 23 November 1916; Bessemer, AL
d. 24 September 1983; Lynn, MA

Trumpet and vocals. Moved to Detroit in 1943, led swing-style combos, switched to R&B in 1947, and had a long residency at the Royal Blue Bar. Bands featured saxophonist Paul Williams, also jazz tenor sax giant Billy Mitchell. Porter played solid, hard-hitting jump-blues. He recorded for Paradise, King, and Savoy, including “Russel Street Hussel” and “Bar Fly.”

JIM GALLERT

Bibliography

Penny, Dave. Notes accompanying *King Porter and His Orchestra: Special Request* (1989, Official Records [Denmark] 6056).

Discography: Lord; LSFP**PORTNOY, JERRY**

b. 25 November 1943; Evanston, IL

Harmonica player who was in the Muddy Waters band from 1974 through 1980, then helped to form the Legendary Blues Band.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Ron Wynn and Stephen Thomas Erlewine); Larkin; Santelli
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E. Dennis, MA: Portnoy, 1997.

Discography: AMG**POWELL, EUGENE**

b. 23 December 1908; Utica, MS
d. 4 November 1998; Greenville, MS

Raised on a Delta plantation in Lombardy, Mississippi, Eugene Powell began playing guitar at age seven. A naturally gifted musician, Powell's prowess on the instrument developed rapidly and soon the young guitarist was playing country suppers with half-brother Ben Wilson. His family relocated to Murphy, Mississippi, near Hollandale, and Powell associated with area musicians Sam and Lonnie Chatmon and Bo Carter. Powell developed a sophisticated finger-picking technique and learned songs of many styles

quickly, which enabled him to perform both popular and country music for whites and blues for black audiences. Powell ran his own juke joint and played with many musicians traveling through the area in the early 1930s, including Robert McCollum (Robert Nighthawk), Houston Stackhouse, and Richard “Hacksaw” Harney. Through arrangements made by Carter, Powell made six recordings for the Bluebird label in 1936 under the pseudonym Sonny Boy Nelson, and accompanied wife Mississippi Matilda and harmonica player Robert Hill on numerous others.

Powell moved to Greenville in the 1940s and played with several bands until the early 1950s, when he separated from Matilda. He remained largely musically inactive until 1972 when he performed at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. Powell made few recordings during the following twenty years, with only the Italian LP *Police in Mississippi Blues* on Albatros being subsequently issued. He rarely performed in public during the remaining years of his life, but often welcomed blues fans and musicians from around the world into his home. Eugene Powell died of a brain hemorrhage caused by a fall at age eighty-nine.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: DGR**POWELL, VANCE “TINY”**

b. 17 May 1922; Warren, AR
d. 2 February 1994; Oakland, CA

Soulful vocalist who worked in the gospel field in St. Louis before World War II and in the Bay Area after it. In 1964 he turned to secular music but never achieved the success his voice deserved. He recorded for Wax (1964), Ocampo (1965), Early Bird (1968), and TBC (1973).

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

PRATER, DAVE

PRATER, DAVE

b. 9 May 1937; Ocilla, GA

d. 9 April 1988; Sycamore, GA

Singing partner with Sam Moore (b. October 12, 1935; Miami, FL) in the soul duo Sam & Dave. They met in Florida in 1961 and sang for several years together before signing with Atlantic Records in 1965. Rather than record for Atlantic, however, Sam & Dave were sent to Stax Studios in Memphis, Tennessee, where they were assigned to songwriters Isaac Hayes and David Porter, who became the group's mentors and models. In the latter half of the 1960s, their records practically defined southern soul, with hits like "Hold On! I'm Comin'" (1966, Stax 189), "Soul Man" (1967, Stax 231), and "I Thank You" (1968, Stax 242), combining gospel call-and-response vocals with percussive rhythms in the instruments. The two also had one of the most dynamic stage shows of the southern soul performers. In 1968, Atlantic Records' arrangement with Stax ended and Sam & Dave were one of the casualties. Technically signed to Atlantic, they lost their access to Hayes, Porter, and Stax's premier studio musicians, Booker T and the MGs. In 1970, due in part to Moore and Prater's constant off-stage fighting, the duo broke up. After the Blues Brothers revived Sam & Dave's songs in the late 1970s, the duo made several attempts to reunite but they played their last show together on New Year's 1980. Prater joined singer Sam Daniels in the 1980s to form a new Sam & Dave, but after an arrest for selling crack to a police officer in 1987, his career was over, and he died in a car accident in 1988.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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See also **Moore, Sam**

PRESLEY, ELVIS ARON

b. 8 January 1935; Tupelo, MS

d. 16 August 1977; Memphis TN

A cultural icon of the twentieth century, singer Elvis Presley was the first and possibly the most

influential rock 'n' roll idol. The early repertoire of Presley included among various genres some blues, rockabilly, and rhythm and blues songs, although he was accompanied by country western musicians such as guitarist Scotty Moore and bassist Bill Black. That synthesis contributed to the birth of rock 'n' roll.

Between 1954 and 1956, Elvis recorded renditions of Arthur Crudup's "That's All Right Mama," "Milk Cow Blues," Ray Charles's "I Got a Woman," Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller's "Hound Dog," which was first recorded by Big Mama Thornton, and Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti" and "Ready Teddy." Through his career, Elvis also covered Roy Brown's "Good Rockin' Tonight," Big Joe Turner's hit "Shake, Rattle and Roll," Lowell Fulson's "Reconsider Baby," John Davenport and Eddie Cooley's "Fever," plus many gospel standards and spirituals like "Peace in the Valley" (written by Thomas A. Dorsey), and the Orioles' "Crying in the Chapel."

In a jam set for his 1968 television special, Elvis revisited blues standards such as Jimmy Reed's "Baby What You Want Me to Do." In 1967, Elvis had also covered Reed's hit from 1960, "Big Boss Man" (composed by Al Smith and Luther Dixon), and opened his 1970s shows with a rock version of the song "C. C. Rider."

YVES LABERGE

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See also **Big Boss Man (Hi-Heel Sneakers); C. C. Rider; Charles, Ray; Crudup, Arthur William "Big Boy"; Reed, Jimmy**

PRESTON, JIMMY

b. 18 August 1913; Chester, PA

Alto saxophonist and singer active from 1948 to 1950. His 1949 Gotham label single "Rock This Joint" with tenor saxophonist Danny Turner would be covered by early white rock performer Bill Haley in 1952.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG (Bill Dahl)**PREZ KENNETH**

b. Kenneth Kidd, 29 December 1933; Newton, MS
d. 27 June 1995; Chicago, IL

Guitarist and bassist. Moved to Chicago in 1956, learned guitar in the early 1960s, played locally with the Sheppards, then with O. C. Perkins. He recorded on the labels Biscayne and his own Kenneth.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP**PRICE, "BIG" WALTER "THE THUNDERBIRD"**

b. 2 August 1914; Gonzales, TX

Houston, Texas-based singer, songwriter, and pianist—known mainly as Big Walter "The Thunderbird."

Born Walter Travis Price on a cotton farm in rural Gonzales County, as a child he moved with his family to San Antonio. There he started his career as a vocalist, first performing spirituals with the gospel group the Northern Wonders. Later, while working for the Texas-Pacific and Katy railway companies, he began to sing blues and play barrelhouse-style piano in regional clubs.

In 1955 Price made his first recordings, including "Calling Margie," on San Antonio's TNT label. Shortly after that, he moved to Houston, where he adopted his ornithological nickname. With his band The Thunderbirds he recorded several singles for the Peacock label in 1956–1957, including regionals such as "Shirley Jean," "Gambling Woman," and "Pack Fair and Square." From then through the 1960s, Price subsequently recorded for various other independent labels in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi—including Goldband, Myrl, Jet Stream, and Tear Drop. Some of these recordings (including two tracks featuring guitarist Albert Collins) have resurfaced on

LP records or CDs released on the Ace, Collectables, Edsel, Flyright, MCA, P-Vine, and Rhino labels.

While remaining based in Houston, Price also has worked as a record store proprietor and disk jockey. As an actor he has appeared in feature films (including 1974's *Sugar Hill*) and on local theater stages. In 1995 Price contributed the performance of a new original song, "The Preacher Talks and Sings the Blues," to the CD *Burning Desire* (Connor Ray) by guitarist Jerry Lightfoot, his former protégé.

ROGER WOOD

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Discography: LSFP**PRICE, LLOYD**

b. 9 March 1933; Kenner, LA

An old-fashioned blues shouter in his youth, "Mr. Personality" transformed himself into a stylish and successful pop music crossover, appearing regularly on television programs like *The Ed Sullivan Show* and Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* while receiving pervasive radio airplay. Price, who supported ten siblings, started early, forming a teenage band with younger brother Leo, a drummer who wrote a couple of songs for Little Richard. He was spotted by band-leader Dave Bartholomew and signed as a seventeen-year old by Specialty Records at an audition. His 1952 first session, with Fats Domino on piano, produced an enormous hit as "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" topped the R&B charts. Price followed it with four more top ten hits before the Korean war interrupted his career when he was drafted into the Army and sent overseas.

Price didn't record for two years. He returned home and formed his own record label, KRC Records, and "Stagger Lee" made it an immediate success. He soon tired of being an executive, however, and signed with ABC/Paramount, where his singing was embellished with brassy horn sections and backup vocalists. More hits resulted but Price moved on again, forming another label, Double L Records, which was responsible for the debut of Wilson Pickett as a solo artist. When his partner was murdered, Price, who moved to Lagos, Nigeria, disappeared from the music scene in the 1970s. He

PRICE, LLOYD

returned to the United States in the early 1980s. After joining a 1993 European tour package with Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, and others, he reentered the music business and his return generated *Lawdy*, a compilation of his early Specialty sides.

MICHAEL POINT

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McGarvey, Seamus. "Lloyd Price: Mr Personality." *Juke Blues* no. 24 (Autumn/Winter 1991): 6–10.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

PRICE, SAMMY

- b. 6 October 1908; Honey Grove, TX
d. 14 or 15 April 1992; New York City, NY

Although jazz, blues, and boogie pianist Price gained neither riches nor stardom, his career was hugely successful if measured by longevity, proficiency, steady work, and the respect of his community.

Growing up in Waco and Dallas, Texas, he often saw guitarist Blind Lemon Jefferson (his first exposure to the walking bass rhythms of boogie-woogie). A budding pianist, he joined Alphonso Trent's southwest territorial band as a Charleston dancer in 1925 and danced as well as played piano on the southern TOBA circuit from 1927 to 1929. A quick learner, Price gained show-business savvy and adeptness at various styles during those formative years. He spent most of the 1930s in Kansas City and Detroit before heading to Harlem, his home for the rest of his life except for an early 1950s stretch back in Dallas.

Soon after his 1937 arrival in New York, Price was recruited by J. Mayo Williams to be a house pianist for Decca, where he backed Cow-Cow Davenport, Georgia White, Peetie Wheatstraw, Trixie Smith, Joe Turner, Rosetta Tharpe, and Blue Lu Baker, among others. He also recorded his own sides for Decca with his Texas Bluesicians and with Mezz Mezzrow for the King Jazz label, both during the 1940s. For Savoy Records, he led R&B sessions with King Curtis and Mickey Baker in the mid- to late 1950s. Price also worked steadily in New York as a live performer, playing Harlem and 52nd Street in their heydays, the Metropole from the late 1950s to mid-1960s (backing Henry "Red" Allen), and swing revival spots like the West End and Cookery in the 1970s. In his later years, he became a respected

civic leader, active in Democratic Party politics and youth education projects.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: DGR; Lord; LSFP

Note: The appendix to *What Do They Want?* (cited above) contains a complete discography, compiled by Bob Weir.

PRIMER, JOHN

- b. 3 March 1945; Camden, MS

Popular guitarist and singer, known for his sideman work with Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters, and Magic Slim, as well as his own performances and recordings.

Primer's early influences included Jimmy Reed, Slim Harpo, and Muddy Waters, as well as a guitar-playing cousin named Percy Flax. He did not play professionally in Mississippi, but a few years after he moved to Chicago in 1963 he began to gig around the West Side and on Maxwell Street, where he played in the band of guitarist Little Pat Rushing. In about 1974 he joined the house band at Theresa's Tavern, 4801 South Indiana, one of Chicago's most fabled neighborhood blues clubs. There he played alongside guitarist Sammy Lawhorn, whom he credits as an important mentor. The band at Theresa's accompanied myriad blues artists both famous and obscure, including Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, James Cotton, vocalist Andrew "Big Voice" Odom, and many others. Primer first recorded as a frontman for the Wolf label in 1991, while still a member of Magic Slim's Teardrops. (A late 1980s performance, taped while Primer and the Teardrops were warming up the stage for Slim at a club in Lincoln, Nebraska, has also been released.) He has since cut for Telarc and Atlantic, as well.

One of Primer's most distinctive characteristics, both onstage and on record, is his knack for mixing well-known standards with more obscure, yet interesting, material in his sets. He is also an effective songwriter on his own.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Ulry, Lois. "John Primer." *Magic Blues* no. 2 (1991): 22–29.

Discography: AMG**PRIMICH, GARY**

b. 20 April 1958; Chicago, IL

The hard-working harpist and singer, one of the most active touring performers of the 1990s, was raised in Gary, Indiana, but his blues schooling came elsewhere. Primich learned his lessons well, developing a blues harmonica prowess that is unusually expansive in style and technique. Although quite capable of bedrock blues, especially classic Chicago stylings, Primich created a customized sound that also incorporated country and jazz phrasings and sensibilities. He was able to further personalize it by writing most of his material and handling the majority of the production on his recordings.

Primich played in Chicago clubs and on Maxwell Street corners at night while attending the University of Indiana. He visited Austin, heard the legendary house band at Antone's backing Otis Rush, and relocated his base of operations. Primich formed the Mannish Boys with former Mothers of Invention drummer Jimmy Carl Black and the band soon attracted an Austin following for its unpredictable live shows. Primich, however, moved on to a solo career with an eponymous debut album in 1991 on Amazing Records. He followed it in 1992 with *My Pleasure*, produced by West Coast harp hero James Harman. *Company Man*, on Black Top Records, was his most well-rounded effort as it included everything from jazz-inflected numbers to acoustic roots material featuring Steve James on mandolin. *Mr. Freeze*, released in 1995 on Flying Fish, was another success. Primich recorded *Dog House Music* in 2002 and also did a guest spot on Long John Hunter's 2003 comeback *One Foot in Texas* on Doc Blues Records.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG**PROFESSOR LONGHAIR**

b. Henry Roeland Byrd, 19 December 1918; Bogalusa, LA

d. 30 January 1980; New Orleans, LA

Pianist, vocalist, composer. An idiosyncratic piano genius who incorporated Caribbean rhythms into his music while singing and whistling in a cracked voice self-described as "freak unique" could only become a legend in New Orleans. And "Fess," with his rambunctious left hand digging deep into "rhumba-boogie" island rhythms while his right added rolling R&B flourishes, not only achieved legendary status during his lifetime but also became the international personification of the sound and sensibility of his hometown music scene.

One of the Crescent City's most beloved musicians, Professor Longhair was, and remains, a core component of New Orleans music. His keyboard creations still resonate from bandstands on a nightly basis while his musical approach and attitude permeate the work of every New Orleans musician, pianist or otherwise. The intensely eccentric Professor Longhair was unlike any other musician the city produced, yet he was somehow representative of them all.

Swamp blues pianist Marcia Ball flatly stated "Fess is what New Orleans piano is all about. It's not just those wonderful runs and rhythms; it's all that life experience and personality of his that comes through so clearly. You can hear the entire city in his playing. Fess was New Orleans." He was also a boxer, a cook, a card shark, and, ultimately, a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The Professor was out of school after the third grade. He ultimately became a street entertainer, tap dancing for tips on the sidewalks in front of Bourbon Street nightspots. He learned to play piano, guitar, and drums as a teenager but was bored with the drums and decided the guitar required too much upkeep. He later said Depression Era work with the Civilian Conservation Corps, where he spent more time entertaining fellow CCC workers on the piano than doing hard labor, probably put him on the road to a professional music career.

There were a lot of detours and distractions on his path to professional success, beginning with an Army stint during World War II that put him out of action until his discharge in 1943. It wasn't until the late 1940s, when he sat in on piano at the Caldonia Club while Dave Bartholomew's band was taking a break, that he would make a name for himself. Due to the long hair sported by his band that band's name became Professor Longhair and the Four Hairs, the first in a long line of curious and/or

inscrutable performing names he employed. His signature song, “Mardi Gras in New Orleans,” was first recorded in 1949 under the band name of Professor Longhair and the Shuffling Hungarians. In a later incarnation, recorded in 1959, it served as the theme song of the Mardi Gras festivities for the next half century.

In the early 1950s, “Fess” was a pervasive presence on the New Orleans scene, although since he often was playing and recording under a variety of names he wasn’t always easy to keep track of. Under the name of Roy Byrd & His Blues Jumpers he recorded his first and only national R&B hit, the hilarious “Bald Head,” a year after the release of the original “Mardi Gras in New Orleans.” He suffered a minor stroke in mid-decade but kept pumping out the hits, releasing quintessential Crescent City classics like “Tipitina,” “Ball the Wall,” and “In the Night” on an assortment of record labels.

Professor Longhair’s popularity in New Orleans at this point was unprecedented as his brilliant pianistic synthesis of styles produced a personalized musical gumbo that blended everything from street parade music to calypso to blues boogies. His songs could seemingly be heard on every block of New Orleans but their unusual nature and regional emphasis meant they were rarely heard outside the city.

With the exception of “Big Chief” in 1964, his musical career as Professor Longhair finally stalled and then almost disappeared in the 1960s. So he returned to his previous occupation, playing cards for a living. By the end of the decade his only connection to the music business was a job as a janitor in a record store. After being rediscovered by Rounder Records and making the first of a series of triumphant appearances at the fledgling New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival in 1971, the last decade of his life was one of belated commercial recognition and increased artistic achievement.

A series of Professor Longhair recordings was issued in the 1970s, some the result of new sessions and others the product of compilations of his early work. They received wide exposure and rave reviews and Fess suddenly found himself in demand far beyond the New Orleans city limits. He toured overseas, headlining the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1973 and in 1975, and appeared on a PBS television special, performing with New Orleans admirers Dr. John and Earl King, and in the documentary *Piano Players Rarely Ever Play Together*. It was a Crescent City tribute, however, that meant the most to him as a group of fervent fans opened a nightclub in his honor, naming it Tipitina’s after his classic early 1950s single. His final album, *Crawfish Fiesta*, released the day after he died in his sleep of a heart

attack, was the first winner of the W. C. Handy Awards’ best traditional album category.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Rum and Coke (ca. 2002, Tomato TOM-2041).

PRYOR, JAMES EDWARD “SNOOKY”

b. 15 September 1921; Lambert, MS

James Edward “Snooky” Pryor, the son of minister James Edward Pryor, Sr., and mother Willie Terry, was born in the small Delta town of Lambert, Mississippi, fifteen miles east of Clarksdale. Pryor, along with childhood friend Jimmy Rogers, was playing harmonica by age fourteen, inspired initially by local street musician John Blissett and the recordings of John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson I. Nicknamed “Bubba,” he was also influenced by watching Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II” perform in the streets of nearby Vance, Mississippi, and by listening to his KFFA “King Biscuit Time” radio broadcast from Helena, Arkansas.

Forbidden to play blues by his Baptist father, he secretly joined guitarist James Scott to play house parties in the area. At age sixteen, he left home and during the next three years lived and played in various parts of the South, including Memphis, Arkansas, and Missouri. Pryor arrived in Chicago in 1940 and stayed for almost a year before returning briefly to Mississippi. Back in Chicago in 1941 with his new bride Luella, Pryor was soon drafted into the Army during World War II and was stationed in the South Pacific. On the island of New Caledonia, he was assigned to play bugle over the PA system, but soon replaced reveille with Woody Herman’s “Flyin’ Home” on his harmonica over the loudspeaker. Later he entertained troops at USO shows throughout the region. He was transferred to Fort Sheridan near Chicago in May 1945 and frequently sat in at various South Side clubs, often in uniform, with musicians

such as Sonny Boy Williamson I and Homesick James. Discharged the following November and inspired by his experiments with amplification in the Army, Pryor bought a small amplifier, microphone, and two-speaker system and began performing with it on Maxwell Street. This significant innovation established him as an early pioneer of amplified harmonica and postwar Chicago blues.

Pryor formed his first band in Chicago in 1946 with cousins Floyd (who named him "Snooky") and Moody Jones and the following year made several groundbreaking recordings for the small Planet label. The single "Snooky and Moody's Boogie," backed with "Telephone Blues" and issued in 1948, was a landmark release in Chicago blues and helped shape the new postwar sound. Pryor went on to record for a variety of independent Chicago labels throughout the next fifteen years including JOB, Parrot, and Vee-Jay. Frustrated with the rough, low-paying life of a bluesman, he dropped out of the music scene in the mid-1960s to become a carpenter and by 1967 relocated to Ullin, Illinois, to raise his large family. A chance encounter with the editors of *Living Blues* magazine in 1971 prompted a brief comeback that included a European tour and recordings for Today, Big Bear, and BluesWay in 1973. Remaining fairly inactive for the next fifteen years, Pryor was coaxed out of retirement in 1987 and recorded for Blind Pig. Throughout the 1990s, he recorded albums for Antone's, Electro-Fi, and Blind Pig, and played sporadically at clubs and festivals, often with musician sons Earl and Richard "Rip Lee."

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

- Mind Your Own Business* (1996, Antone's/Discovery CD 74708).
Can't Stop Blowin' (1999, Electro-Fi CD 3359).

PRYSOCK, ARTHUR

- b. 2 January 1923; Spartanburg, SC
d. 21 June 1997; Hamilton, Bermuda

Like Billy Eckstine, Johnny Hartman, and many other African American crooners, Arthur Prysock's best singing came in an era when opportunities for black balladeers were limited while their white counterparts enjoyed major success doing identical romantic material. But Prysock could also handle lyrically demanding and musically complex jazz material, and be just as effective doing blues and R&B. The brother of saxophonist Red Prysock, Arthur became a star in the mid-1940s thanks to being featured on several Decca hits backed by Buddy Johnson's band. He went solo in 1952, and soon had a hit with "I Didn't Sleep a Wink Last Night," a tune a bit more to the double-entendre side than customary for Prysock. During the 1950s and 1960s, he became known for his powerful, yet smooth leads on such tunes as "I Worry 'Bout You," "The Very Thought of You," and "It's Too Late Baby, It's Too Late." He also ranked among the most popular live entertainers on the chitlin circuit, particularly for late-night engagements.

Prysock's two main labels during his peak period were Old Town and Verve, and he also became one of the first black entertainers to have a television show in the 1960s, though it didn't last very long. After a long dry spell in terms of national hits, Prysock became a disco sensation in 1976 with "When Love Is New." Almost a decade later came another career revival with a cover of the R&B hit "A Rockin' Good Way" and a Milestone LP of the same name. A Lowenbrau jingle also helped keep Prysock on the national radar screen, and he had two more fine albums for Milestone in the late 1980s.

RON WYNN

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Discography: Lord

PRYSOCK, WILBERT "RED"

- b. 2 February 1926; Greensboro, NC
d. 19 July 1993; Chicago, IL

Tenor saxophonist, jump-blues performer. Prysock, brother of vocalist Arthur Prysock, was king of the one-note riffing style solos. He took up the saxophone at age seventeen, and learned to play while in the service. In 1947 he joined Tiny Grimes's

PRYSOCK, WILBERT "RED"

band. In the early 1950s, after arriving in New York, Red joined Tiny Bradshaw's band, and got his first big break when he was featured on the band's recording of "Soft," an R&B smash hit. In 1953, Red briefly joined Cootie Williams's band. In 1954, he recorded his first two singles as a leader for Mercury, "Jump, Red, Jump" and "Blow Your Horn." Prysock gained tremendous exposure after landing the gig on Alan Freed's Rock 'n' Roll Jubilee Ball in New York City in 1955. That same year he enjoyed his biggest hit, "Hand Clappin'." In the 1960s, he played on numerous sessions for the King and Chess labels. In 1971, he teamed up with his older brother and they worked together for the next twenty years.

DENNIS TAYLOR

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: Lord

PUGH, JOE BENNIE "FORREST CITY JOE"

b. 10 July 1926; Hughes, AR
d. 3 April 1960; Horseshoe Lake, AR

Harmonica player in the style of John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. Based in Crittenden County, Arkansas, for nearly his whole life, Pugh recorded a studio session for Aristocrat in 1948, then a field recording session for Alan Lomax in 1959. He died unexpectedly in a truck accident.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

PULLUM, JOE

b. 25 December 1905; unknown place, AL
d. 6 January 1964; Los Angeles, CA

Blues singer and pianist. Joe Pullum was a suave vocalist in the Texas Barrelhouse style with an extremely high vocal range. His 1934 "Black Gal What Makes Your Head So Hard?" was such a big hit that

Pullum recorded at least six versions of it. In 1936, after his final Bluebird session, Pullum moved to Los Angeles, California, where he worked as a presser for the clothing manufacturer Woolen Mills for twenty-five years. While in Los Angeles Joe Pullum recorded for Swing Time in 1951. Pullum made his last (unissued) recordings for Specialty Records in 1953. On January 6, 1964, Joe Pullum suffered cardiac failure and died.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Discography

DGR; LSFP

PURITAN

There are three different Puritan labels, produced in the early 1920s by United Phonographs Corporation, New York Recording Laboratories (both subsidiaries of the Wisconsin Chair Co.), and the Bridgeport Die & Machine Co. The UPC and NYRL versions were distributed in the midwest, the BD&M version in the northeast, drawing on a common pool of masters. Its significant African American catalog was mainly from Paramount including their first blues singer, Flo Bert, and Alberta Hunter. Catalog numbers in each series were synchronized until 1923, but then began to diverge until eventually BD&M established a separate Puretone label. NYRL's Puritan survived until 1927.

HOWARD RYE

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Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

P-VINE SPECIAL

Record label of Blues Interactions of Tokyo, Japan. Started in October 1976 by Yasufumi Higurashi and Akira Kochi, it has specialized in leasing limited edition runs of American material for high-quality reissues and by this means has brought back

to the market much important and obscure blues not otherwise available. The first release was by Calvin Leavy. In the 1970s and 1980s, reissues from Chess figured largely alongside material derived from smaller labels such as Chance, United/States, and Elko. In the CD era, Gus Cannon's Stax album, private recordings of Magic Sam (later released by Delmark), a four-CD set of recordings from Detroit, reissues from Bobo Jenkins's Big Star label, Texas anthologies drawn from Macy's and Freedom, and much else, have kept the label in the forefront of blues reissuing. The label also releases for the Japanese market blues albums that are freely available in the West.

HOWARD RYE

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PYE/NIXA

A significant British jazz label, founded in 1950 by Hilton Nixon, Nixa recorded Big Bill Broonzy, Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry, and Josh White on visits to London. After control passed to Pye, the label became Pye-Nixa. In the 1960s, Pye held the British license for Chess, issuing first on Pye International before establishing a British Chess label.

HOWARD RYE

Q

QRS

A manufacturer of piano rolls founded in Chicago about 1916 by Melville Clark, the inventor of the “marking piano.” The acronym’s original meaning, if any, is unknown but supposedly it became known as “Quality Reigns Supreme.” Records, derived from Gennett, were first issued in 1919–1923. The label’s blues significance came with the 7000 Race series of 1928–1929, directed by Arthur E. Satherley and notably featuring Sara Martin, Clifford Gibson, and Sluefoot Joe. Original material was recorded at Gennett’s Long Island studios. The company has continued to produce piano rolls under various managements.

HOWARD RYE

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- Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

QUALLS, HENRY

- b. 8 July 1934; Cedar Grove, Elmo, TX
d. 7 December 2003; Dallas, Texas

A lifelong resident of Elmo, Texas, singer/guitarist Henry Qualls developed a raw electric and bottleneck guitar style, inspired by local performances from Frankie Lee Sims and Li’l Son Jackson. A true exponent of the rural Texas blues tradition, Qualls made his first recordings in 1994.

GENE TOMKO

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Larkin

Discography

- Qualls, Henry. *Blues from Elmo, Texas* (1994, Dallas Blues Society Records DBS8901).

QUATTLEBAUM, DOUG

- b. 22 January 1927; Florence, SC
d. ca. 1990; Philadelphia, PA

Related to Arthur Crudup and influenced by Blind Boy Fuller, Douglas Elijah Quattlebaum moved to Philadelphia circa 1941 and took up the guitar seriously; a fine, powerful, and impassioned singer, he was a street musician (selling ice cream) and worked occasionally as a preacher. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he toured with a number of gospel groups, making recordings with some of them.

QUATTLEBAUM, DOUG

He recorded three blues songs for Gotham (1953) then, with a repertoire of country and urban blues, R&B hits, and gospel songs, for Prestige/Bluesville (1961) but, surprisingly, could not benefit from the blues revival of the 1960s. He entered the ministry in 1971.

ROBERT SACRÉ

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Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

If You've Ever Been Mistreated (1997, Testament TCD 6003; reissue).

R

R AND B (1)

Operated in Hollywood, California, in 1954–1955 by Larry Goldberg and Al Schlesinger, with artists Chuck Higgins and Ray Agee.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

R AND B (2)

Operated in New York City in 1958 by Fred Huckman and Doc Pomus, with artists The Crowns, Laurel Aitken, and Wilfred Edwards.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

RACHELL, YANK

b. James Rachell, 16 March 1906; Brownsville, TN
d. 9 April 1997; Indianapolis, IN

Singer and mandolinist/guitarist, known for his imaginative playing and his work with Sleepy John Estes and John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson.

Yank Rachell was born to George Rachell and Lula Taylor. Birth years cited by researchers have been 1906, 1908, and 1910. He got his first mandolin by trading away a pig, but he also learned guitar,

violin, and harmonica. His earliest musical inspiration was his uncle Daniel Taylor, but he was soon traveling with Hambone Willie Newbern as well as working local house parties, fish fries, and country suppers in the area around Brownsville.

He met Sleepy John Estes in the early 1920s and by the late 1920s, when they began recording for Victor, they had formed the Three J’s Jug Band with pianist Jab Jones. Most of the vocals from the 1929–1930 Victor sessions were by Estes, backed by Yank’s piercing mandolin lines and Jones’s pounding piano. Yank’s three vocals were strong performances, and his “Expressman Blues” was an arresting blues record by any standard.

Yank returned to farming in Brownsville during the early 1930s, but he returned to the studio in 1934, this time playing both guitar and mandolin for Vocalion and the American Record Corporation label group. He was accompanied by guitarist Dan Smith and of the twenty-one sides they cut, only six were released, and those cuts on which he played mandolin remain unissued.

In 1938, he participated in the legendary Aurora, Illinois, Bluebird sessions of 1938. Some of his best mandolin work can be heard on “Haven’t Seen No Whiskey,” with vocals by Joe Williams (a different singer than Big Joe Williams), and it is these sessions that mark the beginning of his association with John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson. Rachell recorded two more sessions for Victor’s Bluebird label, both accompanied by Sonny Boy Williamson, Washboard Sam, and various washtub bass players.

While no mandolin appeared at these sessions, Yank's approach to guitar was unusual and distinctive. His backing lines often sound like lead guitar played on the bass strings. Listen to the musical break in ".38 Pistol Blues" for a good example of this. Other instances can be sampled on the last bars of "Insurance Man Blues" or on the second musical break in "Tappin' That Thing." Yank was also an imaginative composer, and "Insurance Man Blues" is an intriguing tale of the "industrial insurance man," the agent who would call at the homes of poor African Americans to collect the few-cents-a-week premiums.

Yank moved to Indianapolis in 1958 and began recording again for Delmark in the early 1960s, reunited with Sleepy John Estes and harp player Hammie Nixon. He also toured the country and performed overseas during these blues revival years. He was an active performer for seven decades and played right up until his death in 1997.

PAUL GARON

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

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RACIAL ISSUES AND THE BLUES

Racism directed toward individuals of African descent in America dates from the early colonial era with the advent of a patriarchal ideology that supported the institution of slavery. Supporters of slavery used racist arguments in their attempt to justify their economic system. After the abolition of slavery, these racist arguments continued long after the Civil War. Politicians used a racist agenda to end Reconstruction in the South and establish Jim Crow, or "separate but equal," laws. Blues music eventually reflected the ordeal of Jim Crow racism for American blacks.

Racist arguments supporting slavery can be traced to the seventeenth-century British colonies in America. The first proclamation establishing slavery in the colonies came from the governor of Connecticut in 1638. Massachusetts sanctioned slavery in 1641, Virginia in 1661, and Maryland in 1663.

The early laws of New England specified that individuals of African descent could be denied freedom,

whereas white indentured servants were allowed to buy their way out of servitude. The arguments for slavery were based both on economics and on religious thinking. The return on the investment in slave labor was profitable, and, in the minds of many Christians of that time, God predetermined the sanction of slavery.

While slavery in New England ended in 1790, it proliferated across the South during the eighteenth century and expanded with the development of the frontier as it moved west toward the Mississippi Valley during the early nineteenth century. The ideal of this white patriarchal system in the South was based on the premise that the male planter treated his dependents responsibly and humanely. The grim reality of this system was very much the opposite.

The ideal of the planter's wife also contributed to the moral definition of slave society. The white wife was ideally virtuous and sexually pure while the slave woman was considered more sexually passionate. This difference in perception became another racial issue in slave society, as the planter's wife was elevated to a higher moral position. The planter, however, often had his way with his female slaves and fathered children with them while his wife was forced to ignore this moral transgression.

Laws that forbade black men from having sexual relations with white women further complicated the racial tensions of slave society. Even if a black man were only suspected of having attracted the attention of a white woman, whites punished him brutally. Slave society dictated hypocritically that white southern womanhood had to be protected and the mixing of races prevented.

White planters advanced the racist argument that blacks were inferior and not able to live a free existence. For their own well-being, planters needed an orderly social system to control their slave chattel. Slave owners presented this argument to the rest of the country as a justification for slavery. Even while reform movements advocating the abolition of slavery took hold in other parts of the country, the South was too isolated and its educational effort too restricted to allow this kind of public discourse.

During the period of Reconstruction in the South, post-bellum state governments made an effort to include blacks in society. The federal government in the form of the Freedman's Bureau mandated that ex-slaves should be able to sign contractual work agreements, to vote, and even to seek elected office. Schools and colleges, whose purpose was to educate its newly freed citizens, appeared in the South. Blacks began the arduous task of building their lives as free people. In this process, they also began to prove wrong all of the racial arguments that had been used against them

during the slave years. Consequently, a prospering black middle class began to emerge in many of the cities of the South by the end of the nineteenth century.

The mind-set of the white planter class persisted, however, and white politicians began the effort of ending Reconstruction and promoting the concept of “separate but equal” in society. The same arguments that were used to establish and maintain a slave system in the South were again used, this time to promote the separation of the races. Not even the Populist movement of the late nineteenth century or the Progressive movement of the early twentieth century could stop the unjust and tireless mind-set of racism.

The repudiation of racial equality gained growing support in the states across the South and culminated in the 1896 Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. In this case, the court ruled that segregation was not in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution that assured blacks of their civil rights as long as blacks had the same accommodations as whites. The resulting reality was a country divided into two separate and unequal societies.

Before *Plessy v. Ferguson*, blacks had worked hard to establish themselves as successful, participating members of society in the South. That would change tragically in the decades to follow. By 1908, seven states in the South had made changes in their constitutions that took away black voting rights. Poll taxes, violence, and intimidation served the same purpose of disfranchisement of black voting rights in four other states in the region.

Blacks came to find more and more exclusions in their lives throughout the first half of the twentieth century. If they did not accept these lines of exclusion, they often paid the highest price for striving for equality. To confront these racist exclusions, black intellectuals, business leaders, professionals, attorneys, and others came together to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or the NAACP in 1909. They worked hard to turn the tide of racism, but they did so against a landscape of terror and violence.

White supremacists were ruthless in their terror. They lynched, shot, drowned, bombed, set on fire, beat, and buried anyone who threatened their view of a racially divided society. No one was safe from this threat—they violently killed men, women, and children from all walks of life. They killed because blacks dared to vote, attend church, preach against injustice, wear the uniform of the United States military, walk down a street, or use a public restroom.

The rise of Jim Crow was not confined to the South. Segregation came to be a part of American life all across the country. Even when blacks looked for a new place to live outside of the South, they

encountered racial tension and violence. During the summer following the end of the First World War, many blacks thought that they had earned the right of inclusion by fighting for democracy in Europe. They instead found themselves victims of riots in cities across the United States. The worst riot of that summer occurred in Chicago where a young black man was hit by a brick for swimming in a section of Lake Michigan designated for “whites only.” More than thirty people were killed in the four days of rioting that followed, hundreds were injured, and hundreds of homes were destroyed.

The events of the Chicago riot inspired the blues song, “East Chicago Blues,” recorded by Pinetop and Lindberg Sparks in 1932. Also in this song is a reference to the East Saint Louis, Illinois, riot of 1917 that marked another incident of northern urban racial intolerance.

East Chicago is on fire, East Saint Louis is burnin'
down. . . .

The perils of Jim Crow were the subject of a number of blues songs. Charles Davenport recorded “Jim Crow Blues” in 1927; Joshua White recorded “Jim Crow Train” in 1941; and Huddie Leadbetter recorded “Jim Crow” in 1943.

Even in the recording industry, blacks found themselves labeled by race. When Mamie Smith made “Crazy Blues” in 1920, the first vocal recording using the blues form, it was called a “race record” and not a blues record. Throughout the twenties and the thirties, race records would designate all forms of black music whether it was blues, jazz, or ragtime.

Social progress was slow for blacks in their quest for freedom and inclusion during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1954, attorney Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel for the NAACP, successfully argued the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* before the Supreme Court. This landmark case overturned the decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. It went on to state that separate facilities were inherently unequal and thus rejected by the court.

The nonviolent protest movement of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., followed *Brown v. Board of Education*. King showed to the world the injustices of racial violence used against blacks, and his effort changed public opinion in the United States. After a decade of activism by King and others, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

As the U.S. government followed a more inclusive course during this postwar period, black culture began to emerge as well. Blues was no longer music exclusively for blacks. Rock 'n' roll was a musical

RACIAL ISSUES AND THE BLUES

form rooted in the blues. As rock music grew in popularity, so did interest in the blues. Elvis Presley and Eric Clapton acknowledged their debt to the blues. The decade of the sixties not only saw progress in many issues regarding race, but it also saw the rediscovery of blues music by a wider audience outside the black community.

BILL GRAVES

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RADCLIFF, BOBBY

b. 22 September 1951; Bethesda, MD

Guitarist who was raised in Maryland/Washington, DC, area. In 1967 he traveled to Chicago and sought Magic Sam, who then introduced him to other Chicago musicians. He moved to New York City in 1977, and has been a Black Top label artist since 1989.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Richard Skelly); Santelli

Discography: AMG

RADIO

The blues radio format is defined most eloquently by blues music itself. Blues songwriters often explore subjects that deal with real-life situations, and it is

not uncommon for listeners to contact a blues host between selections to share their testimony after hearing a certain blues selection. Says renowned *King Biscuit Time* disk jockey Sonny Payne, it is the “history of the African American people” surviving enslavement, post-reconstruction, and legal segregation, songs of human beings just dealing with life. The unsugarcoated “facts of life” themes often found in the lyrics can be beneficial, nonetheless. The music helps people forget their problems, and it imbues the human spirit with strength. Like other musical genres, the blues format can serve as a cathartic experience. “The blues is the truth,” according to the late legendary record promoter Dave Clark.

Radio Blues and Disk Jockeys

Bessie Smith sang the blues live on WMC, a Memphis, Tennessee, radio station, as early as 1924. The regular remote broadcasts from The Palace on Beale Street appear to have continued until sometime in the 1930s. The legacy of a blues presence on Memphis radio programming eventually influenced the owners of WDIA radio, the shape of black radio, and lives of WDIA personalities B. B. King and Rufus Thomas, and local listener Elvis Presley, whose first commercial success was the recording of Arthur Crudup’s “That’s Alright Mama.”

In the early 2000s, WMPR-FM in Jackson, Mississippi, devoted eleven hours per day to blues. Most blues programs are limited to certain time blocks during a radio station’s weekly air schedule. One exception is WAVN-AM in Memphis, which in 2003 devoted its entire program schedule to blues. Many noncommercial radio stations (public, community, and college) have increasingly programmed blues for the past thirty years. At least one radio station in many major markets and college communities can be found devoting selected block schedules to blues. National Public Radio downlinks via satellite a blues program, *Portraits in Blue*, to its affiliates each week. The Handy Foundation in Memphis circles the globe to record live blues concerts and syndicates the performances in a magazine format called *Beale St. Caravan*. Blues programming can be heard on the Internet, and the trend is growing rapidly. Emerging satellite services such as Sirius and XM had begun to provide continuous blues programming by the early twenty-first century.

Disk jockeys who work in the radio blues format often travel to blues festivals around the country to keep up with current trends and developments. They

exchange ideas, conduct interviews with historical and leading artists, and then broadcast them on their local blues programs back home. Such periodicals as *Living Blues* and *Big City Blues* can provide invaluable cultural information for the program producer. It is fair to say that most men and women who join the still-loose network of blues programmers take that step seriously. In essence, they become part of a respected culture that was pioneered by men and women who struggled valiantly to regain their human dignity and make life better for everyone. A serious blues disk jockey will know—and play—the music of Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II,” Robert Lockwood, Muddy Waters, and B. B. King. And the blues enthusiast—whether disk jockey or listener—might consider revisiting or discovering the rich origin of the blues radio format, which began in the Mississippi Delta “On the Arkansas Side.”

Chicago: Al Benson

During the early 1940s in Chicago, Al Benson (following the precedent of Jack L. Cooper, another Chicago entrepreneur) began purchasing blocks of time on several different radio stations to program black music, much of which was blues. An important key to Benson’s success was the format he designed, which permitted him and his hired announcers to speak the language of many transplanted southerners and to promote the products of sponsors. His use of recorded blues music and his training of young broadcasters such as Vivian Carter and Sid McCoy appears to have accompanied the rise in popularity of black disk jockeys and blues programming. Carter later cofounded Vee-Jay Records and helped develop the legendary Jimmy Reed. She launched the Beatles’ first recordings in the United States. Benson’s block programs, broadcast on various stations, remain a major contribution to the blues radio format. By 1947 there were at least seventeen blues-oriented radio programs being broadcast in the United States. Several programs aired on various stations in Los Angeles, and Leroy White and others were very popular in Detroit.

Helena, Arkansas: *King Biscuit Time*

Helena, Arkansas, located on the west bank of the Mississippi River, is a small city that became home to the longest-running blues program on radio, *King Biscuit Time*. Shortly after KFFA Radio was

established in 1941, bluesmen Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II” and Robert Lockwood met with their white childhood friend, Sonny Payne, who worked at the station and helped get them on the air. Sam Anderson, the station manager and part owner, agreed to sell Williamson and Lockwood a block of airtime, but the blues duo had no money. Anderson referred them to a potential sponsor, Max Moore, a wholesale grocer who needed to sell a huge backlog of flour from his warehouse. A financial deal was struck, and a tight program structure was agreed upon.

Williamson and Lockwood opened their fifteen-minute show Monday through Friday with a theme song that was followed by an Anderson voiceover announcement: “Pass the biscuits boys, it’s King Biscuit Time.” Mixing performances of blues songs with casual conversation about where the duo would be performing in the area, Williamson and Lockwood were a success. Listeners in a hundred-mile radius of KFFA’s transmitter embraced the blues program and quickly purchased all of Moore’s existing supply of King Biscuit Flour.

KFFA Radio has continued broadcasting *King Biscuit Time*, uninterrupted, for six decades and had logged nearly 14,000 blues shows by the turn of the century. Robert Lockwood and the late Sonny Boy Williamson have grown into legends in both the blues and radio programming history. The show made Max Moore wealthy and the late Sam Anderson’s KFFA world famous. Sonny Payne now hosts *King Biscuit Time* in a half-hour disk jockey format. Visitors from around the world frequently stop in at the Delta Cultural Center in Helena to catch the program, 12:00 to 12:30 P.M. Some guests even get a chance to be interviewed live by Payne. Each year up to 90,000 blues lovers from around the world flock to Helena, Arkansas, to attend a blues festival in honor of *King Biscuit Time* and the return of Robert Lockwood to center stage.

Nashville: WLAC Radio

Francis Hill, a white woman, sang the blues live on WLAC in the late 1930s. Then, sometime in the mid-1940s two black record promoters were welcomed into the WLAC studios by Gene Nobles. One of the promoters is believed to have been Dave Clark. Nobles, white and handicapped, held down the night shift for WLAC’s 50,000-watt clear channel signal, which blanketed the South, Midwest, parts of Canada, and the Caribbean. After Nobles began playing a few of the promoters’ black records several



Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II” on the set of *King Biscuit Time* on KFFA, Helena, Arkansas. *King Biscuit Time*, which debuted in 1941, is still on the air today, now hosted by Sonny Payne. (Photo by Ivey S. Gladin, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

nights a week, listeners began writing from as far away as Detroit, Michigan, and the Bahamas for more blues and boogie. Nobles came to the attention of Randy Wood, a white businessman in Gallatin, Tennessee, about forty miles away. Wood bought some advertising spots to promote the sale of several thousand records by black artists that he discovered after purchasing an appliance store. Again, the audience responded and bought out Wood’s phonograph stock.

Gene Nobles was soon hosting a blues-oriented program on a radio station that many African Americans referred to simply as “Randy’s” (WLAC). The disk jockey–run show focused on promoting a COD mail-order system operated by Randy’s Record Shop in Gallatin, Tennessee. The primary pitch involved promoting sets of phonograph records made up of five or six unrelated 78-rpm singles. To promote sales, one or two records were played each night

from various sets called “specials” (e.g., “The Treasure of Love Special” or “The Old Time Gospel Special”).

Ernie’s Record Mart and Buckley’s Record Shop, both in Nashville, soon imitated the successful Randy Wood format. Each store bought time blocks, which were spread among WLAC’s additional blues-oriented programming with traditional spots and per-inquiry advertisements. By the early 1950s WLAC Radio’s entire nighttime schedule was bought out. John Richburg, Bill Allen, and Herman Grizzard joined Nobles to formulate a powerful programming block from 9:00 p.m. to early morning, Monday through Sunday. All of the disk jockeys were white, but they addressed the audience fairly, respected the culture, and won acceptance and trust from a largely, though not exclusively, black audience. Don Whitehead, an African American, joined the news staff in the 1960s.

Memphis: WDIA Radio

John Pepper and Bert Ferguson, two white businessmen, found themselves unable to attract white listeners or money to their newly built WDIA Radio just as Randy Wood was gaining success. While on a trip to New Orleans, Ferguson encountered a copy of *Negro Digest* and read a success story about Al Benson. The magazine caused him to recall the 1930s live radio broadcasts from Beale Street featuring the skillful Nat D. Williams. When he returned to Memphis, he sought the assistance of Williams, a black educator, journalist, and Beale Street impresario. In an afternoon block of time, Monday through Friday, Williams developed and hosted a blues-oriented show, and the radio audience bonded with his style, laughter, and cultural knowledge. Williams's success led to the hiring of other black announcers until WDIA's entire programming schedule consisted of blues, rhythm and blues, and gospel. It was the birth of full-time radio devoted to these genres.

WDIA Radio intermingled its music with several public service announcements, called "Goodwill Announcements" by the station, to help educate and inform African Americans living in the mid-South's tristate region: Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi. A. C. Williams, another educator turned WDIA radio announcer, maintains that the foundation of black political achievement in Memphis, which is now very organized, began with public-affairs programming on WDIA Radio. The station's 1950s programming model remains at the pinnacle of blues radio formats. WDIA's programming philosophy served as a model for other radio legends who continued to promote or program the blues wherever their career paths led them: Maurice "Hot Rod" Hulbert in Baltimore; Martha Jean Steinberg in Detroit; and Rufus Thomas and B. B. King as performers around the world.

Blues Radio Format Diffused

The blues format was still strong in 1953 when more than five hundred black disk jockeys were reported to be working in radio, mostly in block formats or part-time situations. A few years later, black military veterans returning home from service brought reports that Europeans loved the "real blues." They cited John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, and others as being revered. Indeed, the Animals, the Rolling Stones, and Canned Heat advanced blues programming on white commercial radio stations in the 1960s after they included blues

songs by the great African American masters on their early albums. Curious fans who studied the origins of English rock performers became more aware of the blues. In addition, 1960s FM radio, in need of program material and open to experimentation, also began playing blues. Many young white soul radio station listeners who became attracted to rhythm and blues made additional cultural explorations and discovered the blues. The blues format increasingly made its way onto the programming schedules of noncommercial radio as the number of FM public, college, and community radio stations expanded.

LAWRENCE N. REDD

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RAILROADS

The growth of railroads in the nineteenth century helped transform America from an agricultural society into an industrial society. From this historic transformation came a migratory shift of rural black people from southern states to northern cities. The experience of this migration found its way into the body of blues music written and recorded in the twentieth century.

The first steam-driven railroad service in America took place in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1830. In the following two decades, railroads expanded westward, and by 1852, lines reached as far as Chicago. The expansion of railroad lines occurred mostly in the North, where the need to move industrial goods was felt year round.

The initial railroad expansion in parts of the South was a slower process, as planters across the region saw only a seasonal need to move their agricultural goods to market. According to Scott Reynolds Nelson, planters feared that the new transportation system would disrupt existing trading arrangements, strengthen commercial centers in states other than their own, and give their slaves a way to escape to the North. Merl Reed maintains that planters in the lower Mississippi Valley were reluctant to contract the labor needed to build railroads. Consequently, free labor from outside the South worked alongside slave labor in the earliest years of southern railroad expansion.

RAILROADS

By 1860, Chicago had established itself as the railroad center of the country. Eleven different lines converged there. The Illinois Central emerged as the biggest company in the country with more than seven hundred miles of track. In the spring of 1861, it joined the Mobile & Ohio system, which ran as far south as Alabama and Mississippi. By the beginning of the Civil War, passenger and freight service also connected Boston to New Orleans and New York to Saint Louis.

After the Civil War, railroad companies expanded across the continent connecting east to west. They also began to rebuild lines destroyed during the war east of the Mississippi River. Blacks in the South experienced increased suffering during post-bellum railroad expansion. No longer working as slaves, free black men were hired and paid to construct railroads. Ku Klux Klan violence, however, confronted this labor arrangement from the beginning. The period of Reconstruction in the South saw railroads in some cases broker agreements with the Klan by hiring their members and former Confederate officers to manage the business of building, running, and repairing the railroads.

When the Freedmen's Bureau disbanded in the 1870s, free black men found themselves let go from jobs they had recently gained. Many of these free black men were arrested for vagrancy when they could not find other work. Once jailed, these men not only found themselves working in involuntary servitude for the railroads but wearing convict uniforms and chains as well.

The combined force of government subsidies, land grants, unionization, strikes, corruption, and discrimination moved the expansion forward during the 1870s and 1880s. During that period, railroads also began to consolidate; fewer railroads were operating more and more miles of track across the southeastern and midwestern part of the country. The Illinois Central acquired the railroad line that connected Cairo, Illinois, to New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1877 and thus became a trunk line between the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes. The Illinois Central was joined by the Louisville & Nashville, the Rock Island, the Texas & Pacific, the Southern Pacific, the Atlantic Coast, the Southern, and the Seaboard as dominant railroad companies and routes.

Between 1865 and 1914, the population of the country tripled and the number of miles of railroad track grew seven times over. By 1920, almost the entire population of the country lived within twenty-five miles of a railroad line. As railroads connected more towns and cities across a larger network of service, southern blacks saw an ever-increasing expansion of commerce, while white

hegemony marginalized their participation in the economy.

The increased mobility that came with the growth of the railroads at the close of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century brought about social change. In 1890, eight out of every ten blacks lived in a rural area of the South. By 1920, one out of four would live in a town or city and by 1930, only half of the blacks in the South remained in a rural environment. In the period between the First and Second World War, more than two million blacks from the South would participate in the Great Migration to the cities of the North.

In 1890, social mobility was indeed a new experience for blacks in the South. In the years immediately after the Civil War, free blacks found their movement from one area to another restricted by a series of newly enacted black codes in most southern states. The reality of poverty also controlled black mobility. The labor system of tenant farming and sharecropping replaced the black codes. The wages for this labor system were a small portion of the crops, and landlords forced many black families to accept harsh terms of credit. These families fell into debt from this system, and at best could only expect a bare subsistence from their effort.

The railroad had long symbolized the power of escape to freedom for blacks in the South. Before the Civil War, the Underground Railroad had been an escape route to freedom in the North. The escaping slaves often traveled on foot at night in order to avoid detection. They followed in the direction of the Big Dipper, or Drinking Gourd as they called it, keeping the North Star in front of them. They stopped along the way in barns and basements of sympathetic whites and free blacks.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the movement of southern blacks began on a local level. They left the isolation of their small farms and moved into nearby towns or cities. They followed the parallel lines of track, often on foot, until they came to a populated area. Upon arrival in these town and cities, many found the only available housing to be dilapidated shacks next to the railroad lines at the edge of the community.

The migration became much larger in scale by the time of the First World War. Northern companies looked to bolster their diminished labor pools by recruiting southern black workers. Not only were there better jobs in the northern cities, but there were better schools as well. The railroad was a clearly marked route to escape the impoverished conditions and Jim Crow laws of the South. Among the railroads used in the migration, families from Louisiana and Mississippi traveled to Chicago on

the Illinois Central. Those living in Alabama and Tennessee rode on the Louisville & Nashville to Cleveland.

Those who could save the money purchased a ticket for themselves and family members on segregated train cars. These cars located near the front of the train exposed their passengers to smoke and burning ash from the locomotive. People traveling in the segregated cars could not buy food on the train nor were they allowed into the sleeping cars. Many blacks left under threats of violence. Some were stopped at train stations and were forced to go back to their farms and work off their debts.

Those who could not afford a ticket walked the rails. Many acted in grim desperation and risked their lives by hopping an open boxcar on a freight train. Some blues artists saw that damaging their guitars in this kind of effort was enough of a risk and gave it up as a bad option. If caught by the sheriff in some states, train hoppers faced imprisonment for trespassing on railroad property. The prospect of hopping a train often meant running alongside a moving car to gain a grip near the wheels. Others chose to swing down underneath the car and ride on the brake rods, axle beams, or coupling links. On board, they faced the prospect of fumes, bad weather, the fireman's hose, or the brakeman's club, any of which could kill.

If the door of the boxcar was open, a person could hop in and hope to find it unoccupied. If occupied, whites were ready to throw off any blacks that wanted to share the space. Many blacks consequently traveled in small groups for protection. Their hope was to move on to a place where they could find work.

Young black men traveling in these small groups also found other risks in hopping a freight car. The Scottsboro case in Alabama became a national news story in 1931. Two white prostitutes falsely accused nine young black men of rape after they had occupied the same boxcar. Eight of the young men received the death sentence, but later these sentences were overturned. Four of the accused men subsequently received prison terms for a crime they did not commit.

The social conditions of hopping trains affected homeless children as well as adults. Many of the children came from homes broken apart by the stress of joblessness, racism, substance abuse, and desertion. Living in transient camps along the railroads, they often were used to beg and steal and work as prostitutes.

Norm Cohen noted one of the earliest references to the railroad in a minstrel song dating from the 1840s:

Railroad trabel's getting' all the go,
'Kase de hoss boat an steamboat goes so might slow.

This stanza of the song was quick to realize that the railroads were a faster way to travel than the established modes of canal boats and riverboats.

Black men who performed the hardest part of constructing the railroads in the nineteenth century did so to the rhythm of the call-and-response work song. By the end of that century, the railroad work experience found its way into such songs as "John Henry." Other early twentieth-century songs like "Nine Pound Hammer" and "Spike Driver Blues" told of the work experience that was associated with the building of the railroad.

"Railroad Bill," which told the story of a desperate train robber, was a blues precursor and ballad that first appeared in 1909. Morris Slater, or Railroad Bill as legend remembers him, robbed trains in the South during the 1890s. He died in a shootout, but the written accounts of his demise are as varied as the songs that remember him.

In John Lomax's 1934 recordings of Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter, the blues singer talks about the blues song "Rock Island Line." He explained that men sang while they swung their heavy picks to the rhythm of the song. "The Midnight Special" is a blues song about the train that shines a light on the prison and inmates in Sugerland, Texas, every time it passes. Although Leadbelly made recordings of the song on five different occasions, his was not the first recording by a black blues singer. Sam Collins was the first black singer to record the blues classic in 1927.

The rhythms and sounds of trains became an undeniable influence on the blues artist. In "The Panama Limited," recorded by Bukka White in 1930, the playing of the bottleneck guitar imitates the sound of a train. Robert Johnson achieves a similar effect in his 1936 recording of the song "Rambling on My Mind."

According to Paul Oliver, black workers, or field hollers, marked their workday by the schedule of the trains passing through the Mississippi Delta. Each train sounded a distinctive whistle. As each fireman approached in his engine, he played a simple tune heard across the fields. Blacks hired to work on the railroads communicated with the men and women working in the fields by this form of quilling. Musical rifts floated on the air from the whistles when an Illinois Central train coursed its way between Chicago and New Orleans.

Blacks in the South developed their own names for the railroads, and these names found their way into blues music. The Illinois Central became the I.C.; the Louisville & Nashville became the L & N; the Missouri, Kansas and Texas became the Katy; and the Kansas City Southern became the Kaycee.

RAILROADS

Perhaps the most widely known verbal invention for the railroads that appeared in blues music was the Yellow Dog. Its apocryphal origin remains a mystery. Some speculate that the Yellow Dog is the Yazoo-Delta line. Some think that it was a mongrel dog or a derisive term for workers on another railroad. Still others maintain that it was another way of referring to a short line railroad.

In 1903 W. C. Handy waited one night in Tutwiler, Mississippi, for a train that was nine hours late. He woke in the early hours to find a man dressed in rags and worn out shoes sitting next to him with a guitar. The man played with a knife against the strings for a slide effect and sang about “Goin where the Southern cross the Dog.” Handy notes in his autobiography that the singer was going to the town of Moorehead on the Sunflower River where the Yazoo-Delta line crossed the Southern railroad. The encounter would later inspire Handy’s own song, “Yellow Dog Blues.”

As blacks in the South became more mobile and looked for new opportunities at the turn of the century, the blues music form was also taking shape. The Spanish in the Southwest introduced the guitar to American culture. By the late nineteenth century, black fiddlers and guitar-playing songsters played for white audiences in Texas. The arrival of railroads helped the crossover of varied musical styles and instruments in Texas and states farther east. Not only were railroad yards popular places for the exchange of musical ideas, but the railroads were a network that carried the musical influence from one area into another.

BILL GRAVES

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RAINEY, GERTRUDE “MA”

b. Gertrude Pridgett, 26 April 1886; Columbus, GA
d. 22 December 1939; Columbus, GA

Ma Rainey was one of the most important blues singers of the 1920s. Because of her perceived authenticity as a true southern blues artist, and her great influence on other female blues artists of the time, she has often been referred to as the “Mother of the Blues.”

Life

Gertrude Pridgett began her performing career at the age of fourteen as a contestant in a talent show known as A Bunch of Blackberries. After this event she began performing in tent shows. It is reputed that she was including blues selections in her repertoire by 1902. In 1904 she married William “Pa” Rainey, a traveling singer, dancer, and comedian. Together they formed an act with the Rabbit Foot Minstrels known as the Assassins of the Blues, often billed as “Ma” and “Pa” Rainey. The Rainey family toured with many of the finest black minstrel companies of the time, and eventually “Madame Gertrude Rainey” became a headliner throughout the South.

By the time she signed a recording contract with Paramount in 1923, Rainey had been touring for more than twenty years, and had established a large and loyal following in the South. Aiding her live performances was the success of her early recordings such as “Moonshine Blues” and “Bo-Weevil Blues.” In 1924, Rainey had a couple of breakthrough sessions in New York resulting in the production of several well-known hits, including “Jelly Bean Blues” and “See See Rider Blues.”



Ma Rainey. (Photo courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

Rainey’s overwhelming success led Paramount to book her with the TOBA (Theater Owners Booking Association) circuit, which expanded her following further, eventually leading to numerous performances throughout the Midwest, and even into the North. She spent almost all of 1925 and 1926 touring and recording, rapidly amassing a small fortune.

In 1927, audience taste began to shift away from the vaudeville-style productions that had been Rainey’s medium of choice. However, her immense popularity allowed Rainey to continue beyond the time of many of her contemporaries. In fact, 1928 proved to be one of Rainey’s most successful years of touring and recording. Despite this, Paramount terminated her contract. The time of the classic blues singer was coming to an end, and Rainey’s productions, steeped in the traditions of southern vaudeville and blues, were losing favor with contemporary audiences.

The Great Depression finished what the shift in popular taste had begun, and by the early 1930s the era of classic blues had ended. Rainey continued

touring, but eventually poor working conditions and the death of her sister led Rainey to retire in 1935. She returned home to Columbus, and due to her sound fiscal management, became the owner-operator of two theaters in Rome, Georgia. In 1939, following the death of her mother, Gertrude “Ma” Rainey died of heart disease, and was buried at the Porterdale Cemetery in Columbus.

Music

Rainey had a distinctive contralto voice with a limited range of approximately one octave. She seldom used vibrato, and her vocal quality often sounded strained. When compared to many of her classic blues contemporaries, Rainey’s style may at first seem unrefined, but the true essence of her appeal was in her ability to captivate an audience and intimate both pathos and mirth (particularly in the South).

Her extraordinary showmanship would have likely been honed from many years of touring throughout the South with the black minstrel circuit. Rainey was a singer, but also a comedian and a dancer. Audiences were reported to enjoy her performances of all three, and these aspects of her background informed her stage presentation throughout her career.

Though she came out of a vaudeville tradition that included a variety of popular and folk songs, Rainey’s recorded output and general musical style detail the substantial influence of the blues on her sound. It could be suggested that Rainey’s seeming affinity for the blues had more to do with the nature of her recording deal with Paramount than with her own tastes (a commercial recording label catering to the taste of the black record-buying public), but Rainey had been singing the blues on the minstrel circuit for twenty years before she signed a record deal. Her actual recording career spanned five years, from 1923 to 1928. In that time she recorded ninety-two selections; more than half were twelve-bar blues, and many of the others demonstrated some type of hybrid blues form.

“Moonshine Blues” and “Bo-Weevil Blues” were both recorded in Rainey’s earliest sessions, and were ultimately two of her greatest hits (also covered by Bessie Smith in 1924). Rainey’s distinctive southern blues stylings brought a new sound to the classic blues, and both “Moonshine Blues” and “Bo-Weevil Blues” became Rainey anthems. Though she wrote many of her own selections (a rare trait for the classic blues singers of the 1920s), Rainey was also a successful collaborator. Her 1924 sessions in New York with Fletcher Henderson and Louis Armstrong were

particularly noteworthy, producing both “See See Rider Blues” and “Countin’ the Blues.”

Perhaps the most successful collaboration in Rainey’s career was with Thomas Dorsey. Rainey met Dorsey in Chicago where he was working part time and playing piano in saloons. After a short period of auditioning, Rainey hired Dorsey to be her bandleader. He then formed her touring group, the Wildcats Jazz Band. This early ensemble featured Dorsey as the pianist, saxophonist Eddie Pollack, Gabriel Washington on drums, trombonist Albert Wynn, and trumpeter David Nelson. Dorsey stayed with Rainey as a pianist, director, and arranger until 1926 when he suffered a nervous breakdown. By 1928 he had recovered, and was working as an arranger for the Chicago Music Publishing Company. Dorsey and Rainey again collaborated on her recordings, but he never returned as the director of her touring group.

Interestingly, the two periods of Dorsey’s involvement with Rainey highlight a shift in her performance style. Without exception the musicians in Rainey’s early Wildcats Jazz Band were either professional jazz musicians or experienced performers from the minstrel circuit (if not both). The sound of this backing group was quite polished and in keeping with a larger trend established by the vaudeville inspired classic blues. Upon Dorsey’s return, the accompanying musicians were increasingly idiomatic with rural blues performances. It is entirely likely that Rainey was attempting to maintain her link with the southern audience while at the same time capitalizing on the success recording of the male rural blues singers of the late 1920s.

Influence

Legend suggests that Rainey may have kidnapped a young Bessie Smith and taught her how to sing the blues. Though historically it is known that these reports are exaggerated, the younger Smith may have been influenced by the successful and more experienced Rainey. Many artists of the time were said to have benefited by Rainey’s guidance, either directly (as Butterbeans and Susie did) or by her influence (like Clara Smith). Rainey’s kindness was celebrated even in her own time. From mentoring younger acts to having a reputation for paying her band well and punctually (a rarity on the 1920s black minstrel circuit), Rainey was known for taking care of people. The nickname “Ma” may have come from her days with the Rabbit Foot Minstrels, but her nurturing disposition may have been what sustained it.

In a time when black female entertainers were light skinned and otherwise conformed to white

notions of beauty, Rainey was a heavy-set, dark-skinned woman. However, she celebrated her body image through lavish costuming during performances and a mythic sex life filled with numerous men and possibly women too. Moreover, she was an accomplished businesswoman. When the Great Depression left many in financial ruin, Rainey was able to retire from the touring circuit and return to Columbus where she lived comfortably. These attributes, magnified by the publicity that comes with being a successful entertainer, helped redefine social parity, opening new possibilities for black women of that period.

Though anecdotes about Rainey’s connection with her southern audiences are plentiful and should be carefully considered, it is a historical fact that she was a popular and highly successful figure in the South. Many have suggested that Rainey was a woman of the people and truly understood the lives of black southerners, therefore she could express joy and sorrow through the blues in an authentic way that many of her classic blues colleagues could not.

However, Rainey’s brand of southern-inspired blues was ultimately prosperous in the North and Midwest as well (once she began touring there). This would seem to indicate that perhaps more than understanding one specific ethnic and sociocultural viewpoint (that of the black southerner in most of her songs), Rainey understood the human condition. This combined with her powerful stage presence and extraordinary showmanship secured her status as a Queen of the Blues, and made a significant contribution to the archetypal persona of the blues diva.

JEFFREY A. JONES

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Discography: AMG; DGR

RAINEY, WILLIE GUY

b. 17 April 1901; Calhoun County, AL
 d. 23 August 1983; College Park, GA

Georgia blues singer and guitarist Willie Guy Rainey became a professional performer only in his seventies, appearing at blues festivals in the United States and Holland and recording a solo LP for Southland Records of Atlanta.

LUIGI MONGE

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See also Fuller, Blind Boy; McGhee, Brownie

RAITT, BONNIE

b. 8 November 1949; Burbank, CA

Blues guitarist Bonnie Raitt is the daughter of Broadway star John Raitt who is best known for his roles in *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*. She began learning guitar at age twelve. She began a college education at Radcliffe in 1967 but dropped out after two years to play the Boston folk and blues club circuit. Through Dick Waterman, she met and performed with such blues greats as Howlin' Wolf, Sippie Wallace, and Mississippi Fred McDowell. In time she earned a strong enough reputation to be signed to the Warner Brothers label.

Her self-titled debut album, released in 1971, is noted for a mixture of blues with elements of folk music and R&B and was praised by critics not only for Raitt's skills as a musician but also for her song selection. Her 1972 album *Give It Up* picks up where the first album left off, stylistically. It also includes songs by contemporary musicians such as Jackson Brown and Eric Kaz and includes three Raitt originals. The 1973 album *Takin' My Time* further explored Raitt's eclectic taste in music including jazz and calypso influences and as well as the standard blues and folk. Though enjoying the favor of the critics and a faithful cult following, Raitt had yet to enjoy success on the charts. Under pressure from Warner Brothers to release a popular hit, Raitt teamed with producer Jerry Ragovoy to record the album *Streetsights*. This attempt to cross over failed to produce hits, and it was felt by critics that Raitt strayed too far from her accustomed style. *Home Plate* continued Raitt's path

toward a more popular sound, but was somewhat more successful due to the work of producer Paul A. Rothchild. Raitt enjoyed her first significant taste of popular radio airplay with a cover of Del Shannon's "Runaway" on her 1977 album *Sweet Forgiveness* (this album was also produced by Rothchild).

The year 1979 saw the release of *The Glow*. Throughout the 1980s Raitt toured regularly and played hundreds of benefit concerts. She was never able to establish herself on the charts however, releasing two albums (*Green Light*, 1982, and *Nine Lives*, 1986) that were received like her previous albums had been. Warner Brothers then released her. In 1989, however, she teamed up with producer Don Was and released the album *Nick of Time* under the Capitol label, which turned out to be a smash hit. The album won a number of Grammy Awards including album of the year.

The 1990s saw Raitt's success continue with the release of the albums *Luck of the Draw* (1991), *Longing in Their Hearts* (1994), *Road Tested* (1995), and *Fundamental* (1998). Also, after bouts of alcoholism and drug use in the 1980s, her personal life stabilized following her marriage to the actor and poet Michael O'Keefe in 1991, though they divorced eight years later. She continued to tour and play benefit concerts throughout the 1990s, retaining and exercising her enviable slide guitar touch. *Silver Lining* was released in 2002.

ROBERT SORICELLI

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Discography: AMG**RANKIN, R. S.**

b. 22 February 1933; Roysce City, TX

Guitarist whose style and career was shaped by his uncle T-Bone Walker. His initials are his given name. He initially assisted Walker as valet in 1949, then as sideman guitarist in appearances and recordings through the 1950s. He formed his own band in 1956, performing at the 5-4 Ballroom in Los Angeles, then toured the West Coast for some years afterward. On many recordings he was billed as T-Bone Walker, Jr. From 1964 through the 1970s he worked less in music, but he gave a notable performance at the T-Bone

Walker memorial concert in Los Angeles in May 1975.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography

LSFP (as T-Bone Walker Jr.)

RAP

Rap has evolved during the past three decades into the dominant musical expression of young adults, simultaneously reflecting the identical sensibilities of rebellion, stylistic flamboyance, and free expression as rock 'n' roll in the 1950s. What began as essentially a New York City and East Coast phenomenon is now an international force, with rappers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and throughout Europe constructing rhymes over intricately produced song samples and fragments as well as layers of beats and rhythms. The music is part of a culture that also includes graffiti, styles of dance, and styles of dress, but most importantly reflects an attitude and philosophy that defines "hip-hop culture." Many within this universe object to the separation of the music from these other components. Still, rap has made its own journey, attaining a place within the nation's consciousness that many would have deemed impossible during the 1970s and 1980s.

The music has connections with African storytelling (griots) and Jamaican reggae (toastmasters, DJs, producers, and sound systems) as well as links to blues troubadours and poets who orally presented their stories over music rather than singing lyrics. The notion that rap is not a wholly original art form disturbs some in the rap world, who dispute its ties to anything other than their neighborhoods in the South Bronx or history in America, but there are clear similarities in tone, cadence, method, and approach between rappers and Jamaican toastmasters like Big Youth, Yellowman, or U Roy. Ironically, one of the key figures in early rap music was Jamaican immigrant Clive Campbell, known as Kool Herc. He began as a DJ in 1973, and despite his enormous sound system, wanted to ensure that the crowds who assembled at dances could fully hear the music. Herc closely studied crowd reactions, discovering which parts of a song stimulated the biggest response. From there, he developed the technique that would revolutionize music presentation and also be a key element in rap production. He purchased copies of the same record

and would repeatedly play them, placing major emphasis on the breaks in the tunes. While isolating and replaying these breaks, DJ Herc also developed a string of phrases designed to encourage the dancers. The dancers featured at the clubs he worked became known as break dancers.

Eventually other important components emerged. These included the techniques of scratching (spinning a record backward and forward rapidly with the needle in the groove) and punch phasing (hitting a break on one turntable while a record is still playing on another one), plus a device called a beat box, a machine that produced electronic beats. Along with DJ Herc, some other major early figures were Afrika Bambaataa, who operated a sound system at the Bronx River Community Center and became the leader of the "Zulu Nation" and one of the earliest hip-hop culture champions; The Sugar Hill Gang; producer/rapper Kurtis Blow; rapper Spoonie Gee; producer Todd Terry; and the trio Run-D.M.C. All of these acts, as well as the Fat Boys, helped popularize what was now emerging as an actual art form. The Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" and "The Message" were key anthems, while the Fat Boys' primarily novelty cuts and silly tunes proved quite popular, and Run-D.M.C. became the first rap act to attract a large white audience. Another band whose role during rap's formative period often gets overlooked is the Fatback Band, whose single "King Tim III" many insist is the first true rap number.

Interestingly, the members of both Run-D.M.C. and Public Enemy came from middle-class backgrounds, yet they, as well as Russell Simmons and Rick Rubin, cofounders of the influential label Def Jam, helped move rap from underground status into the mainstream. Add to that list the Beastie Boys, still the most creative and important white rap artists, whose status helped disprove the notion that rap was solely a black art form. Later would come other white performers like House of Pain, 3rd Bass, the excruciating Vanilla Ice, and the controversial Eminem. Some regard them as the rap equivalent of R&B cover acts, but Eminem in particular has demonstrated a flair and proficiency that transcend questions of color.

Rap subsequently started moving beyond simple songs about clothes and neighborhoods. The lyrics became more involved, and performers were now delivering frenetic verbal displays about the harshness of street life and disparity of the American system. The productions became increasingly more sophisticated, and the tone of rap songs tougher and harsher. The music's influence began spreading beyond New York's borders. West Coast rappers such as N.W.A. started devising lyrics to reflect their communities, as did the Geto Boys from Houston, 2 Live Crew from

Miami, and so on. Even the feuds, which at one time were mostly good-natured combative exchanges confined to record labels, such as the battles between L.L. Cool J and Kool Moe Dee, became more deadly and “beefs” were no longer just musical. The escalation of these fights into societal violence has led to several tragic and unsolved murders over the years and has also been part of the intensely negative attitude many older adults have toward rap. Yet the popularity of such shows as *Yo MTV Raps!* and the decision of Black Entertainment Television to fully embrace the music and hip-hop culture helped expand the audience and sales base both nationally and globally. Likewise, video became a more important element within the rap world, and singles became increasingly accompanied by videos, frequently featuring gyrating, scantily clad females, with rappers presenting their songs within tightly produced mini-movies.

The issue of women in rap has been problematic since its inception. A handful of female rappers have emerged, among them Salt 'n Pepa, Monie Love, M. C. Lyte, Queen Latifah, Eve, Missy Elliott, and L'il Kim, but the issue remains a thorny one. *Essence* magazine began a campaign in early 2005 called “taking back the music,” featuring harsh denunciations of several rap videos and urging its audience to insist that rap acts stop degrading black women. This campaign ties in with problems many adults have with the music’s most controversial form, “gangsta” rap. This is a style known as much for its vulgarity and celebration of violence as the stark descriptions of life on the street. Of course, such rappers as the late Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls also included themes of recognizing black cultural achievement, fighting economic disparity, and encouraging black unity, but these messages often get overlooked due to the coarseness of the backgrounds. The battle over these songs mirrors the growing generational divide within the black community, with many blues, R&B, soul, gospel, and jazz fans disgusted by what they consider a perversion of values being espoused by these artists, and rap lovers equally angry at what they view as a wholesale dismissal of their music and viewpoints.

The music has also spawned a host of publications, the most influential being *The Source* and *Vibe*. Just as rock’s steady growth and importance created its own corps of journalists, today there are numerous rap writers, authors, commentators, scholars, and critics. There are also awards shows for rap acts, among them the Soul Train and *Source* ceremonies. Many rappers now land parts in major films, and such former musical mainstays as L.L. Cool J, Ice Cube, and Ice-T are now more known for their movie and television works than for their music, though each maintains some connections to the music world.

Today, rap is undeniably a major social force, with music by groups such as Outkast and the Black-Eyed Peas used by major sports organizations or appearing in commercials. However, the debate still rages regarding the genre’s ultimate positive or negative impact.

RON WYNN

RAPONE, AL

b. Al Lewis, 1936; Lake Charles, LA

Zydeco vocalist, accordionist, and guitarist. After seven years playing guitar with his sister, Queen Ida, he reverted to the accordion and went out on his own. He has recorded a series of albums since 1982, including one with the Butanes and a reunion with his sister on GNP Crescendo.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG

RASCOE, MOSES

b. 27 July 1917; Windsor, NC

d. 6 March 1994; Lebanon, PA

Guitarist, mostly acoustic, in 1950s styles from Brownie McGhee to Jimmy Reed. From the 1940s through the early 1980s, he drove trucks for Allied Van Lines. Upon retirement, he pursued music full time, eventually performing at the Newport Folk Festival and the Chicago Blues Festival.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

RAWLS, JOHNNY

b. 10 September 1951; Columbia, MS

Born in the small southern Mississippi community of Columbia, Johnny Rawls took an early interest in

RAWLS, JOHNNY

blues, especially the music of B. B. King, Bobby Bland, and R&B vocalist Jackie Wilson. By his teens, Rawls was playing guitar and impressed his high school band director enough to be asked to join his professional show band in which he backed many touring musicians such as soul artists Z. Z. Hill and Little Johnny Taylor.

Rawls moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1970, but continued to perform throughout the South with various groups. In 1975, he worked with soul legend O. V. Wright and became the singer's guitarist and bandleader until Wright's death in 1980. Throughout the next decade, Rawls continued on with the O.V. Wright Band, and formed a thirteen-year partnership with guitarist and former Wright session musician L. C. Lockett.

In the early 1990s, Rawls was introduced to Jim O'Neal's Clarksdale, Mississippi-based Rooster Blues label through musician Willie Cobbs. He recorded as a session guitar and bass player on a number of releases for the imprint, and in 1994 collaborated with Lockett on their *Can't Sleep at Night* release. In late 1995, Rawls signed with JSP Records and recorded and produced *Here We Go*, a debut that showcased his successful fusion of soul and blues. Besides several more releases of his own, Rawls's abilities as producer, songwriter, and talent scout were utilized on numerous other JSP titles. In 2002, Rawls founded his own recording label, Deep South Sound, and continued to be active on both the club and festival circuit.

GENE TOMKO

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AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

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Lucky Man (2002, Deep South Sound CD01).

RAWLS, LOUIS ALLEN "LOU"

b. 1 December 1935; Chicago, IL

Popular singer and crooner in the soul/jazz style, influenced by the smoothness of Nat King Cole and the strength of Frank Sinatra.

At seven, Lou Rawls was singing gospel in a Chicago Baptist church choir, and in the mid-1950s recorded as a member of various formations, including the Chosen Gospel Singers, in Los Angeles.

As a solo artist, Lou Rawls had his debut album in 1962, titled *I'd Rather Drink Muddy Water*, on

Capitol. His first R&B hit was "Love Is a Hurtin' Thing" (1966).

Although not a blues artist in any sense, Lou Rawls included in his early repertoire light and jazzy versions of some blues standards such as "St. James Infirmary," T-Bone Walker's "Stormy Monday," Leroy Carr's "In the Evening When the Sun Goes Down," and Count Basie's "Goin' to Chicago Blues." From the 1970s, he added more popular songs like "Hello Dolly" and Stevie Wonder's "Sir Duke." Lou Rawls referred to Dinah Washington as the "Queen of the Blues."

In the late 1960s, Lou Rawls began framing his songs, such as "Tobacco Road" and "World of Trouble," with long spoken introductions on an instrumental background that are sometimes seen as an early form of rap. In the late 1970s, Lou Rawls gave concerts with a big band, strings and brass, backing vocalists, and an orchestra director. During one 1978 tour, he even performed on stage a thirty-second jingle for a beer company.

Lou Rawls's biggest hit was "You'll Never Find (Another Love Like Mine)" (1976), composed by producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, mixing a smooth soul sound with a disco tempo, similar to some of Barry White's most commercial productions. In some forty years, Lou Rawls has released more than fifty albums and CDs.

YVES LABERGE

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Lou Rawls website, <http://www.lourawls.com>.

RAY, FLOYD

b. 19 July 1909

d. 15 November 1985; Northridge, CA

Bandleader active from 1934 through 1941 in big band swing music. His 1939 Decca session with the vocal group Ivy, Vern, and Von may be heard as a prototype of post-World War II jump band rhythm and blues and female vocal groups. After World War II, he took several musical jobs, then settled in Northridge, California.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

RAY, HARMON

b. 1914; Indianapolis, IN
d. ca. 1980; Chicago, IL

First name sometimes spelled “Harman.” Though often billed as a Peetie Wheatstraw impersonator (he even recorded as “Peetie Wheatstraw’s buddy”), Harmon Ray was a fine, relaxed vocalist in his own right. The handful of sides, such as “President’s Blues,” an original tribute to Harry Truman, that he recorded in Chicago in the 1940s in the company of Joe McCoy or Sammy Price are all first rate.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Living Blues no. 26 (March/April 1976): 14–15.

Discography: DGR; LSFP**RAY, KENNY “BLUE”**

b. 11 January 1950; Lodi, CA

Guitarist. After completing service in the Air Force in 1972, he apprenticed under Paul Hermann (1972–1975), Little Charlie and the Nightcats (1975–1976), and Smokey Wilson (1976–1980). He left the West Coast for Austin, Texas, where he began a four-year stint with Marcia Ball, in addition to being a recording session musician. Since 1990 he has led and recorded with his own band.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Kenny Ray website, <http://home.earthlink.net/~blueray/>
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Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)**RCA/VICTOR/BLUEBIRD/CAMDEN/
GROOVE/X/VIK**

Originally founded in 1901 by Eldridge Reeves Johnson, the Victor Talking Machine Company allied with Emile Berliner’s Gramophone Co. and was responsible for the first authentic jazz recordings, but the company was slow to develop further jazz and blues repertoire until Nat Shilkret was appointed A&R

director in late 1926. In the late 1920s, Victor began an extensive campaign of field recordings, sending teams of talent scouts/A&R staff to record musicians unwilling or unable to make the trip to the main recording centers of New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Portable recording equipment was set up in radio stations and hotel rooms in rich musical locations like Memphis, Atlanta, and Dallas to record the area’s local jazz, blues, and country singers.

The Victor label was taken over by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) in 1929, and for a few years during the Depression, the recording activities were seriously curtailed until, in 1933, the budget Bluebird subsidiary was launched. Selling each disk at 35 cents, it soon became the main label for the company’s blues, jazz, and country releases (with certain well-received issues being rereleased on Victor proper at 75 cents, once their sales had merited the accolade). New A&R man Lester Melrose became the main source for the blues recordings, and he was the first to employ a “houseband” style, with a group that would often include Big Bill Broonzy, Roosevelt Sykes, Sonny Boy Williamson, Jazz Gillum, Washboard Sam, and several others as session musicians as well as featured artists.

The Bluebird subsidiary was dropped in the United States in 1945, although it limped on for almost a decade more as a subsidiary of RCA Victor of Canada. In the 1950s, RCA inaugurated specific R&B and pop subsidiary labels with Groove (1954–1957), “X” (1954–1956), Vik (1956–1958), and Camden (1954–present). The latter continues at the time of writing as the imprint for budget reissue compilations, while the Bluebird label continues to be resurrected for compilations of blues, jazz, and country reissues.

DAVID PENNY

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When the Sun Goes Down: The Secret History of Rock & Roll (2002, Bluebird CD 64006).

RECORD PRODUCERS

(See *Recording*)

RECORDED IN HOLLYWOOD/ HOLLYWOOD/CASH/LUCKY/MONEY

Founded on Los Angeles's Central Avenue (miles from Hollywood!) in 1950 by John Dolphin, who had previously dabbled with an eponymous gospel and jazz label in 1948, Recorded in Hollywood began issuing gospel music along with blues and R&B by Percy Mayfield, Smokey Hogg, Pee Wee Crayton, Little Caesar, and Jesse Belvin. Despite relative success with its small catalog of blues recordings, Recorded in Hollywood's main trade was in issues by black vocal groups. In 1953, Dolphin ceased business as "Recorded in Hollywood" and formed a business partnership with Don Pierce, the latter heading the newly launched Tennessee-based Hollywood Records—a label that would last until 1959—while Dolphin formed a string of new labels; Lucky (1954; King Perry, Joe Houston, and Chuck Higgins), Money (1954; Johnny Moore's Three Blazers, Memphis Slim, and Peppermint Harris), and Cash (1955; Ernie Freeman, Ray Agee, Riff Ruffin, and Bo Rhambo). In 1958 Dolphin was murdered by an irate songwriter, Percy Ivy, but Dolphin's wife persevered with the Money label into the late 1960s.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography: McGrath

Blues from Dolphin's of Hollywood (1991, Ace CDCHD 357).

RECORDING

Technology and Manufacture

Sound recording technology and manufacturing originated in the late nineteenth century and evolved over the course of the twentieth century. The development of recorded sound during this period changed the way music was heard and created. The growth of the sound recording business brought music to larger audiences. The opportunity to record and distribute the music of black Americans grew concurrently with the development of this new sound recording industry.

Acoustic Era, 1877–1925

Thomas Edison recorded the first known sound of a human voice on a tinfoil strip wrapped around a cylinder in 1877. He quickly sought patents to cover his invention and set out to improve on and exploit it. Neither of these efforts bore fruit immediately, and it was not until 1889 that the Columbia firm first produced music recordings for public consumption. In 1885, Chichester Bell and Charles Taintie improved the recording process by using wax-coated cylinders. In 1887, Emile Berliner developed flat disks with lateral cut grooves to record the sound.

The first commercial cylinders initially appeared in 1890. They appeared in coin-operated machines where patrons could listen to recordings at drugstores, hotels, bars, and county and state fairs. Duplication of recorded music for these machines was very limited.

A giant acoustic recording horn attached to a stylus could only make one cylinder at a time. To produce more than one cylinder required multiple recording machines to be crowded in the studio area with a small band performing the same song thirty times over the course of a three-hour session. In this way 300 cylinders of a song could be produced. A singer's voice was not as strong as a small band and could only be recorded by a few horns at a time.

The first gramophone records went on sale to the American public in 1894. Emile Berliner had developed a way to create a metal master recording from a lampblack-coated lead disk, which was dipped in an acid bath after recording. He then was able to manufacture records by pressing hard rubber disks with the metal master. In 1896, he began using shellac as the recording surface of the manufactured disk.

This increased efficiency in manufacturing a disk allowed it to succeed in the commercial marketplace over the cylinder. The disk was also played back in louder volume, it was more durable, and it was easier to store. In spite of the advantage of the recorded sound disk, the Edison Company continued to produce cylinders until 1929. In either case, the quality of music that was recorded was very limited in these early sound recordings.

The first disks that played at approximately 78 revolutions per minute were introduced in 1901 and were manufactured in a variety of nonstandard diameters. The Victrola, which was the first sound player designed as a piece of furniture, went on sale in 1906. The Victrola had the turntable, spring-driven motor, and audio horn built and concealed in a cabinet. Other makes through 1925 were based on this model, including those manufactured by the Wisconsin Chair Company.

Electric and 78-rpm Era, 1925–1948

The KDKA radio station in Pittsburgh went on the air with the first live commercial broadcast in 1920. The advent of live radio in the early part of the 1920s introduced the new technology of microphones, amplifiers, and sound being transformed into electric impulses. Acoustic recording technology suffered from the limitations of its sound. Recorded acoustic songs sounded tinny, muffled, and scratchy in contrast to the clarity of an early live radio broadcast. Record sales declined as more radio stations went on the air, including WSM in Nashville and WSB in Atlanta.

In 1925, Bell Telephone Laboratories introduced a system of amplifying sound electronically. The first electronically recorded disks went on sale to the public that year. Also, Victor released its Orthophonic Victrola model, which was an acoustic phonograph for electrically recorded disks, and record sales began to climb again.

Electric recording captured a broader sound frequency range. Lower bass range sounds could be heard on record as well as the higher treble range sounds. The electronic microphone also could pick up sound from a greater distance so that singers and musicians no longer had to crowd around the acoustic recording horn in a studio. Later in the early 1930s, radio shows could be prerecorded on longer playing disks that played at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute.

Blues and black sacred music were also recorded and sold directly to radio stations during the 1930s and 1940s on 33 1/3-rpm discs. These labels included Associated, Lang-Worth, Planned Program Services, Thesaurus, and World Transcriptions.

The first Library of Congress recordings began with Robert W. Gordon in the late 1920s. The first electric disk recording machine used in the field for the Archive of Folk Song recordings occurred when John Lomax and his son Alan recorded Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly) at the Angola Penitentiary in Louisiana in 1933. (See the separate *Alan Lomax* and *John Avery Lomax* entries.)

Another development that occurred during the advent of electrical recording was the growing popularity of jukeboxes. By the mid-1930s, jukeboxes had helped rescue the recording industry when record sales dropped in the earlier Depression years of that decade. These coin-operated machines offered a variety of 78s for customers to listen to in a variety of public settings. Record producers had found yet another way to expand the commercial success of Race records. Popular songs could be selected and heard at restaurants, cafes, drug stores, ice cream soda counters, bars, and dance halls.

The rebound of the record business ended, however, with the United States entering the Second World War in December 1941. Shellac, a significant ingredient in the material for the 78-rpm disks, became scarce during the war as the government restricted its commercial use. The manufacture of records declined sharply as a result. Another problem in the record business during the war years was the competition between live musical performers and the expanding use of the jukebox. James C. Petrillo, head of the American Federation of Musicians union, demanded compensation for being undercut by the playing of music on jukeboxes. The union and its member musicians went on strike in July 1942, refusing to record for the next two years.

LP and 45-rpm Era, 1948–1982

The technical and manufacturing capabilities of sound recording expanded significantly after the Second World War ended in 1945. Decca first produced records with an extended sound range of 14,000 Hz. In 1948, shellac began to be replaced by vinyl whose principal material was polyvinyl chloride or PVC.

The new twelve-inch vinyl records first produced in the United States by Columbia also played at the slower speed of 33 1/3 rpms. They would be called “Long-Play,” or LP, because their sides could contain twenty minutes or more of music. Their playback grooves were narrower, and tone arms on the players were lighter than those on the 78-rpm gramophones. Diamond and sapphire styluses picked up a higher quality of sound from the surface of vinyl records. A year later in 1949, RCA released the first seven-inch vinyl record that played at a speed of 45 rpm. The 45-rpm record generally played one song on each side and came to be known as a “single.” And while 78s would remain available, the newer LPs and 45-rpm singles would increase in sales each year and come to dominate the market.

Magnetic tape had been used since the 1930s but the quality of sound prior to the Second World War was about the same as that of 78s. The German radio broadcasts during World War II used improved recorders and tape. This technology was discovered by the Allied Armed Forces in 1945. By 1947, radio broadcasters and record producers used this technology to make master tapes in the United States.

The results of these technical and manufacturing advances in the recording business allowed longer and better sound fidelity recordings on master tapes. Also, for the first time, the tape could be cut and spliced, which allowed sound engineers to edit the record performances.

RECORDING

RCA was recording music in stereo under studio conditions in late 1953, but the stereo LP did not come into wide commercial distribution until 1958. Previous LPs had been monaural recordings, whereas the stereo LP produced a panorama of sound between two separate speakers. Stereo recording created the sensation of hearing musical sound in a three-dimensional setting.

In 1963, music recorded on cassette tapes was sold for the first time. Their small size and the convenience of handling made cassettes a popular format that rivaled LPs in sales. Home cassette players also could record, which put the easy ability to transfer music from one source to another in the hands of consumers for the first time.

Digital Era, 1982–Present

The digitization of sound began in the late 1960s for the purpose of improving telecommunications and broadcasting. Unlike electrical recording that reproduced the sound wave with electrical impulses, the digital recording process sampled sound at intervals ranging up to 50,000 times a second. Each reading of sound was programmed by a computer. When played back, each digital interval was read and the sound recorded was recreated.

By the late 1970s, digital masters were used to produce some LPs. The digital masters exceeded the LPs in their dynamic range. A digital master captured 96 dB of dynamic range, whereas the LP could only play back a range of 70 dB. Unlike the electrical recording, the digital recording had the potential to provide an exact copy of sound with no loss of quality, although it would not be until the 1990s that such copies could begin to satisfy the most critical listeners.

The first commercial compact disc or CD was introduced in 1982 and the manufactured recording that consumers bought matched the sound quality of the digital master. Other advantages over the LP existed for the CD. Its small size of less than five inches in diameter made for more convenient handling and easier storage. The CD also could carry up to eighty minutes of sound, nearly double the duration of a vinyl LP disc.

Other technical developments in the late twentieth century for sound recording included the introduction in 1990 of the Moving Pictures Experts Group 1, Layer 3, or MP3. This allowed digital music files to be compressed by a factor of more than ten. Recorded music could then be easily transferred from one computer to another, albeit with a substantial reduction in sound quality.

In 1995, RealAudio became the first major service provider for audio streaming on the Internet. In 1999, the musical file sharing network Napster was established, which allowed peer-to-peer exchange of copyrighted music. These technical and manufacturing changes in the late twentieth century brought a host of copyright challenges to the music industry.

The evolution of recording technology and manufacturing has produced continued improvements in the quality of sound for recorded blues music in live and studio settings. This improved sound capability coincided with a greater access to a once-local folk music genre. This access has created an ongoing discourse about the origins and contexts for blues music.

Examples of this kind of discourse note that early recording sessions may not have recorded all of the significant blues artists of the twentieth century. The early recorded history may be incomplete. The influences on later blues recording artists may not have been local or even blues music.

Paul Oliver contends that the positive side of the discussion is that an important musical form that originated with black Americans was recorded, sold, and broadcast to larger audiences. Second to this point, he states that the improvisational qualities of this musical form that were based on the instance of the performance could be recorded and preserved.

Recording technology has allowed past recorded blues sessions to reemerge during both the LP era and the digital era. The digital recording era has allowed music labels to remaster many older recording sessions dating back to the acoustic era of the early twentieth century. These older recordings have been rereleased on CDs with a quality of sound far superior to the original. These rereleased recordings have also allowed the public an opportunity to hear alternate takes of songs in many sessions.

BILL GRAVES

History of Blues Recording Through 1960

Recordings from the 1890s, whether on cylinders or disks, included a few African American artists, most notably George W. Johnson (1846–1914), a street entertainer whose “Whistling Coon” and “Laughing Song” were best sellers of the era, recorded over and over again for phonograph companies large and small. Louis Vassier (1858–?) recorded voice and banjo pieces along with comic sermons for the Louisiana Phonograph Company of New Orleans in the early 1890s, and became the company’s most popular

artist. The Unique Quartette recorded for the New York Phonograph Company as early as 1890, appearing on numerous cylinder releases through 1896. The same company made records of the Standard Quartette from 1891 through 1893. Afterward, the group made cylinders that appeared in Columbia and several other catalogs until 1897. A Standard member, Ed DeMoss, sang on at least two Berliner disks around 1897, with Sam Cousins and a banjo or two. With the exception of George Johnson, none of these performers recorded after 1900. That year saw disk producer Emile Berliner cede his record-producing business to Eldridge Johnson, who formed the Victor Talking Machine Company in 1901. Among the company's early accomplishments was the signing of black vaudeville stars Bert Williams (1874–1922) and his partner George Walker (ca. 1873–1911) to make a handful of records. The Dinwiddie (Colored) Quartet made a series of Victor disks in 1902.

The following eighteen years saw only a handful of black performers in the studios. The most popular were Bert Williams and the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, whose records sold steadily in the 1910s. A white pharmacist, Polk Miller (1844–1913), made several published Edison cylinders with the (African American) Old South Quartette at his home in Richmond, Virginia, in 1909. Bandleader James Reese Europe (1880–1919), music director for the popular dance team Vernon and Irene Castle, made a few spirited Victor records in 1913–1914. But, for the most part, record companies depended on salaried, white house musicians and a handful of trained singers to perform virtually all popular material, including music from African American composers.

The situation began to change with a Victor record by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in 1917, who demonstrated that a distinctive black-derived performance style could make an artistic and commercial impact on records. Columbia signed W. C. Handy's (1873–1958) Orchestra of Memphis to make records, with an emphasis on the blues that had made him famous. Clarinetist Wilbur Sweatman (1882–1961) recorded for small labels in 1916–1917, and for Columbia in 1918–1920. Bandleader Ford Dabney (1883–1958) made a series of records for Aeolian Vocalion from 1917 through early 1920. Both groups focused on pop tunes of the day. Two noted entertainers, singer Noble Sissle (1889–1975) and pianist Eubie Blake (1883–1983), made a few Pathé disks in 1917. When Jim Europe was commissioned to take a band to France during World War I, Sissle enlisted as well. Pathé recorded them both and the band—in 1919 after they returned from the front.

Meanwhile, blues and blues-related songs had been selling on records since 1914, when two versions of Handy's "Memphis Blues" made an appearance. His "Beale Street Blues," "St. Louis Blues," "Hesitating Blues," and "Joe Turner Blues" all appeared on records before 1920, though rarely by black performers. That situation changed with the recording debut (for OKeh) of the Ohio-born black vaudevillian Mamie Smith (1883–1946), whose "Crazy Blues" became a hit in 1920, revealing to record makers that an untapped audience existed for recordings of black music by black performers, or "Race records." The music of Smith and those who followed her was influenced by the urbane cabaret style exemplified by Sophie Tucker and Marion Harris, though it was still recognizably black, and different from anything else on record.

With the exception of the older Handy, most black record makers before 1920 were born in the early 1880s, and represented the generation before the spread of jazz and blues. Lucille Hegamin (1897–1970) was significantly younger, and the first black entertainer after Mamie Smith to record the blues. Hegamin's "Jazz Me Blues" was recorded in the fall of 1920 for the small Arto label, which began circulating copies throughout the South early in 1921.

Any remaining doubts about the viability of recorded blues soon disappeared, and most labels hastened to sign their own blues singers and cash in on the trend. In order of recording debuts, the 1921 blues talent roster included Mary Stafford (Columbia, January), Lillyn Brown (Emerson, March), Ethel Waters (Cardinal, March), Daisy Martin (Gennett and OKeh, April), Alberta Hunter (Black Swan, May), Alice Leslie Carter (Arto, August), Edith Wilson (Columbia, September), Josephine Carter (OKeh, September), and Esther Bigeou (OKeh, October). All were New York-based women backed by small jazz bands, and few had any staying power. Those who did (Waters, Hunter, and Wilson) distanced themselves from the blues craze and returned to popular music as soon as it became convenient. It was not until 1923 and the advent of Bessie Smith, Ida Cox and "Ma" Rainey that significant career blues singers connected with record makers. Each of those singers had amassed years of southern performing credentials with the TOBA circuit and other regional venues, bringing a feeling for southern life and emotions to their records, which became the first blues documents of lasting worth. Record making immediately became a significant component of their profession, complementing and enhancing their live performances. Male blues singers were conspicuously absent from most early blues records, mostly because

the great self-accompanied singer/guitarists were unknown to New York talent brokers.

The Okeh company took portable recording equipment to Atlanta in 1923, primarily to record local talent featured on WSB, the city's popular new radio station. Almost inadvertently a record by Fiddlin' John Carson was made that began the country music industry, and a couple of female blues singers recorded almost as an afterthought. One of them, Lucille Bogan, would create some memorable records after 1930. Atlanta had some notable minstrel guitarists, though no one saw their potential at the time. In 1924, Okeh returned to Atlanta and recorded one Ed Andrews, who sang two pieces with his own accompaniment, becoming the first to make a "country blues" disk. However, the record was unremarkable and it started no trends. More influential was a pair of guitar solos made for Okeh in 1923 by Sylvester Weaver from Louisville. "Guitar Rag" was poorly recorded but it was influential, and among its several covers was Bob Wills's "Steel Guitar Rag" in 1936. Weaver returned to record a number of vocal blues.

Paramount Records, a subsidiary of the Wisconsin Chair Company, decided to become a major player in 1923, signing both Ida Cox and "Ma" Rainey to extended contracts, and recording a number of lesser lights in their Chicago and New York facilities. In 1924 the company recruited "Papa" Charlie Jackson, a gifted and glib vocalist who accompanied himself on a six-string banjo-guitar. Two of his first records, "Salty Dog Blues" and "Shake That Thing," became hits, and were all the more profitable because only one musician was paid to make them. Though neither was a blues in the classic mold, they were early examples of successful recordings by a self-accompanied singer performing in a southern style.

In 1925, a Dallas music retailer persuaded Paramount to record a local street busker, Blind Lemon Jefferson, whose accomplished and emotional music became a matrix for generations of blues singers and guitarists. In 1926, the company scored again with a transplanted Floridian, Blind Blake, whose music matched Jefferson's sophistication. Paramount would have a continuing profitable relationship with both.

With the introduction of electrical recording methods in 1925–1926, the resulting improved sound revolutionized the industry. By this time, other record companies were slowly beginning to emulate the example of Okeh in 1923, and scour the South for local musicians with national potential. Okeh was still the most ambitious operation, traveling to Atlanta, Kansas City, New Orleans, and Dallas to record both black and white regional talent. On a trip to St. Louis

in November 1925, Okeh made its first recordings of multi-instrumentalist Lonnie Johnson, whose blues records would dominate the company's catalog through 1932.

Columbia was less adventurous, and managed visits only to Atlanta and New Orleans before 1927. But the company had a license (shared with Victor) to the state-of-the-art Western Electric recording process. Its products clearly trumped those of Okeh, whose "Truetone" electrical recording system was not competitive. Columbia purchased Okeh in 1926, giving Okeh access to its superior technology. Okeh continued its activities independently, but, by 1927, it found its competition actively recording in the South.

Victor, though traveling to Houston, New Orleans, and St. Louis in 1924–1925, recorded almost no black music. Nor would they before the summer of 1926, when the company hired producer Ralph Peer away from Okeh. By then, it was clear that the prestigious company was missing the boat in both the blues and white country music areas and Peer, with his extensive knowledge and contacts, was clearly in a position to bring Victor quickly up to speed. After some initial New York recordings, Peer and a Victor crew set out for Memphis, Atlanta, and New Orleans, securing the first recordings by Blind Willie McTell, the Memphis Jug Band, and other groundbreaking musicians before 1927 ended. (The extended list included country giants Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family, whom Peer encountered that summer in Bristol, Tennessee.) By then Victor had made up for lost time, developing both "Race" and "hillbilly" catalogs that soon rivaled even Okeh.

Brunswick Records evolved from a modest start in Canada in 1917 to become a major U.S. label by the early 1920s. A few blues singers appeared on Brunswick in 1923, but the company lost interest until it purchased the Vocalion label late in 1924. Vocalion had also released blues records, and it continued to do so under Brunswick stewardship. The operation shifted into high gear in 1926, when Vocalion introduced a 1000 series devoted to "Race" records. Brunswick followed with a 7000 series in 1927, with specially designed labels employing a lightning motif. Both series lasted through 1932.

Paramount and Gennett continued to be prolific producers of black music, but their low-budget operations precluded field trips to southern locales. Instead, each label depended on recommendations from southern jobbers and retailers to recruit artists, who then traveled to company studios in Richmond, Indiana (Gennett), Chicago (Paramount, 1923–1929), and Grafton, Wisconsin (Paramount, 1929–1932). It was an inefficient procedure, and

both companies gradually lost ground to major labels (Brunswick, Columbia, OKeh, Victor, and Vocalion) who accelerated their southern travel schedules during 1927.

Economies of scale and low artist payments meant that gathering and publishing a broad variety of regional blues and gospel (and country) music quickly became profitable. In 1927–1928, trips to Texas were added, primarily to record Spanish-language performers. Fortunately, black performers were recorded on these occasions as well.

In New York, the QRS (Quality Reigns Supreme) piano roll manufacturer decided to produce phonograph records in 1928. They had no field recording schedule and concentrated on local performers, plus talent recruited from areas of the southeast. Despite the motto, the records were poorly and cheaply made, and production lasted only through 1929.

Depression economics hit the recording business hard, leaving only the Victor operation intact after 1932. Neither Paramount nor Gennett retained a significant market share after 1929 and blues records from their final years are extremely rare today. Larger labels continued blues production through 1930–1931, though on a steadily diminishing basis. Southern field trips were severely curtailed by the end of 1930, and were employed only sporadically through 1934. By then, three companies comprised an oligarchy that would control the recorded music business through World War II.

The American Record Corporation (ARC), formed in 1929, was a holding company that acquired numerous labels through the Depression, including Brunswick, Columbia, OKeh, Vocalion, and several low-priced brands. One was Conqueror, marketed exclusively through the Sears, Roebuck department store chain. Most of the labels atrophied as the 1930s progressed, and were discontinued after the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) radio network purchased ARC in 1938. Vocalion became CBS's sole blues label through 1940, though selected issues still appeared on Conqueror. In 1940, a revived OKeh label replaced Vocalion.

Victor experimented with several low-priced labels before settling on Bluebird, and a 35-cent retail charge, in 1933. A special series was created for Montgomery Ward department stores that included reissues of Victor country material from the 1920s and new music (including blues) derived from Bluebird. Decca Records, formed in 1934, unsettled the industry by marketing all of its popular records at 35 cents, when 75 cents was the prevailing price elsewhere. By then, all blues and country records were available for 35 cents or less.

With the demise of Prohibition in 1933, jukeboxes provided entertainment in bars and taverns everywhere, and the demand for records expanded rapidly. Jukeboxes excelled at playing music loud, making it audible for dancers over noisy bar room environments. Blues records made after 1935 usually featured heavier rhythms, provided by bass, piano, guitar, and/or drums. Performers such as Memphis Minnie, Big Bill Broonzy, and Bumble Bee Slim (Vocalion), Peetie Wheatstraw, the Harlem Hamfats, and Johnnie Temple (Decca), and Sonny Boy Williamson, Washboard Sam, and Tampa Red (Bluebird) dominated the era. Most were in the employ of the Chicago music publisher Lester Melrose, who brokered sessions in that city for Bluebird and Vocalion. Melrose's session recordings had what may be termed "the Bluebird sound," resulting from using repeatedly in the studio a relatively small group of musicians associated with Big Bill Broonzy and Tampa Red.

As the economy improved during the mid- to late 1930s, commercial labels resumed some of their field recording activity, although not at the same level they had during the late 1920s. But it was during this later time that the Mississippi Sheiks and Sonny Boy Nelson (pseudonym for Eugene Powell) recorded in New Orleans for Bluebird in 1936, the Graves Brothers recorded in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, for ARC in 1936, and Robert Johnson recorded in Texas in 1936–1937.

Most of these performers continued to enjoy popularity through the war years, even when record production was curtailed by a lack of raw materials. Most recording activities were halted after July 31, 1942, when an AFM (American Federation of Musicians) strike kept musicians out of the studios until the fall of 1943, when Decca became the first of the majors to come to terms with the union. Victor and Columbia held out for another year.

During the war years, small independent record operations sprang up around the country to fill the void left by major label inactivity. There had been early stirrings in Los Angeles, where independent studios had formed in the 1930s to serve the film industry. The Bronze and Ammor labels published records by local black artists between 1939 and 1941. Songwriter Leon René fathered Ammor, and would beget the Exclusive label in 1944. His brother Otis founded Excelsior the same year. Black and white southwesterners migrated in large numbers to California during the war, creating a bottomless pool of talent for new labels to draw on. Startup outfits Aladdin, 4-Star, Gilt Edge, Globe, and Modern Hollywood were all in business by the war's end.

Elsewhere, King/Queen debuted in Cincinnati, and there were Mercury in Chicago, and Apollo and Commodore in New York. Even after major labels resumed recording, the independents continued to sprout like weeds. Many failed because of inadequate capital, poor management, and competitive pressure, but a few, like King, Atlantic, Mercury, Savoy, Chess, and Imperial, would be major players by 1950, and remain profitable for years. They built impressive catalogs of varying combinations of blues, rhythm and blues, gospel, and country. Stars such as Wynonie Harris (King), Ruth Brown (Atlantic), Nappy Brown (Savoy), Muddy Waters (Chess), and Fats Domino (Imperial) were their creations and, with many colleagues, would place African American popular music at the forefront of the industry by 1955. “Down-home” blues artists such as Brownie McGhee, Lightnin’ Hopkins, and John Lee Hooker flourished in this environment too, making records that appeared on a variety of labels. Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, and Little Walter had permanent contracts with Chess Records, as did Li’l Son Jackson with Imperial. Others of their ilk only recorded sporadically, and usually for marginal labels.

By the end of the 1950s, the black audience for down-home or “country” blues had waned, and the slack was taken up by young white fans who were enthusiastic about a broad range of “folk” music, including the blues. In New York, producer Moe Asch had been selling blues to cosmopolitan purchasers since 1949 on his Folkways label. In 1957, Chess began to produce LP disks of earlier singles by Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Little Walter, and Sonny Boy Williamson, with several in a series dubbed “The Real Folk Blues.” Riverside, Prestige, and other jazz-oriented labels began adding blues to their catalogs, and small collector-operated outfits began to produce reissues of Charley Patton, Henry Thomas, Son House, Bukka White, and others like them from early 78-rpm pressings.

Soon, the young white fans were playing the blues on their own. Some, like Paul Butterfield and Charlie Musselwhite, created “blues bands” with rock elements. Others, like Dave van Ronk and John Hammond, performed as soloists, emulating more traditional models.

RICHARD SPOTISWOOD

Recording Since 1960

1960–1990

With its capacity to hold up to twenty-five minutes of music per twelve-inch side, or fifty minutes total, the

vinyl LP offered new, extended means of presenting blues performances past and present. Historical reissues of prewar blues could now offer more comprehensive overviews of a career or regional style than previously possible on a two-sided 78-rpm disk (such as those by the SD [Steiner Davis] label in 1944–1945). An important early compilation was the six-LP *Anthology of American Folk Music* assembled by Harry Smith and issued in 1952 on Folkways. It presented various styles of secular and sacred music by black and white musicians recorded before 1932. Among the bluesmen included were Henry Thomas, Furry Lewis, and Charley Patton (as the Masked Marvel, a pseudonym given to him by Paramount Records during a 1929 promotion). Other labels like Riverside and Columbia reissued recordings by “classic” blues singers, and Columbia’s 1961 reissues of Leroy Carr and of Robert Johnson were significant forays outside “classic” blues of the 1920s. Through the mid-1950s, jazz and blues LPs were as likely to be ten inches in diameter as twelve, and were certain to be collections of an artist’s “greatest hits”; hence, Bullmoose Jackson’s 1952 King label double-entendre hit record, “Big Ten Inch Record.” As it was, King Records offered many LPs of jump-blues and urban piano boogie, some of which are collector’s items today. On the other hand, rural “down-home” artists, including those who migrated to the big cities in the north, would not be represented on a 12-inch LP until 1957 with *The Best of Muddy Waters* (Chess LP 1427), a packaging of his hit singles. Similar collections of Chess hits would be issued for Howlin’ Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson II.

In 1959, with the popular music success of the Kingston Trio’s “Tom Dooley” on Capitol Records, and the success of the 1959 Newport Folk Festival, the folk revival on stage and on records was under way. Elektra and Folkways presented Jesse Fuller, Sonny Terry, and Josh White on LP. K. C. Douglas’s LP *A Dead Beat Guitar and the Mississippi Blues* appeared in 1952 on the Cook label, and in 1957 Sam Charters issued a newly recorded collection *American Skiffle Bands* with Gus Cannon, and the Memphis Jug Band. Several of the Chess LP anthologies mentioned above were titled *The Real Folk Blues*, although most of the tracks included were very much urban in sound and commercial in sensibility. In 1959 Waters recorded for Chess an album of Bill Broonzy songs, although the repertoire was not regular in Waters’s live performances, and even if it was, it would have been performed with his full band, not with Waters alone accompanying himself with guitar.

Little by little the sound of live blues as heard in a cultural context came to be recorded. Important

efforts were presented by producer/folklorist Kenneth Goldstein in the Prestige Bluesville series, including albums devoted to Lightnin' Hopkins (many of those produced by Mack McCormick), Wade Walton, Lonnie Johnson, and Big Joe Williams. The documentary field recordings made in 1933–1942 by John and Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress were compiled and released on a series of LPs issued by the Library on its own label. Additional and later Alan Lomax recordings of southern field chanters and musicians were released on the Atlantic and Prestige labels in the late 1950s. Another important set of tapes were those recorded by Harry Oster of Angola (Louisiana) prisoners; their release on Folk-Lyric to critical acclaim led to the post-prison career of the most striking of the Angola musicians, Robert Pete Williams.

The improvement of portable recording equipment in the 1950s made possible high-fidelity on-location recordings of musicians performing “live” before audiences. The possibilities were shown in RCA Victor’s best-selling two-LP set of Harry Belafonte’s 1959 Carnegie Hall concert, which included African American songs during the first portion. Vanguard released several live performances from 1959 to 1960 of Odetta from the Newport Folk Festival, New York’s Town Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Muddy Waters’s appearance with his regular band with pianist Otis Spann at the 1960 Newport Folk Festival was released on Chess; the riots the night before lent the recording a documentary value in addition to its musical content. Recordings made in black venues in the early 1960s are some of the most thrilling to exist, especially Ray Charles with Marjorie Hendricks in Atlanta in 1959, James Brown’s 1962 Apollo Theater show, B. B. King’s *Live at the Regal* from his fall 1964 shows at Chicago’s Regal Theater, Gene Chandler’s “Rainbow ’65 parts one and two” also recorded at the Regal, and *Etta James Rocks the House* taped in Nashville in 1965.

Eventually in 1965 electric blues came to be captured in the studio within reasonable sonic stereo fidelity and without worry about duration of performance, that is, not having to fit—or expand—a song to a three-minute 45-rpm single side. One three-LP series, *Chicago/The Blues/Today!* produced by Samuel Charters for Vanguard, recorded nine different blues acts, with songs lasting from two to six minutes. A contrasting approach was taken by Bob Koester of Delmark Records, who through 1965 had twelve years of jazz and “classic” blues LP production experience. He applied the Delmark session methods to Junior Wells’s band with Buddy Guy to produce *Hoodoo Man Blues* (Delmark DS 612) to replicate the club manner of improvising and performing in a

listener’s living room, mirroring the fact that for many laborers who were hearing Wells in Chicago clubs like Theresa’s, the clubs were quite like their living rooms. A follow-up success for Delmark was Magic Sam’s *West Side Soul* (Delmark DS 615), which captured his informality, inventiveness, and expressivity.

Koester also ran the Jazz Record Mart, which was and remains today the leading jazz and blues record store in Chicago and arguably in the country. Several labels were founded by Koester’s former employees at his label or at his store, including Bruce Kaplan (Flying Fish), Michael Frank (Earwig), and most notably Bruce Iglauer (Alligator). Iglauer began Alligator with the intent of recording guitarist Hound Dog Taylor after failing to interest Koester in recording for Delmark. *Hound Dog Taylor and the Houserockers* was duly released on Alligator LP 4701 in 1971, its success leading to two additional Alligator studio LPs with Taylor, as well as an international touring career for the Chicago musician. Not to be overlooked in Alligator’s early history was its second LP artist, Son Seals, a bluesman whose vocals and guitar were equal in expressive power to Taylor’s.

Rural southern blues recorded before 1942 were getting reissued on LP. Much of this activity was due to the folk music revival, to the success of Samuel Charters’ *The Country Blues* (New York: Rinehart, 1959) and Paul Oliver’s *Blues Fell This Morning* (London: Cassell, 1960) in calling new attention to the blues. Charters released several reissues on RBF, a label created for him by Moe Asch. There were also the efforts of a handful of collectors, especially Pete Whelan and Bernard Klatzko, in recovering rare 78s from oblivion. In 1961, Whelan and Bill Givens began the Origin Jazz Library (OJL) label with an issue of Charlie Patton, the Mississippi prewar great whose performances had been out of print since his 1934 death. The second OJL LP, *Really! The Country Blues* (1962) answered Charters’ LP *The Country Blues* by presenting Son House and Willie Brown, among other southern artists, in prewar recordings. A considerable achievement was OJL 12 and 13, *In the Spirit* (1996), which presented prewar sanctified sacred recordings. Meanwhile, a new reissue label was appearing, begun by Nick Perls, who had built an impressive collection of pre-1942 blues 78s. His label, initially called Belzona but renamed Yazoo, would release prior to his death in 1986 seventy-three LPs of blues from Mississippi, the Carolinas, St. Louis, and Atlanta, with new collections of Patton, Skip James, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Willie McTell. Other notable labels from

the 1970s into the early 1980s were Klatzko's revival of the Herwin label, with its landmark reissues of Henry Thomas and of Gus Cannon; Don Kent's Mamlish label; and Rosetta Reitz's Rosetta, which specialized in various styles of women's blues performances.

One result of this renewed interest in old 78s was the rediscovery of the men and women who made them. Columbia's 1965 sessions with Son House were a rare instance of a major label working with a rediscovery. Otherwise, new recordings of old legends were being done by independent labels such as Dick and Louisa Spottswood's Piedmont and Melodeon labels (for the first rediscovery recordings of John Hurt and of Skip James), and John Fahey's Takoma (for Bukka White). Later, small labels handled both reissues and new sessions. One of the most enduring and eclectic is Arhoolie, which was established in 1960 by Chris Strachwitz, and its subsidiary Blues Classics. In addition to reissues of Sonny Boy Williamson II's Trumpet material and Lightnin' Hopkins's Gold Star sessions, and of Harry Oster's Folk-Lyric field and prison recordings, Strachwitz recorded new material with Hopkins, Mance Lipscomb, Earl Hooker, Fred McDowell, and he released the field recordings of George Mitchell. Working seemingly in parallel with Strachwitz, Frank Scott recorded West Coast acoustic blues talent like Thomas Shaw for his Advent label; over the years Scott has operated the Roots and Rhythm mail-order record business. There was also Pete Welding's Testament label, which presented a variety of LPs, including recent recordings by Dr. Isaiah Ross and Robert Night-hawk, and an album devoted to topical songs on John F. Kennedy's assassination. Another notable label has been Arnold Caplin's Biograph founded in 1967, which reissued prewar music, but also issued Bukka White's *Big Daddy* LP in 1973.

It should be remembered that from the 1950s through the 1970s, contemporary blues and soul blues records to the black market sold very well, often selling better than the blues records aimed at white collectors. Ruth Brown helped to establish Atlantic in rhythm and blues. Ray Charles developed his soul style during his years recording for Atlantic in the 1950s, then crossed over into mainstream popular music success when he recorded for ABC-Paramount the song "Georgia on My Mind" and the album *Modern Sounds in Country and Western*. B. B. King was a high seller for the Bihari brothers' Modern label with songs like "Three O'Clock in the Morning," "Sweet Sixteen," and "Please Love Me," and later he would be a mainstay on the ABC label and its BluesWay subsidiary, then coming to MCA where in 1969 he released his landmark "The Thrill Is Gone."

Bobby Bland was perhaps the biggest star for Duke Records, staying with the label for about twenty years, and several of the album covers (such as that for *Call on Me*, 1963) were designed to appeal to the women who bought his records. James Brown was the innovative blues, soul, and funk artist for King in the 1960s and early 1970s, and his anthems like "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)" were played heavily on black radio, jukeboxes, in cars, and around neighborhoods. These and other stars—Dinah Washington, Koko Taylor, Albert King, Isaac Hayes, Johnnie Taylor, the Staples Singers, among many others—enjoyed stellar success through recordings, and younger artists would enjoy initial success through singles hits through the early 1970s, including Aaron Neville, and Peggy Scott-Adams with Jo Jo Benson.

Alligator continued to develop after its early success with Hound Dog Taylor and Son Seals. It brought to greater prominence Albert Collins including his LP *Ice Pickin'* and it sustained Koko Taylor's post-Chess recording career. It had a notable series with *Living Chicago Blues*, presenting many local acts deserving good recordings yet not having enough commercial interest for a whole album. One of the most memorable Alligator releases of the 1980s was *Showdown!* (1986) featuring Albert Collins, Johnny Clyde Copeland, and Robert Cray, a newcomer enjoying mainstream success with his *Strong Persuader* LP for Mercury.

European labels carried the torch for American blues, even as interest for the music was ebbing in the United States. In the 1960s and early 1970s, labels like Saydisc and Xtra were issuing new and old performances of American musicians, and Paul Oliver arranged through British CBS to issue several illustrative albums to his book *Story of the Blues* (London, Barrie and Rockcliff: The Cresset Press, 1969) and the first four volumes of his *Blues Series* editions for Studio Vista/Stein and Day. Through the 1980s, Americans performing abroad took opportunities to record whole albums for labels like Black & Blue and Swingmaster, or to appear on anthologies such as those on Southland Records. L+R Records released the *Living Country Blues USA* series from the tapes of Axel Kuestner in the early 1980s, and it issued several albums of material from the American Folk Blues Festival tours. Ace Records in England began reissuing classic jump-blues and rhythm and blues of the 1940s and 1950s. In the early 1970s, Johnny Parth with Evelyn Parth was issuing classic southern blues, including the 1930 complete surviving recordings of Son House, Willie Brown, Louise Johnson, and Bukka White, and alternate takes of Robert Johnson. Mr. R&B, a Swedish label run by

Jonas Bernholm, issued many important collections of jump-blues.

The 45-rpm disk continued to be used, especially for jukebox and radio play, and many soul labels were issuing new music in that format for home enjoyment. Stax and Volt, Malaco, and Hi Records enjoyed many radio and sales hits, sustaining the recording of soul music and helping to push the boundaries of the blues. Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, several labels were issuing traditional and acoustic blues on 45s, including High Water, Rooster Blues, and Jewel, although more for jukebox or local sales in the recording artist's vicinity.

The activity recounted here, however various, was at a low production and fiscal level; it was not unusual for a blues issue to be pressed in a run of hundreds, not thousands of copies. This is in contrast to the high production and sales of the 1960s and 1970s records of the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, and other blues-based rock bands. These acts were inspired in part by Chess artists Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, and the 1961 Columbia LP of Robert Johnson. The reissues of their music in the late 1980s and 1990s were to pave the way for the blues boom to come.

1990 to the Present

The compact disc and its playback equipment were introduced in American stores in Spring 1983; they came to Europe and Japan in late 1982. CD technology was significantly improved in 1986 and again in 1988. For some years through 1992, an initial release of a new recording was on both LP and CD, as was the case for Sam Cooke's *Live at the Harlem Square Club 1963*. One advantage that the CD had over the LP was its longer playing time, up to seventy-five minutes (later eighty minutes). In blues it had the potential for adding alternate takes and other special features for fans and collectors. Among the first to realize this was Bob Koester at Delmark Records, who added alternate takes to the CD releases of Junior Wells's *Hoodoo Man Blues* and Magic Sam's *West Side Soul*.

The package that showed that there was a huge potential for blues on CD was *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (Sony/Columbia/Legacy C2K 46222) released in 1990, produced by Lawrence Cohn with research and copyrights from Stephen LaVere. Initial sales were expected to be 20,000 or 30,000, but they were instead ten times that many. The success was due in part to familiarity with Johnson's songs through rock groups, and also in part to the fact that a blues musician's entire recorded legacy fit on two CDs and hence on a customer's palm, and it

was affordable at twenty dollars. Its high sales made possible several excellent follow-up Legacy reissues including Cohn's *Roots and Blues* box, the complete Blind Willie Johnson set with notes by Samuel Charters, a five-box reissue of Bessie Smith with notes by Chris Albertson, and single CDs devoted to Bukka White, Willie McTell, Leadbelly, John Hurt, and Lucille Bogan. Although there was a three-LP issue of the Johnson recordings simultaneously, it was the two-CD set that sold in remarkable numbers. The wide success encouraged other labels—some of new music, others of reissues—to develop their CD catalogs.

In the wake of Sony/Columbia's success in launching the Legacy series, a number of labels devoted to reissuing prewar blues began on CD. One was Shanachie's continuation of Yazoo, under the direction of Richard Nevins with assistance of Don Kent. They converted the LP issues to CD and offered new compilations, including its *Times Ain't Like What They Used to Be, Before the Blues*, as well as its eclectic world music series *The Secret Museum of Mankind*. Johnny Parth had established Document as an LP label, reissuing rare and/or otherwise unavailable performances of well-known artists. With the appearance of CD technology, Parth planned the Document series of "Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order," with the goal of reissuing every blues and gospel prewar performance on CD, save for those handled on Sony/Columbia and other major labels. Although during the 1980s LP and early CD reissue labels had largely complemented one another's work, the Document CD reissue series eventually took over the "complete recordings in chronological order" market. By the time he sold the label in 1999, he had largely succeeded in returning to print not only the Mississippi and Memphis blues masters, but also reviving the recordings of Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, Lonnie Johnson, Roosevelt Sykes, Peetie Wheatstraw, Ida Cox, Sara Martin, Clara Smith, Lucille Bogan, and hundreds of other artists celebrated or obscure.

Meanwhile, MCA embarked on a successful series of reissues of the Chess catalog that it acquired in the early 1980s. During the last years of the LP, MCA reissued many classic blues LPs with the original cover artwork; many of those albums had CD equivalents, too. But around 1990 MCA embarked on its Chess Box series, giving career overviews of five LPs or three CDs of key figures Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, Chuck Berry, and Bo Diddley. Andy McKaie directed the series with assistance from Mary Katherine Aldin, especially for *Muddy Waters: The Complete Plantation Recordings*, and the women blues anthology *Men Are Like Streetcars*.

Delmark and Alligator continued in the 1990s with their rosters of artists and back catalogs. Among Alligator's leading artists on CDs were Luther Allison and Corey Harris, and excellent releases by Saffire—The Uppity Blues Women. Other labels enjoyed good business too, such as Michael Frank's Earwig releases of David "Honey Boy" Edwards and of Big Jack Johnson. Johnson later went over to M. C. Records as a leading artist for that label. Testament's activity was halted by its owner Pete Welding's untimely death in 1995, but it was sustained by Bruce Bromberg at HighTone Records. Other labels came to the fore including Ruf Records and Burnside Records.

Mississippi in the 1990s became a focal point for recording by labels within the state and others outside. One of the notable releases was the 1991 soundtrack album to Robert Mugge's film *Deep Blues* with live performances of R. L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Jack Owens, Frank Frost, and Big Jack Johnson. In Oxford, Mississippi, Fat Possum Records was established by Peter Lee in 1991 with Matthew Johnson, having Burnside and Kimbrough on the initial roster, with T-Model Ford and Paul "Wine" Jones added after Johnson took over the label in 1994–1995. Burnside's *A Ass Pocket of Whiskey* (1994) with Jon Spencer combined blues with punk rock; however mixed the results may seem to some listeners, the album sold enough to young rock record buyers for the label to survive and experiment. More traditional was Rooster Blues, a Chicago label that founder Jim O'Neal brought to Clarksdale, Mississippi. O'Neal retained Eddie Shaw and Eddy Clearwater for some while after his move, but he soon produced CDs with modern Delta musicians Lonnie Shields, Booba Barnes, and Lonnie Pitchford, as well as the last studio recordings of James "Son" Thomas.

Also located in Mississippi in Jackson is Malaco Records, which, after the demise of Stax Records, emerged as the leading soul label of the 1980s onward. A key talent was Bobby Bland in 1986, who resumed his string of classic records with *For Members Only*. By 1990 Malaco had taken up the Savoy gospel catalog and released the Jackson Southernaires, and it was maintaining the Waldoxy subsidiary. Other significant southern soul artists for Malaco were Johnnie Taylor, Little Milton, Denise LaSalle, and Z. Z. Hill, with occasional releases by Bobby Rush and Latimore.

Rounder distributed many labels, including Bullseye, Black Top, Tone-Cool, and Smithsonian Folkways, in addition to its own imprint. Rounder

had begun in 1971 with releases in blues, old-time music, and Louisiana music. Bullseye cast a wide stylistic net, from Ronnie Earl and Pat Boyack, to Roomful of Blues, Smokey Wilson, and Lowell Fulson. Tone-Cool has Paul Rishell and Annie Raines, Rod Piazza, Susan Tedeschi (whose *Just Won't Burn* release was hugely popular), and the North Mississippi All-Stars.

Overview boxes and series helped newcomers to the blues. The Smithsonian Institution, having made its name in the 1970s with its Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz set, released blues sets *The Blues* (1994), which concentrated on acoustic blues, and the follow-up *Mean Old World* (1996) on postwar to contemporary electric blues. In 1992–1998 Rhino Records released eighteen volumes of its *Blues Masters* anthologies. Other sets deepened examination, including Revenant's *Charley Patton* box (2001), Dust-to-Digital's *Goodbye Babylon* (2003), and Mosaic's *T-Bone Walker* set (1995). *B. B. King* (1992, MCA) was an important retrospective that was imitated by other blues boxes on single careers.

European labels maintained their releases. JSP produced new artists like Chris Beard, UP Wilson, and the Butler Twins who were unlikely to be signed in the United States; it has also issued a number of three- to five-disc sets. Wolf Records in Vienna issued much country blues, but it made available many performances of contemporary Chicago blues artists such as Magic Slim, Deitra Farr, Zora Young, and Boston Blackie. Ace Records has produced many excellent packages of postwar blues, including jump-blues, and of those affiliated with the Bihari brothers' Modern Records. Pea-Vine of Japan produced some of the most interesting reissues, including a Charley Patton set with notes and transcriptions by Jim O'Neal in 1992.

Some audiovisual presentations of blues were available on film through the 1980s, but the VHS videotape format made it possible for many older performances to be issued for home enjoyment. Shanachie, through the Yazoo Home Video subsidiary, issued the films shot in the early 1970s by the Seattle Folklore Society of Son House, Fred McDowell, Bukka White, Big Joe Williams, Sonny Terry, and others. Vestapol issued the 1966 *The Beat!* performances of Freddy King, Alan Lomax footage from Newport in 1966, and guitar lessons from Stefan Grossman. Other important films were *Out of the Blacks and into the Blues*, *And This Is Free*, and *Wild Women Don't Have the Blues*. For overall context, California Newsreel has made available the notable trilogy of documentaries

by Marlon Riggs that depicted racial matters, *Black Is—Black Ain't*, *Color Adjustment*, and *Ethnic Notions*.

DVDs have eased manufacturers' duplication of film and videos, and more treasures have been unearthed. To date, three volumes of the American Folk Blues Festival performances of the 1960s have been released. The seven films of the series *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues* were issued on Sony in longer edits than when they were originally broadcast on PBS television in September 2003.

Recordings will always remain secondary sources; the ideal primary source would be witnessing the musicians as part of an audience. Obviously as time passes, and musicians become older, retired, or deceased, that ideal primary source will not last. But the future of blues performance recording through sight and sound presentations offers the chances of becoming ever closer to that ideal primary source.

EDWARD KOMARA

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RECTOR, MILTON

d. 4 April 1994; Chicago, IL

Chicago bassist active in jazz and blues. In the late 1940s he led a jazz band with Johnnie Johnson as pianist. In the 1950s and 1960s he contributed signature bass runs for records by Jimmy Reed and Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson II," as well as for J. B. Lenoir and Homesick James. Writer Eugene Chadbourne mentions an interesting point of comparison, Rector's bass line on Sonny Boy Williamson's "Help Me" recorded in January 1963, with Lewie Steinberg's similar line recorded some months before on Booker T and the MGs recording of "Green Onions."

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

RED LIGHTNIN'

Label devoted to postwar blues operated by Peter Shertser and Ian Sippen, founded in Ilford, England, in 1968, moving to Diss, Norfolk, in the early 1970s. The catalog mixed new recordings with reissues from American sources. Notable also were the soundtracks of the film *Chicago Blues* and the *Devil's Music* television series. Trading ceased in the late 1990s.

HOWARD RYE

RED ROOSTER, THE

"The Red Rooster" was written by Willie Dixon and was first recorded by Howlin' Wolf in 1961 for Chess Records. The song, which is often titled "Little Red Rooster," became a classic of postwar Chicago blues

and was subsequently recorded by many diverse musicians including Sam Cooke (whose version reached number eleven on the pop charts in 1963), Z. Z. Hill, and Luther Allison, as well as the rock groups the Rolling Stones, the Grateful Dead, and the Doors. The original song's popularity is credited to Howlin' Wolf's powerful singing and ethereal slide guitar playing, as well as Dixon's captivating poetic imagery.

Though a Dixon composition, much of the lyrical ideas of "The Red Rooster" can be traced to earlier blues traditions. The song's underlying theme dates back to the first generation of recorded blues and the folk beliefs of southern African Americans of the early twentieth century. At that time, it was a widely held superstition that the crowing of a rooster was a warning of the presence of a stranger. In turn, a rooster could be used to watch one's house, just as a dog might be used today. Mississippi Delta blues pioneer and Howlin' Wolf mentor Charley Patton recorded "Banty Rooster Blues" for Paramount Records in 1929 and sang

I'm gonna buy me a banty, put him at my back door.
So he see a stranger comin' he'll flop his wings and
crow.

The stranger mentioned by Patton is the infamous "back door man," or secret lover. In "The Red Rooster," the singer complains that his rooster is too lazy to crow before daybreak, therefore allowing the stranger's clandestine predawn visits to his spouse to go unnoticed. His life is clearly in disarray because of the situation as he completes the first verse, and he uses the metaphor of the upset barnyard to represent his current agonizing circumstances.

The second verse is a cautionary boast of just what the rooster is capable of doing. The singer warns the unwelcome stranger of the telltale signs of barking and howling dogs when the little red rooster is doing his job. The use of the color red is also significant as being the color associated with an alarm or danger.

Another influential prewar blues singer and guitarist, Memphis Minnie, used a similar theme in her 1936 recording for Vocalion Records, "If You See My Rooster (Please Run Him Home)." Although Minnie's symbolism of the rooster is used figuratively to represent her missing lover, the song's lyrical structure most likely inspired "The Red Rooster's" final verse. Dixon borrows a plea similar to Minnie's, but alters the meaning. The singer is now desperate to get his missing rooster back. He once again states how his life is in disorder since his rooster has been gone and is no longer keeping strangers away.

Beginning with Howlin' Wolf, "The Red Rooster" has been traditionally recorded by male singers. One notable exception is female blues singer Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton, who recorded the song several times throughout her career and featured it in many of her live shows.

GENE TOMKO

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REED, A. C.

b. Aaron Corthen, 9 May 1926; Wardell, MO
d. 25 February 2004; Chicago, IL

Tenor saxophone player, vocalist, who played modern electric Chicago blues—tough, gritty sax tone combined with tongue-in-cheek lyrics. Reed moved to Chicago in the early 1940s and bought his first sax. He studied music at the Chicago Music Conservatory so he could play big band swing (which he never pursued) and got his start playing around Chicago with blues guitarist Earl Hooker. In 1948, Reed joined pianist Willie Mabon's band. Elmore James's sax player J. T. Brown coached Reed in the ins and outs of playing blues. In 1956, Reed joined ex-Ike Turner bassist Dennis "Long Man" Binder's group and toured the Southwest. In the early 1960s, Reed reunited with Hooker with whom he played numerous sessions for producer Mel London's Chief and Age labels. During the 1960s, Reed recorded as a vocalist for small Chicago labels including Nike, Cool, and USA. In 1967, Reed joined Buddy Guy's band. In 1970, the band toured as the opening act for the Rolling Stones. Reed briefly joined Son Seals' band in 1977, then was recruited by Albert Collins in 1978, with whom he toured and recorded for the next five years, playing on Collins's first five Alligator Records recordings. With Collins, Reed developed an international following. That, coupled with the 1980 *Living Chicago Blues Vol. 3* album (which featured Reed on four cuts), helped launch his solo career. Reed's 1982 solo debut album on the Ice Cube label (cofounded by Collins's drummer Casey Jones) *Take These Blues and Shove 'Em* was later reissued by

Rooster Blues. His follow-up release, 1987's *I'm in the Wrong Business!*, on Alligator Records, featured guest stars Bonnie Raitt and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Reed, with his band the Spark Plugs, remained active through the early 2000s.

DENNIS TAYLOR

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REED, DALTON

b. 23 August 1952; Cade or Lafayette, LA
d. 23 or 24 September 1994; Minneapolis, MN

Singer active in the 1980s through the mid-1990s, mostly near his hometown of Lafayette, LA. Reed had a strong tenor voice, and sang a gospel-influenced southern soul style associated with 1960s Memphis. He died of heart failure at age forty-two.

JIM TRAGESER

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REED, FRANCINE

b. 11 July 1947; Kankakee, IL

Soul-blues singer first came to prominence as backing vocalist for alt-country and pop singer Lyle Lovett. In the mid-1990s, she began issuing recordings under her own name. Her voice is deep and rich and crosses comfortably from southern soul to straight-ahead blues to R&B.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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REED, JIMMY

b. Mathis James Reed, 6 September 1925; near Dunleith, MS
d. 29 August 1976; Oakland, CA

Jimmy Reed is a legendary blues singer, songwriter, guitar and harmonica player. He has had more *Billboard* hits than any other blues artist, with nineteen entries on the R&B charts and twelve songs that "crossed over" on the *Billboard* Hot 100 pop charts.

Life

Jimmy Reed was born on a plantation near Dunleith, Mississippi. His parents, Joseph Reed and Virginia Ross, were sharecroppers. Reed had nine siblings. As a child, he worked in the cotton fields and sometimes sang with his family at the Baptist Church. From 1932, he learned guitar from his friend Eddie Taylor, who will also become an accomplished musician. Reed went to school until 1939. He found various jobs in farms around Duncan and Meltonia, Mississippi.

In 1943, Jimmy Reed went to Chicago where one of his older brothers lived; there, he served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 until 1945. After his discharge from the Army at age twenty, Reed's brother gave him an electric guitar and an amplifier. Reed returned to Mississippi where married his longtime girlfriend Mary Lee Davis, who would be known as "Mama Reed" or the "Boss-Lady." She would be his adviser, inspiration, backing vocalist, and sometimes coauthor on songs. From 1945, Jimmy Reed worked in an iron foundry in Gary, Indiana, as a junk man, and later in a meat packing plant and even in the coal delivery business. From 1950, he began working as a professional



Jimmy Reed. (Photo courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

musician. After playing part time with John Brim's group, the Gary Kings, in 1949 (with Albert King as a drummer—by then), Jimmy Reed decided to team up with his old friend Eddie Taylor, who would play guitar regularly on many Reed classics until 1967.

Jimmy Reed's debut and his successes are inseparable from the history of Vee-Jay. After a refusal from Chess Records, Reed moved to Chicago and joined the newly born Vee-Jay label in summer 1953. His first record was "High and Lonesome," backed with an instrumental, "Roll and Rhumba"; it appeared under the name Jimmy Reed and His Trio simultaneously on the Vee-Jay and Chance labels in July 1953. It sold well, and Vee-Jay decided to carry on with that new artist. From that moment on and through the upcoming decade, Jimmy Reed would have a hit every year.

The list of blues classics by Jimmy Reed is extensive: "You Don't Have to Go" (1954), "Ain't That Lovin' You Baby" (1955), "You've Got Me Dizzy" (1956), "Honest I Do" (1957), "Goin' to New York" (1958), and "Baby, What You Want Me to Do" (1959). A major hit, "Big Boss Man" (1960), was composed by producer Al Smith and

Luther Dixon; Willie Dixon played bass on the original March 1960 recording. Jimmy Reed sold four hundred thousand copies of "Honest I Do" (1957) the year it was released. His first LP, titled *I'm Jimmy Reed*, was released in 1958 on Vee-Jay.

The 1960s brought similar successes with "Bright Lights Big City" (1961), "Aw Shucks Hush Your Mouth" (1962), "Shame, Shame, Shame" (1963), "I'm Going Upside Your Head" (1964), and "Knocking at Your Door" (1966), which marked Reed's last presence on the charts. In the studio, Mama Reed used to sit behind her famous husband to speak the words of the songs while recording.

Starting in the 1960s, Jimmy Reed's problems with alcohol began to interfere with his musical creativity. He often appeared on stage or at recording sessions drunk. Reed's alcoholism also caused conflicts between himself and his lifelong friend Eddie Taylor. When Vee-Jay closed its doors, Reed went to different labels such as ABC-BluesWay Records from 1965, but he did not meet with the same success he had found in his Vee-Jay years. From the mid-1960s, Jimmy Reed's European tours were eagerly anticipated by audiences, especially in England, but the alcoholic and epileptic bluesman did not always show up in good shape.

In 1967, Jimmy Reed misguidedly signed a contract in which he abandoned all his future royalties for a net cash amount of ten thousand dollars. But twelve years after the bluesman's death, his widow went to court against Arc Music to contest the agreement, and settled for an undisclosed amount.

Mama Reed left Jimmy in 1970, but they did not officially divorce. After going through detox, Jimmy Reed began a new tour in 1976, but he died of respiratory failure on August 29, 1976, and was buried at Lincoln Cemetery in Blue Island, Illinois. He was only fifty.

Among posthumous recognitions, Jimmy Reed was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Hall of Fame (1980) and into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1991).

Music

Jimmy Reed's almost off-hand style with slurred vocals and urban blues borrowed from shuffle, boogie, and jump-blues. His enjoyable, danceable music created a sharp contrast with the raw, intense style of the urban, Chicago blues of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. Jimmy Reed would play electric guitar and

a rack-mounted harmonica on most of his songs, with a second guitar often played by Eddie Taylor and drums usually played by Earl Philips (from 1955). There was frequently no bass player on many of Jimmy Reed's recordings until 1957, but the efficient walking bass lines were usually played on the guitar by Eddie Taylor.

Some of Jimmy Reed's most famous songs prove that his meters and chord changes were sometimes irregular, as in "You Don't Have to Go," "Big Boss Man," and "Trouble in Mind." It is difficult as well to guess when vocals would get in after the intro in "Shame, Shame, Shame." Other great bluesmen such as Lightnin' Hopkins and John Lee Hooker were also unpredictable in their phrasing, and sometimes they "forced" or tried to extend the twelve-bar blues song structure.

In 1963, Jimmy Reed revisited various blues standards, such as "St. Louis Blues," "Trouble in Mind," "Wee Wee Baby," "How Long How Long Blues," "See See Rider" ("C. C. Rider"), and "Roll 'Em Pete," in a superb album titled *Jimmy Reed Sings the Best of the Blues*. Jimmy Reed makes each of these songs his own, with his catchy rhythms, lazy singing, and high harmonica solos.

During the folk blues rediscovery of 1963, Jimmy Reed also recorded instrumental versions of some of his own classics, on a fine album titled *Jimmy Reed Plays 12 String Guitar Blues*, which combined solos on twelve-string acoustic guitar and harmonica on the usual rhythm background, with twelve instrumental versions including "Bright Lights Big City," "St. Louis Blues," "Blue Carnegie," "Big Boss Man," "Baby What You Want Me to Do," and "Boogie in the Dark."

In a recorded interview made on December 7, 1964, by Calvin Carter, heard on Jimmy Reed's LP, *Jimmy Reed, The Legend—The Man*, Jimmy Reed acknowledged that his wife, Mary Lee Davis (or Mama Reed), wrote the song "Baby, What You Want Me to Do." This rare album remains the best introduction to Jimmy Reed's works, and feature the original recordings of twelve of his best songs, with presentations made by Jimmy Reed himself, who briefly explains with his gentle, generous voice the origins of every song, with anecdotes and jokes. It was reissued in 2000 under the title *The Legend—The Man*, on a CD by Collectables, but no other CD or box set includes these presentations before each song.

From the mid-1960s, some interesting recordings from 1966, 1967, and 1971, emerged on a CD titled *Jimmy Reed*, released on Paula Records in 1991. It featured twenty lesser-known songs, plus a new

version of "Shame, Shame, Shame" from 1967. Some titles included Eddie Taylor and Lefty Bates, both on guitar; some extra tracks even featured young Jimmy Reed Jr. on bass.

Influence

Jimmy Reed's influence is considerable in every aspect: either his songwriting, chuckling singing, or harmonica playing. Bluesmen such as Slim Harpo and Frank Frost have borrowed from his musical style. In the 1960s, many British groups imitated Reed's music (including Them and the Spencer Davis Group). The Rolling Stones copied his song "Shame, Shame, Shame" with their "Little by Little" (1964), although it was always credited to "Phelge-Spector," which means the "official" composers were the whole group, plus Phil Spector, who played maracas. Hencemore, the introduction from "Big Boss Man" is reproduced in the opening guitar riff of The Rolling Stones' "All Down the Line," from *Exile on Main Street* (1972).

Jimmy Reed's singing style has influenced Arkansas-born Levon Helm (lead vocalist of the Canadian group The Band). On the harmonica, Jimmy Reed invented the high and long one-note harmonica solo style in a perfect timing, as in "Blue Carnegie" and "Big Boss Man."

Elvis Presley did a tribute to Jimmy Reed when he released a rock 'n' roll version of "Big Boss Man" as a single in 1967, and played "Baby, What You Want Me to Do" on his TV special in 1968. Jimmy Reed gave to the Chicago blues its light, joyful side.

YVES LABERGE

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Transcriptions

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See also **Big Boss Man (Hi-Heel Sneakers); Presley, Elvis Aron; Reed, Mama; Rolling Stones; Taylor, Eddie; Vee-Jay/Abner/Falcon**

REED, LULA

Active 1950s–1960s

Lula Reed recorded with the Cincinnati-based King label from 1951 to 1955 and received sympathetic accompaniment from her husband Sonny Thompson's ensemble and solid material and supervision from the prolific house producer Henry Glover. Her voice possessed a high-pitched and distinctly pinched tone that imbued her with an evocative nasality. Her most enduring influential track was Glover's heartfelt ballad "I'll Drown in My Tears," a top rhythm and blues hit for Reed in 1952 and an even greater success for Ray Charles in 1956 as "Drown in My Own Tears." She briefly transferred to the Chess Records subsidiary Argo from 1958 to 1959, but returned to King in 1961 and collaborated with guitarist Freddy King in some spirited duets. Following a brief association with Ray Charles's Tangerine

label (1962–1963), she vanished from the commercial scene.

DAVID SANJEK

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AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG; LSPF

REED, MAMA

b. Mary Lee Davis

Lyricist, muse, and sometimes backing vocalist, Mary Lee Davis was dubbed "Mama Reed" and later the "Boss-Lady" by her famous husband Jimmy Reed (1925–1976). The Reeds married after World War II; they met while teenagers. She is credited as coauthor on Reed's "Bright Lights, Big City" and "Baby, What's Wrong." Lenny Goldberg (from *Stormy Weather* magazine) contends that Mama Reed brought uncredited help in cowriting much of Jimmy Reed's songs from the late Vee-Jay period. Others say she just reminded him of the appropriate timing and exact verses.

Although she did not record on her own, Mary (Mama) Reed can sometimes be heard on some Jimmy Reed's songs, occasionally on "You Got Me Dizzy," "Shame, Shame, Shame," "Baby, What You Want Me to Do," and "Big Boss Man."

In 1988, Mama Reed and her eight children settled a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against Arc Music, related to royalties and a misguided contract signed by Jimmy Reed in 1967.

YVES LABERGE

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See also **Reed, Jimmy; Big Boss Man (Hi-Heel Sneakers); Vee-Jay/Abner/Falcon**

REYNOLDS, BIG JACK

b. 1921; Dayton OH
d. 29 December 1993; Toledo, OH

Harmonica player and guitarist who was raised in Georgia. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II (1941–1943), stationed in Indiana. Upon discharge, he moved to Detroit and began participating in the Hastings Street blues activity. He moved to Toledo, Ohio, in the mid-1970s and became a musical fixture there.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Donahue, Matthew H. "Big Jack Reynolds." *Living Blues* no. 114 (March/April 1994): 74–75.

Discography: LSFP**REYNOLDS, BLIND JOE**

b. Joe Sheppard, 1900; Arkansas
d. 10 March 1968; Monroe, LA

Aka Blind Willie. Reynolds was a rough, blind traveling musician noted for violence and theft who recorded while on the run from the authorities. He was noted as a fine guitarist, a reputation backed by his handful of records, his strong, coarse voice, and the intelligence of his lyrics about short dresses, mistresses, and street girls. He was one of the outstanding recording artists of his time. His song "Outside Woman Blues" was recorded by Cream in 1967.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

AMG (David Lewis); Larkin
Calt, Stephen, and Gayle Dean Wardlow. "He's a Devil of a Joe." *Blues Unlimited* no. 146 (Autumn/Winter 1984): 16–20; reprinted in Wardlow, *Chasin' That Devil Music*. San Francisco: Miller Freeman, 1998.

Discography: DGR**REYNOLDS, THEODORE "TEDDY"**

b. 12 July 1931; Houston, TX
d. 1 October 1998; Houston, TX

Pianist, songwriter, and singer. Recorded singles on Sittin' In With, Mercury, and Crown labels. Backing

musician on numerous recordings on Duke (Bobby Bland, Junior Parker), ABC-Dunhill (Bland, B. B. King), Black Top, and other labels.

ROGER WOOD

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Govenar, Alan. *Meeting the Blues: The Rise of the Texas Sound*. Dallas, TX: Taylor, 1988.
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Discography: LSFP**RHINO**

While its formal origins date back to 1978, Rhino essentially began as a California retail operation five years earlier. Cofounder Richard Foos was a rabid record collector who discovered that there was enough of a market for historic recordings, particularly blues and jazz, to make a company based solely on reissuing those lines successful. Foos started a store called Rhino, and one of his first hires was a fellow enthusiast and collector named Harold Bronson. This team subsequently created Rhino Entertainment in 1978, starting off by reissuing novelty records. They soon expanded into blues, jazz, soul, R&B, and rock reissues, gradually establishing their outlet as a premier source for both comprehensive anthologies and also tasty various artists collections. In addition, one of their first company projects became a minor hit overseas, when the late British DJ John Peel began playing a sonically limp but vocally exciting Wild Man Fischer song "Go to Rhino Records." His previous release was *An Evening with Wild Man Fischer*, a session that was produced by Frank Zappa, but attracted virtually no attention when first released. But Foos, Bronson, and the others at Rhino loved the record, and Fischer became a frequent Rhino client. Eventually Bronson got a staffer to cut a cassette version of the Fischer single, and it subsequently turned into the company's first nonreissue success.

Today, Rhino is one of the nation's premier reissue and archival operations, and it has recently begun its own specialty label Rhino Handmade. Rhino Handmade issues titles with special interest to collectors that are available only online. Rhino has also expanded heavily into videos, classic TV, and DVDs through the Rhino Home Video departments, as well as children's items with Kid Rhino. Perhaps their

RHINO

finest achievement was partnering with Atlantic for a series of excellent anthologies devoted to specific musicians like John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Ornette Coleman, as well as huge boxed sets featuring the complete label output of Coleman and Coltrane. They currently issue a monthly newsletter, periodic fanzine, and mail-order service, although almost every Rhino title except for the Handmade series is available in retail stores.

RON WYNN

Bibliography

Rhino website, <http://www.rhino.com/> (accessed February 7, 2005).

RHODES, SONNY

b. Clarence Edward Smith, 3 November 1940; Smithville, TX

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter. With a turban on his head and a lap steel guitar in front of him, Rhodes is one of the most distinctive figures on the modern blues scene. The son of sharecroppers, Rhodes took to the guitar at an early age and was performing in the rural areas around Austin, Texas, while in his teens. He worked with singer Frankie Lee in Austin and formed his own band but had a career detour for a stint in the Navy. After backing Albert Collins and Freddie King as a bassist, he relocated to California in 1963. Rhodes recorded regularly but met with little commercial success, mostly due to poor promotion and distribution from a succession of small labels.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli Skelly, Richard. "Sonny Rhodes: The Disciple of the Blues." *Living Blues* no. 102 (March/April 1992): 12–21.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

RHODES, TODD

b. Todd Washington Rhodes, Jr., 31 August 1900; Hopkinsville, KY
d. 4 June 1965; Wayne County, MI

Pianist. Founding member of McKinney's Synco's (later McKinney's Cotton Pickers) based in Springfield, Ohio. Rhodes moved to Detroit 1927 and worked with local bands. He formed his own band in 1945,

turned fully to R&B in 1947, and toured the Midwest regularly. He made many recordings for Sensation (1947–1949) and King (1949–1954), including "Dance of the Redskins" and "Bell Boy Boogie"; he also backed Wynonie Harris and Dave Bartholomew. Rhodes is a good musician, a solid blues/boogie player.

JIM GALLERT

Bibliography

Southern
Chilton, John. *Who's Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*. 4th ed. London: Macmillan; New York: Da Capo, 1985.

Discography: Lord; LSFP

RHODES, WALTER "LIGHTNIN' BUG"

b. 4 September 1939; Beaufort, NC
d. 4 July 1990; Rockingham, NC

Aka "Little Red Walter." Heavily influenced by Lightnin' Hopkins and Blind Boy Fuller, singer-guitarist Walter Rhodes settled in New York in the 1950s and recorded rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll under various aliases (the Blonde Bomber, Little Red Walter) as well as a down-home blues album *The Blues Goes On*. Rediscovered by Gary Erwin, Rhodes went again into the studio, waxing several sessions, playing Carolina-styled solo guitar, and singing in an effective down-home manner.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

Bruin, Leo. "Down in the Bottom Picking Cotton." *Juke Blues* no. 18 (Winter 1989): 6–10.
Erwin, Gary. "Walter 'Lightning Bug' Rhodes" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 94 (1990): 55–56.

Discography

Giving You the Blues (1988, Swingmaster LP 2116).
Now Hear This! (2000, Swingmaster CD 2207).

RHUMBOOGIE

Chicago blues label of the 1940s. Rhumboogie was an outgrowth of a major black and tan nightclub, the Rhumboogie. Proprietors Charlie Glenn and boxing champion Joe Louis scored their greatest coup when they booked blues guitarist and singer T-Bone Walker, who was creating a sensation with his sustained electric guitar picking and elegant vocals. He

played the Rhumboogie on and off from August 1942 to September 1945, and in October 1944 Glenn recorded Walker with the house band led by pianist Marl Young. The first Rhumboogie record was a good-sized hit after its release in August 1945. Two more T-Bone singles appeared, and a second session took place on December 19, 1945. One last Rhumboogie single by Charles Gray (a trumpet player fronting for Buster Bennett while Buster was under contract to Columbia) appeared early in 1946. The label seems to have closed by mid-1946. The sides from the December 1945 T-Bone session never came out on Rhumboogie but eventually saw release on Mercury, Old Swing-Master, and Constellation. The Rhumboogie club closed in mid-1947.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Pruter, Robert, and Campbell, Robert L. "The Rhumboogie Label." Red Saunders Research Foundation website, <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~campber/rhumboogie.html> (accessed December 18, 2002).

Discography: McGrath

RHYTHM

Founded by Dave Rosenbaum in San Francisco in 1942, Rhythm Records issued singles by Saunders King and Jack McVea up to 1947. The label was revived in 1954–1955, with Bob Geddins supplying the recordings, and issued less than twenty singles by most of the Bay Area's blues artists, including Mercy Dee, K. C. Douglas, and Johnny Fuller. In 1957 a new Rhythm label emerged in Oakland run by Don Barksdale who up to 1959 issued material in a variety of styles; blues was represented by Sugar Pie DeSanto, Roy Hawkins, and Little Willie Littlefield.

RAY ASTBURY

Discography: McGrath

See also Douglas, K. C.; Fuller, Johnny; Geddins, Bob; King, Saunders; Littlefield, "Little" Willie; McVea, John Vivian "Jack"; Robinson, L. C. "Good Rockin"; Walton, Mercy Dee; Wilson, Jimmy

RHYTHM AND BLUES

The phrase "rhythm and blues" was first used on June 25, 1949, in *Billboard* magazine on page 30 as the sales

chart title "Best Selling Retail Rhythm & Blues Records." Rhythm and blues music by this point in the late 1940s had evolved from folk blues and other "black-music" forms to become a unique hybrid music that was characterized by elements of various styles. Blues and gospel-influenced vocal effects including melodic, rhythmic, and textual improvisation, call-and-response sections, and earthy, realistic vocals were found within the twelve-bar blues forms of some rhythm and blues tunes, while other selections used thirty-two-bar ballad structures, honking saxophone solos, and pared-down big band instrumentation to indicate a jazz influence. Some rhythm and blues compositions also contained elements of various ethnic musics such as Caribbean and Cuban; country music's electric guitar and the vocal quartet "doo-wop" harmonies found their way into the repertoire, making the style a true fusion of various musical genres.

The crossover of style and the varied influences that characterized rhythm and blues music at this time were captured on various independent record labels that recorded and distributed the music and therefore allowed it to reach a wider audience. Most of the more commercially successful independent labels were located around two prominent musical centers, New York and Los Angeles, with other labels found in Chicago, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Houston, Texas. Such prominent names as Dinah Washington, the Drifters, and Ray Charles were all recorded on these independent labels, and in later years companies such as Motown Records in Detroit and Stax/Volt in Memphis became hugely successful by recording rhythm and blues and R&B-influenced performers.

The impact of rhythm and blues music continues to be widespread, and its influence may still be heard in—and its name still applied to—various genres from current rock 'n' roll and folk styles to hip-hop, soul, and other types of urban music.

DONNA LOWE

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Southern, Eileen. *The Music of Black Americans: A History*. 3rd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997.

RHYTHM WILLIE

b. Willie Hood, ca. 1905
d. May 1954; Chicago, IL

RHYTHM WILLIE

Certainly not a strictly blues artist, Rhythm Willie played a very personal style of diatonic harmonica (in the first position) in uptown Chicago lounges and Broadway theaters. He recorded infrequently, harp instrumentals with a dazzling technique that makes one regret that he didn't do more sessions.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

Dirks, Scott. "I've Got Rhythm. The Rhythm Willie Story," *Blues & Rhythm* no. 127 (March 1988): 4-9.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings in Reissue

Harps, Jugs, Washboards, Kazoos (1994, RST CD 1505).
Harmonica Blues 1946-52 (Frémeaux & Associés FA CD 5059).

RIC

Acronym for Recording Industries Corporation, active 1965, in Nashville, Tennessee, and New York City. Artists included Freddie North and Jerry McCain.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

RICE, "SIR MACK" BONNY

b. 10 November 1933; Clarksdale, MS

R&B and soul vocalist active in the Detroit music scene, primarily during the 1950s and 1960s. Rice spent his formative years in and around the Clarksdale area, where he heard Charles Brown, Amos Milburn, Ike Turner, and others. When he was around twelve years of age, Rice's family moved to Detroit for work in the auto business. It was here, while in high school, that Rice started singing with a vocal group called the Five Scalders and later, after returning from army service, the Falcons. Though he has written hundreds of songs, he is best known for penning "Mustang Sally," made famous by Wilson Pickett. His own recorded version was the fifteenth ranked song in 1965's R&B charts. In the late 1960s Rice went to Memphis, where he wrote many songs for various Stax artists. He also worked as a writer for

the Hi and Motown labels. Rice's song "Respect Yourself" achieved much success when recorded by the Staples Singers. Other songs he penned include "Cadillac Assembly Line" and "Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin'" performed by Albert King, "Cheaper to Keep Her" by Johnnie Taylor, and more. Sir Mack came out of retirement in the early 1990s to tour with the Dynatones from San Francisco.

GREG JOHNSON

Bibliography

Child, Christine. "Sir Mack Rice: Anything I See I Can Write On." *Living Blues* no. 109 (May/June 1993): 32-37.

See also **Detroit; Mustang Sally; Rhythm and Blues; Soul; Stax/Volt**

RICHARD, RUDOLPH "RUDY"

b. Church Point, LA

Guitarist in Slim Harpo's band The King Bees from the mid-1950s until Harpo's death in 1970; often had to provide the "sting" note during renditions of "I'm a King Bee." Previously received instruction in guitar from Lonesome Sundown. Other musical associations include those with Raful Neal and Clifton Chenier.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Coleridge, Steve. "Sting It Awhile." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 84 (November 1993): 19.

RICHARDSON, C. C.

b. Clarence Clifford Richardson, 18 December 1918; Sumter, SC

d. 30 January 1984; Charleston, WV

Singer and guitarist. Learned guitar from a grandfather, and sang in a sacred quartet in church with three uncles. After losing one foot and injuring the other in a 1927 accident, he recovered to the extent of becoming a tap dancer in the manner of Peg Leg Bates. For some years he succeeded in earning a living as a dancer. In 1962 he moved to Charleston, West Virginia, and played blues guitar. He self-produced and sold albums and singles of his playing.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris
Darwen, Norman. "C. C. Richardson" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 59 (Spring 1984): 35.

Discography: LSPF**RICHARDSON, MONA**

b. 5 February 1947; Los Angeles, CA
d. 5 August 1985; Melbourne, Australia

Singer of blues, jazz, and gospel. Performed with Johnny Otis, Ike Turner, and Ray Charles in 1970–1972. She recorded as a solo artist for Epic, RCA Victor (UK), and Philips. During a theatrical tour of Australia in 1980, she elected to stay in Melbourne. It is believed her death by fall from her apartment building was a suicide.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Eagle, Bob. "Mona Richardson." *Living Blues* no. 69 (1986): 41.

RICHBOURG, JOHN

b. 20 August 1910; Davis Station, SC
d. 15 February 1986; Nashville, TN

John Richbourg was a pioneering rhythm and blues disk jockey, known as John R., whose nightly broadcasts out of Nashville on 50,000-watt WLAC introduced an ever-growing audience of white teenagers throughout the eastern half of the nation to the music of black artists ranging from Muddy Waters and Wynonie Harris to Chuck Berry and Little Richard, from the Five Royales and the Moonglows to Ray Charles and James Brown. His exquisite taste in music and enthusiastic delivery won him a loyal audience of unprecedented size and made him one of the most influential forces in the golden age of R&B and the rise of rock 'n' roll.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

John Richbourg Collection, Blues Archive, Archives and Special Collections, John D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi.
O'Neal, Jim. "John R." *Living Blues* no. 70 (1986): 14.

RICKS, "PHILADELPHIA" JERRY

b. 22 May 1940; Philadelphia, PA

Born and raised in the city of his namesake, "Philadelphia" Jerry Ricks's awareness of the blues came as a child upon hearing local street musicians such as Doug Quattlebaum and Washboard Slim as well as then-Philadelphia resident and blues pioneer Lonnie Johnson. He became active in the folk music scene in the late 1950s and learned guitar from both recordings and by studying the performances of Lightnin' Hopkins and Brownie McGhee. Ricks became involved with the Philadelphia coffee house The Second Fret in the early 1960s, where he was mentored by and accompanied many of the great prewar bluesmen. Throughout most of the 1960s, he performed across the country at folk festivals, clubs, and coffee houses with musicians such as Mississippi John Hurt, Skip James, Son House, Buddy Moss, Mississippi Fred McDowell, and Reverend Gary Davis. In 1969, Ricks toured East Africa with Buddy Guy for the U.S. State Department and later that year was enlisted by the Smithsonian Institute to aid in research for its Folklife Festival. Ricks moved to Germany in 1970 and spent most of the next eighteen years living in various European countries where he performed, lectured, and recorded extensively. He returned to the United States in 1988 and by the mid-1990s had relocated to Clarksdale, Mississippi, where he recorded his first domestic release, *Deep in the Well*, for Rooster Blues Records in 1997. Ricks continued to perform throughout the United States and Europe continuously and remains a vital link to the first generation of prewar bluesmen.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

Santelli
Hoffman, Lawrence. "The Blues Passage of Jerry Ricks." *Living Blues* no. 106 (November/December 1992): 16–25.

Discography

Many Miles of Blues (2000, Rooster CD R2639).

RIDGLEY, THOMAS "TOMMY"

b. 30 October 1925; Shrewsbury section of Jefferson Parish, LA

d. 11 August 1999; New Orleans, LA

If Tommy Ridgley never gained much of a commercial foothold outside of his native New Orleans, he participated energetically in that city's musical culture

RIDGLEY, THOMAS "TOMMY"

for a half a century. A self-taught keyboard player, Ridgley joined Dave Bartholomew's landmark band as a vocalist in 1949. Together with Jewel King on "Shrewsbury Blues (sic)," he was the first New Orleans vocalist to record for Lew Chudd's Imperial Records. Ridgley stayed with Bartholomew until 1951 and went on to lead his own ensemble, the Untouchables, as the house band at the celebrated Dew Drop Inn. In 1960, he joined Joe Ruffino's Ric label and acquired the sobriquet "The King of the Stroll." During the next two years, he scored local hits, including "In the Same Old Way" (1961). While commercial interest in rhythm and blues waned, Ridgley remained in the game, releasing numerous singles on local small labels and backing regional headliners. His final release, *Since the Blues Began*, appeared in 1995, and in 1999, Ridgley received local publication *OffBeat's* Lifetime Achievement Award.

DAVID SANJEK

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin; Santelli Richardson, Clive. "Tommy Ridgley." *Blues Unlimited* no. 137/138 (Spring 1980): 34–35.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

RIEDY, BOB

Pianist active on Chicago's North Side during the 1970s. Also assisted in booking acts in various local clubs. He recorded one LP each for the Flying Fish and Rounder labels. Activity since the early 1980s is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG (Bill Dahl)

RIGGINS, RICHARD "HARMONICA SLIM"

b. 1 July 1921; Tupelo, MS

Singer and harmonica player. Early influences were Muddy Waters and Little Walter Jacobs. Moved to Fresno, California, in 1949, then to Oakland, California, in 1962. From 1966 through 1975 he performed and recorded with guitarist K. C. Douglas. Around

1976 he returned to Fresno, performing as leader or in duet with guitarist Hosea Levy, including for the Fedora label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Rainsford, Mike. "I Just Wanna Play My Harmonica, Sing My Songs and Walk Them Back Bottom Blues." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 87 (March 1994): 10–12.

RILEY, JUDGE LAWRENCE

b. 1 January 1909; New Orleans, LA

d. 22 August 1977; Chicago, IL

Bassist and drummer. Lived in New Orleans only until 1941, but he retained his musical contacts there until the end of his life, even receiving an invitation to join the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. After arriving in Chicago, he drummed in many Lester Melrose sessions for Bluebird and Columbia. In live appearances he would perform blues, jazz, and popular songs. Later in his career he switched to playing bass.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

O'Neal, Jim. "Judge Riley" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 34 (September/October 1977): 40.

RISHELL, PAUL

b. 17 January 1950; Brooklyn, NY

Acoustic guitarist who specializes in pre-1943 southern blues. He often performs with harmonica player Annie Raines.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); Santelli Wasserzieher, B. "Paul Rishell and Annie Raines: Goin' Up the Country." *Blues Revue* no. 81 (April/May 2003): 8–9.

Discography: AMG

RIVERS, BOYD

b. 25 December 1934; Pickens, MS

d. 22 November 1993; Jackson, MS

Singer and guitar evangelist; nephew of gospel artist Reverend Cleophus Robinson. Performed blues

through 1963, then he turned exclusively to sacred music. Active mostly in Mississippi, with an exceptional appearance at the 1986 Musica dei Populi Festival in Florence, Italy.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Evans, David. "Ramblin..." *Blues Revue* no. 14 (Fall 1994): 18–20.

ROBERTS, ROY

b. 22 October 1942; Livingston, TN

Roberts, influenced by Chuck Berry and Jimmy Reed, played in bands with Solomon Burke and Otis Redding. The guitarist/vocalist charted with "The Legend of Otis Redding" in 1967. President of Rock House Records, Roberts continues to record.

GAILE WELKER

Bibliography

Duffy, Timothy. "Roy Roberts." *Living Blues* no. 107 (January/February 1993): 38–39.

Selected Recordings

Burnin' Love (Rock House CD RH 00052).
Deeper Shade of Blue (Rock House CD RH 0001).
Every Shade of Blue (King Snake CD KS 42).
Introducing Roy Roberts (Rock House CD RH 0007).

ROBICHEAUX, COCO

b. Curtis John Arceneaux, 25 October 1947; Ascension Parish, LA

Vocalist, guitarist, trombone player, composer. Coco Robicheaux traveled the South from Texas to Key West, playing and singing his striking compositions in bars and roadhouses for years until his *Spiritland* album introduced the "Louisiana Medicine Man" to an international audiences in 1994. He has worked with Carlo Ditta, Smokey Greenwell, Irene Sage, Earl Stanley, Nancy Buchan, and Dave Easley.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Selected Recordings

Spiritland (1994, Orleans Records).
Louisiana Medicine Man (1998, Orleans Records).
Get You a Healin' (1999, New Orleans Musicians Clinic).
Hoo Doo Party (2000, Orleans Records).

ROBILLARD, DUKE

b. Michael Robillard, 4 October 1948; Woonsocket, RI

Duke Robillard formed Roomful of Blues in Westerly, Rhode Island, in 1967. He led the band through numerous line-up changes until leaving in 1979 to play guitar briefly for rockabilly singer Robert Gordon. Afterward he joined the Legendary Blues Band, but left soon after, forming the Duke Robillard Band (later known as Duke Robillard & the Pleasure Kings) in 1981. Throughout the rest of the 1980s Duke toured the United States with the Kings and recorded a number of albums for the Rounder label. In 1990 Duke joined the Fabulous Thunderbirds, and continued to record as a solo artist for the Point Blank/Virgin label.

ROBERT SORICELLI

Bibliography

AMG (Stephen Thomas Erlewine); Larkin
 Ellis, A. "Beyond the I–IV–V: How Duke Robillard Makes Twelve-Bar Blues Jump and Swing." *Guitar Player* 34, no. 1 (January 2000): 78–81.
 Tipaldi, Art. "Duke Robillard: In a Class All His Own." *Blues Revue* no. 31 (October 1997): 18–19.

Discography: AMG

ROBINSON, ALVIN "SHINE"

b. 22 December 1937; New Orleans, LA
 d. 25 January 1989; New Orleans, LA

Vocals, guitar. Alvin "Shine" Robinson grew up in the fertile New Orleans music scene of the 1950s and became one of the city's favorite guitarists and leading sidemen. His recording of "Down Home Girl" is an R&B classic. He worked with Professor Longhair, Big Joe Turner, Dr. John, Allen Toussaint, David Lastie, James Booker, and Harold Battiste.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

Larkin
 Burke, Tony. "Alvin Robinson." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 44 (May 1989): 16.

Discography: LSFP

Dr. John. *Gumbo* (1972).
 Maria Muldaur. *Waitress in a Donut Shop* (1974).
 Dr. John. *Hollywood Be Thy Name* (1975).
 Dr. John. *Tango Palace* (1979).
 James Booker. *The Lost Paramount Tapes* (1997).
Down Home Girl (Red Bird).

ROBINSON, ARTHUR CLAY "A. C."

ROBINSON, ARTHUR CLAY "A. C."

b. 12 April 1915; Brenham, TX

d. 24 February 1980; San Francisco, CA

Vocalist and harmonica and bass player, whose career in music began in Texas with his brother L. C. Moved to San Francisco in the early 1940s and played with his brother (recording for Black & White [1945] and Rhythm [1954]) until the late 1950s when he gave up the blues for religion.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

Mazzolini, Tom. "A. C. Robinson." *Living Blues* no. 45/46 (Spring 1980): 95.

Discography: LSFP

Mojo in My Hand (Arhoolie CD 453).

See also **Black & White; Rhythm; Robinson, L. C. "Good Rockin'"**

ROBINSON, BOBBY

b. 16 April 1917; Union, SC

Record label owner and producer, best known for his labels Fire, Fury, and Enjoy. Moved to New York in the late 1930s. In 1946 he opened a record store in Harlem on 125th Street, one block away from the Apollo Theater. His first label, Robin, later renamed Red Robin, lasted from 1951 through 1956. His other labels were Whirlin' Disc (established 1956), Fury and Everlast (established 1957), Fire (established 1959), and Enjoy (established 1962).

Among the biggest hits Robinson produced was Wilbert Harrison's "Kansas City," released on Fury in March 1959, but a lawsuit filed by Savoy Records for contract infractions prevented any follow-up Harrison release at least through that September. Other best-sellers for Robinson were Buster Brown's "Fannie Mae" (Fire) and Lee Dorsey's "Ya Ya" (Fire); both were included in the landmark soundtrack album for the film *American Graffiti* in 1973.

Among the Fire, Fury, Enjoy, and Everlast albums were excellent southern blues releases such as Lightnin' Hopkins's *Mojo Hand* (1962, Fire FLP 104) and Arthur Crudup's *Mean Old Frisco* (1960, Fire FLP 103). Elmore James had a Fire hit single in 1959 with "The Sky Is Crying," his most significant record since the Trumpet recording of "Dust My Broom" in 1951. James's last session ever, recorded by Robinson in 1963, was taped in stereo, and often

reissued in that form. Fury issued some of the earliest releases by Gladys Knight and the Pips, fresh from their initial success at the Apollo theater. In 1965 Robinson leased many of his studio recordings for LP release on Sphere Sound Records, a subsidiary of Bell Records in New York.

Although renowned for his blues recordings of the 1950s and 1960s, Robinson continued to scout and record new talent in black music, including some of the 1970s recordings of early rap artists Grandmaster Flash and Kool Moe Dee.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Warner, Alan. "Bobby Robinson Productions." http://www.emimusicpub.com/worldwide/music/catalog_jtf_bobby-robinson-productions.html (accessed October 5, 2004).

Discography: McGrath

Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "Bobby Robinson's Labels: Album Discographies." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/fire.html> (accessed October 5, 2004).

ROBINSON, ELZADIE

Flourished 1920s

Singer from Shreveport, Louisiana, who recorded for the Paramount label in 1926-1929. It is believed she lived in Chicago after her first recording session there in 1926. On most sides she was accompanied by noted Shreveport pianist Will Ezell. Activity after 1929 is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Joslyn Layne)

Discography: DGR

ROBINSON, FENTON

b. 23 September 1935; Minter City, MS

d. 25 November 1997; Rockford, IL

Singer/guitarist Fenton Robinson was raised on a Mississippi plantation and was first introduced to

blues on local jukeboxes. Inspired by Lightnin' Hopkins and the refined guitar style of T-Bone Walker, Robinson practiced on a homemade one-string instrument as a child. A move to Memphis at age seventeen exposed him to the city's rich blues tradition. He bought himself a guitar, began taking lessons, and played local amateur shows. In 1954, Robinson moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, and, after a few years playing throughout the area, recorded the regional hit "Tennessee Woman" on Memphis's Meteor label. Due to its success, he signed with Duke Records in 1958 and cut a few sides for the Texas-based label, including "As the Years Go Passing By" in 1959.

Robinson moved to Chicago in 1961 and recorded sporadically throughout the decade on small labels such as USA, Giant, and Palos. It was for Palos in 1967 that he wrote and recorded his signature song, "Somebody Loan Me a Dime," which featured his trademark sophisticated jazz-inflected guitar style and smooth vocals. Rock singer Boz Scaggs's cover of this song became a hit in 1969, but Robinson received no initial credit. Robinson would later recut the song for his 1974 critically acclaimed debut on Alligator. He went on to release two more albums for the label, including the 1977 Grammy-nominated *I Hear Some Blues Downstairs*. Robinson recorded for several European labels throughout the 1980s, and eventually settled in Rockford, Illinois. In the 1990s, he was plagued by health problems and died of cancer at age sixty-two.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli Sakolsky, Ron, and Jim O'Neal. "Fenton Robinson." *Living Blues* no. 70 (1986): 16-23.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

Selected Recording

Somebody Loan Me a Dime (1990, Alligator CD 4705).

ROBINSON, FREDDY

b. 24 February 1939; Memphis, TN

Raised on a plantation near West Memphis, Arkansas, Freddy Robinson began playing guitar at age nine, encouraged by his father who took him to see area performances by Howlin' Wolf, Elmore James, and B. B. King. Robinson moved to Chicago in 1956 and

soon began playing regularly with Little Walter. He recorded behind Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, and Jimmy Rogers for Chess in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Robinson recorded as a leader and sideman throughout the next three decades, occasionally experimenting with jazz and R&B. Relocating to Los Angeles in the 1970s, Robinson converted to Islam, renamed himself Abu Talib, and continued to perform and record.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

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ROBINSON, JAMES "BAT THE HUMMINGBIRD"

b. 25 December 1903; Algiers, LA

d. 2 March 1957; St. Louis, MO

Raised in Memphis, Robinson was taught to play piano and drums by his father. He played on Beale Street and at age nineteen moved to Chicago, where he recorded "Humming Blues" from which his nickname was derived. He later settled in St. Louis, working the levee joints. Rediscovered in 1957, he recorded once more, but died the same year. Robinson played simple, rhythmic piano, using a four-to-the-bar chorded bass to accompany his powerful, declamatory vocals.

BOB HALL

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Harris

Discography: DGR

ROBINSON, JESSIE MAE

b. 1919; Call, TX

d. October 1966; Los Angeles, CA

A commercially successful composer in the late 1940s and early to mid-1950s, Robinson composed a dozen blues hits and then crossed over to the pop field,

ROBINSON, JESSIE MAE

becoming perhaps the first African American female songwriter to break the color barrier. Born Jessie Mae Booker (named after her father Jesse) just outside Beaumont, Texas, her family moved to Watts when she was three. Drawn to show business, Robinson started writing songs at age fourteen, and a few years later began pitching them to publishers and singers. Throughout her career, Robinson composed her songs while sitting at her kitchen table with paper and pen, humming the melodies to herself.

The first artist to record one of her compositions was Dinah Washington (“Mellow Man Blues,” 1945). She then wrote “Cleanhead Blues” for Eddie Vinson (1946; authorship of the song is disputed and is sometimes credited to Vinson). Among her top blues hits were “Rooming House Boogie” (recorded by Amos Milburn, 1949), “Blue Light Boogie” (Louis Jordan, 1950), and “Black Night” (Charles Brown, 1951). Other notable compositions included “Cold Cold Feeling” (T-Bone Walker, 1952), “Sneakin’ Around” (B. B. King, 1955), and “Let’s Have a Party” (Elvis Presley, 1957; Wanda Jackson, 1960). She also wrote an earlier version of the song Johnny Otis recorded as “Double Crossing Blues.” Her affiliations with major New York publishers opened doors for her pop-oriented compositions to be recorded by Hit Parade stars like Patti Page, Bing Crosby, and Dinah Shore. By the early 1960s her hits had dried up, but she still received a modest income from royalties. She died suddenly in October 1966 after complaining of a sore throat.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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ROBINSON, JIMMIE LEE

b. 30 April 1931; Chicago, IL
d. 6 July 2002; Chicago, IL

Chicago-born Jimmie Lee Robinson learned guitar as a boy from neighbor Blind Percy, who accompanied him in various storefront church performances. In 1942, Robinson began playing blues for tips on Chicago’s Maxwell Street and quickly became a regular there, performing with local musicians Muddy Waters, Eddie Taylor, and Little Walter. He continued to play on Maxwell for almost sixty years and became a tireless activist against the neighborhood’s demolition in the 1990s. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Robinson performed regularly

with Howlin’ Wolf, Elmore James, Magic Sam, Freddy King, Little Walter, and Jimmy Reed. He also remained an in-demand studio musician, and appeared on many recordings for Checker, Parrot, Atomic H, and Vee-Jay. Robinson recorded as a leader for Bandera in the late 1950s and early 1960s, waxing one of his signature tunes, “All My Life,” in 1960. In 1965, he toured Europe as part of the American Folk Blues Festival and returned in 1975 with the American Blues Legends package.

Robinson continued to work in and outside of music throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and appeared on recordings by Shakey Jake, St. Louis Jimmy Oden, and Willie Mabon. In the early 1990s, Robinson took on the western-styled persona of “the Lonely Traveler,” and developed an acoustic-based blues sound with country and folk influences. Songs of social awareness and protest dominated these later works, which were released on Delmark, APO, and his own Amina label. Shortly after being diagnosed with cancer, Jimmie Lee Robinson committed suicide at the age of seventy-one.

GENE TOMKO

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ROBINSON, L. C. “GOOD ROCKIN’”

b. Louis Charles Robinson, 13 May 1913; Brenham, TX
d. 26 September 1976; Berkeley, CA

As a teenager, Robinson played guitar and fiddle on traveling shows, partnered by his brother A. C. In the 1930s he took up steel guitar, learning from Leon McAuliffe of Bob Wills’s Texas Playboys. After World War II he moved to the Bay Area, where he was active in Oakland clubs. In the 1970s, he played the Berkeley Blues Festival and toured Scandinavia. Albums for Arhoolie and ABC-BluesWay

testified to his versatility, but it is as an exponent of electric steel guitar, an instrument not much played by African American blues musicians, that he was most influential, with his legatees including Sonny Rhodes.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Rhodes, Sonny

ROBINSON, TAD

b. 24 June 1956; New York City, NY

Singer and harmonica player in blues and soul-blues. Attended the School of Music at Indiana University, after which he moved to Chicago. He recorded with Dave Specter for the Delmark and Rounder labels in 1988 and 1994, then on his own for Delmark and Severn.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Bill Dahl)

Discography: AMG (Bill Dahl)

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

The blues in Rochester is dominated by two Mississippi-born musicians: Eddie "Son" House and Joe Beard. House arrived in 1943 and Beard in 1957, and their migration to Rochester reflects the growth of the African American population that had been miniscule prior to 1940. But it was the mid-1960s before events connected with House and Beard spawned a blues scene in Rochester.

The first event was the "rediscovery" of Son House in 1964. Son House's impact on the blues in Rochester was huge; he was an inspiration to his neighbor on Grieg Street, Joe Beard, who sometimes accompanied House at local gigs, and he was a direct musical influence on John Mooney and many others. Not long after House resurfaced, Armand Schaubroeck

and his two younger brothers, Blaine and Bruce, opened the Black Candle coffee house in Charlotte next to their music store the House of Guitars, and during the next few years House performed there a number of times.

Joe Beard's decision, also in the mid-1960s, to form a blues band was the second critical event. After a year of playing in Chicago, Beard returned to Rochester and formed "The Friends of the Blues," which included a number of musicians who remain active performers to this day, most notably, John Mooney. In the early 1970s Mooney went out on his own. Like Mooney, over the coming decades many if not most of the notable musicians in the area played with Beard: to mention only a few, singer-guitar players John Cole, Dan Schmitt, and Steve Grills, and the harp players Fred Palmer ("Rockin' Red") and John Dubuc. Finally there is Beard's own son Chris who has been performing nationally since 1997.

With a growing black population and a community of local blues musicians, a number of clubs opened that featured both local and national blues acts. In 1968 Ruther Sheppard opened Shep's Paradise at 293 Clarissa Street. Clarissa was the "Broadway" of the black community, and Shep's was a venue for many local blues bands until 2002.

The K&T Tavern, House of the Blues, on Genesee Avenue, owned by Bill Wooten, was an important venue where Beard was often joined by friends such as Buddy Guy and Junior Wells. On Jefferson Avenue, the People's Club, owned by Casey Lee, Palm Gardens, and Black Orchid featured blues.

Downtown, the BK Lounge owned by Ben Keaton featured artists such as Albert King, Bobby Bland, Buddy Ace, Jimmy Rodgers, as well as Joe Beard. Ruth 'n' Irv's was another downtown venue for blues acts.

In April 1970, Jeff Springut opened the Red Creek club in Henrietta, just outside the city limits. For the next twenty-six years the Red Creek featured most of the national blues acts touring at that point including Muddy Waters, James Cotton, John Lee Hooker, Buddy Guy, and Junior Wells. Often people like Guy and Wells and Matt Murphy would layover a night in order to play with Joe Beard at the K&T Tavern. Club Obia, on Lyell Avenue, featured acts such as Little Milton, while Duffy's on Marshall was another venue for national acts.

In the 1990s, Smokin Joe's, Milestones, and the Beale Street Cafe featured local blues acts while the Dinosaur BBQ and in 2001 the Montage, both downtown, became venues for national acts such as Jimmy Johnson, Ike Turner, and Shemeka Copeland.

DANIEL BEAUMONT

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ROCK 'N' ROLL

Rock 'n' roll originated from a number of other traditions and genres. From jazz came swing rhythm, walking bass lines, the use of drums and horns, and the idea of improvising soloists. The electric guitar was first used in jazz and Western swing (a jazz-influenced form of country). The nonsense syllables used by rock 'n' roll vocal groups—the dom-bi-doo-bi's and diddley-bop-bop's—find a precedent in jazz scat singing. And in their approach to arrangements, some of the earliest rock 'n' roll groups, such as Bill Haley and the Comets, were like scaled-down big bands. From gospel, rock borrowed call-and-response singing and passionate, emotional, grainy vocal delivery. Southern rock 'n' rollers borrowed some of their stage movements and dramatic personas from flamboyant preachers, but the singers' Christian upbringing also caused one of rock's chief underlying tensions. The conflict between the lure of Saturday night's dancing and romancing (the pleasures of the flesh), and the call of Sunday morning's churchly devotion (repentance and the promise of heavenly reward) created internal discord for Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard in particular.

Other genres also contributed to rock 'n' roll. From folk came a stock of venerable songs, a tradition of storytelling, and, though it did not appear in rock until later, a concern for social justice. From country, rock 'n' roll adapted the string band instrumentation and continued with brother duet harmony singing and playing on guitar the left-hand piano figures of boogie-woogie. From pop music came concepts of orchestration, cliché chord progressions like the "Blue Moon" changes, professional songwriters and their lyrics about romantic longing, and a whole mechanism for distribution, publicity, hype, and exploitation.

But rock 'n' roll borrowed mostly from the blues and from R&B, a mix of blues and jazz. From blues came boogie-woogie piano, gruff singing, and gritty lyrics about day-to-day living, distorted guitars, slide guitar technique, and other down-home blues styles that got updated, plus African American rhythms. The major school of rock guitar playing is a creative extrapolation of the blues tonality, and the most fundamental common knowledge among rock players is blues song form. Since its inception, musicians in rock have drawn inspiration from and paid tribute to the

blues by covering traditional songs, developing new songs and styles that are indebted to the blues, and honoring and sometimes recording with blues musicians.

After World War II, the era of big swing bands gave way to smaller R&B combos with two or three horn players—inspired by Louis Jordan's Tympany Five—who mixed jazz with boogie-woogie rhythms and humorous, often risqué lyrics. The style became known as jump-blues and it typically featured a male blues singer shouting about booze, women, or "rockin'" over a hot band with a honking sax and a swinging drummer. On the lucrative "one-nighter" circuit, jump bands polished their stage shows and their ability to thrill audiences with solid grooves and wild solos. Though it quickly faded with the arrival of rock's vocal groups and electric guitarists, jump-blues was a direct forerunner of rock 'n' roll. Louis Jordan's influence in particular is discernible in the work of Bill Haley (who at his peak had the same producer in Milt Gabler), and Chuck Berry. One jump-blues song that became a rock 'n' roll standard was "Train Kept-A Rollin'" by Tiny Bradshaw (1951). It was covered by Johnny Burnette and the Rock and Roll Trio as rockabilly (1956), by the Yardbirds as British Invasion rock (1966), by both Aerosmith and Motorhead as hard rock (late 1970s), and by Lenny Kravitz as psychedelic funk (1991).

When rock 'n' roll arrived in the 1950s, it created excitement, confusion, and controversy. As with the beginning phase of any new sound, many of its aspects were unsettled: What were its origins and musical parameters, what should be its function in society, and who could or should represent it? One thing was undisputed: Its audience was young people. Once the music industry identified this new market, it made music specifically for teens, and, increasingly, preteens, starting with the first wave of the baby boom.

Before rock 'n' roll there was little that could be considered as music for teenagers. Until the postwar period, they were barely recognized as a distinct group. There was no concept of an intermediary period between childhood and adulthood, and teens had no collective identity, no particular resources, and no real voice of their own. Infants heard nursery songs, school students had playground songs and perhaps folk songs at summer camp. Music accompanied community functions and assemblies: dances, religious services, and marriages and other ritualized events. In the home, there was parlor music, often maudlin songs sung around the piano, and the radio. Radio programs like *Your Hit Parade* (later on television), which presented the top songs of the day, provided some figures onto which adolescent

fantasies could be projected, but the lyrics focused on little aside from romantic love and the music was smooth and conventional.

One alternative to bland pop music was R&B. It spread through two developments: the rise of independent record labels (known as indies), and new opportunities for radio airplay. Independent labels proliferated in the late 1940s and 1950s by taking advantage of the recent availability of the tape recorder and the shift from the 78-rpm record to the smaller, more durable 45-rpm disk. Indies were also community oriented and thus able to find and record local stars and promising newcomers. Starting in 1948 with WDIA in Memphis (which later had B. B. King and Rufus Thomas as disk jockeys), radio stations began programming black music full time. In the next few years, black music—blues, R&B, gospel, pop, and jazz—found a regular slot in the schedule of stations across North America. As evidenced by the repertoire of rock 'n' roll's pioneers and comments made during interviews, radio music was a major influence.

The disk jockeys were eccentric characters. Alan Freed, first in Cleveland and then in New York, who popularized the term *rock and roll* for the music he played; "Daddio" Dewey Phillips in Memphis was the first to play a record by Elvis Presley; and Wolfman Jack broadcast on Mexican border radio with a signal five times that of the top U.S. stations. Their delivery was fun and infectious, loose but earnest, at times theatrically goofy. They were energized by their records (and so were their loyal listeners), singing along in snippets and pounding out beats while the records played, talking and joking overtop of them, and making snide remarks, a drastic change from the formality that had previously dominated broadcast media. Both the music and its presentation felt conspiratorial and subversive, a facet that attracted fans who liked its offer of a break from regimented thinking and suburban aspirations. At the same time, its subversiveness appalled critics who disliked rock 'n' roll for what they saw as moral degradation and racial contamination. Not only were songs like "Sixty Minute Man" by Billy Ward and the Dominoes (1951) and "Work with Me Annie" by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters (1954) lewd, they were hits. They crossed over from the R&B charts (where, because the main audience was the black minority, they had been disapproved of but tolerated) to the pop charts (where they could corrupt everybody).

The detractors were right: There was racial mixing in rock 'n' roll in private and in public, on stage and in theater audiences. Having been created from elements of blues, jazz, pop, country, and gospel, it was inevitable that rock 'n' roll was an integrated music. Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Buddy Holly,

Ricky Nelson, and others created rockabilly by blending country traditions with R&B. Black artists did something similar; Chuck Berry's "Maybellene" (1955), for example, was based on the country song "Ida Red."

Blacks wrote songs for whites; whites wrote songs for blacks. Otis Blackwell, an R&B singer turned professional songwriter, provided Elvis Presley with "All Shook Up" and "Don't Be Cruel," and wrote "Great Balls of Fire" for Jerry Lee Lewis. Dion, a white doo-wop singer, got "Ruby Baby" from the Drifters, a black vocal group. They got it from the same place Presley got "Jailhouse Rock" (as well as "Treat Me Nice," "Don't," and "Hound Dog"); the Jewish songwriting team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller.

"Hound Dog" had first been a hit for Big Mama Thornton, a blues singer from Texas. At her recording session in Los Angeles, the band was comprised of Louisiana blues guitarist Pete Lewis, Puerto Rican bassist Mario Delgarde, and Greek R&B drummer and bandleader Johnny Otis, who considered himself "black by persuasion" (and who later had a rock 'n' roll hit of his own in "Willie and the Hand Jive" (1958). Another of Leiber and Stoller's early blues songs was "Kansas City" (recorded often but not successfully until Wilbert Harrison's 1959 version). The two writers went on to compose, and produce in most cases, a host of black acts, including Ruth Brown ("Lucky Lips"), Ben E. King ("Spanish Harlem," "Stand By Me"), La Vern Baker ("Saved"), the Robins ("Riot in Cell Block #9," "Smokey Joe's Café"), the Clovers ("Love Potion #9), the Drifters ("Drip Drop," "Fools Fall in Love"), and particularly the Coasters ("Yakety Yak," "Poison Ivy," and "Charlie Brown").

"Hound Dog," "Kansas City," "Sixty Minute Man," "Work with Me Annie," and many other songs of the period used the twelve-bar blues form. So did Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" (1955), perhaps rock 'n' roll's biggest seller. The twelve-bar progression and its variations are ubiquitous in rock. The pioneering country bands, jump-blues acts, and R&B vocal groups who moved toward rock 'n' roll based their sound on the blues. They updated it, taking greater freedom in the way lyrics fit the chord progressions, and exploring different rhythmic feels in order to heat up the dance floor. The form was enlivened by faster tempos, rhythmic stops, and call-and-response vocals and by overlaying instrumental solo choruses. Some songs, like Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" (1958), have a twelve-bar verse and a twelve-bar chorus. Others, like Buddy Holly's "That'll Be the Day" (1957), use the progression only during the guitar solo. Some, like Hank Ballard's "The Twist"

(1959, covered by Chubby Checker in 1960), give it an infectious beat. Leiber and Stoller's "Jailhouse Rock" (by Elvis Presley, 1957) and "Ruby Baby" (the Drifters, 1955; Dion, 1963) stretched the form by adding an extra four measures before the first chord change. Larry Williams's "Boney Maronie" (1957) expands the basic twelve-bar blues progression to twenty-four bars by doubling each measure's length. It also features a catchy riff played in unison by sax and guitar; they later play chords in a punchy rhythmic figure behind a soloist.

Many musicians enlivened the blues form by playing it in a minor key. Several rock songs were minor-key blues with interesting variations in chords, such as the Doors' "Riders on the Storm" (1971, with a keyboard bass part whose left-hand patterns derive from boogie-woogie), and the Doobie Brothers' "Long Train Runnin'" (1973). With blues structures comprising an essential part of rock 'n' roll it is no surprise that several older blues and R&B performers had success in the field. Willie Lee "Piano Red" Perryman, a pianist and singer born in Georgia in 1913, had been a rhythm and blues star in the early 1950s. Operating under the name Dr. Feelgood and the Interns, in 1962 Perryman's "Doctor Feel-Good" spent more than two months on the *Billboard* pop charts. Big Joe Turner, a Kansas City blues singer who took part in John Hammond's From Spirituals to Swing concert at Carnegie Hall in 1938, became a rock 'n' roll star in the 1950s even though his songs were more successful when done by others. "Shake Rattle and Roll" was covered by Bill Haley and the Comets (1954), and "Chains of Love" by Pat Boone (1956). Ivory Joe Hunter, a Texas pianist steeped in barrelhouse traditions who had known Blind Lemon Jefferson and was first recorded in 1934 by John Lomax for the Library of Congress, scored with "Since I Met You Baby" (1956). It features a (European) major scale melody over the (African American) blues progression.

Although many rock 'n' roll hits for white artists were covers of R&B songs, black artists also covered white pop hits. Fats Domino's "Blueberry Hill" (1956), was done first by Glenn Miller in 1940, the Platters' "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" (1958) was a hit for Paul Whiteman in 1934, and James Brown's "Prisoner of Love" (1963) was not only a hit for Perry Como in 1946, but was the signature song of crooner Russ Columbo, who wrote it in 1931.

Some old blues songs were redone in rock 'n' roll style. Big Joe Turner's biggest pop hit was a rock and roll version of "Corinna, Corinna" (1956), a blues song that dates back to the 1920s, credited to Bo Carter. In Turner's version, the use of unison walking bass doubled in octaves by bass and guitar predates

late 1960s rock blues, where the device was deployed in much heavier fashion. Chuck Willis's "C. C. Rider" (1957), whose beat inspired the dance called the Stroll, was first recorded by Ma Rainey in 1924. Though no one had a top forty hit with W. C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" (1914), it was recorded and performed live by rock 'n' rollers from Jackie Wilson to Roy Orbison.

Instrumental blues, whether by ensembles or solo pianists and guitarists, had long been popular. "Guitar Boogie" (1948) by Arthur Smith and his Crackerjacks was picked up by budding guitarists and remained as a source for variations for decades, as did Bill Doggett's "Honky Tonk" (1956), part of the live repertoire of thousands of bands, including that of Muddy Waters. Saxophonist Junior Walker, recording for Motown, a label that more habitually presented its unique form of pop R&B, stayed close to the blues. Walker's "Cleo's Mood," a minor-key blues instrumental, made the top fifty in 1966. His "Pucker Up Buttercup" a twelve-bar blues song that starts on the IV chord like the Mississippi down-home blues standard "Rollin' and Tumblin'," did even better the next year.

Black rock 'n' roll artists were numerous in the music's formative years, from the R&B-based ones like Little Richard ("Long Tall Sally," 1956), Bo Diddley ("Bo Diddley," 1955), Chris Kenner ("I Like It Like That," 1961), and Larry Williams ("Short Fat Fanny," 1957), to the more pop-oriented vocalists like Johnny Ace ("Pledging My Love," 1954), Clyde McPhatter ("A Lover's Question," 1958), and Jackie Wilson ("Lonely Teardrops," 1958). The majority of doo-wop groups were black, such as the Penguins, Harptones, Orioles, and Ravens, and some were integrated: Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers ("Why Do Fools Fall in Love," 1956) had blacks and Puerto Ricans; the Del-Vikings ("Come Go With Me," 1957) had blacks and whites.

In 1956, via television, Elvis Presley catapulted to fame and soon dominated the market as no other entertainer had before him. The following year, the advent of *American Bandstand*—televised from Philadelphia and hosted by Dick Clark—showed how rock 'n' roll had changed from a minority music—based in community functions and independent production—into a mainstream industry. It was an industry that marketed three-minute portrayals of dreamy romances and adolescent frustrations: pop music, in other words.

As rock 'n' roll gained respectability and was increasingly controlled by major labels, it shifted toward becoming a music made for and by whites. This never completely occurred however, because African American performers were continuously present.

Blues remained one of the bedrocks of rock 'n' roll though sometimes the blues component was not immediately obvious to the listener, as in the Beatles' "Can't Buy Me Love," a number one song in 1964, which uses the twelve-bar progression for its verses and solos.

Elvis Presley was first recorded in Memphis by Sam Phillips, whose Sun Studio had already recorded Howlin' Wolf, B. B. King, Junior Parker, Rufus Thomas, Little Milton, and James Cotton, as well as Jackie Brenston's "Rocket 88." After Presley's impact, which was immediate if only regional at first, Sun recorded Carl Perkins ("Blue Suede Shoes," 1956) and Jerry Lee Lewis ("Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," 1957) and a host of other rockabillys. Presley's debut single, considered to be the first rockabilly song, was his version of Mississippi bluesman Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup's "That's Alright Mama."

Another blues song done as rockabilly by Presley was "Good Rockin' Tonight." Recorded in 1947 by its composer Roy Brown, it was immediately covered by Wynonie "Mr. Blues" Harris. After Presley did "Good Rockin' Tonight," Pat Boone did it as pop (1959), and James Brown as soul (1967). A 1984 version, actually a cover of a sequel to the original song, called "Good Rockin' at Midnight," was a hit for the Honeydrippers, with vocals by Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin.

Los Angeles, a vibrant center of R&B, had numerous acts that managed the shift into rock 'n' roll including Johnny Otis, Don and Dewey, Young Jessie, and Richard Berry. Berry's calypso-influenced "Louie Louie" was an inspiration to a generation of musicians in the Northwest (Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia). The Wailers, who earlier had hit the national charts with a blues-form instrumental called "Tall Cool One" (1959), while still teenagers, were the first of the white bands in the region to record it. Inspired by them and by the Kingsmen's hit version of "Louie Louie" (1963), and awed by the power the song itself exerted over audiences, bands adopted it as the unofficial anthem of the region. The Northwest Sound developed directly out of R&B, and covering R&B songs became standard policy for the legions of white and occasionally integrated bands that populated the scene. Jimi Hendrix, growing up in Seattle, was influenced by this style, later commemorating a local night club (where many R&B acts performed) in the song "Spanish Castle Magic" (1967).

In the mid-1950s in the United Kingdom there was a phase for skiffle, basically American folk blues interpreted by acoustic guitar strummers and homemade one-string bass pluckers and washboard scratchers. The Beatles, under their earlier name the

Quarrymen, played skiffle. By the early 1960s, a host of young musicians in the United Kingdom was using American music, particularly blues, R&B, blues-based rock 'n' roll, and the gutsy early Motown repertoire for inspiration. What the Rolling Stones, Yardbirds, Animals, Downliners Sect, Paramounts (who became Procol Harum), Them (led by Van Morrison), and others did through their energetic and often-inspired renditions was to educate the pop audience to black music, first through repertoire and then through personal connections. Both the Animals and the Yardbirds backed up Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson" on concert and on record. In 1969 Fleetwood Mac, while touring the United States, recorded *In Chicago* on location at the Chess Studios, joined by blues veterans Willie Dixon, Honeyboy Edwards, Otis Spann, and Walter "Shakey" Horton. On *The London Howlin' Wolf Sessions* (1971), Wolf and his guitarist Hubert Sumlin were backed by the rhythm section of the Rolling Stones along with Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood. Carrying on the tradition, in 1988 U2 invited B. B. King to sit in for "When Love Comes to Town."

In the 1960s and 1970s, U.K. bands resurrected many old blues songs. "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out," first recorded in 1929 by Bessie Smith, was done by the Spencer Davis Group, sung by Steve Winwood. Big Joe Williams's "Baby Please Don't Go" (1935), was arranged by Them, led by Van Morrison. Cream, featuring Eric Clapton, covered Skip James's "I'm So Glad" (1931) and Blind Joe Reynolds's "Outside Woman Blues" (1930). Cream also did "Rollin' and Tumblin'," recorded first by Blind Willie Newbern (1929), and popularized by Little Walter and Muddy Waters. Led Zeppelin arranged Memphis Minnie's "When the Levee Breaks" (1929). They also covered "You Shook Me" and "I Can't Quit You Baby," both composed by Willie Dixon. Jeff Beck did Dixon's "I Ain't Superstitious." Robert Johnson's songs were also popular choices: Led Zeppelin did "Traveling Riverside Blues," the Rolling Stones covered "Love in Vain," and Eric Clapton did "Rambling on My Mind" (with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers) and "Crossroads" (with Cream). The impact on American youth of the British Invasion groups and their reverence for black music contributed to the explosion of garage bands, which not only covered the repertoires of the U.K. bands but also caused some musicians and fans to research roots music themselves. Most American rock bands, from the local stars to the hit makers, had at least a couple of blues items on their song list. The band down the street likely knew something by Bo Diddley, or just copied, say, the Doors' version of "Back Door Man" (by Willie Dixon and

Howlin' Wolf). In America, blues-rock was pioneered in the mid-1960s by the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, an integrated unit from Chicago. Other important early blues-rock bands were the Blues Project from New York, whose lengthy version of Muddy Waters's "Still A Fool" "Two Trains Running" was a concert highlight, the Allman Brothers from Georgia, who remade Blind Willie McTell's "Statesboro Blues" (1928), and Canned Heat from Los Angeles who put their version of "Bull Doze Blues" by Henry Thomas (1928) on the pop charts (as "Going Up the Country," 1968). Bands from San Francisco's psychedelic scene drew heavily from the blues repertoire, including the Grateful Dead, who had numerous blues and jug band pieces in their repertoire, often stretched by improvisations, and Big Brother and the Holding Company, featuring Janis Joplin, who did a version of Big Mama Thornton's "Ball and Chain."

The role of guitar hero—a flashy soloist with an impressive command of blues-based licks—was established in the mid-1960s in England. At the forefront were the lead guitarists of the Yardbirds—Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Jimmy Page. Clapton left the band because he felt they were too commercial, seeking blues purity, which he found in John Mayall's band. His stay was brief, replaced by another superb blues guitarist, Peter Green. Green left also, to form Fleetwood Mac, which, in their first incarnation, was perhaps Britain's best blues-rock unit. Upon Jimi Hendrix's arrival in Britain, his outrageous stage antics and mastery of blues-rock guitar both intimidated and inspired other players. His recordings and tours created a sensation and many guitarists, including Robin Trower and Stevie Ray Vaughn, followed his lead; many still do. In America, Mike Bloomfield, first with Paul Butterfield and then the Electric Flag, was an early guitar hero. From Texas, Johnny Winter exploded onto the pop scene in 1969, the year Alvin Lee of England's Ten Years After made a big impression at Woodstock. Blues-rock remains strong and the guitarist's role continues to be central.

Rock guitarists and bass guitarists have been responsible for creating blues riffs of remarkable cultural longevity, like the ones found in Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman," the Beatles' "Day Tripper," Cream's "Sunshine of Your Love," and the related one in Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida." Heavy metal carried on the project of creating blues-influenced riffs. That teenage players in the twenty-first century—not buying vinyl records but downloading digital music files—are still eager to learn the songs and styles of Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters and the great riffs from the 1950s and 1960s bodes well for the future of both blues and rock.

CRAIG MORRISON

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ROCKIN' DOPSIE

b. Alton Jay Rubin, 10 February 1932; Carencro, LA
d. 26 August 1993; Opelousas, LA

Raised in a South Louisiana family of cotton and sugar cane pickers, Dopsie (Alton Jay Rubin) got his first accordion, a push-button model, at age fourteen. Being left-handed, he learned to play it upside down. In the mid-1950s, having moved to the city of Lafayette to work in construction, he began playing clubs with Chester Zeno on rubboard. After a dancer named Doopsie made a strong impression on local club-goers, they started calling Rubin by that name (pronounced with an "oo" although he dropped the second "o"). In Lafayette, Dopsie heard lots of blues and R&B and began incorporating those styles into his zydeco act, like his idol and mentor Clifton Chenier. He recorded in 1969 and 1970 for South Louisiana producers Floyd Soileau and Jay Miller, while remaining unknown outside his native region. That began to change in 1973, when he made his first of six albums for Sam Charters on Sonet, a Swedish label, leading to European tours. His domestic visibility grew after a guest appearance on Paul Simon's 1985 *Graceland* album, and he became one of the top zydeco acts in the United States, recording for Maison de Soul, Rounder, and Atlantic and going so far as to claim the crown as King of Zydeco after the December 1987 death of Chenier.

Starting in the early 1980s, his band (the Zydeco Twisters) included sons Alton ("Tiger") on drums and David ("Rockin' Dopsie Jr.") on rubboard. Ex-Chenier saxophonist John Hart also joined the group. Upon his death, another son, Anthony, took over on accordion, but the band was, and continues to be, led by Dopsie Jr., a flamboyant and charismatic frontman.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: LSFP**ROCKIN'/GLORY**

Record Label (Florida, 1952–1953). Owner: Henry David Stone (b. June 3, 1921; Bronx, NY). Artists include Willie C. Baker, Ray Charles ("Walkin' and Talkin'," "I'm Wondering and Wondering"), Little Sam Davis (with Earl Hooker, "Goin' Home to Mother"), Wilbert Harrison ("The Letter"), Earl Hooker ("Sweet Angel," "On the Hook"), John Lee Hooker (as John Lee Booker) ("Lovin' Guitar Man," with Eddie Kirkland), Eddie Hope ("Lost Child"), and Joe Hill Louis (as Leslie Lewis, Johnny Lewis).

ROBERT EAGLE

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Discography: McGrath**RODGERS, JAMES CHARLES
"JIMMIE"**

b. 8 September 1897; Last Gasp near Meridian, MS
 d. 26 May 1933; New York City, NY

Singer, songwriter, and guitarist. Known as the "Singing Brakeman" and the "Mississippi Blue Yodeler," Rodgers is regarded as the progenitor of what became modern country music. He worked on the railroad until his health failed, then on the carnival circuit. Recorded by RCA field producer Ralph Peer in 1927, the second session produced the million-selling "Blue Yodel" (aka "T for Texas"). He became established as a major star (1928–1931), until depression brought a lull. Rodgers died from a lung hemorrhage caused by tuberculosis. His yodels were an

integrated expressive device within his style, which drew centrally on blues (including thirteen "Blue Yodels") alongside an eclectic mix of hillbilly, gospel, jazz, cowboy, and folk influences.

KENNY MATHIESON

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"Blue Yodel" (1927, Victor 21142); "Blue Yodel No. 2" (1928, Victor 21291); "In the Jailhouse Now" (1928, Victor 21245); "Anniversary Blue Yodel" (1929, Victor 22488); "I've Ranged, I've Roamed, I've Travelled" (1929, Bluebird B 5892); "Jimmie's Texas Blues" (1929, Victor 22379); "Mississippi River Blues" (1929, Victor 23535); "Nobody Knows But Me" (1929, Victor 23518); "Train Whistle Blues" (1929, Victor 22379); "Jimmie's Mean Mama Blues" (1930, Victor 23503); "Pistol Packin' Papa" (1930, Victor 22554); "Those Gambler's Blues" (1930, Victor 22554); "My Good Gal's Gone Blues" (1931, Bluebird B 5942); "T. B. Blues" (1931, Victor 23535); "Travellin' Blues" (1931, Victor 23564); "My Time Ain't Long" (1932, Victor 23669); "Ninety-Nine Years Blues" (1932, Victor 23669); "Peach Pickin' Time in Georgia" (1932, Victor 23781); "Whippin' That Old T. B." (1932, Victor 23751); "Jimmie Rodgers' Last Blue Yodel" (1933, Bluebird B 5281); "Mississippi Delta Blues" (1933, Victor 23816); "Waiting for a Train" (Victor V 40014).

RODGERS, SONNY "CAT DADDY"

b. Oliver Lee Rodgers, 4 December 1939; Hughes, AR
 d. 7 May 1990; Minneapolis, MN

Guitarist. Through 1960 he performed in Hughes, Arkansas, including recording with Forrest City Joe Pugh in 1959. After a brief time in Texas, he moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Rodgers had a long association with Mojo Buford, who recommended him to Muddy Waters to replace Sammy Lawhorn in 1972.

EDWARD KOMARA

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ROGERS, JIMMY

b. James A. Lane, 3 June 1924; Ruleville, MS
 d. 19 December 1997; Chicago, IL

Jimmy Rogers was instrumental in creating the Chicago, urban blues sound that has become the foundation for modern blues. He was the first guitarist with Muddy Waters's band, creating a complement to Muddy's slide guitar. Rogers developed a solo career and enjoyed national fame in the 1950s.

Born James A. Lane, he was raised by his grandmother after his father was killed in a scuffle at a sawmill. She moved them often, living in several towns in several states: Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi. His first guitar was a diddley bow, common in the country—broom wire nailed to the side of a house and plucked. Next was the harmonica, which was more portable than a wall, less inexpensive, and easily accessible. Soon he was playing other people's guitars. Meeting and watching Houston Stackhouse, Tommy McClennan, Robert Petway, Robert Lockwood, and Joe Willie Wilkins, and listening to King Biscuit Time on the radio, Rogers developed a solid musical foundation and earned a reliable reputation as a player.

Rogers had family in Chicago, and had been there several times before settling permanently in the mid-1940s. He found an apartment on the Near West Side, next to the Maxwell Street market, which is where he was living when he befriended a factory coworker who was Muddy Waters's cousin. From the time Muddy and Jimmy first played together, they knew they had a good sound. Rogers understood how to play bass parts and how to play licks that complemented Muddy's slide. If Muddy's playing was a diamond, Jimmy was the jeweler's black velvet that made it shine.

Initially, Rogers and Waters played with a third guitarist named Claude "Blue" Smitty. To keep the sound varied, Jimmy often played harmonica instead of guitar, until Blue Smitty left and Jimmy found Little Walter. Muddy, Jimmy, and Walter began gigging together and, on their off nights, called themselves the Headhunters, roving the Chicago club scene of the late 1940s, sitting in on other people's gigs and showing off their new, urban blues sound.

Jimmy began making his first recordings around 1946. He put out a single on the Harlem label, recording with Chicago's African American producer J. Mayo Williams, possibly around the time of Muddy's session with Williams. In 1947, Jimmy backed Little Walter for the small Ora-Nelle label in Chicago, and recorded his own single for the label about a year later. In 1949 he backed Memphis Minnie for the Regal label and cut an early version of "Ludella," which he recut in 1950 at his first Chess Records session. With "That's All Right" on the other side, Jimmy's first release became a two-sided hit. The full Muddy Waters band had yet to back Muddy on records, the label preferring the simpler sound of Muddy and an upright bass; however, Chess let the band record with Jimmy

as the leader, beginning in December 1950. A year later, they began regularly recording with Muddy. Rogers continued to perform and record with Muddy, even as his solo career took off. When "Juke" became a hit for Little Walter, Muddy's band boasted a line-up with three stars. Through the early 1950s, Jimmy Rogers was on nearly all of Muddy's major hits: "Standing Around Crying," "She's All Right," "Mad Love (I Want You to Love Me)," "I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man," "I Just Want to Make Love To You," "I'm Ready," and more.

Eventually, however, the performing group splintered. The three stars continued to work on each other's recordings as schedules allowed, but Jimmy, in 1955, also developed his own group: Eddie Ware on piano, S. P. Leary on drums, Poor Bob Woodfork on bass, and Big Walter Horton on harmonica. Other personnel would include saxophonist Ernest Cotton and, later, pianist Henry Gray. Rogers often recorded his sides immediately after a session with Muddy.

Under his own name, Rogers recorded a number of popular songs for Chess, many of which have enjoyed longevity: "That's All Right," "Ludella," "Goin' Away Baby," "Money, Marbles, and Chalk," "The Last Time," "Chicago Bound," "Sloppy Drunk," "You're the One," "Walking By Myself," and "Rock This House." Generally, Rogers's songs were upbeat and urbane. His voice was smooth and accessible, relaxed; there was a smile implied in many of his blues.

The rise of rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s made blues gigs evermore scarce. Before putting down his guitar in the early 1960s, Rogers cut several sides with Howlin' Wolf, including "Down in the Bottom" and "The Red Rooster." Eventually, he quit music and opened a clothing store. He worked various jobs through the 1960s, including occasional roles as a hired guitarist for other people's bands. He returned to recording at the decade's end, and went on to make records featuring Freddie King and the Aces for Leon Russell's Shelter label. In 1977, he reunited with Muddy for the latter's *I'm Ready* album. They did occasional gigs together thereafter, until Muddy's death in 1983. Jimmy also made records for Bullseye (with Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters), Analogue (with Carey Bell), and Antone's (with Kim Wilson).

Through the 1980s and 1990s, Jimmy was recognized as one of the blues' elder statesmen. He was a hero in Austin, Texas, and worked often with members of the Fabulous Thunderbirds. After Muddy's death, Jimmy toured with members of Muddy's later bands, including Pinetop Perkins, Willie Smith, and Calvin Jones. Many of Rogers's tunes were covered by other artists; "Walkin' By Myself" was covered by Paul Butterfield in 1969 and by Gary Moore in 1990. Big Bill Morganfield, Muddy's son, cut "Trace of

You” on *Ramblin’ Mind*. Two of Rogers’s tunes (“Goin’ Away Baby” and “Blues Leave Me Alone”) were on Eric Clapton’s *From the Cradle*—one of the biggest-selling blues albums of all time. At the time of his death in 1997, Rogers was working on an album that featured many of the people he’d influenced. *Blues Blues Blues* was released posthumously, and includes contributions from Eric Clapton, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, Lowell Fulson, Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, and others.

ROBERT GORDON

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

ROGERS, ROY

b. 28 July 1950; Redding, CA

Roy Rogers has gained a reputation as a gifted slide guitarist. Since his first recording, *A Foot in the Door* (1976) with harmonica player David Burgin, he has recorded more than ten solo albums and performed on even more. In 1980, Rogers formed the Delta Rhythm Kings, based out of San Francisco. During the early 1980s, he toured with John Lee Hooker’s Coast to Coast Blues Band. He later produced Hooker’s albums *The Healer*, which included the Grammy-winning song “I’m in the Mood” (1989) and *Chill Out*, which won a Grammy in 1995. Rogers was a 2003 W. C. Handy Award nominee for best blues guitarist.

GREG JOHNSON

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Discography: AMG

ROGERS, SONNY

(See *Rodgers, Sonny* “Cat Daddy”)

ROLAND, WALTER

b. 4 December 1903; Ralph, AL

d. 12 October 1972; Fairfield, AL

Birth date from death certificate is 1903; an alternate birth date of December 20, 1902, was given on his Social Security documents. Roland was an Alabama pianist who shared some repertory with Jabo Williams, especially “House Lady Blues.” He recorded solo and with Lucille Bogan and Sonny Scott for the ARC labels in 1933–1935. Among his notable solo titles are “Red Cross Blues,” “Jookit Jookit,” and “Early This Morning.”

EDWARD KOMARA

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“Walter Roland.” Delta Haze Corporation profile, <http://www.deltahaze.com/30/wr.html>.

Discography: DGR

ROLL AND TUMBLE BLUES

“Roll and Tumble Blues” was first recorded by “Hambone” Willie Newbern in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, for Okeh Records (Okeh 8679). Sleepy John Estes, guitarist and singer from Brownsville, Tennessee, in an interview published in 1975 (Lornell), remembered performing with Newbern in Como, Mississippi. In view of some similarity of the “Roll and Tumble Blues” melody to “Banty Rooster Blues” recorded by Walter Rhodes and by Charley Patton, and to the “Minglewood Blues” recorded by Gus Cannon, Newbern on his record may have taken a commonly used melody from Mississippi/West Tennessee practice. The melody is in twelve measures, with an AAB lyric scheme. Over the years the title would also be known as “Rollin’ and Tumblin’.” Newbern’s guitar was tuned to open A, performing a distinctive lick on the middle four strings.

The song quickly received other treatments on 78s. Estes himself would sing the melody to the words “The Girl I Love, She Got Long Curly Hair” during his first recording session (1929, Victor V38549). A direct cover of the Newbern version, but with the rhythmic pattern in the melody altered, was “Dough Roller Blues” (Vocalion 1481) in 1930 by Garfield Akers with Joe Callicott, both of Hernando, Mississippi.

In 1936 Mississippi Delta bluesman Robert Johnson used the melody and several verses of Newburn's record as the apparent basis for "If I Had Possession over Judgment Day." While the title verse suggests an apocalyptic image, other verses may indicate now-obscure slang from Johnson's time. The performance was not released during his lifetime; in fact it was not issued until the 1961 *King of the Delta Blues Singers* album (Columbia CL 1654). The following year (1937), Johnson made "Traveling Riverside Blues" (also unreleased until 1961), singing with Charley Patton-like drawls; the performance suggests more Patton's "Banty Rooster Blues" than "Roll and Tumble Blues." The similarity of the three records should be noted nonetheless.

Muddy Waters was another Mississippi Delta bluesman who adopted the song, and he retained it in his repertoire when he moved north to Chicago in 1943. His early sessions for Aristocrat (later Chess) Records were of him singing and playing guitar with a bassist assisting him. In this duo format Waters recorded his first treatment of this song, as "Down South Blues" (1948, but not released until Chess LP 1511), and then a second one as "Rollin' and Tumblin'" Parts One and Two (1950, Aristocrat 412). Midway through 1950, Waters participated in a Parkway label session held in drummer Baby Face Leroy Foster's name, during which Foster, Waters, and Little Walter Jacobs recorded a two-part version of "Rollin' and Tumblin'" in the harmonica-guitar-drums combination that Waters longed to use in his own recording sessions. Then on October 23, 1950, Waters was allowed to bring his full working band to a Chess recording session for the first time, and among the songs recorded that day was "Louisiana Blues" (Chess 1441), sung to the "Rollin' and Tumblin'" melody.

Rock versions tend to follow the Muddy Waters's versions. Perhaps the best known version is "Rollin' and Tumblin'" by Cream with bassist Jack Bruce and guitarist Eric Clapton on its debut album *Fresh Cream* (1966, Atco). Notable also is "Drinking Muddy Water" by Clapton's former band The Yardbirds, but with Jimmy Page on guitar; the 1967 studio version for the *Little Games* LP (Epic) features Keith Relf on the harmonica, but the April 1968 live version (on the scarce LP *Live Yardbirds with Jimmy Page*, released 1971) has electric guitar slide solos from Page. Page's later group, Led Zeppelin, taped a track titled "Traveling Riverside Blues," but this has no melodic resemblance and little if any lyric reference to the Robert Johnson song of the same title, or to any other song in the "Roll and Tumble" tune group.

EDWARD KOMARA

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ROLLING STONES

After performing with Blues Incorporated, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Brian Jones formed the Rolling Stones with Dick Taylor and Mick Avory in 1962. Their debut gig was on July 12, 1962, at London's Marquee Theater as a temporary replacement for Blues Incorporated. By January 1963, Charlie Watts had replaced Mick Avory and Bill Wyman had replaced Dick Taylor to complete the band. After several gigs in the London club scene, the Rolling Stones became the resident band at Richmond's Station Hotel, later called The Crawdaddy Club. Their sound was deeply rooted in the Chicago blues scene, which is evident from the fact that their band name was taken from the Muddy Waters song and their first release, recorded in 1963, which contained a cover of Chuck Berry's "Come On" and Muddy Waters' "I Wanna Be Loved."

The Rolling Stones continued to introduce blues and R&B songs, such as Willie Dixon's "Little Red Rooster" and Slim Harpo's "I'm a King Bee," to young British and American audiences. The Stones released their first album in April 1964. The album was followed by U.S. tours in June and October of the same year. During their second tour, the Stones appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Their appearance caught the attention of the media and established the Rolling Stones in the United States. Subsequent albums, while still influenced by Chicago blues, moved away from covers and focused on original songs written by Jagger and Richards. Their 1966 album *Aftermath* was groundbreaking in that it was their first album to contain only new material. The Stones continued their success throughout the next four decades and continue to record and play sold-out venues.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

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Discography: AMG**Selected Recordings**

England's Newest Hit Makers—The Rolling Stones (1964, London).
Aftermath (1966, London).
Beggar's Banquet (1968, London).
Let It Bleed (1969, London).
Sticky Fingers (1971, Rolling Stones).
Forty Licks (2002, ABKCO).

ROMEO

A subsidiary label of the Cameo Record Corporation, Romeo was introduced in July 1926 for sale through S. H. Kress & Company stores. Blues issues included sides by Viola McCoy (1926–1927). Cameo merged with Pathé in October 1927 and Romeo passed with its parent to the American Record Corporation (ARC) in July 1929. It became one of ARC's five "dime-store" labels using common issue numbers from September 1935. The labels shared an important Race catalog, including releases by Lucille Bogan and Walter Roland, Big Bill (Broonzy), Sam Collins, Georgia Tom (Dorsey), Blind Boy Fuller, and Pine-wood Tom (Josh White). All the "dime-store" labels were withdrawn in April 1938.

HOWARD RYE

Discography: DGR; Sutton

Dixon, Robert M. W., and John Godrich. *Recording the Blues*. London: Studio Vista, 1970; reprinted in Paul Oliver et al., *Yonder Come the Blues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
 Rust, Brian. *The American Record Label Book*. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Press, 1978.

RON

New Orleans label owned by Joe Ruffino, and active 1958–1963. Artists included Professor Longhair, Irma Thomas, and Chris Kenner.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath**ROOMFUL OF BLUES**

Formed in 1967 in Providence, Rhode Island. The longest-running and best-known blues big band of the modern era, founded and headquartered in the unlikely blues location of Rhode Island, served as the

single most productive talent incubator of the genre. The band, with more than fifty members through the years, accumulated an extensive and accomplished list of alumni, but it began as the duo of guitarist Duke Robillard and pianist Al Copely. It grew to a quartet with the addition of a rhythm section, featuring future Fabulous Thunderbirds drummer Fran Christina. By 1970 Robillard had discovered jump-blues, and a horn section featuring Greg Piccolo and Rich Lataille was added to give the group its big band configuration.

Robillard, replaced by Ronnie Earl, left the band in 1979 and Piccolo assumed command. The horn section was expanded and it recorded *Hot Little Mama* on its own label. Ron Levy and Curtis Salgado were added by time of the second album, *Live at Lupo's Heartbreak Hotel*. A trio of recording projects as a backing band, Big Joe Turner's *Blues Train*, New Orleans guitarist Earl King's *Glazed*, and an eponymous Eddie "Cleanhead Vinson" album, earned it three Grammy nominations in the 1980s. The band's W. C. Handy Award-winning horn section also recorded behind Stevie Ray Vaughan on his *Live at Carnegie Hall* and pop star Pat Benatar's blues effort *True Love*.

A 1997 Roomful reconfiguration involved five members exiting but it rolled on, recording *There Goes the Neighborhood* the next year, with guitarist Chris Vachon in the driver's seat, and releasing *That's Right* four years later.

MICHAEL POINT

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 Smith, M. "The Biggest, Baddest Band in the Land: Roomful of Blues." *Blues Revue* no. 34 (January/February 1998): 19–22.

Discography: AMG**ROOSTER BLUES**

Label founded in Chicago by Jim O'Neal in 1980, then moved to Clarksdale, Mississippi. Album artists include Eddy Clearwater, Eddie Shaw, Lonnie Pitchford, Lonnie Shields, and Valerie Wellington. The 45-rpm issues included tracks by Big Jack Johnson and Hound Dog Taylor. In recent years, the label has been owned as a subsidiary of Bottled Majic Music.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Rooster Blues website, <http://www.roosterblues.com/>.

ROOTS/PALTRAM/TRUTH/FOR SPECIALISTS ONLY

Record label established in Vienna, Austria, in the mid-1960s by Evelyn and Johnny Parth, producing limited-edition reissues of pre-1942 blues. Some were devoted to individual artists including Blind Lemon Jefferson and Tommy McClennan; many were collections whose programming appeared arbitrary even among the relative dearth of reissues at that time. Remastering was also inclined to be uncritical. The five issues made in a Roots Special Edition series attempted more systematic programming and improved sound. Releases also appeared on the subsidiary Paltram and Truth (for gospel) labels, while a single issue of one hundred fifty copies on For Specialists Only made available for research a number of items then known to survive only in very poor condition, including three Charley Patton titles. Contemporary recordings by Son House, Furry Lewis, and Honeyboy Edwards were issued in a series otherwise devoted to Austrian folk music. Following the proprietors' divorce, Evelyn continued trading for a time but no new issues were made after the mid-1970s.

HOWARD RYE

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ROSETTA RECORDS

Historian, critic, and cultural activist Rosetta Reitz began the Rosetta label in 1980 as a company dedicated to chronicling the achievements of undervalued and/or unknown female jazz and blues musicians. Reitz not only compiled the selections for each of the albums, but she wrote extensive, informative liner notes as well. Some of the releases included definitive anthologies of the Sweethearts of Rhythm, the fine trumpeter Valaida Snow, and a superb release of Dinah Washington material. Reitz sometimes would extend her reach into debatable territory, most notably an album of Mae West numbers, but almost all the Rosetta releases are essential. They are also still predominantly on hard-to-find twelve-inch vinyl albums.

RON WYNN

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ROSS, DOCTOR ISAIAH

b. Charles Isaiah Ross, 21 October 1925; Tunica, MS d. 28 May 1993; Flint, MI

Blues multi-instrumentalist "Doctor" Isaiah Ross grew up in a musical family and started playing harmonica at age six, inspired by his father's skills on the instrument and later by the recordings of John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. Ross began playing the guitar several years later and took lessons from local guitarist Wiley Galatin. He served in the Army during World War II and played music in various USO shows. After being discharged, he hosted radio shows in Clarksdale, Mississippi; Helena, Arkansas; and Memphis, Tennessee. Ross recorded sporadically for Memphis producer Sam Phillips from 1951 until 1954, with issues on both Chess and Sun. Ross's powerful sound featured his hypnotic amplified harmonica and infectious boogie guitar rhythm, showcased on such Sun classics as "Chicago Breakdown" and "Juke Box Boogie." He performed throughout the tristate region with his bands The Jump and Jive Boys and The Interns. In 1954, Ross moved to Flint, Michigan, and gained employment at a local automobile plant, a job he held for the rest of his life. Frustrated with keeping a band together, he began performing as a one-man band consisting of harmonica, guitar, and drums. In 1959, after releasing a single on his own D.I.R. label, Ross recorded numerous sides for Fortune Records, including "Cat Squirrel," which would be covered by the rock group Cream in 1968. He continued to perform and record periodically throughout the United States and Europe during the rest of his life. Ross died at age sixty-seven from a heart attack while working at the plant, just three months before retirement.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Boogie Disease (1992, Arhoolie CD 371).

ROTHCHILD, PAUL A.

b. 18 April 1935; Brooklyn, NY
 d. 30 March 1995; Los Angeles, CA

House producer for Elektra label, 1963–1969. Oversaw numerous roots-oriented album projects, many featuring young, white performers, for example, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, whose influential 1965 debut helped inaugurate blues-rock. As an independent, he also produced Janis Joplin and Bonnie Raitt. At the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, Rothchild ran the PA board as Bob Dylan performed in a controversial set with an electric band.

JOHN KIMSEY

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Discography: AMG

See also Bloomfield, Michael; Butterfield, Paul; Elektra Records; Guitar; Joplin, Janis; Raitt, Bonnie

ROULETTE, FREDDIE

b. 3 May 1939; Evanston, IL

An unconventional though heralded blues musician, Freddie Roulette forged a name for himself as an innovator in the post-Hendrix world of guitar playing by introducing the lap-steel guitar to the blues. He absorbed the standard country music and Hawaiian styles particular to this instrument as a child, and adopted blues structures to his playing by his mid-teens. By age sixteen he had steady gigs in Chicago's South Side clubs backing Earl Hooker. He played with Luther Allison on the guitarist's first recordings from 1967 as well as appearing on various 45s by area musicians. He and Hooker toured extensively from 1966 to 1969, recording one LP each for Cuca and Arhoolie. In 1969 Roulette left Chicago, touring cross-country with Charlie Musselwhite twice before settling in Fresno, California. He joined the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1969, and its later variant, Southern Comfort. In 1973, Roulette recorded his first solo record while living in Fresno and adopted the teachings of Buddhism in that same period. A move to Berkeley in the late 1970s signals a reduction in Roulette's musical activities. Though he undertook

an overseas tour in the 1980s, he appearances became restricted to local gigs and festivals, teaming up in the early 1990s with Bay Area cohort Luther Tucker. Roulette made his living as manager of an apartment building through the rest of the decade, though a comeback album in 1997, *Back in Chicago* (High Horse label) won awards and critical acclaim.

JOHN OTIS

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ROULETTE/RAMA

Founded in New York City in 1953, George Goldner's first R&B label, Rama, grew out of his Latin American label Tico. The label lasted until 1957, issuing blues disks by Lonnie Johnson and Ben Smith among the usual vocal group releases. After launching a pop subsidiary, Gee, in 1956 Goldner incorporated the successful Roulette label, which he then sold to producers Hugo & Luigi the following year.

DAVID PENNY

Discography

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ROUNDER

Founded in 1970 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by a trio of friends, Ken Irwin, Marian Leighton, and Bill Nowlin, who shared a passion for rural American acoustic music. Rounder's earliest releases focused on string band, bluegrass, and folk music, including folklorist-produced compilations of blues field recordings. It grew to become a premier indie label, with a catalog of more than three thousand titles covering a wide gamut of genres.

Rounder skyrocketed in size and influence after its late 1970s LPs by blues-rocker George Thorogood went gold. Soon, the formerly acoustic label was a major presence in electric blues, with early 1980s

ROUNDER

signings of Gatemouth Brown, Johnny Copeland, and the Legendary Blues Band. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the label tapped the fertile musical fields of Louisiana, recording New Orleans stalwarts like Johnny Adams, Irma Thomas, Walter Washington, and the Rebirth Brass Band; zydeco artists like Boozoo Chavis and Beau Jocque; Cajun artists like Bruce Daigrepoint and Steve Riley; and rising stars of the “crawfish circuit” like Marcia Ball. Long-time in-house producer Scott Billington was responsible for many of those recordings. For a time, the label’s distribution deal with New Orleans-based Black Top Records cemented its role as a dominant force in Louisiana roots music. In 1990, under the stewardship of producer Ron Levy, Rounder launched its Bullseye Blues and Jazz subsidiary, which released new recordings by aging stars Charles Brown, Ruth Brown, Lowell Fulson, and Jimmy McCracklin while signing new acts like Little Jimmy King, Smokin’ Joe Kubek, Preston Shannon, and Michelle Willson and issuing a steady flow of CDs by blues circuit perennials like Anson Funderburgh, Luther “Guitar Jr.” Johnson, Eddie Clearwater, and Roomful of Blues. Acoustic blues continued to be represented on the Rounder roster by John Jackson, Rory Block, and John Hammond.

Faced with a nationwide slump in blues sales since the late 1990s, Rounder has cut back considerably on blues in favor of Americana, alt-country, bluegrass, and indie rock. Even so, the label did release an ambitious series of vintage recordings from the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Culture and the Alan Lomax Collection.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Selected Recordings

Various artists. *Deep Blue: The Rounder 25th Anniversary Blues Anthology* (1995, Rounder 8520).

ROUNDS, ERNESTINE SMITH

b. Linden, TX

Composer. Has declined to give birth date in interviews. Arrived in the Los Angeles area in 1949, and worked as sales clerk at Flash Records store from 1952 to 1957. Wrote “Stranded in the Jungle” for the Jayhawks, whose 1956 hit recording sustained the Flash label through 1958.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Propes, Steve. “Confessions of a Flash Counter Girl.” *Blues & Rhythm* no. 134 (November 1998): 10–13.

ROY, EARNEST “GUITAR”

b. 25 September 1958; Clarksdale, MS

Son of regarded Clarksdale guitarist Earnest Sr., Roy began playing guitar at age five and played local jukes as a teen with his father. In the 1980s, he recorded with Frank Frost and Big Jack Johnson, and released a single on Rooster that displayed his exemplary guitar skills. Roy returned to blues in 2001 after a stint in gospel during the mid-1990s.

GENE TOMKO

ROYAL, MARSHAL

b. Marshal Walton Royal, Jr., 5 December 1912; Sapulpa, OK

d. 8 May 1995; Los Angeles, CA

After working with the Duke Ellington and Lionel Hampton bands, Royal achieved renown in jazz history as musical director and a warm-sounding alto saxophonist and clarinetist for the blues-savvy Count Basie Orchestra from 1950 to 1970.

FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

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Discography: Lord

RPM

(See *Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM*)

RST/RST BLUES DOCUMENT/ FANTASY BY

Vienna-based record label of drummer Rudolf “Rudi” Staeger, which in the 1980s issued some of Johnny Parth’s compilations of prewar blues and gospel music on its RST Blues Documents and Fantasy

By Selmerphone labels, the last-named being devoted to obscure vaudeville blues artists. Shortly after transference to CD in the early 1990s, the Parth compilations were repackaged on his own Document label. RST also issued a series devoted to jump bands and other early R&B performers, and a series of reissues of AFRS Jubilee transcriptions.

HOWARD RYE

RUBBOARD

In general, the term *rubboard* refers to a wood and metal device commonly used for washing clothes prior to the advent of modern washing machine; also called *scrubboard* or *washboard*. Wet, soapy clothing was rubbed against the crimped metal or glass surface of the rubboard to force the dirt out, then the items were rinsed in clean water, wrung, and hung to dry.

Pried from the protesting hands of busy mothers and wives, the rubboard was a commonly used informal rhythm instrument in the blues and other American folk traditions, and it played a major role in the jug and novelty (“spasm”) bands popular during the early days of jazz and blues. Like body percussion, foot stomping, diddley bow, and the washtub bass, the rubboard provided an underlying rhythmic pulse for melody instruments such as guitar and voice. The instrumental washboard and rubboard are thought to be substitutes for West African rubbed percussion instruments such as animal jawbones, incised gourds, and carved wood or animal horns, all played by passing a stick over ridges to make a rhythmic scraping noise.

By the 1960s the term *rubboard* had come to refer specifically to the Creole rubboard, or *froittoir*, that is the rhythmic hallmark of Louisiana zydeco music. The *froittoir* has its origins in the icebox rather than the washtub. A forerunner of the refrigerator, an icebox was an insulated box in which a large block of ice could be stored. It contained a ridged drip tray of metal or glass on which the block of ice was placed. Used as an instrument, this tray was originally held in the lap or attached to a string and hung around the neck. The modern metal *froittoir* is most often seen in the form of a vest worn by the player.

Although the traditional rubboard and the *froittoir* serve a similar rhythmic purpose in blues and zydeco, they are held and played differently, and the sounds are not really interchangeable. The *froittoir* is played standing, usually using bottle openers (“church keys”), silverware, coins, or other metallic objects in an up-and-down scraping motion over the ridges to provide a continuous rhythmic pulse. The rubboard is played from a seated position, with the board held

under the arm, or resting on one thigh and supported by the hand on that side. The metal surface is usually tapped in rhythm with the fingers of the free hand, the tips of which are covered with metal thimbles to project the sound and protect the fingertips.

The basic rhythm is straight eighth notes. The pattern is typically tapped or scraped on all four beats, or a combination tapped on 1 & 3 and scraped on 2 & 4. For fast charts, scraped sixteenth notes yield a continuous sound with a pulse on the first note of each beat.

In 1942, Alan Lomax undertook an ambitious program of recording Coahoma County, Mississippi, blues for a joint project of Fisk University and the Library of Congress. Among the artists he recorded is Theopolis Stokes, who played double rubboard with added metallic items that provided a wide range of sounds. Stokes’s performances on the Lomax *Black Appalachia* CD (Rounder 1161-1823-2) are among some of the best examples of rubboard virtuosity.

Other rubboard players include the Hoosier Hot Shots, Warren “Baby” Dodds (Jimmy Bertrand’s Washboard Wizards, Jimmy Blythe’s Washboard Wizards, Beale Street Washboard Band), Washboard Sam, Washboard Slim, Washboard Chaz Leary, Fiddlin’ Joe Martin, and James “Peck” Curtis. Cleveland Chenier is probably the best known *froittoir* artist.

DEBORAH L. GILLASPIE

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RUSH, BOBBY

b. Emmitt Ellis, Jr., 10 November 1940; Houma, LA

Bobby Rush, born Emmett Ellis, Jr., the son of a preacher, began his blues career in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, with guitarist Boyd Gilmore and pianist Moose John Walker. He spent his journeyman years in

RUSH, BOBBY

Chicago alongside Luther Allison, Willie James Lyons, Freddie King, and others, doing versions of popular R&B hits of the time, whether it was Chuck Berry or James Brown. Influenced by Louis Jordan's comedic approach, Rush also began to develop what would become a renowned stage show by disguising himself so that he could play the role of MC or comedian as well as the featured singer of the night.

Though he lays claim to recording for Chess in the 1950s, the first Bobby Rush record that shows up in discographies is a 1961 single on Kem, followed by 45s on Salem, Jerry-O, Palos, Starville, Checker, and ABC. His 1971 hit on Fantasy, "Chicken Heads," was a prime sampling of the style Rush originated, which he calls "folk funk," built from an amalgam of vintage blues lyrics, old folk sayings, street talk, and bedroom humor, set to an insistent, bluesy funk rhythm pattern. After a few more singles on On Top, Sedgrick, Jewel, Warner Brothers, and London, Rush finally hit the charts again when he recorded his first LP in 1979 for Philadelphia International.

Rush moved to Jackson, Mississippi, a center of soul-blues activity in the heart of the southern area that had provided most of his audience, and began recording for LaJam Records in 1982, using the by now tried and true formula that had built him a following over the years. His tenure with LaJam yielded four albums and, among other staples in his repertoire, "Sue." Rush later did albums with Urgent! and Waldoxy, and in 2003 launched his own Deep Rush label in partnership with manager Greg Preston, releasing a live DVD followed by the CD *Folk Funk*, which marked a return to his blues roots. His live shows began to feature more of his blues harmonica and guitar playing, in addition to the revue of dancing girls he carries with him.

Always a businessman and promoter as well as an entertainer, Rush has made sure to make his presence known to white blues festival and blues society audiences as well to his traditional black R&B fan base. The "king of the chittlin circuit" title bestowed upon him by *Rolling Stone* magazine after his 2003 appearance in Martin Scorsese's PBS series may be disputed by performers in the field who have sold more records and command higher performance fees than Bobby Rush, but no one works harder or is so tireless and enthusiastic a showman.

JIM O'NEAL

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

RUSH, OTIS

b. 29 April 1934; near Philadelphia, MS

Born and raised on a plantation near Philadelphia, Mississippi, by his single mother Julia, influential blues singer and guitarist Otis Rush received little formal schooling, a result of having to work in the fields from as early as five years of age. Rush was exposed to the blues through both the radio and his mother's record collection, and was inspired by the recordings of Memphis Minnie, Charles Brown, and Louis Jordan. By the age of eight, he began teaching himself to play on his brother Leroy's guitar, and also learned from watching local guitarist Vaughan Adams.

After spending much of his life farming, Rush went to Chicago in the late 1940s to visit his sister, prompted by her enthusiastic reports of meeting blues musicians T-Bone Walker and Muddy Waters. He began frequenting local Chicago clubs and caught performances by Waters, Little Walter, and Junior Wells. Encouraged by what he saw, he decided to stay and began practicing guitar seriously. While holding down a day job, he started playing at several clubs throughout the neighborhood as a solo performer.

Rush formed his own band in the early 1950s and worked at various South and West Side taverns, including the Brown Derby and the 708 Club. He often teamed up with musician brothers Dave and Louis Myers and drummer Fred Below. By the mid-1950s, Rush, along with fellow contemporaries Magic Sam, Buddy Guy, and Freddie King, were developing a raucous, riff-oriented guitar-driven urban blues style that eventually became known as the "West Side Sound."

While performing at the 708 Club, Rush was discovered by famed producer Willie Dixon and he was quickly signed to Cobra Records. Rush's first release for the label was the phenomenal "I Can't Quit You, Baby" in 1956, which reached number six on the R&B charts and became a postwar blues classic. The incendiary slow blues featured Rush's tortured vocals and vibrato-laden guitar lines, both of which would become his signature sound. Rush recorded several more classics for the label over the next two years,



Otis Rush performing at the Chicago Blues Festival, June 2001. (Photo by Gene Tomko)

including “All Your Love,” “Double Trouble,” and “My Love Will Never Die.” These recordings are considered by many to be Rush’s greatest sides, and are often regarded as some of the best Chicago blues of the postwar era.

After Cobra’s demise in the late 1950s, he continued to play area clubs and recorded for Chess Records in 1960, which yielded several more blues classics, including the impassioned “So Many Roads.” A session for Duke followed in 1962, which resulted in the solitary single “Homework.” Rush recorded for several different labels throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but was never able to receive the recognition, status, or success that his talent merited. In 1965, the left-handed guitarist recorded a solid set for Vanguard’s celebrated *Chicago/The Blues/Today!* series, and the following year he toured Europe as part of the American Folk Blues Festival package. His 1969 Mike Bloomfield–Nick Gravenites–produced release *Mourning in the Morning* on Cotillion yielded mixed reviews from critics.

Rush’s luck seemed to turn around for the moment in 1971 when he signed with a major label and cut the splendid *Right Place, Wrong Time* for Capitol Records. Unfortunately, Capitol never released the album, and it remained unissued until it appeared on Bullfrog in 1976 (and currently available on HighTone.) An inspired but uneven studio session for Delmark titled *Cold Day in Hell* was also released that year. The following year saw the release of the controversial *Lost in the Blues* on Alligator, a session Rush recorded earlier in Sweden but to his dismay was edited and overdubbed with Lucky Peterson’s keyboards by the Chicago label. Frustrated by years of self-perceived bad record deals, Rush took a hiatus from the recording studio for the next seventeen years. In the meantime, several live recordings of

Rush were issued, including the stellar *So Many Roads: Live*, recorded in 1975 in Tokyo and released on Delmark.

Rush made a triumphant return to the studio in 1994 with the critically acclaimed *Ain’t Enough Comin’ In* on Mercury, which found him in excellent form both vocally and instrumentally. Another exceptional effort for the House of Blues label titled *Any Place I’m Going* followed in 1998. He continued to perform periodically both in the United States and abroad for the next several years, finally taking his rightful place as one of the originators of modern Chicago blues and a major influence on countless blues and rock musicians. Tragedy struck in early 2004 when Rush suffered a stroke that affected both his singing and playing, making his future as a performer uncertain.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

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Ain’t Enough Comin’ In (1994, Mercury CD 314 518 769-2).
Good ‘Un’s—The Classic Cobra Recordings 1956–1958 (2000, West Side CD WESA 858).

RUSHING, JAMES ANDREW “JIMMY”

b. 26 August 1903; Oklahoma City, OK
d. 8 June 1972; New York City, NY

Raised in a musical family in which his father played trumpet and his mother and brother were singers, Rushing took violin lessons as a child and was taught to play piano by his cousin, Wesley Manning. After graduating from the Douglass High School in Oklahoma City, he moved to California in 1923, returning home two years later to sing with the Billy King Revue, the musicians from which would become Walter Page’s Blue Devils. By the mid-1930s, after a long spell under bandleaders Bennie and Buster Moten, Rushing became the vocalist with Count Basie’s Orchestra, remaining until 1948. From the mid-1940s, although he continued to work frequently with the Basie band, he began touring as a single and recording under his own name for independent R&B labels such as Excelsior, King, Gotham, and Parrot Records. From the mid-1950s, Rushing became a jazz

ambassador, traveling internationally and frequently touring Europe and Australia, both as a single and with the big bands of Basie, Buck Clayton, Benny Goodman, Harry James, and Eddie Condon, and recording extensively for the Vanguard and Columbia labels. In 1969 Rushing was featured as both an actor and a singer in the Seven Arts period drama *The Learning Tree*, but by the summer of 1971 he was inactive due to illness with cancer and he died the following year.

Often referred to as a progenitor of the jump-blues style of blues shouting, Jimmy Rushing was certainly one of the first band singers to have to contend with the level of noise generated by a boisterous swing band; his ballads were often performed in a slightly archaic fashion, but his jazzy blues and jump tunes were completely innovative. He became the singing hero of the early Kansas City blues singers such as Walter Brown, Gate-mouth Moore, and Joe Turner, who in turn influenced the likes of Wynonie Harris and Jimmy Witherspoon. Rushing performed—and in many cases either wrote or cowrote—the definitive original versions of such jazz blues and jump-blues classics as “Good Morning Blues,” “Boogie Woogie (I May Be Wrong),” “Going to Chicago,” “Sent for You Yesterday (And Here You Come Today),” “The Blues I Like to Hear,” “Evil Blues,” and “Take Me Back Baby,” all recorded during his tenure with Count Basie in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He remained friends with his old boss to the end of his days and, indeed, even on his solo recordings following his split with the Count in the late 1940s, he usually benefited from sterling accompaniment from bands composed from Basie sidemen, past and present.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

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RUSSELL, TOMMIE LEE

- b. 11 September 1925; Vienna, GA
d. 1976; Atlanta, GA

First name sometimes spelled “Tommy.” Pianist born in a rural musical family. Later in life he moved to Atlanta. In his obituary, Pete Lowry described him as “a strange pianist, mostly a crude sort with little regard for bar-length, but with touches of subtlety in his playing.”

EDWARD KOMARA

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RYKODISC

Formed in 1980 as the world’s first CD-only company, Rykodisc has now expanded into a multi-format company issuing everything from rock and pop to blues and world music. It was created by founders Don Rose, Arthur Mann, Rob Simonds, and A&R head Jeff Rougvie, and the label’s first signee was Frank Zappa. There are now more than four hundred titles in their catalog, and some current artists include Kelly Joe Phelps, Bill Hicks, and the Thrill Kill Kult.

RON WYNN

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S

SADLER, HASKELL ROBERT **“COOL PAPA”**

b. 6 April 1935; Denver, CO
d. 6 May 1994; Oakland, CA

Vocalist and guitarist. Traveled widely with different bands before settling in Oakland in the late 1960s. Recorded in Denver with his Mellowtones on Melodia (early 1950s), then in Los Angeles with Sidney Maiden for J. R. Fulbright (1955, issued on Flash), and later (ca. 1982) recorded an album for TJ.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: LSFP

See also Flash; Maiden, Sidney; Oakland

SAFFIRE—THE UPPITY BLUES **WOMEN**

Acoustic trio featuring pianist Ann Rabson, guitarist Gaye Adegbalola, and mandolinist Andra Faye McIntosh, performing sassy and spirited blues in clubs and festivals. Since 1990 they have recorded for Alligator Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

SAIN, OLIVER

b. 1 March 1932; Dundee, MS
d. 28 October 2003; St. Louis, MO

Alto/tenor saxophone, drums, keyboards, songwriter, producer, studio owner. Sain started out playing drums before moving to his primary instrument, saxophone. By the late 1940s, Sain’s family was living in West Memphis, Arkansas. As a teenager, Sain played with the Howlin’ Wolf Band in the Memphis area. At this same time, he began his long relationship with Little Milton. After Sain moved to Chicago in 1955, he briefly reunited with Howlin’ Wolf, who had since moved to Chicago. He also played with Elmore James. Sain relocated to St. Louis in 1959 to work with Little Milton. While bandleader/sax player for Milton, Sain hired Fontella Bass to play piano in Milton’s band and discovered that she could sing. Sain brought Bass and Bobby McClure to Chicago to record for Chess Records. Their duet, the Sain-penned “Don’t Mess Up a Good Thing,” was an early hit for the label. Sain opened his own studio in the mid-1960s. His only charting song as a

SAIN, OLIVER

leader was a disco hit in 1976, “Party Hearty.” During the 1980s and 1990s, Sain produced Larry Davis, Eddie Kirkland, and Johnnie Johnson.

DENNIS TAYLOR

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SALGADO, CURTIS

b. 4 February 1954; Everett, WA

Singer and harmonica player Curtis Salgado gathered his early musical interest from his father and soon developed a deep love for the blues. In his teens, Salgado formed his first band, Three Fingered Jack, which turned into the Nighthawks in 1974.

Salgado later became lead vocalist of the Robert Cray band and spent six years with Cray before Cray achieved his international fame. It was during this time that Salgado became an influence for John Belushi’s character Jake Blues in the film *The Blues Brothers*. In 1979 when he was filming *Animal House*, Belushi saw Salgado perform in Eugene, Oregon, with the Robert Cray band, and Belushi reputedly used much of what he heard and saw from Salgado as a blueprint for his famous blues character, although this remains generally unknown to the public.

After leaving Cray’s band in 1982, Salgado formed his own group, In Yo Face, and then sang as the lead singer for the Boston band Roomful of Blues from 1984 to 1986. He eventually broke out as a solo artist in 1991, forming the Stilettos. In 1995, Salgado moved to the Priority label, which released *More Than You Chew*, followed by *Hit It ‘n’ Quit It* with Lucky Records.

Over the years, he has sat in with several heroes, including Muddy Waters, Bobby “Blue” Bland, Albert Collins, and Bonnie Raitt, and he accompanied Santana on his nationwide tour in 1995. Salgado’s charismatic singing and stylistic combination of R&B, soul, and blues make him a popular performer, especially in the Pacific Northwest.

HEATHER PINSON

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Discography: AMG

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Hit It ‘n’ Quit It (1997, Lucky Records CD LRS-040).

Wiggle Outta This (1999, Shanachie CD 9014).

Soul Activated (2001, Shanachie CD 9028).

SAMPLES, JOHN T.

b. 10 January 1898; Kilgore, TX

d. 13 January 1998. Kilgore, TX

Singer, guitarist, and harmonica player of pre-blues songs and early blues. Lived most of his life in Kilgore, Texas, playing parties and dances. His music was recorded and documented by Alan Govenar.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SAN FRANCISCO

Though the black population of San Francisco was very small up until World War II—less than five hundred in 1852 and still below five thousand in 1940—the city was a regular port of call for touring musicians and supported a thriving black entertainment district. The war saw a large influx of blacks—by 1950 the black population was nearly forty-five thousand—and the creation of ghettos near the shipyards at Hunter’s Point and especially in the Fillmore district, where there were many nightclubs, such as Jack’s Tavern, the Club Alabam, and the New Orleans Swing Club.

The expulsion of the area’s Japanese population opened up housing for black immigrants from the South, and as a consequence created business opportunities to serve their needs. As Maya Angelou says, “As the Japanese disappeared, soundlessly and without protest, the Negroes entered with their loud jukeboxes, their just-released animosities and the relief of escape from Southern bonds. The Japanese area became San Francisco’s Harlem in a matter of months” (p. 204).

But the clubs featured jazz much more than blues, and the blues artists who did appear tended to be the more uptown figures, such as Saunders King and Ivory Joe Hunter. “San Francisco mostly had a lot of dinner clubs. And in a dinner club, you didn’t hardly play the blues. Seemed like the club owners in the Fillmore was trying to get away from the blues. They wanted class” (King, p. 50). The more

down-home blues artists could be found in small clubs such as the Can-Do (later Minnie's Can-Do).

Charles Sullivan made the Fillmore Auditorium (which had been the Majestic Dance Hall up until 1942) the prime venue for visiting stars such as Dinah Washington, Ray Charles, James Brown, and Bobby Bland. Records could be bought at Scotty's Radio on Third Street and at Dave Rosenbaum's Rhythm Record Shop on Grove Street and later on Sixth Street, which was also the home of Rhythm Records, the only record company in San Francisco of any significance for the blues at that time.

The growth of San Francisco in the mid-1960s as a hippie mecca led to many blues artists appearing in shows aimed primarily at a white audience, such as those produced by Bill Graham at the Fillmore Auditorium and the Winterland—and these were national rather than regional artists (B. B. King, Muddy Waters, Albert King, etc.). Some liked the area so much that they became permanent residents and part of the local blues scene—examples are Luther Tucker and Francis Clay. Solo artists such as Lightnin' Hopkins and Mississippi Fred McDowell could be found at clubs such as the Matrix. This gave opportunities for local artists to appear as opening acts, including country blues harmonica player J. C. Burris, Johnny Mars (who played harmonica in a more modern style), blues singer and guitarist Mike Henderson, and most significantly Joe Louis Walker, who was active on the San Francisco scene from 1963 until he moved into gospel in 1975.

These developments also inspired the rise of white blues (or blues rock) bands: Janis Joplin, Elvin Bishop, Electric Flag (with Mike Bloomfield), Steve Miller, Mother Earth (with Tracy Nelson), Charlie Musselwhite (who moved to San Francisco after the success of his first album), and others came to prominence at this time. There were still small clubs catering for a predominantly black audience, such as Club Long Island at Hunter's Point and Minnie's Can-Do and Dottie Ivory's Stardust Lounge in the Western Addition; however, the latter suffered a devastating blow in the urban renewal of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Two names should be singled out for their importance in the development of the San Francisco blues scene. Tom Mazzolini founded the San Francisco Blues Festival in 1973, making it the longest enduring event of its kind. At first he relied largely on local Bay Area artists, but gradually it became a national blues festival (though he has always found space on the bill for some local artists). His radio program on KPFA has also been important in popularizing the blues and in bringing attention to blues artists working in the Bay Area. Mark Naftalin, after working with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, moved to San Francisco in

the late 1960s and has been tirelessly active since then, as bandleader, session musician, producer, radio presenter (of the *Blue Monday Party* and *Blues Power Hour*) and organizer of the Marin County Blues Festival.

San Francisco has continued to produce (or to become the home of) a host of white blues artists—a partial list would include Robben Ford, Little Charlie (Baty) and the Nightcats (with Rick Estrin), Ron Thompson, Bobby Murray, Chris Cain, the Dynatoners (originally Charlie Musselwhite's backing band), Rusty Zinn, the Johnny Nocturne Band, Tommy Castro, Steve Freund, Ron Hacker, Mark Hummel and the Blues Survivors, and many more. Clubs include Biscuits and Blues, Lou's Pier 47, and John Lee Hooker's Boom Boom Room, which cater as much for the visitor to the city as to local fans. San Francisco has been home to very few record labels specializing in the blues; Blind Pig Records has been in the business for more than twenty-five years, while Blues Express has had five years of steady progress, but most labels been short-lived and have made little impact.

RAY ASTBURY

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SANDERS, WILL ROY "WILROY"

b. 1934; Byhalia, MS

Memphis singer and guitarist. Served in the U.S. Army in 1953–1955. Performed as member of the Binghampton Blues Boys, recording with them a single for the XL label in 1964. Performed with the Fieldstones from 1974 through the 1990s and since then as a featured artist in Memphis.

EDWARD KOMARA

SANDERS, WILL ROY “WILROY”

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Discography: LSFP (as Willie Sanders)

SANE, DAN

b. 22 September 1896; Hernando, MS
d. ca. 1971; Osceola, AR

Guitarist active in Memphis acoustic guitar blues and jug bands through the 1950s. He made pre-World War II recordings as a member of the Jack Kelly South Memphis Jug Band and as a partner to singer/guitarist Frank Stokes.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: DGR

SANFORD, AMOS “LITTLE”

b. 7 June 1923; Arkansas
d. 29 October 1982; St. Louis, MO

Slide guitarist who learned from Robert Nighthawk and Houston Stackhouse in Helena, Arkansas. In St. Louis, he performed and recorded with harmonica player Doc Terry, Piano Slim, and other local musicians.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SAR/DERBY

Record label (ca. 1959–1965). Owners: Samuel (Sam) Cooke (b. January 22, 1931, Clarksdale, MS; d. December 11, 1964, Los Angeles, CA), James Woodie (J. W.) Alexander (b. January 21, 1916, Hamilton, MS; d. July 8, 1996, West Hollywood, CA), and

Senior Roy (S. R.) Crain (b. June 7, 1911, San Augustine, TX; d. September 13, 1996, Vallejo, CA). Hollywood, California-based. Artists include Linda Carr, L. C. Cooke, R. H. Harris and the Gospel Paraders (“Pass Me Not”), Gus Jenkins, Johnnie Morissette (“Black Night,” “Don’t Throw Your Love on Me So Strong,” “Never [Come Running Back to You],” “Meet Me at the Twisting Place”), Billy Preston, Jackie Ross, Sims Twins (“Soothe Me”), Soul Stirrers (“Stand By Me Father,” “God Is Standing By” featuring Johnnie Taylor), Johnnie Taylor (“A Whole Lotta Woman,” “Run, But You Can’t Hide”), Kyo Turner, and the Valentinos (aka Womack Brothers) (“It’s All Over Now,” featuring Bobby Womack and guitarist Clifton White).

ROBERT EAGLE

Discography: McGrath

- Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. “SAR and Derby Album Discographies.” Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/sar-derby.html> (accessed December 12, 2004).

SATHERLY, ART

b. 19 October 1889, Bristol, England
d. 1986

Arthur Edward Satherly immigrated to the United States in 1913. He began working for Wisconsin Chair in or by 1914 and was transferred to its subsidiary operation Paramount Records, where through 1929 he was shellac formulator, salesman, and talent scout, including of blues talent for the Paramount 12/13000 series. In 1929 he joined the ARC labels, staying on through its 1938 sale to Columbia, scouting country music and younger blues artists Bill Broonzy and Blind Boy Fuller.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SAUNDERS, RED

b. Theodore Saunders, 2 March 1912; Memphis, TN
d. 4 March 1981; Chicago, IL

Drummer and show band leader from the early 1930s to the late 1960s. His band backed many great jazz and blues performers while serving as the house band

for the Club DeLisa (1937–1945, 1947–1958) and the Roberts Show Lounge (1958–1962), notably for Little Miss Cornshucks, Marion Abernathy, Joe Williams, Gatemouth Moore, and Dinah Washington. The Saunders band first recorded under its own name for Savoy in 1945. His most extensive recording was done for Columbia/OKeh during 1949–1953, under his own name and with such artists as Joe Williams, LaVern Baker, and the Hambone Kids. At United/States, during 1952–1953, he backed sessions for Grant Jones and Edward “Gates” White. During 1953–1956, Saunders did sessions for Parrot/Blue Lake, under his own name and backing Jo Jo Adams, Lou Mac, and St. Louis Jimmy. His band also recorded behind blues shouter Joe Turner in 1946 and 1953.

As the music changed in the 1960s to soul music, the Saunders orchestra was used as the house band in monthly packaged soul shows that appeared at Chicago’s Regal Theater, during 1960–1968. During 1963–1966, he helped lead the integration of the white and black musicians’ unions in Chicago. Saunders continued in the business until his death, working as a booking agent and doing occasional shows and recording sessions. His last session work as a drummer was backing blues legend Edith Wilson in 1973 and 1975 and blues pianist Little Brother Montgomery in 1976, both for Delmark Records.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

Larkin

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Discography: LSFP

SAVOY BROWN

Led by Kim Simmonds

b. 5 December 1947; Newbridge, South Wales, England

The long-lasting blues-rock band Savoy Brown is and always has been the domain of bandleader Kim Simmonds. In his early teens, Simmonds joined many other aspiring guitarists growing up during the early-1960s English blues boom in listening intently to American R&B and blues records. Simmonds organized the Savoy Brown Blues Band in 1966, teaming with John

O’Leary (harmonica), Leo Manning (drums), Bryce Portius (vocals), and Ray Chappell (bass).

This biracial band played in the Chicago blues style, with Simmonds evidencing influences such as Hubert Sumlin, Otis Rush, Freddie King on material from the songbooks of Willie Dixon, Fenton Robinson, and John Lee Hooker. They became a leading blues cover band in clubs and signed with Decca, but soon personnel changes—talented singer Chris Youlden being the most significant addition—and a shortening of the group name to Savoy Brown portended a more rock direction for the band. The first tour to America was in 1969, and several more followed in the next few years, each sizably increasing the popularity of the band stateside with rock audiences. Savoy Brown, however, was running low on creative energy by 1971 and Simmonds brought in new players, as he would again before long.

Simmonds relocated to America in the late 1970s and has kept incarnations of Savoy Brown busy touring and recording to the present day, never compromising his deep feeling for the blues. He lives in New York state and in recent years has recorded convincing acoustic blues solo albums.

FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Huey); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG

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Savoy Brown. *Blue Matter* (1969, Decca/Polygram); *Raw Sienna* (1970, Decca/Polygram); *Street Corner Talking* (1971, Decca/Polygram); *Strange Dreams* (2003, Blind Pig 5082).

SAVOY/NATIONAL/REGENT/ACORN

Founded in 1942 in Newark, New Jersey, by electronics expert and radio parts retailer Herman Lubinsky—with the patronage of veteran record man Eli Oberstein—Savoy Records was formed as a jazz label and was named after “The Home of Happy Feet,” the Savoy Ballroom.

Now justly famous for the innovative and invaluable mainstream jazz and bebop recordings conducted by A&R man Teddy Reig between 1945 and 1951, Savoy Records, and often Reig himself, was also responsible for many blues and R&B sessions by successful artists such as Billy Wright, Hal Singer, Brownie McGhee, H-Bomb Ferguson, Mickey Baker, Paul Williams, and the earliest recordings of Redd Foxx. In 1948, at the height of its power, Savoy Records

began purchasing other label catalogs and within a short space of time had added Fred Mendelsohn's Regent Records (John Lee Hooker, Tommy Brown, etc.), and Al B. Green's National Records (Gatemouth Moore, the Ravens, Joe Turner, etc.).

The same year, Savoy opened a West Coast office in Los Angeles under the direction of Ralph Bass, who was responsible for successful recordings by Big Jay McNeely and Johnny Otis. A short-lived subsidiary, Acorn Records, was launched in 1950 and issued records by Tommy Brown and Carolina Slim. The end of the 1950s also saw the end of jazz and blues recording at Savoy, but the company prospered through the 1960s and into the 1970s with its popular gospel issues. After Lubinsky died in March 1974, the label was purchased by Arista, which implemented a sterling reissue program of the entire catalog.

DAVID PENNY

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Discography: McGrath

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SAXOPHONE

History

The saxophone was patented in 1846 by Belgian-born musician/inventor Adolphe Sax. Trained in flute and clarinet at the Brussels Conservatory, he moved to Paris at age twenty eight in 1842. He first exhibited his new instrument, which he called the Saxophone, two years later, at the French Exposition in Paris—winning a silver medal.

The new woodwind featured a metal body with a conical bore and a single-reed mouthpiece with keys and fingerings similar to those of the clarinet. The saxophone was first used by French military bands. By the late 1800s it had started to become recognized by classical composers, who liked the sonorities, falling somewhere between the clarinet and the oboe. The saxophone family consists of seven members, the most common being the B-flat soprano, E-flat alto,

B-flat tenor, and E-flat baritone. They are pitched in different keys to enable the saxophonist to play all the saxophones with the same fingerings.

The saxophone was first introduced to the American audience around the turn of the century by John Philip Sousa, who began including the instrument in his compositions. By 1917 the tenor and soprano saxophones were starting to be used in larger, more orchestrated bands (on Mississippi riverboats, in vaudeville shows). In vaudeville, the saxophone was commonly used as a “comic” instrument, utilizing slap-tonguing, whinnying/laughing sounds. By 1920, the saxophone was slowly being incorporated into jazz bands, often replacing the clarinet. Arrangers loved the melodic and harmonic possibilities of the new reed instrument. Commercial dance bands began using a quartet of saxophones—a soprano, two altos, and a tenor—to counterbalance the brass.

By the 1930s, the sax section was an established part of every big band. By the 1940s, it was fairly common to have a five-piece sax section—two altos, two tenors, and a baritone.

The Emergence of the Saxophone in Blues

In the early 1900s, as the boll weevil destroyed cotton fields, wiping out the southern economy, blacks migrated from the Delta to urban cities in the South. Rural blues musicians and their style of blues met with African American styles of music already being played in the southern cities, combining elements of string or jug bands and military bands, creating a new type of ensemble—the commercial dance band.

This new musical hybrid ensemble contained a three-piece rhythm section consisting of string bass, guitar or banjo, and drums and wind instruments—coronet, trombone, clarinet, and/or saxophone. The sound of blues was transformed from solo instruments to larger ensembles. The field hollers were replaced by horns, documenting the new city life of migrant black workers. At that time, jazz was a loose, highly syncopated rhythmic music, largely unheard of outside New Orleans and a few other southern cities. A typical group featured trumpet, clarinet, banjo or guitar, string bass or tuba, and occasionally drums or piano. By 1923, Crescent City musician Sidney Bechet had taken up the soprano saxophone, preferring it to the clarinet. One of the first to play improvised solos on the saxophone, Bechet's playing was self-assured and virtuosic.

In the 1920s, touring black vaudeville performers such as Mamie Smith and Ma Rainey brought blues to a new audience outside the rural South. The sax was introduced to blues through the recordings of

these women. The instrumentation on these records was influenced by the location of the sessions—primarily the urban areas of Chicago and New York. The musicians on these sessions often were accomplished black jazz musicians. This cross-pollination of rural blues interpreted by urban jazz musicians led to the standardization of what we know now as the twelve-bar blues form.

During the 1930s, the popularity of the saxophone continued to grow. Dance bands grew increasingly larger, becoming “big bands,” each incorporating twelve to fifteen members and featuring a sax section of four or five players. Big bands were often propelled by their featured sax soloist(s). Fletcher Henderson had the top band of the late 1920s, featuring the first star of the saxophone, Coleman Hawkins. Arguably one of the most influential sax players ever, Coleman Hawkins took improvised solos to a whole new level of inventiveness and technique. (At the 1963 Newport Jazz Festival, Jon Hendricks introduced Hawkins as “the man for whom Adolphe Sax invented the saxophone.”) Lester Young was the star of Count Basie’s band. The audience would come to hear his legendary sax “battles” with his section mate Herschel Evans. One of the most identifiable characteristics of Duke Ellington’s music was the unique blend of the sax section as well as featured soloists Johnny Hodges (alto), Ben Webster (tenor), and Harry Carney (baritone).

In the 1940s, wartime economics with the draft and gas rationing and the musicians’ union strike against record companies changed the face of the music scene. Big bands were forced to curtail touring and were faced with a shortage of musicians. The new R&B dance bands—two or three saxes and a trumpet and/or trombone fronted the rhythm section—served as a smaller, more economical version of the big bands. The music was blues-based with riffing horns, but with a heavier, more danceable beat.

During this era, the role of the saxophone in blues was at its most prominent. Many of the most popular jump-blues/R&B bands were led by saxophonists. Singer/alto saxophonist Louis Jordan was a major influence on small combo R&B in the 1940s. One of the first black artists to cross over in popularity, Jordan spawned a whole new genre, leading the music farther from jazz and toward rhythm and blues and ultimately rock ’n’ roll. Jordan’s songs were laced with humor and street-corner jive. From 1943 to 1951, Louis Jordan had fifty-seven charted R&B hits, including “Caledonia,” “Choo Choo Ch’ Boogie,” and “Ain’t Nobody Here but Us Chickens.” At the same time, Lionel Hampton Orchestra saxophonist—flamboyant soloist Illinois Jacquet’s style of playing, with his stratospheric shrieks, low honking, and

burning on wild, up-tempo tunes, helped define the new genre of R&B. Jacquet’s solo on the song “Flying Home” propelled him to stardom and became a standard for the instrument. Other sax-playing blues/R&B bandleaders during this era include Red Prysock, Joe Houston, and Big Jay McNeely.

Mid-Century to Present Day

By the 1950s, a whole new style of blues was thriving on the West Coast. While Mississippi and Alabama migrants moved to Chicago and brought the rural Delta blues with them, Texas and Louisiana musicians, with their more sophisticated urban blues, migrated to California. The West Coast style featured a more theatrical presentation, larger ensembles with horn sections, and a hint of jazz influence in the chord progressions. T-Bone Walker, Johnny Otis, and Lowell Fulson were chief purveyors of this newest coast style of blues. From the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, funky blues-based jazz/organ combos featuring the saxophone enjoyed widespread popularity. Organist Bill Doggett’s “Honky Tonk” spent twenty-two weeks on *Billboard*’s top forty chart in 1956. Other top forty hits in this genre include Jimmy Smith’s “Walk on the Wild Side” and Jimmy McGriff’s “I’ve Got a Woman.”

As the popularity of the guitar grew, the dominance of the saxophone in blues waned, with it generally taking on more of a support role. Since the 1960s, the saxophone’s role in blues has been split largely between two functions—horn section accompaniment (as in B. B. King’s band, Little Milton, Bobby “Blue” Bland, Roomful of Blues) and solo saxophone (where the sax fills the same role as the harp player, running counterpoint and counterrhythms to the guitar player and filling in between the vocals, such as done by Eddie Shaw in Howlin’ Wolf’s band and by A. C. Reed with Albert Collins and Son Seals.

DENNIS TAYLOR

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SAYDAK, KEN

SAYDAK, KEN

b. 18 August 1951; Chicago, IL

Chicago-based pianist who got his start in the 1970s as sideman to Chicago blues artists such as Sam Lay, John Littlejohn, and Mighty Joe Young before joining Lonnie Brooks. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Saydak fronted the blues-rock-jazz fusion band Big Shoulders. Since then, he has flourished as an in-demand session player and has played under his own name.

JIM TRAGESER

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AMG (John Bush)

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

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Foolish Man (1999, Delmark 725).

Love Without Trust (2001, Delmark 751).

SAYLES, CHARLIE

b. 4 January 1948; Woburn, MA

Harmonica player. He learned the instrument while he was a soldier in the Vietnam war, and after discharge he discovered the recordings of Sonny Boy Williamson II. He developed a rich sound and a variety of melodic hooks and phrase fills while playing in streets and subway stations. He was initially discovered by Ralph Rinzler, then an organizer of the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife. His recent attention has come after the release of his JSP label efforts since 1990.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

SAYLES, JOHNNY

b. 9 February 1937; Winnsboro, TX

d. 17 August 1993; Chicago, IL

Chicago R&B singer whose intense screaming style produced some of the hardest of hard soul and

gospel-styled blues in the 1960s and 1970s. He grew up in Texas but in 1955 moved to St. Louis, where he sang with such St. Louis bands as Eugene Neal and Ike Turner. He returned to Texas in 1960 but left in 1963, when the Five Duttones (of "Shake a Tail Feather" fame) came through the area and he joined their revue to perform as "Little Johnny." Blues singer Little Johnny Taylor was not touring off his big hit, "Part Time Love," and Sayles along with Johnnie Taylor toured the South as Little Johnny Taylor imitators.

When the Five Duttones Revue returned to Chicago, Sayles was signed to their record company, One-derful, to record on the label's Mar-V-lus subsidiary. His recordings for the company represented some of the most uncompromisingly raw soul treatments ever performed on record. Subsequent label associations, with Chess, Brunswick, never matched those stellar recordings. Sayles's final recordings were a blues single, "Food Stamps" (1983), for Willie Henderson's Now Sound label and serving as guest vocalist on a Roy Buchanan LP on Alligator (1985). He continued to work in local blues clubs until his death.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Larkin

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SCALES

A scale (from Latin *scala*, "ladder") is a succession of tones, normally a whole step or half step apart, arranged in ascending or descending order. A typical scalar structure consists of a defined collection of pitches arranged in order from the lowest to the highest note or the highest to the lowest note, like rungs of a ladder, hence the ladder etymology and analogy of the word. The pitches of any music in which pitch is definable can be reduced to a scale. When a pitch collection is presented in scalar form a succession of interval distances or steps becomes perceptible. This perception informs and guides the functional application of scalar material in composition and improvisation.

In virtually all music, particularly Western tonal music, scales are merely a reflection of compositional and improvisational practices and are subordinate to principles of melodic progression and the relationship of one tone to another. In blues music the term "scale" becomes a qualitative, analytical descriptor used as a means of assessing and categorizing blues melodies.

For the initiated listener blues melody and particularly blues improvisation are immediately recognized by their specific scalar content and note-to-chord relationship. For several decades musicologists have ascribed properties and technical elements such as pentatonic scales, blue notes, and uncommon modes to define these characteristics and explain part of the blues' musical import and aesthetic quality. Blues music does indeed use scales and melodic patterns that are distinctive and evocative and not found in most Western forms.

The *pentatonic* scale is a primary resource of blues. This melodic formula derives its name from the joining of *penta* (Greek for "five") and *tonic* ("tones") and is a five-note series as distinguished from diatonic (seven-note) and chromatic (twelve-note) scales. In the ancient cultures of Africa, China, Polynesia, and various Native American tribes as well as Scots and Celts, pentatonic scales were common. It is thought that the pentatonic scales, which are indigenous to blues music, are of African ancestry.

Pentatonic scales as used in blues music are generally of two types: minor pentatonic and major pentatonic. These scales are distinct from normal diatonic and chromatic scales in that they contain only major second and minor third interval distances and no half-step interval distances.

The *minor pentatonic* scale (in A; see Example 1) is spelled A–C–D–E–G with an interval structure of tonic (A), minor third (C), perfect fourth (D), perfect fifth (E), and minor seventh (G). The minor third and minor seventh tones, part of the family of blue notes, substantially distinguish this scale from major blues scales.



Example 1, Minor Pentatonic Scale

The *major pentatonic* scale (in A; see Example 2) is spelled A–B–C#–E–F# with an interval structure of tonic (A), major second (B), major third (C#), perfect fifth (E), and major sixth (F#). It closely resembles a partial major scale and significantly differs from minor blues scales in its incorporation of the major second and major third steps.

Subjective perceptions about the nature of minor and major pentatonic scale sounds in blues are common and unavoidable and are part of the listener's aesthetic experience. Albert King's acerbic blues improvisation generally exploits the minor pentatonic scale while Freddy King's sweeter melody of "Hide Away" connotes the application of the major pentatonic scale.



Example 2, Major Pentatonic Scale

The *blues* scale is similar in structure to the minor pentatonic scale. It contains a six-note pattern that in essence adds the raised fourth or flatted fifth to the minor pentatonic formula. The blues scale (in A) is spelled A–C–D–D# or Eb–E–G with an interval structure of tonic (A), minor third (C), perfect fourth (D), augmented fourth (D#) or diminished fifth (Eb), perfect fifth (E), and minor seventh (G). The inclusion of the D# or Eb (enharmonic) tones creates a chromatic series in the scale: D–D#–E or E–Eb–D. This colorful intervallic element is an attribute unique to the blues scale, among all others in common usage in the blues, and is often exploited for its piquant effect in the creation of blues melodies that exploit the tritone interval.

The blues scale is accorded its name because it contains the most active blue note, the flatted fifth. In actual blues performance the flatted fifth tone in a melody is frequently the result of a pitch bend or slur rising from the fourth step or dropping from the fifth step of the minor pentatonic scale or other scale of the moment. Vocalists and wind players "fall off" notes in performance to achieve the flatted effect, slide guitarists use a bottleneck or metal tube on the strings to slur to and from a tone in a glissando motion, and pianists often strike two adjacent piano keys simultaneously to produce a slurred "crushed note" impression. Since the days of Charlie Christian and T-Bone Walker, modern electric blues guitarists literally bend and release strings to raise and lower their pitch in order to emulate vocal inflections and phrasing.



Example 3, Major Diatonic Scale

Diatonic scales are also heard prominently in blues music. They are based on the major scale (see Example 3), also called the Ionian mode, which yields the seven-tone "do–re–mi–fa–so–la–ti" pattern of European music. In the blues repertory most diatonic melodies are derived from this source as a parental form but are generally modal in nature—that is, actually based on sounds in but not of the strict major scale. Rather they are based on modes formed by building seven-note scales on steps other than the tonic of a major scale. If a major scale is played from C to C on the white keys of the piano the related

modes are generated by starting the scale on D, E, F, G, A, etc. and continuing for an octave, for example, playing D to D in the C major scale. Modal scales are endemic to medieval sacred music and have been accordingly labeled “Church modes” or “Ecclesiastical modes” in music scholarship. Two particular church modes are used with great frequency and regularity in blues melody and improvisation: the Mixolydian mode and the Dorian mode.

The *Mixolydian* mode is built from the fifth step of a major scale. In a diatonic context, the only scale step capable of generating a dominant seventh chord, a requisite component of blues, is the fifth step of the major scale. In the tonal center of A, if the blues piece or improvisation in question is to be played in A, the A7 dominant or Mixolydian sound is preferred and idiomatically correct.

The Mixolydian mode (in A) is spelled A–B–C#–D–E–F#–G with an interval structure of tonic (A), major second (B), major third (C#), perfect fourth (D), perfect fifth (E), major sixth (F#), and minor seventh (G). The melodic content of this mode is based on the key of D major: A is its fifth degree of the scale. Such transpositions are critical in the blues. Consider a harmonica player’s choice of a specific correctly pitched instrument for a blues song. Blues harmonica players select a “harp” based on the *dominant* tonal center of the parent key to produce an appropriate blues melody. Similarly, a guitarist or keyboardist in the blues hears a dominant sound when playing on the tonic I chord and responds with a diatonic mode containing the minor seventh tone (G) rather than the major seventh (G#) of an A major scale.

The *Dorian* mode is built from the second step of a major scale. This secondary mode (secondary to the Mixolydian mode) produces a scale used by numerous blues artists as a substitution or alternate option, essentially minorizing the Mixolydian mode. Moreover, the Dorian mode is typically the diatonic scale of choice in the minor blues context.

The Dorian mode (in A) is spelled A–B–C–D–E–F#–G with an interval structure of tonic (A), major second (B), minor third (C), perfect fourth (D), perfect fifth (E), major sixth (F#), and minor seventh (G). The important blue notes of minor third and minor seventh are contained in this scale.

The Dorian mode as a blues component can be perceived in a number of ways by performers. It is often employed as a substitution or in conjunction with a Mixolydian mode sharing the same tonic. In an A blues, both the Dorian mode and Mixolydian mode have been used interchangeably, often within the same phrase. The improviser can view the

relationship through at least two distinct prisms: the Mixolydian mode with a substituted minor third or a minor pentatonic scale with an added major second and major sixth.

In the swing era the use of the major sixth tone in conjunction with the minor third of a minor mode was part of the idiomatic language and affected numerous blues compositions of the period. The theme melody of “Till Tom Special,” written by Benny Goodman and Lionel Hampton, is a case in point. Blues musicians with a tendency to favor that aspect of the lexicon have included, purposefully or inadvertently, constituents of the Dorian mode in their improvisations and themes. Moreover, the minor-tinged sound generated by the Dorian mode is favored by many modern blues-rock and postmodern blues players who cross over into rock ‘n’ roll, jazz, and popular musical forms.

An alternate pentatonic scale based on the Dorian mode is sometimes exploited in blues composition and improvisation for its unique evocative quality and specific dissonance. In A, this scale is spelled A–C–D–E–F# with an interval structure of tonic (A), minor third (C), perfect fourth (D), perfect fifth (E), and major sixth (F#). In essence, this scale replaces the minor seventh tone (G) of the conventional minor pentatonic with a sixth tone, generating a dissonant tritone interval from C to F# and in turn producing the possibility of a diminished triad (F#–A–C) within the pentatonic structure.

This particular alternate pentatonic scale has been employed by Texas blues guitarist Albert Collins as well as Larry Carlton, Carlos Santana, and Robben Ford, who are more eclectic guitarists rooted in the blues. A commonly employed mannerism found in the improvisations of these musicians, and in their composed melodies, when applying this alternate pentatonic scale is the half-step pitch bend into the seventh step of the scale from the sixth degree.

Scale combining is a tactic and strategy pursued in, but not confined to, blues composition and improvisation. In blues the term delineates certain stylistic constructs and serves to define standard melodic practices employed intuitively by musicians when speaking the music’s idiomatic language. In the course of an improvised blues solo a performer such as B. B. King or Stevie Ray Vaughan may choose to freely mix and merge the minor and major characteristics of two or more particular scale forms in a hybrid *combined* structure. King’s early classic “Please Love Me” (1953) exploits improvised melodies based on the Mixolydian mode, the minor pentatonic scale, and the blues scale. In other King solos such as “You Done Lost Your Good Thing Now”

(1960) he will choose to combine the major pentatonic scale with the minor pentatonic scale and the blues scale, each element selected as a purposeful melodic allusion or melodic gesture indicating the blues language in action. Stevie Ray Vaughan's solo in "Tight-rope" (1989) similarly employs a hybrid melodic arrangement freely combining the standard minor pentatonic scale and major pentatonic scales. Related scale combining procedures are found in blues offshoots such as the R&B of Chuck Berry, the rock 'n' roll of Elvis Presley, and the blues-rock of Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix as well blues-influenced heavy metal and alternative rock.

Another common combination is the seven-note blues scale formed by merging elements of standard minor and major pentatonic scales with the specific chromatic series of the blues scale. In A this formation is spelled A–C–C#–D–D# or Eb–E–G with an interval structure of tonic (A), minor third (C), major third (C#), perfect fourth (D), augmented fourth (D#) or diminished fifth (Eb), perfect fifth (E), and minor seventh (G). This scale can also be assessed as a normal blues scale with an added major third step. In either perception the rising form with D# leading to E is endemic to countless blues themes and improvisations. Moreover, the chromatic series filling in the major third distance from C to E is a prized convention of the blues language and occurs often in the soul jazz and hard bop subgenera of music. The extracted melody (in A) A–C–C#–D–D#–E is frequently exploited as a repeated figure (riff) in big band shout choruses, in saxophone, piano, and Hammond organ solos, and in the improvised solos of jazz-blues guitarists such as George Benson.

WOLF MARSHALL

SCALES, ALONZO "LONNIE"

d. 1975; New York City, NY

Singer and guitarist in East Coast acoustic style. Recorded with Big Chief Ellis in 1949 and with Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee in 1955. He was long elusive to researchers. His death has also been reported as occurring in 1976.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Lowry, Pete. "Alonzo Scales" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 23 (September/October 1975): 5.

Discography: LSFP

SCEPTER/WAND

Florence Greenberg founded Scepter Records in New York in 1959 to compete in the R&B market with Atlantic Records. With their biggest-selling artists (the Shirelles, Dionne Warwick, and B. J. Thomas), the label primarily relied on the songwriting and producing teams of Gerry Goffin/Carole King and Burt Bacharach/Hal David to create a "sophisticated soul" sound with crossover pop appeal. In 1961, Greenberg launched a subsidiary label, Wand, producing a grittier sound with soul acts Chuck Jackson and the Isley Brothers.

Scepter did release a few traditional blues albums, including Big Maybelle's *The Soul of Big Maybelle* in 1964 (Scepter 522) and two by Memphis Slim in 1966, *Self Portrait* (535) and *Blues Portrait* (536). In 1970, Wand released three significant blues albums: John Lee Hooker's *On the Waterfront* (Wand 689), recorded in England with a British band; the Animals' *In the Beginning* (690), a live recording from December 1963 with Sonny Boy Williamson II joining in; and Canned Heat's *Live at the Topanga Corral* (693). In 1975, both labels ceased production.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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Discography: McGrath

Callahan, Mike, and David Edwards. "The Scepter/Wand Story." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/scepter/scepterstory.html> (accessed December 20, 2004).

SCOTT, BUDDY

b. Kenneth Scott, 9 January 1935; Jackson, MS
d. 5 February 1994; Chicago, IL

Guitarist/bassist/vocalist, born Kenneth Scott. He played and recorded with numerous Chicago artists (including brother Howard and other members of the extended Scott musical family) and led his own band, the Rib Tips, for decades. In later years, he held down a weekend slot at Lee's Unleaded Blues on South Chicago Avenue; he was a beloved mentor to generations of South Side musicians.

DAVID WHITEIS

SCOTT, BUDDY

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl)
Sharp, Steven. "The Nicest Man in Show Business." *Living Blues* no. 114 (1994), 51–57.

Discography: AMG

SCOTT, CLIFFORD

b. 21 June 1928; San Antonio, TX
d. 19 April 1993; San Antonio, TX

Tenor saxophone and R&B stylist, most famous for "Honky Tonk Part 2," which he recorded with organist Bill Doggett in 1956. He got his start with Lionel Hampton from 1948 to 1950 and worked with Roy Brown, Jay McShann, and Amos Milburn before rejoining Hampton in 1953. In 1954 he moved to New York, working as a freelancer. He joined with Bill Doggett 1956–1961. He recorded several albums as a leader for King and Pacific Jazz. In 1962 he moved to Los Angeles. He toured with Ray Charles 1966–1973 and returned to San Antonio in 1976.

DENNIS TAYLOR

Bibliography

Penny, Dave. "Clifford Scott." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 80 (July 1993): 20.

Discography: Lord

SCOTT, ECRETIA JACOBS "E. C."

b. Late 1950s; Oakland, CA

Soulful and sophisticated Bay Area vocalist and songwriter. She had been working in music for some years before her first single in 1988; after that, between 1995 and 2000 she recorded three albums for Blind Pig and in 2003 another for her own Black Bud label.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: AMG

SCOTT, ESTHER MAE "MOTHER"

b. 1893; Polk Plantation, Bovina, MS
d. 16 October 1979; Washington, DC

Singer, composer of blues and spirituals, and acoustic guitarist. From the 1910s through the 1920s, she traveled as a singer and dancer in black entertainment troupes, working with Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Leadbelly. For some years she worked as a baby nurse. In the 1940s she moved to Washington, D.C., where she resumed her singing, initially in church and later in clubs, at civil rights demonstrations, and at folk music festivals.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Goren, David. "Remembering 'Mother' Scott: An Interview." *Sing Out!* 27, no. 6 (November/December 1979): 13–15.

Discography

Mama Ain't Nobody's Fool (1972, Bomp LP1).

SCOTT, JAMES, JR.

b. 21 January 1913; Lexington, MS
d. 18 July 1983; Chicago, IL

James Scott's early years were spent playing blues in Mississippi, learning slide guitar from Robert Night-hawk and performing with Boyd Gilmore and Snooky Pryor. He moved to Chicago in the mid-1950s, playing in West Side clubs. Often he was sideman to Eddie Taylor, Carey Bell, and Willie Williams, in addition to leading his own groups.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

O'Neal, Jim. "James Scott, Jr." [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 58 (Winter 1983/1984): 42–43.

SCOTT, JOE

b. Joseph Wade Scott, 2 December 1924; Texarkana, AR
d. 6 March 1979; Culver City, CA

Trumpet, composer, arranger. Joe Scott settled in Houston, Texas, in the mid-1950s as arranger and bandleader for Duke/Peacock Records, crafting hits for Johnny Ace, Bobby "Blue" Bland, and Little

Junior Parker and their label-mates, often backing them on tour.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

“Joe Scott” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 43 (Summer 1979): 48.

Discography

Johnny Ace. “Pledging My Love” (Duke).
Bobby “Blue” Bland. “Farther Up the Road” (Duke); “I Pity the Fool” (Duke); “Two Steps from the Blues” (Duke).
Little Junior Parker. “Next Time You See Me” (Duke).

SCOTT, “LITTLE” JIMMY

b. James Victor Scott, 17 July 1925; Cleveland, OH

Vocals, composer. Little Jimmy Scott developed his unique high-pitched vocal approach as a young man in the late 1940s as a result of a condition named Kallman’s Syndrome. His early singing was with jazz and urban rhythm and blues bands. From 1975 through 1985 he worked outside music, but eventually he made a welcome and long-lasting comeback to jazz and urban blues audiences. Among those he has sung with during his long career are Charlie Parker, Lionel Hampton, Charles Mingus, Ruth Brown, Big Maybelle, and Wes Montgomery.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

SCOTT, MARYLIN

Aka Mary DeLoatch; no birth/death data available. Singer, possibly guitarist, of Piedmont-style blues and Sister Rosetta Tharpe–style gospel. All that is known of her are her recordings on Lance, Regent, and Arctic made between 1945 and the early 1960s. One Regent session in 1950 was with the Johnny Otis Orchestra in New York City.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Templeton, Ray. “Marylin Scott and Mary DeLoatch: Two Faces of Black Music.” *Blues & Rhythm* no. 18 (April 1986): 26–28.

Discography: LSPF

SCOTT, SONNY

Flourished 1930s

Guitarist from Alabama who recorded with pianist/guitarist Walter Roland for the ARC labels in 1933. According to friend Gress Barnett of Quitman, Mississippi, Scott’s last name was Scarborough, and he was known as “Sonny” or “Babe.” Barnett also related that Scott had died just before World War II.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Wardlow, Gayle Dean. “Six Who Made Recorded History.” *78 Quarterly* no. 5 (1990): 93–96.

Discography: DGR

SCOTT-ADAMS, PEGGY

b. Peggy Stoutmeyer, 25 June 1948; Opp, AL

Rhythm and blues and soul singer since 1966. From 1968 through 1972 she was in a popular duet with JoJo Benson, including the hit “Lover’s Holiday” (1968). By the mid-1980s she was assisting at her husband’s funeral home in Compton, California. New songs and recordings since 1985 were made possible through songwriter/producer Jimmy Lewis, including the 1996 hit “Bill,” in which the singer loses her man to another man.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin
Carpenter, Bil. “Peggy Scott-Adams: To Thine Own Self Be True.” *Living Blues* no. 136 (November/December 1997): 28–33.

SCRUGGS, IRENE

b. 7 December 1901; Mississippi

Singer in vaudeville and on the TOBA circuit. She first came to notice in St. Louis, staying there in the 1920s while recording for OKeh, Vocalion, Victor, Paramount, and Gennett. Her daughter was dancer Leazar “Baby” Scruggs. In the mid-1950s, she moved to Paris, France, then to West Germany. Reports of

SCRUGGS, IRENE

her death in West Germany in the mid-1970s are unconfirmed.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne); Harris

Discography: DGR

SD (STEINER DAVIS)

Chicago-based record label issued by John Steiner and Hugh Davis in 1944–1947. Its reissue series (100–110) included blues items derived from Paramount by Cow Cow Davenport, Roosevelt Sykes, and Skip James, the latter amongst the earliest country blues reissues. The label's few original recordings are of jazz.

HOWARD RYE

Discography

Raichelson, Dick. "The Steiner-Davis Label Discography." *IAJRC Journal* 33, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 33.

SEALS, SON

b. Frank Seals, 13 August 1942; Osceola, AR
d. 20 December 2004; Richton Park, IL

Guitarist, singer. Despite his Arkansas birth, Seals became the personification of the modern Chicago guitar approach. His intense blues stylings, powered by explosive guitar solos and throat-ripping vocals, recaptured and updated the aggressive edge and urban energy that had created the original Windy City scene.

Seals was a well-seasoned blues veteran by the time he decided to take on the Chicago scene. His father owned a blues bar in Osceola, Arkansas, where Robert Nighthawk and Sonny Boy Williamson were frequent performers. It was natural for the young Seals to want to get involved in the music, and he first did so behind a drum kit, playing drums with Earl Hooker and Albert King while getting his first taste of touring. He also assimilated elements of their guitar styles, as well learning a few Elmore James licks from Nighthawk's performances.

Seals relocated to Chicago in 1971, attracting local attention when he took over Hound Dog Taylor's weekend gig at the Expressway Lounge but remaining under the national blues radar screen. His characteristically forceful self-titled 1973 debut for Alligator

Records was therefore a revelation to fans outside the Windy City. It revealed a musically mature bluesman who effortlessly combined raw energy and advanced musicianship to create a deeply rooted but very contemporary interpretation of the blues.

Seals won the 1985 W. C. Handy Award for best contemporary album with *Bad Axe* and won again in 2001, the second time for best traditional album with *Lettin' Go*. But it was his electrifying live act, as exciting as any in the genre, that made, and maintained, his reputation.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli Moon, D. T. "Son Seals: Intensity Is the Key." *Living Blues* no. 153 (September/October 2000): 14–25.

Discography: AMG

SEARS, "BIG" AL

b. Albert Omega Sears, 21 February 1910; Macomb, IL
d. 23 March 1990; St. Albans, NY

Tenor saxophonist. Exciting soloist, hard-blowing swing-based tenor, romping blues R&B. He first gained attention in 1928, replacing Johnny Hodges in Chick Webb's band. He played with Duke Ellington from 1944 to 1949 and was on several notable Ellington recordings, including "I Ain't Got Nothing But the Blues" and 1945's "It Don't Mean a Thing." He worked in Johnny Hodges's band during 1951–1952 and was featured soloist on the hit "Castle Rock" (released under Hodges's name, thus depriving Sears of deserved recognition). In the 1950s, he became a part of the New York City studio scene and a member of Alan Freed's Rock 'n' Roll Orchestra. He appears in the movie *Rock, Rock, Rock*.

DENNIS TAYLOR

Bibliography

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SEASE, MARVIN

b. 16 February 1946; Blackville, SC

Singer, songwriter. Sease, well known on the so-called "chitlin circuit" of southern blues festivals and juke

joints for his X-rated songs such as “Candy Licker” and “Hoochie Momma,” has made several recordings from the mid-1980s to the present.

JUSTIN WERT

Bibliography

AMG (Steve Huey)
O’Neal, Jim. “Marvin Sease.” *Living Blues* no. 134 (July/August 1997): 18–27.

Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

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Hoochie Momma (1999, Jive 41674).

SEATTLE

(See *Washington [state]*)

SEE THAT MY GRAVE IS KEPT CLEAN

This title is nowadays so closely associated with Blind Lemon Jefferson that the song’s opening stanza is engraved on the headstone that was erected for him in the Wortham Black Cemetery in Texas in 1997.

Jefferson recorded two versions of this song for Paramount, one under the religious pseudonym of Deacon L. J. Bates. The first version was cut ca. October 1927 and issued the following January with the title “See That My Grave’s Kept Clean,” b/w the spiritual “He Arose from the Dead” (Pm 12585). Initially, Jefferson’s recording was clearly aimed at the prospective sacred buyer, but, possibly due to its apparent secular content, it was soon withdrawn from the market. Because of its immediate commercial success, however, “See That My Grave’s Kept Clean” was remade ca. February 1928 and released in April under Jefferson’s real name, coupled with “Lectric Chair Blues” (Pm 12608), a song on the theme of the singer’s death by electrocution.

Nonetheless, the origin of “See That My Grave’s Kept Clean” is much older. Well before Jefferson immortalized it, in 1876 Gus Williams had composed a popular song bearing a similar title, “See That My Grave Is Kept Green,” hillbilly versions of which were recorded by Bela Lam and His Greene County Singers (1927) and by the Carter Family (1933). One year before Jefferson first recorded “See That My Grave’s Kept Clean,” a printed text from black tradition had been published by Odum and Johnson (p. 129) with the title “Dig My Grave wid a Silver

Spade.” The latter is a collection of floating verses and has only one verse in common with Jefferson’s song. As maintained by Dan Patterson and reported by John Cowley (p. 4), it is also possible that “Jefferson’s original is an amalgamation of several earlier songs, among them ‘Old Blue’ (or ‘Old Veen’), ‘Stormalong’ (a nineteenth century sea shanty), and a number of spirituals.”

In his two versions, “Jefferson arranges the words in an AAAB fashion, using a structure of sixteen bars that is often extended by a few notes on the guitar at the ends of lines. The melody ... ranges over an octave in a pentatonic scale, on rare occasions moving a step above or below the high or low tonic Jefferson’s guitar is played in the E position of standard tuning, mostly in the bass and middle register, with his left hand not venturing beyond the fourth fret of the instrument” (Evans, p. 609). Besides confirming a pre-blues origin, this song’s slow and repetitive AAAB verse structure is in sharp contrast with its fast instrumental delivery, especially the first version.

The text of Jefferson’s “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean” describes “the nightmare of a person seeing or dreaming his own death and burial” and contains many references to sight and sound (Monge, p. 56). As often occurs in Jefferson’s lyrics, the logical and temporal sequence of the stanzas are overturned.

Subsequent black renderings of Jefferson’s influential versions have so far remained virtually unchanged. Also known as “Dig My Grave with a Silver Spade,” “Two White Horses (in a Line),” and “One Kind [of] Favor,” “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean” was recorded under one or another of the titles by—among others—Joe Evans and Arthur McClain, aka The Two Poor Boys (1931), Pete Harris, with the title “Blind Lemon’s Song” (1934), Smith Casey (1939), John Lee Hooker (1949, 1961), Lightning’ Hopkins (ca. 1951–1952, 1952, 2 in 1959, 1969), Tom Dutson (1959), Eugene Rhodes (early 1960s), Pete Franklin (1961), the Staple Singers, with the title “A Dying Man’s Plea” (1962), John Lee Granderson (1964), Furry Lewis (1967, 2 in 1968, 1969), Larry Johnson (1970), Robert Pete Williams (1972), Tom Shaw (1972), Robert Lowery (1989), John Cephas and Phil Wiggins (1992), Frank Robinson (1995a, 1995b), and Little Pink Anderson (2000).

White country versions of “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean” were recorded by the Carter Family (1935) and by The Kentuckians (1963) with the title “Sad and Lonesome Day,” by the Arthur Smith Trio with the title “A Lonesome Day Today” (1938), by Bill Monroe & His Blue Grass Boys (1940) with the title “Six White Horses,” and by Koerner, Ray & Glover (1963), Canned Heat (1968a, 1968b, 1998), John Hammond (1983), Ford Blues Band (1990), Christian

SEE THAT MY GRAVE IS KEPT CLEAN

Dozzler (1997), Randall Lee Rainwater (1998), New Legacy Duo (1999), Ben Andrews (2001), and David Evans (2001) with the title “One Kind Favor.” Other versions bearing Jefferson’s original title were cut by Hobart Smith (1959), Bob Dylan (1961, 1967, 1970), John Hammond (1964), Kelly Joe Phelps (1996), and Lou Reed (2003), the latter for the soundtrack of Wim Wenders’s feature film *The Soul of a Man*.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography

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SEELEY, BOB

b. Robert Emmett Seeley, 13 September 1928; Ozone Park, NY

Pianist. Seeley began playing at thirteen. His first inspirations were Meade Lux Lewis/Pinetop Smith and later Pat Flowers, and he took lessons from Lewis. He accompanied singer Sippie Wallace in many appearances in the 1970s and 1980s. Seeley works as a solo pianist around Detroit and internationally. His playing has guts and drive, with a solid left hand bass technique.

JIM GALLERT

Discography

Industrial Strength Boogie Woogie (self issued, CD-101).

SELLERS, BROTHER JOHN

b. 27 May 1924; Clarksdale, MS

d. 27 March 1999; New York City, NY

Chicago blues, folk, and gospel singer of the post-World War II era. Sellers brought a more cosmopolitan approach to his blues, bringing in gospel and folk influences. In the early 1940s, he was mentored by gospel great Mahalia Jackson. He recorded his first blues for the Southern label and the King label during 1945. At Miracle in 1946, he waxed four gospel numbers, including Mahalia’s signature song, “Move On Up a Little Higher,” but the following year he recorded a blues session for RCA-Victor. In late 1948, as Reverend John Sellers, he recorded another gospel session for Miracle. After two Chance blues sessions in 1952 (he was billed as “Johnny” Sellers for these), Sellers moved to New York and became involved in the folk club scene, recording folk-blues albums that were the synthesis of blues, gospel, and folk stylings. From the 1960s to 1997 he worked with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

ROBERT PRUTER

Bibliography

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- Dahl, Bill. “Brother John Sellers” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 146 (July/August 1999): 50.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

SEMIEN, “KING IVORY” LEE

b. 13 September 1931; Washington, LA

Musician and entrepreneur. Semien moved with family to Houston, Texas, in 1949. He had early success with steel guitarist Hop Wilson with the 1958 Gold-band single “Chicken Stuff.” As an associated business to his record store and TV repair shop, he established Ivory Records in 1960. He has continued performing in Houston. In 1995 he released *The Bitch Done Quit Me* on the Home Cooking label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

- Harris; Larkin
- Lorenzo Thomas. “Ivory Lee Semien.” *Living Blues* no. 140 (July/August 1998): 55.

Discography: LSFP

SENEGAL, PAUL “LIL’ BUCK”

b. 1944; Lafayette, LA

Paul Senegal (Sinegal) is most well known for the fourteen years he played guitar with Clifton Chenier. He began his career with local R&B groups and later worked on Excello sessions for Lazy Lester and Slim Harpo. In 1999 he recorded his first solo record, *Buck Starts Here*, for Alan Toussaint’s NYNO label.

JARED SNYDER

Bibliography

Tisserand, Michael. *The Kingdom of Zydeco*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998.

Discography: AMG

See also **Chenier, Clifton; Harpo, Slim; Lazy Lester; Toussaint, Allen**

SENSATION

Detroit label active 1949–1950, owned by Bernard Besman and John S. Kaplan. Leading artists were John Lee Hooker, Todd Rhodes, Russell Jacquet, and T. J. Fowler.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath**SEQUEL**

London-based British record label established in October 1989 by Bob Fisher under the aegis of Castle Communications to exploit specialist material owned or licensed by Castle, which had recently purchased the Pye catalog. Blues from Pye/Nixa sessions by Big Bill Broonzy and Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee and Alan Lomax’s *Murderers Home* collection were among early releases. Direction of the label passed to Tony Rounce in 1996, by which time artists such as Professor Longhair, Ruth Brown, and Big Joe Turner were featured in compilations licensed from Atlantic/Rhino. The label ceased to exist when Castle was purchased by the Sanctuary group.

HOWARD RYE

7-11

Record label (California, 1952–1953). Owners: Edward “Eddie” Mesner (b. 1914, New York;

d. March 26, 1963, Los Angeles), Rudolph “Rudy” Toombs (b. 1907, Louisiana; d. Harlem, New York, November 28, 1962). Beverly Hills, California–based 7-11’s artists included The Flames (aka Hollywood Flames with Bobby Day), Jewell Grant (with Desiree), The Jets (aka Hollywood Flames), Jack “The Bear” Parker (with Emmett Davis and Sadie Styn), and Jimmy Wilson.

ROBERT EAGLE

Bibliography

Burke, Tony, and Tony Watson. “The 7-11 Label.” *Blues & Rhythm* no. 29 (June 1987): 20–21.

See also Los Angeles**SEWARD, ALEXANDER T. “ALEC”**

b. 6 March 1901; Newport News, VA

d. 11 May 1972, New York City, NY

Singer and guitarist. Seward moved to New York in 1923. In the 1940s he began performing with Louis Hayes and with Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, later recording with each. His music was typical East Coast style, with several ragtime characteristics.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP**SEX AS LYRIC CONCEPT**

When Lucille Bogan sang about a market for her meat under the title “Tricks Ain’t Walkin No More,” she facilitated combination of the sexual mores of Calvinist thought, African aesthetics, and the black American experience.

Alan Lomax stated in *The Land Where the Blues Began*, “[T]hose sexual expressions belonging to Africans and thereby extended to African Americans faced a marked challenge when introduced to Calvinist principles of the slave-holding South.” From the Calvinist perspective that served as the backdrop of Southern society, sex and procreation are synonymous and neither one nor the other is viewed in terms of exclusive physical pleasure. Such an understanding naturally created a response of unacceptability to the sexual nature of lyrics in

blues music and helped to ensure a backlash to the sexualization of blues lyrics as well as to blacks.

However, from the perspective of many African religions, sexual pleasure is a divine gift, an enjoyable act not denied or placed in a position of shame. The sexualized lyrics of blues exemplify this belief. Blues sung in microcosmic environments cocooned from Protestant mores celebrated sexual expression. The sexual lyrics of blues music matched the implied rhythmic beats of African music. As described by Richard Alan Waterman in his 1952 article "African Influences on the Music of the Americas," "Melodic tones, and particularly accented ones, occur between the sounded or implied beats of the measure with great frequency. The beat is . . . temporarily suspended . . . delayed or advanced in melodic execution." This suggests that the African beat is in itself a sexual dance.

With the birth of the blues came the birth of the self-expression of sexual freedom among African Americans, a particular freedom that did not arrive for white Americans until the rise of Elvis Presley. Sexual expression in blues music served both as a cultural remembrance and as sexual declaration. Blacks merged the mores of both African and Calvinist perceptions of sexuality into a vocal if not a literal freedom to move beyond the extreme images of the "Hottentots Venus," the "Tragic Mulatto," and the "Black Buck." As a result, sexual expression in blues music to the black listener called for sexual celebration, even if only by means of vicarious sound emanating from an old Victrola phonograph.

PHOENIX SAVAGE-WISEMAN

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SEYMOUR

Chicago post–World War II jazz record label. Seymour Schwartz, a trumpet player who ran Seymour's Record Mart at 439 South Wabash, operated the Seymour imprint for a few months in 1950. After running both traditional and modern jam sessions in the store's loft for some time, Schwartz decided to issue some loft-taped Dixieland material (by the Jimmy James Jas Band) and to make studio recordings of singer Lurlean Hunter and some of the modern jazz artists who had participated, such as

tenor saxophonist Kenny Mann and pianist John Young. In all, Seymour released five records (sides by John Young were not released and were sold to Chance). During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Seymour operated the Heartbeat label.

ROBERT PRUTER

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SHAD

Subsidiary of Sittin' In With label owned by Bob Shad, active 1958–1960. Based in New York City, it had Chicago artists Junior Wells and J. B. Lenoir, and from Texas, Lightnin' Hopkins.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

SHAKE 'EM ON DOWN

September 2, 1937, in Chicago, Mississippi musician Booker Washington "Bukka" White recorded "Shake 'Em On Down" for Vocalion and immortalized the phrase

must I keep [or done stopped] hollering or must I shake 'em on down.

The title phrase typically refers to having sex, dancing, or both. Though the song may have been in circulation before White's recording—Calt and Wardlow state that Bo Weavil Jackson (not the Paramount recording artist) taught it to Booker Miller in 1932—once recorded, it was an immediate hit and widely copied.

In May 1938, in Chicago, Big Bill Broonzy, accompanied by a combo that included George Barnes's jazzy electric guitar, recorded "New Shake-Em On Down" (Vocalion). In San Antonio, Texas, in October 1938, Bo Carter recorded it (Bluebird). Both versions had new verses, and Carter changed the refrain to

must I keep dealing or must I shuck them on down.

Bluebird released the next three: Tommy McClenan's "New 'Shake 'Em On Down'" (November 1939), Robert Petway's "Ride 'Em On Down" (March 1941; covered by Eddie Taylor on Vee-Jay,

1955), and Big Joe Williams's "Break 'Em On Down" (December 1941). The last elaborates on the gambling theme introduced by Carter. Each of these versions included some if not all new lyrics. Lucille Walker's *a cappella* Library of Congress recording from May 1939 (Rosetta) is a copy of White's original. Murray states that "Shake 'Em" was also part of Delta musician Tony Hollins's repertoire.

Following World War II, Dr. Ross recorded a largely instrumental boogie version for Sun (1952), and Furry Lewis (Bluesville) and Fred McDowell (Atlantic) each recorded unique renditions in 1959. McDowell performed it often and was so well known for it, in the Mississippi hill country, that locals named him "Shake 'Em."

Guitarist and barber Wade Walton's recording (1962, Bluesville), a laid-back interpretation of this typically intense song, included none of the previously recorded verses. Oster collected the song in Louisiana (1959–1960) from both Willie B. Thomas and Guitar (Robert) Welch.

White's second recording (1963, Tacoma) omitted verses concerning jelly and jellyroll and included new ones. Williams's 1964 Milestone recording covers White's original with additional lyrics from his own 1941 record. Evans recorded slide performances by Ranie Burnette (guitar) and Compton Jones (bow diddley) in Tate County, Mississippi, in 1970 (Rounder).

Sam Chatmon's 1974 recording (1999, Flyright) incorporated all new verses, while David "Honeyboy" Edwards's (1989, Blue Suit) and R. L. Burnside's (1996, Matador) used combinations of lyrics from earlier recordings. Detroit's Bobo Jenkins also recorded it (1971, Big Star). Albert King's 1971 Don Nix–penned "Shake 'Em On Down" and Stick-Horse Hammond's 1952 "Truck 'Em On Down" are unrelated.

It is significant that all of these blues musicians were originally from Mississippi with the exception of Alabama-born Jenkins, who spent time there. Jim Dickinson's Catmando Quartet, recording in Memphis (1965), produced the first Caucasian version. Savoy Brown (1967), Led Zeppelin (1970), and subsequently numerous others have recorded "Shake 'Em."

Described as a "sexy dance tune" (Lomax) and as "dance blues" with a "monotonous sing-song quality" (Calt and Wardlow), "Shake 'Em On Down" is quintessential Mississippi blues.

FRED J. HAY

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SHAKEY JAKE

b. James D. Harris, 12 April 1921; Earle, AR
d. 2 March 1990; Pine Bluff, AR

James D. "Shakey Jake" Harris acquired his nickname as a gambler shaking the dice, and he continued to hustle throughout a career as a blues singer–harmonica player, manager, producer, club owner, and record label proprietor. Raised on an Arkansas farm, Harris came to Chicago as a schoolchild and broke into the Chicago blues scene around 1949, inspired by the harmonica work of the late John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson and then by Little Walter, as well as by the nightlife. In the 1950s and 1960s Jake recorded for the Ping, Artistic, and The Blues labels in Chicago and did two LPs for Prestige Bluesville but turned his promotional energies toward rising young star and protégé Magic Sam, whose aunt Jake had married.

Harris performed on the first American Folk Blues Festival tour of Europe in 1962. In 1968 he moved to Los Angeles, where he recorded for World Pacific, Polydor, and Murray Brothers, ran the Safara Club, and started his own label, Good Time Records. His last hustle was making a living from selling discarded paper and cardboard products to recycling centers. After his health began to fail, he moved back to Arkansas and died in Pine Bluff.

JIM O'NEAL

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

SHAMA

Chicago soul and blues label of the 1960s and 1970s. The label was soul singer Syl Johnson's personal label that he operated out of his house in Chicago. Much of

the recording for the company, however, took place at the studio at 2131 S. Michigan Avenue, operated by Peter Wright's Twinight label. Johnson worked with artists who did not interest Twinight, mainly the funk duo Simtic and Wylie and stand-up blues singers Lee "Shot" Williams and Nolan Struck. Johnson produced the acts with Twinight creative people, namely songwriters Carl Smith and John Zachary, arranger Johnny Cameron, and the bands Deacons and the Pieces of Peace. When Johnson moved to Hi Records in 1971, he closed the Shama operation. He revived the imprint during the late 1970s and early 1980s when he put out a slew of recordings of himself, much of it blues.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

SHANACHIE/YAZOO/BELZONA/ BLUE GOOSE

During the 1960s, Nick Perls, scion of a wealthy family of New York art dealers, amassed a vast collection of country blues 78s from the 1920s and 1930s. In 1968, he began transferring some of these prewar rarities onto LPs, initially naming his label Belzona (after Belzoni, Mississippi) but after five releases changing it to Yazoo (another Mississippi town) to avoid confusion with the Beltona trademark. Operating from a Greenwich Village townhouse, Yazoo issued seventy-four LPs prior to Perls's death in 1987 from AIDS at age forty-five.

Some Yazoo LPs were anthologies themed by region or style (for example, Mississippi, St. Louis, East Coast, bottleneck guitar, barrelhouse piano, or hokum blues); others were devoted to individual artists (for example, Charley Patton, Willie McTell, or Gary Davis). Many Yazoo releases featured cover art by famed underground cartoonist R. Crumb and exhaustive liner notes by guitar expert Steve Calt. Crumb and Calt also recorded for Yazoo's sister label, Blue Goose—Perls's outlet for living artists (for example, Jo-Ann Kelly, Roy Bookbinder, Larry Johnson, Woody Mann, Sam Chatmon, and Rory Block).

Shortly before his death, Perls sold Yazoo to Shanachie, a label founded in 1975 by fellow record collector Richard Nevins. Shanachie has maintained

Yazoo's archival catalog on CD and added to it. Some Shanachie-era Yazoo compilations offer fascinating glimpses into the shared musical traditions of blacks and whites in the early twentieth-century South. Several of the 1990s blues reissues were compiled and annotated with the assistance of Don Kent.

Shanachie (pronounced SHA-nuh-kee, a Gaelic term for storyteller) initially focused on Irish music but has expanded aggressively into reggae, world music (especially African), jazz, folk, Americana, New Orleans music, blues, and—on its Spirit Feel subsidiary—gospel. Now based in New Jersey, Shanachie's contemporary blues roster includes Debbie Davies, Duke Robillard, Curtis Salgado, and Mem Shannon. The company also produces performance and documentary music videos and DVDs.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Shanachie Entertainment website, <http://www.shanachie.com> (for current Shanachie catalog).

SHANNON, MEM

b. 21 December 1959; New Orleans, LA

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter. A full-time taxi driver in New Orleans at the time of his breakthrough as a recording artist, Shannon was a natural storyteller who created a unique conversational blues style. He was also one of the very few modern bluesmen to be born and develop his music in the Crescent City. Shannon was musical at an early age, playing clarinet at eight and becoming proficient on guitar at fifteen. He formed a couple of bands, first the Ebony Brothers and later Free Enterprise, after high school but had to give up music to support his extended family when his father died unexpectedly in 1981.

In his spare time Shannon began writing songs about his taxi experiences and ultimately resumed his performing career in the early 1990s, winning a talent contest that landed him and his band The Membership a high-profile gig at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. His debut album, *A Cab Driver's Blues*, was released in 1995, and it exhibited a mature talent who mixed elements of funk, jazz,

and humor into his personalized blues approach. Its success, embellished by his *2nd Blues Album* in 1997, meant that Shannon, who was fond of telling people he had driven more than a million miles without ever going north of highway I-10, finally got to take his blues on tour. In 1999 he released the country-tinged *Spend Some Time with Me* and followed it two years later with *Memphis in the Morning*, a more R&B-flavored effort featuring backing by the Memphis Horns.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG**SHANNON, PRESTON**

b. Olive Branch, MS

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter active in Memphis, Tennessee, and a Bullseye Blues recording artist.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly and Al Campbell)

Discography: AMG**SHAW, ALLEN**

b. ca. 1890; Henning, TN

d. 1940; Tipton County, TN

Singer and guitarist active in Memphis and western Tennessee. His two surviving recorded songs from 1934 are touchstones of pre-World War II acoustic blues. It is believed that he was father of unrecorded but noted blues guitarist Willie Tango.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: DGR**SHAW, EDDIE**

b. 20 March 1937; Stringtown, MS

Alto, tenor saxophone, harmonica; equally adept at playing swing and blues. As a teenager growing up in Mississippi, Shaw backed up Little Milton and Ike Turner. He was hired by Muddy Waters in 1958 and moved to Chicago at Muddy’s request. A few years later, after an argument with band members about the sloppiness of the band’s performance, Shaw packed up his horn and walked down the block and sat in with Muddy’s chief rival, Howlin’ Wolf. Wolf hired him on the spot, thus beginning a nearly twenty-year alliance. Shaw became Wolf’s right-hand man, performing as bandleader, arranger, and road manager.

His reputation as a sideman grew with his stellar performances on Wolf’s 1965–1967 Chess recordings and Magic Sam’s 1968 release *Black Magic*. Shaw’s solo career began to take off in the mid-1970s and continued to gain momentum after his smokin’ performance on Alligator Records’ 1978 release *Living Chicago Blues* anthology. He released two solo albums for the Rooster Blues label—*King of the Road* (1985) and *In the Land of the Crossroads* (1992).

In a career that has spanned more than forty years, Shaw has played with many of Chicago’s legendary bluesmen. In addition to Waters, Wolf, and Magic Sam, Shaw has played with Otis Rush, Willie Dixon, Freddy King, Hound Dog Taylor, and Earl Hooker. He continues to tour and record with his own band, Eddie Shaw and the Wolf Gang. Shaw’s son, guitarist Eddie “Vaan” Shaw, Jr., continues the family’s musical legacy.

DENNIS TAYLOR

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Discography: AMG, LSPF**SHAW, EDDIE “VAAN,” JR.**

b. 8 November 1955; Greenville, MS

Chicago-raised Eddie “Vaan” Shaw, son of singer/saxophonist/bandleader Eddie Shaw, learned guitar as a child from Magic Sam and Hubert Sumlin. He went on to tour and record with both his father and his own band, showcasing his technically proficient playing style.

GENE TOMKO

SHAW, EDDIE "VAAN," JR.

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Johnson, Matthew. "From the Ring Master's Knee: Eddie 'Va'an' Shaw." *Living Blues* no. 95 (January/February 1991): 28–31.

Discography

Ass Whoppin!! (2001, self-produced).

SHAW, ROBERT

b. 9 August 1908; Stafford, TX
d. 16 May 1985; Austin, TX

Barrelhouse pianist. Shaw performed widely in the South and as far north as Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s. He then left professional music-making until his rediscovery in 1967, whereupon he played extensively in America and Europe. Shaw had a vibrant, hard-hitting style that changed little after the 1920s.

PETER MUIR

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

The Ma Grinder (Arhoolie 377; original release *Texas Barrelhouse Piano*, Arhoolie F1010).
Robert Shaw: The 1971 Party Tape (Document 1014).

SHAW, THOMAS "TOM"

b. 4 March 1908; Brenham, TX
d. 24 February 1977; San Diego, CA

Acoustic guitarist and singer in prewar Texas styles. During the 1920s and early 1930 in east Texas he encountered Blind Lemon Jefferson, Texas Alexander, and Blind Willie Johnson. He moved to San Diego, California, in 1934; not long after, he performed on XEMO radio and in personal appearances. He met and began performing with pianist Bob Jeffreys in the 1940s. His contact with local storeowner Lou Curtiss in 1968 led to recording

opportunities and occasional performances outside California until his death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SHEPHERD, KENNY WAYNE

b. 12 June 1977; Shreveport, LA

Kenny Wayne Shepherd was inspired to begin playing the guitar after attending a Stevie Ray Vaughan concert at age seven. Shepherd soon took up the guitar under the eye of his father, Ken, Sr., a local concert promoter/deejay, who had booked Vaughan to play the Louisiana Music Festival. A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, Shepherd debuted his talents to the music world at age thirteen when he was asked to join in a jam with guitarist Bryan Lee while in New Orleans. He began to play club dates in his teens and released his first album, *Ledbetter Heights*, at age eighteen on Giant Records.

Deemed a guitar prodigy by many critics, Shepherd's initial release topped the *Billboard* blues charts. Shepherd issued his sophomore release in 1997, entitled *Trouble Is ...*, on Revolution Records, featuring artists such as Chris Layton, Tommy Shannon (both known as members of the group Double Trouble), and James Cotton. The album, like his debut, found widespread commercial success in both blues and rock markets. His next effort, *Live On*, was released in October 1999, this time featuring such guests as Les Claypool and Warren Haynes.

Shepherd's virtuosity as a guitar player has earned him frequent comparisons to artists such as Stevie Ray Vaughan and fellow youthful prodigy Johnny Lang. His success as a recording artist has been aided by an extensive tour schedule, attracting a wide array of fans, both young and old, to his approach to blues guitar.

MATHEW J. BARTKOWIAK

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

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Trouble Is ... (1997, Revolution).
Live On (1999, Giant).

SHEPPARD, BILL “BUNKY”

- b. William Edward Sheppard, 20 March 1922; New Orleans, LA
 d. 2 July 1997; Los Angeles, CA

Chicago and Los Angeles record company executive. Bill “Bunky” Sheppard began working with doo-wop groups in Chicago during the 1950s, independently producing such acts as the Sheppards and the Bel Aires. He operated the Apex label (1959–1962), on which he recorded Danny Overbea, Lefty Bates, and the Sheppards, and with Carl Davis the Nat/Wes/Pam label complex (1961–1962), on which he recorded bluesman Lucky Carmichael as well as the Dukays. He was with Vee-Jay (1962–1963) and with Constellation (1963–1966). Recording the vocal group the Esquires, Sheppard operated his own Bunky label (1967–1969). During the 1970s, he moved to Los Angeles and worked for Motown, CTI, Mercury, and Capitol. He joined 20th Century Fox Records in 1978, serving as vice president until the company was absorbed by RCA in 1982.

ROBERT PRUTER

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SHIELDS, LONNIE

- b. 17 April 1956; West Helena, AR

Lonnie Shields spent his early singing years in gospel and soul music but was drawn into the blues by drummer Sam Carr, who lived across the Mississippi River from Shields in Lula, Mississippi. Carr and his partners in the Jelly Roll Kings—Big Jack Johnson and Frank Frost—mentored the young Shields, and in 1986 Shields played at the inaugural King Biscuit

Blues Festival in Helena, where he has also appeared many times since. He combines elements of southern R&B and Delta blues, with a B. B. King–influenced guitar style and soulful gospel-rooted vocals.

His first blues recordings were for Rooster Blues, a single recorded in 1987 followed by an album that won the *Living Blues* Critics’ Poll as Best Album of 1993. After he began to tour following the CD release, he relocated to the Philadelphia area. Shields recorded another CD for Rooster Blues and two for JSP and has continued to tour, though he has yet to make the breakthrough that seemed to beckon when he appeared on the national blues scene.

JIM O’NEAL

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Discography: AMG

SHINES, JOHNNY

- b. John Ned Lee Shines, 25 April 1915; Frayser, TN
 d. 20 April 1992; Tuscaloosa, AL

Influential blues singer, guitarist, and composer John Ned Lee Shines was born on a farm on the outskirts of Memphis, Tennessee. Shines’s parents separated when he was seven, and he spent the rest of his childhood divided between his mother’s home in Memphis and his father’s farm in the Marion/Mound City region of Arkansas, just across the Mississippi River from Memphis. His strong singing voice developed as a boy, and he would practice yelling in the expansive cotton fields on his father’s farm.

Around the age of sixteen, Shines moved to Hughes, Arkansas, and began playing the guitar after being shown a few songs by his brother. His playing progressed rapidly after his associations with Memphis blues musicians Eddie Vann and Willie Tango, and he soon fell under the spell of Howlin’ Wolf, whom he devoutly followed throughout north-eastern Arkansas. Shines started playing professionally at age seventeen, and his dedication to Howlin’ Wolf’s music garnered him the nickname “Little Wolf.” He continued to perform throughout Memphis and northeastern Arkansas, playing much of Howlin’ Wolf’s repertoire.

In 1934, Shines teamed up with a piano player called M&O and the two moved to Helena, Arkansas. Through M&O, he was introduced to Robert Johnson, the legendary guitarist who would become Shines's greatest influence. Shines traveled periodically throughout the South and North with Johnson from 1935 through 1937 and absorbed Johnson's masterful finger-picking and slide guitar style. The pair traveled as far north as Canada, where they appeared together on *The Elder Moten Hour* gospel radio show in 1937. Shines would play a pivotal role in carrying on Johnson's music and memory after Johnson's death in 1938.

The following year, Shines moved to Memphis and continued performing while working a day job for the next several years. Following a brief stay in St. Louis, Shines relocated to Chicago in 1941 and continued to work outside music. He started playing on Maxwell Street for tips shortly afterward and also began working regularly with Big Walter Horton, a harmonica player he associated with in Memphis in the 1930s. About this time, Shines fitted his Kalamazoo acoustic guitar with an electric pickup, consequently helping to shape the new sound of urban Chicago blues that was emerging in the 1940s. He continued to work in and outside music throughout the 1940s and played with the Dukes of Swing, an eight-piece jazz band.

Shines made a handful of recordings for Columbia and Chess in 1946 and 1950, respectively, but the resulting sides remained unissued until decades later. In 1952 and 1953, he recorded several postwar blues classics for the JOB label that showcased his superior electrified Delta blues and powerful, vibrato-laden vocals, including "Evening Sun," "Ramblin'," and "Cool Driver." An extremely talented songwriter, Shines's highly sensitive and beautifully crafted lyrics made him one of the most imaginative composers of postwar blues.

Discouraged by the lack of sales his JOB sides generated, Shines retired from music in the late 1950s and continued to support himself through various construction jobs. In 1965, after being urged by blues enthusiasts Frank Scott and Mike Rowe, Shines returned to music and recorded for Sam Charters's landmark *Chicago/The Blues/Today!* series for Vanguard. With the blues revival of the 1960s in full swing, Shines toured the United States and abroad and recorded albums for Biograph, Testament, Blue Horizon, Advent, and Adelphi during the next ten years.

Shines relocated to Holt, Alabama, in the late 1960s with wife Hattie and family, and in 1971 he appeared in the film *The Velvet Vampire*. In 1980, he teamed up with old friend Robert Lockwood, and recorded "Hangin' On" for Rounder Records, which was nominated for a Grammy Award. Shortly after the recordings, Shines suffered a stroke that partially

affected his guitar playing. He underwent physical therapy to help regain his hand strength and coordination but because of his impaired condition, he continued to perform mainly as a slide guitarist. Still a powerful singer, his commanding vocals remained undiminished. In the late 1980s, he often performed with his current wife, vocalist Candy Martin Shines, and their Alabama-based band.

Revived interest in the Robert Johnson legacy, spurred on by Columbia's successful Johnson boxed set in 1990, renewed interest in Shines's own illustrious career, and he was featured on several Johnson tributes and documentaries. In 1991, he made his last recordings with Snooky Pryor on Blind Pig's *Back to the Country*. Johnny Shines, hailed as one of the most important and distinctive figures of postwar blues, passed away after a short illness in 1992, just days shy of his seventy-seventh birthday.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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Last Night's Dream (1993, Sire/Blue Horizon CD 9 45285-2).
Evening Shuffle: The Complete J.O.B. Recordings 1952–53 (2002, Westside CD 635).

SHIRLEY & LEE

Shirley Pixley Goodman (b. June 19, 1936) and Leonard Lee (b. June 29, 1936; d. October 23, 1976) were known commercially as Shirley & Lee. They are most associated with their top 1956 hit "Let the Good Times Roll" but also "Feel So Good." The "Sweethearts of the Blues" took fans on a fictional love story through the LP *Let the Good Times Roll* (1956), following the love and foibles within relationships. Shirley & Lee's impact on the blues music scene was carried forth by work with the famous A&R man/producer Dave Bartholomew, who, with an all-star

ensemble, captured the New Orleans blues sound of the 1950s and carried it to the masses.

MEG FISHER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Let the Good Times Roll (1956, Aladdin LP).
The Best of Shirley & Lee (1982, Act LP 47).
Let the Good Times Roll (1997, Ace LP 751; boxed set).

SHORT, J. D.

b. 26 December 1902; Port Gibson, MS
d. 21 October 1962; St Louis, MO

By his twenties, Short had mastered half a dozen instruments and was playing clarinet in Douglas Williams's band in St. Louis. His 1930s blues recordings, accompanied on guitar and issued under a variety of names, are gripping both for their rough-hewn, jerky music and darkly comic, or just dark, narratives. The depression era-themed "Hard Time Blues" (issued as by Joe Stone) is outstanding. In the 1950s and 1960s he occasionally worked with his cousin, Big Joe Williams, playing both guitar and harmonica, and they made some exhilarating albums together for Delmark. Short also recorded solo albums.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: DGR; LSFP

SHOWER, "LITTLE" HUDSON

b. 6 September 1919; Anguilla, MS

Chicago blues singer and guitarist of the post-World War II era. Shower led one of the most popular club bands in Chicago during the 1950s, playing loud electric country-style blues. In 1939 he came to Chicago, but it was not until 1946 that he entered the city's burgeoning blues scene. He formed his own group, the Red Devil Trio, in 1950 and worked regularly in

the clubs through the 1950s. His recordings for the JOB label are considered classics, although his most popular club number, "Shake It Baby," was never released. Shower never recorded again, but continued to play the clubs regularly into the early 1960s. In 1963 he was appearing in a North Side folk music club, the Fickle Pickle, which possibly meant that he no longer had a strong base in the black community. In 1964 Shower retired from the music business.

ROBERT PRUTER

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SIEGEL - SCHWALL BAND

Siegel, Corky

b. 24 October 1943; Chicago, IL

Schwall, Jim

b. 11 November 1942; Chicago, IL

Chicago electric blues-rock band active from the mid-1960s through 1975. Occasionally it will reunite to play a half-dozen gigs per year.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Michael Erlewine); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG

SIGNATURE

A 1944–1950 record label owned by Bob Thiele and revived by him in 1959. Although mostly a jazz and popular music label, some blues talent was featured, including Walter Brown, James P. Johnson, Ralph Willis, and Arthur Prysock.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

New Grove Jazz

Discography: McGrath

SIGNIFYING MONKEY, THE

“The Signifying Monkey” most frequently occurs as a toast or narrated tale. It is derived from the African folk tale “Why Monkeys Live in Trees,” and it begins with the monkey’s signifying to the lion.

The monkey tells the lion that in a recent conversation with the elephant, the elephant was talking about how weak the lion was and how the elephant intended to teach him a lesson at his earliest opportunity. This enrages the lion, who tears through the jungle with a mighty roar, looking for the elephant. When he finds him, he insists on fighting, even though the elephant warns him off. The lion loses pitifully and, more dead than alive, drags himself back to the monkey. The monkey is jumping up and down on a tree limb, excited about the success of his scheme. He slips and falls and the lion is on him “with all four feet.” The monkey begs “with tears in his eyes,” says, “look here Mr. Lion, I apologize,” but the lion is having none of it and he kills the monkey.

This is how the tale ends in the version recorded by Hot Lips Page (1953, King 4616), but in another version, recorded by the Johnny Otis Show (1968, Kent LP 534), the monkey tells the lion he will fight him, but it has to be “fair and square.” When the lion backs off to ready himself to fight, the monkey escapes to the trees. Some commentators believe that the variation where the monkey loses is a later development and signals the weakening in importance of the trickster motif in African American folklore. These variations can be heard in the examples above and in others by Little Miss Cornshucks, who recorded it in 1948 (DeLuxe 3194), and by the Big Three Trio, who recorded it twice, in 1946 on Bullet 275 and in 1947 on Columbia 37358. “The Signifying Monkey” also appealed to more jazz-oriented performers such as Oscar Brown, Jr. (1960, Columbia CL 1577), and Sax Kari (1949, Apollo 389). “The Monkey and the Baboon” cuts by Lonnie Johnson and Spencer Williams (1930, OKeh 8762) and Big Maceo’s “Can’t You Read” (1941, Bluebird 8772) are extensions of “The Signifying Monkey.”

Essential to our understanding of the importance of this group of songs is the signal importance of “signifying” in African American culture. Signifying can be defined as a mode of African American speech wherein allusion and indirection are used to approach a potentially taboo subject for the purposes of ritual or humorous insult. The monkey was “signifying,” trying to stir up trouble by baiting the lion with alleged insults from the elephant. Musically speaking, the whole domain of call-and-response can be seen as a signifying realm: in boogie-woogie,

the right hand signifies to the left hand, Tommy Johnson’s falsetto signifies to his guitar as well as his normal voice.

PAUL GARON

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SIMIEN, “ROCKIN’” SIDNEY

b. 9 April 1938; Labeau, LA

d. 25 February 1998; Lafayette, LA

There are several distinct phases in the career of Sidney Simien. He began in the late 1950s playing guitar and harmonica in his uncle’s R&B band. After replacing his uncle as bandleader, he developed a strong local following but had little success with records until 1962, when he scored a hit with “No Good Woman” backed with “You Ain’t Nothin’ but Fine” for the Jin label. By the middle 1960s he had transformed into a soul singer, creating the stage persona of “Count Rockin’,” complete with a turban, and moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana, to record for Eddie Shuler’s Goldband label, but the hits had stopped coming. For twelve years he worked as lounge organist on the Lafayette circuit in the company of Lynn August and Stanley “Buckwheat Zydeco” Dural. During that time, he made a study of Clifton Chenier, taught himself piano accordion, and eventually returned to performing as the Zydeco singer Rockin’ Sidney.

He had several hits, such as “If It’s Good for the Gander,” but in 1985 he decided to record a song he had written ten years earlier that was loosely based on a French expression for a term of endearment, “my special all and all.” That song, “My Toot Toot,” became a local jukebox hit, expanded into a regional smash, and finally became an international phenomenon. Eventually, more than a million copies were sold, and the song earned a Grammy Award. The proceeds allowed Sidney to build his own studio, but

he was never able to recapture the success of “My Toot Toot.”

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Goldband Records; Maison du Soul; Soileau, Floyd**

SIMMONS, MALCOLM “LITTLE MACK”

b. 25 January 1933; Twist, AR
d. 24 October 2000; Chicago, IL

As a boy, Simmons played harmonica with his neighbor, James Cotton; like Cotton, he found his way to Chicago, where he put together his first band in 1955. Always an astute self-promoter, Simmons became a well-known figure on the club scene, setting up “battles” with other harmonica players and securing record deals with Carl Jones’s C. J. Records, Cadillac Baby’s Bea & Baby, and Checker. He also released singles on his own PM and Simmons labels and produced the album *Arelean Brown Sings the Blues in the Loop* (1977, Simmons).

His investment in a club and adjacent recording studio was lost when he was arrested and given a suspended sentence for a drug offense, a setback that lowered his profile in the 1980s, but in the mid-1990s he reestablished himself on the blues scene with albums for Wolf and St. George, and in his last years he recorded three albums for Electro-Fi. Though not an exceptional singer or harmonica player, Simmons was gifted with enthusiasm and versatility, prompting experiments with soul, funk, and country music that were almost always successful, but he was equally at home with a set of unreconstructed 1950s-style Chicago blues such as in *High & Lonesome* (1995, St. George).

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: LSFP

SIMS, FRANKIE LEE

b. 30 April 1917; New Orleans, LA
d. 10 May 1970; Dallas, TX

Blues singer and guitarist. Frankie Lee Sims is a very important Texas blues guitarist who remained rather obscure because he died relatively young, at age fifty three, in 1970. Born to musical parents in New Orleans, Sims moved to Dallas, Texas, in the late 1920s. At age twelve he learned how to play the guitar on homemade instruments. In World War II Sims spent three years in the Marines. After a short career as teacher, Sims recorded his first songs for the Blue Bonnet label in 1948. In 1949 he accompanied his “cousin” Lightnin’ Hopkins on some of his records. His classic recordings, however, were made for Specialty in 1953. The first of these, “Lucy Mae Blues,” even became a local hit for Art Rupe’s label.

Sims’s music is characterized by a stomping rhythm, heart-rending lyrics, and rough vocals. In 1957 Sims recorded ten rough stompers for Johnnie Vincent’s Ace Records, of which “Walking with Frankie” is the best known. On the strength of these records, Sims even traveled to Chicago to play for a while with Muddy Waters and Little Walter. When Ace began to lose interest by 1960, Sims returned to Dallas. In 1970 a combination of heart attacks, tongue cancer, and pneumonia caused his untimely death. Posthumously, some 1960 sessions for Bobby Robinson in New York were traced that were issued on Krazy Kat.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

SIMS, HENRY “SON”

b. 22 August 1890; Anguilla, MS
d. 23 December 1958; Memphis, TN

Son Sims was a multi-instrumentalist around the Mississippi Delta. He recorded about half a dozen sides on fiddle behind Charley Patton in 1930, including “Elder Greene Blues” and “Running Wild.” In addition, he recorded four sides of his own at those sessions. Previously, Sims had formed a string band, the Son Sims Four, near Clarksdale in 1922. By the early 1930s, his group featured a young Muddy Waters. Sims was one of Waters’s first guitar instructors, and they often performed as a duo. Sims played reels and jigs—pre-blues—but adapted to the burgeoning style; he accompanied Muddy on his first recordings, in 1941 and 1942.

ROBERT GORDON

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SINCE I MET YOU BABY

“Since I Met You Baby” was written in 1956 by singer/songwriter/record producer Ivory Joe Hunter (1914–1974). Atlantic Records’ white production team—Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller—marketed this rhythm and blues ballad with crossover appeal to an adult, rather than a teenage, and to a black as well as white audience. Although the chords of “Since I Met You Baby” were based on the twelve-bar blues progression, there were enough differences to classify the song as rhythm and blues (blues with rhythm). Instead of the typical blues structure of call and response or of small jazz/dance band arrangements, the song included sing-along stanzas/verses, lush, full orchestral arrangements with strings, as well as a

popular, rather than a typical blues or gospel, vocal style.

Released in December 1956, Hunter’s own version of “Since I Met You Baby” sold more than a million copies to become gold. His original recording had sold more than the cover versions by both Molly Bee (Dot Records) and Mindy Carson (Columbia Records). (By the end of 1956 the original recording artist—usually black—was beginning to become preferred somewhat to the cover/copy recording artist—usually white.) Also in 1956, white singer Pat Boone had a million-seller in his cover version of the song. Boone’s version was an exact duplicate of Hunter’s record, from phrasing and pitch to tempo. Another million-seller of the song—this time in 1970—was by Sonny James, a country singer. Additionally, in 1970 at the Monterey Jazz Festival, Hunter received a standing ovation from the crowd, which also sang along with him when he performed “Since I Met You Baby.”

MONICA J. BURDEX

SINGER, HAL

b. 8 October 1919; Tulsa, OK

Originally a violinist, Harold “Hal” Singer, also known as “Cornbread,” switched to clarinet and alto saxophone in 1933 before adopting the tenor saxophone for work with the territory jazz bands of Ernie Fields (1938–1942), Nat Towles and Tommy Douglas (both 1939–1942), and Lloyd Hunter (1941–1942). He traveled to New York with Jay McShann’s band and appeared there with many swing artists as well as doing more blues-oriented work with Hot Lips Page and Lucky Millinder. With Page he recorded with various blues singers, notably Wynonie Harris (“Blow Your Brains Out” b/w “Lollipop Mama,” 1947, King 4226).

In 1948 he formed his own jump/rhythm and blues band, whose successful “Cornbread” (1948, Savoy 671) gave him his nickname. From 1949 to 1958 he toured widely and accompanied many rhythm and blues performers on record, including Harris again in 1957. From 1958 he worked in more jazz-oriented contexts and also studied at the Juilliard School but continued to accompany blues artists on record, including Lonnie Johnson (*Blues by Lonnie*, 1961, Bluesville BVL1007).

Following a tour of Scandinavia, he settled in Paris in 1965, working and recording in both jazz and blues contexts, including with visiting Americans, among them T-Bone Walker (*Feeling the Blues*, 1968,

Black & Blue 33019), Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, and Jimmy Witherspoon. His autobiography, coauthored with his French wife, was published in 1990 in French. He was named Chevalier des Arts in 1992.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: AMG; Lord

SINGING

Singing is the articulation of human vocal sound to melody, often enunciated with words. The art of blues singing lies in vocalizing a melody, either one in blues practice or one composed or improvised with one of the scales used in blues, while enunciating words according to one of the chorus rhyme schemes, sometimes improvising with one or more lyric techniques (see the *Blues* entry). The present entry discusses the importance of the singer in the blues, the physical act of singing, and the various styles, trends, and practices of singing during blues history.

The Importance of the Singer

With the melody as the basis of musical and lyrical improvisation during performance (see the *Blues* entry, vol. 1), and words sung to individual tones, the blues singer is the central figure of any performing group or ensemble, sometimes even a solo performer by him- or herself. Formulating and singing lyrics that may range from ballad narratives to a series of jokes, the singer will have more immediate and intelligible impact on listeners than the supporting instrumentalists, especially if the lyrics are sung with illustrative visual expressions.

In jazz practice, where the harmonic chord progression is the basis of improvisation, the jazz singer may depart from the initial melody to articulate in variations in alternate melodies, or even free improvisation, and to enunciate with vowels so as to function as an instrumentalist. Such may not be the case in

blues singing, where at most the singer may introduce alternate chorus melodies as contrast, may add to or rearrange the choice of lyrics as the occasion demands, and may add vocal growls and moans as the context invites. However, many blues instrumentalists try to function as a second vocalist; whether or not the instrumentalist “tells a story” through tone without words is one measure of his/her ability in blues performance. So, the matter of singing is important to all blues musicians, singer and instrumentalist alike.

Proper classical vocal technique requires the singer to have upright posture and to coordinate various body parts. This is not always possible in blues performance. In field hollers and work songs, the singer is often walking, sitting, or kneeling in accordance with the task being done. A singer may be sitting to play a piano or be standing weighed down by a guitar, both affecting posture, breathing, and vocal production. Cultural customs and individual social function may be the source of distinctive vocal sounds. Performing with or without a microphone has to be taken into account. Sometimes a singer will sacrifice posture to walk onstage to act out a narrative lyric, or to encourage an audience response. The recording studio and its apparatus may make special demands on the singer, whether drawing away from a 1920s recording horn to avoid overload and tone bursts on the recording disc or coming nearer to the later electric microphone for softer lyric utterances. The presence of any of these factors may be elements in a basic account of blues singing.

Early Unamplified Blues Singers Through 1932

Rural (Including Field Holler Singers)

Among the early types of African American songs described on paper is the work song, especially the rowing song such as that described by Sir Charles Lyell (1849). The field recordings made by John and Alan Lomax from 1933 through the 1960s and those by Bruce Jackson through the 1960s and 1970s preserved a variety of field hollers, task songs, and work chants before they passed into disuse. The particular functions of this music were to pace the work being done, to lead other men and women in assisting the work, and to ensure safe timing of the alternating actions for tasks being done by two or

more people. While black types of sacred music, dance, and musical theater contributed to early blues, field hollers have been singled out by some historians as a prominent antecedent, partly for their lack of instrumental accompaniment and partly because many southern male singers who recorded before 1940 endowed their blues singing with the field holler style, especially Leadbelly, Son House, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Texas Alexander, and Jaybird Coleman.

Not every rural blues singer of the World War II era sang like a field hand, but many still had to make much use of their lungs and throats to bellow their words and vowels, including Henry Thomas and Charlie Patton. Tommy Johnson is notable for the high falsetto phrases that he used to complete many of his blues choruses. Among Mississippi performers, John Hurt was unusual for his low, nearly conversational manner of singing.

Urban

Early singer/guitarists in southern cities sang in medium volume and register, perhaps due to their performing in enclosed spaces, whether Frank Stokes, Gus Cannon, and Furry Lewis in Memphis, Blind Blake in Georgia–north Florida towns and Chicago, and Willie McTell in Atlanta. Among southern women singer/guitarists, the best known is Memphis Minnie, always identifiable for her piercing, slightly nasal singing, but others are Geechie Wiley, Mattie Delaney, and Bessie Tucker. Also notable is Bessie Johnson, whose gruff singing—hard on the vocal cords—may be heard on many sanctified Church of God in Christ religious recordings of the late 1920s in Memphis.

Urban Unamplified Singers

The earliest blues singers to make commercial records were urban performers, mostly women, beginning with Mamie Smith in 1920 for OKeh Records. That rural blues musicians did not record until 1925–1926 was due to the fragility and susceptibility to damage of the wax recording matrix discs, the cumbersome and bulky pulley-driven recording equipment, which made portability difficult, and an apparent belief that record buyers were mostly in northern cities and were interested only in local city singers. The initial recording successes of Blind Lemon Jefferson and of Blind Blake in 1926 led to labels seeking

southern musicians through 1932. This awakening of the labels to a blues genre through high initial sales was a repeat of the discovery of the potential of blues upon the release of Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" (1920), which led to a rush to record other urban women singers, resulting in a body of work termed retrospectively as "classic" blues.

It is wrong to think that the "classic" blues women were the originators of the blues on the basis of recording first, but it is also wrong to overemphasize the rural male blues musicians without considering the ongoing performances of city women. Both genres developed in parallel, at times casting artistic looks at each other: Son House appropriated lyrics from Bessie Smith's "Work House Blues" (1927) for his "My Black Mama" (1930), while northern singer Victoria Spivey had a supporting role in King Vidor's 1929 film *Hallelujah*, depicting black southern cotton culture life. While rural blues derived much of its vocal phrasing from field hollers, dances, and sacred music, urban blues came from American popular music, black theater and cabaret, and New Orleans jazz.

Unlike rural performers, the "classic" blues singers were more likely to have a little formal vocal technical training and to sing in theaters and cabarets. However, instead of a guitarist, they would have been accompanied by a considerably louder pianist or small "orchestra" of reed and brass instruments. Alto and contralto voices fared well, soprano voices less so; attacking notes forcefully from above aided enunciation of lyrics. Because of the highly organized nature of theater appearances with band arrangements, urban blues were often composed and arranged in advance, allowing little for on-the-spot lyric improvisation. There were many significant collaborations of composer/impresarios, including Fletcher Henderson, Clarence Williams, Perry Bradford, and Lovie Austin.

Today the most highly regarded singers of this "classic" genre are Alberta Hunter, Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Victoria Spivey, and Bessie Smith. Hunter was a significant artist for Paramount Records, her sales high enough to ensure a lengthy string of recording sessions; her talent saw her through additional performing in the 1940s, with a distinguished career until her death. Ma Rainey was active on southern show circuits, and she adopted blues in her repertory as early as 1902. Her surviving recordings for the Paramount label give some glimmers of the effects of her vocal charm on her audiences. Bessie Smith is now considered as the great blues singer of the 1920s; her records having stayed in print in one form or another since the late 1930s. On her studio recordings

she showed a hearty, rich contralto voice, but other aspects of her sound may be heard (and seen) in the film *St. Louis Blues* (1929), where she harshly inflects the flatted scale tones during the title song. Victoria Spivey's voice was not as deep and rich as Rainey's nor Smith's, but she enjoyed great commercial success in the 1920s and 1930s. In later years she wrote for *Record Research* magazine and operated the Spivey record label, keeping alive memories of the "classic" blues period.

There were many other singers from this time. Bertha "Chippie" Hill and Sippie Wallace made records with cornetist Louis Armstrong, then at the beginning of his career; record collectors today prize the discs more for Louis Armstrong than for the singers, who sang distinctly and expressively. Ida Cox was a best-selling artist for Paramount in the 1920s and later made some memorable records in 1939 and 1940. Virginia Liston, Viola McCoy, and Rose Henderson have cult-like status among collectors of 1920s blues records. Clara Smith is sometimes noted for having been one of the most expressive singers of slow blues.

It could be said there were three contributors to the end of "classic" blues ear singing. One was that it was supplanted entirely by new styles and melodies from 1929 onward, as is related in the next section. A second was that the labels that had widely recorded "classic" blues had folded or been sold to other companies by 1932, effectively ending the singers' recording careers and "freezing" their catalogs until rediscovery by record collectors some years later. A third reason was that many of their voices were becoming worn from frequent singing without microphone amplification. Recordings through 1925 were made with an acoustic recording horn, those afterward with an electric microphone. Records made in 1928 and 1929 sometimes show the extent of vocal wear on some singers, unflinchingly captured by the sensitive electric apparatus.

Microphone Amplified Singers (1928–1942)

Urban

Around 1920 the electric microphone was invented. It was to have two uses: in the recording studio, replacing the acoustic horn for recording sound with greater fidelity than before, and in public performance venues, amplifying sound—including the human voice—so as to be heard above ambient room noise. The electric microphone was introduced

into recording studios by Victor in October 1925, and within a year most labels followed suit.

How soon electric amplification was available to blues singers remains uncertain, but it is likely it was available initially in the cities, less likely in the country, where electricity was still unavailable. It would have been quickly apparent to any city singer—even through radio broadcasts—that not only could the microphone faithfully reproduce the projected singing of the "classic" blues women, it could serve to bring out and make easily heard every subtle nuance at medium and low singing volumes, hence rendering a performance all the more communicative. White singers, including Bing Crosby, developed the "crooning" singing style. Black blues singers, too, developed various intimate styles for the microphone, identifiable to each artist regardless of whether a name could be attached to it.

Lonnie Johnson was one of the first singers to realize such a style. His first hit was "Falling Down Blues" in 1925, on which he sang and played violin. Although he made some virtuoso sides as a guitarist with Louis Armstrong and with Eddie Lang, his vocal sides were immensely popular and influential. His style was singing at medium range and volume to a slow tempo, often to a mournful melody, heard best on "Blue Ghost Blues" and "Life Saver Blues," and with self-deprecating lyrics about bad luck and lost love. During the mid- and late 1920s, he had an impact on singers in St. Louis, where he was then based, including Robert Peeples ("Fat and Greasy Blues," 1929), Specks McFadden ("Misunderstood Blues," 1929), and Alice Moore ("Black and Evil Blues," 1929). Another blueswoman from St. Louis was Edith North Johnson, who introduced the song "The Honey Dripper" on record in 1929 with pianist Roosevelt Sykes (who later was to perform the tune himself), singing in a high, light-timbred voice that was very different from, say, Ma Rainey's.

In 1928, Leroy Carr of Indianapolis, Indiana, recorded "How Long How Long Blues." The song wasn't new—Ida Cox had recorded a full-throated rendition in 1925—but his smooth, easy delivery of the words and melody was. His initial success cemented a musical partnership with guitarist Scrapper Blackwell, ensured recording sessions and steady work to keep him busy until his death in 1935, and resulted in new classic songs for the urban singer, including "Mean Mistreater Mama" (1934) and "Blues Before Sunrise" (1934). Among the singers who were influenced by Carr—or at least were willing to imitate his vocal style on records—were Bumble Bee Slim, Josh White, and Robert Johnson.

Two other important singers were Roosevelt Sykes and Peetie Wheatstraw (William Bunch). Sykes had apprenticed as a pianist in Arkansas and Mississippi, but by the time he began making rounds in St. Louis and Chicago he had developed a carefree, slightly flat-pitched singing style that fit well in urban and rural jazz and blues settings. Wheatstraw was identifiable with one melody, initially heard as “So Long Blues” (1930), and with his “ooh well well” lyric openings.

Also in 1928 Tampa Red and Thomas A. Dorsey recorded “Tight Like That,” introducing a new melody and encouraging the verse-and-refrain (four and eight measures) lyric scheme to blues practice. At the same time, the hit record heralded the hokum blues style and the 1930s Chicago blues style. One of the most prominent singers of this time and place was Big Bill Broonzy, who possessed a booming baritone voice that was versatile in all kinds of Chicago blues styles.

The effect of the microphone and the new kinds of blues melodies the singers introduced changed the nature of female blues singing. Lucille Bogan is a prominent example. She first recorded in 1923 into an acoustic recording horn and had her first significant hit in 1930 with “Black Angel Blues,” but she hit her artistic stride in 1933–1935, with the accompaniment of pianist Walter Roland and with her smart choice of new-style blues. She wasn’t a blues empress in the 1920s—her voice was too light, her phrasing and attack too lilting—but her approach to songs such as “I Hate the Train Called the M&O” is in keeping with the stylistic changes of the time.

Rural

For the most part, southern singers sang without amplification through most of the 1930s. Still, a few singers knew and made use of the microphone’s advantages. A notable early one was Skip James, who possessed a high, eerie falsetto singing voice that may have seemed faint in an empty juke joint, but through the microphone he could be heard well and with expression, judging by the eighteen surviving sides he made in 1931. Recorded evidence is scant for Mississippi bluesmen for 1934–1939—and even less so for blueswomen, save for Memphis Minnie, who became more established in Chicago in the 1930s. But it appears that these men and women sang in a field holler manner, loud, bellowing, and forceful, as may be heard in the performances of Bukka White and Big Joe Williams.

One major difference between urban and rural singing in the 1920s (and presumably before) was in the phrasing. Urban singers were likely to begin a lyric phrase on the first beat of the first notated measure of music or on the last of the preceding measure (the so-called “pickup” beat). Field hollers and work chants tended to delay the phrase beginning until the second beat of the first measure, presumably the first beat for the ax-fall, footstep, or arm motion. Any urban song can be “countrified” in a field holler manner by delaying the lyric beginning by one beat, and any rural song can be “citized” to urban tastes by starting the phrase sooner, on the “pickup” beat before the first notated measure. Few singers were recorded in the mid-1930s to capture this assimilation of city elements into rural music, but Robert Johnson of Mississippi and Blind Boy Fuller of North Carolina are notable singers in this regard. Any attribution to Johnson of rural-and-city, old-and-new synthesis has to take into account his phrasing on his various records.

The singers who began performing in the South during the 1930s developed booming voices, such as Big Joe Williams, Johnny Shines, Howlin’ Wolf, and Elmore James. Although the latter three would record only after 1945, their volume and diction come from their early years, when they may have often performed without microphones. For others, though, the microphone was a means to expression, and the 1939–1942 commercial and field recordings of Robert Lockwood, David “Honeyboy” Edwards, Muddy Waters, and Willie “61” Blackwell should be listened to in this way. In between would be Robert Petway and Tommy McClennan, who were the first to record a memorable standard, “Catfish Blues,” in rural gruffness with the distinct clarity of the lyrics.

Piedmont Carolina blues singers reflect parallel changes. Reverend Gary Davis may be described as “old school,” his blues singing reflective of his experiences listening and performing sacred music and early blues and at medicine shows and carnivals. Some elements of his early vocal style owe much to Blind Willie Johnson, a best-selling artist for Columbia Records of the late 1920s. Davis’s guitar protégée was Blind Boy Fuller, who was a popular recording artist until his death in 1941. Fuller’s singing combines elements of Bill Broonzy and Tampa Red, with melodic influences from Blind Lemon Jefferson or Blind Blake. His style was carried on by Brownie McGhee, who later broadened his repertoire to include folk music as well as blues. McGhee’s partner, Sonny Terry, was a superb vocalist who

interpolated whoops and hollers between his harmonica phrases.

Gospel Transitions

During the time of changes in blues singing styles, melodies, and phrasing, a new form of religious music evolved. Thomas A. Dorsey and Sallie Martin were at the forefront as the creators of what was called gospel music. Leaving behind a blues career that included working with Ma Rainey and Tampa Red, Dorsey devoted himself to composing new songs for sacred expression, eventually composing “Take My Hand, Precious Lord” and “Peace in the Valley,” songs that influenced many young church singers. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Sallie Martin began singing gospel music and eventually became an administrator in the National Gospel Convention.

The Dorsey gospel singer par excellence was Mahalia Jackson, who began her career in the 1930s and prevailed as the most recognized gospel singer through the 1960s and until her death. Jackson was never a blues singer; she devoted her singing to worship. Yet she applied the forceful hit-the-note-from-above attack of Bessie Smith to the new gospel melodies, inducing fervency in her listeners by emphasizing words on accented downbeats.

Another significant sacred singer of the late 1930s was Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Working more out of independent traditions—her “That’s All” (1938) is based on Washington Phillips’s “Denomination Blues” (1928)—she brought glamour, flair, and showmanship to sacred music, and she influenced some blues singers in the 1940s.

Singers and Styles of the 1940s–1970s

Three of the great singers to emerge out of the Kansas City jazz scene of the 1930s and early 1940s were Walter Brown, Big Joe Turner, and Jimmy Rushing. Brown was a singer of medium volume and range who during his tenure with the Jay McShann band introduced the blues standard “Confessing the Blues.” Turner and Rushing were blues shouters, using their chests and throats to increase their volume. Rushing and Helen Humes were featured singers with the Count Basie band. Turner initially performed with boogie-woogie pianist Pete Johnson, then with various bands. Their styles were a predecessor to

jump-blues, whose singers were also shouters, especially Wynonie Harris, Louis Jordan, and Roy Milton. Jackie Brenston and B. B. King as young singers were in the jump-blues style. Something of the Leroy Carr charm with contemporary popular music crooning was combined by Cecil Gant, whose success with “I Wonder” led him to be dubbed by newspapers and magazines as “the sepia Sinatra.”

During the post–World War II years, jazz and blues singing were evolving rapidly as chromatic modern “bebop” jazz emerged. Billie Holiday is regarded more as a jazz singer, but her trademark “Billie’s Blues” theme identifies her as distinctively as the signature melodies that Lonnie Johnson and Peetie Wheatstraw used repeatedly to many sets of lyrics identified them. Jazz singers Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan were capable of singing blues, but after the 1940s they turned increasingly to popular music standards for material. Joe Williams, a later vocalist with the Count Basie band, sang blues to scales other than the typical pentatonic scales (see the *Scales* entry). With jazz pushing musical boundaries and many urban musicians of the East and West coasts performing new jump-blues and ballads, the new in-between blues were called rhythm and blues in the press and in the record industry, especially in *Billboard* magazine.

Among the singers of rhythm and blues in Los Angeles and other West Coast cities were Nat “King” Cole, who was known for suave classics such as “Route 66” and “Straighten Up and Fly Right” before turning to mainstream popular music in the 1950s, Jimmy Witherspoon, Lowell Fulson, and Charles Brown. They followed in the footsteps of Gant, and they in turn influenced later soul and rock musicians, especially with regard to repertoire.

Among women singers of the 1950s, LaVern Baker and Ruth Brown were among the most popular on the Atlantic label roster, while “Big” Maybelle Smith scored a distinctive hit for Savoy Records with “Candy.” Little Esther Phillips and Etta James began as teenage rhythm and blues singers in the mid-1950s. Other notables of the decade include Marie Adams, Marjorie Hendricks (especially her recordings with Ray Charles), and Willa Mae “Big Mama” Thornton, the first singer of “Hound Dog” and “Ball and Chain.” Dinah Washington had a less heavy chest register to her voice than Big Maybelle or Big Mama Thornton, but she used her voice to piercing and forceful effect on jump-blues recordings of the 1950s and the early 1960s.

Meanwhile, musicians migrating from the South to Chicago were becoming distinctive artists. Chief

among them was Muddy Waters, who through 1941 in Mississippi modeled himself after Son House and Robert Johnson. After moving to Chicago in 1943, he copied little mannerisms from John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson and “Big” Maceo Merriweather, eventually growing into the persona he presents in “Hoochie Coochie Man.” On casual listening, it seems that Howlin’ Wolf had strained his voice too much over time, but biographers report that his vocal cords were damaged during childhood; nonetheless, his singing was loud, resonant, and powerful, even without microphone amplification. Elmore James also reportedly had a powerful voice, regardless of how it was recorded during studio sessions. Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II” recorded several excellent jump-blues style cuts for the Trumpet label in the early 1950s; however, his subsequent works for the Chess label show him as a skillful communicator of witty, intricate lyrics, such as in “Your Funeral and My Trial.” A distinctive singer of the times was J. B. Lenoir, whose high chirping voice may be an acquired taste for some listeners today but whose 1950s hits such as “Mama Talk to Your Daughter” helped to establish a new style for younger West Side Chicago singers.

Many of these southern transplants recorded for Chess Records in Chicago, a label that had two artists in the mid- to late 1950s who straddled blues and early rock ’n’ roll: Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley. Berry was from St. Louis, and his influences ranged from country music to jump-blues. His lyrics were narrative or descriptive, sung at medium volume and in a near-conversational register to render the words intelligible. His songs and manner of singing would be copied by hundreds of white rock singers in America and England from the mid-1950s through the 1960s. Bo Diddley made much use of urban African American cultural elements such as his booming voice, street-talk lyrics, and “shave-and-a-haircut, two bits” guitar rhythms. Even so, he had numerous cultural crossover hits with “Bo Diddley” and “I’m a Man.” Ten years later, Koko Taylor continued the Chess line of African American blues that attracted white rock fans and performers with her rendition of Willie Dixon’s “Wang Dang Doodle.” Its compilation of traditional partying toasts and word games gave structure to the lyrics, which Taylor would improvise upon each time she performed it on stage. It became her signature song.

Singers based in the South sustained their styles through the 1940s and 1950s, and they were

“rediscovered” by white audiences in the 1960s. Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins, whose melodies could be traced to the Leroy Carr blues of the 1930s, was a clever, inventive lyricist. John Lee Hooker’s low drawl on “Boogie Chillen” (1948) earned him much work in black clubs and for small record labels and later in the white folk music circuit. Professor Longhair had a fluid baritone voice and a sharp whistle that he would use indelibly in countless performances of “Going to the Mardi Gras.” Robert Pete Williams—whose prison blues are equaled only by those recorded by Bukka White in 1940—often sang in alternate pentatonic scales, which gave his singing a unique quality. In the north Mississippi hill country east of the Delta, Fred McDowell was discovered, and his brand of singing would be continued by R. L. Burnside. Among the younger singers/guitarists of the 1960s were Odetta, a classically trained contralto who turned to performing blues and blues antecedents, including ballads and sacred music, Jerry Ricks, and Taj Mahal.

White Singers in Rock Music and Folk Revival Music

“Rock ’n’ roll music” was part imitation by whites of blues and part combination of that white imitation with elements of American popular music and country music. “Rock music” may be characterized as the exercise and extension of white Anglo musicians of rock ’n’ roll, and by 1980 it was outgrowing the blues roots. Between the rock ’n’ roll and rock eras was the 1959–1974 folk music revival, in which acoustic blues elements and pre–World War II musicians were rediscovered.

Elvis Presley, the first great rock ’n’ roll singer, succeeded in singing blues in part because he understood and sang in the southern gospel tradition. Much the same can be said for Jerry Lee Lewis, who brought more of the ecstatic, if not sanctified, side of gospel music into his singing.

The folk music revival yielded several notable singers accompanying themselves on acoustic guitars. Bob Dylan recorded several blues on his early albums, cultivating his distinct nasal vocal timbre. Dave Van Ronk was an overlooked standout whose vocalism should be studied anew.

In 1963, British singers and their rock bands began performing blues; they were enormously

successful with white British and American audiences from the start, although their best performances would occur later in their careers. Chief among them was Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, whose voice had an affected imitative drawl that by 1965 acquired a tensile sound at high register, as in “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” (1965); his best and most versatile singing may be heard on records made in 1968 through 1973. Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin possessed a voice of astounding high range and volume that he pushed and overused over time, but his singing from 1968 through 1975 went beyond contemporary blues styles and set new boundaries in the rock style. In between were such singers as Van Morrison, Steve Winwood, Keith Relf of the Yardbirds, Jack Bruce of Cream, Eric Burdon, Joe Cocker, and Rod Stewart.

American singers emerged, enriching rock with new timbres. Jimi Hendrix, a blues journeyman who was introduced to rock audiences in 1967, possessed a baritone voice versatile in singing blues, soul, and rock. Canned Heat had two blues students as vocalists, Bob Hite was the closest that rock had to a jump-blues shouter, and Al Wilson sang in falsetto akin to Skip James. Janis Joplin sounded like equal parts Willa Mae Thornton and Etta James, but she also used expressively a light high shriek as a timbral contrast. John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival was and remains an appreciative student of blues and early rock ‘n’ roll, but his songwriting and singing have been among the few successful American efforts to develop past the mere imitation of blues models. Steven Tyler of the band Aerosmith had a clear, beautiful tenor voice that became raspy in the mid- to late 1970s, a change to which he has adapted to incorporate little blues and rock singing tricks and devices to keep the listeners’ attentions.

Only a very few of the most distinctive white singers in rock music can be mentioned in this short space. Yet they and their commercial imitators helped to narrow the variety of blues familiar—and acceptable—to white audiences on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, namely, the Mississippi Delta–Chicago lineage of blues from 1930 through 1960. Meanwhile, young African American singers in the blues tradition were developing according to new sounds in gospel and soul during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. When white audiences sampled contemporary blues in the wake of Robert Cray’s “Smoking Gun” hit in 1986, what they heard was different from the Muddy Waters Chicago-style blues they expected.

Soul Style Innovators Since 1960

From the 1950s through the 1960s, there was a shift in vocal technique, seemingly reaching for the pitches from below instead of forcefully from above. At the same time, new composers appeared, who devised new styles of melodies to match their vocal approach. The results would be what is known as soul music, which would be performed by and for African American audiences whether in a gospel performance or in a blues club.

Many new developments seemed to be first recorded by gospel and sacred artists. Sacred vocal quartets dated back to the Fisk Jubilee Singers touring groups organized by John Work II in 1899, if not back to the first Jubilee groups of 1871. Post–World War II groups continued to cultivate harmony, but increasingly they had a featured tenor singing lead melody. Top sacred male groups of the 1950s included the Soul Stirrers with Sam Cooke and the Dixie Hummingbirds. Among the women, a generation younger than Mahalia Jackson, were Marion Williams, Clara Ward, and Shirley Caesar. Future soul great Mavis Staples began singing with her father and siblings in the Staples Singers. Among the new composers was Reverend James Cleveland, who apprenticed as performer and arranger for the Caravans in 1954–1958. Perhaps the most famous, and certainly the most expressive and dramatic sermonizer, was Reverend C. L. Franklin of Detroit, whose daughter Aretha performed in his church. It was only a matter of time before these new sacred expressions would be applied in blues and other kinds of black popular music.

Two key singers credited as soul innovators are Ray Charles and Sam Cooke. Charles had begun in the late 1940s as an imitator of the smooth jazz singing of Nat “King” Cole and Charles Brown. In 1953–1954 he began singing in a sanctified style, accompanying himself with gospel style piano. “Hallelujah I Love Her So” (1954, Atlantic) was a signal performance. Melodic antecedents of another Charles song, “Leave My Woman Alone,” may be heard in the songs “I Was Born to Preach the Gospel” by Washington Phillips (1928) and “The Liar” by Reverend Isaiah Nelton. Before long, his backing singers the Raelettes were providing antiphonal responses to Charles on “Drown in My Own Tears,” “Lonely Avenue,” and especially “What I’d Say.” Among Charles’s associates was the songwriter and singer Percy Mayfield, whose own solo

recordings are excellent in their own right. Sam Cooke was the son of a preacher, and in the early 1950s he was the star tenor of the Soul Stirrers. He established his popular music career with hits for Keen and RCA-Victor labels, and among his protégées were Lou Rawls (who performed with Cooke on “Bring It On Home to Me”) and Johnnie Taylor. Cooke’s last record before his untimely 1964 death, “A Change Is Gonna Come,” remains a unique ethical and sacred expression.

Other male singers of the 1950s and 1960s who straddled the popular and gospel music worlds were Jackie Wilson and Little Richard Penniman. Wilson’s recording of “Higher and Higher” (1964) may be heard either as a rapturous love song or as an ecstatic sacred tune. Little Richard took blues shouting to new extremes; his Specialty label performances of “Long Tall Sally” and “Lucille” are some of the loudest and most frenetic twelve-bar blues on records. Screamin’ Jay Hawkins used his low register to thrilling effect on “I’ve Put a Spell on You.” The Impressions with Curtis Mayfield and Jerry Butler were famous for “People Get Ready.” Gene Chandler remains famous to all audiences for popularizing the song “Duke of Earl,” but his studio and live performances of Curtis Mayfield’s “Rainbow” are stunning. The Temptations, the Motown label’s lead male group, recorded several blues in popular 1960s style, the grittiest being “I Wish It Would Rain” featuring David Ruffin in declamatory, preaching style. Solomon Burke set his soul stride with “Cry to Me” for Atlantic in 1962. The Four Tops with Levi Stubbs may be heard as stylistic predecessors to Melvin and the Blue Notes with Teddy Pendergrass in the 1970s.

Bobby Bland has been one of the top draws in soul and contemporary blues since recording “I Pity the Fool” in 1957. His Duke label recordings through the 1970s are influential classics of southern soul. In later years he adopted a kind of snort or gargle as ornaments, citing Reverend C. L. Franklin as his source; listeners are divided on their effectiveness.

Memphis soul music was a distinctive style, often with singers performing with trumpet and saxophone ensembles, and much of it was produced at two studios there. Stax’s great singer was Otis Redding, who modeled his early style after Sam Cooke and rapidly developed into stunning maturity: “Try a Little Tenderness” and “Sitting on the Dock of the Bay” are among the highlights of a career cut short by a 1967 plane crash. Albert King was as influential a singer as he was a guitarist, showing

how to sing with a slightly gravelly baritone voice; “I’ll Play the Blues for You” and “Born Under a Bad Sign” are influential examples of his vocal style. Other performers who made significant soul-blues records at Stax were Rufus Thomas and his daughter Carla Thomas, Little Milton, and Isaac Hayes. Hi Records under Willie Mitchell’s production supervision had the wildly popular Al Green, who sang soft, intimate vocals on “Love and Happiness” and other 1970s hits. Another great Hi singer was Ann Peebles, who recorded the classic “Couldn’t Stand the Rain.”

The developments of the 1950s and 1960s were echoed in Chicago by “West Side” artists Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and Buddy Guy with Junior Wells. Magic Sam’s 1967 *West Side Soul* LP is a compendium of active blues singing styles, including those of J. B. Lenoir, Otis Rush, and Junior Parker, with touches of Bobby Bland and Roosevelt Sykes.

Aretha Franklin is rightly considered the exemplary woman soul singer of the 1960s and 1970s, on the basis of the quality of her performances and of how many singers have been imitating her. However, the fact that Fontella Bass’s Chess record “Rescue Me” (1965) is often confused as being sung by Franklin illustrates the common gospel roots both singers shared in the Clara Ward Singers, with whom Bass’s mother Martha Bass was a member. Franklin’s late 1960s recordings for Atlantic of songs such as “You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman,” “Chain of Fools,” and “Respect” were best-sellers, and Franklin’s graceful voice was a new model for young women singers. In contrast was the gritty voice of Mavis Staples (as heard on the Staples Singers’ “Respect Yourself”). Gladys Knight made many records with the Pips, including an exciting “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” and the hit about reverse migration, “Midnight Train to Georgia” (1974). One singer obviously influenced by Knight was Dorothy Moore, whose “Misty Blue” helped to secure Malaco a place as a new soul blues label.

In the 1960s, one of the leading singers on records was Vee-Jay label artist Jimmy Reed, whose slightly laconic delivery suggested irony in classics such as “Bright Lights, Big City,” “Big Boss Man,” and “Baby What You Want Me to Do.” Some elements of the latter song may be heard in George Jackson’s composition “Down Home Blues” as performed by Z. Z. Hill, a master of late 1970s/early 1980s soul blues.

The lyrics of many blueswomen since the 1970s have been as raucous as any of those of their

predecessors of the 1920s and 1930s. The tunes and manners of singing may be worlds apart, but lyric themes of love, cheating, and sex remain up front. Millie Jackson, Peggy Scott-Adams, and Denise LaSalle (“Drop That Zero”) helped to revive this attitude, and Lynn White (“Home Girl”) and Barbara Carr have kept it fresh and ever-renewing.

Prevailing Vocal Styles Since 1990

Many blues vocal styles are still practiced today; however, it may be easier to identify those styles that have become extinct. Field hollers and work chants have not been heard in fields or farms since the early 1970s, except perhaps an occasional demonstration by retired railroad “gandy dancers” at a folklife festival. The “classic blues” of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith are hardly if ever performed today, except as tributes. Singer/guitarist John Cephas is among the few to perform Piedmont and Bentonia style blues on stage. Mississippi blues outside the Charlie Patton–Son House–Willie Brown–Robert Johnson lineage, such as Bo Carter or Jim Jackson, are hardly if ever performed by current blues revivalists Corey Harris and Alvin Youngblood Hart. Bill Broonzy, Tampa Red, and other prewar Chicago stars are rarely imitated. Leroy Carr and Big Maceo live on through the imitators of Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters, respectively.

New influences have crept in. Andrae Crouch has been the gospel artist of blues influence since 1980. Prince, particularly his early 1980s albums *1999* and *Purple Rain*, has been important to young Mississippi singers such as Dave Malone. It is too early to tell if rap has been a direct influence on blues or an indirect encouragement of revival of African American oral arts, but Clarksdale, Mississippi, favorite O. B. Buchana has effectively fused spoken chant with soul songs.

Even so, the postwar heroes remain. B. B. King and Bobby Bland still influence southern singers, with Albert King a close third. John Lee Hooker’s influence abides in rock as well as in blues, through rock groups as varied as Z Z Top or Big Head Todd and the Monsters. White rock singers often draw inspiration from Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, and Ray Charles, although often one can tell if they are imitating Wolf or Charles only by recognizing the song being performed. Dinah Washington

is a favorite model for women singing with jump-style bands.

Contemporary masters of blues abound today. Bobby Rush’s showmanship sometimes overshadows his versatile singing, which can range from brisk Las Vegas opening numbers such as “Big Fat Woman” to slow blues such as “Tough Tittie”; any singer inserting a nasal “hey, hey” while pausing briefly during onstage patter to the audience is imitating Rush. Latimore is another southern favorite, with a marvelous bass voice. Robert Cray may be underappreciated by some fans because he doesn’t sing like Muddy Waters, but his voice has a distinctive sound, and it has been well maintained by good singing technique. Big Jack Johnson sounds by turns like B. B. King and Albert King, and he is a first-rate improviser of candid lyrics on topical events. Among women, Etta James and Koko Taylor are the matriarchs. Toni Lynn Washington is one of the best discoveries of the 1990s blues revival. Irma Thomas recorded “Time Is on My Side” before the Rolling Stones, but today she is a seasoned singer—and one of the best—in New Orleans. Shemekia Copeland is a younger singer to follow in the future, and not just because her father was late blues legend Johnny Clyde Copeland.

The introduction of the electric microphone has had a lasting impact on blues singing. Today’s blues singers never had to sing field hollers, or sing without a microphone except for a high school or college theater production. What some younger singers may lack in vocal power, they make up for in subtlety and nuance.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SINGLETON, T-BONE

SINGLETON, T-BONE

b. New Orleans, LA

Gospel and blues guitarist and singer in Baton Rouge. From the mid- to late 1970s he was guitarist in the regional band the Condors, performing blues and soul music. Since then, he has been ordained a Baptist minister, but he continues to write and play blues in Baton Rouge clubs and regional festivals. JSP Records released his debut CD *Walkin' the Floor* in 1996.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

SIRENS

Record label (Illinois, 1975–1976, 2001–). Owner: Steven Barnett Dolins (b. November 2, 1956, Chicago, IL). Highland Park, Illinois–based. Artists include Barrelhouse Chuck (Chuck Goering), Blind John Davis, Detroit Junior, Erwin Helfer, Willie Mabon, Billie & DeDe Pierce, Pinetop Perkins, James "Bat, the Hummingbird" Robinson, Speckled Red, Doug Suggs, Sunnyland Slim, Jimmy Walker, and Skinny Williams. In 1975, they reissued "Primitive Piano," originally issued in 1957 on Erwin Helfer's Tone Records.

ROBERT EAGLE

SISTA MONICA

b. Monica Parker, 1956; Gary, IN

Powerful and versatile gospel-influenced vocalist who has become an internationally known artist since she began her career on the West Coast in 1992. Her first album appeared on Thunderbird (1995), and since then she has put out four albums (including a gospel one) on her own Mo Muscle label.

RAY ASTBURY

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Sista Monica Blues Singer website, <http://www.sistamonica.com>.

Selected Recording

Alive in Europe (Mo Muscle MMRE-716).

SITTIN' IN WITH/JADE/JAX/ MAINSTREAM

Sittin' In With was founded in 1948 by Bob Shad (1920–1985), and it was operated by him in New York City as part of Castle Records, Inc. An artists-and-repertoire veteran from Savoy and various jazz labels in the mid-1940s, Shad initially recorded jazz musicians such as Chu Berry, Stan Getz, and Wardell Gray. Later he recorded blues, including rural artists such as Lightnin' Hopkins and Houston rhythm and blues artists including Elmore Nixon, Peppermint Harris, and Goree Carter. In 1951 he sold Sittin' In With to the Mercury label and joined the latter firm as A&R man; discographers note that Sittin' In With releases continued through 1953.

Jade and Jax were subsidiary labels operated by Shad during the life of Sittin' In With; both issued blues, rhythm and blues, and jazz, and Jade issued gospel, too. When he left Mercury in the 1960s, he founded Mainstream, which issued albums as well as singles. He reissued some Sittin' In With material on Mainstream, and among new sessions he produced the debut LP of Big Brother and the Holding Company with singer Janis Joplin (1967). In later years Shad was assisted by his daughter Tamara Shad, and since his death she has continued to maintain the tapes of her father's session productions.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: Larkin

SLOAN, HENRY

Active ca. 1900 near Drew, MS

Unrecorded guitarist known to have been at Dockery's Plantation while Charlie Patton was living and beginning his performing career there. The extent of his influence on Patton, if any, has been speculated on by writers such as Robert Palmer and Robert Santelli.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SMALL, DRINK

b. 28 January 1933; Bishopville, SC

Small's early career was as singer and guitarist with the Spiritualaires, who recorded for Vee-Jay in the 1950s. With the group's breakup in 1959, Small began performing blues, building a regional southeast coast following. He has grown more versatile, singing traditional blues and soul music alike. He has recorded for Ichiban and Mapleshade, as well as for a few smaller labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG**SMITH, ALBERT "AL"**

b. 23 November 1923; Bolivar County, MS
d. 7 February 1974; Chicago, IL

Record producer for Vee-Jay and ABC-Bluesway labels. He grew up around Rosedale, Mississippi; his mother owned a barrelhouse. He learned bass in a school band. Sometime in or before 1945 he moved to Chicago, where that year he formed an eight-instrument band. His initial experience in the recording industry was as sideman, bandleader, and/or producer with small Chicago labels, including Chance, United, JOB, and U.S.A. From the 1950s to the mid-1960s, he produced Vee-Jay sessions with Jimmy Reed, the doo-wop groups The Spaniels and The Dells, Jerry Butler, and John Lee Hooker. He continued to produce Reed and Hooker for Bluesway after Vee-Jay folded. He also was Reed's manager through 1970–1971. The 1974 *Living Blues* magazine obituary records his blunt yet effective ways as manager and producer and his work for the benefit of underprivileged children and prisoners.

EDWARD KOMARA

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O'Neal, Jim. "Al Smith" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 16 (Spring 1974): 5, 31.

Discography: LSFP**SMITH, "BARKIN" BILL**

b. 14 August 1928; Cleveland, MS
d. 23 April 2000; Chicago, IL

The self-taught Smith sang with a gospel quartet in his youth and learned blues from listening to 78s. As a young man in East St. Louis, he made his first stage appearance with Chuck Berry. In Detroit he performed the ballads of Arthur Prysock, Nat King Cole, and others in working-class taverns.

He moved to Chicago in the late 1950s and honed his skills as a singing bartender at the Cougar Club. Working at the Cotton Club at Clybourn and Weed, he acquired the nickname "Barkin'" Bill from bandmate Homesick James Williamson, perhaps for the high-pitched catch in his voice at the end of a vocal phrase, or for his comic lechery from the bandstand. Debonair and graceful despite his meager circumstances, he publicly gave credit to the women who raised him. Smith sang on Maxwell Street and for decades did the rounds of clubs, making stand-up appearances with the bands of Elmore James, Kansas City Red, Hound Dog Taylor, Little Walter, Lonnie Brooks, Eddie C. Campbell, and others, though he apparently rarely held a gig himself.

He appeared on a Wolf anthology in 1987 and reportedly recorded a single with bassist and singer Hayes Ware. Smith appeared regularly with guitarist Dave Specter and recorded on his 1991 Delmark recording *Bluebird Blues*, after which Smith began securing regular gigs, including one he held several years at Shaw's Crab House. In 1994 Smith returned to Delmark with guitarist Steve Freund to record *Gotcha!*, a fully realized collection of ballads and blues with horn accompaniment that showcased his stylish, mellifluous delivery and jazzy phrasing, which has been likened to that of Joe Williams, Johnny Hartman, and Brook Benton. Throughout the 1990s he enjoyed fairly regular work in Chicago clubs and also appeared at the Long Beach and Chicago blues festivals and toured the western United States and Canada with Sam Lay and Madison Slim.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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Discography

Gotcha! (Delmark DE-672).

SMITH, BESSIE

b. 15 April 1894; Chattanooga, TN

d. 26 September 1937; Clarksdale, MS

Bessie Smith was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Laura and William Smith. Her birthday remains uncertain for she came from a large and poor family where records were not kept accurately.

Her father died when she was very young and her mother when she was just nine, leaving the children to take care of themselves. Bessie and her brother Clarence began performing on street corners, with Clarence, an able showman, teaching her to sing and dance. Another early influence on Bessie's magisterial style was a long forgotten and unrecorded singer called Cora Fisher. After Clarence joined the Moses Stokes Minstrel Show, Bessie continued performing for pennies with another brother, Andrew.

Then Clarence obtained her an audition with the minstrel show and in 1912, Bessie Smith became a professional dancer. It seems unlikely today—Bessie

was six feet tall and weighed two hundred pounds in her prime—but she seems to have been popular and she moved on to be a chorus girl and finally a featured singer.

Also working for the troupe at the time Bessie joined was Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, an earthy and superb singer whose work was deeply rooted in the traditional country blues. Different accounts give different versions of the relationship between the two—one story even claims Ma and her husband Will kidnapped the girl and forced to her perform. It's far more likely that Ma taught Bessie some of the rudiments of presenting a song and that Bessie learned far more by simply watching the older woman carefully. In any event, when Bessie began recording, she included a number of Ma Rainey songs, and Ma's influence is clear in the way Bessie created new songs from familiar tunes or simply adapted existing ones by emphasizing a slightly different pitch than usual. Whereas Ma was down to earth and used lots of traditional material reworked for small blues band or jazz group accompaniment, Bessie added a vaudeville or cabaret element that expanded her appeal outside Rainey's core audience.

Bessie was an established name among southern black audiences by the time she moved to Philadelphia in 1921. She had traveled the South to tent shows and decrepit theatres and had her first press notice in the *Chicago Defender* of May 25, 1918. She was also the headliner in the revue *Liberty Bell* and starred with pianist Clarence Williams in *How Come* with soprano sax giant Sidney Bechet as a Chinese laundryman. It was then Frank Walker of Columbia Records sent Williams to sign Bessie for Columbia.

Stories persist that she auditioned for a number of record companies including Edison, Emerson, Black Swan, and Okeh, all of whom rejected her. In retrospect it seems a stunning error, on a level with British Decca rejecting the Beatles, but these were the days when the young Louis Armstrong had to be moved away from recording horns for fear his sheer power would make the cutting stylus jump. Bessie's enormous, dynamic voice and strong accent were like no other and far removed from the light theatre singers who had gone before, and the verdict was that she was too loud and rough. The usually canny Thomas Edison even declared her voice “no good.”

The discographies list one unissued title, “I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate” recorded for Okeh in January 1923, but it was Frank Walker who had the foresight to tie her to a one-year contract. He recalled later how she had arrived in New York for the recording sessions looking “tall, and fat and scared,” which is possibly why her first two sides were rejected.



Bessie Smith performing at the Apollo Theatre, New York City, in 1936. This is the only known performance photo of Smith. (Image courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

But the next day she cut two songs that made up the biggest selling 78 of her career—"Down Hearted Blues," written by singer Alberta Hunter, and "Gulf Coast Blues," by the ubiquitous Williams. The coupling sold an estimated eight hundred thousand copies, and this in a market that had scarcely begun to open up. Bessie subsequently recorded around 160 sides of different kinds for Columbia but never repeated this success.

For some reason, many of Bessie's recordings were accompanied by piano only, which was, presumably, to put all the focus on the voice. But although that might have worked in live performance, on records the results were often disappointing. In so many cases, what could have been an incisive cutting-edge performances are left to Bessie's imperious vocals while the pianists—Fletcher Henderson, Irving Johns, and Porter Grainger—plod along monotonously at a funereal tempo. However, she is at her unrestrained best on the joyous "Cake Walking Babies (From Home)" (1925) with a unit from the Henderson orchestra.

Bessie Smith had a strong assertive personality and a vicious temper, and in the new freedom of the 1920s, she was a hard drinker, fighter, and regular lover of both men and women. She made no secret of her sexual involvement with chorus girls, and her niece, Ruby Walker, recalled her sleeping openly with a dancer called Lillian in early 1927. Yet in 1923, she married a man named Jack Gee, who later tried to exploit the relationship. The marriage was often violent. On one occasion, when Bessie caught Jack with a chorus girl, she beat up the girl and threw her off a train and chased Gee down the tracks shooting at him. Echoes of the relationship, which ended in separation, can be heard in the lyrics of "Please Help Get Him Off My Mind" (1928). It was recorded at the same session as her poignant lament for her drinking, "Me and My Gin."

Bessie was also utterly intolerant of racial prejudice and made no attempt to ingratiate herself into white society. She had the occasional white friend such as Walker and New York socialites the Van Vechtens, but distrusted and disliked most others. In the theaters, she was ferociously territorial, refusing to appear with other blues singers (Walker managed to persuade her to twice record with Clara Smith but her singing shows her disdain for the proceedings), and she was not above absconding with a show's props and costumes, leaving the cast and crew penniless and stranded.

Her career on record lasted ten years and she recorded with some of the best musicians around—Louis Armstrong, James P. Johnson, Don Redman, Charlie Green, Coleman Hawkins, and many

more—but many of the songs are in the popular form rather than blues. Yet there were plenty of examples of the truly great Bessie in her prime—the extraordinarily intense "Hateful Blues" from 1924, the magnificent duets with Armstrong (1925), "Trombone Cholly" with Charlie Green (1927), or the way she transmutes the double entendres of "Empty Bed Blues" into a moving, nostalgic lament. And "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out" from 1929 could almost be seen as her epitaph. That same year she starred in the Kenneth Adams–W. C. Handy film short *St. Louis Blues* with James P. Johnson, Thomas Morris, Joe Smith, and the Hall Johnson Choir. It is the only film footage of her that survives.

But the classic blues era was over and Columbia dropped her in 1931. She recorded once more in a John Hammond all-star session in 1933 with Benny Goodman, Jack Teagarden, and Chu Berry and sounds as relaxed and gin soaked as on all her later records when her voice had become rougher and more passionate.

She continued to perform in the South but in September 1937 was involved in a car accident close to Clarksdale, Mississippi. John Hammond claimed she bled to death because she was refused treatment because of racial prejudice but later admitted he was wrong. In fact, she was treated by a doctor on the spot and in hospital but was too badly hurt to survive. The myth continued largely thanks to a 1959 play by Edward Albee, *The Death of Bessie Smith*. She is remembered in the Bessie Smith Hall in Chattanooga's African American Museum.

DAVID HARRISON

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Discography: DGR

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Bessie Smith: The Complete Recordings (Frog, UK, DGF40-DGF47).

SMITH, BOSTON

SMITH, BOSTON

b. 1907; Texas

d. 22 December 1989; Dallas, TX

Pianist; brother of Buster Smith. He was taught piano by Doug Finnell and was active in Dallas his entire life. His most notable associations were with Buster Smith and Lil' Son Jackson, including the latter's 1951–1953 recordings.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SMITH, BUSTER

b. Henry Franklin Smith, 24 August 1904; Alford (or Alsdorf), TX

d. 10 August 1991; Dallas, TX

Influential saxophonist and big band arranger. His career through the early 1940s was in early big bands, including those led by Walter Page, Bennie Moten, Count Basie, and Benny Carter. His postwar activity was mostly in Dallas, leading his Heatwave of Swing orchestra and providing accompaniment to local appearances by T-Bone Walker, Pee Wee Crayton, Big Joe Turner, and Lowell Fulson, among others.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: Lord

SMITH, BYTHER

b. April 17, 1932; Monticello, MS

Byther Smith's raw, insistent blues offers no hints of the country-western he first played as a teen roustabout entertaining nearby cowboys. Orphaned as a boy, Smith was raised by an aunt and uncle before setting out on his own doing construction work at age fifteen. It was while working in construction that some neighboring farmhands taught him to play upright bass, and he found he could make money playing country-western dances. When he showed an

interest in boxing, his aunt bought him an electric bass to try to encourage a career in music instead.

In 1956, Smith and his wife, Etta Mae, moved to Chicago at the urging of his cousin, J. B. Lenoir, where he found gigs playing bass in a jazz combo. By the early 1960s, he had picked up a regular job as rhythm guitarist for Otis Rush, but only after having received instruction on guitar from Robert Lockwood. In the early 1970s, he joined Junior Wells's band, and in the late 1970s, he toured with George "Harmonica" Smith and Big Mama Thornton.

It was in the 1980s that Smith finally established himself as a leader in his own right. In 1983, he recorded *Tell Me How You Like It* for the Grits label, which led to opportunities to tour Europe. Recording sessions in Europe built on his newfound momentum, and Smith spent the remainder of the decade touring and recording on small labels. The 1993 release of *I'm a Mad Man* on Rounder's Bullseye Blues subsidiary finally put Smith in the national limelight, where he has comfortably remained.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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I'm a Mad Man (1993, Bullseye Blues/Rounder 9527).

Throw Away the Book (2004, Black and Tan 17).

SMITH, CARRIE

b. 25 August 1941; Fort Gaines, GA

Vocalist. Her secular career began in 1970 with Big Tiny Little. Thereafter, she performed "classic blues" extensively with touring jazz groups, including at European festivals and on recordings (for example, *Do Your Duty*, 1976, Black & Blue 33.103), continuing into the twenty-first century, including frequent work with Bross Townsend.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: AMG

SMITH, CLARA

b. 1894; Spartanburg, SC
 d. 3 February 1935; Detroit, MI

Singer of the 1920s "classic blues" era whose trademark was low, gloomy moans on such blues as "Awful Moaning Blues." From 1923 through 1932 she recorded for Columbia. She continued performing until a fatal heart attack in 1935.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Chilton; Harris; Larkin; New Grove; Santelli; Southern

Discography: DGR**SMITH, CLARENCE "PINE TOP"**

b. 11 January 1904; Orion, AL
 d. 15 March 1929; Chicago, IL

Clarence "Pinetop" Smith was born in Orion, Alabama, on January 11, 1904, and in his teens moved to Birmingham, Alabama, which at that time had a strong blues piano tradition. As a pianist, he was soon proficient enough to appear on the TOBA circuit, accompanying such artists as Butterbeans and Susie, Ma and Pa Rainey, and Coot Grant and Sox Wilson. He was discovered, playing in a Pittsburgh club, by Cow Cow Davenport, who was a record company talent scout as well as an outstanding pianist. In about 1924 he moved to Chicago where, with his wife and two children, he moved into an apartment at 4435 Prairie Avenue on South Parkway near to fellow pianists Meade "Lux" Lewis and Albert Ammons.

In 1928 he was contacted by record executive Mayo Williams, who arranged for him to record for Vocalion the songs and piano solos for which he is justifiably famous. The titles cut at his first four sessions were never issued, but Williams persevered and ultimately Smith produced eleven classic sides (including three alternate takes). Two months later, on March 15, 1929, he was dead. According to the police file, Smith was attending a dance in a hall at 10002 Orleans Street when one of the dancers created a disturbance by pulling out the shirt tails of other dancers. A fight broke out, and a shot was fired by a man selling sandwiches and pop. Smith, reputedly an innocent bystander, was hit and although rushed to Cook County Hospital, died soon after arrival. His death certificate states that the cause of death was "Haemorrhage due to gunshot wound in chest fired by gun held in hands of David Bell, now held to Grand Jury on a charge of

manslaughter." At his trial Bell was acquitted, claiming that he attempted to stop the fight by firing his gun and that the shooting was accidental.

It has been suggested that Smith may have been a small-time bootlegger, like many others, hustling cheap alcohol. This may explain his "Pine Top" nickname and also the title of "Jump Steady Blues," both expressions having connections with locally distilled liquor.

It seems possible that the original title of the classic "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie" was "Pine Top's Trouble" because that is how the alternate take is introduced by Smith and that is also the title of one of his earlier unissued recordings. The origin of the term boogie (woogie is a reduplication) is obscure, although at this period it probably had sexual connotations. Although he was far from the first to play in this style, Smith's record firmly associated the word in the public's mind with the insistent eight-to-the-bar bass. It is alleged that the melody of "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie" first appeared in sheet music form in Axel Christensen's *Symphonic No. 4* published in 1925, and the double-handed trill introduction closely resembles the Hersal Thomas intro to "Special Delivery Blues" by Sippie Wallace (1926). Nevertheless, Smith fashioned these elements into a timeless performance. Played with a light, deft touch, the single note eight-to-the-bar bass has a terrific swing, and Smith's commentary shows that this was music for dancing as well as listening.

The flip side, "Pine Top Blues," has many of the melodic elements of "Pine Top's Boogie" and uses a similar bass and tempo. The mood is different, however, for this is vaudeville, a blues with pathos but not intended to be taken too seriously. Of his other recordings, "Jump Steady Blues" bounces along and uses a walking octave bass to support a variety of elegant, graceful right-hand variations executed with his customary dexterity. "I'm Sober Now" is a vaudeville piece that is interesting for the juxtaposition of "gin-mill" or sentimental passages with more gutsy blues choruses.

Coming from the milieu that produced Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, and Jimmy Yancey, among others, Smith was on the brink of an illustrious career when he was shot, depriving the world of an exceptional talent.

BOB HALL

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Discography: DGR

SMITH, EFFIE

b. Effie Criner, 1915–1916

d. March 1977; Los Angeles, CA

Singer, record promoter. Smith sang as one of the Three Shades of Rhythm for Lionel Hampton in the 1930s. She recorded in many postwar West Coast blues sessions through 1953. In 1959 with her husband, John Criner, she had a hit comedy single “Dial That Telephone” for the Spot label. She turned to record and artist promotion until shortly before her death from cancer, and she was active in the Hollywood/Beverly Hills chapter of the NAACP.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSF

SMITH, FLOYD

b. 25 January 1917; St. Louis, MO

d. 29 March 1982; Indianapolis, IN

One of the pioneer musicians of the electric guitar. Smith’s reputation was made by his debut session with Andy Kirk and His Clouds of Joy, in 1939, producing his Decca hit, “Floyd’s Guitar Blues,” which exhibited slide playing on the Gibson ES-150. Except during his Army service in World War II, Smith worked with Andy Kirk until 1946.

That year, Smith left the Kirk band and formed a trio with pianist Bill Huff and bassist Booker Collins, performing at the famed DuSable Lounge in Chicago

until 1950. His trio recorded a new version of “Floyd’s Guitar Blues” for Hy-Tone in 1946. He also recorded for Aristocrat and recorded two sessions for Decca (1951 and 1952) as a member of combos led by Horace Henderson. During 1953–1957, Smith was a member of Wild Bill Davis’s highly successful organ trio. Smith made an LP in France for Black & Blue in 1972. “Floyd’s Guitar Blues” was frequently recorded by blues guitarists and was copied by Chuck Berry for his “Blues for Hawaiians” (1958).

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: Lord; LSF

SMITH, GEORGE “HARMONICA”

b. 22 April 1924; Helena, AR

d. 2 October 1983; Los Angeles, CA

George Smith began playing harmonica at age four and worked with a country band while in his early teens. He hoboed throughout the South from the late 1930s through the 1940s, frequently playing on the streets. He moved to Chicago in 1951 and worked with Muddy Waters and Otis Rush, and he patterned his exceptional harmonica style after Little Walter and pop/classical harmonicist Larry Adler. Smith was considered by many to be one of the greatest blues chromatic harmonica players. He recorded numerous sides for RPM in the mid-1950s, including “Telephone Blues.” He relocated to Los Angeles in 1955 and became an important figure on the West Coast blues scene, influencing many local musicians, such as William Clarke and Rod Piazza.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSF

SMITH, HUEY “PIANO”

b. 26 January 1934; New Orleans, LA

Huey “Piano” Smith grew up listening to blues and gospel music in New Orleans and began playing the piano at age fifteen. In 1950 he began playing clubs with Guitar Slim and quickly became a popular session pianist. He can be heard on recordings by Smiley Lewis, Lloyd Price, and Little Richard from the early 1950s. During this time Smith also worked with guitarist Earl King. In the mid-1950s Smith formed his own group, the Clowns, which included popular local blues singer and female impersonator Bobby Marchan on lead vocals.

In 1957 Smith and the Clowns signed with the Ace label and scored a top five R&B hit with “Rockin’ Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu.” It was in 1958 that Smith recorded the double-sided “Don’t You Just Know It”/“High Blood Pressure” that would prove to be his biggest hit, reaching the pop top ten and the R&B top five. In 1959 Smith recorded the original “Sea Cruise.” Seeking more pop radio play, Ace had white teenage R&B singer Frankie Ford overdub a vocal onto Smith’s backing track, which made the song a hit nationwide.

Afterward, Smith recorded a few more novelty songs in an attempt to re-create the success of “Rockin’ Pneumonia”; some even utilized the same type of illness joke, such as “Tu-Ber-Cu-Lucas and the Sinus Blues.” Unfortunately, it didn’t work, and Marchan left the Clowns in 1960 after scoring a hit with “There Is Something on Your Mind.” He was replaced by female singer Gerri Hall and male vocalist Curley Moore. After switching briefly to Imperial records, Smith returned to Ace to record one last chart single entitled “Pop Eye” in 1962. In 1964 Smith switched to the Instant label and spent the rest of the decade touring with the Clowns and other alternative groups such as the Huey’s and the Pitter Patters. By 1970, after being unable to return to the charts, Smith retired from music permanently and converted to the Jehovah’s Witnesses religion.

ROBERT SORICELLI

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

SMITH, J. B.

b. Johnnie B. Smith, ca. 1917; Unknown location

d. Unknown

Johnnie B. Smith was perhaps the last link to the old tradition of prison songs and hollers. Mainly known as a worksong leader, Smith sang unaccompanied for folklorist Bruce Jackson at the Ramsey Prison Farm in Texas in the mid-1960s while serving a forty-five-year sentence for murder. Smith’s nine compositions—three of which were originally issued on Takoma—contain a closely knit total of 132 stanzas, which are partly new and partly traditional. The latter are often drawn from earlier blues recordings and retain a typical blues flavor.

The songs present melodies that are more or less the same but at different tempos and with a sometimes estranging yet poetically very effective ABB’A’ verse structure, which adds further meaning to the treatment of subjects such as imprisonment, injustice, hopelessness, the passing of time, and so on seen from both an individual and communal perspective. In 1967 Smith was paroled and took up preaching in Amarillo, Texas, but was later jailed again for breaking his parole.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: LSFP

SMITH, JOHN T.

Active 1920s–ca. 1940

Texas singer and guitarist who recorded as “Funny Paper Smith” and “Howling Wolf” in 1930–1931. It is believed he was jailed for a murder, and he died while imprisoned.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

SMITH, LUCIUS

b. 9 November 1884; Panola County, MS
d. 18 May 1980; Sardis, MS

Self-taught traditional musician (banjo, drums, kazoo) and blues singer. Smith received banjo lessons from multi-instrumentalist Sid Hemphill (1876–1963), with whom he played for fifty-four years. They were first recorded at Sledge in 1942 for the Library of Congress and again at Senatobia, Mississippi, in 1959. After Hemphill's death in 1963, Smith had nobody to play music with, but he was recorded again at Sardis in 1971 at age seventy nine. The birth and death data here are from his obituary in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* newspaper, as reported in turn in *Living Blues*.

Smith had removed the first four frets of his instrument, using a high bridge, fretless neck, neutral third in the tuning. His playing represents a very early banjo style with a high degree of percussion and syncopation. He employs both the downstroke "frailing" technique as well as flat finger picking with thumb and index finger, as on "New Railroad" (1971). As a vocalist Smith speaks rather than sings the words, preferring to let his banjo "do the talking."

RAINER E. LOTZ

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Discography

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SMITH, MAMIE

b. 26 May 1883; Cincinnati, OH
d. 16 August 1946; New York City, NY

Mamie Smith is credited with being the first black vocalist to record a blues song, Perry Bradford's "Crazy Blues," on August 10, 1920.

Life

Smith began her professional career while still a child in her hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio, as a member of the Four Dancing Mitchells. As a teenager, she later

joined Salem Tutt-Whitney's The Smart Set. Before the age of thirty, Smith was working in Harlem as a dancer, chorus girl, and cabaret singer.

In 1920 she met Perry Bradford, a successful composer and singer who had toured nationally on the minstrel circuit. Bradford, along with OKeh Records executive Fred Hager, arranged for Smith to record "That Thing Called Love" and "You Can't Keep a Good Man Down" on February 14, 1920. Following the modest yet encouraging success of these selections, Smith went into the OKeh studios again in August to record Bradford's "Crazy Blues" and "It's Right Here for You." "Crazy Blues" was an immediate success, selling seventy-five thousand copies within the first month of its release and approximately one million within a year, making Smith an instant celebrity.

Smith capitalized on this good fortune by touring the United States for almost a decade. She also recorded approximately one hundred selections in that time. However, the financial hardships of the Great Depression left people with little money for concert going and record buying, and this put an end to Smith's touring and recording career. She attempted a comeback in the early 1940s, appearing in a few films (the most notable being *Paradise in Harlem*), but her efforts were largely unsuccessful.

She was known for her extravagant lifestyle, and the abrupt end to her success led to significant financial difficulty. Without a hit record since 1923 or a national touring schedule to support her, Smith died almost penniless. She was buried in the Frederick Douglas Memorial Park on Staten Island, New York, without a headstone.

Music

Despite being the first black vocalist to record a blues song, Smith was not a virtuosic blues stylist. Even her most historically significant hit, "Crazy Blues," featured a relatively simple melodic structure. Moreover, her sound comes more out of the vaudeville tradition, often noted for fine enunciation and a polished performance but also for a lack of emotional connection with the lyrics (as heard on "That Thing Called Love," a vaudeville-style ballad). Many of the female artists associated with the classic blues style of the 1920s who also had an extensive vaudeville background have been similarly critiqued. Generally acknowledged as having a noteworthy stage presence, Smith's continued success throughout the decade may have ultimately had more to do with her live performances than her recording credentials.

The musical accompaniment to Smith's brand of blues demonstrated a comparable affinity for stage performance, featuring standardized forms and polished arrangements. Even her backing bands were sophisticated, filled with professional jazz musicians from the vaudeville touring circuit (as heard on "Jenny's Ball" and "Don't Advertise Your Man"). From her earliest recordings with the Jazz Hounds (as heard on "Fare Thee Honey Blues" and "Don't Care Blues"), Smith featured talented individuals such as cornetist Johnny Dunn, pianist Willie "The Lion" Smith, violinist George Bell, and clarinetist William "Buster" Bailey. The trend of keeping her bands filled with talented musicians continued throughout her career. Among the notable musicians who backed Smith were saxophonists Coleman Hawkins and Sydney Bechet, trumpeters Ward Pinkett and Bill Dillard, cornetist Bubber Miley, and trombonist Jimmy Archey.

Influence

In addition to being the first black vocalist to record the blues, Smith's phenomenal success with "Crazy Blues" amply demonstrated the financial viability of the black recording market. This led to the widespread recruitment and promotion of black blues singers (particularly females) in the 1920s, many of whom were important figures in the development of the classic blues. Though often overlooked by historians, the success of these ladies may have paved the way for many of their male counterparts in the late 1920s.

Due to her erratic behavior in public, her extravagant spending habits, and stories of her many love affairs, Smith's turbulent and risqué lifestyle was highly publicized. She capitalized on this publicity by cultivating a lavish stage appearance replete with sequins, rhinestones, and peacock feathers. Further, through the colorful antics of her private life presented in the gossip columns and her distinctive stage appearance, Smith played a significant role in contributing to the archetypal "Queen of the Blues" persona.

JEFF JONES

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Discography: AMG; DGR

Selected Recordings

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SMITH, MOSES "WHISPERING"

- b. 25 January 1932; West Brookhaven, MS
d. 28 April 1984; Baton Rouge, LA

A singer with a powerful and hoarse voice, Whispering Smith with his down-home harp playing has graced many sessions by fellow Louisiana swamp bluesmen Silas Hogan and Lightnin' Slim. He also recorded under his own name several sides on 45s and anthologies as well as an uneven album. He also toured frequently in Europe, drawing a strong following there.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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Swamp Blues (1998, Ace CD 661).

SMITH, ROBERT CURTIS

- b. 1930; Mississippi

Guitarist and singer influenced by Bill Broonzy. He was discovered in Wade Walton's barbershop

SMITH, ROBERT CURTIS

in Clarksdale, Mississippi. He recorded an LP for Bluesville/Prestige in 1963, and excerpts of his playing were included on the Arhoolie anthology *I Have to Paint My Face*. It is said he turned to religion in 1969.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: LSFP

SMITH, TALMADGE “TAB”

b. 11 January 1909; Kinston, NC

d. 17 August 1971; St. Louis, MO

Soprano and alto saxophonist in jazz and jump-blues. His first career phase through World War II was in big bands, often with Lucky Millinder. His postwar phase was in jump-blues and rhythm and blues, recording for the United label in 1951–1957. He retired to St. Louis, Missouri, in the early 1960s. His United sessions have been reissued on the Delmark label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Scott Yanow); Larkin

Discography: AMG; Lord

SMITH, TRIXIE

b. 1895; Atlanta, GA

d. 21 September 1943; New York City, NY

Smith attended Selma University in Selma, Alabama. She moved to New York in 1915 and began a career as a vaudeville and TOBA circuit singer. From 1922 through 1938 she recorded for the Black Swan, Paramount, and Decca labels. After 1940, she performed less often, sometimes for charity benefits.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin; New Grove Jazz; Santelli

Discography: DGR

SMITH, WILLIE “BIG EYES”

b. 19 January 1936; Helena, AR

Smith's influences included listening to 78s and to KFFA King Biscuit radio shows, some of which were broadcast from Helena's Miller Theater, where he saw Joe Willie Wilkins, Rice Miller, and also Muddy Waters, whose band he would later join.

On a Chicago visit in 1953 his mother took him to hear Waters at the Zanzibar, where Henry Strong's harp playing inspired him to learn that instrument. He remained in Chicago and soon formed a band with Clifton James and Bobby Lee Burns. As “Little Willie” Smith he played in the Rocket Four, led by “Big Boy” Spires.

He played harmonica on Bo Diddley sessions that produced “Diddey Wah Diddey” (1955) and “Who Do You Love” (1956), but after seeing Fred Below play drums, he switched instruments and for a time worked in Little Hudson (Shower)'s Red Devil Trio before drumming in Muddy Waters's “junior band,” which held his gigs while he toured.

In 1959 Waters invited him to record on a tribute to Big Bill Broonzy, which led to more gigs and another Waters session in 1960 before his gaining the full-time chair in 1961. He left in the mid-1960s to work to support his family, though he continued to record with Waters. During his hiatus he backed Big Walter Horton's Argo sessions that yielded the classics “La Cucaracha” and “Hard Hearted Woman.” Smith returned to Waters's band in 1968 and remained until 1980. During his eighteen-year tenure with Waters, Smith is estimated to have participated in twelve sessions yielding eighty-four tracks, contributing crisp shuffles and his strong backbeat with its seductive lag. In 1980 an economic dispute with Waters led the band to break away. During four years with The Legendary Band, Smith continued to tour internationally and appeared on six albums for Rounder and Ichiban.

In 1995 he recorded *Bag Full of Blues* for Blind Pig and *Blues from the Heart* for Juke Joint as a bandleader. Smith has won four Handy awards for his drum work, and his son Kenny Smith is also a fine drummer.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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Discography: AMG

SMITH, WILLIE MAE FORD “MOTHER”

b. 1906; Rolling Fork, MS
d. 2 February 1994; St. Louis, MO

Gospel singer Willie Mae Ford Smith moved with her family to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1918. In 1922 she performed with her sisters at the National Baptist Convention. From there she built a career in black sacred music. An important meeting was with Thomas A. Dorsey in 1932, who asked her to assist in the organization of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. Her singing of her song “If You Just Keep Still” is said to have set a new standard in gospel solo performance. She joined the Church of God Apostolic, and her music began to take on a sanctified style. Few recordings of her were made, and then only from the late 1940s and after. In later years she devoted herself to evangelical work.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG; Gospel Records

SMITHER, CHRIS

b. 11 November 1944; Miami, FL

Singer-songwriter-guitarist Chris Smither is a veteran of the 1960s folk explosion, and although never achieving stardom, he has built up a loyal following for his bluesy acoustic music and his rough, gravelly vocals. Raised in New Orleans, Smither dropped out of college to pursue music full time in the mid-1960s. While living and performing in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he briefly shared boarding with Mississippi Fred McDowell and Son House. Smither has been more active in the recording studio since the early 1990s, which has led to his being in demand on the folk circuit.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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Happier Blue (1993, HighTone 8095).
Live as I’ll Ever Be (2000, HighTone 8120).

SMOKESTACK LIGHTNING

“Smokestack Lightning,” one of the most widely known blues songs, was written and first recorded by Howlin’ Wolf (Chester Burnett) in 1956 (Chess single #161). The musicians on this recording were Howlin’ Wolf on vocals and harmonica, Hosea Lee Kennar on piano, Willie Johnson and Hubert Sumlin on guitars, Earl Phillips on drums, and Willie Dixon on bass. An earlier song with the same title, also credited to Burnett, was recorded by Muddy Waters in 1954, though it used a different chord structure and shared only a few lines.

The popularity of Howlin’ Wolf’s recording surely owes something to its aural ominousness. Played in the key of E, the song consists essentially of a single chord, delineated by a repetitive riff played on one guitar and shadowed by piano. A second guitarist plays a complementary bass figure. The main guitar riff—which starts the song and is soon joined by drums—begins on the first off-beat of each measure (that is, it begins on the first “and” in a beat pattern of “one and two and three and four and . . .”). The drummer accents the beginning of the riff each time by playing a two-beat snare fill on the off-beat, not a normal practice. An unexpected beat pattern is immediately established that makes the song seem to halt and lurch forward at the same time.

Howlin’ Wolf sings the lyrics with fury. Paralleling the instrumental starkness, he uses only a few notes, mostly E with glides down to D and B and up to G, essentially paralleling the guitar riff. Between the verses he plays harmonica, drawing out an E note and playing a rhythm that also parallels the guitar riff.

Lyricaly the song is fragmented, consisting of short verses loosely around the theme of betrayed love and the singer’s intention to hobo away. A tag

Don’t you hear me cryin’?

is repeated after every verse, as well as a vocalized “whoa-ooo,” Howlin’ Wolf’s well-known howl that is made more ominous by being given extra reverb in the mix. According to statements made by Howlin’ Wolf, the song is about a train, which seems clear in the imagery of a smokestack and the singer’s plea,

Stop your train, let a poor boy ride.

The metaphor behind the phrase “smokestack lightning,” however, is elusive. Earlier recorded uses of the image also carry a train association, but one version suggests as well the tolling of funeral, rather than

SMOKESTACK LIGHTNING

train, bells. The Mississippi Sheiks' "Stop and Listen Blues" has the verses

Smokestack lightnin', bells that shine like gold . . . I
found my baby layin' on the cooling board / Stop and
listen, hear the bell that tones; I had a sweet little
faro, but she's dead and gone.

Death is also a theme in Lightnin' Hopkins's 1960s recorded version.

Interestingly, Howlin' Wolf doesn't complete the metaphor of bells in his song, only suggesting

smokestack lightnin', shining just like gold.

Both the Mississippi Sheiks and Muddy Waters sing that the train bells shine like gold, as does Charlie Patton in his use of similar images and phrases in "Moon Going Down" (1930, Paramount 13014). In a song clearly depicting a train,

Lord, I think I heard that Helena whistle blow,

Patton includes the line,

The smokestack is black, and the bell it shine like gold.

This is the only recorded use of the image that does not use the metaphor of lightning, but instead gives a perhaps more sensible picture of a black smokestack set against a train's shiny gold bells. Patton's line may suggest an older version of the metaphor.

This mystery behind the metaphor is compounded by Lightnin' Hopkins's singing

smokes like lightning,

perhaps meaning a train speeding as fast as lightning. Nevertheless, the phrase "smokestack lightning" does conjure a picture of a well-stoked, speeding locomotive spewing live embers from its smokestack, a display that at night could have looked like flashes of lightning.

Other artists who recorded the song include Fred McDowell and Butch Cage with Willie Thomas. Howlin' Wolf's recording inspired cover versions by blues revival and rock artists, including the Animals and John Hammond. A popular live recording of the song by the Yardbirds appeared on their British LP *Five Live Yardbirds* in 1964.

JOSEPH A. LAROSE

SMOKEY BABE

b. Robert Brown, 1927; Itta Bena, MS

d. 1975; Louisiana

A self-taught original guitarist, Louisiana resident Smokey Babe was discovered by Harry Oster, who recorded him for Folk-Lyric (later reissued on

Arhoolie), Storyville, and a solo album for Bluesville at the beginning of the 1960s.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: LSFP

SMOTHERS, ABRAHAM "LITTLE SMOKEY"

b. 2 January 1939; Tchula, MS

Smothers first played on a broom wire (see the *Diddley Bow* entry) before learning his brother's guitar. He traveled to Chicago in 1956 and within two years was playing and recording as a member of Howlin' Wolf's band, following in the footsteps of older brother Otis ("Big Smokey"), who had preceded him to both Chicago and Wolf's band. Also like "Big Smokey," he was briefly a member of Muddy Waters's band.

Smokey fraternized with such musician peers as Magic Sam, Shakey Jake, Bo Diddley, Otis Rush, Leo Wilson, Syl Johnson, and his cousins Lester Davenport and Lee Shot Williams. Unlike his brother, "Little Smokey" favored a jazzier sound and recruited horn players for his showband, which played the Blue Flame, Club Tay May, Pepper's, and the Playhouse.

Harmonicist Paul Butterfield joined Smother's band after sitting in at the Blue Flame and shortly after was working with them in Old Town. *An Offer You Can't Refuse*, released on Red Lightnin, features material recorded at Big John's in 1963. Smothers, however, in what is now seen as a gross injustice, was replaced by Michael Bloomfield before the landmark Paul Butterfield Blues Band recording for Elektra in 1965, which introduced many young whites to the blues.

Smothers continued to appear locally and toured with Earl Hooker and later with Jimmy Rogers and The Legendary Blues Band, but gave up music for a time to raise his family.

He recorded with Mojo Buford and Lee Shot Williams, but apart from a 1979 Big Bear *American Blues Legends* tour LP (recorded before a tour he actually missed), it wasn't until *Bossman* on Black Magic in 1993 that Smothers had a recording as a

bandleader. In 1996 Smothers followed it with *Second Time Around* on the German Crosscut label.

He has been a guest on the shows and recordings of his former student and Butterfield bandmember Elvin Bishop, and in 2000 they shared billing on Alligator's *That's My Partner*.

Smothers is recognized as a powerful singer and an incendiary and knowledgeable guitarist, and in addition to Elvin Bishop, he has been an influence to Jumpin' Willie Cobbs, Illinois Slim, and Billy Flynn.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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SMOTHERS, OTIS "BIG SMOKEY"

- b. 21 March 1929; Lexington, MS
d. 23 July 1993; Chicago, IL

Chicago bluesman Otis "Big Smokey" Smothers, older brother of Abraham "Little Smokey" Smothers, was raised in Tchula, Mississippi, and was first inspired to be a musician by hearing his aunt play guitar. Although forbidden to listen to blues, Smothers would sneak off to hear Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson II" and Elmore James in local juke joints.

He moved to Chicago at age seventeen and quickly immersed himself in its vibrant blues scene. By the early 1950s, he was playing in a variety of bands, which often included Henry Strong, Good Rockin' Charles, and Joe Carter, frequently performing under the name The Muddy Waters Junior Band. Smothers recorded as a sideman for Chess in the mid- to late 1950s and in 1956 joined Howlin' Wolf's band and recorded with the group on several sessions. In 1960, Smothers signed with the Federal label and recorded some excellent original Chicago blues in the vein of Waters and Jimmy Reed. His cleverly quirky and often humorous songwriting was showcased on gems such as "Give It Back" and "I've Been Drinking Muddy Water."

Throughout the 1960s, Smothers worked as a sideman with a number of musicians, including Waters

and Little Walter. A casualty of the decreasing popularity of Chicago blues during the 1970s, he worked mainly outside music throughout the decade. By the early 1980s, Smothers began gigging around Chicago again and recorded for Rooster, Wolf, and Red Beans. Unfortunately, with his career in resurgence, he was diagnosed with lung cancer and succumbed to the disease at age sixty four.

GENE TOMKO

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SNOW, EDDIE

- b. 9 March 1921; Corona, TN
d. 21 November 1998; Springfield, IL

Singer and pianist. Eddie Snow was influenced by Memphis Slim, whom he heard in his father's juke joint. He began playing piano as a child, performing professionally as a teenager. After World War II he participated in the blues activities in Memphis, West Memphis, Osceola, Arkansas, and Cairo, Illinois. He recorded for Sun label in 1952–1955. He was mostly inactive in music from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, but he returned to performing in the 1980s, often with guitarist Floyd Murphy.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

SOILEAU, FLOYD

- b. 2 November 1938; Ville Platte, LA

Record producer and entrepreneur. Since 1956, he has owned Floyd's Record Shop in Ville Platte,

SOILEAU, FLOYD

Louisiana. He began his first label, Big Mamou, in 1957, issuing singles on the new 45-rpm disc format instead of the outgoing 78-rpm format, which attracted regional musicians to him. Speaking French and English, he has been well positioned to bring Cajun, Creole, and zydeco music to records, especially on the Maison du Soul label established in 1973. All of his labels (ten as of 1991) are managed through his Flat Town Music Company.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SOLBERG, JAMES

b. 8 June 1951; Superior, WI

Electric guitarist. After starting in Wisconsin, he began working in the 1970s through the 1980s with Sam Lay, Luther Allison, and John Lee Hooker. His most prominent work as a sideman was as songwriter and second guitarist on Allison's Alligator CDs in the 1990s. He has recorded several highly regarded releases under his own name for the MP and Ruf labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

SOLOMON, CLIFFORD

b. 17 January 1931; Los Angeles, CA
d. 21 June 2004; Los Angeles, CA

Tenor/alto/soprano saxophonist. Solomon worked with Lionel Hampton, Charles Brown (1950–1952 and 1954–1955), Roy Milton (1956–1957), and Johnny Otis (1969–1970), for Ray Charles (1974–1987) and Johnny Otis (1988–1990). Recorded as Clifford "King" Solomon in 1953. He rejoined Charles Brown in 1990.

HOWARD RYE

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SONS OF BLUES, THE (THE S.O.B. BAND)

A Chicago-based electric blues and R&B band that formed in the mid-1970s. The band was initially composed of the sons of fairly prominent blues musicians; guitarist Lurrie Bell was the son of harpist Carey Bell, and bassist Freddie Dixon was the son of bassist/composer Willie Dixon. The group also included Billy Branch on harmonica and Jeff Ruffin on drums (though Garland Whiteside played drums at the first gig in which the band performed together). The band formed partly out of a suggestion by Jim O'Neal, then editor of *Living Blues* magazine, to take a band to perform at the 1977 Berlin Jazz Festival.

Alligator Records included the Sons of Blues on two anthology releases in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1982, Billy Branch was the only remaining member of the group, as Bell and Dixon had left for other bands. Branch added bassist J. W. Williams (formerly of the Chi-Town Hustlers), drummer Mose Rutues, and guitarist Carlos Johnson to carry on the Sons of Blues name. Johnson was soon replaced by Carl Weathersby. The slightly renamed Sons of Blues/Chi-Town Hustlers recorded their first album, *Where's the Money*, in 1984 for the Red Beans label. In 1997, Weathersby left the group. Though the band has gone through a number of personnel changes, it continues to perform.

GREG JOHNSON

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Discography

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See also Bell, Lurrie; Branch, William Earl "Billy"; Weathersby, Carl

SONY/LEGACY/COLUMBIA/ EPIC/OKEH

Among this family of five labels, Columbia has the longest and most distinguished history. On the strength of the jazz artists signed by John Hammond in the 1930s, the company became a jazz giant throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s, at one point having on its roster Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, and Louis Armstrong, as well as eventually signing Charles Mingus and Thelonious Monk. Okeh was revived as the subsidiary for blues, R&B, and country music, and

eventually Epic also became a site for some jazz and blues sessions.

But with the changing nature of the recording industry from a leisure time entity being operated by music lovers into a multinational profit-making enterprise, Columbia has gradually evolved from being a label known for adventurous signings and ambitious releases into one that signs only polished and established performers and then helps them further that success. To that end, Ellington, Mingus, Ornette Coleman, and several others were released from Columbia during the Clive Davis years, although they made a major comeback for other labels during the 1970s. Besides the electric edition of Miles Davis, they also had on board the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Weather Report, and Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters* aggregation.

However, the classic albums by Janis Joplin in 1967–1970 were being kept in print, and Johnny Winter was making his early recordings at this time, including his 1969 double LP set *Second Winter*. During the 1980s, Columbia introduced Wynton and Branford Marsalis, helping make Wynton the most visible jazz musician of his generation and a multiple Grammy winner as both a jazz and classical performer. Meanwhile, the Epic subsidiary was releasing new albums by Texas blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan throughout the 1980s.

Today, Columbia is owned by Sony and is far more noticeable in terms of jazz and blues for the magnificent reissue program being operated by its Legacy division. Legacy is reissuing the entire Columbia output of Miles Davis, has rereleased numerous classics from other label mainstays, and continues various programs devoted to jazz, soul, country, rock, and blues. Two different OKeh reissue lines have also reissued to domestic availability valuable material from Big Maybelle, the Treniers, and some other vintage artists. The most recent new OKeh album was a 2004 Keb Mo' set. Legacy also had its Roots 'n' Blues reissue series produced by Lawrence Cohn. Among those reissues are the complete recordings of Robert Johnson and of Bessie Smith and the ARC and Columbia performances of Leadbelly, Bukka White, Willie McTell, and Emmett Smith.

RON WYNN

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See also **Columbia**; **OKeh**

SOUL

Introduction

The word “soul” obviously has its origins in the religious experience. Our soul is that ineffable part of our being that many understand as our core, our essence. It is the soul that churchgoing folk believe survives the corporeal part of our body—our flesh, blood, bones, organs, and brain—and that ascends to heaven upon our death. Just as the soul is understood to represent the essence of a given individual, soul music was understood, implicitly by some, explicitly by others, to represent in some sense the very essence of black culture.

The term was first used in a musical sense to refer to a style of jazz current in the 1950s. An offshoot of hard bop, sometimes later designated “soul jazz,” a few of this style's primary exponents were Horace Silver, Bobby Timmons, and Lee Morgan. The recordings of these musicians, in many senses, can be understood as a return to the musical roots of black culture in response to the increasing complexities of the bebop style originated by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie in the early and mid-1940s. Consequently, soul jazz drew extensively on techniques, gestures, and at times the repertoire of blues and gospel.

As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s, the term soul began to be used to refer to aspects of African American personality, style, or culture, as in “she's a soul sister,” “he's got soul,” “boy, was that soulful,” and, of course, as an appellation for down-home cooking, “soul food.”

In the 1960s, “soul music” came to designate a set of styles of rhythm and blues, demarcated by region, that were largely rooted in black sacred music, including gospel music that, although having antecedents in the 1950s, came to life at the turn of the decade, peaked in the mid- to late 1960s, and by the mid-1970s was supplanted by funk and disco as the most important contemporary styles of black popular music.

While many styles of postwar black popular music were clearly influenced by black gospel, in the mid- and late 1950s there appeared a handful of records such as “Please Please Please” by James Brown and “What'd I Say” by Ray Charles that in all but lyrical content might as well have come straight out of the church. At the same time, as the 1950s gave way to the 1960s, gospel artists such as Sam Cooke and Aretha Franklin were beginning to sing secular music,

helping to lay the seeds for the genre of soul in the 1960s. A discussions of the soul music of the 1960s and 1970s by region follows.

Memphis, Tennessee

Home to Stax Records, Hi Records, and American Sound Studios, as well as lesser concerns such as Goldwax, Pepper, and XL Records, Memphis was the single most important location for what has come to be known as southern soul music. Stax was started in 1958 as Satellite Records, a country and pop label, by fiddler and banker Jim Stewart. The label developed into a soul music powerhouse when in 1960 Stewart relocated his operation to an abandoned movie theatre in a neighborhood whose demographic was rapidly changing from white to black. Although the company subsequently attempted to record pop, rock, and country records sporadically (in addition to jazz, gospel, and black comedy), its importance lies in the soul recordings released on Satellite, Stax, and the Volt, Enterprise, Respect, and Truth subsidiaries between 1960 and 1975.

Stax Records was for all intents and purposes the seat of southern soul. When one hears recordings by artists such as Aretha Franklin on Atlantic or Etta James's mid- and late 1960s Chess recordings cut in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, one is hearing southern soul music as defined by the sound of Stax Records.

While the influence of gospel music is manifest in all of the regional varieties of soul, gospel had a much greater influence on southern soul than it did on the northern styles found in Detroit and Philadelphia. A common southern compositional technique was to simply take a gospel song and, by changing the words, transform it into secular soul music. In the 1950s Ray Charles transformed "I Got Religion" into "I Got a Woman." At Stax, Isaac Hayes and David Porter took "You Don't Know Like I Know What the Lord Has Done for Me" and made it into "You Don't Know Like I Know What that Woman Has Done for Me."

Stax vocalists such as Sam Moore of Sam and Dave, Otis Redding, and Ollie Nightingale quite clearly made much more extensive use of gospel vocal techniques (particularly melismatic decoration and timbral variation) than did most northern singers, and Stax pianists such as Booker T. Jones and Marvell Thomas regularly employed gospel voicings while playing block chords on a triplet grid, such as one would commonly hear in church. Stax songwriters gave the gospel subdominant IV chord much more prominence than did their Motown

counterparts, while in turn they regularly minimized their use of the more common secular dominant V chord. Finally, Stax recordings nearly always ended with an extended ad lib outro that would fade while reaching emotional catharsis, emulating a typical gospel recording, where a significant portion of the performance would be devoted to emotional improvising over a repeated riff and chord progression.

Just as the sound of Stax was inextricably tied to the church, the black church was inextricably tied to the Civil Rights Movement. Putting these points of the triangle together, it is safe to say that the sound of southern soul music cannot be understood except as being influenced by, and having an influence on, the Civil Rights era.

It is interesting to note in this regard that, to quote Peter Guralnick in *Sweet Soul Music*, the sound of Stax and the sound of southern soul in general were born out of the impulse toward integration. Both the Stax rhythm and horn sections (Booker T. and the MGs and the Memphis Horns, respectively) comprised both white and black members. While all were engaged in the creation of African American music, the racial composition of the band invariably meant that a number of pop, rock, and country influences would also play a part in the creation of the Stax sound. Most notable among these are guitarist Steve Cropper's use of open sixth dyads (typically used by country guitarists such as Chet Atkins) and bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn's tendency to craft melodic, contrapuntal bass lines (Paul McCartney being a big influence in this regard).

Precisely summing up the sound on the several hundred recordings issued on Stax and Volt in the 1960s is nigh-on impossible. One can, though, delimit in general terms the main features of the Stax sound in the 1960s, all of which stand in stark contrast to the musical practices of Detroit's Motown Records, Stax's main rival in this period. The Stax sound consisted of (1) an emphasis on bass and drum patterns; (2) the prominent use of horns, which often took the place of background vocals; (3) prearranged horn ensembles, often serving as bridges in place of the more typical "improvised" guitar, keyboard, or sax solos heard on many popular music recordings (this concept was originated by Otis Redding); (4) a "less is more" aesthetic manifested in sparse textures, the absence of ride cymbals on a lot of vocal recordings, unison horn lines, the absence of strings until late 1968, and so on; (5) a mix that placed the vocalist in the middle of the recording rather than way out in front; (6) a prominent gospel influence as heard in the juxtaposition of organ and piano, the extensive use of the IV chord, and, most important, in the deployment by vocalists at Stax of extensive timbral variation,

pitch inflection, melismas, and highly syncopated phrasing, all in the service of emotional catharsis; and (7) a delayed back beat. The latter was developed in 1965 by Steve Cropper and drummer Al Jackson, Jr., while working with Wilson Pickett on "(In the Midnight Hour)," in response to a new dance on the scene known as the Jerk, and became a component of virtually every Stax recording through the end of the decade. Jackson would become a leading force at Stax until its demise in the mid-1970s.

The readily identifiable sound of Stax in the 1960s gave way to a disparate array of new and different sounds in the 1970s. Most significant of these were Isaac Hayes's groundbreaking fusion of soul, pop, jazz, classical, and rock on his *Hot Buttered Soul*, *Isaac Hayes Movement*, and *To Be Continued* albums. Charting R&B, pop, jazz, and easy listening, these albums transformed the political economy of the black music industry, contradicting the age-old wisdom that black LPs (as opposed to singles) could not sell in significant numbers. Hayes's breakthrough paved the way for subsequent album-oriented projects by Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield, Funkadelic, and others. In 1971, Hayes pioneered the black soundtrack with the double album *Shaft*.

A few blocks from Stax was the Royal Recording Studio, home of Hi Records. Hi had also started in the late 1950s but, with the exception of a series of instrumental hits by trumpeter Willie Mitchell, focused on pop, country, and rockabilly records. This changed in the late 1960s when owner Joe Cuoghi put Mitchell in charge of signing and producing R&B talent at Hi. During the next decade, Mitchell perfected an original, distinctive Hi sound on records by Al Green, Ann Peebles, Syl Johnson, Otis Clay, O. V. Wright, and Denise LaSalle (the latter released on Westbound Records) that came to define much of what was great about soul music in the 1970s.

In the wake of the success of both Stax and Hi, a number of smaller labels were started in Memphis. Of these Goldwax, with hits by James Carr and the Ovation, was the most significant. Many of the Goldwax recordings were cut at Chips Moman's American Sound Studios on the north side of Memphis. Moman and the American house band were equally adept at cutting pop, country, soul, and jazz records. Between November 1967 and January 1971, they were responsible for an astonishing 117 chart hits. These included soul records by James Carr, James and Bobby Purify, Oscar Toney, Jr., Wilson Pickett, Bobby Womack, Solomon Burke, the Sweet Inspirations, King Curtis, Joe Tex, Joe Simon, the Masqueraders, Arthur Alexander, and Roy Hamilton.

Alabama

As improbable as it might seem, outside of Memphis the most important region for the recording of southern soul music was the cluster of towns in northern Alabama collectively referred to as Muscle Shoals. Situated on either side of the Tennessee River in the dry counties of Colbert and Lauderdale, neither Florence, Sheffield, Tuscumbia, nor Muscle Shoals itself boasted a music scene to speak of through the late 1950s. That was to change when an eccentric local visionary, Tom Stafford, joined forces with two songwriters from Hamilton, Alabama, Billy Sherrill and Rick Hall, to form FAME (Florence, Alabama, Music Enterprises) Music in 1959. Quickly transforming a doctor's office located above Stafford's father's drugstore into a studio, FAME began to attract an array of aspiring white country, rock, and R&B musicians, including Donnie Fritts, Spooner Oldham, and Dan Penn. The latter two would write soul standards such as "I'm Your Puppet" for James and Bobby Purify and later become important parts of the Memphis music scene, working with Chips Moman at American Sound Studios in the latter half of the 1960s.

The FAME partnership ended in mid-1960, with Rick Hall retaining the name while building a new studio modeled on Nashville's RCA complex in an old tobacco and candy warehouse. In mid-1961 Hall produced "You Better Move On" (later covered by the Rolling Stones) backed with "A Shot of Rhythm and Blues" for local black singer Arthur Alexander, accompaniment being provided by an all-white local rhythm section including future Elvis Presley sidemen drummer Jerry Carrigan and pianist David Briggs. During the next few years Hall produced hits on a freelance basis for Tommy Roe and the Tams. In 1964, he produced "Steal Away" for local gospel singer Jimmy Hughes and issued it on his own Fame label. Shortly after the record broke into the R&B top twenty, the Fame rhythm section quit and went to Nashville. Undeterred, Hall put together a second rhythm section, heavily influenced by Booker T. and the MGs, consisting of drummer Roger Hawkins, bassist David Hood, guitarist Jimmy Johnson, and keyboard player Spooner Oldham. In 1967 when the latter headed to Memphis, Barry Beckett joined what became known as the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section.

The first southern soul record to reach number one on the pop charts and the first hit recorded by Hall's new rhythm section was Percy Sledge's "When a Man Loves a Woman." Cut in early 1966 at another local studio, Quinvy, the record was picked up by Atlantic for national distribution. Since Stax had closed its

doors to outdoor sessions several months earlier, Atlantic immediately turned to Rick Hall and Fame studios for subsequent sessions by Wilson Pickett (“Land of 1000 Dances,” “Mustang Sally”) as well as Aretha Franklin’s first Atlantic session (“I Never Loved a Man,” “Do Right Woman”). After the first Franklin session, Wexler and Hall had a falling out and no further Atlantic artists were brought to Fame. Hall next began producing hits for Chess soul singers including Laura Lee, Etta James, and Irma Thomas, for Goldwax artists including James Carr, as well as for two local artists he had signed to Fame, Clarence Carter and Candi Staton.

In April 1969, Hall’s rhythm section left to start their own Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, financing being provided by Atlantic Records. During the next several years, the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section cut dozens of soul hits for artists such as the Staple Singers, Johnnie Taylor, Mel and Tim, Luther Ingram, Margie Joseph, Veda Brown, and the Soul Children as well as pop and rock hits for artists as diverse as Simon and Garfunkel, Cher, Rod Stewart, Willie Nelson, and Bob Seger. Over at Fame, Rick Hall was cutting pure pop hits for the Osmonds (“One Bad Apple”), Paul Anka (“You’re Having My Baby”), and Mac Davis (“Don’t Get Hooked on Me”). In 1973 alone, recordings produced by Rick Hall held the number one slot on the pop charts for an astonishing seventeen weeks.

New Orleans, Louisiana

Through the first few years of the nineteenth century, New Orleans was under either French or Spanish rule. Catholic slave masters took a very different stance from the Protestant slave masters of the United Kingdom. Equally brutal during the work day, Catholic slave masters chose to interfere very little with the recreation time of their slaves. The result was that in South America, the French and Spanish Caribbean, and the southern part of Louisiana, African cultural retentions were much stronger among slaves and their descendants than they were in other parts of the United States. This partially explains why, despite the purchase of Louisiana by the United States from Napoleon in 1803, the music of black New Orleans has always exhibited a markedly different rhythmic sensibility compared to black music in the rest of the country.

The world of New Orleans soul primarily centered around the talents of writer, pianist, and producer Allen Toussaint and the studio of Cosimo Matassa. In 1958, by the time he was twenty, Toussaint had

played piano on Fats Domino recordings, released a solo album on RCA, and written and produced a local hit for Lee Dorsey. Toussaint would go on to write, arrange, and/or produce local and national hits by a who’s who of Crescent City soul stalwarts, including Jessie Hill, Lee Dorsey, Clarence “Frogman” Henry, Irma Thomas, Aaron Neville, Ernie K-Doe, Benny Spellman, and Chris Kenner. In the late 1960s, Toussaint began to use the Meters as a house band. The latter were clearly influenced by the work of Stax’s Booker T. and the MGs and similarly developed simultaneous careers as session men par excellence and hit instrumental artists unto themselves.

In addition to Toussaint, arranger Wardell Quezergue was responsible for a number of superior recordings to come out of New Orleans, including King Floyd’s “Groove Me” and the monster Stax hit “Mr. Big Stuff” for Jean Knight, cut at a single session at Jackson, Mississippi’s Malaco Records in 1970.

Detroit, Michigan

As a soul and popular music center in the 1960s, Detroit was dominated by Motown Records. Founded by Berry Gordy, Jr., Motown has a history that in many respects parallels that of Stax. Both companies were based in residential neighborhoods, both owners built idiosyncratic recording studios in preexisting buildings, both company’s utilized a “house” band and “in-house” songwriting teams, and, most important, both companies developed identifiable sounds. Motown liked to refer to its sound as “the Sound of Young America,” the sign outside their headquarters proudly proclaiming the building as “Hitsville U.S.A.”

In direct contrast to Jim Stewart and Stax, Gordy was the product of an urban, middle-class upbringing in the depersonalized North. Having experienced life on the Mercury assembly line, Gordy understood that time is money and had internalized the basic precepts of industrial capitalism, running his company accordingly from the top down in assembly-like fashion. A firm believer in vertical integration, Gordy’s Motown empire included a management company, a booking agency, a finishing school, and a choreography department, in addition to a variety of record labels, including Tamla, Motown, Gordy, and Soul, and the Jobete publishing company.

From the beginning, Gordy was determined to sell records to both white and black Americans. He consequently spent time attempting to deduce the

qualities necessary to facilitate the crossing over of black records from the R&B to the pop charts. Armed with his conclusions, Gordy developed an approach to songwriting, arranging, and producing that focused on narrative lyrics that presented a problem and attempts at resolution but that were never fully resolved, maximized the use of hooks, employed lots of high register sound, and positioned the lead vocalist way out front in the mix. Gordy was also enamored of Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound" approach to production, and consequently Motown recordings, in contrast with those at Stax, tended to be extremely dense, employing at various times up to three guitarists, two drummers, strings, horns, and backup vocalists. Above all, Motown relied on an enormous beat, in-house producers such as Holland, Dozier, and Holland creating enormous composite sounds by layering handclaps, foot stamps, tambourine, and snare.

With a roster of artists that included Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, the Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Four Tops, and the Jackson Five, Motown became the most successful black-owned and, arguably, the most successful independent record company in history. In the 1960s alone, Motown placed an astonishing seventy-nine records in the pop top ten. In 1972, Gordy moved the company to Los Angeles. While the Motown sound of the 1960s was no longer in evidence, Motown continued to produce a substantial number of hits with funk and disco-oriented artists such as Rick James, the Dazz Band, DeBarge, the Mary Jane Girls, Teena Marie, the Commodores, and Lionel Richie.

While it made its impact on mainstream American popular music, Motown did so by developing its own style of black popular music, especially in the recordings of its male stars the Temptations, Marvin Gaye, and Stevie Wonder, that may be heard by some as a subgenre of rhythm and blues. These artists, along with the Isley Brothers and Edwin Starr, would become of high interest to northern England fans, for whom writer Dave Godin would coin the term "Northern Soul."

In the wake of Motown, dozens of local entrepreneurs attempted to start record labels in Detroit. The most successful were Golden World, Revilot, Ric Tic, Hot Wax, and Invictus, which collectively produced hits by the Parliaments, Edwin Starr, Freda Payne, 100% Aged in Soul, the Chairman of the Board, and Flaming Ember. Hot Wax and Invictus were started by Holland-Dozier-Holland after their departure from Motown in 1968.

Chicago, Illinois

The history of the twentieth century in the United States has largely been the story of the movement of people from the country to the city, from the South to the North and West Coast. Chicago was the primary destination of black Americans from Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, and western Tennessee. With a constant flow of migrants north and family members routinely visiting in both directions, well into the 1970s most black citizens of the Windy City maintained strong relationships with southern black relatives and culture.

Pre-World War II, Chicago developed into the most important urban center for both boogie-woogie piano music and all forms of gospel. In the postwar era, as the home to southern migrants such as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Little Walter, Chicago became the focal point for the most influential tradition of electric blues and also could boast of a healthy vocal group scene. Given all this musical activity, perhaps it is not surprising that the Windy City played a seminal role in the development of black radio and, with Chess and Vee-Jay Records, was home to two of the most important postwar record labels specializing in black music.

Chess Records was started as Aristocrat in 1947 and, although primarily specializing in blues, also recorded gospel, jazz, rock 'n' roll, and soul artists. Among the latter were Etta James, Fontella Bass, Billy Stewart, Irma Thomas, and the Dells. Vee-Jay, founded in 1953 by Vivian Carter and James Bracken, was one of only a handful of black-owned record labels. In the 1950s the company specialized in blues, gospel, and doo-wop. Before going bankrupt in 1965, Vee-Jay went into the soul business, issuing seminal recordings by Jerry Butler, Dee Clark, Gene Chandler, and Betty Everett and serving as the distributor of the Memphis soul label, Goldwax Records.

In 1959 Vee-Jay issued "For Your Precious Love" by the Impressions. While the lead vocal was sung by Jerry Butler, the record was also notable for the contributions of sixteen-year-old guitarist, singer, and writer Curtis Mayfield. As the first important R&B artist to be born in the urban North, in the early 1960s Mayfield developed an utterly original sensibility that, for all intents and purposes, became *the* "sound of Chicago soul." Mayfield wrote, sang lead, played guitar on, and produced more than three dozen hits for the Impressions, many of which, such as the often-covered "People Get Ready" and "We're a Winner," he referred to as "songs of faith and inspiration."

In addition to his work with the Impressions, Mayfield wrote and produced hits for a number of other Chicago artists, including Major Lance and the Staple Singers, as a solo artist scored the influential soundtrack to *Superfly*, and owned three record labels that specialized in soul, Windy C, Mayfield, and Curtom. Some critics regard this trend in Chicago, with the ensuing musical development in Philadelphia, as “Uptown Soul.”

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

An early Philadelphia soul figure was Bill Doggett, master of the Hammond B-3 organ, who introduced that instrument to soul-style keyboardists.

Inspired by the success of Motown, in the mid-1960s singer/lyricist Kenny Gamble and pianist/arranger Leon Huff decided to team up and start Gamble Records in 1966 in Philadelphia. Up to this point, with the exception of Arctic Records, the City of Brotherly Love was primarily known as the home of *American Bandstand*, Cameo-Parkway Records, and a plethora of artistically bereft teen idols. Gamble Records enjoyed substantial success with the Intruders. At the same time another Philadelphia writer and pianist, Thom Bell, was storming the charts with the Delfonics on Philly Groove Records. Gamble, Huff, and Bell became partners in Mighty Three Music Publishing.

In 1968 engineer Joe Tarsia took over a mediocre local studio, Sound Plus, and transformed it into Sigma Sound Studios, which would soon become the home of all sessions conducted by Gamble, Huff, and Bell. For the next few years Gamble and Huff freelanced, producing hits for Jerry Butler, Wilson Pickett, Dusty Springfield, Archie Bell and the Drells, and Peaches and Herb. In 1972 Gamble and Huff worked out a deal with Clive Davis at CBS Records. In exchange for financing their new Philadelphia International label, CBS would distribute their productions. With a label, studio, house band, and writing teams in place, Philadelphia International became the Motown of the 1970s, developing a recognizable sound that hit the charts over and over again with the O’Jays, Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, Teddy Pendergrass, Billy Paul, MFSB, and the Three Degrees. By 1975, Philadelphia International was the second largest black-owned record company in the United States.

Gamble and Huff’s “Sound of Philadelphia,” replete with heavy duty orchestration, vibes, Latin percussion, and a flattened four-four beat, helped lay the blueprint for what became disco music.

Soul Blues

By the mid-1970s the soul era had passed as funk and disco became the dominant genres of black popular music. A few soul artists, such as Diana Ross, enjoyed substantial success in the disco era. Others, such as Curtis Mayfield and Rufus Thomas, embraced the sound of funk, but with the exception of the Bar-Kays, few former soul artists enjoyed successful careers as funk artists post-1975.

The majority of soul artists found themselves pushed to the margins of the industry, either without record contracts or signed to the tiniest of independent labels. One of these independents was Malaco Records based in Jackson, Mississippi. Started by Tommy Couch and Wolf Stephenson in 1967 as a production company, Malaco achieved early success with its productions of King Floyd’s “Groove Me” and Jean Knight’s “Mr. Big Stuff,” which it placed with Atlantic and Stax, respectively. Buoyed by their success, Couch and Stephenson restarted the Malaco label proper (back in 1967 they had issued a solitary single on Malaco before deciding that leasing their recordings to more established labels made more sense). With the exception of Dorothy Moore’s country-soul recording of “Misty Blue” and “Funny How Time Slips Away,” Malaco struggled through most of the 1970s, cutting disco, funk, early electro-beat, and uptown R&B records with little success.

Things changed substantially in the early 1980s when the company hired legendary R&B promotion man Dave Clark. Clark’s reputation and extensive contacts within the black entertainment industry enabled Malaco to sign a bevy of veteran soul singers, including Z. Z. Hill, Denise LaSalle, Latimore, Little Milton, Johnnie Taylor, and Bobby Bland. The company proved eminently successful in reviving these artists’ careers, recording blues, soul, and material that seamlessly fused the two genres.

Despite the soulful grooves that define many Malaco recordings cut in the 1980s and 1990s, at the level of radio and within trade journals such as *Billboard*, the majority of Malaco recording stars had become pigeonholed as blues artists. Whereas in the 1970s, Denise LaSalle, Latimore, Little Milton, and especially Johnnie Taylor were mainstream black soul stars, now they were consigned to the margins of the industry and consequently found themselves selling one or two hundred thousand copies of their biggest hits rather than half a million and up.

This reclassification of soul as blues is largely a product of the aging demographic that continued to support artists such as Little Milton and Johnnie Taylor. In the mind of most radio programmers,

older black people listened to the blues. So, if an older demographic listened to Johnnie Taylor, ergo, he had to be a blues artist. The music hadn't changed all that much, but the way it was understood and consequently marketed and consumed had shifted significantly. While a number of artists such as Hill, Bland, and Johnny Copeland had at different points in their careers worked within a gray area that was part blues and part soul, the situation with Malaco artists in the 1980s and 1990s recording clearly soul-based material that was automatically classified as blues was a new phenomenon.

This was especially odd when it came to Johnnie Taylor's recordings, very few of which were even close to straight-ahead blues. Taylor came to Malaco with an impressive pedigree, which included thirty-seven charting records, fifteen of which had been top ten R&B hits. By 1984 when he was signed to Malaco, Taylor, like so many of Malaco's other artists, had found himself a relic of an earlier era, unable to find anyone interested in recording him.

With Malaco, Taylor's albums proved to be a heady mix of blues, Southern soul, urban ballads, and funky floorshakers. Despite such diversity, Taylor still found himself fighting the blues tag. As late as 1996, he was stressing in interviews "I want people to stop categorizing me. Sure, I can sing the blues, but that's not all I do. I've got nothing against the blues. But it is time that people realize that Johnnie Taylor doesn't just sing blues. Most of the hits I had were not blues."

Taylor was fond of telling the story of when he played at the Fairmont Hotel in New Orleans and walked across the street on his break to visit a local record shop. The clerk in the store didn't recognize Taylor and when the singer asked why his most recent release was in the blues section, the clerk replied without hesitation something to the effect of "Why it's on Malaco, it must be blues."

In the early years of the twenty-first century the soul-blues genre is still alive and well as Malaco and smaller concerns continue to cut records aimed at an older black demographic by artists who continue to work the southern chitlin circuit that receive substantial airplay on select southern radio stations. A handful of 1960s soul superstars such as Aretha Franklin, Al Green, and Isaac Hayes continue to record and play theaters in both North America and Europe while numerous other soul artists of the same generation, such as Booker T. and the MGs, Sam Moore (of Sam and Dave), Solomon Burke, Bobby Womack, and Irma Thomas, ply their trade for eager audiences on the festival circuit in the summer and at casinos and clubs in the winter months.

ROB BOWMAN

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SOUND STAGE 7

One of the many influential independent record labels dedicated to regionally based rhythm and blues, Sound Stage 7 was a subsidiary of Fred Foster's Monument Records, home to Roy Orbison. Foster hired Nashville's preeminent rhythm and blues deejay John Richbourg as its manager. Formed in 1963, Sound Stage 7 lasted until 1972. Among the most noteworthy artists were Rose Shelton, Arthur Alexander, and Joe Simon, whose "The Chokin' Kind" (1969), written by the prolific country legend Harlan Howard, exemplifies the recurrent crossover between country and rhythm and blues.

DAVID SANJEK

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Discography: McGrath

SPADY, CLARENCE

b. 1 July 1961; Paterson, NJ

Singer, guitarist, and songwriter in electric and contemporary blues. Spady's early encouragement to perform came from family, including his father and uncle; Baptist church music was also a formative influence. He was raised and educated in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and began performing full time in 1979.

For much of the 1980s he was guitarist in the Greg Palmer Band, a north Pennsylvania group that often opened concerts for national touring soul and blues acts.

In 1981 he formed his first group, the Scranton Blues Band, playing mostly northeast Pennsylvania but with an occasional engagement in New York City or Philadelphia. In the late 1980s he also led the Shiloh Baptist Church choir in Scranton. In 1990 he joined the house band in the newly opened Blues Street club in Scranton, a stable full-time performing opportunity. In 1996 he released his first CD, *Nature of the Beast* (Evidence 26080), which led to greater recognition and performances nationwide and abroad.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

SPAIN

The blues arrived in Spain in 1953 with a performance by Bill Big Broonzy at the Capsa Theater in Barcelona. Before this, the only available blues record was an old 78-rpm disc by Jimmy Yancey. After Broonzy, no other bluesman would visit until 1957, when the great singer and guitar player Josh White played at the Coliseum Theatre in Barcelona, followed by Sister Rosetta Tharpe. The early 1960s saw a growth in the blues' popularity in Spain: a jazz club called Jamboree opened its doors, hosting the singer and piano player Memphis Slim in 1962. Meanwhile, in 1961, Jimmy Witherspoon, backed by Buck Clayton's Orchestra, played at Barcelona's Windsor Theater.

In 1965, the American Folk Blues Festival brought a group of blues legends such as Roosevelt Sykes, Big Mama Thornton, Buddy Guy, John Lee Hooker, Walter Horton, J. B. Lenoir, Dr. Ross, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Eddie Boyd, Jimmie Lee, and Fred Below to Spain. It was a great success, and Spanish audiences were able to see live performances by musicians who had never visited Spain before.

In the early 1970s, however, the popularity of blues exploded and has continued to grow. Blues performances are popular at venues all over the country, and the number of festivals has increased. Though the last American Folk Blues Festival took place in 1972, a number of jazz festivals devote time to blues

performances, and other festivals dedicated to blues now occur on an annual basis; the most well known are the Cerdanyola Blues Festival (Barcelona), Roses Blues & Gospel Festival (Girona), Getxo Blues Festival (Bilbao), Antequera Blues Festival (Malaga) and the most prominent, the Festival de Blues de Cazorla (Jaen). Some of these festivals are also broadcast on television.

Blues is no longer merely an import from the United States: During the 1980s, a number of Spanish blues bands saw great success, particularly the Dolphin Blues Band, Harmonica Zúmel, the Caledonia, Ferroblues, and Tonky Blues Band. In the new century, a number of younger Spanish blues bands and musicians regularly play all over the country.

The first Spanish blues radio program was *El Tren*, directed by Jorge Muñoz from Madrid, which remains on the air. In addition, *La Hora del Blues* has been broadcast every week for more than twenty years in Barcelona and its surrounding areas.

Quartica Jazz (now out of print) was the first magazine to have a regular blues section, including record and concert reviews, pictures, articles, news, and a variety of other features about the blues. In 1985, *Sólo Blues*, the first Spanish blues magazine, was published in Madrid. It continued for twenty issues. Another blues magazine, *Rítmico y Blues*, appeared later but published only fifteen issues, the last in 2000. The city of Barcelona now has a free blues magazine, *BarnaBlues*, which publishes four issues per year.

Most blues albums are imported from American labels such as Alligator, Tone Cool, Telarc, Rounder, Antone's, Wolf, JSP, Fedora, Bullseye, Black Top, and Blind Pig and many other small independent labels and distributed by Spanish distributors.

VICENTE ZÚMEL

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SPAND, CHARLIE

Active 1920s–1940s

Pianist and singer. Spand's reputation rests on the twenty-three sides he made for Paramount Records between 1929 and 1931 and the eight he made for Okeh in 1940. Little is known of Spand's life. He was born probably around 1900, possibly in Ellijay, Georgia. In the 1920s and perhaps before, he moved to Detroit, where he was resident at the time of the

Paramount sessions. He seems to have relocated to Chicago by 1940. He then may have moved to the West Coast. Nothing is known of his subsequent activities.

All of Spand's recordings are piano-vocals in the standard twelve-bar format. A majority are performed solo, although the first six of the Paramount sides and the entire OKeh session are accompanied by guitar. Spand's singing style is light and intimate, with clear diction. His songs are particularly noted for their lyrics, which adapt folk elements in an original and poetic manner. Pianistically, Spand alternates between a gently rolling boogie-woogie, usually with eighth-note octave figures in the bass, and a light stride. Some of his most impressive playing is heard on "Hastings Street," recorded with guitarist Blind Blake, who was apparently a close musical associate.

Most of Spand's blues use a conventional AAB lyric structure. However, his most popular recording, lyric "Soon This Morning Blues" (1929, Pm 12790), is structurally less orthodox, and given the success of the record, it is perhaps surprising that he did not experiment more. Spand's popularity is to be inferred by his appearance on "Hometown Skiffle" (1929, Pm 12886), Paramount's sampler of some of its best-known race artists.

PETER MUIR

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Discography

Selected Recordings

As Soloist or with Guitar Accompaniment: DGR

- "Soon This Morning Blues"/"Fetch Your Water" (1929, Pm 12790); "Good Gal"/"Back to the Woods Blues" (1929, Pm 12817); "Ain't Gonna Stand for That"/"Moanin' the Blues" (1929, Pm 12856); "In the Barrel Blues"/"Levee Camp Man" (1929, Pm 12887); "Mississippi Blues"/"Got to Have My Sweetbread" (1929, Pm 12917); "45th St. Blues"/"Room Rent Blues" (1929, Pm 12930); "Mistreatment Blues"/"Soon This Morning—No. 2" (1930, Pm 13022); "She's Got Good Stuff"/"Big Fat Mama Blues" (1930, Pm 13005); "Thirsty Woman Blues"/"Dreamin' the Blues" (1930, Pm 13047); "Hard Time Blues"/"Tired Woman Blues" (1931, Pm 13112); "Georgia Mule Blues"/"Evil Woman Blues" (1931, Pm 13101); "Gold Tooth Mama"/

- "Hoodoo Woman Blues" (1940, OK 05757); "Big Alley Rat Blues"/"She's a Squabblin' Woman" (1940, OK 05894); "Soon This Morning No. 2"/"Gone Mother Blues" (OK 1940, 05946); "Rock and Rye"/"Alabama Blues" (1940, OK 05699).

As Accompanist

- Blind Blake. "Hastings St." (1929, Pm 12863).

SPANN, LUCILLE

- b. Mahalia Lucille Jenkins, 23 June 1938; Bolton, MS
d. 2 August 1994; Vicksburg, MS

Lucille began as a church gospel singer in Mississippi and continued the practice when her family moved to Chicago around 1952. She met blues pianist Otis Spann in the 1960s. The two began a musical collaboration and would later marry. Lucille and Otis performed regularly at college gigs and would record together, though their partnership would be cut short by Otis's death in 1970. Lucille continued to work in music and made a number of recordings including the album *Cry Before I Go* in 1974.

ROBERT SORICELLI

Bibliography

- Harris; Larkin

Discography: LSFP

SPANN, OTIS

- b. 21 March 1930; Belzoni, MS
d. 24 April 1970; Chicago, IL

Otis Spann was perhaps the preeminent blues sideman of all time. He played backup for Muddy Waters for nearly two decades (two-thirds of Waters's career). In addition, he maintained an active solo recording career and also recorded behind Chuck Berry, Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Johnny Shines, and many others. His left-hand rumble was as agile as his right-hand tinkle. He could amble on the bottom and crash on the top—without getting in the way of the vocalist.

Spann was the child of musicians. His mother, Josephine Erby Spann, played guitar and once recorded with Memphis Minnie. His father, Frank Houston Spann, played piano and preached in his



Otis Spann. (Photo courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

hometown of Belzoni, Mississippi, located in the lower Mississippi Delta. Spann was also inspired by two local piano players, one named Friday Ford and the other Tolley Montgomery, sibling of Little Brother Montgomery. Spann won a talent contest at age eight and began playing for local vaudeville acts. He also claimed to have held regular club gigs by age fourteen.

His mother died in the mid-1940s and the teenaged Spann moved to Chicago, where his father and an aunt resided. He worked a day job in construction while frequenting blues clubs at night. He befriended the smoky-voiced Big Maceo Merriweather, listening to his swinging bass hand entwine with Tampa Red's guitar; he keenly observed the rough-and-tumble piano style of Little Brother Montgomery and Sunnyland Slim. Though he was a heavy drinker, it had little discernible effect on his behavior, and his playing was always superb, intricate, and relevant.

After scuffling with Morris Pejoe and others, Spann heard from Jimmy Rogers that Muddy Waters needed a piano player. When Muddy hired Spann in 1951, the lineup for the first great modern blues band was complete: Muddy Waters, Jimmy Rogers, Little Walter, Elgin Evans, and Otis Spann. The template for the modern electric rock band was also defined: two guitars, harmonica, drums, piano.

Spann became Muddy's de facto bandleader, breaking in each new player when he joined the group. From James Cotton to Hubert Sumlin to Paul Oscher, Spann taught the new guy how to back Muddy. However, Spann never took the title of bandleader, not wanting the additional responsibilities.

Otis Spann stayed with Muddy from 1951 until 1969. His first recording with Waters was "Blow Wind Blow" in 1953, his second "Hoochie Coochie Man." He and Muddy became close friends and took to calling themselves brothers (Muddy's granddaughter thought Spann was a blood relative until, as a young woman, she asked Spann which side of the family he was on). Spann went to England with Muddy in 1958.

At Newport in 1960, Spann played a set as bandleader before Muddy took the stage. From then on, Spann enjoyed a solo career simultaneously with his role in Muddy's band. (He'd recorded a couple of singles at Chess in the mid-1950s, but Newport instigated his solo career in earnest.) He cut his first solo album as duets with Robert Lockwood and went on to make albums for Fontana, Storyville, Prestige, Arhoolie, Decca, Spivey, Testament, Vanguard, Blues Horizon, Bluestimes, and Delmark. For these, he employed, in addition to Muddy's band, Johnny Shines, Junior Wells, Johnny Young, and, later, younger white players such as Eric Clapton, Paul Butterfield, Michael Bloomfield, and Fleetwood Mac.

In addition to the myriad hits on which he backed Muddy, Spann played piano on Wolf's "Forty-Four," Bo Diddley's "I'm a Man" and "Road Runner," Sonny Boy Williamson's "Little Village," Lowell Fulson's "Lonely Hours," and Jimmy Rogers's "Walking by Myself."

In the late 1960s, Spann suffered a heart attack while on tour but insisted on continuing with his performance schedule. In an interview during the making of Muddy's *Fathers and Sons* album, which united Muddy and Spann with some of the younger players they influenced, Spann said he wanted to be considered one of the sons.

Early in 1970, at age thirty-nine, Otis Spann was diagnosed with liver cancer. He had only recently left Muddy's band to pursue a solo career. He died on April 24, 1970, in Chicago's Cook County Hospital. Despite his prodigious talent and extensive recording history and the respect he was accorded by other musicians, he had very little money; he had let his musicians' union dues lapse and was buried without a headstone.

ROBERT GORDON

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SPANN, PERVIS

b. 16 August 1932; Itta Bena, MS

Legendary Chicago disk jockey and promoter; one of the original WVON "Good Guys." Spann left Mississippi in the late 1940s. His first radio job was a guest slot on *McKie's All-Night Roundup*, a show on Chicago's WOPA hosted by McKie Fitzhugh. He promoted his first concert, a B. B. King–Junior Parker double bill, at the Ashland Auditorium in 1960. In 1963, after Leonard Chess launched WVON, Spann became one of the station's most popular personalities, and he continued to promote and emcee shows in theaters and nightclubs in Chicago and, eventually, in out-of-town locations such as Memphis. He also represented and booked artists, at least on an informal handshake basis: He claims to have been influential in launching the careers of the Jacksons, Chaka Kahn, Aretha Franklin, and others.

Today Spann is majority owner of WVON, which shares its frequency with another station, WCEV. He still holds forth with his *Blues Man Show* from midnight to 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. several nights a week. Spann also continues to promote blues shows, usually revues featuring half a dozen or more artists. His reign as Chicago's leading African American blues promoter and radio personality has not been without controversy, and his influence is nothing like it was in WVON's heyday, but his importance in the city's broadcasting and entertainment history is secure, as is the esteem in which he is still held, especially by old-timers.

DAVID WHITEIS

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SPARKS BROTHERS**Aaron "Pinetop" Sparks**

b. 22 May 1910; Tupelo, MS
 d. ca. 1938

Marion (or Milton) "Lindberg" Sparks

b. 22 May 1910; Tupelo, MS
 d. 25 May 1963; St. Louis, MO

Twins born in 1910 in Tupelo, Mississippi, moving to St. Louis around 1920. Both brothers were fine singers, and Aaron learned piano at school, becoming an exceptional accompanist in the St. Louis tradition. They first recorded in 1932 as Pinetop and Lindberg, creating some classic blues sides, including Milton's "4-11-44" and "East Chicago Blues" and Aaron's "Tell Her About Me." Their record careers ended in 1935, and Aaron died soon after, though Marion lived on (as Milton) until 1963.

BOB HALL

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Discography: DGR**SPECIALTY/FIDELITY/JUKE BOX**

Founded in Los Angeles, California, in 1945 from the ashes of the failed Atlas label, Art Rupe (b. Arthur Goldberg, September 5, 1917, Greensburg, Pennsylvania) formed Juke Box Records and enjoyed early success with records by "The Blues Woman" (Marion

Abernathy) and Roy Milton & His Solid Senders. In 1946 he abandoned Juke Box Records and incorporated his new Specialty label, reissuing the old masters.

Milton proved to be one of the label's major assets, scoring nineteen top twenty R&B chart hits between 1946 and 1953. Other successful acts recorded in the 1940s and 1950s included Milton's pianist, Camille Howard, Jimmy Liggins & His Drops of Joy, Joe Liggins & His Honeydrippers, Percy Mayfield, Lloyd Price, Marvin & Johnny, Little Richard, Larry Williams, and Sam Cooke. The label also made many fine gospel recordings and a small clutch of important blues recordings by the likes of Roosevelt Sykes, Jump Jackson, Honey Boy (Frank Patt), Gus Jenkins, and, most successfully, Guitar Slim (Eddie Jones).

In 1951 Rupe bought the Fidelity label and issued records by Joe Turner, Bumble Bee Slim, Pete McKinley, Clarence London, and Smokey Hogg and maintained the label for just over a year, but by early 1953, Rupe had abandoned it to concentrate on the main Specialty imprint. Specialty did little recording from 1960 onward, although it lasted as an economically viable business for another forty years, relying mainly on its back catalog of rock 'n' roll classics. Remaining independent for more than forty years, Specialty Records was finally sold to Fantasy Inc. in 1990.

DAVID PENNY

Discography: McGrath

Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "Specialty Album Discography." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/specialty.html> (accessed December 12, 2004).

Selected Recordings in Reissue

The Specialty Story (1994, Specialty SSPCD-4412-2).

SPECKLED RED

b. Rufus G. Perryman, 23 October 1892; Monroe, LA
d. 2 January 1973; St. Louis, MO

Speckled Red, real name Rufus G. Perryman, was born in Ouachita Parish, Monroe, Louisiana, on October 23, 1892, one of the sixteen children of a local blacksmith. He was an albino and his friends called him "Speckled Red" because of his pink complexion and light brown freckles. When he was an infant, the family moved to Hampton, Georgia, where his father found work as a field hand. Subsequently

his mother took him to Detroit, where he was raised, although he made frequent return visits to Hampton during his teenage years. His father played piano and may have given him early lessons. He learned to play the organ in Detroit, and from 1912 to 1917, when he was back in Hampton, he played in local churches.

His family settled in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1920, but by 1924 he had moved back to Detroit, where he began playing at rent parties, clubs, and brothels. One of his early influences was the young Florida-born pianist Paul Seminole, whose playing was firmly in the ragtime tradition. In Detroit he also met blues pianist Charlie Spand, from whom he learned "Early in the Morning." By 1927 Red was performing with the Wolverine Nighthawks, and in 1928 he joined the Red Rose Minstrel Show, which also included Jim Jackson, touring Mississippi, Arkansas, and Alabama. He played with Jackson and Tampa Red in the bars and clubs of Memphis in 1929–1930, and it was here, at the Peabody Hotel, that he made his first recordings for Brunswick.

A wild, undisciplined pianist, Speckled Red is best known for his version of "The Dirty Dozen," a traditional insult song that had been previously banned by the U.S. Army because it was the cause of frequent fights. Undeterred, Red recorded the song at his first Brunswick session in 1929, albeit in a highly expurgated version. His definitive piano accompaniment features a walking octave bass and the familiar riff, with its two-handed triplet breaks.

The "dozens," a contest between black youths in which the participants traded verbal abuse and insults in rhyme, has been extensively studied. According to McCormick (1965), it is derived from a nineteenth-century teaching device wherein children were taught to memorize a canto of twelve verses setting forth essential biblical facts. Versions had been collected by folklorists as early as 1909. Red's exuberant original recording was an immediate success, and he recorded "The Dirty Dozen—No. 2" at his next session in 1930. Other artists quickly produced cover versions, including Leroy Carr, Tampa Red, Ben Curry, Victoria Spivey, Kokomo Arnold, and George Noble. The song appeared under various titles in the following years and the game persisted, according to Abrahams (1964), until the 1960s.

Other fine tracks from Red's early sessions include the piano solo "Wilkins Street Stomp" and "The Right String—But the Wrong Yo Yo," the latter a song featuring an accented walking octave bass and a ragtime chord sequence. Several of Red's compositions are similarly in an approximately sixteen-bar format, reflecting his enthusiasm for barrelhouse and

burlesque material. In addition to the walking bass he also occasionally used a solid four-to-the-bar stride bass on such pieces as “We Got to Get That Fixed.”

Although he had a considerable technique, as evidenced by “Wilkins Street Stomp,” Red often employed a rough-and-ready, two-fisted percussive approach to the piano, with abrupt stops and changes of pace. His idiosyncratic approach to bar lengths and chord sequences, perhaps resulting from his apparent lack of formal musical education, may have limited his opportunities for ensemble work and made him difficult to accompany. However, he was an able and energetic soloist, and his hard, strident voice was well suited to the noisy bars and clubs in which he was often obliged to play.

He entertained on excursion trains to New Orleans around 1931 and played weekends in Truman, Arkansas. During the depression he traveled extensively throughout the South and the Midwest, finding what work he could in lumber camps, levee camps, taverns, juke joints, and house parties. He recorded ten sides for Bluebird in 1938 in Aurora, Illinois, with a trio including Robert Lee McCoy on guitar and Willie Hatcher on mandolin. As well as “Early in the Morning,” the group recorded “Welfare Blues,” which was previously made popular by Walter Roland as “Red Cross Store.” An outstanding stomp from this session is “Do the Georgia.” The session was also noteworthy for the fine piano instrumental “St. Louis Stomp” and a guest appearance by harmonica player John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson on “You Got to Fix It.”

Red returned to Memphis in the late 1930s, where he renewed his partnership with Jim Jackson, performing in local clubs and bars. He finally settled in St. Louis in 1941, taking a job as a shipping clerk and working in local clubs, often as an intermission pianist for the Dixie Stompers. During the next twenty years, he continued to perform in traditional jazz venues and taverns, appearing at the World’s Fair Bar in St. Louis in 1953–1955.

With the revival of interest in traditional jazz he began recording again, with sessions in 1956–1957 for Tone and Delmark. He toured California in 1957 and Europe in 1959–1960, where he made further recordings for VJM, Folkways, and Storyville. He retired from regular performance in the early 1960s, although he still gave occasional concerts up until his death, from cancer, on January 2, 1973. He was survived by his younger brother, Willie “Piano Red” Perryman, also a blues pianist, who had national hits with “Rockin’ with Red/Red’s Boogie” in 1950 and “Dr Feelgood” in 1962.

BOB HALL

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 McCormick, Mack. Liner notes to *The Unexpurgated Folk Songs of Men* (1965, Raglan LP51).
 Oliver, Paul. *Screening the Blues*. London: Cassell, 1968.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

SPECTER, DAVE

b. 21 May 1963; Chicago, IL

An inventive guitar instrumentalist mainly influenced by B. B. King, Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and T-Bone Walker, Dave Specter also heard blues in the playing of Kenny Burrell, Grant Green, and Wes Montgomery. As a result, his distinctive playing displays well-measured pick work, lush jazzy chording, and stylish arrangements, all rendered cool and clean with a modicum of reverberation.

He took up the guitar at eighteen and in a few years was sitting in with Hubert Sumlin, Johnny Littlejohn, and Sam Lay before joining the band of Son Seals, from whom he learned the role of an ensemble player. Still in his twenties, he toured Europe as a member of The Legendary Blues Band in 1989 with Calvin “Fuzzy” Jones and Willie “Big Eyes” Smith, shortly after which he went on his own, fronting the Bluebirds. For three years he and the Bluebirds featured the suave singing of Barkin’ Bill Smith, which led to Specter’s fine first recording, *Bluebird Blues* (1991, Delmark), on which Ronnie Earl guested on guitar. Five additional CDs for Delmark have each featured a different vocalist—Jesse Fortune, Lynwood Slim (with Jack McDuff), Tad Robinson, and Lenny Lynn—and a sixth, *Speculatin’* (Delmark DE-744) is an all-instrumental outing featuring guest keyboard players Rob Waters and Ken Saydak.

Exploring the nexus of blues and jazz, Specter’s guitar work is earmarked by precise, economical timing and phrasing in backing up his vocalists, and intelligent melodic interplay between guitar and keyboard.

In addition to his Delmark sides, Specter has been anthologized on two Laserlight compilations and has appeared on others’ CDs. He has produced several of his own recordings plus those of Lurrie Bell, Floyd McDaniel, Steve Freund, and Al Miller.

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

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Discography: AMG

SPEIR, H. C.

b. Henry C. Speir, 6 October 1895; Prospect, MS
d. 1972; Jackson, MS

No single person was as instrumental in the recording and, in turn, the preservation of early southern acoustic blues of the 1920s and 1930s as H. C. Speir. The owner of a Jackson, Mississippi, music store, Speir served as a talent scout for Paramount, OKeh, the American Recording Company (ARC), Decca, Vocalion, Columbia, Victor, and several other smaller recording companies. Through his efforts, Speir arranged the recording of a virtual who's who of early blues artists. Charley Patton, Skip James, Robert Johnson, The Mississippi Sheiks, Tommy Johnson, Ishmon Bracey, and Kokomo Arnold among others were all found by Speir and sent to various recording companies to record. Speir also was active in scouting white Mississippi country music talent for records, and he brought early country music legend Uncle Dave Macon to record in Jackson in 1930 for OKeh Records.

He was born Henry C. Speir in 1895, and in 1925 he opened a music store in the black district of Jackson. To attract business to his store, Speir began working as a "talent broker." There are several factors to consider when discussing how he searched for talent. First of all, it should be understood that Speir was not merely a stationary figure organizing these sessions out of his record store. He referred to himself as a "talent broker" and traveled extensively, seeking out new artists to record. He was also very adept in understanding exactly what each record company was looking for in its new artists.

Whether Speir was recording one of the many delta bluesmen who walked into his music store or approaching a street musician playing on a city corner, Speir had only a few criteria that would need to be met. He would first listen to them play and then determine whether their style would fit into any of the various blues genres that were beginning to be categorized by the record companies. Then, if he found them to be satisfactory performers, he would ask them if they had at least four original songs ready

for recording. Once Speir determined that a particular artist was desirable, he would then make the arrangements for a recording session.

Speir went through this process with hundreds of performers, and had it not been for his efforts, it is doubtful whether many of the great blues performers from this era would have ever been heard by later audiences or even by audiences outside their immediate geographic area.

In the late 1930s record companies' interest in new artists was waning. The fact that they were focusing their efforts on established artists and not searching for new talent inhibited Speir's efforts. This, combined with a fire in 1942 that partially destroyed his music store, caused Speir to give up on the music business altogether. Tragically, also lost in this fire was Speir's private notebook in which he kept the names and addresses of the performers with whom he had been in contact through the years. This notebook would have proved to be of enormous value to blues historians had it survived.

Blues historian Gayle Dean Wardlow found Speir in 1964 on a tip from Ishmon Bracey, and Wardlow was able to document the history of Speir's ventures. Speir died in Mississippi in 1972.

BRYAN GROVE

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SPENCER, EVANS

b. 1921; near Monroe, LA

Rhythm guitarist; learned to play at age eight. Spencer moved to Chicago in 1937, and during the mid-1950s he performed, and perhaps recorded, with Lou Kid Thomas. He assisted as rhythm guitarist for Willie Dixon on Spivey label recordings by St. Louis Jimmy Oden, Homesick James, Koko Taylor, and Sunnyland Slim. Soon afterward, he turned to church and sacred music. His activity since 1974 is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SPIRE

Fresno label, operated by Chester Lew in 1949–1950. Only a handful of issues were produced, including two by Mercy Dee Walton (whose "Lonesome Cabin Blues" reached number seven in the R&B charts) and two by tenor saxophonist Gene Morris and the Hamptones with vocals by Sonny Parker.

RAY ASTBURY

Discography: McGrath

See also Parker, Sonny; Walton, Mercy Dee

SPIRES, ARTHUR "BIG BOY"

b. 1912; Yazoo City, MS
d. 22 October 1990; Chicago, IL

Guitarist and singer. Published sources give varying birth dates for Spires, citing both October 1912 and 6 November 1912. He was born and raised in Yazoo City, Mississippi, ten miles away from Bentonia. By 1930 he had taught himself guitar, and through the early 1940s he performed at local house parties. In 1943 he moved to Chicago, studying guitar with George Burns of Lyon and Healey Music Studio and with Eddie El. In March 1952 Spires, El, and guitarist Earl Dranes recorded Chess/Checker single 752 with Spires singing; according to Larkin, "Murmur Low" from that session is based on Tommy Johnson's "Big Fat Mama" (1928). It is believed that Spires acquired his nickname "Big Boy" from this session, although it is not clear whether it was due to a similarity to Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup.

Through 1955 he took additional opportunities to record, but with the exception of a 1965 Testament label session, he worked increasingly outside music until his death. His son Benjamin "Bud" Spires is the Bentonia musician who performed with the late Jack Owens.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSPF**SPIRES, BUD**

b. Benjamin Spires, 20 May 1931; Yazoo County, MS
Son of Arthur "Big Boy" Spires. Spires became blind from exposure to pesticide at work and took up the harmonica to earn income. He performed and recorded with Jack Owens from the early 1960s through the latter's death in 1997.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SPIRIT OF MEMPHIS QUARTET

Continually performing gospel group founded in 1930. The Spirit of Memphis Quartet was one of the leading professional groups in the 1950s and is still a notable presence in the early twenty-first century. The revolving roster of singers has included Jethroe Bledsoe, Earl Malone, Robert Reed, Silas Steele, William Broadnax, O. V. Wright, and Melvin Mosely, among others.

BRIAN MOON

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Discography

Lornell, Kip. *Happy in the Service of the Lord: African American Sacred Vocal Harmony Quartets in Memphis*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995.

See also Wright, Overton Ellis "O. V."

SPIVEY, ADDIE "SWEET PEASE"

b. 22 August 1910; Houston, TX
d. 1943; Detroit, MI

Singer; sister of Victoria Spivey, with whom she toured on vaudeville and theater circuits in the 1920s and 1930s. She recorded with Henry "Red" Allen for Victor in 1929, then for the Decca, Vocalion, and Bluebird labels in 1936–1937.

EDWARD KOMARA

SPIVEY, ADDIE “SWEET PEASE”

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne); Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR

SPIVEY, ELTON “THE ZA ZU GIRL”

b. 12 August 1900; Galveston, TX
d. 25 June 1971; East Meadow, NY

Singer; sister of Victoria Spivey, with whom she toured and performed. She recorded for the ARC labels in Chicago in 1937. She was inactive in music from the 1940s on.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR

SPIVEY RECORDS

Independent blues label founded in New York by singer Victoria Spivey (1906–1976) and husband, producer Len Kunstadt, in 1962. The first LPs included new recordings of Spivey’s standards (*Victoria and Her Blues*, Spivey LP 1002), while the fourth release, *Three Kings and the Queen* (1963, Spivey LP 1002), featured Victoria Spivey, Lonnie Johnson, Roosevelt Sykes, and Big Joe Williams, the latter accompanied on two tracks by a young Bob Dylan on harmonica. Widower Len Kunstadt continued the company’s recordings until 1985 and died in 1996 without issuing any CDs. The whole catalog included some forty LPs.

YVES LABERGE

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as sideman). *Victoria and Her Blues* (1963, Spivey LP 1002).

See also Johnson, Lonnie; Spivey, Victoria; Sykes, Roosevelt; Williams, “Big” Joe Lee

SPIVEY, VICTORIA

b. 15 October 1906; Houston, TX
d. 3 October 1976; New York City, NY

Spivey’s father was a musician and her sisters Addie, Elton, and Leona were also singers, but none obtained the fame that singer-pianist-songwriter Victoria did. She recorded nearly eighty issued sides in the prewar years and made a comeback in the 1960s and 1970s, persuading many of her old colleagues such as Hannah Sylvester, Lucille Hegamin, and Sippie Wallace to return to show business.

Spivey learned to play piano and sing when she was quite small, and by age twelve she was performing at the Lincoln Theatre, until the manager discovered she couldn’t read music. She continued to play at house parties and clubs, learning from local musicians such as John Calvin, and occasionally sharing a gig with Blind Lemon Jefferson. By age twenty, she had moved to St. Louis, where she made her first record for Okeh, the legendary “Black Snake Blues.” It was an earthy, primitive recording, full of the moans that would come to be associated with Texas performers such as Spivey and Texas Alexander, but Blind Lemon Jefferson’s recording of the song a few months after Spivey’s became the most famous version.

Spivey had a penchant for bizarre and bloodthirsty imagery and wrote songs of murder and mayhem, drugs and crime, hoodoo and disease. Some of the strongest performances from her early days, accompanied by Lonnie Johnson, were her own compositions: “T-B Blues,” “Dope Head Blues,” and “Blood Thirsty Blues.” In “T-B Blues,” the lonely patient grows alarmed at the continued absence of the nurse; in “Dope Head Blues,” the drug user becomes frankly delusional:

The President sent for me, the Prince of Wales is on my trail.

The year 1928 saw Spivey teaming up with Lonnie Johnson to record a number of double-entendre vocal duets that sold quite well, but she continued to write songs and record for Okeh until she took time off to appear in King Vidor’s film *Hallelujah* in 1929. When she returned to the recording studio in late 1929, she was under contract to Victor, and the sides she made

under her own name, with the Henry “Red” Allen band behind her, are arguably her finest sides, both lyrically and musically. She returns to her favorite themes of disease and murder with “T. B. Blues” and “Blood Hound Blues,” but “Moaning the Blues” and “Telephoning the Blues” are superior performances.

Spivey continued to record throughout the 1930s, for both Decca and Vocalion, and as her recording career ended, she hit the road, traveling with the Olsen and Johnson’s “Hellzapoppin” troupe, owning a club in East St. Louis, and finally retiring to work in the church. But in the 1960s she came out of retirement to appear at clubs such as Gerdes Folk City and to found the Spivey record label. She was among the first to record the young Bob Dylan, and the encouragement she gave to both young and old performers was instrumental in furthering many careers.

PAUL GARON

Bibliography

Chilton; Harris; Herzhaft; New Grove Jazz; Larkin; Santelli; Southern

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

“Black Snake Blues” (1926, OKeh 8338).
 “T-B Blues” (1927, OKeh 8494).
 “Moaning the Blues” (1929, Victor 38546).

SPOONFUL (A SPOONFUL BLUES)

“Spoonful” (“A Spoonful Blues”) is a family of songs with a long history in recorded blues, beginning with Papa Charlie Jackson’s version in 1925. While there are some formal differences, all of the songs have similarities in wording and in the image of a “spoonful” to suggest sex.

Charlie Patton’s “A Spoonful Blues” (recorded in 1929, Paramount 12869) shares a repeating ragtime-influenced chord progression of II, III, V, I with Charley Jordan’s “Just a Spoonful” (recorded in 1930, Vocalion 1543) and Papa Charlie Jackson’s “All I Want Is a Spoonful” (recorded in 1925, Paramount 12320). Patton plays his guitar in the key of E, tuned to an open chord (from high to low, E, B, Ab, E, B, E) and frets it with a bottleneck or knife. He begins the progression each time with a descending run of four notes—E–E–Eb–C#—begun high on the twelfth fret. This run is used in a similar way by

Charley Jordan, who plays the song on a conventionally tuned guitar in the key of G.

Patton’s version, like all others, is made up of narratively isolated verses, related only in their reference to a common theme: the all-powerful craving for one’s greatest pleasure, presumably sex, suggested in the metaphor of a spoonful. Each verse ends with the word “spoonful,” though sometimes with it or its last syllable left out, perhaps a device inherent in the genre for heightening bawdy suggestiveness. Patton generally “finishes” each line by playing a phrase on his guitar to mimic the saying of the word. Patton also emphasizes, more than his counterparts, the violent aspects of this craving. It has been suggested that the “spoonful” in Patton’s song might refer to cocaine, a meaning supported by Patton’s emphasis on the most desperate and violent results of the craving.

Charley Jordan’s sprightly picked version, without the dense wordplay of Patton’s, suggests the styles of white blues guitarists of the 1920s, such as Dick Justice. Indeed, there is a passing melodic resemblance in Justice’s “Cocaine,” recorded in 1929, lending support to a drug interpretation of “Spoonful.” Overall, melodic resemblance to “Salty Dog,” “Don’t Let Your Deal Go Down,” and other ragtime-based songs with little harmonic variation often played by white performers suggests a possible history of racial crossover in the song that predates the recordings of Patton, Jordan, and Jackson.

A version with a different chord progression was recorded in 1966 by Mississippi John Hurt as “Coffee Blues” (Vanguard, *Mississippi John Hurt Today*), a song that gave the rock group The Lovin’ Spoonful its name. Similar to Leadbelly’s “Midnight Special” and Hurt’s “Creole Belle,” it follows a progression of IV, I, V, I. Hurt diverts attention from the sexual theme in a spoken introduction about his girl’s measuring spoonfuls of Maxwell House coffee. Though clearly sexual, his use of the conceit is characteristically gentle and humorous, as in his reference to a preacher laying his Bible down for a spoonful.

The most well-known song based on the image, however, is almost totally different in structure and was not recorded until 1960. “Spoonful” (Chess #1762), was written by Willie Dixon and sung by Howlin’ Wolf. Midtempoed and minor keyed, the song conveys a thoughtful assertiveness, with a dose of the ominous, as Howlin’ Wolf sings verses that expand the metaphor to include anything that men might crave, and the violence that some resort to in order to fulfill the cravings. The last line—noted EG,

SPOONFUL (A SPOONFUL BLUES)

EG, EG, E—constitutes the song's well-remembered melodic and verbal hook.

One of the most widely covered blues songs, Dixon's "Spoonful" was subsequently recorded by artists such as Jimmy Witherspoon and Koko Taylor. Many rock and rock-blues bands covered the song, popularly Cream in a studio version on *Fresh Cream* (1966) in a live version on *Wheels of Fire* (1968).

JOSEPH A. LAROSE

SPOONS

Spoons, which are sometimes known colloquially in blues circles as the "bones," are also historically referred to as "clappers" or "clackers."

In formal musical instrumentation categorization, the spoons are a type of concussion idiophone, where a sound is generated when two or more similar materials are struck together. Spoons are typically made from metal or wood materials, but in most blues numbers, the spoons are metal. Most commonly spoons in blues music are made of two separate metal spoons; some contemporary spoons sets are welded together at the ends.

Since primary idiophones create sound by striking two pieces of wood or metal together, the historical origins of the spoons can be traced from Africa to Europe to the Middle East.

Though spoons were played extensively during the late 1800s and with lesser frequency in the first half of the 1900s, this particular instrument is not widely recorded. Or, in cases where it may be played, the instrument is not listed on the album credits.

While the spoons as an instrument have been nearly completely absent from contemporary blues since the 1960s, they had once been a staple of blues music, with a rich heritage and tradition.

Proliferation of the use of spoons centered from Memphis, Tennessee, and Louisville, Kentucky, but was prevalent throughout the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys of the United States. Most often, the playing of the spoons was synonymous with the many blues jug or "skiffle" bands that actively toured this region from the 1890s through the Great Depression era. The spoons were a complement to the rhythm section, along with washboard, bass, and jug.

The most notable jug band that featured spoons players was the Henry Miles Jug Band. This band ended up attracting two of the most significant spoons players during its lengthy history. Both

James Hardy and John "Preacher" Stevenson played for the Henry Miles Jug Band, beginning in the early 1950s.

The spoons were played by young and old alike. Louisville, Kentucky, being one of the spawning grounds for skiffle bands, had a number of "kids bands" where many young players learned their spoons technique. William Bean, for example, was one youth who started with a kids' band and later joined the Mud Gutter Jug Band in 1925.

With the resurgence of interest in folk music in the 1960s, isolated use of the spoons arose in the jug bands within contemporary folk, roots, or blues music but still remains rare.

In many music education stores, plastic, metal, or wood spoons still are actively used to teach percussion to elementary school-aged children.

MEG FISHER

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SPROTT, HORACE

- b. 2 February ca. 1890; Sprott, AL
d. Unknown

As a child, guitarist and harmonica player Horace Sprott learned sacred and secular songs from his parents. In 1954 he was recorded by Frederick Ramsey, Jr., for Folkways and disappeared into obscurity from the 1960s.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: LSFP

SPRUELL, FREDDIE

b. 1893; Lake Providence, LA
d. 1956; Chicago, IL

Spruell's first recordings, in June 1926, were among the earliest by an African American male blues singer and guitarist. He was then living in Chicago, where he spent most or all of his adult life. By comparison with his contemporary Blind Lemon Jefferson, he was a ponderous singer and rhythmically stolid guitarist, but his songs have a good deal of original character. Although he had no known association with Mississippi bluesmen of his era, his "Low-Down Mississippi Bottom Man" is curiously similar to pieces played by Kid Bailey and Charley Patton. He became a Baptist minister in the 1940s.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: DGR**SPRUILL, JAMES "WILD JIMMY"**

b. 9 June 1934; Washington, NC
d. 3 February 1996; Fayetteville, NC

Guitarist Wild Jimmy Spruill was one of the many prolific journeymen in the New York studio scene during the 1950s and 1960s. A native of North Carolina, he appears on such well-known tracks as Wilbert Harrison's "Kansas City," Dave "Baby" Cortez's "The Happy Organ," and Tarheel Slim's "No. 9 Train." He accompanied many other minor figures, including saxophonist Noble "Thin Man" Watts and Mississippi-born B. Brown as well as cutting some stinging solo sides. Spruill's evocatively energetic picking earned him his sobriquet, and numerous both prominent and obscure sessions benefited from his talents.

DAVID SANJEK

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Discography: LSPF**ST. LOUIS BLUES**

Song (1914) by W. C. Handy, among the biggest hits of the twentieth century, remaining immensely popular for several generations. Handy assembled "St. Louis Blues" from bits of folkloric music and text that he had collected during his wanderings of the 1890s and early 1900s. He supposedly heard the lament

my man's got a heart like a rock cast in the sea

(used in the third section of the song) while destitute in the streets of St. Louis in 1892. The second of the song's three musical sections, a habanera or tango, may derive from his 1900 visit to Havana while bandmaster with Mahara's Minstrels.

The famous opening lyric of the song,

I hate to see de evenin' sun go down,

seems to derive directly from African American folklore, probably collected by Handy during his extensive travels through the South as a bandleader and musician. The third and final musical refrain is the most controversial part of the piece. Handy had used it in 1913, in his lesser-known instrumental "The Jogo Blues." Some scholars have pointed out its similarity to a piece called "I Got the Blues," which the white New Orleans musician Anthony Maggio had published in 1908. It is impossible to know whether or not Handy could have heard Maggio's piece, which had a limited circulation, and Handy was never in New Orleans during this period. However, Maggio was convinced Handy had appropriated his tune.

Structurally, "St. Louis Blues" is quite ingenious. In assembling not two but three strong thematic units, Handy created something similar in quality to one of Scott Joplin's classic piano rags. The second section, to the text

St. Louis woman, with her diamond rings, ...

is the most brilliant of the three strains. Here Handy combines the habanera rhythm with a switch to a minor key. Other published blues of this period contained plenty of blue notes and other standard features we associate with blues, but this was the first blues to contain an entire section in a minor key. Indeed, it was the only one in sheet music form at its time, out of dozens of blues and pseudo-blues published pre-1920. This synthesis of a Latin music trait with one clearly deriving from black rural blues culture is the feature, more than any other, that marks "St. Louis Blues" as a masterpiece.

Early performance practice confirms the song's appearance in the ragtime era, when America was dance-mad. "St. Louis Blues" could be used as a three part dance suite, with a tango section providing

ST. LOUIS BLUES

variety between two sections that might have been done as “blues” dances, popular when the piece was new. No early recordings are taken at a slow tempo, and there have continued to be up-tempo renditions right up to the present.

The countertradition, singing the song as a lament, begins with the 1920 record by white entertainer Marion Harris, a friend of Handy’s. This trend reached its apotheosis with the legendary 1925 recording by Bessie Smith, and her equally lugubrious 1929 film performance of the song. “St. Louis Blues,” of all early published commercial blues, best embodied the emotional and stylistic elements of country blues that could provide it with an extended afterlife. It has successfully adapted both to up-tempo commercial arrangements and to the slow blues performance style that would come to dominate in much commercial, and some country, blues performance of the 1920s and after.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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Selected Recordings

- “St. Louis Blues” is among the most recorded pieces of music of all time. The following is only a small sampling of the groups and individuals to have recorded the song. A complete list of the recordings with their dates and matrix numbers would take up much of this volume.
- Country blues musicians and folk musicians. Leadbelly; Big Bill Broonzy; Sam Chatmon; Furry Lewis; Jim Jackson; and John Fahey.
- Commercial or city blues artists. Bessie Smith; Ethel Waters; Ida Cox; Esther Bigeou; Bessie Brown; Katherine Henderson; and Laura Rucker.
- Pre-jazz brass bands and ragtime ensembles. Ciro’s Club Coon Orchestra; Jim Europe’s 369th Infantry “Hell Fighters” Band; Prince’s Band; and Handy’s Memphis Blues Band.
- Early jazz, traditional jazz, and swing artists. Louis Armstrong; Duke Ellington; Count Basie; Benny Goodman; Fletcher Henderson; Cab Calloway; Fats Waller; The Dorsey Brothers; Earl Hines; Art Tatum; Artie Shaw; Lena Horne; Eubie Blake; Django Reinhardt with Stephane Grappelli; Gene Krupa; Jack Teagarden; Jimmie Noone; Paul Whiteman; The Original Dixieland Jazz Band; Noble Sissle; Albert Ammons; Pete Johnson; Mildred Bailey; The Boswell Sisters; Clarence Williams; Art Hodes; John Kirby; Red Norvo; Valaida Snow; Sonny Clay; Sam Lanin; and Boyd Senter.
- Miscellaneous pop musicians, novelty acts, and commercial entertainers. Marion Harris; Seger Ellis; Larry Adler; Joe Haymes; Ted Lewis; Eddie Peabody; The Washboard Serenaders; and Guy Lombardo.

Country musicians. Milton Brown and His Brownies. Modern blues and modern jazz artists. Big Joe Turner; Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown; Herbie Hancock with Stevie Wonder; Pat Metheny.

See also Handy, William Christopher “W. C.”; Memphis Blues, The (“Mama Don’ ’low” or “Mister Crump”); Smith, Bessie

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Two decades after W. C. Handy linked the name of St. Louis to his most famous composition, the city actually became a major center for recorded blues music, giving birth to an original range of styles that combined urban tradition and rural patterns.

Prewar St. Louis Blues

Ragtime composers such as Tom Turpin and Scott Joplin had already established the musical reputation of St. Louis at the turn of the century, and urban piano styles kept evolving in such legendary places as “Deep Morgan” around Delmar, or in the sporting district around 20th Street known as the Chestnut Valley. Early blues or blues ballads of the 1890s and 1900s were about local real-life figures such as Frankie Baker (“Frankie and Albert”), Stagger Lee, and Bob McKinney (recorded by Henry Thomas in 1927).

Most prewar St. Louis blues musicians moved from the South between 1918 and 1925, following the flood of African American migrants. The city reinforced housing segregation, confining most Africans to the Mill Creek Valley, part of the central corridor between Grand and 20th Street, south of Olive and north of Scott Avenue, and its counterpart across the Mississippi River, the East St. Louis “Valley,” also known as the red light district, which had suffered from one of the worst race riots in 1917.

Blues emerged in both cities, mostly played at private parties and, as soon as prohibition banned alcohol, in many illegal joints. St. Louis included many bars, nightclubs, and theaters but no recording studios until the 1950s, so the first recordings involving blues were made during field trips. OKeh featured Kansas City vocalist Ada Brown with Benny Moten’s orchestra in 1923, and soon such residents as Lonnie Johnson and Victoria Spivey, but the main local output was jazz or dance music, such as from Charles Craith’s Jazz’o’Maniacs, who operated on the riverboats linking the city to New Orleans.

Most St. Louis musicians were recorded in Chicago, sometimes from the initiative of local talent scouts

such as record shop owner Jesse Johnson or guitarist Charley Jordan. Among the most urbanized artists were vocalists such as Mary Johnson or Alice Moore, but the number of pianists was overwhelming. Peetie Wheatstraw, Henry Brown, Roosevelt Sykes, James “Stump” Johnson, the Sparks brothers, Jabo Williams, Sylvester Palmer, and Lee Green did not define a noticeable St. Louis style but shared high professionalism and inventiveness and subtle left-hand accompaniments that could lead to a typical style of boogie-woogie, with sometimes a clear jazz influence.

Guitar styles ranged from the refined melodic approach of Lonnie Johnson, Clifford Gibson, or Charley Jordan to the rough playing of Mississippi-born Jaydee Short or Hi Henry Brown, who still inherited some local features from earlier musicians, Henry Spaulding and Henry Townsend: typical rhythmic signatures, heavy bending and snapping of top strings. Artists such as Teddy Darby, Townsend, and Wheatstraw could play both instruments, and many piano–guitar duets emerged from these early years.

A couple of St. Louis musicians kept recording during the hardest years of the depression, and the end of Prohibition in 1933 enlarged the opportunities for playing. New talents such as Walter Davis and Big Joe Williams appeared around 1935, and in spite of the repeated projects to close the Valley, East St. Louis remained a renowned place even for Chicago artists such as John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson and Robert Nighthawk.

The Postwar Years

Several blues performers, such as Clifford Gibson, were still active in St. Louis after the war, but rhythm and blues dominated the scene. Chuck Berry and Ike Turner cut their teeth in St. Louis clubs, and several modern musicians such as Albert King and Little Milton met success there.

The city stayed aside of the “blues revival” and its festivals, although the foundation of Delmark records by Bob Koester helped with the rediscovery of Big Joe Williams, Jaydee Short, and more obscure blues musicians who had not recorded before the war. Among the major postwar figures in St. Louis were pianist Johnnie Johnson and guitarist Tommy Bankhead.

Urban redevelopment cleared most of the areas that had sheltered the prewar musicians, and blues moved to the Soulard neighborhood or clubs along Broadway. Among others, BB’s Jazz, Blues, and Soups maintains the blues tradition as well as other types of popular music, and several organizations

keep encouraging new talents, while the Big Muddy Blues and Roots Festival pays his annual tribute to the city’s long underrated blues heritage.

PATRICE CHAMPAROU/EDWARD KOMARA

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STACK LEE

Songs, toasts, and tales about Stack Lee (also known as Stagolee, Staggerlee, Stackerlee, and Stack-o-lee) proliferated throughout the twentieth century. He was bad, really bad. He’d

kill you just for fun.

Born with a veil over his face, he sold his soul to the devil, had hooves for feet, owned a magic Stetson hat, fought Jesse James, caused the San Francisco earthquake by wrecking a saloon when the bartender was slow serving him, and took over Hell when he died. He killed Billy Lyons over that Stetson hat (Botkin, 1944).

The kernel of truth here is that “Stack” Lee Shelton did kill William Lyons in an argument over a hat (Brown, 1993; David, 1976; Eberhart, 1996). The three-syllable names by which we now know Shelton, “Stagolee,” etc., probably arose because it is hard to pronounce “Stack Lee” without involuntarily introducing an intermediate syllable.

Ironically, Lyons was the reputed bully, especially when he had drunk too much. Shelton was a small, cross-eyed man.

It happened in Bill Curtis’s Elite Club, 11th and Morgan Streets, downtown St. Louis, Missouri, late Christmas night, 1895. Shelton (aged thirty) and Lyons (thirty one), both black, were friends who met there often. They argued, possibly over politics—Shelton was a Democrat, Lyons a Republican. After each had struck at the other’s hat, Shelton took Lyons’s derby and broke it. Lyons then grabbed Shelton’s hat, perhaps a Stetson, and would not give it back. After Shelton hit Lyons on the head with his Smith and Wesson .44-caliber revolver, Lyons came after him, reaching into his pocket as if for a knife, and Shelton shot him in the abdomen. He died the next day. Before entering the saloon, Lyons had borrowed a knife from a companion.

Despite strong arguments for self-defense, Shelton was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to twenty-five years in the penitentiary. He was paroled in 1909, reincarcerated for robbery in 1911, and died of tuberculosis in prison in 1912. His parole was based on many pleas, including those from Thomas Turpin (ragtime composer), the judge who presided at his trial, and ten of the jurors. The foreman said that he never had “believed the verdict a just one” and had accepted a compromise verdict only because he was ill.

One early version of the ballad says that Stack Lee was a

good man / One every body did love,

others are sympathetic to him, and still others paint him as evil. Eberhart speculates that competing versions, perhaps politically motivated, might have originated with Lyons’s and Shelton’s friends.

“Stack Lee” may have been performed in St. Louis at Babe Connors’s famous Castle Club, a multimedia entertainment center (music, dancing, gambling, drinking, sex). It has entered many genres, having been performed and recorded by prisoners, songsters, and blues singers, popular and novelty artists, jazz musicians, and rhythm-and-blues and rock groups, using a variety of tunes, one of which is the common “Frankie” tune. The best-known tune today may be that of the 1958 Lloyd Price hit or the original melody of the Grateful Dead version, both entitled “Stagger Lee.”

JOHN GARST

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STACKHOUSE, HOUSTON

- b. 28 September 1910; Wesson, MS
d. 23 September 1980; Helena, AR

The distinguished Mississippi singer and guitarist Houston Stackhouse, who would spend virtually all

of his unassuming life in the South and who would associate with many great prewar and postwar blues artists, was actually born Houston Goff, the son of Garfield Goff, in Wesson, Mississippi, located forty miles south of Jackson. He was raised on the Randall Ford Plantation by James Wade Stackhouse, who he believed was his natural father for much of his life. As a boy, he heard blues being played on the plantation by fiddle player Lace Powell as well as from his visiting uncles, who performed throughout the Jackson area.

Around 1925, the family moved to Crystal Springs, Mississippi, and Stackhouse took up the violin, harmonica, and mandolin before concentrating on the guitar, an instrument he learned from locals Floyd Patterson and brothers Tommy, Mager, and Clarence Johnson. He also studied the records of Lonnie Johnson, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Blind Blake. From the late 1920s throughout the early 1930s, he played with many area musicians and formed a partnership with his cousin and then-harmonica player Robert McCollum (Robert Nighthawk), whom Stackhouse would also teach guitar. Stackhouse was already an accomplished slide guitar player and was responsible for shaping McCollum’s early interest in the style. In 1931, the pair met and performed with country music pioneer Jimmie Rodgers in Jackson.

Stackhouse began playing white country dances in the mid-1930s with the Mississippi Sheiks Number 2, a group patterned after the Chatmon brothers’ famous Jackson-area black string band that he often had associated with since the late 1920s. Around 1936, he met Robert Johnson in Jackson and was extended an offer to join Johnson on his upcoming recording session, but declined. He continued with the string band into the early 1940s, when he moved to Wiggins, Mississippi, to work outside music at a lumber mill.

In 1946, McCollum, now a recording star known as Robert Nighthawk, moved to Helena, Arkansas, and asked Stackhouse to relocate there to join him. Stackhouse accepted and would spend the next twenty-two years living in the Mississippi River town. He played throughout the region and on radio shows for the next year with Nighthawk’s band, which also included Kansas City Red, Pinetop Perkins, and Sam Carr.

After Nighthawk’s departure in 1947, Stackhouse began playing on Helena’s influential KFFA radio show *King Biscuit Time* with drummer James “Peck” Curtis and guitarist Joe Willie Wilkins. Harmonica player and singer Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II,” who returned to host his popular show, joined them in 1948. The group performed throughout the Delta for several years, using the daily radio spots to advertise their appearances. Stackhouse also

played with and influenced many blues musicians passing through Helena at the time, including Earl Hooker, Sammy Lawhorn, and Jimmy Rogers. He worked with Elmore James, Ernest Lane, Willie Love, and Roosevelt Sykes during this period as well, all the while keeping a day job at an automobile plant in West Helena.

Stackhouse resisted the temptation to move north to Chicago as Williamson did in the mid-1950s and spent the next decade playing locally and working various regular jobs. Although he had stopped playing on *King Biscuit Time* several years earlier because of a dispute with its owner, he agreed in 1965 to accompany Williamson, who had recently returned to Helena, on a live broadcast that was recorded by Arhoolie's Chris Strachwitz. Williamson died a few weeks after the recordings and Stackhouse continued on with another former partner who recently had moved back to Helena, Robert Nighthawk. As the Stackhouse Blues Rhythm Boys, the trio, which included drummer Curtis, was recorded by George Mitchell in 1967 in Dundee, Mississippi, just months before Nighthawk's death. These recordings were eventually released by Arhoolie and Testament Records and featured the gentle Stackhouse singing many prewar and postwar classics—most notably, those of mentor Tommy Johnson.

Stackhouse moved to Memphis in 1970 to live with Wilkins and his wife Carrie, and throughout the decade both guitarists toured together as The King Biscuit Boys. Stackhouse also appeared at many prestigious venues as a solo performer and toured overseas in 1976. His easygoing demeanor and grandfatherly presence garnered him many friends and fans on the festival circuit. Stackhouse recorded for Adelphi Records in 1972 and toured nationally with the Memphis Blues Caravan package, which also included old friends Sam Chatmon and Eugene Powell. In his final years, he moved back to Crystal Springs and rarely performed. Houston Stackhouse returned to Helena shortly before his death and passed away quietly at age sixty nine.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSF

Houston Stackhouse. *Cryin' Won't Help You* (1994, Genes GCD 9904).

Robert Nighthawk/Houston Stackhouse. *Masters of Modern Blues* (1994, Testament TCD 5010).
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STAFF/DESSA

Staff was owned by Maurice King in Detroit in 1947, with Dessa owned by Idessa Malone. Artists included John Lee Hooker, Baby Boy Warren, Ted Buckner, and Milt Hinton.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

STAPLES, ROEBUCK "POPS"

b. 28 December 1914; Winona, MS
d. 19 December 2000; Dolton, IL

Guitarist and singer and patriarch of the Staples Singers family group.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG; Gospel Records 1943–1969

STAR TALENT/TALENT

Labels run in Dallas, Texas, in 1949–1961 by Jesse and Louise Erickson. Artists included Rufus Thomas, Professor Longhair, and Willie Lane.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

STARK, COOTIE

b. 9 December 1927; Abbeville, SC

Blind acoustic guitarist and singer. Stark acquired his first guitar at age fourteen from his father and learned how to play from a neighbor. He moved to live with an aunt in Greenville, South Carolina, around 1943, where he learned guitar from Baby Tate and began performing for tips. He developed a repertoire ranging

STARK, COOTIE

from Reverend Gary Davis songs to 1960s soul music. In the 1990s he was performing at festivals in the United States and abroad, and he was associated with the Music Maker Relief Foundation.

EDWARD KOMARA

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STARR PIANO COMPANY

The Starr Piano Company of Richmond, Indiana, founded in 1872 by James and Benjamin Starr, was the parent company of Gennett. After 1917 the name was used on record labels only in Canada, where a few vaudeville blues artists were issued, including Edna Hicks and Viola McCoy, sometimes using alternate takes. In 1925 Canadian Starr was purchased by Compo, which had always pressed the records. The U.S. company withdrew from the record business in 1934.

HOWARD RYE

Discography: DGR; Sutton

Dixon, Robert M. W., and John Godrich. *Recording the Blues*. London: Sudio Vista, 1970; reprinted in Paul Oliver, Tony Russell, Robert M. W. Dixon, and Howard Rye, *Yonder Come the Blues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

STASH RECORDS

This company, founded in the early 1970s, earned initial notoriety from founder Bernard Brightman's fondness for vintage double-entendre and drug tunes, which he featured on several early Stash anthologies. The albums had mixed musical value but were historically significant because they documented a forgotten sound and lyrical direction (some argued that it might be better not to remember some of the numerous reefer and dope tunes these collections spotlighted). But Stash eventually expanded its catalog and has subsequently released vital reissues featuring some of Charlie Parker's formative and finest bop dates and outstanding contemporary sessions from trombonist Steve Turre, pianist Hilton Ruiz, guitarist John Pizzarelli, and the String Trio of New York among others. Brightman died in 2004 at eighty two.

RON WYNN

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STAX/VOLT

Founded in Memphis in 1958 as Satellite Records by country fiddler Jim Stewart, Stax Records was initially conceived as a pop and country label. It was only after renting an abandoned movie theatre in 1960 in a neighborhood whose demographic was rapidly changing from white to black that Stewart, now in partnership with his sister, Estelle Axton, began to regularly record black artists. The first black artist to record at the new location was Memphis disc jockey and former Sun recording artist Rufus Thomas, who alongside his daughter Carla provided the fledgling Satellite label with its first hit, "Cause I Love You."

While "Cause I Love You" and many other early Satellite/Stax hits, including instrumental recordings such as the Mar-Keys' "Last Night" and "Green Onions" from Booker T. and the MGs, were set in a twelve-bar blues structure, the majority of Stax vocalists sang and the majority of Stax composers wrote within the then-new style of soul music. A cursory examination of the singles released by Satellite/Stax and the subsidiary label Volt demonstrates that, with the exception of early Johnnie Taylor recordings cut in 1966 and 1967, by the mid-1960s most of the company's artists were no longer singing twelve-bar blues-based material.

By the late 1960s, Stax had blossomed into a soul music powerhouse. The label reached its commercial peak in 1971 and 1972, but due to a series of tragic events resulting from an unfortunate distribution agreement with Columbia Records, the company was forced into involuntary bankruptcy in December 1975.

During the course of the company's history (1958–1975), Stax recorded a handful of blues artists, including Albert King, Little Milton, Little Sonny, and Prince Conley. King arrived at the label in 1966 after stints recording for the Parrot, Bobbin, King, and Coun-tree labels going back to 1953. Backed for his first few years at the label by Booker T. and the MGs, King cut his finest work for Stax. Among his most notable recordings for the label are "Laundromat Blues" (1966), "Crosscut Saw" (1967), "Born Under a Bad Sign" (1967), "I'll Play the Blues for You" (1972), and "That's What the Blues Is All About" (1974).

Little Milton signed with Stax in 1971 after having already enjoyed a substantial career recording for

Sun, Bobbin, and the Chess subsidiary, Checker, beginning in the early 1950s. Paired initially with producer Don Davis, Milton placed seven Stax singles on *Billboard's* R&B charts, the most notable being "That's What Love Will Make You Do" (1972). He also recorded two albums for Stax that included what became two of his signature tunes and blues classics in their own right, "Little Bluebird" and "Walking the Back Streets and Crying." Both King and Milton were featured in the 1972 Wattstax concert and included in the subsequent *Wattstax* double-pocket albums.

The less well-known Detroit-based harmonica player and vocalist Little Sonny recorded four albums and a handful of singles for the Stax subsidiary Enterprise in the early 1970s. While none of these efforts charted, they are recognized as superb examples of latter-day Detroit blues. The obscure Prince Conley was from Memphis and recorded a solitary single on Satellite, "I'm Going Home" (1961). In the 1970s Stax issued albums by blues artists John Lee Hooker and Jimmy McCracklin, licensed from Henry Stone and Willie Mitchell, respectively.

ROBERT BOWMAN

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Discography: McGrath

- Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "The Stax Volt Story." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/staxvolt.html> (accessed December 12, 2004).

STEINER, JOHN

- b. 21 July 1908; Milwaukee, WI
 d. 3 June 2000; Milwaukee, WI

Record collector and label owner. In the post-World War II years, Steiner led a revival of interest for traditional jazz and country blues. He first became involved in Chicago's jazz scene in the early 1930s while earning his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Chicago (1933). With Helen Oakley and Harry Lim, he founded the country's first hot jazz club, the Hot Club of Chicago. In 1940, Steiner teamed up with Hugh Davis to record traditional jazz acts, and in 1944 they founded S D Records.

Steiner and Davis released newly recorded discs on jazz artists and put out reissue discs, some drawn from the Paramount label, including blues artists Laura Rucker, Cow Cow Davenport, and Skip James. In early 1945 Davis sold his half of the company to Steiner, who then operated the imprint for the next three years. After acquiring the old Paramount label in 1948, however, he released singles and LPs on a revived Paramount imprint of jazz and blues artists drawn from the original Paramount label, S D, and other labels. Steiner withdrew from the music business in 1955.

ROBERT PRUTER

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STEPHENS, JAMES "GUITAR SLIM"

- b. 4 March 1915; Pauline, SC
 d. 10 February 1991; Greensboro, NC

Piedmont blues and sacred singer, guitarist, pianist, master of black oral arts. From the late 1920s through the early 1950s he traveled around the southern United States, often with medicine shows. He settled in Greensboro, North Carolina, for twenty years, but he returned to performing in the mid-1970s at colleges and folk festivals. Recordings of him appeared on the labels Flyright, Rounder, and L+R. He is not to be confused with James "Preacher" Stephens, who recorded with the Modern label in Houston, Texas, in 1954.

EDWARD KOMARA

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STEPNEY, BILLIE

- b. 16 January 1930; Grenada, MS

Drummer active in Chicago since the mid-1940s; first name sometimes shown as "Billy." During the 1950s, he performed frequently for Memphis Slim and in Willie Dixon-supervised sessions for Chess and Cobra. In 1963 he performed with the American Folk Blues Festival tour of Europe.

EDWARD KOMARA

STEPNEY, BILLIE

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STIDHAM, ARBEE

b. 9 February 1917; DeValls Bluff, AR
d. April 1988; Chicago, IL

Stidham followed his father, a professional bandsman, by taking up saxophone. He led his own band in the Little Rock, Arkansas, area and played for a couple of seasons with Bessie Smith. On arriving in Chicago in the 1930s, however, he found that he would do better as a blues singer, a role in which he was encouraged by Big Bill Broonzy and Tampa Red. His first recording session, for Victor in 1947, produced the sleek ballad "My Heart Belongs to You," a surprise hit that he proved unable to repeat, although many labels offered him the chance to try.

Having given up the saxophone on health grounds, he learned guitar but, as albums for Bluesville and Folkways confirm, did not become adept. Nevertheless, he was astute enough as a songwriter and self-promoter to continue to garner recording opportunities into the 1970s, including dates with Sun and Mainstream. By then he had settled in Cleveland, Ohio, where, after a final album with local musicians in 1973, he effectively retired from music. Since his early recordings evinced an aesthetic unpalatable to most present-day enthusiasts, they were largely disregarded for many years, only earning a comprehensive reissue, by Blue Moon, in 2004.

TONY RUSSELL

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Danchin, Sebastian. "Arbee Stidham—Our Hearts Belong to You." *Soul Bag* no. 100 (September/October 1984).

Discography: AMG; LSFP

STINSON RECORDS

Originally founded in 1939 by Herbert Harris to distribute Soviet recordings, this New York label was joined for a time with Moe Asch's eponymous label; in 1946, Asch broke away from Harris and started Disc Records, the ill-fated precursor to Folkways.

Stinson released several recordings by blues artists, including Sonny Terry, Josh White, Meade Lux Lewis, and Leadbelly.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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STOKES, FRANK

b. 1 January 1888; Whitehaven, TN
d. 12 September 1955; Memphis, TN

Frank Stokes, a burly blacksmith, can be said to have laid the foundations of what became accepted as Memphis blues with a long series of solo records and unparalleled duets with Dan Sane as the Beale Street Sheiks.

His playing was firmly rooted in ragtime rhythms, and he and Sane often recorded pre-blues songs such as "Chicken You Can Roost Behind the Moon," "Last Go Round" or "I Got Mine," and "Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do." In all he recorded some forty songs, and while his Sheiks duets are unrivalled of their kind, his other partnership with fiddler Will Batts produced some of the most beautiful and heart-tugging blues ever recorded.

Stokes had a perfect blues voice—big, dramatic, and forceful, and his guitar playing was strong and accurate. His solid yet subtle rhythms interspersed with Sane's flat pick ornamentation are among the glories of the blues. Stokes was never afraid to tackle modern issues either—political corruption in "Mr Crump Don't Like It," fashion in "Jazzing the Blues," short skirts in "Nehi Blues"—and a number of his songs refer to places in and around Memphis.

After his recording career ended, Stokes carried on playing music locally, and a young B. B. King spoke about his house parties and star guests. He died in 1955 but is remembered by a star set in the pavement of Beale Street.

DAVID HARRISON

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Olsson, Bengt. "Frank Stokes: The Beale Street Sheik." *Blues Unlimited* no. 100 (April 1973): 25–27.

Discography: DGR

STONE, HENRY*(See Chart)***STONE, JESSE**

b. 16 November 1901; Atchison, KS

d. 1 April 1999; Altamonte Springs, FL

Aka Charles Calhoun. One of the greatest R&B songwriters, Jesse Stone's career in the music business lasted more than six decades. He first worked on the black vaudeville circuit and later was the leader of a jazz band that included saxophonist Coleman Hawkins. In Kansas City, his reputation began to grow as an arranger and pianist for the George and Julia Lee Bands. Duke Ellington caught his act and, impressed with his arranging and songwriting skills, recommended him to Mills Music in New York. As a staff writer, Stone wrote for the Cotton Club. Later he wrote comedy scenes, music, and arrangements for the city's Apollo Theater. During this time he advised and encouraged a young Louis Jordan.

In the 1940s, Stone led his own band, recording R&B for the RCA-Victor label. Jesse Stone joined newly formed Atlantic Records as a staff producer-songwriter-arranger. Many of his songs became hits for other rhythm and blues singers. "Coleslaw" was a hit for Louis Jordan, and "Shake Rattle and Roll," though originally written for Big Joe Turner, helped make the career of Bill Halley and the Comets. He also wrote other hit-making material for the Cardinals, the Drifters, Ray Charles, Ruth Brown, Chuck Willis, Titus Turner, and Roy Hamilton. Because many of these songs were BMI tunes, Stone wrote them under the name Charles Calhoun so as not to jeopardize his membership in ASCAP.

TOM MORGAN

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Discography: Lord; LSFP

Jesse Stone Alias Charles "Chuck" Calhoun (1996, Bear Family CD 15695; reissue)

STORMY MONDAY

Aaron Thibaux "T-Bone" Walker (1910–1975) (vocals, electric guitar), Teddy Buckner (trumpet),

Bumps Myers (tenor sax), Lloyd Glenn (piano), Arthur Edwards (bass), Oscar Lee Bradley (drums). Recorded 1947, Los Angeles, California (Black and White 122 matrix BW 637).

From the bold and brassy introduction: Eb9–D9 repeated over a triplet rhythm, T-Bone Walker lets us know why he is one of the kings of the electric blues guitar. Not only a guitarist but a gifted singer, songwriter, bandleader, and showman, he made unparalleled contributions to the modern blues idiom. "Stormy Monday" was an enormous commercial success; it has also been covered and adapted by many other artists over the years and is considered a classic of the genre.

Walker begins with closely reasoned midrange guitar counterpoint to his vocal musings, joined in the background by tenor sax riffs and piano filigree. One device that gets the listener's attention is his use of the chromatic passing or leading chord (Db9–C9, F#9–G9), which sounds incredibly rich (and novel for the time).

In some cover versions of this song (Bobby Bland, B. B. King, the Allman Brothers, Isaac Hayes, and countless others have recorded it), there is a chord progression in measures 7–8: I (or I major 7)–ii7–'iii7–biii7, two beats each, en route to a ii7 at bar 9. This progression does not occur in the original. The bassist plays a more conventional pattern, without passing tones. The last four bars appear to begin ii7–V7. In contrast with the country blues, "Stormy Monday," an urban blues, is very "choreographed," and the twelve-bar verses clearly marked.

Walker ends the first verse with a more intensive statement on guitar. His voice is melodic, almost like Nat King Cole's, and the intonation is near perfect, with a touch of vibrato. Buckner plays simple muted trumpet countermelodies. In the body of the second verse, Walker primarily plays low figures on the guitar, a rhythm function, ending with a flurry of linear ideas.

His twelve-bar guitar solo after the second verse remains largely in the middle register, but it contains some gems, particularly in his use of space, phrasing, and melodic development. It is obvious that he is really thinking, not playing reflexively as some musicians do. The horns play a simple, bluesy background riff in the mode of 1930s Kansas City groups such as Count Basie's.

The third and final verse is noteworthy for two things: the triplets that Walker hits so hard in the first line leading to the IV chord and Buckner's wailing plunger mute fill after the word "misery." Here Buckner conjures up the ghost of Bubber Miley, to go with his Sweets Edison–like playing on verse 2. Quite a contribution overall.

STORMY MONDAY

A clean unison ending buttons up T-Bone Walker's ageless recording. The song would enter the rock repertoire in 1971 through the Allman Brothers Band's classic live recording *Live at the Fillmore East*.

LENNY CARLSON

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STORYVILLE RECORDS

Storyville Records was founded in December 1952 in Copenhagen, Denmark, by Karl Emil Knudsen. That company released hundreds of LPs and even some 45s and EPs. Many great blues artists recorded original LPs in Storyville's Copenhagen studios while touring in Scandinavia: Big Bill Broonzy (in 1956), Champion Jack Dupree (in 1959), Memphis Slim (in 1960), Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson II" (in 1963), Lonnie Johnson (in 1963), and Big Joe Williams (in 1963). Some of those unique LPs later reappeared in the 1960s on the Los Angeles label Everest Records, in the Archive of Folk Music Series, sometimes on Folkways (USA), and occasionally in Japan on the Teichiku label.

Starting in the early 1990s, Storyville Records began reissuing material on CD and offers vintage archival footage of jazz, bebop, and blues on video.

YVES LABERGE

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Wirz, Stefan. "Storyville Records Discography." Stefan Wirz website, <http://www.wirz.de/music/storyfrm.htm>.

STOVALL, JEWELL "BABE"

b. 4 October 1907; Tylertown, MS

d. 21 September 1974; New Orleans, LA

Singer and guitarist with a wide repertoire in addition to blues. He began performing in the 1920s as part of a Tylertown group associated with Herb Quinn. In the mid-1930s, he came to know and learn the music of Tommy Johnson, who had married a local woman.

By 1957 he had moved to New Orleans, playing on the streets in the French Quarter. He became a local favorite, and he appeared at their first five New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festivals in 1970–1974.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris; Larkin

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Discography: LSFP

STOVEPIPE NO. 1

b. Sam Jones, flourished 1920s–1930s

Jones was known in Cincinnati as a one-man jug band, playing harmonica, guitar, and a length of stovepipe, and recorded in that fashion as early as 1924. He also played lilted harmonica with the Cincinnati Jug Band and Kid Cole and sang pungent blues and vaudeville songs with guitarist David Crockett.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: DGR

STRAIGHT ALKY BLUES

"Straight Alky Blues" was composed and first recorded by Leroy Carr in 1929. It provided the melodic basis and, to a lesser extent, a lyric basis for "Black River Blues" by Roosevelt Sykes (1929) and for "Cross Road Blues" by Robert Johnson (1936).

Carr's "Straight Alky Blues" is in a twelve-measure AAB lyric form. In the opening two measures, its distinguishing opening melodic motif begins at the flatted 7th scale degree, steps up to the octave for several lyric syllables, then lowers itself down to the root tone. In the next two measures (mm. 3–4) the motif is used again to complete the first lyrical line. The high opening pitches are sung to the words

I went down to Smith Street

to combine distinctively the words and music by which subsequent treatments may be identified as song descendants.

The “State Street” referred to by Carr was and still is one of the main commercial streets in downtown Chicago. The lyrics relate the purchase, preparation, consumption, and effects of bootleg liquor; prohibition of alcohol was in effect in 1929.

In Chicago Carr and guitarist Scrapper Blackwell had their 1928–1931 Vocalion label sessions. On February 15, 1929, they attempted to record “Straight Alky Blues” in two three-minute parts to be issued back to back on a single disc. This performance was likely considered unsatisfactory, as it was not issued by Vocalion, and only the first part survives (Vocalion matrix C-2966-A). A second try was recorded the following March 19, with the result released on Vocalion 1290 soon afterward, then leased to Supertone Records for issue on Supertone S 2220.

On November 16, 1929, pianist Roosevelt Sykes of St. Louis, recording in Chicago for OKeh, performed “Black River Blues” (OKeh 8787). He borrowed the “Straight Alky” melody and Carr’s moderate tempo but modified some of the lyrics. It is not clear which Black River is referred to, since no clues are evident in the lyrics, nor does Sykes call the river by name during the recording.

On November 27, 1936, Mississippi Delta bluesman Robert Johnson recorded “Cross Road Blues,” today the best-known treatment of the melody. His opening lyric appears to be an adaptation from Sykes. Instead of imitating on guitar the piano accompaniment styles of Carr and Sykes, Johnson alternated passages of slide guitar with sharply plucked tonic and tonic-seventh chords. Johnson’s first take matched the tempi of the Carr and Sykes antecedents, and it was released by Vocalion (on Vocalion 03519) in 1937. His second take was performed at a less hurried tempo and with greater care on the guitar, but it was not released until 1961 as the lead track of the LP *Record King of the Delta Blues Singers* (Columbia CL 1654). The first take would not be reissued widely to the general public until the 1990 Sony/Columbia complete reissue of Johnson’s recordings.

“Cross Road Blues” was introduced to white rock musicians by Cream, who included a live recording from a Fillmore East concert on their 1968 two-LP set *Wheels of Fire*. On it, guitarist Eric Clapton altered the third line of the opening chorus, a change that preceded a critical appraisal of this blues as one associated with Johnson’s supposed giving his soul to the devil for improved guitar playing (see especially Greil Marcus’s *Mystery Train* [1975], Robert Palmer’s *Deep Blues* [1981], and Julio Finn’s *The Bluesman* [1986]). Incidentally, the one-measure riff performed by Clapton and bassist Jack Bruce on the Cream live recording would be adapted to a new

melody by the Steve Miller Band for “Jet Airliner” (*Book of Dreams*, 1975).

EDWARD KOMARA

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STREHLI, ANGELA

b. 22 November 1945; Lubbock, TX

Singer Angela Strehli is a longtime member of the Austin, Texas, blues community whose contributions to the blues have extended into promotion as well as performance. Strehli was living in Austin in the late 1960s as that city became a regional center of the burgeoning folk music revival. Strehli became an active part of a community of young whites who immersed themselves in the blues, similar to what was happening in Chicago and London. While Austin’s white blues community was not as immediately influential as Chicago’s (which spawned the Paul Butterfield Blues Band among many others in the 1960s), it has stayed active for much longer (through 2005, at least).

When blues promoter Clifford Antone opened Antone’s nightclub in Austin in 1975, Strehli became a regular performer in backing major touring blues artists, along with Lou Ann Barton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimmie Vaughan, and Kim Wilson. She also assisted Antone and his sister, Susan Antone, in choosing artists to book and promoting the club, and when Cliff Antone started a record label in the mid-1980s, she was one of the first artists recorded (*Soul Shake*).

As a singer, Strehli has a warm voice and engaging style; since the 1980s, she has performed most often in a Texas-style rhythm and blues mode. While she has recorded only a handful of albums, she has maintained a busy touring schedule both in the United States and Europe. In the late 1990s, she relocated to the San Francisco area with her husband.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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Deja Blue (1998, A&M 161399).

Dreams Come True (1990, Antone's 0014; with Marcia Ball and Lou Ann Barton).
Soul Shake (1987, Antone's 0006).

STROGER, BOB

b. 27 December 1930; Hayti, MO

A resident of Chicago since 1947, Bob Stroger established himself as a first-rate bassist alongside Otis Rush, Sunnyland Slim, and Jimmy Rogers and in the band Mississippi Heat. He remained active on both session recordings and live appearances into his senior years.

GENE TOMKO

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STROTHER, JAMES "JIMMIE"

On June 13 and 14, 1936, Virginia State Prison Farm inmate James "Jimmie" Strother recorded thirteen songs with either banjo or guitar accompaniment. Harold Spivacke, soon-to-be chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress, recorded Strother under the direction of musicologist John A. Lomax. Spivacke remembered the recording trip vividly, recalling that Lomax interviewed Strother for several hours. He left Spivacke to record Strother the next day, and Spivacke marveled that "All I had to do was ask him to sing one song after another and turn over the records and set the needles, etc."

Strother, a prototypical songster, played a wide range of music for Spivacke and Lomax, including dance tunes, religious music, blues, and popular songs. Probably born in the mid-1880s in the Tidewater region of Virginia, he absorbed the spirituals of the former slaves, recording "Do Lord, Remember Me" with inmate Joe Lee and "We Are Almost Down to the Shore" (also known as "Fighting On"). According to Lomax, Strother lost his sight in a mine accident, and his "Thought I Heard My Banjo Say," a version of "Cripple Creek," suggests travels in the Appalachian region.

Folklorist Benjamin Botkin recalled Strother's medicine-show background, and "Tennessee Dog" reveals that influence. Strother delivered the provocative ditty "Poontang Little, Poontang Small," protested the abuses of the harsh "contractor" Mike Hardy in "I Used to Work on a Tractor," and also integrated blues into his repertoire. "Goin'

to Richmond," an eight-bar blues, reveals Strother's adaptation to that musical style and to the guitar, the preferred instrument of the bluesman.

Strother married Blanche Green in 1923 in Alexandria, Virginia, but he was living in Baltimore at the time. They soon moved to her home county of Culpeper. The 1930 census listed him as a musician employed in a dance hall in the town of Culpeper. The events that led to Jimmie Strother's imprisonment occurred on April 2, 1935. That evening visitors had been to the Strother home and after her guests retired, Blanche sat down at a table and began writing a letter. Jim Strother, armed with a pistol, approached her from behind and fired. Blanche Strother lingered for nearly a week at the University Hospital in Charlottesville before finally expiring on April 8, 1935. Witnesses attributed Strother's crime to drinking and jealousy. He was indicted and pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, receiving a twenty-year term.

John Lomax's son Alan wrote to the superintendent of the Virginia State Penitentiary in 1942 to gain Strother's permission to use several songs on Library of Congress compilations. R. M. Youell replied that the man Lomax sought had been granted a conditional pardon on September 15, 1939, and his whereabouts were unknown. Subsequent letters to the Culpeper County sheriff and other contacts in the county also failed to locate Strother. The blind musician had again become largely anonymous to history—except through his recordings.

GREGG KIMBALL

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Discography: DGR

STROTHER, PERCY L.

b. 23 July 1946; Vicksburg, MS

Born in the river town of Vicksburg, Mississippi, Strother's relatively calm and stable childhood was shattered by the violent death of his father; his mother died shortly thereafter, leaving the young Percy to choose between relocation to an orphanage and life on the road. He chose the latter, moving first to Jackson, Mississippi, and then around the South, gradually drifting north to Chicago and then to Minneapolis. During his wanderings he became an alcoholic, an

addiction that would afflict him well into his adulthood. Although he was never able to hold down a steady job during these early years, it was during this period that he began to lay the foundation for his future musical career, frequenting blues clubs and occasionally exercising the rudimentary guitar technique his father had taught him onstage with local musicians.

Finding that Minneapolis offered a congenial environment and a thriving blues scene, he settled there in the late 1980s and began to develop and hone his guitar technique and songwriting skills. He recorded his debut album, *A Good Woman Is Hard to Find*, in 1992; several more solo albums followed, and in 2001 he released *Home at Last*, a tribute to the blues artists who had inspired and influenced him during his troubled, formative years.

RICK ANDERSON

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Discography: AMG

STUCKEY, HENRY

b. 12 December 1896; Yazoo County, MS

d. 9 March 1966; Jackson, MS

Birth date also given as April 11, 1897. Considered "The Father of Bentonia Blues," singer and guitarist Henry Stuckey taught the young Skip James his haunting E-minor tuning guitar style, which James would later exemplify. The pair played barrelhouses throughout the Bentonia, Mississippi, area during the 1920s. He did not record.

GENE TOMKO

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STUDEBAKER JOHN

b. John Grimaldi, 5 November 1952; Chicago, IL

Guitarist, singer, and harmonica player "Studebaker" John Grimaldi plays a driving, Chicago-style electric

blues with his band the Hawks. He came to national prominence during the 1990s with a series of well-received albums on Blind Pig and remains a steady draw on the blues circuit, although his recorded output slowed in the late 1990s.

JIM TRAGESER

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AMG (Jason Ankeny)

Discography: AMG

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Outside Lookin' In (1995, Blind Pig 5022).

Tremoluxe (1996, Tone-Cool 5031).

Howl with the Wolf (2001, Evidence 26112).

SUE (1)

Label established by Henry "Juggy" Murray in New York City in 1957. Blues talent included Ike and Tina Turner, Don Covay, Jimmy McGriff, Bill Doggett, and Gary U. S. Bonds. Wilbert Harrison recorded the original version of "Let's Work Together" for this label.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography

Edwards, David, and Mike Callahan. "Sue/Symbol/A.F.O Album Discographies." Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/sue.html> (accessed December 21, 2004).

SUE (2)

Subsidiary of Jewel/Paula Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

SUGAR BLUE

b. James Whiting, 16 December 1949; New York City, NY

An avant garde harmonica player raised in Harlem, Sugar Blue (James Whiting) created a sensation upon his arrival in Chicago in 1982 with his high-energy, rapid-fire harmonica attack, spinning his own innovations off the foundation of the Chicago harp masters

who had come before. Prior to his move to Chicago, Sugar Blue spent several years in Europe, recording two albums in France and playing on three albums by the Rolling Stones, most famously contributing the harmonica track to “Miss You” in 1978.

His earliest work as a singer appeared on the Spivey label in New York. In the 1970s he also did session work with Johnny Shines, Louisiana Red, Brownie McGhee, and Roosevelt Sykes on the New York-based Blue Labor label. In Chicago Sugar became a crowd favorite at Kingston Mines and other clubs and toured some with Willie Dixon’s Chicago Blues All Stars. He has done limited touring on his own and recorded only two albums, both showcasing not only his technical acumen but also his songwriting skills, for Alligator in the 1990s. He has recorded more frequently as a sideman, adding Dixon, Eddy Clearwater, Lonnie Brooks, Son Seals, Melvin Taylor, Johnny B. Moore, and Rico McFarland to his accompanist’s discography.

His adeptness at melding blues, jazz, rock, and funk has brought him opportunities to record with a variety of artists ranging from Stan Getz to Bob Dylan. Sugar Blue has drawn rave reviews for his dedication to expanding the boundaries of blues harmonica, earning comparisons to such varied revolutionists as Jimi Hendrix and James Joyce. Yet he has maintained a fairly low profile in the wake of predictions for superstardom.

JIM O’NEAL

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Discography: AMG

SULTAN

Detroit jazz label of the 1940s. Morton Sultan (1921–1983) briefly operated the label in 1946. Although headquartered in Detroit, the label (a release of three 78s in June 1946) concentrated on artists who were working the clubs along Randolph Street in Chicago’s Loop. The label’s gimmick was “double-header hits,” meaning that two different artists shared each 78. Sultan recorded Red Saunders’s six-piece combo, along with the sextet led by alto saxophonist Eddie Wiggins and solo piano by Alphonso “Sonny” Thompson. Although Sultan was a commercial failure, Saunders went on to record steadily during

the next decade, and Thompson moved to Miracle, where he enjoyed a huge success; subsequently, Thompson would record and do A&R for King Records. Eddie Wiggins, though praised by jazz critics at the time, never got another recording opportunity.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

SUMLIN, HUBERT

b. 16 November 1931; Greenwood, MS

Guitarist Hubert Sumlin is legendary for his wildly unbridled playing behind Howlin’ Wolf. Using his fingers instead of a pick, Sumlin wrenched a vast array of exotic sounds out of his electric guitar, and his sonic flights—full of hiccupping glissandos, extravagant vibrato, and unexpected percussive accents—inspired Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, Jeff Beck, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and many other guitarists.

The youngest of thirteen children, Sumlin was born on a plantation near Greenwood, Mississippi, and grew up in Hughes, Arkansas. He played drums and a one-string diddley bow as a child, and his mother sacrificed a week’s pay to buy him a guitar when he was eight years old. Inspired by the records of Charley Patton and Robert Johnson, he began playing local juke joints and fish fries as a teenager with harp player James Cotton. One night in Seyppel, Arkansas, Sumlin accidentally fell through a window of a juke joint while listening to Wolf’s band, which included blues guitarists Pat Hare and Willie Johnson. Impressed by the young man’s dedication, Wolf let Sumlin occasionally sit in with his band in the wide-open clubs of West Memphis and eastern Arkansas. In 1953, Wolf left his band behind in West Memphis and went to record for Chess Records in Chicago. The next year, he convinced Hubert to join him up north. Thus began one of the great collaborations in blues history, lasting almost twenty-five years and interrupted only twice when Hubert played for short stints with Muddy Waters.

Wolf had a gravelly, hypermasculine voice and Hubert a jagged, unpredictable guitar style: the two

combined musically like gasoline and a lit match. Sumlin played second guitar with guitarists Willie Johnson, Jody Williams, and Otis “Smokey” Smothers on many of Wolf’s hits of the 1950s, including “Evil,” “Forty Four,” “Who Will Be Next?” “Smokestack Lightnin’,” and “I Asked for Water.” In the 1960s, Sumlin’s slashing lead guitar galvanized such hits as “Three Hundred Pounds of Joy,” “Built for Comfort,” “Killing Floor,” “Goin’ Down Slow,” “Love Me Darlin’,” “Hidden Charms” (perhaps his greatest solo), and many other Wolf classics. During the 1960s, Sumlin toured with Wolf all over America and Europe, even doing shows behind the Iron Curtain.

When Wolf died in January 1976, Sumlin was emotionally devastated and quit playing for a few months. Returning to music, he played briefly as a member of Eddie Shaw and the Wolf Gang and then began to establish his identity as a solo artist. During the next twenty-five years, he recorded seven albums under his own name, appeared on records with many other blues stars, and toured clubs and festivals across America, Europe, and Japan. He also became a mentor to Stevie Ray and Jimmie Vaughan, Ronnie Earl, and many other younger stringbenders. His musical sons returned the compliment in 2001 with the album *About Them Shoes*, featuring Sumlin with an all-star band including Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, Bob Margolin, Levon Helm, Paul Oscher, David Maxell, Jimmy Vivino, and others.

MARK HOFFMAN

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(September/October 1989): 10–18.

Discography: AMG; LSPF

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Healing Feeling (1990, Black Top 1053).
Blues Anytime (1994, Evidence 26052).
Blues Guitar Boss (1994, JSP 2118).
I Know You (1998, Analogue Productions Originals 2004).
Wake Up Call (1998, Blues Planet 1116).
About Them Shoes (2001, Record Company TBD).

SUN/PHILLIPS INTERNATIONAL/FLIP

Founded 1950 Memphis, Tennessee; sold to Shelby Singleton 1969. Sun Records and Sam Phillips’s Memphis Recording Service will always be known as the place where Elvis Presley first recorded and became a star. But before Sam Phillips began using his Memphis studio to record country and rockabilly

singers such as Elvis, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Carl Perkins, he had already built a successful blues studio and label. Howlin’ Wolf, Rufus Thomas, James Cotton, B. B. King, Walter Horton, Little Milton, Ike Turner, Rosco Gordon, and Earl Hooker were just some of the blues artists who recorded for Sun in the early to mid-1950s.

It was January 1950 when Phillips opened his small recording studio at 706 Union Avenue in Memphis. Initially, Phillips’s business plan was to both rent studio time to locals and to serve as an agent for musicians with more potential, licensing their recordings to labels that would release them. During 1950, Phillips sold songs to 4 Star and Modern Records. In 1951, he began working almost exclusively with Chess Records out of Chicago—including two songs that became substantial hits, “Rocket 88” by Jackie Brenston and “Bear Cat” by Rufus Thomas.

An early attempt at running his own label, Phillips, had not done well in 1950, with only one single issued. But in 1952, Phillips tried again with the Sun imprint. Although it, too, started slowly, by 1953 Phillips was ramping the label up with releases by the blues artists he had been recording. Through the mid-1950s, the preponderance of artists Phillips recorded and issued were African American blues musicians, with a smattering of black gospel and white country singers. By the late 1950s, though, Elvis, Cash, Lewis, and the other rockabilly artists were dominating Sun’s sales, and fewer and fewer blues sides were issued.

By the mid-1960s, most of Sun’s successful artists had left for the larger labels, and Sun began to lose steam. As early as 1962, Phillips was searching for a buyer. In 1969, he sold the label to record industry executive Shelby Singleton.

JIM TRAGESER

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Blue Flames: A Sun Blues Collection (1990, Rhino 70962).
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SUNBEAM

Chicago blues and jazz label of the late 1940s. The label was founded in the fall of 1946 by pianist and arranger Marl Young, who operated it with assistance from his brothers who were in the dry cleaning business. The studio big band that Young assembled for Sunbeam recorded a few instrumentals and backed vocals by gospel singer Bob McFerrin (father of well-known eclectic vocalist Bobby McFerrin) and blues ballad singer Little Miss Cornshucks (who hit with “So Long”). Other recordings were made of blues shouter Petite Swanson, crooner Bill Green, jazz singer Johnny Hartman, and the Bob Carter Trio. Marl Young sold the Sunbeam masters to Vitacoustic in September 1947 and moved to the West Coast. In Los Angeles he became a successful studio musician, capping his career as music director of the *Lucille Ball Show*.

ROBERT PRUTER

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SUNNYLAND SLIM

b. Albert Luandrew, 5 September 1907; Vance, MS
 d. 17 March 1995; Chicago, IL

A piano master of unadulterated Delta blues whose career spanned from 1920s unamplified barrelhouses to 1990s state-of-the-art concert stages, Sunnyland Slim was a commanding figure physically as well as musically and in his final decades a patriarchal figure on the Chicago blues scene.

The Early Years

A self-taught musician, Albert Luandrew began in the church, where his father was a preacher, and

received some help from early blues piano stylist Jeff Morris. As a teen he played piano between reel changes at the silent movies in town. He ran away from home and an abusive stepmother, working at men’s jobs—while still a teen he played piano and hustled cards and dice at levee, logging, and turpentine camps. A piano player in these rough places required stamina, a strong left hand to beat the rhythm, and an extremely loud voice. He ably filled the bill. Harmonica player Snooky Pryor remembered in later years that Sunnyland’s voice could shatter microphones.

Not yet twenty, he met fellow pianist Eurreal “Little Brother” Montgomery in a sawmill barrelhouse where they played all night long, forging a lifelong friendship. By the late 1920s he had traveled to Memphis, where he remained for several years and briefly accompanied singer Ma Rainey.

In the 1930s he adopted the name “Sunnyland Slim” after writing the song “Sunnyland Train” about the train that barreled through the Mississippi night taking the lives of a white family and a black family in separate occurrences in the same week, an event that he later said gave him “a tender heart” toward all people.

Slim visited Chicago in 1933 and again in 1939 and for a time teamed up with John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson and played with Memphis Minnie and Big Bill Broonzy. During his depression-era travels he knew Honeyboy Edwards, Roosevelt Sykes, Memphis Slim, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Robert Johnson and very likely the majority of blues musicians who were out on the road.



Sunnyland Slim. (Photo courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

A New Chicago Scene

Chicago became his permanent home during World War II. In 1946 Sunnyland brought the virtually unknown Muddy Waters to Columbia to record sides that were never issued. Perhaps thinking his growing renown had not yet reached Chicago, Slim recorded eight sides for RCA-Victor in 1947 as “Doctor Clayton’s Buddy,” imitating his friend Clayton’s piercing vocal whoop. The following year he took Waters to the Chess brothers’ fledgling Aristocrat label, where he recorded “Fly Right Little Girl” and his bizarrely violent “Johnson Machine Gun” as “Sunnyland Slim,” with Waters accompanying. Waters then played two numbers with Slim accompanying—his first recordings for Chess. For this act Sunnyland is often credited with “taking Muddy off the truck,” a reference to the Venetian blinds truck Waters was then driving, an event recognized as the first step of Waters’s unparalleled rise to the pinnacle of Chicago blues. The first four of Waters’s Aristocrat sides open with Slim’s booming chords, as would subsequent recordings by many other blues artists.

Throughout the 1950s Slim worked the South Side clubs and recorded prolifically as a featured artist as well as a sideman with Floyd Jones, Little Walter, Robert Lockwood, Lonnie Johnson, Jump Jackson, King Curtis, J. B. Lenoir, John Brim, and many others, on such labels as Mercury, Tempo-Tone, Vee-Jay, Constellation, Apollo, Regal, Hy-Tone, Chance, Blue Lake, Cobra, and JOB, of which he was part owner.

He turned to the smaller labels after a falling out with Chess and probably, too, because he might have more control over the recording issues and in addition receive cash for recording and for selling the platters out of the trunk of his car.

Recorded Legacy

Sunnyland became one of the most recorded Chicago blues musicians. It is estimated that he sang and played piano on hundreds of recordings and appeared on more than twenty LPs for a number of labels, among them his own Airway label, on which he recorded and also promoted young singing talents “Big Time Sarah” Streeter, Zora Young, and Bonnie Lee.

While none of his compositions were hits for him, he left a memorable body of work. He wrote of the electoral process in “Be Careful How You Vote,” which slyly celebrated the growth of black

ward politics in Chicago and resurfaced as a vehicle to promote the candidacy of Chicago’s first black mayor, Harold Washington, and survived as a perennial tongue-in-cheek commentary on the gamut of mayoral office holders.

“The Devil Is a Busy Man,” “I Had It Hard,” “Smile on My Face,” “Sometime I Worry,” and “Patience Like Job” each wrestles with the recurring theme of his life’s misfortunes but never without a glimpse of salvation. “Every Time I Get to Drinking” is a sobering look at his own life and a personal statement of regret for past sins—a hauntingly beautiful piece of public penance.

New Audiences

It has been suggested that Sunnyland Slim did not adapt to modernization like Waters and other musically successful cohorts. Perhaps he lacked the elegance of Little Brother Montgomery and the originality and sparkle of Otis Spann, but throughout his career he consistently maintained his instantly recognizable, chiming Delta sound, his thunderous, cascading chords, and a voice that demanded attention and respect.

For a musician who had no grand ambitions beyond entertaining the Southern-born audience who shared his cultural background, Sunnyland’s fame and influence only grew among those others who recognized in his distinguished demeanor, patriarchal benevolence, and commanding musical style a poetically powerful force and a living link to an earlier time and culture.

When a new audience of mostly young white fans emerged on the heels of the folk revival, Sunnyland became a beloved regular in new clubs and on the college and festival circuits. He traveled to Europe for the first time in 1962 and in 1964 recorded behind the Iron Curtain. Shortly he became a perennial favorite on tours and festivals on both sides of the ocean. And even as he aged his strong hands and falsetto whoops, shouts, and Woody Woodpecker calls seemed to survive undiminished and to thrill new audiences.

At home his honors include the Medal of Merit from the City of Chicago (1987) and a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts (1988).

In his later years he successfully balanced his life in the blues with a return to the Baptist church, which he attended on Sunday mornings before heading up Halsted Street for the Sunday night gig he held at B.L.U.E.S. for fifteen years with The Big Four, comprised of Sam Burckhardt, Bob Stroger, Robert Covington, and Steve Freund.

SUNNYLAND SLIM

His final performance, for Chicago's annual Jazz Institute Fair, only weeks before his death, merited a standing ovation.

On his deathbed he told Burckhardt that he didn't want to keep Little Brother (Montgomery) waiting. His funeral drew hundreds of fans of all ages and races—some who had traveled long distances—and featured moving musical tributes from blues, jazz, and gospel artists.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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SUNRISE (POSTWAR)

New York jazz label of the late 1940s. The label was founded in April 1947 by Leonard Evans and was oriented largely toward jazz, recording many sides by Al Hibbler (who had been Duke Ellington's vocalist), as well as sides by Mercer Ellington, Earl Hines, and Johnny Hodges. Mercer Ellington produced the sessions, which accounts for the heavy representation of the Duke's men. Dr. Arthur Logan, Duke Ellington's personal physician, owned a share of the company. Sunrise also recorded the big bands of Milt Larkin and Tiny Bradshaw. From March 1948 to April 1949, Sunrise operated in alliance with Chicago-based Miracle and released records by the gospel group the Dixiaries and blues ballad singers Wini Brown and Gladys Palmer. Evans closed his Sunrise operation in September 1947.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

SUNRISE (PREWAR)

A subsidiary label of Victor active for about a year from August 1933. All releases also appeared on Bluebird and include significant blues by DeFord Bailey and Roosevelt Sykes. Most Sunrise issues are unknown to collectors and doubt has sometimes been expressed as to whether many were actually issued.

HOWARD RYE

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SUPER CHIKAN

b. James Louis Johnson, 16 February 1951; Darling,
MS

Born James Johnson in the Delta town of Darling, Mississippi, the multitalented bluesman was dubbed Super Chikan from his childhood preoccupation with the family chickens and his fast cab driving skills as an adult. Like many other Mississippi bluesmen, Johnson's first instrument was a one-string guitar that he made as a child. He learned by trying to emulate the sounds of the chickens and eventually added more strings to play songs he heard by area musicians. Johnson graduated to a real guitar at age thirteen and took lessons from area musicians Little Jenó Tucker and uncle Big Jack Johnson. By nineteen, he was playing bass in local juke joints with Johnson, and he soon began playing guitar throughout the Delta with such notable Delta musicians as Frank Frost, Sam Carr, and Jackie Brenston.

After years of supporting himself by driving cabs and trucks, Johnson caught the attention of Rooster Blues owner Jim O'Neal, and his impressive all-original debut *Blues Come Home to Roost* was released in 1997. Johnson's catchy R&B-inspired melodies,

quirky songwriting, and wry sense of humor were showcased marvelously, and the release established him as one of the most original blues artists on the current scene. A very prolific songwriter (he recorded forty originals during his initial sessions), he followed with a release on Fat Possum in 1999 before returning to Rooster in 2000 with *Shoot That Thing*. James “Super Chikan” Johnson’s unique ability to capture glimpses of everyday life in the Mississippi Delta make him one of the genre’s most vital contemporary exponents.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

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SUPER DISC

Label in New York City and Washington, D.C., in 1945–1947, owned by Irvin Feld, Izzie Feld, and Viola Marsham and devoted to jazz and urban blues, including Bull Moose Jackson and Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

SUPERIOR

Record label introduced by the Starr Piano Company in December 1930 when the Gennett label was dropped, apparently for sale in chain stores. There were 339 issues up to June 1932. Blues artists appearing, mostly under pseudonyms, include Lottie Kimbrough and Winston Holmes, Alura Mack, Willie “Scarecrow” Owens, and Irene Scruggs. Most material was also issued on Gennett and/or Champion.

HOWARD RYE

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SUPERTONE

Label name used in 1924 and again in 1928–1931 by Sears-Roebuck and Company, drawing its catalog from Olympic and Paramount (1924), Gennett (1928–1930) and Brunswick (1930–1931). In 1925–1928, an unrelated Supertone series was issued by Chicago store Straus and Schram, drawing its catalog from Grey Gull, Columbia, Paramount, and Pathé. Issues from Gennett include sides by Willie Baker, Sam Collins, Georgia Tom, Lee Green, Teddy Moss, Ivy Smith, and Tampa Red, most pseudonymous. The Brunswick material includes forty-six race records (S2211–S2256), all released on August 28, 1931, including reissues of Leroy Carr, Jim Jackson, Frankie Jaxon, Lil Johnson, and Pine Top Smith.

HOWARD RYE

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SUPREME

Los Angeles label founded by Al Patrick in 1947; up until 1950 it issued about fifty singles. Among the artists who had chart hits on the label were Jimmy Witherspoon, Paula Watson, and Eddie Williams with Floyd Dixon. Jim Wynn, Earl Jackson, and Percy Mayfield also appeared on the label.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: McGrath

See also Dixon, Floyd; Mayfield, Percy; Witherspoon, Jimmy

SWAN SILVERTONE SINGERS

Formed in 1938 by Claude Jeter as the Four Harmony Kings, they became the Swan Silvertone Singers when offered a job on a Knoxville radio station sponsored by the Swan Bakery. Working from the smooth *a cappella* harmonies of the 1930s and 1940s to the hard gospel of the 1960s, the group centered around the chilling falsetto voice of Claude Jeter.

First recording in 1945 with King Records with Solomon Womack sharing leads, they subsequently moved to Specialty then Vee-Jay. Joined in 1951 by tenor/arranger Paul Owens, the group moved into a more modern sound, influencing groups as diverse as the Temptations and Simon and Garfunkel.

JIM THOMAS

Discography: Gospel Records 1943–1969

SWEDEN

The recorded interest in blues music in Sweden goes back to the 1940s, when jazz music was discovered by a larger audience.

In the late 1940s Swedish jazz artists made some blues or blues-influenced recordings. At that time blues was considered a part of jazz. However, piano player Charlie Norman emerged and became very popular, recording many straight boogie-woogie tunes. He is still active. In the 1940s the first serious collectors of blues records also had their start by first listening to the few records that happened to find their way into Swedish record stores.

In the early 1950s a very basic twelve-bar blues was a big hit in Sweden. “Gräsänkling Blues” by the Swedish musical comedian Povel Ramel had all the elements expected from a blues recording, even though the lyrics weren’t too serious, being about a man rambling and losing the family maid in a poker game when his wife was away visiting her mother.

In the 1950s some blues was played on the radio as part of jazz programs. The first blues artists such as Memphis Slim, Champion Jack Dupree, and Josh White were brought to Sweden. The visiting artists performed mostly in the folk blues style and represented the jazz people’s opinion of blues artists. The blues scene hadn’t yet achieved its independence from jazz music. The broadcasting in Germany to American soldiers also reached Sweden to some extent, and listeners could hear blues music as part of the R&B and rock ‘n’ roll shows of Alan Freed and other popular American disc jockeys. Radio

Luxemburg, which targeted the audience in England, also featured blues and R&B in their evening and night shows and reached some parts of Sweden.

During the 1950s some collectors started to write about blues and R&B in local newspapers, pushing the likes of Roy Brown and Wynonie Harris. A short lived attempt to run a distribution company for imported R&B records was also started in the early 1950s. At the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s the scene changed dramatically.

The breakthrough of English blues and R&B in the early 1960s opened a new dimension among the young people, as it did elsewhere. Almost overnight the blues scene parted from jazz music and became a musical form of its own, more closely related to pop music. Blues LPs were imported by specialist stores and Crown LPs could be found in the cut-out bins at large department stores. The very first blues band was formed by piano player Per “Slim” Notini. His band, Slim’s Blues Gang, released in 1964 the first record by a working Swedish band. Per Notini later acquired international fame playing on some tracks of the legendary Magic Sam LP *West Side Soul* on Delmark while visiting Chicago. In the early 1970s guitar player and singer Roffe Wikström emerged from the Slim Notini band. He is today the most successful blues artist in Sweden, releasing more than a dozen albums and performing and recording his own material in Swedish.

One of the most important events in developing a Swedish blues scene was the radio broadcast of *I Blueskvarter*, which occurred during the latter part of 1964. Host Olle Helander, who earlier had presented visiting blues artists on the radio, received an assignment from the Swedish Broadcasting Cooperation to visit the United States to record blues music for presentation on Swedish national radio. He stopped at Chicago, Memphis, and New Orleans, recording then forgotten or obscure artists such as Eddie Boyd, Washboard Sam, Walter Horton, Furry Lewis, and Snooks Eaglin but also new and up-and-coming white artists such as Paul Butterfield and Mike Bloomfield. The show had a tremendous impact on young would-be musicians. Many of them were inspired to start playing blues from these first programs devoted entirely to blues music. Singer/guitarist Sven Zetterberg and singer/harpist Peps Persson, blues artists popular in Sweden today, started out as a result of these shows.

In 1959 piano player and big band leader Gugge Hedrenius started his first Jazz & Blues Big Band, which in the 1960s featured Texas blues piano player and singer Clarence “Candy” Green as the singer; one of their records received four and a half stars

in *Down Beat* in 1964. Clarence Green lived for many years in Sweden and did tours of schools all over the country as part of educational programs before he in 1974 moved back to Galveston where he was born.

The American Folk Blues Festival visited Sweden in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s on most of their tours in Europe, bringing serious blues artists to the attention of the Swedish audience.

Another important event was the establishing of *Jefferson Blues Magazine*, today shortened to *Jefferson*, by Claes Hedman in May 1968. He was then only sixteen years old. After some years the magazine reached a good following and is today the world's oldest existing blues magazine. Also important was the opening of Smokestack record store in 1971, devoted entirely to selling blues records to the Swedish market. The store still exists today.

In the early 1970s the Telge Blues Band was started in the small town of Södertälje about 30 km from Stockholm. From that band several important artists emerged who are still active today, such as Sven Zetterberg and drummer Stoffe Sundlöf. The Mönsterås Blues Band was also started at that time. The band is today the oldest active blues band in Sweden. The Tottas Bluesband, which was started in Göteborg, was at times very popular and influential, releasing several records.

In 1972 the Scandinavian Blues Association was formed to take over the publishing of *Jefferson*. The association also started a record label, Jefferson Records, and a mail order operation selling books, magazines, and records. Later the association also arranged tours, bringing Koko Taylor, Philip Walker, Lonesome Sundown, Lowell Fulson, Lightning' Slim, Whispering Smith, and others to Sweden. The association released legal LPs by Eddie Boyd and artists from the San Francisco area.

In 1976 Jonas "Mr. R&B" Bernholm launched his labels beginning with Route 66, reissuing recordings mainly from the 1940s with exclusive agreements by then-neglected artists. Over the years more than eighty highly regarded albums appeared on his labels.

At this same time Sam Charters had moved to Sweden. While living here he collaborated with the Swedish label Sonet, recording American artists for the label.

In the 1970s many blues associations were established in the bigger Swedish cities. The associations played and are still playing an important part in establishing and preserving the interest in the blues by arranging concerts and seminars and even releasing leaflets. The oldest of these associations and perhaps the most important is Stockholm's Bluesförening, which arranges weekly Saturday concerts that give new and upcoming artists the opportunity to

perform in public. Stockholm's Bluesförening also worked as the tour arranger in Sweden, taking over the business from the Scandinavian Blues Association, bringing Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, and George Smith among other acts to Sweden.

In the 1970s American singer and songwriter Eric Bibb moved to Stockholm and started performing prewar blues. After a five-year stint in New York in the 1980s, he was back living in Sweden, teaching at schools but also performing.

At this time Sweden also aired its first weekly blues show on the national radio. The show ran for twenty years. In 1978 the independent record label Last Buzz was started, releasing blues, rock, and roots music. The label is still very active today, releasing records by the most popular blues artists in Sweden, such as Sven Zetterberg, Knock Out Greg & Blue Weather, and the Bluebirds.

In the early 1980s the Monaco Blues Band was started. The band enjoyed great popularity, releasing three albums during the decade. The band toured extensively in Sweden and Europe and still exists today but performs very seldom.

The band Blues Down Town was started in the 1980s and is today one of the few bands still playing the traditional Chicago blues or in that style. The band is fronted by singer and harmonica player Thomas Grahn. The band has released several records.

In 1984 the Stockholm Jazz and Blues Festival was started, over the years bringing important artists such as B. B King, Little Milton, Ray Charles, Buddy Guy, Lucky Peterson, Junior Wells, Denise Lasalle, and Latimore to Sweden.

At the beginning of the 1990s interest in the blues declined. The strong U.S. currency made it costly to bring American artists with their own bands to Sweden. The tours were not successful and attendance dropped, resulting in very few artists visiting Sweden. At this time enthusiasts in the small towns of Mönsterås and Åmål started the first festivals devoted entirely to blues music. The first attempts with only local artists were very successful, and the Mönsterås Bluesfestival grew rapidly to become the biggest and most important festival, with headliners such as Roy Gaines, Lazy Lester, Ann Peebles, Sam McClain, Charlie Musselwhite, Earl Thomas, Louisiana Red, Chick Willis, Ricky Allen, Eddie & Jimmy Burns, Deborah Coleman, and Jody Williams. Today the Åmål Bluesfestival equals Mönsterås in stature, featuring artists such as Abu Talib (formerly Freddy Robinson), T Model Ford, Mojo Buford, R L Burnside, Magic Slim, and Larry Johnson.

In the mid-1990s the blues show was dropped from national radio and blues was again integrated into

jazz programs. Several of the blues associations in smaller Swedish towns started broadcasting at local stations an hour once a week or once a month. Losing its former position as a major musical form, the blues became more of an underground movement, relying more on enthusiasts than on established media and institutions.

The female singer and harp player Jenny Bohman joined the Monaco Blues Band in 1990. Jenny Bohman later launched a solo career even though she still is a member of this band. Today Jenny performs country blues in a duo setting and modern blues as a leader in the all-female electric blues band Jenny & Bluebeans.

In the late 1990s interest in blues started to rise again; smaller festivals were started in several Swedish towns such as Östersund, Umeå, Eslöv, Norrtälje, and Göteborg, mainly featuring Swedish artists. The new concert hall in the town of Gävle started with big ambitions, bringing Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, and Koko Taylor to Gävle. But in 2003 there were no blues artists anymore.

In the 1990s several important bands were formed. One of the most popular is Knock Out Greg & Blue Weather. Knock Out Greg (Greger Anderson) was at an early age influenced by Sven Zetterberg, starting out playing guitar and singing. Later he switched to harmonica. His band also features his brother on drums and the very skilled guitar player Anders Levén, who introduced jump-blues to the Swedish audience. Losing their keyboard player, they employed two horn players and changed their style toward 1950s R&B. The band tours regularly all over Europe and has also played the Dohenny Bluesfestival in America.

Jump 4 Joy, headed by piano player and singer Ulf Sandström, performs in a jump-blues and boogie-woogie style. The band tours extensively in Sweden and Europe, having released five albums.

The Bluebirds, from the town of Skövde, mostly perform original material, based on blues and R&B with a New Orleans and Louisiana flavor. The band's three latest records have given them widespread recognition. The band also tours in Europe and has even been to Australia.

Eric Bibb's first three albums were released on the Swedish Opus 3 label. In the late 1990s Eric Bibb rose rapidly to international stardom, being nominated for both Grammy and W. C. Handy awards.

One important step in broadening the interest in blues music was the starting in the late 1990s of jam sessions at the club Stampen in Stockholm by the American singer and guitar player Brian Kramer. From these jam sessions at least three very popular artists or band have emerged: Young Guns,

consisting of Emil Arvidsson and Daniel Kordelius, the young Little Chris, and the Slaptones, consisting of three sisters playing guitars and bass with their father on drums. All of them have already released acclaimed albums. Young Guns and the Slaptones tour extensively, and Little Chris, now seventeen years old, has played the very prestigious Pori Jazz in Finland and Stockholm's Jazz Festival 2003.

The 1990s also saw the establishment of two independent record labels for blues recordings, Blaze and CeePeeVee Records. Both are releasing records by Swedish artists, with CeePeeVee concentrating on artists playing the traditional Chicago blues. In the 1990s the Scandinavian Blues Association released on its Jefferson label two compilations of the best of the Swedish blues and one compilation of the best Norwegian blues.

At this moment the blues scene in Sweden seems to be more active than it has been for many years. Swedish blues artists have been featured on national television, and there are even plans at the national radio for a program devoted again entirely to blues. During the summer of 2003, the history of Swedish blues ran on national radio, with interviews by artists who started out in the 1960s and who are still active today as well as by some members of the blues associations. Even though most of the bands act on a semiprofessional level, with band members holding daytime jobs, the bands Knock Out Greg, Young Guns, and the Bluebirds as well as Sven Zetterberg, Roffe Wikström, and Peps Person manage as full-time musicians.

Internationally, the band Knock Out Greg and Sven Zetterberg have reached a new milestone being booked as headliners at the Great British R&B Festival in Lancashire in 2003, which shows the true acceptance of the Swedish blues on an international arena. Before that, the Swedish bands were booked as headline acts only in Norway and Finland. Records by Swedish blues artists have received good reviews during the most recent years in the international blues press and are selling quite well in Germany. The Swedish bands are considered technically very skilled and true to the original blues styles.

Very few Swedish bands perform in the style of blues rock. This development, very special to Sweden compared to other European countries, has to a large extent been propelled by the numerous blues associations in Sweden booking only blues bands. The bands have got the opportunity to perform the music they like to an audience understanding the music. To some extent, for good or bad, this has also restricted the development of the formula for blues music or to use blues as a basis for an individual approach. In that sense the blues scene in Sweden

lacks an experimental freshness. But as long as Swedes can hear the music or the style of T-Bone Walker, Jimmy Rogers, and so on in very true renditions by young skilled musicians, they shall not complain.

ANDERS LILLSUNDE

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK

Black female *a cappella* vocal group performing jazz, blues, sacred music, and traditional music. It was formed in 1973 at the Black Repertory Theater Company by Bernice Johnson Reagon. Their music serves to point out injustice and exploitation and to bring out love. Through 1989 it recorded for Flying Fish label and since then for Earthbeat.

EDWARD KOMARA

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SWEET MISS COFFY

b. Veetta Smith, 7 July 1956; Chicago, IL

Keyboardist/vocalist. Sweet Miss Coffy moved to Jackson, Mississippi, in her teens and played in church and with the R&B group Love and Soul. Later she toured with Artie "Blues Boy" White, Albert King, and Willie Kent. Currently she leads her own band.

DAVID WHITEIS

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SWING TIME/DOWN BEAT

A postwar indie label that peaked early, issuing seminal recordings by Lowell Fulson and Ray Charles before folding at the dawn of the rock 'n' roll era. It was founded in 1947 as Down Beat, leading to clashes

with the famed jazz magazine and subsequent rechristening as Swing Time. Run by Texas-born, Los Angeles-based African American businessman and gambler Jack Lauderdale, it specialized in the jazz-inflected urbane blues styles favored by California-based artists of the period.

Lauderdale leased or bought many masters from other indies such as Big Town (Fulson), Exclusive and Excelsior (Charles Brown, Johnny Moore's 3 Blazers, Johnny Otis, Mabel Scott), and Supreme (Jimmy Witherspoon, Floyd Dixon, Eddie Williams, Percy Mayfield). But he also produced many of his own recordings, often utilizing the A&R and bandleading skills of pianist Lloyd Glenn.

Ray Charles was Lauderdale's greatest discovery. During his 1949–1952 Swing Time stint, Charles scored three hits and began to let his gospel-tinged soul butterfly emerge from his Nat Cole Trio-style cocoon. Lowell Fulson was another major Lauderdale signing, waxing top ten hits "Everyday I Have the Blues" and "Blue Shadows" (both 1950). Fulson's recordings featured Lloyd Glenn "at the eighty-eight," and Glenn had his own Swing Time best-seller, "Chicka Boo," in 1951. Lauderdale's roster also briefly included Jimmy McCracklin and Joe Turner, and his labels released a number of Christmas blues perennials.

By 1954, Lauderdale was out of the music business, having lost not only his best artists but also a key business associate to other emerging labels. In the 1990s, Aaron Fuchs of New York-based Tuff City Records acquired the entire Swing Time catalog and reissued much of it on his Night Train International subsidiary.

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Discography: McGrath

Selected Recordings

Ray Charles. *Complete Swing Time and Down Beat Recordings* (2004, Night Train 2-CD).

Various artists. *The Swingtime Records Story* (1994, Capricorn 2-CD 42024); *Swing Time Christmas* (1995, Night Train CD 7005); *A Taste of Swing Time* (1995, Night Train CD 1001).

See also Charles, Ray; Excelsior/Exclusive; Fulson, Lowell; Glenn, Lloyd; Supreme

SYKES, ROOSEVELT

b. 31 January 1906; Elmar, AR

d. 17 July 1983; New Orleans, LA

Roosevelt Sykes was born on January 31, 1906, in Elmar, Arkansas, although his family moved to St. Louis when he was still a baby. As a young child he started playing the organ at his grandfather's home and graduated to accompanying morning prayers at school. The little school pump organ, or harmonium, was the instrument on which Sykes learned his first blues, "Single Tree Blues," before his hands were big enough to do more than play simple chords.

By the time he entered his teens he had switched to piano, and he soon ran away from home to work as a musician in the West Helena, Arkansas, area. Helena during and after World War I was a center of blues activity, and Sykes quickly developed in this environment. "They was what you call real blues players, always be playing the blues" Sykes is quoted as saying, remembering in particular "a real stomp-down blues playin' pianist" named Jesse Bell. Around this time he also met and played with the influential pianist Lee Green, whom Sykes credits with putting him on "the blues side."

Two of Sykes's brothers, Jesse and Walter, were also pianists, as was his half-brother Johnny. By the late 1920s Sykes had moved back to St. Louis and was living on Seventeenth Street with his wife Leola. Lee Green lived close by and played at a speakeasy on Seventeenth between Wash and Franklin. Henry Townsend remembers Sykes around this time playing at Jazzland and The Royal Candy Kitchen on Market Street. The latter was a candy shop up front, with "other activities" going on behind. In 1929, Jesse Johnson, the entrepreneur and proprietor of the DeLuxe Record Shop in St. Louis, discovered Sykes and became his manager, arranging recording sessions for him in New York, Richmond, Indiana, and Chicago.

At his first recording session for OKeh he produced, among others, the hit "44 Blues," which he learned from Lee Green, and "I'm Tired of Being Mistreated," on which he was accompanied by a guitarist identified by Henry Townsend as Clifford Gibson (though listed in the record company files and on the label as Oscar Carter).

In the early days, Sykes recorded for several different companies but for contractual reasons used a variety of pseudonyms on his recordings. Thus, although he recorded under his own name for OKeh, he was Willie Kelly on Victor and Easy Papa Johnson on Vocalion. "At that time you could change around, sort of change your name and if you have a different tune why you could make recordings for different

people. So I had a contract with OKeh and I did recordings for other companies under different names. One of my names when I was a kid was Dobby [a nickname for someone who was short and stumpy]. They always called me Dobby, so my mother's name was Bragg so I used the name Dobby Bragg." It was under this name that "3-6 and 9 (Three, Six and Nine)" was issued by Paramount. The title refers to an illegal but widespread gambling lottery known as "policy" that flourished from the late nineteenth century until it was supplanted by state lotteries. Other classic recordings from this time include "32-20 Blues" for Victor (1930) and "Highway 61 Blues" for Champion (1932).

Through the recruiting efforts of Mayo "Ink" Williams, Sykes signed a contract with Decca Records in 1934. From then until 1941 Sykes recorded prolifically for Decca, with most of his records bearing the legend "The Honeydrinker (Roosevelt Sykes)," or vice versa. The term "honeydrinker" can also have sexual connotations, and the innocent explanation of his sobriquet given to Paul Oliver may not be the whole truth, since the singer Edith North Johnson also claimed to have bestowed the name on him. Sykes accompanied Johnson on her 1929 recording "Honey Drinker Blues," and Johnson recollected that she had thought of a song title, "but I couldn't use that! So instead of using the right words I changed it to 'Honey Drinker.' And then I tried to sit down and think of some right words that would fit." The Joe Liggins 1940s hit "The Honeydrinker" is a different tune, which was also subsequently covered by Sykes in 1945. Among Sykes's Decca recordings were the popular 1936 "Driving Wheel Blues" and the 1937 "Night Time Is The Right Time," which have both become blues standards.

Throughout the 1930s Sykes retained St. Louis as a base but worked clubs and bars in many cities, including Chicago, Memphis, and Detroit. His companions on these trips were often guitarist Henry Townsend or singer St. Louis Jimmy (who wrote the blues perennial "Going Down Slow"). However, a brush with the law in around 1941 obliged Sykes and St. Louis Jimmy to leave St. Louis and settle in Chicago, where Sykes soon became a house musician for the Victor/Bluebird label. Victor attempted to market him as the successor to Fats Waller, who recorded for the same label and died in 1943, but Sykes was very much his own man.

He found work at the Tin Pan Alley Club and also formed a twelve-piece band, The Honeydrinkers, which toured the South in 1943, playing venues such as the Palace Theater in Memphis. Back in Chicago he worked in local clubs with Memphis Minnie and

Little Son Joe. He continued to be in demand for recording sessions and was a seminal figure during the transition that took place between the older blues styles and the modern jump-blues in the mid-to late 1940s. His band at that time included trumpet, alto, tenor horns, and a rhythm section of piano, guitar, bass, and drums. He recorded for Victor (1945–1949), Specialty (1946–1947), Regal (1949), United (1951–1954), and Imperial (1954).

In 1954 Sykes moved to New Orleans, from whence he earned a steady if unspectacular living playing clubs in the city and residences in resorts along the Gulf Coast. He returned briefly to St. Louis in 1958 and moved back to Chicago in 1960, where he recorded for Delmark. The folk blues revival was just beginning, and Sykes was in the right place to take advantage of it. The 1960s saw a rapid resurgence of his career. In 1961, with the burgeoning of interest in the blues in Europe, he toured the United Kingdom and also appeared in the Belgian film *Roosevelt Sykes: "The Honey Dripper."* A tour with the American Folk Blues Festival in 1965 and several other visits to Europe in 1966, 1970, and 1974 followed.

Once again relocating to New Orleans in the late 1960s, he performed at the Court of the Two Sisters and at the annual Ann Arbor Blues Festival. In the succeeding years he appeared at blues festivals and performed concert tours throughout the United States and abroad, becoming one of the elder statesmen of the blues. Sykes appeared in the French film *Blues Under the Skin* in 1972 and the BBC series *The Devil's Music* in 1976. He continued to perform until his death, of a heart attack, on July 17, 1983, in New Orleans.

Although capable of other styles, Sykes was primarily a blues artist, singing with a high-pitched vibrato and skillfully interpolating sparkling piano treble runs between his vocal lines. His distinctive treble runs, frequently started with rapid triplets followed by cascades of notes down the keyboard, were much imitated, and he is often spoken of as the father of modern blues piano style. In the early days, his basses were usually single note runs, or four-to-the-bar chords, with occasional stride tenths. In the 1940s he worked hard to adapt his solo piano style to the formal discipline of a swing band. He recalled in *Beale Black & Blue* that he "took up harmony, by having me a band. I had to tell the fellows what I wanted them to

do But I didn't play what I told them, see, 'cause I never could play anything over again just alike."

His later groups played in the popular jump band style of the day, and he had an influence on the vamps being developed by pianists to underpin the new rhythm, with its heavily accented off-beat. A consummate accompanist, he was very popular with his fellow artists and appeared on records by Walter Davis, Clifford Gibson, Lonnie Johnson, Charlie McFadden, St. Louis Jimmy Oden, Henry Townsend, Washboard Sam, and a host of others.

BOB HALL

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

SYLVESTER, HANNAH

b. 1900; Philadelphia, PA

d. 15 October 1973; New York City, NY

Singer; recorded with Fletcher Henderson for various labels in 1923. She performed in vaudeville, theater, and revues through the 1940s, with occasional work afterward. She recorded with Lucille Hegamin for the Spivey label in 1962.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: DGR; LSFP

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TAGGART, BLIND JOE

Flourished 1920s–1930s; Greenville, SC

Singer/guitarist of sacred music; first name sometimes shown as “Joel.” Taggart recorded for Vocalion, Paramount, and Decca in 1926–1934. During several sessions he was accompanied by Josh White.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Eugene Chadbourne)

Discography: AMG; DGR

TAIL DRAGGER

b. James Yancy Jones, 30 September 1940; Altheimer, AR

Gruff vocalist, physical performer, and adept Howlin’ Wolf imitator, Tail Dragger has long been a presence on Chicago’s West Side, in clubs, and at the Delta Fish Market. A truck mechanic by trade, for years he made the rounds of clubs in the evenings as a guest vocalist, befriending in particular Howlin’ Wolf, who said he was always late, “draggin’ his tail.” He recorded “My Head Is Bald” (Leric) in the 1980s and had a CD, *Crawlin’ Kingsnake*, on St. George. After serving prison time for the 1993 murder of musician Boston Blackie (Bennie Houston), he revived his career locally with an appearance on

Rockin’ Johnny Burgin’s *Straight Out of Chicago* (Delmark, 1997) and his own full-length recording, *American People* (Delmark, 1999).

JUSTIN O’BRIEN

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Discography: AMG

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TAJ MAHAL

b. Henry Saint Clair Fredericks, 17 May 1942; New York City, NY

Guitarist, banjoist, harpist, pianist, singer, and songwriter. The most eclectic and international of bluesmen, Taj Mahal began his career as an acoustic traditionalist. More than four decades and two dozen albums later, he had innovatively expanded the appeal and definition of the blues by incorporating South Pacific and Caribbean sensibilities to create a universal music of inclusion. He also popularized the music by fusing the blues with other entertainment media through a variety of multidisciplinary collaborations, including the movie soundtrack for *Sounder*, the Grammy-nominated

TAJ MAHAL

Broadway production of *Mule Bone*, and several major television scores.

The son of a gospel-singing South Carolina mother and a West Indies jazz arranger father, Taj Mahal was raised in Springfield, Massachusetts. He played Boston folk clubs in the early 1960s, and after he graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a degree in agriculture he moved to Los Angeles. In California Taj Mahal hooked up with another eclectic internationalist, multi-instrumentalist Ry Cooder, to form the Rising Sons. The group recorded several times, but only one single was released until the later fame of the musicians brought attention to their earlier efforts.

Once Taj Mahal began recording under his own name, he rapidly amassed an extensive catalog. He made his recording debut in 1968 with a self-titled album featuring Cooder and guitarist Jesse Edwin Davis. *The Natch'l Blues* followed just a few months later, and *Giant Step*, a double album with one acoustic and one electric disc, was released in 1969. The success of the albums, which became staples of the emerging free-form FM stations of the era, combined with the power of his live shows established Taj Mahal as an unlikely contemporary blues icon.

Early 1970s albums, such as *Happy to Be Just Like I Am*, and the reggae-inflected *Mo Roots*, the latter partly influenced by his Jamaican stepfather, presaged his worldbeat blues approach. He played for a different audience with the children's album *Shake Sugaree* and also collaborated with guests such as Etta James, Eric Clapton, and Bonnie Raitt. He won the 1991 W. C. Handy award for best acoustic artist and three years later his *Dancin' the Blues* was named best traditional album. In 2001 his Phantom Blues Band won the Handy Award for best blues group.

Several live recordings, ranging from solo acoustic to full electric band, as well as more unorthodox contexts, such as the tuba quartet on *The Real Thing*, captured sonic snapshots of his musical evolution. His fervent fan base, especially strong in Europe, where he recorded two live albums in the 1990s, rarely witnessed the same show or musical setting two times in a row, but it never lost its enthusiasm for the artist and his experimentation.

In the late 1990s Taj Mahal's recordings, beginning with *Senor Blues* in 1997, emphasized his fascination with recasting blues in new cultural contexts. *Sacred Island* in 1998 began an intense exploration of Hawaiian music as he successfully melded the seemingly disparate sounds and sensibilities of the South Pacific and South Mississippi. *Hanapepe Dream*, recorded with the Hula Blues band in 2003, continued the experiment.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

TAKOMA

Founded in 1959 in Takoma Park, Maryland; acquired by Chrysalis in 1977; acquired by Fantasy in 1995. Takoma Records began as a way for idiosyncratic guitarist John Fahey to issue recordings of himself. He and label cofounder Ed Denson also tracked down Bukka White and recorded an album by the then-forgotten blues great in 1963. Takoma issued numerous recordings by other blues and rock artists, primarily guitarists. Fantasy continues to reissue repackaged material from Takoma under the label name.

JIM TRAGESER

Selected Recordings

The Best of John Fahey 1959–1977 (1977, Takoma CD-8915-2).

Takoma Blues (1998, Takoma CD-8907-2).

Takoma Slide (1999, Takoma CD-8910-2).

TALBOT, JOHNNY

b. Johnny Tolbert, 12 August 1939; Texas

Guitarist and singer who moved to Oakland in 1951 and formed his own band De Thangs. He recorded very little—singles for In, Modern, and Red Fire and three for Jasman in the period 1962–1972 and, after a long period out of music, an album in 1992.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: LSFP

Selected Recordings

Johnny Tolbert—De Thang.

Oakland Rythmn [sic] & Blues Op'ry (ORBO CD-01).

TALIB, ABU

(See *Robinson, Freddy*)

TALTY, DON

b. 16 August 1911; Chicago, IL
 d. 24 January 1979; Sandwich, IL

Chicago record company executive and producer. Talty recorded a variety of artists from 1959 through the 1960s for such labels as Chess, Formal, Boyd, and Night Owl. His biggest act was Jan Bradley, with whom he recorded a national hit, "Mama Didn't Lie." He also recorded two vocal groups, the Trinidads and the Masquerades, jazz pianist Earl Washington, guitarist Phil Upchurch, soul singer Ace St. Clair (brother of Johnny Ace), and two blues acts—Guitar Red (Paul Johnson), who hit locally with "Red Hot Red" in 1960, and Willie Mabon, who hit nationally with "Got to Have Some" in 1962. By the early 1970s Talty was out of the record business.

ROBERT PRUTER

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TAMPA RED

b. Hudson Woodbridge, 8 January 1904; Smithville, GA
 d. 19 March 1981; Chicago, IL

One of the most influential bluesmen of the early Chicago blues scene, Tampa Red opened doors for many artists, including Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon. He was narrowly categorized as a blues musician in the early years of his career, and although his music is deeply rooted in the blues, his musical eclecticism shows a much larger scope and is difficult to categorize into one all-encompassing genre. Billed as "The Guitar Wizard" in his early years and then publicized as "artist and composer" in the late 1930s, Tampa Red enjoyed a wide variety of musical endeavors throughout his career. There is a valid argument that during the "artist and composer" phase of his career he was being marketed to a white audience and no longer placed solely in the race record category. Nonetheless, these musical excursions led him from roles as a serious guitarist with few, if any, equals to being a session player, bandleader, and even a go-between for the young, country bluesmen who were new to city life and the workings of the established white recording industry.

Red's address at 3432 South State Street served not only as his home but also as a rehearsal hall for other blues musicians in the Chicago area, as well as a place for budding bluesmen, fresh out of the country and off the farm, to stay as they made the transition from country to city life. It was also the place where aspiring bluesmen such as the aforementioned Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon would go to become acquainted with Lester Melrose, the "Godfather" of the Chicago blues scene. Melrose was the A&R man for both Columbia and Victor recording companies in the 1930s and 1940s. Throughout all of these endeavors Tampa Red would ultimately record more 78 records than any other artist in blues history (a total of 335) and, in turn, become a major influence on both pre- and postwar blues artists.

Red was born Hudson Woodbridge on January 8, 1904, in Smithville, Georgia (it should be noted that he gave early blues researchers several inconsistent birth dates, December 25, 1900 to 1908, yet it is the January 8, 1904, date that appears on his 1981 death certificate). His parents, John and Elizabeth, died when he was very young, at which time he moved to Tampa, Florida, to live with his grandmother and adopted her surname, Whittaker, thus becoming Hudson Whittaker. It would be years before he would become known as Tampa, due to his place of origin, and Red, due to his light complexion and reddish hair.

His older brother Eddie played the guitar, and this was all the inspiration the young Hudson needed. He claimed never to have had any formal guitar instruction and that his abilities on the guitar were "just a gift." He also claimed that upon hearing the early 1920s recording of "Crazy Blues" by Mamie Smith, he could just hear it in his head, and although he didn't "know" music, he knew he could play it; this ability illustrates his natural propensity toward music.

In 1925 Red met piano player "Georgia" Tom Dorsey, who had been successful as a session player, songwriter, and traveling musician. It is believed that through their friendship, Tampa met J. Mayo Williams, the African American A&R man responsible for recording Gertrude "Ma" Rainey and Blind Lemon Jefferson. This meeting led to Red's first recording, "Through Train Blues," in May of 1928. It was several months later, however, on October 28, 1928, that Red and Dorsey would record a major hit in the bawdy, double-entendre-ridden song "It's Tight Like That." After this recording, Red and Dorsey went on to record many successful sides together as well as sitting in as a session "team" for artists such as "Ma" Rainey, Frankie Jaxon, and Madlyn Davis. It was not long, however, before



Tampa Red (l) welcomes Leroy Carr (r) to the Bluebird label, Chicago, 1935. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

Dorsey would leave his collaboration with Red to pursue a career in gospel music, leaving Red to explore further musical opportunities in the burgeoning Chicago blues scene.

Tampa's bottleneck (slide guitar) technique was well known early in his career, as was his use of the newly produced National steel guitar. This particular instrument was designed to create greater volume and "punch" in the days before electric amplification. This allowed for Tampa to play with other musicians and not have his guitar overshadowed by the sounds of the other, naturally louder instruments (a recurring problem for guitarists of the day). Red's use of this guitar would soon impress many other blues musicians of the day, such as Delta blues musician Edward "Son" House, who would utilize this extra volume so as to be heard over the reveling crowds in the numerous juke joints and dance parties he would play. Tampa Red was also one of the first musicians to

experiment with the electric guitar ("Anna Lou Blues," 1940).

After parting with "Georgia" Tom Dorsey, Tampa went on to work in several group settings throughout the 1930s. Tampa Red and his Hokum Jug Band and the Chicago Five were groups made up of Chicago blues and jazz session players, and with these groups, in a series of variations, Red recorded nearly 230 sides for the Bluebird and Victor labels between 1934 and 1953. During the early recordings from these sessions, Red stopped placing his musical focus on the guitar and concentrated more on roles as piano player and bandleader. A large part of Red's success during these years can also be attributed to social and technological factors as well as musical ability. In 1933 prohibition was repealed and the choice many tavern owners selected for their entertainment was the jukebox. Red was particularly keen in his ability to interpret trends in popular music and would fashion his

next recordings accordingly, nearly guaranteeing his latest endeavors playtime in this new medium. This allowed him to reach a much larger audience than he would have been able to reach via radio and record sales alone.

After 1953 Red's career came to a sudden halt. The death of his wife, to whom he was deeply devoted, along with health problems due to continued alcohol abuse left Red unable to maintain the creative pace of his early career. He briefly attempted to gain mass acceptance once again during the folk/blues revival of the early 1960s. These recordings, however, lack the strength and mastery of his early career.

Tampa Red died destitute on March 19, 1981, in Chicago's Central Nursing Home. His funeral was sparsely attended. However, his legacy has become increasingly appreciated since the mid-1970s. Many popular artists during the last three-quarters of the twentieth century have interpreted his music, among them Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Elmore James, Robert Nighthawk, B. B. King, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, and Eric Clapton. His clean bottleneck technique and his eclectic musical endeavors will no doubt continue to impress music enthusiasts for many decades.

BRYAN GROVE

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

TANGERINE RECORDS

Label established by Ray Charles in Los Angeles, California, in 1963. Devoted to West Coast and jump-blues, its artists included Louis Jordan, Percy Mayfield, Lula Reed, Ike and Tina Turner, and Charles's vocal backup group The Raelettes.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath (45 rpm)

TARHEEL SLIM

- b. Alden Bunn, 24 September 1924; Bailey, NC
d. 21 August 1977; New York City, NY

Versatile postwar electric guitarist and singer. In the late 1950s he performed and recorded with his wife Little Ann.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

TARNOPOL, NAT

- b. 26 January 1931; Detroit, MI
d. 25 December 1987; Las Vegas, NV

Record company executive who during the 1960s and 1970s built Brunswick into one of the most successful R&B labels. Tarnopol was raised in Detroit. He entered the music business in 1956, when in partnership with Al Green he opened an artist-management firm in Detroit. Among their early clients were LaVern Baker and Jackie Wilson. When Green died in 1957, Tarnopol inherited the business and built Jackie Wilson into a major R&B star recording for Decca's Brunswick imprint.

In 1964 Tarnopol received half of Brunswick from Decca; in 1970 he bought the remainder of the label. In 1966, he hired Chicago producer Carl Davis, and Davis revived both the career of Wilson and the fortunes of Brunswick with a seemingly endless stream of hits by such artists as Tyrone Davis, the Chi-Lites, Barbara Acklin, and Gene Chandler. Tarnopol also produced several of Brunswick's acts, notably Jackie Wilson, Lionel Hampton, and Louis Armstrong. In 1976 the company came crashing down when Tarnopol was convicted on fraud and conspiracy charges. Although the conviction was overturned in 1978, Brunswick was moribund by the early 1980s.

ROBERT PRUTER

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TARRANT, RABON

- b. ca. 1910
d. 1975; California

TARRANT, RABON

Singer and drummer active in San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco from 1937 through the early 1970s. His best-known recorded work is his hundred sides as drummer with the Jack McVea All Stars during the 1940s, singing on more than thirty of them.

EDWARD KOMARA

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TARTER AND GAY

On November 2, 1928, Stephen Tarter (1887–1935) and Harry Gay (1904–1983), walked into a makeshift studio in Bristol, Tennessee, and recorded for the Victor Record Company. "Brownie Blues" and "Unknown Blues" (Victor 38017), the only issued recordings by the duo, are in the standard twelve-bar blues structure, but the duo's highly syncopated and beautifully interlocking two-guitar arrangements reveal the influence of ragtime and string-band music. The lyrics to "Brownie Blues" relate a common blues theme: color differences within the African American community.

Both men were born in Scott County, Virginia, in or near Gate City. Tarter's father, Maryland-born Charles Tarter, was a farmer and is reported to have played several instruments. Stephen Tarter served in the 801st Pioneer Infantry during World War I, and by 1920 he resided on Sullivan Street in Kingsport, Tennessee, just south of Gate City. Tarter met Harry Gay in the mid-1920s near Johnson City, Tennessee. Gay also came from a musical family, but he credited Tarter with teaching him a great deal; Gay always seconded Tarter on guitar. Lesley Riddle, musician and associate of the Carter Family, met both men in Kingsport and reported that "Steve was one of the finest instrumentalists that I ever heard," noting that Tarter "could play guitar, banjo, mandolin, fiddle, anything that had strings on it." Brownie McGhee also remembered Tarter as a fine instrumentalist. The duo played throughout east Tennessee and southwest Virginia, performing for local dances, birthday parties, and at coal camps as a sidelight to other employment.

Stephen Tarter died of heart failure in Gate City on March 19, 1935, and was buried in that city in the Prospect School Cemetery. After the loss of his partner, Harry Gay rarely played music, and he died in 1983 in Johnson City, Tennessee.

GREGG KIMBALL

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Discography: DGR

TASBY, FINIS

b. 8 August 1940; Dallas, TX

Singer. In 1962 in Dallas he formed the Thunderbirds, playing bass behind singer Z. Z. Hill and, later, Joe Simon. From 1965, Tasby led his band as singer, but also he had them back Clarence Carter, Lowell Fulson, and Freddie King in regional tours. In 1973 he moved to Los Angeles, where he has been recording as lead artist and working in films, including *Sharkey's Machine* starring Burt Reynolds (1982) and songs on the film soundtrack for *The Babysitter* (1995).

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

TATE, BUDDY

b. George Holmes Tate, 22 February 1912; Sherman, TX

d. 10 February 2001; Chandler, AZ

An architect of the "Texas tenor" saxophone style that served as a template for the R&B/blues approach to horns, Tate started off on the alto with his family's orchestra but switched to the larger horn as a teenager in the late 1920s to perform with jazz bands in the Midwest and Southwest. These crowd-pleasing groups included McCloud's Night Owls, the St. Louis Merrymakers, and groups led by Troy Floyd, Nat Towles, Andy Kirk, and Ethel May.

In 1934, Tate appeared with Count Basie's Kansas City-based first band. His career break came in 1939

when asked by Basie to replace recently deceased star saxophonist Herschel Evans; Tate's fervent, blues-soaked horn was heard alongside those of fellow Texan Illinois Jacquet, Lester Young, and other notables in the Basie saxophone section until 1948. Musicologists agree that the swinging blues-based music produced by the Basie big band during this period belongs to the most remarkable in jazz history.

After quitting Basie due to the grueling road work, Tate settled in New York City and formed his own band for a twenty-one-year run at Harlem's Celebrity Club; he also kept busy with recording sessions and freelance club work. Starting in 1959, Tate and other Basie veterans, not least blues singer Jimmy Rushing, became favorites of European audiences, particularly the French. Jazz-blues encounters with similarly styled Texas tenor players Illinois Jacquet and Arnett Cobb and alto saxophonist Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson in the 1970s and 1980s are memorable. Pianist Jay McShann and singer Carrie Smith were other late-career collaborators who shared his natural affinity for the blues. His swinging mainstream jazz band with trombonist Al Grey is remembered as one of the best of the 1980s. Almost to the end, Tate's thick vibrato and special way with blues and ballads was still affecting.

FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

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TATE, CHARLES HENRY "BABY"

b. 28 January 1916; Elberton, GA

d. 17 August 1972; Columbia, SC

Guitarist in Piedmont blues style. During the 1930s he performed often with Blind Boy Fuller. He cut an album for Bluesville in 1962 and appeared in Samuel Charters's film *The Blues* (1963) but essentially remained a local musician.

LUIGI MONGE

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See also Anderson, Pinkney "Pink"; Fuller, Blind Boy

TATE, TOMMY

b. 29 September 1944; Homestead, FL

Southern soul singer in the styles of the 1960s and 1970s. He enjoyed an R&B chart hit with "School of Love" in 1972 for the Koko label. His more recent work was done for the Urgent subsidiary of the Ichiban CD label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Ron Wynn)

Discography: AMG (Ron Wynn)

TAYLOR, EDDIE

b. 29 January 1923; Benoit, MS

d. 25 December 1985; Chicago, IL

Influential postwar blues guitarist and singer Eddie Taylor was born the son of Joseph and Mamie Taylor in the Mississippi Delta town of Benoit, just north of Greenville. Taylor worked on a farm as a boy and experienced firsthand the music of Delta legends Memphis Minnie, Charley Patton, Son House, and Robert Johnson. He taught himself to play the guitar after receiving one as a gift from his mother in 1936. After gaining confidence on the instrument, he began teaching childhood friend Jimmy Reed.

Taylor went on to play juke joints and country suppers around Clarksdale and Leland, Mississippi, through the early 1940s, and often he partnered with Howlin' Wolf, Big Joe Williams, and Son House. He moved to Memphis in 1943 and continued to play in area clubs for several years, working with Big Walter Horton, Elmore James, Johnny Shines, and B. B. King. In the late 1940s, Taylor moved to Chicago and occasionally played on Maxwell Street. He worked regularly throughout the 1950s with a variety of Chicago musicians, including Snooky Pryor, Floyd and Moody Jones, Little Willie Foster, and Horton (who had moved to Chicago with Taylor).

He reunited with Jimmy Reed, who had recently relocated to the city, and in 1953 started what would

become one of the most successful partnerships in the blues when he began recording with Reed for Vee-Jay Records. The loping, rock-steady shuffle that is famously known as “The Jimmy Reed Sound” is commonly credited to Taylor, who electrified the Delta rhythms that he learned directly from Charley Patton and Robert Johnson to create Reed’s signature beat. Reed and Taylor would record throughout the next ten years together and produce more than a dozen R&B hits. In 1955, Taylor recorded as a leader for Vee-Jay and cut two of his signature tunes, “Bad Boy” and “Big Town Playboy,” both of which featured his solid rhythm work, stinging leads, and heartfelt vocals.

A much sought after session guitarist, Taylor appeared as a sideman on many recordings for Vee-Jay and other Chicago labels throughout the 1950s and 1960s, most notably with Elmore James, John Brim, and John Lee Hooker. He continued to perform in Chicago clubs throughout the 1960s, both as a leader and a sideman, as well as with wife Lee Vera Burns Taylor on vocals. Taylor recorded for Testament and ABC/BluesWay in the late 1960s and made his first of many trips to Europe as part of the American Folk Blues Festival tour. He recorded for a variety of U.S. and European labels throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, including Big Bear, Advent, L+R, Blind Pig, and Antone’s.

Although a hugely influential guitarist of Chicago postwar blues, Eddie Taylor’s contribution remained largely unrecognized during his lifetime. His death from heart disease at age sixty-two robbed Chicago blues of one of its original architects who helped contemporize the rural, acoustic Delta blues into the amplified urban blues that it is known as today. Three of Taylor’s sons, drummers Tim and Larry and guitarist Eddie, Jr., are active Chicago blues musicians. Vera Taylor died in 1999, shortly after recording her only full-length release on Wolf Records.

GENE TOMKO

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Selected Recordings

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 CD 5087).
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TAYLOR, EVA

- b. Irene Gibbons, 22 January 1895; St. Louis, MO
 d. 31 October 1977; Mineola, NY

Vocalist; billed as “the Dixie Nightingale” and “Queen of the Moaners.” Her career began on vaudeville. She collaborated with her husband, bandleader Clarence Williams, from the 1920s until the 1940s on revues, songs, and radio broadcasts.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

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TAYLOR, HOUND DOG

- b. Theodore Roosevelt Taylor, 12 April 1915;
 Natchez, MS
 d. 17 December 1975; Chicago, IL

Born Theodore Roosevelt Taylor to Robert Taylor and Della Herron, the raucous singer and slide guitarist grew up on a Delta plantation but ran away from home as a boy to hobo throughout the South. In the mid-1930s, Taylor settled in Tchula, Mississippi, and began playing guitar and performing in area juke joints.

His path crossed with many influential Delta musicians around Tchula, and Taylor worked with Elmore James, Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II,” and Robert Lockwood. James’s fierce slide guitar playing had an enormous impact on him, and Taylor would later play an important role in keeping that blues style popular after James’s death.

Although originally nicknamed “Nitter” by his mother, he eventually became known as “Hound Dog” due to his notoriety for chasing women. Taylor moved to Chicago in 1942 and worked outside music initially, but after the urging of his sister and musician

friend Uncle Johnnie Williams, he began performing on Maxwell Street for tips and in various South and West Side clubs in the mid-1940s. Taylor made his recording debut for the Bea & Baby label in 1960, and a single followed on both Firma and Checker during the next several years, to little success. One of Taylor's unrecorded bandstand instrumentals reportedly inspired Freddie King to record the song as "Hide Away," which became a top ten R&B hit in 1961.

In the mid-1960s, the band that would eventually become world famous as The Houserockers came together. Consisting of Brewer Phillips on second guitar (who had been playing with Taylor since 1959) and Ted Harvey on drums, the pair complemented Taylor's distorted slide guitar and raw boogie blues style perfectly. The trio's reputation as one of Chicago's most exhilarating blues bands spread quickly through their celebrated sets at South and West Side clubs such as Florence's, Pepper's Lounge, and Theresa's.

Taylor made his first trip to Europe in 1967 as part of the American Folk Blues Festival, a tour that included artists Little Walter and Koko Taylor. In 1971, after blues enthusiast Wesley Race failed to convince Delmark Records to record Taylor, avid fan and current Delmark employee Bruce Iglauer stepped in and launched Alligator Records solely to record the guitarist and his band. Cut live in the studio and coproduced by Taylor, Iglauer, and Race, *Hound Dog Taylor and the Houserockers* captured the raw intensity of the band's live shows and established their reputation nationally as one of Chicago's most electrifying bands.

Iglauer recorded and managed the group during the next four years, and the trio performed at festivals and in clubs throughout the country and overseas. Taylor's seemingly boundless energy and good-time, charismatic stage presence was at the core of every live performance. Periodic disputes between Taylor and Phillips occurred, usually with guitarist Lefty Dizz substituting on second guitar, but Taylor and Iglauer managed to keep the band together throughout the years. In November 1975, Taylor was hospitalized for difficulty in breathing and was subsequently diagnosed with lung cancer. He succumbed to the disease six weeks later at age sixty.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

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TAYLOR, JOHNNIE HARRISON

b. 3 May 1934; Crawfordsville, AR
d. 31 May 2000; Dallas, TX

Dapper and debonair, smooth yet gritty, oozing soul and showmanship, possessed of a sexy voice and an impeccable sense of phrasing, Johnnie Taylor was a soul-blues performer and recording artist of the highest caliber. Although blues purists and rock critics tended to overlook him, his core audience loved him and made him the top-selling artist on two eras' leading Southern soul labels—Stax during the late 1960s to mid-1970s and Malaco during the mid-1980s to late 1990s.

Raised in West Memphis, a blues hotbed, by churchgoing parents who surrounded him with gospel music, he moved to Kansas City and then Chicago, where, after an early 1950s stint with a doo-wop group, the Five Echoes, he began quite literally to follow in the footsteps of the great Sam Cooke. In 1953, he joined the gospel Highway QCs, Cooke's first group; in 1957, he replaced Cooke in the Soul Stirrers; and in 1961, he followed Cooke into secular R&B, recording for Cooke's own SAR and Derby labels until his mentor's murder in 1964.

Taylor then moved back to the Memphis area and signed with Stax in 1966. During the next two years, working with the Stax house band, he recorded perhaps his deepest and bluest soul-blues material, such as "I Had a Dream" (his first hit) and "Little Bluebird." But he really hit his stride when the label brought in ex-Motown producer Dan Davis to update the Stax sound. The immediate result, in the fall of 1968, was "Who's Making Love," a million-selling up-tempo soul tune that dealt cheerfully with infidelity, a topic he often revisited during an unbroken string of R&B hits during the next six years. Among the highlights of those years were "Take Care of Your Homework," "Testify (I Wanna)," "Love Bones," "Steal Away," "I Am Somebody," "Jody's Got Your Girl and Gone," "I Believe in You (You Believe in Me)," "Cheaper to Keep Her," and "We're Getting Careless with Our Love." During his Stax tenure, he acquired the sobriquet "Philosopher of Soul"; on record, he often referred to himself in the third person as "J. T."

After Stax's demise in 1975, Davis brought Taylor to Columbia, where he was recast as a disco singer,

TAYLOR, JOHNNIE HARRISON

dismaying blues and soul fans but garnering the biggest hit of his career, “Disco Lady,” which topped both the pop and R&B charts and was certified platinum. As the disco era wound down, Taylor recorded briefly for Beverly Glen before finding a new home at Malaco Records, where he eventually recorded thirteen albums, each containing a mix of Southern soul, urban ballads, funk, and blues. Although the sound was updated, anchored by heavy bass lines and sometimes sweetened by synthesizers or strings, Taylor’s vocals still were drenched in his gospel and blues roots. He became Malaco’s biggest-selling artist, outgrossing even Little Milton and Bobby Band. Typical was his 1996 album, *Good Love*, with its title track, a sensuous slice of contemporary funk, and its outstanding blues cut “Last Two Dollars,” which became a latter-day chitlin circuit staple. Taylor maintained a rigorous touring schedule right up until his sudden death from a heart attack in Dallas, where he had lived since the 1970s.

Johnnie Taylor’s similarity in name to Little Johnny Taylor was the source of much confusion throughout both their careers, abetted by their similar styles during J. T.’s initial years at Stax and his cover version of L. J. T.’s signature song “Part Time Love.”

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

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See also **Malaco/Waldoxy; Stax/Volt; Taylor, Johnny Lamar “Little”**

TAYLOR, JOHNNY LAMAR “LITTLE”

- b. Johnny Lamont Merrett, 11 February 1943; Gregory, AR
d. 17 May 2002; Conway, AR

Blues and soul vocalist best known for the blues classic “Part Time Love,” Little Johnny Taylor was often confused with the older and more popular singer Johnnie Taylor of Stax, Malaco, and “Disco Lady”

fame; both were Arkansas natives with roots in gospel music. Both at times spelled their names Johnnie and Johnny on record, and both recorded “Part Time Love.”

Little Johnny Taylor was raised in Los Angeles from age seven and sang with gospel groups as a teenager before joining the Johnny Otis Show and working the West Coast rhythm and blues club and concert circuit. He cut his first record in 1960 for deejay Hunter Hancock’s Swingin’ label. His biggest success came with Galaxy Records in 1963–1964, when he waxed four singles that hit the Billboard charts, with “Part Time Love” hitting the number one spot. On the strength of his Galaxy hits and five more for Ronn Records in the early 1970s, Taylor toured the country, working the black chitlin circuit venues.

By the late 1970s his career had slowed down, and though he did a little more recording for Ichiban and Nasha, he lived his last few years out of the spotlight in Conway, Arkansas, where he did more fishing than performing. When he died, even the local Conway newspaper erred in its report by confusing the careers and recordings of the two Johnnie/Johnny Taylors.

JIM O’NEAL

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Discography: AMG; LSFP; Whitburn

TAYLOR, KOKO

- b. Cora Walton, 28 September 1935; Memphis, TN

Singer with a powerful, belting contralto voice and one of the leading blues artists in Chicago since the 1960s. “Koko” is a shortened version of “Little Cocoa,” a family nickname due to her early fondness for chocolate. She was born to sharecropper parents; her mother died when Taylor was four years old, her father when she was around eleven. During her early years, she sang in church and with her musically inclined siblings at home. In 1953 she and her boyfriend Robert “Pops” Taylor moved to Chicago, and soon after their arrival they married. He took a job at a slaughterhouse, and she as a maid. On weekends they would go to the clubs in the Chicago South Side. Over time they became friends with the local

musicians, and on occasion she would sing a song with the band.

In 1962, Willie Dixon heard her by chance, and he recruited her to sing on recordings. Their initial recording was "Honky Tonky" for the USA label, recorded in 1962 and released the following year. On Dixon's encouragement, she wrote her first song, "What Kind of Man Is This," which she sang for the Spivey label in 1964 and also at her first Chess label session that same year. In 1965 she recorded her version of Willie Dixon's "Wang Dang Doodle," which previously had been done by Howlin' Wolf in 1960. Soon after recording, her rendition was first played on the radio by Pervis Spann on his late-night WVON show; listener reaction that night led to a quick release by Chess and a massive hit, reputedly selling a million copies. That success led to tours with Dixon, including the 1967 American Folk Blues Festival tour in Europe, and to local gigs with informal pickup bands. She continued recording for Chess until Leonard Chess's death in 1969.

While preparing for her appearance at the 1972 Ann Arbor Blues Festival, she and her husband picked the musicians for her Blues Machine band, whom she would retain full time. Taylor's husband began serving as manager at about this same time. Meanwhile she recorded briefly on Dixon's Yambo label. In 1975 she signed as the first woman artist on the Alligator label and soon recorded the album *I Got What It Takes*. Her second Alligator LP, *The Earthshaker* (1978), contains some of her most famous songs, "I'm a Woman," and "Hey Bartender." In 1980 she won for the first of many times the Handy Award for Best Contemporary Female Artist, and in 1984 she received her first Grammy Award.

In February 1988, Taylor, her husband, and the Blues Machine were seriously injured when the van missed a curve and went over a mountain cliff. She broke her shoulder, collarbone and ribs, while Pops Taylor had a cardiac arrest. Later that spring, a benefit concert was held in Chicago to raise money to pay the medical bills for the Taylors and their band; participating artists included The Kinsey Report, Kim Wilson, Robert Cray, Lonnie Brooks, Big Time Sarah, and Valerie Wellington. Taylor made her first postcrash appearance that June at the Chicago Blues Festival. Pops Taylor never fully recovered from the accident, and he died on March 22, 1989.

Since 1990 she has retained her position as today's "Queen of the Blues," with her brassy, belting, growling voice and her distinctive songs. In 1990 she had a cameo role in David Lynch's film *Wild at Heart*. She continues as a recording artist for Alligator. A retrospective, *Deluxe Edition*, was released in 2002.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

TAYLOR, MELVIN

b. 13 March 1959; Jackson, MS

Guitarist, singer. Taylor's ability to utilize the full spectrum of sound his guitar could create, combined with his fast and fluid playing and the unusually dramatic dynamics of his soloing, made him a star in Europe before he achieved success in the United States. His energetic and endlessly eclectic live act, featuring everything from jazz passages to wah-wah pedal experimentations, exhibited an expansive and adventurous perspective on blues guitar.

When he was three Taylor's family moved to Chicago, where his uncle, bluesman Floyd Vaughan, provided him guitar lessons. By the time he was fifteen he was working in an R&B band, The Transistors, and backing local blues stars. His blues career began in earnest in 1981 when he was recruited by the Legendary Blues Band for a European tour.

Taylor so impressed European audiences that he was able to return with own band the next year. He also impressed record executives and he recorded *Blues on the Run* and *Plays the Blues for You*, both later released by Evidence Records, in Chicago for the French Isabel label in 1980s. The 1995 trio recording *Melvin Taylor & the Slack Band* was his first true American release and it was followed in 1997 by his best recording, *Dirty Pool. Bang That Bell*, with a five-piece edition of the Slack Band, was released in 2000. He also found time to record on albums by Eddie Shaw and Lucky Peterson, the latter returning the favor by participating in the sessions for Taylor's 2002 *Rendezvous with the Blues*, which also featured Mato Nanji of the group Indigenous.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

TAYLOR, MONTANA

TAYLOR, MONTANA

b. Arthur Taylor, 1903; Butte, MT
d. 1954

Singer and pianist in barrelhouse style. Taylor moved with his family initially to Chicago, then to Indianapolis. After teaching himself piano, he performed at rent parties and in small bars and clubs in Indianapolis and Chicago. He recorded for Vocalion in 1929. He was rediscovered in Cleveland, Ohio, by jazz listeners in 1946, after which he made additional recordings for the Circle label.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSPF

TAYLOR, OTIS

b. 30 July 1948; Chicago, IL

Otis Taylor is an eclectic innovator who moved to Denver at an early age and was exposed to many musical genres at the Denver Folklore Center. He formed two blues bands as a teenager and later played with Tommy Bolin and the Colorado-based band Zephyr. He quit music in 1977 and became an antiques dealer but returned to music in 1995. Taylor won the Best New Blues Artist Award at the 2002 W. C. Handy Awards.

GAILE WELKER

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Discography: AMG

TAYLOR, SAM "BLUZMAN"

b. 25 October 1934; Mobile, AL

Guitarist/vocalist/songwriter; son of saxophonist Sam "The Man" Taylor. Taylor boxed as a young man.

He took up guitar in the mid-1950s and played in Joey Dee's Starlites in the early 1960s; he later worked chitlin' circuit shows with various soul and R&B acts. From the early 1970s, he led blues/R&B bands on the West Coast before moving to Tucson, Arizona, in 1986. He currently is based in Long Island. His songwriting credits include "Mother Blues," recorded by Son Seals, and "Do It ('Til You're Satisfied)," which earned a gold record for B. T. Express in 1974.

DAVID WHITEIS

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TAYLOR, SAM "THE MAN"

b. 12 July 1916; Lexington, TN
d. 5 October 1990; Westchestertown, NY

Saxophonist best known for his rhythm and blues "honking" style in the 1950s. His early work was as sideman for Scatman Crothers (late 1930s), Cootie Williams and Lucky Millinder (early 1940s), and Cab Calloway (1940s). In the 1950s, he recorded much rhythm and blues music, on his own, and as side musician to Ray Charles, Big Joe Turner, and Louis Jordan. In the 1960s he formed his band The Blues Chasers, and in his commercial recording work he turned to romantic music (such as *The Bad and the Beautiful*, 1962, Prestige label).

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Ron Wynn, Dave Nathan)

Discography: AMG (Ron Wynn, Dave Nathan)

TAYLOR, TED

b. Austin Taylor, 16 February 1934; Okmulgee, OK
d. 23 October 1987; Lake Charles, LA

An underrated but extremely demonstrative and intense singer, Ted Taylor's dramatic style and flair have influenced many Southern and Southwestern

contemporary blues and soul singers. He cut some memorable material for a number of regional labels, with his best arguably being sessions done for Stan Lewis's Jewel and Paula companies, some of which appeared on a boxed set a few years ago.

RON WYNN

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Discography

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TEDESCHI, SUSAN

b. 9 November 1970; Norwell, MA

Guitarist, singer. A successful modern popularizer of the music who incorporated rock, pop, and R&B, Tedeschi solidly established her blues credentials before enlarging her audience. Prior to her mainstream breakthrough Tedeschi won the 1999 W. C. Handy Award for best new artist as well as for best contemporary female artist, a category she won again in 2000.

Tedeschi played guitar and sang in her church choir. Barely in her teens when she began actively playing, she formed her first band before she finished high school and established herself as a regular on the New England club circuit while also attending Berklee School of Music and singing with a gospel group. Her recording debut, overlooked at the time but later rereleased as *Better Days*, came via an independently released album.

Tedeschi, hiring teenage guitar star Sean Costello for her band, toured steadily before relocating to Atlanta, Georgia. Her career was significantly elevated by the release of her Tone-Cool Records debut *Just Won't Burn*, featuring Costello, who had left her band. The album became an instant airplay favorite, gaining Tedeschi recognition outside the blues community and garnering her a 2000 Grammy nomination for best new artist in the process.

She married guitarist Derek Trucks in 2001. In 2003 *Wait for Me*, co-produced with Tom Dowd, secured her another Grammy nomination as it successfully built upon her crossover fan base.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

TELARC

Founded 1977, Cleveland, Ohio, by musicians Jack Renner and Robert Woods as a high-end audiophile outlet for classical music, Telarc has expanded its vision through the years to take in jazz and blues. In the process, Telarc has become a prominent and important midlevel blues label, with an impressive roster and the same high technological standards as it applies to its jazz and classical recordings.

For its first twelve years, Telarc focused on classical music and Broadway; in 1989, the label released its first jazz recording and in 1993, its first blues side, "Better Off with the Blues" by Chicago legend Junior Wells.

Since then, Telarc has recorded artists ranging from Kenny Neal and Son Seals to James Cotton and Deborah Coleman, from Eddie Kirkland and Robert Lockwood to Charlie Musselwhite and Otis Taylor. The label seems more comfortable signing established artists than in seeking out new talent but provides its artists with absolutely first-rate production, promotion, and distribution.

JIM TRAGESER

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TELEVISION

The Early Period

The earliest traceable evidence of any blues on television is probably Gladys Bryant's 1952 appearance on the game show *You Bet Your Life*, when host Groucho

Marx, to his credit, recognizes her name (“Not *the* Gladys Bryant?” he asks) and allows her a few seconds to sing and dance before taking part in the show itself.

Beyond that wild anomaly, we have to wait until the syndicated broadcasting of the series *Showtime at the Apollo* (see the *Films* entry) first screened in 1955 for any evidence of blues on the small screen. In November of that same year Ed Sullivan introduced a short segment of his syndicated Sunday night show featuring Bo Diddley, among others, to illustrate a “typical” night at the Harlem Apollo. Convinced that Bo was the man who had sung “Sixteen Tons” (then a hit for Tennessee Ernie Ford), he reportedly became enraged when Bo, despite clear direction, sang his signature tune instead of the song Sullivan expected. Bo remained convinced for some years that this incident kept him from further appearances on the major networks. The truth is probably that Sullivan wielded no such punitive power. The networks simply ignored blues the way film had before them.

With the advent of rock ‘n’ roll, and most especially Dick Clark’s *Beechnut Show* and *American Bandstand*, black musicians became a little more high profile, but most were performing within the R&B/rock area, even to the extent that Frankie Lee Sims’s only TV appearance is firmly attached to his backing Jimmy McCracklin performing “The Walk” on *Bandstand*.

Local TV stations often featured local artists. St. Louis was able to experience Ike Turner’s Kings of Rhythm thanks to the efforts of entrepreneur George Edick. Wilmington, Delaware, oddly enough, played host to a rock ‘n’ roll show with much African American input. Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and many others appeared on it, but no footage is known to have survived. There was also a Johnny Otis TV show in Los Angeles at about the same time, and in all likelihood there were other appearances of interest around the country, but evidence is rare and surviving footage even more so.

In an isolated incident in 1958, the syndicated arts show *Perspectives* focused on a history of Beale Street; among the interviewees were music promoters Robert Henry and Howard Yancey, WDIA disc jockey Nat D. Williams and, astonishingly, Memphis Jug Band alumni Will Shade and Charlie Burse, who performed a four-minute version of “Kansas City Blues.” This is probably the earliest videotape—as opposed to film or kinescope—of any blues performance.

Blues in Europe

In Europe Big Bill Broonzy appeared on British TV once, in 1957, and on Italian TV once that same year.

Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry turned up on the BBC in London in 1958, and Rosetta Tharpe followed the next year. But all in all the 1950s were a vast global wasteland if televised blues was your sole interest.

However, by the beginning of the 1960s there was a shift of interest, as a predominantly young white audience began to involve itself in folk music. The definition was a very broad one, and some of the material embraced was quite shallow, but a by-product of this focus was to bring blues into sharper relief. This was especially true in Europe, and in a kismet situation, German promoters Horst Lipmann and Fritz Rau were able to bring a package of blues singers to Europe in the fall of 1962 that not only succeeded in filling auditoriums in Britain, Germany, and France but also attracted the attention of German SudWestFunk television in Baden-Baden.

Hence, that fall German TV viewers were able to see T-Bone Walker, Shakey Jake, Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry, Memphis Slim, and Helen Humes perform both live and good examples of current blues. Even accepting that some of the sets constructed by the TV company were a touch hokey, the music itself was excellent. Shakey Jake performed “You’re Looking Good” in the then-current Chicago West Side style, while John Lee Hooker’s solo electric guitar version of “Hobo Blues” is astonishingly similar to his recording of fourteen years earlier and is one of the best of all Hooker’s filmed performances. T-Bone Walker, ably backed by Memphis Slim, Willie Dixon, and Billie Steptey, delivered a superb rendition of “Don’t Throw Your Love on Me So Strong,” while Slim himself demonstrated both blues and boogie piano that is as delightful now as it was when first broadcast.

The show made enough impact to become a regular feature on SudWestFunk for the next three years. As with all subsequent SudWestFunk American Folk Blues Festival (AFBF) shows, the videotapes remain intact and in good condition, and many were rebroadcast during 2000 in a special retrospective.

In the meantime the British “R&B Boom” as it was sometimes called, encompassing everything from the Rolling Stones through Tamla, Stax, and Atlantic and back to Chess and Vee-Jay artists, was starting to reach large audiences. From its public emergence in late 1962 it was, by 1963, a considerable force within the British music industry. On its coattails rode some excellent traditional blues.

Thus, in the fall of 1963 the second AFBF, containing Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, Otis Spann, Big Joe Williams, Memphis Slim, Matt Murphy, Lonnie Johnson, Victoria Spivey, and Willie Dixon, toured Europe once more, with a higher

profile, appearing at more venues and also on British, as well as German and possibly French, TV. Individual spinoffs and guest appearances also occurred that year; Sonny Boy Williamson, Memphis Slim, and Matt Murphy appeared on Belgian TV, and Muddy Waters and Sonny Boy Williamson guested on early evening news shows in the United Kingdom.

Also in 1963 British ATV launched a show called *Ready Steady Go*, aimed at the teen markets and featuring an eclectic mixture of rock, soul, pop, and R&B. A glance at the roster of artists who appeared during its three-year life reveals not just current beat groups but also Sugar Pie DeSanto, Jesse Fuller, Buddy Guy, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Jimmy Reed, and Tommy Tucker in addition to Ike & Tina Turner, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, Marvin Gaye, and a host of others.

The following year, BBC launched a little-seen competitor, *Beat Room*, little seen because it was appearing on BBC-2, the "new" channel that much of the country could not then receive. Howlin' Wolf, Tommy Tucker, Sonny Boy Williamson, and others appeared live on it, but today only the episode featuring John Lee Hooker appears to have survived and is available on Vestapol Video/DVD 13035.

In 1964 the pace was kept up with the European tour, in May, of the Blues & Gospel Caravan, featuring Muddy Waters, Rosetta Tharpe, Cousin Joe Pleasants, and Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry. Strange bedfellows in an American context, perhaps, but seen in Europe as essentially an "R&B package." In Britain, the Manchester-based TV company Granada employed producer Johnny Hamp and director Phil Casson—who had collaborated on the 1963 televising of the AFBF—to produce a show called *The Blues & Gospel Train*.

How they went about it says a great deal about the mindset and approach of Europeans to blues at that time. They took over a deserted suburban railway station, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, in Manchester and decorated it to resemble their view of a Southern whistle-stop. Bales of hay, "wanted" posters, live chickens, a goat, and a name change to "Chorltonville" were all employed to add ambience to the next phase of the plot, which was to load the musicians and about two hundred young fans onto a steam train at Manchester and send it into Chorlton station. On-board scenes were filmed to run under the opening credits, and the arrival, disembarkation, and subsequent musical events on the platforms were videotaped.

Thus, Muddy Waters's version of "Blow Wind Blow" was performed as hundreds of young fans flowed off the train and around him, attempting to get the best seats for the ensuing performances. While Cousin Joe Pleasants sang "Railroad Porter Blues,"

accompanied by bassist Ransom Knowling and drummer Willie Smith, a sudden and prolonged cloudburst descended upon both them and the audience. Joe continued, trouper that he was, to sing despite being drenched. Rained poured off the roof directly onto Ransom Knowling's head, who reached for his hat only after the song was finished. After the storm, Sister Rosetta Tharpe arrived in a horse and carriage, complete with fringe on top, talking, laughing, clapping her hands, the now-evident sun shining, to take up her electric guitar, demand a key, and then launch herself into a blistering version of "Didn't It Rain," bringing immediate and positive reaction from the audience.

Muddy reappeared to sing his then-current hit "You Cant Lose What You Ain't, Never Had" on the platform, followed by Sonny & Brownie singing to the goat; the massed company then joined together for a jam session version of "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." Muddy at least must have realized in that moment that his career path was altering.

That year, 1964, also brought the return of the AFBF, with Lightnin Hopkins, Howlin' Wolf, Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson," Sunnyland Slim, and others. In Britain the live performance at Manchester's Free Trade Hall was videotaped and broadcast as a two-part program, copies of which still reside in the British Film Institute. In Germany SudWest-Funk spent a lot of money building a special set, a sort of cleaned-up barrelhouse with a front porch attached, for AFBF members to perform in.

The ailing John Henry Barbee's only filmed performance stems from this show. In the company of Sleepy John Estes and Hammie Nixon, providing the string band setting he was familiar with from his Maxwell Street years, he delivers a superb, ragged, blues-drenched version of "Can't You See What You Done to Me." Barbee was too ill to continue with the tour and thus returned to the United States, dying in tragic circumstances the following month. This now-familiar annual blues festival also probably appeared on television in Paris, East Berlin, and Moscow, although if tapes survived they have yet to see the light of day.

In the British TV program *Juke Box Jury*, a safe-format panel show, celebrities passed judgment on newly released pop records; after one such review a mystery guest would appear to either embarrass or be congratulated by the panel. In November 1964 the panel, consisting of socialite Lady Isabel Barnet, comedian Jimmy Edwards, and skiffle musician Lonnie Donegan, listened to and reviewed Howlin' Wolf's "Love Me Darling." Only Donegan knew enough to give an informed opinion, and then to his delight

and the others' clear discomfort, Wolf appeared from behind the curtain. Towering over everyone, he shook hands with the panel and was then asked by the proto-smooth host David Jacobs why he had "such a rough voice." "I was born with the voice" Wolf answered, turning to wave at the camera before exiting.

The following year the AFBF again appeared in an elaborately erected set for German TV, providing posterity with rare footage of J. B. Lenoir, Fred McDowell, Eddie Boyd, John Lee Hooker, Doctor Ross, Roosevelt Sykes, Buddy Guy, Big Mama Thornton, and others. For reasons now lost to us, the British ignored the AFBF that year.

The year 1966 saw the return of the AFBF to Europe, and again the British and German TV companies videotaped live performances, at London's Albert Hall and in a theater in Baden-Baden. Joe Turner, Otis Rush, Junior Wells, Little Brother Montgomery, Roosevelt Sykes again, Sippie Wallace, Robert Pete Williams, and Sleepy John Estes for a second time, accompanied by Yank Rachel, all appeared that year.

The AFBF in 1967 was ignored by all the European TV stations except, oddly, the Danish, which broadcast a somewhat antiseptic half hour that opened with three major proto-blues men, Son House, Skip James, and Bukka White, then segued into the Modern Chicago sound with Hound Dog Taylor, Koko Taylor, and Little Walter, and ended with Sonny & Brownie. The AFBF in 1968 was ignored by everyone except the BBC, which never broadcast the results of the tapes they made at their White City studios.

The Germans returned to the AFBF in 1969 but took a different approach. They made a two-part cinema verité documentary about life on the road in a tour bus, with Chris Strachwitz playing roadie and giving on-camera explanations of the blues in fluent German. Without this film there would be no visual evidence of Magic Sam. The final Lipmann-Rau tour was in 1970, although a variety of blues festivals would continue to play through Europe for some time to come. German TV filmed the 1970 concert live, exposing its audience to Larry Johnson, Carey Bell, Margie Evans, and others, but the eight-year period of almost annual interest in televising the AFBF effectively ended that year.

Blues in the United States and Canada in the 1960s

Meanwhile, U.S. TV was still largely ignoring the product of its own back yard. Howlin' Wolf had

appeared on the teen-oriented rock 'n' roll show *Shindig*, but only at the insistence of the Rolling Stones, who, flexing their newly acquired muscle, said they would do the show only if Wolf appeared on the same episode. They got their way.

Elsewhere in the United States, networks were offering very little. *Shindig* featured some black acts—the Coasters in 1965, for instance—but almost no blues. PBS fared a little better. In 1965 the show *Camera Three* investigated the blues by having Son House and Buddy Guy in the studio at the same time to demonstrate their art—good performances by both artists—and the show closed with Guy accompanying House on acoustic guitar. Guy has never lost his Delta roots and can be seen returning to them quite regularly in later films.

Elsewhere on U.S. TV that year, Pete Seeger hosted *Rainbow Quest* on PBS, an informal folk music show that featured wonderful performances by Mississippi John Hurt, Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry, and Reverend Gary Davis, all now available once more on several Vestapol Video/DVDs. When one looks at Seeger's other contributions, he emerges as something of a pioneer of recording folk music visually. Beyond blues, his show hosted a large number of traditional, old-timey artists, including the blues-drenched Rosco Holcomb, as well the first Cajun band to be aired on a network show. His library of visual accomplishments looks quite handsome in retrospect.

But the most important contribution to blues on TV in 1966 came from Canada. For three days in January, CNBC-TV in Toronto played host to an astonishing array of blues talent in a relaxed and informal setting. Muddy Waters and his band, including Otis Spann and James Cotton, Sunnyland Slim, Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry, Big Joe Williams, Mabel Hilary, Jesse Fuller, Willie Dixon, and Bukka White (in his earliest surviving visual performance) all sang, played, swapped stories with each other, and responded to questions from anchorman Barry Callaghan. The broadcast result, *Festival Presents the Blues*, was aired later that same month, using perhaps only twenty-five percent of what was videotaped. Important because it captured the blues at a cusp of change and because the relaxed atmosphere coaxed some excellent performances from everyone, a selection of this material is now available on Sanctuary 88330 video. The rest still lies in the archive awaiting use, including extraordinary performances by Big Joe Williams that surely deserve attention.

During the spring and summer of that year a Dallas-based syndicated show called *The Beat!!!* appeared for a total of twenty-six episodes. Hosted by deejay Bill "Hoss" Allen, it featured exclusively

African American artists rendering a broad mixture of then-current soul, R&B, and urban blues performed largely live but occasionally mimed. For the live performances the house band, The Blue Beats, was under the direction of Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown. Freddy King appeared regularly, and all his performances have been gathered together on Vestapol Video/DVD 13014. However, much remains unused, including Big Amos, Little Milton, the obscure but wonderful Cleo Randall, Robert Parker, and a long set by Louis Jordan, the only known color footage of him. The show did not survive its initial season but is still archived.

Into the 1970s and 1980s

The 1970s opened with the making of *Chicago Blues* in January by director Harley Cokliss. Wonderful if frustratingly incomplete performances by Muddy Waters, Johnny Lewis, Buddy Guy & Junior Wells, and Floyd Jones adorn this essentially political documentary about life in the ghetto. Now something of a period piece, it still contains what many believe to be Guy and Wells’s finest filmed performances.

The decade continued with a generally more open approach to putting some form of blues on TV from time to time. The arrival of B. B. King on the wider music scene at the start of the decade ensured his appearance on shows such as *The Flip Wilson Show* and, later, *Family Ties* as well as in movies and in an astonishingly good short documentary, *B. B. King at Cook County Jail*. Blues artists touring Europe showed up with some regularity across Europe, and a few who settled there—such as Jack Dupree, Sammy Price, and Eddie Boyd—became, if not familiar faces, at least recognized ones on their adopted countries’ airwaves. From 1972 onward, the Montreux Jazz and Blues Festival was routinely broadcast on Swiss TV, often live and unedited. Archiving began immediately, and the archives contain important material by Freddy King, Bo Diddley—playing a set of almost straight blues, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, Louisiana Red, T-Bone Walker, and many others.

In January 1976 BBC producers Giles Oakley and Maddelena Fagandinni, accompanied by a small film crew, toured the United States from Chicago to St. Louis, on to Memphis, and into the Delta to film performances for a major production to be called *The Devil’s Music*, probably the first serious overview of the subject in visual form. They captured stellar performances by many important artists that, a few short years later, would have been impossible to

make. Big Joe Williams, Sam Chatmon, Little Brother Montgomery, Houston Stackhouse, Sonny Blake, Joe Willie Wilkins, Billy Boy Arnold, the Aces, and Fenton Robinson were all filmed in color, performing complete songs and often interviewed as well.

When the five-part series appeared two years later, the original film shot seemed woefully underused, snippets here and there interspersed with archival footage, rostrum camera work, and talking heads. However, two years later the BBC revisited this substantial archive and aired a four-part show simply called *The Blues*, in which Alexis Korner introduced complete performances by all the artists filmed. The best of the rural material is now available on several Vestapol Video/DVDs, but the urban songs remain unissued commercially.

The Mississippi Authority for Educational Television produced, in 1978, the generally excellent documentary *Good Morning Blues*. Hosted by B. B. King—always a genuine enthusiast for the music—it took the viewer into the Delta to explain how and why the blues began. It contains the only known footage of the then-101-year-old Nathan Beauregard, as well as perhaps the finest performances ever captured on film by Big Joe Williams. Performing live in a juke joint in Crawford, Mississippi, the electric atmosphere and sheer sense of enjoyment translates well into the film. Made initially to be shown for schools, it remains one of the few truly classic blues documentaries.

Documenting the blues in the 1980s became a more regular event. Jim Gabbour’s excellent New Orleans-based series *All Alone with the Blues* provided posterity with excellent sets by Boogie Bill Webb, Henry Grey, Cousin Joe, Robert Lockwood, and others; the country music show *Austin City Limits* made a regular feature of blues, including Taj Mahal, Robert Cray, Buddy Guy, and an extraordinary set by the archaic Texas barrelhouse pianist Robert Shaw. *Maintenance Shop Blues*, a mid-1980s PBS series, featured John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Lonnie Brooks, Koko Taylor, and others. The list goes on at some length and depth, segueing into the 1990s and beyond, to a point where lines begin to blur in several directions.

The Twenty-First Century

During the fall 2003 PBS television season was *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues*, which presented seven films broadcast on consecutive nights. The director of each film devoted himself to one topic: Martin Scorsese on African antecedents of the blues; Charles

Burnett on blues and sin; Richard Pearce on contemporary blues in Memphis and north Mississippi; Win Wenders on Blind Willie Johnson, Skip James, and J. B. Lenoir; Marc Levin on Chicago and Chess Records; Mike Figgis on British blues of the 1960s; and Clint Eastwood on piano blues. The series was released on video and on DVD, with a companion book and various compact disc reissues of the artists featured in individual episodes.

As global media grew and integrated in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the old separations that had existed between various media essentially disappeared. Film became television, television became film, and home video and then DVD allowed greater participation by amateurs, and in that technological melting pot the blues both profited and suffered some loss. While on the one hand it offered many more opportunities for the music to be seen and heard, its dissemination was at times poorly handled by people with a less than adequate grasp on what they were doing. Because at the same time the lines between contemporary urban blues and the rock that it had generated were also blurring and cross-feeding each other, some, at least, of what was offered as blues was closer to rock. Thus, the person in the street knows who B. B. King is but is more likely to have been exposed to rock disguised as blues.

There is, in and of itself, nothing wrong with that, but the roots of the music were often lost amid the clamor of the music industry's need to sell the latest product to the widest audience in the fastest time possible. Witness, on another level, the elevation of Robert Johnson to posthumous superstardom while his mentors went largely uncredited.

However, that we still have blues of any shape or form a hundred years after its emergence is testimony to the staying power of the music. That we have a cache of historic, if unsystematically documented, visual performances available to us is perhaps more than we could have hoped for. Let us therefore be grateful for what there is rather than being in mourning for what was lost.

PAUL VERNON

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TEMPLE, JOHNNY “GEECHIE”

b. 18 October 1906; Canton, MS

d. 22 November 1968; Jackson, MS

Singer and guitarist Johnny Temple was born and raised on a Mississippi farm and moved to Jackson in about 1920 with his family. He learned mandolin and guitar as a boy and played house parties and picnics around the Jackson area during the 1920s, often with Skip James.

Temple relocated to Chicago in the early 1930s and frequently worked with Charlie and Joe McCoy in area clubs. He made his first recordings in 1935 for Vocalion and had a hit the following year with “Louise Louise Blues” for Decca. A popular recording artist, Temple made numerous recordings throughout the 1940s. He returned to Jackson in the early 1950s and continued to play area jukeboxes until his death by cancer in 1968.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSPF

TEMPO-TONE

Chicago label active in 1948 owned by club owner Big Earl. Issues 1001 and 1002 were by Sunnyland Slim, the second with assistance from Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Floyd Jones, and Leroy Foster.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

TEN YEARS AFTER

Key participants in the British blues scene, Ten Years After was formed in 1965 in Nottingham. The group, originally called the Jaybirds, comprised guitarist/vocalist Alvin Lee, organist Chick Churchill, bassist Leo Lyons, and drummer Ric Lee. Their material was primarily blues based—covers of Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson” and Willie Dixon appeared alongside their twelve-bar-oriented originals—but the band worked in jazz and rock influences with equal aplomb. One of their early signature songs was a bluesed-up cover of Woody Herman’s “Woodchoppers Ball.”

The band’s live work won them a reputation for exceptionally energetic delivery, largely owing to Alvin Lee’s virtuosic guitar playing. Dubbed “the fastest guitar in the west,” Lee accelerated Clapton-style blues-rock guitar to unprecedented levels of velocity. Their self-titled debut album was released in 1967, but the band was elevated to star status by their stunning eleven-minute performance at Woodstock of “I’m Goin’ Home.” Following this performance, the albums *Ssssh* (1969), *Cricklewood Green* (1970), and *A Space in Time* (1971) sold well, although by 1975, after years of nearly nonstop touring, the members of Ten Years After parted ways.

Alvin Lee pursued a middling solo career, but the band reconvened for one more album in the late 1980s, during the Stevie Ray Vaughan–led revival of blues-rock. Unfortunately, it failed to make much impact. Though the group crafted some catchy riffs and singles for example, 1971’s “I’d Love to Change the World”, the band’s dynamic blues work is best appreciated live, as evidenced on their concert recording *Undead* (1968).

CHRIS McDONALD

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Columbia 32288); *Positive Vibrations* (1974, Columbia 32851); *Goin’ Home! Their Greatest Hits* (1975, Columbia 50008); *Anthology* (1976, Columbia 1107); *Classic Performances* (1977, Columbia 34366); *Hear Me Calling* (1981, Decca 24); *About Time* (1989, Chrysalis F2-21722); *Essential Ten Years After* (1991, Chrysalis 21857); *Live 1990* (1994, Demon 1093); *Live at the Fillmore East 1970* (2001, EMI 533297).

TENNESSEE

Nashville label with subsidiaries Republic and Dixie Jamboree, owned by Howard Allison, William Beasley, and Alan and Reynold Bubis. Active 1951–1952. Artists included Christine Kittrell, with local blues and gospel groups.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

TERRY, COOPER

b. Verl Cooper, Jr., 22 January 1949; San Antonio, TX

d. 17 December 1993; Antioch, CA

Harmonica player. He became interested in blues through coworkers, including Jerry Portnoy at the University of California Medical Center; also through them he met and took harmonica lessons from Sonny Terry. From 1971 through 1991 he was based in Milan, Italy, touring Europe as a blues musician and recording six albums. Diagnosed with AIDS, he returned to the United States in 1992 to be with family.

EDWARD KOMARA

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TERRY, DOC

b. Terry Adail, 14 December 1921; Sunflower, MS

d. 24 August 2001; St. Louis, MO

Harmonica player in the style of John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson I. He served in the U.S. Army in the Pacific during World War II. After discharge he moved to St. Louis, Missouri. He and his band the

TERRY, DOC

Pirates were local favorites from the 1940s until his death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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TERRY, SONNY

b. Saunders Terrell, 24 October 1911; Greensboro, NC
d. 11 March 1986; Mineola, NY

Superb singer and harmonica player. He lost sight of one eye at age five, the other at eighteen. To earn a living, he began playing harmonica on the streets, and by 1937 he was performing and recording with Blind Boy Fuller. After Fuller's death, he began working with Brownie McGhee. They became especially famous during the 1960s folk boom, but they slowed the frequency of their appearances by the end of the 1970s. Terry's vocal "whoop" may be heard in imitations by Buster Brown and Neal Pattman, among other harmonica players.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

See also McGhee, Brownie

TESTAMENT

Independent record label founded by Pete Welding (1935–1995), specializing in country blues, jazz, black folk song, and sometimes field recordings, since 1963. Welding had his own folk music program on radio station WHYI, in Philadelphia, and showcased some unknown blues artists on the program. Since 1961, Welding also wrote LP liner notes for Vee-Jay and OJL (Origin Jazz Library), plus reviews and articles in magazines such as *Down Beat* and *Blues Unlimited*.

Recordings on the Testament label were mostly collected by Pete Welding and sometimes by David Evans. Among the earliest titles, Testament issued the LP *Down on Stovall's Plantation*, containing the first field recordings of the unknown McKinley

Morganfield (who would become Muddy Waters), made in 1941 and 1942 for the Library of Congress. The Archive of Folk Song of the Library of Congress also supplied the tapes from 1970 for Jack Owens and Benjamin "Bud" Spires's album, titled *It Must Have Been the Devil* (1971, Testament T-2222), plus some "primitive" recordings of "fife and drum band music" made in Georgia, Alabama, Texas, and Mississippi from 1942 to 1970, titled *Traveling Through the Jungle: Negro Fife and Drum Band Music from the Deep South*, offering syncopation and polyrhythms on African American minstrel pieces and spirituals ("When the Saints Go Marchin' In," "Jesse James") owing much to traditional African folk and old British military sounds.

Most original LPs released on the Testament label were first distributed by OJL (mostly by direct mail orders), and many are now reissued on CD by HighTone Records, sometimes in extended versions, in the HighTone Testament Series, featuring Mississippi Fred McDowell (*Jesus Is on the Mainline*), Eddie Taylor (*Peach Tree Blues*), Robert Nighthawk (*I'm Gettin' Tired*), Johnny Shines (*So Cold in Vietnam*), Bill Jackson (*Titanic Blues*), Johnny Young (*All My Money Gone*), Mississippi Fred McDowell (*Goin' Down South*), Big Joe Williams (*Annie Mae*), and many others.

YVES LABERGE

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See also HighTone; OJL (Origin Jazz Library)

TEXAS

Geography

Given the vast expanse and diverse geography of Texas, it's not surprising the state has been home to all hues of blues. In square miles Texas is roughly the same size as France, and it possesses as many blues regions as there are French wine regions. And, in a similar fashion, each has a special character directly linked to the soil and surroundings of its origin.

The sheer physical size of the state, not only fifty thousand square miles larger than France but also equal to the combined size of California, New York, and Florida, is overwhelming. Texas, which adjoins four states and shares a thousand-mile-long border with Mexico, is 790 miles long and 660 miles wide at its most distant points. The southern tip of Brownsville is a thousand miles closer to Mexico City than it is to Washington, D.C., while the state's easternmost point is closer to the Atlantic Ocean than to its westernmost metropolitan area of El Paso, which resides in the Rocky Mountain time zone.

Southern sensibilities prevail in the rich farming land of East Texas, which also incorporates pristine piney woods. The rolling hills of Central Texas, where ranching is prominent, have more of a Western feel, while the south, where the Gulf Coast Plain meets the Gulf of Mexico, is heavily influenced by Hispanic culture.

The topography of the state ranges from the sandy dunes of its Gulf Coast shoreline to a southern extension of the Rocky Mountains called Trans-Pecos, where Guadalupe Peak, at 8,749 feet, is the highest point in Texas.

History

Texas, as the only state to exist as a sovereign nation in its own right, has an extraordinarily rich and colorful history that has been the subject of multitudes of movies, books, and popular songs. From the Alamo to the first astronauts, Texas has established an identity of adventurous self-reliance that is reflected in blues stylings that are similarly bold, proud, and original.

In addition to its iconic lone star state banner, a half dozen flags have flown over Texas, beginning with the early colonial emblems of France, Spain, and Mexico. Each affiliation, however brief or involuntary, left an enduring influence on the state's culture.

Beginning in the 1530s, Spanish exploration parties led by Cabeza de Vaca, Francisco Coronado, and Hernando de Soto passed through the state, but it wasn't until 1682 that the first Spanish settlement appeared near what would become El Paso. Under constant attack by Comanche and Apache raiding parties, the settlement didn't last long, but the Spanish eventually established a presence in the state. A French expedition under the leadership of LaSalle landed on Galveston island in 1685 and planted its flag, but little came of subsequent colonization efforts by France.

Texas began to take shape in 1821, the year the territory was ceded to Mexico when it won independence from Spain. That's when Stephen F. Austin led three hundred families to the state to create the first major American settlement. Even before Austin's settlements in the Colorado and Brazos river valleys were officially established, more Americans were streaming into the state. Within a decade Americans, primarily Southerners, outnumbered Mexicans three to one in the region.

The combination of Anglo aspirations for autonomy and increasingly repressive territorial rule by Mexico led to the revolution of 1835. The eight-month campaign started badly, if heroically, for the Texans with the siege at the Alamo, but Sam Houston's defeat of the Mexican army at San Jacinto secured independence. The Republic of Texas existed until 1845 before joining the United States with a provision authorizing secession should the state change its mind in the future.

After the Civil War, during which Texas was the only Confederate state not overrun by Union troops, the state's economic base and cultural character became heavily intertwined with cattle ranching.

Texas was transformed at the beginning of the twentieth century by an oil boom that began with the Spindletop gusher in 1901. Although ranching and agriculture would continue to be prominent, the nature of the state's economy soon became an urban industrial one instead of one with the prior rural planter emphasis.

The completion of the Houston ship channel in 1914 gave the state one of the leading ports in North America and led to an energetic economic expansion that continued unabated through most of the century, including the depression, which Texas, with its history of self-reliance and abundant natural resources, weathered relatively easily.

The space age arrived early in Texas via the state's leading role in NASA exploration. Several decades later the state was on the cutting edge of a high-tech boom centered on Austin's semiconductor and computer industry that effectively created the

twenty-first-century Texas economy dichotomy of down-to-earth commodities such as oil and cattle coexisting with computers and spacecraft.

The image of Texas as a frontier where economic advancement is possible has made it a magnet for immigration from the beginning of its history, and it has assimilated numerous cultures into its all-inclusive social fabric. That tradition, which began when the Caddo and Comanche tribes in the 1600s relocated in advance of influxes of immigrants from Spain, Mexico, and the United States, continues to the present day as the state has welcomed large numbers of Asian and Central American refugees.

Pre-Blues Era

Before the music had a name, it had a following. “Songsters,” the itinerant entertainers who performed live overviews of African American popular culture, presaged the blues even while they preserved its seminal sources. It was the songsters who segued slave songs into blues by creating a populist, all-inclusive folk art form that served as the musical core of most twentieth-century American entertainment.

A songster was usually a one-man revue capable of coming up with something for everyone. That required an unusually expansive musical repertoire, as well as a bit of theatrical ability. In addition to providing an encyclopedic array of dance styles, the songsters performed every form of popular music, mixing ballads, rags, field chants, spirituals, and any and everything else that either caught their fancy or generated a positive audience response. Much of the material mandated storytelling expertise, and the most successful songsters soon discovered the best stories were always autobiographical. Their travels imparted credibility to their image of having seen and done it all, and it was this subtle personalization of the music that created the context within which most blues would ultimately be constructed.

Henry “Ragtime Texas” Thomas may have been the first to make an enduring name for himself as a songster because his 1874 birth date predates even the legendary Charley Patton. Thomas left the family farm in his teens and was performing steadily before the turn of the twentieth century. Blues were just one aspect of the Thomas show, one that featured him performing on the “quills,” a version of pan pipes popular in the South in the 1800s. Thomas’s material, which he did not record until the late 1920s, found its way into modern blues through remakes by Taj Mahal, Bob Dylan, and Canned Heat, among others.

The best-known modern Texas songster was Mance Lipscomb, the son of an Alabama slave. Lipscomb, who was born in 1895 and later renamed himself after a local elder named Emancipation, didn’t record until he was sixty five. By that time his vintage folk-blues sound, firmly ingrained with sharecropper sensibilities, was as fully developed as it was personalized and unaffected by outside music trends. But while Lipscomb’s music may have been pure, it certainly wasn’t primitive. The fascination with the authenticity of his oral history songcraft served to obscure his advanced talents as a guitarist. His mastery of the multiple styles necessary for the songster’s role was impressive, but it was his ability to recast tunes in different keys and tempos that set him apart from more conventional guitarists.

The last true Texas songster was an unlikely one since he wasn’t an acoustic guitarist. Roosevelt “Grey Ghost” Williams maintained the tradition into the 1990s, reprising the century-old repertoire from behind the piano. In his prime he had become legendary for appearing out of nowhere to play dances and social functions and then disappearing into the night as he hopped a train to the next music-hungry gathering. He was brought out of retirement in his later years in Austin, recording and regularly performing tunes that fans from six or seven decades before would recognize and enjoy.

Prewar Era

Classic Vocalists

The full-throated, demonstrative vocals of Alger “Texas” Alexander reverberated forcefully through the Texas folk-blues tradition for most of the twentieth century. Alexander was widely known in Texas for his dramatic live act long before he made his recording debut in 1927. Alexander’s passionate singing style combined with the ability to endlessly improvise new verses made him a popular attraction wherever he played, whether at a county fair or on a street corner. His vocal virtuosity was very influential on the generation of younger folk bluesmen, including movement leader Lightnin’ Hopkins, who popularized the music years later. Alexander, who played no instrument, also provided employment for numerous guitarists who accompanied him, most of whom, including in addition to Hopkins everyone from Blind Lemon Jefferson to Lowell Fulson, would go on to successful careers of their own.

Alexander recorded throughout the 1930s, but his career momentum was destroyed in 1940 by a prison

stay for the murder of his wife. With the help of Hopkins he made a half-hearted and only partly successful comeback attempt after his release.

Shreveport, Louisiana, native Elzadie Robinson, already a popular entertainer at age twelve, served as a trailblazing pioneer for Texas female blues singers. Usually accompanied by pianist Will Ezell, she recorded almost three dozen country-tinged blues songs in 1926–1929, exhibiting a strong, sure voice and poised, professional manner. Always backed by outstanding musicians, such as guitarist Blind Blake and clarinetist Johnny Dodds, she melded Gulf Coast sensibilities with those of her adopted Chicago in songs with surprisingly prim and proper lyrics for an era when sexual innuendo was almost mandatory for female blues singers.

Guitarists

Acoustic The sensationalistic saga of Leadbelly (Huddie William Ledbetter) and his prison days made him the best-known guitarist from the pre-war era. But it was virtuoso guitarist Blind Lemon Jefferson, whose advanced abilities as an improviser amazed both fans and fellow players, who was most admired and subsequently most influential on the generation of musicians who ultimately fashioned the fabric of Texas blues. And Jefferson was even directly responsible for Leadbelly's musical development since he taught the older musician slide guitar during a brief performing partnership.

Jefferson was unquestionably the most musically advanced guitarist in the region. He combined his guitar virtuosity with a strong voice and an inherent grasp of showmanship, becoming as popular with fans as he was influential on other musicians. Collecting tips in a tin cup, Jefferson played Dallas street corners in the dangerous Deep Ellum district, often causing so much congestion with his sidewalk serenades that the police were called. He was a local legend for years before his recordings brought him to national attention, ultimately making him by the late 1920s the best-selling male African American artist in the United States.

Jefferson's enlightened guitar technique moved the instrument out of its previous rhythmic role and into the spotlight by breaking with the tradition of having it merely repeat and reinforce vocal lines. His imaginative improvisational solos gave the guitar its own voice, and his technique laid the foundation for T-Bone Walker's pioneering electric guitar work.

Leadbelly, although born a decade earlier than Jefferson, outlived him by twenty years. He was a polished performer, proficient on multiple instruments but most accomplished on the twelve-string guitar, by

the time he hit his teens. He met Jefferson in 1915, and for a short while the region's two most important blues figures played as a duo. But Leadbelly was in a Texas prison two years later. He played for the governor to get a pardon but was back in prison in the 1930s. Once he was able to stay out from behind bars, he achieved major national success.

Blind Willie Johnson, born on the outskirts of Temple, was the premier sacred slide guitarist of the region. Johnson had wanted to be an evangelical musician from an early age, and his testifying blues style, featuring searing pocketknife slide licks and emotion-charged vocals, made him popular with both sacred and secular audiences. Much of his playing was done in the Baptist church, but he also played for tips in Beaumont and traveled enough to catch the ear of other musicians, becoming an inadvertent musical influence while seeking to save souls.

Slide guitarist Willard "Ramblin'" Thomas, who lived up to his name by being a man in almost constant motion, performed his passionate country blues throughout the region in the 1920s and 1930s.

Electric It's not just another Texas brag to say the first and, arguably, most influential blues musician to play electric guitar was a native son. T-Bone Walker was not just the primary blues popularizer of electric guitar; he was the creator of both the instrument and the technique with which to play it, as well as the most artful explorer of its inherent musical possibilities.

Walker's enlightened, expressive electric guitar work had enormous and enduring influence throughout the blues world, but in Texas his status was almost godlike, especially to the first generation of guitarists aspiring to emulate him. His sophisticated stylings were beyond the ability of some, but for most, including numerous legendary disciples, they became the framework for the modern evolution of the music. Walker even had an impact on the development of jazz through his boyhood friend and later musical protégé Charlie Christian, the legendary guitarist given credit for popularizing the instrument in that genre.

The dominance of Walker's sound in Texas was almost total for two decades. It wasn't until the modern era, when innovators such as Albert Collins came up with a new sound or someone emphasized outside influences, such as Freddie King's Chicago energy, that the sound of Texas electric blues guitar and the sound of T-Bone Walker weren't one and the same.

Texas Western Swing

The quintessential blues style of the Lone Star state, the Texas Shuffle, is characterized by a lean and

limber swing that is often as much country jazz as it is basic blues. It, like most Texas music, was the product of the almost inadvertent stylistic cross-pollination generated by the frequent interaction of the state's musicians.

The music style, originally called "Texas Swing" because of its immense, but localized, popularity in the state, found its way into the blues scene in several ways, but the primary facilitator was the shared sensibilities and shared audiences of the genres. Western swing, like Texas blues, began and thrived as small town dance music, entertaining rural fans in shows at roadhouses and county fairs.

Blues, of course, had already had its influence on Western swing via the jazzy rhythms at the base of the sound. It also could be heard in the bowing technique of the fiddlers, who produced the signature sound of the style by using long, smooth strokes instead of the staccato tapping approach common to country music.

The strong Texas tradition of African American cowboys, as well as the fiddle's enduring popularity as an African American instrument, especially in Central Texas, also figured in the blues assimilation of Western swing. Musicians such as Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, a country fiddler in addition to his blues guitar prowess, mixed and matched melodies and styles from the beginning of the twentieth century until its conclusion.

Postwar to Present, by Region

East Texas Rural

In the postwar boom the attraction of larger audiences and the opportunity to record pulled most established blues musicians out of the deep woods of East Texas and into the cities, primarily Houston and Dallas, although some relocated out of state to Shreveport, Louisiana, and Little Rock, Arkansas. The ones who remained close to home played mostly at local social functions and church dances and were rarely recorded in their prime, despite belated attempts by ethnomusicologists.

Other than Mance Lipscomb, the Navasota folk bluesman who achieved late life success, not recording until he was sixty five, the best known East Texan was probably country bluesman Melvin "Lil Son" Jackson. Like Lipscomb, he was indebted to Lightnin' Hopkins for his professional breakthrough, one that came when he was holding a day job as a mechanic in Dallas. Jackson, born in Tyler in 1915, recorded in Houston after sending an unsolicited demo to

Hopkins's label. His blues approach, autobiographical and permeated with references to African American culture and traditions, was highly representative of the East Texas rural sound. Jackson, however, ultimately gave up the blues for spiritual reasons.

Guitarists Frank Robinson and Guitar Curtis played in and around the Crockett area for years, and Andrew "Smokey" Hogg, who worked with slide guitarist Black Ace at dances around Greenville in the 1930s, remained active as a performer and recording artist throughout the 1950s. But once the big farming communities modernized, the distinction between rural and urban blues became meaningful only to academics as the music and its fans broadened and dispersed.

Houston

Houston, as the jumping-off spot for the musical migration to California, was the epicenter of the postwar Texas blues scene. Much of what would be played in California was premiered in Houston as major artists such as Charles Brown, from nearby Texas City, Amos Milburn, Percy Mayfield, and Ivory Joe Hunter all established themselves through performing and recording in Houston before leaving to create the West Coast scene.

Dallas had previously dominated due to the lack of recording opportunities in Houston, but the advent of local labels such as Gold Star, where Lightnin' Hopkins first recorded, and, most important, Peacock, where controversial entrepreneur Don Robey built a blues empire, radically altered the situation.

Peacock, originally intended as a showcase for Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, escalated blues activity in Houston, especially after the label acquired Duke Records and its roster of artists, which included Bobby "Blue" Bland and Junior Parker. Their success meant steady session work for talented sidemen such as pianist Teddy Reynolds and guitarists Clarence Holliman and Wayne Bennett, among many others, and their presence in Houston considerably deepened the live music talent pool in both quantity and quality.

Everyone didn't record for Duke/Peacock, as guitarist Goree Carter, vocalist Peppermint Harris, and singer/guitarist Lester Williams were among the early recording artists in the city. And, of course, Lightnin' Hopkins, possibly the most widely recorded bluesman in history, also regularly made the rounds of Houston studios, collecting a cash per-song fee up front and then moving on to another label.

Hopkins's pervasive presence in the city gave Houston a rare combination of country blues

purveyors, as similar artists such as Lil Son Jackson, Juke Boy Bonner, and Nathaniel “Bill” Barnes successfully plied their trade, and electrified urban stylists. The city aspect of the city/country dichotomy came primarily from an assemblage of classic Texas guitar greats and contemporaries, including Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland, Pete Mayes, Johnny “Guitar” Watson, Hop Wilson, Joe “Guitar” Hughes, and Johnny Brown, among others.

It was the excitement generated by Collins and his fellow “guitar slingers” that gave Houston its modern blues identity, but there was no shortage of other noteworthy instrumentalists, including saxists Grady Gaines and Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, among many others, and keyboardist Katie Webster.

Houston, the birthplace of Sippie Wallace, also has an unusually strong female vocal heritage that features Big Mama Thornton, Esther Phillips, Lavelle White, and Carol Fran. As the westernmost stop on zydeco tours coming out of Louisiana, the city also developed an active scene focusing on swamp sounds.

Depleted by the deaths of its founders and unable to compete with the crossover excitement of the Austin scene, Houston’s blues significance suffered in the closing years of the twentieth century, although a healthy live scene continued to exist.

Dallas/Fort Worth

The Metroplex blues scene of Dallas and Ft. Worth developed numerous major blues talents, but it never developed a distinct identity. It came closest in the 1920s and 1930s when its Deep Ellum district was the home base for a litany of seminal folk blues legends, including Blind Lemon Jefferson, Leadbelly, and Lonnie Johnson. Dallas also established itself as a recording center during this period, as well a regular stop for touring national acts.

T-Bone Walker stepped in after the decline of Deep Ellum and dominated the Metroplex blues scene with his unprecedented combination of musical innovation and crowd-pleasing showmanship. His relocation to California physically removed him from the local scene but his music was a pervasive presence for decades afterward.

Guitarist ZuZu Bollin and vocalist Frankie Lee Sims were local stars and influences but their fame didn’t travel far. Pianist Alex “Whistlin” Moore was belatedly discovered decades after his prime, while stylish guitarist Cornell Dupree later carved out a prolific career as an R&B and jazz recording session star. And, of course, the rocking blues of Freddie King was a major modern influence, especially

on Metroplex guitarists, even though he moved to Chicago.

The early modern scene coalesced around the Bluebird club in Fort Worth and its roster of up-and-coming young blues talents, such as the biracial band the Juke Jumpers, roadhouse singer Delbert McClinton, and the dynamic duo of guitarist U. P. Wilson and singer Robert Ealey.

Soul-flavored singers such as Z. Z. Hill, Al “TNT” Braggs, and R. L. Griffin always flourished in the area, and guitarist/vocalist Tutu Jones kept the tradition alive with regular recording and performing activity into the twenty-first century.

Many of the musicians, including the Vaughan brothers, vocalist/bandleader Paul Ray, vocalist Lou Ann Barton, and drummer/singer/songwriter Doyle Bramhall, who would create the blues boom in Austin, began their careers in the Metroplex area.

The contemporary scene has been dominated by the long-running bands of journeyman guitarists Anson Funderburgh and Smokin’ Joe Kubek.

Austin

Although known as a guitar town in modern times, keyboards set the tone early on in the state capital, with pioneer pianists such as barrelhouse master Robert Shaw and his keyboard compatriots Lavada Durst, Erbie Bowser, and Roosevelt “Grey Ghost” Williams being the best-known local bluesmen.

During and immediately following World War II, a thriving live music scene that capitalized on the proximity of Central Texas military bases evolved in the African American neighborhoods of East Austin. At historic venues such as the Victory Grill national touring acts were performing, a singing soldier from nearby Fort Hood named Bobby “Blue” Bland was winning the amateur talent contest, and guitarist T. D. Bell’s high-powered band the Cadillac was the cream of the local crop, although Blues Boy Hubbard wasn’t far behind.

Sonny Rhodes, from nearby Smithville, perfected his lap steel guitar stylings in Austin and recorded his first single there in between gigs as a bass player for Albert Collins and Freddie King. Guitarist Pee Wee Crayton, from neighboring Rockdale, also worked out his jazz-inflected style on the scene before relocating to California.

A new generation of young Anglo blues players took over in the 1970s with acts such as Paul Ray & the Cobras and Southern Feeling, the former featuring guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, the latter including singers W. C. Clark and Angela Strehli, developing faithful followings. The arrival of Antone’s nightclub,

and, later, its record label, energized and educated the blues scene as owner Clifford Antone aggressively pursued blues greats, even bringing some out of retirement, for bookings. The opportunity to learn from and play with them radically upgraded the quality of a scene already almost overstocked with major musical talent.

Austin became the home base of modern swamp blues proponent Marcia Ball, who, with Strehli and Lou Ann Barton, gave the city an unusually talented trio of female blues stars. Sue Foley joined their ranks after Antone imported her for recording. Stalwarts such as guitarists Denny Freeman and Derek O'Brien, bassist Sarah Brown, and drummer George Rains anchored an active scene that attracted still more blues players, both aspiring and accomplished.

The phenomenal success of Stevie Ray Vaughan in the 1980s, which built upon the attention gained by the Fabulous Thunderbirds a few years earlier, solidified Austin's reputation as a regional blues center.

The tragic 1990 death of Vaughan, who had moved back to Dallas months earlier, didn't derail the Austin scene. Vaughan's Double Trouble rhythm section of drummer Chris Layton and bassist Tommy Shannon kept the name alive, amassing extensive recording credits and touring behind Buddy Guy and others. W. C. Clark successfully delved deeper into southern soul with a series of successful recordings, while Jimmie Vaughan, who left the Fabulous Thunderbirds for a solo career, continued to record and perform, usually with Barton as a vocalist.

Hard-working Omar Dykes, who relocated to Austin in the mid-1970s and established Omar & the Howlers as an international touring attraction, harpist Gary Primich, folk bluesman Steve James, multi-instrumentalist Guy Forsyth, and no-nonsense guitarist John McVey formed the core of the city's blues scene at the end of the century. A talented younger generation, including Nick Curran, Ruthie Foster, Jake Andrews, Gary Clark, Jr., and Erin Jaimes, carried the Austin blues banner into the twenty-first century.

Port Arthur and Beaumont

The crossover success of Janis Joplin and brothers Johnny and Edgar Winter would be enough to put the Beaumont/Port Arthur/Orange area on the blues map. But the Louisiana border region, known as the "Golden Triangle" during its postwar heyday as a petrochemical and shipbuilding center, also produced an eclectic array of other artists. Singer/songwriter

and left-handed guitarist Barbara Lynn had her first hit as a teenager and was still going strong five decades later. Wildman guitarist Long John Hunter moved away to achieve fame, while his guitarist/vocalist brother Tom Hunter kept the family name active in the area. In similar fashion guitarists Lonnie Brooks and Phillip Walker carved out accomplished careers after leaving the area, while one of their major local influences, Ervin Charles, had a lower profile after opting to stay on his home turf.

The proximity of Louisiana infused strong elements of zydeco and swamp blues into the Golden Triangle sound. Clarence Garlow, as a performer, promoter, and deejay, was an influential popularizer of a hybrid style that integrated a deep, muddy Excello Records sound with the wide-open Texas approach. The Winter brothers, active in Beaumont from when Johnny formed the family band at age fourteen, provided a racial as well as generational bridge that further unified the region's blues scene and sound.

The area, also home to a large number of horn-powered R&B groups, produced an additional succession of distinctive Gulf Coast guitar stylists, including Ashton Savoy, Isaac Payton Sweat, and contemporary star Little Ray Ybarra.

Lubbock

Although singer Angela Strehli, who was instrumental in the Antone's scene in Austin as a performer and recording artist when she wasn't running the club, was a Lubbock native, as was roadhouse soulman Delbert McClinton, there isn't much of a blues heritage in the windswept stop on the western plains. The most prominent blues figure in the modern era was a cook, barbecue genius C. B. Stubblefield. His restaurant became the crossroads of the West Texas blues scene as he went from just feeding the musicians to staging shows. Stubb's, as the barbecue and blues establishment was known, soon attracted attention far beyond West Texas, and a steady stream of national blues acts dropped by the out-of-the-way spot to eat and/or play. But most of Lubbock's most accomplished musicians, including Strehli, Joe Ely, Jesse Taylor, Butch Hancock, and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, began to relocate to the more active Austin scene.

Stubblefield eventually followed the musicians to Austin, setting up shop at Antone's before opening a new restaurant a few years before his death. His name, now used for one of Austin's major outdoor concert venues, remains one of the most beloved in modern Texas blues.

San Antonio

Texas blues has long benefited from a unique cross-cultural advantage afforded by its assimilation of Mexican culture. San Antonio, where Robert Johnson recorded many of his classic compositions in the 1930s, became the center of a multiracial blues boom in the 1960s that produced singer/guitarists Randy Garibay and Doug Sahm and saxist Clifford Scott, among others. The San Antonio sound was usually reinforced with horns, frequently mixing big band and mariachi sensibilities. At the same time Long John Hunter was creating another style of Tex-Mex border blues in Juarez across the Rio Grande from El Paso. Hunter's no-holds-barred showmanship and authoritative guitar work made him the most popular blues act in West Texas.

MICHAEL POINT

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THACKERY, JIMMY

b. 19 May 1953; Pittsburgh, PA

Electric guitarist, initially with the Nighthawks, then in a high-profile solo career. He has recorded for the Blind Pig and Telarc labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG**THARPE, SISTER ROSETTA**

b. 20 March 1915 or 1916; Cotton Plant, AR
d. 9 October 1973; Philadelphia, PA

Rosetta Tharpe—better known as "Sister" Rosetta Tharpe in the church—was a gifted singer and guitarist who distinguished herself as gospel music's first superstar. Tharpe was not a blues musician in the traditional sense, identifying herself as a religious performer throughout most of her career. Yet her musical sensibility was deeply rooted in blues, and her influence radiated beyond gospel, touching performers of blues, rhythm and blues, and early rock 'n' roll.

Tharpe was born to Katie Bell Nubin on a cotton plantation in the Delta region of Arkansas. She received her earliest musical training at the local sanctified church, where her mother sang and played mandolin in day-long worship services that featured rollicking, improvisational, and heartfelt congregational music-making. Their denomination, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), distinguished itself from others by welcoming a variety of instruments—including string instruments, brass instruments, and drums—into the church. It also actively encouraged women musicians.

By 1921, Tharpe and her mother had moved to Chicago and joined the Fortieth Street Church of God in Christ, where Tharpe, a guitar prodigy and accomplished pianist, gave her first public performances. In Chicago, Tharpe also briefly attended public school, although she abandoned her formal education to join her mother as a COGIC evangelist. Throughout Tharpe's teenage years the two traveled constantly, singing and playing at revivals. By the late 1930s, when New York talent scouts heard her performing at a Miami tabernacle, Tharpe had developed into an accomplished soloist, attracting listeners from the greater Miami area.

Tharpe was lured to New York by the prospect of larger audiences and a well-paying musical career, as well as by the desire to escape a failing marriage to her first husband, a COGIC minister. By 1938, she had appeared with the Count Basie Band and had become a regular in the Cab Calloway Revue at the Cotton Club, the city's most prestigious (and a

whites-only) nightclub. Her success there landed her a recording contract with Decca, a publishing deal with Mills Music, and a place in the lineup of John Hammond's vaunted "Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall that December. She also introduced her swinging spirituals to crowds at the Savoy, Café Society, and the Apollo Theater. Collectively, these accomplishments were unprecedented and turned Tharpe—a musician adept at channeling the charisma of the sanctified church in secular performances—into gospel's first "entertainer" of national stature.

Tharpe's popularity skyrocketed in the 1940s, in concert with a number of significant collaborations. In 1941 she toured briefly with Louis Jordan's band (preceding Dinah Washington and Sarah Vaughan), and teamed up with the Lucky Millinder Orchestra, with whom she produced swing hits, including "I Want a Tall Skinny Papa," a racy number that led some in the church to recoil from her music. Her work with the Sam Price trio led, in 1944, to "Strange Things Happening Every Day," a song that made the "race" charts and heralded early rock 'n' roll with its steady beat and spare instrumentation. Tharpe's pairing, beginning in 1947, with Marie Knight, a young gospel singer from Newark, New Jersey, gave rise to such gorgeous gospel duets as "Didn't It Rain," "Up Above My Head," and "My Journey to the Sky." The partnership with Knight lasted the better part of the decade and was Tharpe's most significant, musically and personally.

Tharpe performed her most memorable concert in July 1951 at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C., where she played before a crowd of more than twenty thousand fans who had come to see her get married to her third husband, Russell Morrison (Tharpe had suffered a disastrous second marriage in the 1940s). The "wedding concert" made national headlines in the black press and was recorded by Decca, which released a recording of the concert, wedding vows and all. Despite her ability to attract stadium-sized crowds, however, the 1950s brought setbacks in Tharpe's life and career. She lost the Richmond, Virginia, house that she had purchased in the 1940s with Marie Knight and saw her popularity eclipsed by stars such as Mahalia Jackson and the Clara Ward Singers.

Like a number of blues and gospel musicians, however, Tharpe saw the flame of her career rekindled in Europe, which she visited first in 1957, at the invitation of English bandleader Chris Barber. The tour—which featured Tharpe reaching into her old repertoire for songs such as "Precious Memories" and "Peace in the Valley"—was a huge success, and ardent English fans (later joined by French fans



Sister Rosetta Tharpe in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

including Hugues Panasié) hailed her as a genius in the tradition of Muddy Waters and Big Bill Broonzy. Tharpe basked in the adulation, insisting in the British press that blues and gospel were the products of the same tradition.

European tour dates—including appearances at Montreux and the American Folk Blues Festivals—occupied Tharpe for most of the 1960s, although she made her home in Philadelphia, in the same neighborhood where gospel singers Marion Williams and Frances Steadman lived. Tharpe was playing a concert in Europe in 1970 when she suffered a stroke that led to the amputation of a leg. Yet she soldiered on, singing and playing guitar in a wheelchair at Lincoln Center in 1972 and planning new recordings, until she died of diabetes-related illness in 1973.

The most notable quality of Tharpe's music is its blending of blues and religious sounds. Tharpe injected into all of her gospel material, from her earliest recordings ("Rock Me" or "I Looked Down the Line") to recordings made at the height of her career ("Daniel in the Lion's Den," "Precious Lord"), a blues sensibility that distinguished her from other gospel soloists of the time. She also played guitar in a finger-picking style as visually arresting as it was

audibly thrilling. Among fans, Tharpe was well loved for her ability to make the guitar “talk.” Her success as a woman singer who accompanied herself on guitar is paralleled only by Memphis Minnie.

GAYLE WALD

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See also **American Folk Blues Festival; Arkansas; Bessie, Count; Black Sacred Music; Broonzy, Big Bill; Calloway, Cab; Decca; Guitar; Jordan, Louis; Mandolin; Memphis Minnie; Millinder, Lucky; Price, Sammy; Rock ’n’ Roll; Washington, Dinah; Waters, Muddy; Women and the Blues**

THEARD, SAM “SPO-DEE-O-DEE”

- b. 10 October 1904; New Orleans, LA
 d. 7 December 1982; Los Angeles, CA

Comedian and novelty singer in the blues and jazz idioms. Theard began his career in the circus, eventually working regularly the black vaudeville circuit. He recorded more than fifty songs from 1929 to 1940, notably “Let the Good Times Roll,” “I’ll Be Glad When You’re Dead You Rascal You,” and “Spo-Dee-O-Dee,” which gave him his nickname. During much of his career, he performed in major black and tan clubs, notably the Club DeLisa in Chicago. In the 1970s, Theard developed a career in Hollywood, appearing on the TV shows *Sanford and Son* and

Little House on the Prairie and in such films as *Which Way Is Up?* and *Norman, Is That You?*

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: DGR

THEATER, BLUES IN

Despite the fact that classic blues artists recording early in the twentieth century, such as Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Ida Cox, were contemporaries of “New Negro” writers including Alain Locke, Countee Cullen, Arna Bontemps, and W. E. B. DuBois, with the notable exceptions of Sterling Brown and Langston Hughes, very few saw the value of the blues as folk expression. Instead, those who deemed themselves to be at the vanguard of the black cultural arts movement shunned the blues and its proponents. Many members of the newly emerging black middle class drew distinctions between “high” and “low” art based largely on opportunities for formal education and economic conditions. Hughes, however, loved the “little people” and the blues.

Hughes came to the attention of W. E. B. DuBois when at age eighteen his play *The Gold Piece* was published in *The Brownies’ Book* (1921), a children’s magazine started by DuBois along with the editors of *Crisis*. *Mulatto*, Hughes’s first professional production, was performed on Broadway in 1935. While *Mulatto* tells the story of the tragic irony of miscegenation in the deep South, a number of his plays resonate with the tenor of the blues. Comedies such as *Little Ham*, *Simply Heavenly*, and *Tambourines to Glory* reflect the characteristic blues strategy of masking the pain of poverty and privation with humor.

On the other hand, the influential DuBois thought that art should forward a political agenda, and he did not believe that the music created by black people held much political saliency. He included only one essay about music in *The Souls of Black Folk*. His concern, like so many others of that era, was focused on “high culture,” and as a result we must wait until the latter part of the twentieth century before we see significant scholarly contributions in the area of black music as it relates to literature and theater. However, DuBois was interested in the development of black

theater. DuBois published his requirements for Negro theater in *Crisis*, stating that it must be as follows:

1. *About us*. That is, the plays must have plots that reveal Negro life as it is.
2. *By us*. That is, the plays must be written by Negro authors who understand from birth and continuing association just what it means to be a Negro today.
3. *For us*. That is, the theater must cater primarily to Negro audiences and be supported and sustained by their entertainment and approval.
4. *Near us*. The theater must be in a neighborhood near the mass of ordinary Negro people.

Seemingly, it was the work of African American women playwrights that most closely aligned with DuBois's expectations. DuBois approved of plays written by women such as Mary T. Burrill, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Marita Bonner, Shirley Graham, and Alice Childress because they met the values he identified. Many of these women published plays in *Crisis* during this era.

Over time, however, African American women playwrights gradually moved audiences away from the issues reflected in the work of the Harlem Renaissance to center on issues of home and family rarely depicted by male authors. Meanwhile, the call for a "black aesthetic" that had been identified by Alain Locke's *The New Negro* (1925) had not yet been satisfied. As the century began to wind down, the scholars coming of age after the Renaissance challenged earlier assumptions about the blues. Writers such as Larry Neal, Addison Gayle, Amiri Baraka, and Houston A. Baker, Jr., argued that if a distinct black form existed, it would likely emerge from the folk. The blues, they suggested, was such a performance that both lay outside dominant expressive formulations and embodied the wisdom of "black" sensibilities. Baker's seminal work *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (1984) helped introduce the language of the blues to scholarship. In this text, Baker argues that, more than a mere musical formulation, the blues transcends folk culture to become an ideology that informs other forms of cultural productions.

Playwrights such as LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), James Baldwin, August Wilson, and Suzan-Lori Parks use the blues to inform the stories they tell. The blues serve as a means of bringing historical circumstances to bear on current or even future situations. While the blues may appear on stage as music, with its traditional three-line stanzas, more frequently it appears as an ideology that informs the action of the play. Characters utilize blues sensibilities as a coping mechanism when they find themselves

grappling with a situation peculiar to the African American condition.

Richard's murder is the impetus behind the action of James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964). While his murder takes place before the action begins, we gather the events of his life that led to his death in a series of flashbacks throughout the play. His death is tragic in spite of its predictability (or perhaps because of it). In a conversation with the Reverend Meridian Henry, Richard's father, Parnell James, the editor of the local newspaper, expresses his concern about the level of hostility seething within the black community after the murder:

Parnell: I've never seen you like this before. There's something in your tone I've never heard before—rage—maybe hatred—

Meridian: You've heard it before. You just never recognized it before. You've heard it in all those blues and spirituals and gospel songs you claim to love so much.

Like other African American music, the blues masks the rage characters feel and translates the emotion into something outsiders can bear to hear.

The blues also speak of change. Movement is one of the dominant characteristics of the blues. The call of the whistle and the rattling over the rails signal the sorrow of departures and the hope of a new direction for the agents of the blues. LeRoi Jones's Clay from *Dutchman* (1964) is a young traveler, the next generation of bluesmen. Symbolically, he has left the railway junctures for the subway train of the urban North. In a moment of anger against an only partially imagined white enemy and fellow traveler, Lula, a "liberated white woman" who targets him as a mark, he begins a diatribe in which he rails, "They say, 'I love Bessie Smith.' And don't even understand that Bessie Smith is saying, 'Kiss my ass, kiss my black unruly ass.'" It is unclear if Clay is referring to any particular song recorded by Bessie Smith or if Jones intentionally slips in order to suggest that Clay, in fact, has become alienated from his culture (certainly, Ma Rainey shows the world her "black bottom" in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*). Later, Clay suggests, "If Bessie Smith had killed some white people she wouldn't have needed that music."

Lula critiques Clay for his social privilege, suggesting that as a result of his economic class, education, and youth he is more removed from the "black experience" than she is. He counters by suggesting that without the soothing effect of the blues, he is precariously close to homicidal rage. Jones's Clay is just one generation removed from Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas, who murders Mary Dalton in *Native Son*. Clay is wrong, however. He is a false prophet whose

angry words are overshadowed by the anger Lula conceals. While Clay believes that his race makes him heir to the blues, it is Lula who ultimately acts out Bigger’s legacy of blues by stabbing Clay twice in the chest as if to avenge the murder of Mary.

Perhaps more than any other playwright, August Wilson draws his material from the blues. The influence of the blues is evident in nearly his entire *oeuvre*, including: *The Piano Lesson*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, and *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*. Wilson sees the blues as a sacred means of transferring history, wisdom, culture, and values. In *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (1981), Wilson explicitly critiques the recording industry that took advantage of blues artists. His fictionalized Ma Rainey is absent throughout a significant portion of the play. This absence serves as a metaphor for her exploitation as an artist. We see as she explains to Cutler, the lead member of her band, however, that she is not deceived: “As soon as they get my voice down on them recording machines, then it’s just like if I’d be some whore and they roll over and put their pants on.” After the men finish gratifying themselves, Rainey suggests, they will walk away with as much regard for her as they would have leaving a prostitute.

Another talented member of her band, Levee, never comes to understand the reality that the white recording industry has little respect for black musicians. Levee believes the blues might provide him with a way of gaining economic control. What he fails to understand is that Ma Rainey gains control because she uses the blues to “fill up that empty space a little bit” that Levee is never able to fill. Levee seeks validation for his blues from Sturdyvant, the record producer. Once Sturdyvant insults him by offering him only five dollars for a song. Levee has no blues to tame the fury raging inside him; his frustrations boil over and he kills Toledo, another member of the band, ostensibly for stepping on his toes. It is, of course, not Toledo but Sturdyvant and the white men who, in his childhood, came in to rape his mother who are the real culprits.

Suzan-Lori Parks creates a modern-day Cain and Able story in *Topdog/Underdog* (1991), which won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for drama. Two brothers, Lincoln and Booth, live in a one-room apartment trying to overcome a history of abandonment. First their mother and then two years later their father leave the young brothers to fend for themselves. After one of his friends is murdered, Lincoln gives up his pastime as a three-card hustler for a job impersonating Abraham Lincoln. He enjoys the work: “It’s a sit-down job. With benefits.”

In one scene, after coming home from work Lincoln picks out a blues tune on the guitar. When

Booth asks if he’s just made the song up, Lincoln explains that he makes up songs in his head. While the blues only appears explicitly in this one scene, the drama centers around the sentiment of the blues. Booth marvels at Lincoln’s talent when singing this song because Booth’s only talent is shoplifting and he has no skills. Without the blues or any other such expressive devices, Booth does not have a means of venting his frustrations. He kills Lincoln for hustling him out of his “inheritance,” the only thing he has left from his mother.

Although music has undergone many transformations, including the shift to rhythm and blues, rock ’n’ roll, soul, and hip-hop, the blues is the means of expression many modern-day playwrights choose. Born of a unique amalgam of racism, sexism, privation, and hopefulness, no one can say with certainty from where it originates.

VALERIE SWEENEY PRINCE

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THERON

Chicago label owned by Connie Toole in 1952–1956. Artists included were Byllye (Billye) Williams and Leon Washington.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

THIERRY, HUEY PETER “COOKIE”

- b. 16 August 1936; Roanoke, LA
d. 23 September 1997; Lake Charles, LA

Singer and leader of Cookie and the Cupcakes. In 1952 he joined a Lake Charles group, the Boogie Ramblers, which later changed its name to the Cupcakes. Their two national hits, “Mathilda” (1958, Lyric) and “Got You on My Mind” (1962, Lyric) have been credited by historians as a basis of the Louisiana swamp pop style.

From 1965 to 1992 he lived in California and worked outside music. In 1992 he joined the reunited Cupcakes for appearances until his sudden 1997 death from a heart attack.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

THIS TRAIN (MY BABE)

Willie Dixon is often considered one of the greatest songwriters in the blues genre. While he had had some success in the preceding years, in 1955 Little Walter’s recording of “My Babe” was the first Dixon composition to reach number one on the R&B charts, a position it held for an impressive five weeks in the spring and summer of that year. But as is so often the case in blues, “My Babe” did not spring fully formed from the imagination of a lone individual.

The direct predecessor of “My Babe” was the traditional gospel standard “This Train.” One of the earliest recordings of the theme was by Bryant’s Jubilee Quartet in 1931, and a version by the popular Golden Gates Quartet in the mid-1930s achieved widespread popularity. Sister Rosetta Tharpe was widely popular from the late 1930s onward and recorded “This Train” several times during her career, the first time in 1939. There were also other gospel numbers that used variations on the lyrical theme

This train don’t carry no sinners . . . ,

but the above versions all followed the standard gospel chord changes I–V–I–IV, the arrangement that would later be the basis of “My Babe.”

In the postwar years “This Train” remained a popular number both in black churches and recording studios. In 1954 Elder Beck recorded his only session for Chicago’s Chess Records, and one of his two songs that day was “This Train.” Willie Dixon was brought in to play bass on that session, and his participation may have provided the inspiration for his reworking of the lyrics from the gospel theme

This train don’t carry no sinners, this train . . .

to the secular

My babe don’t stand no cheatin,’ my babe. . .

Another likely factor contributing to Dixon’s motivation was the success of Ray Charles’s recording “I’ve Got a Woman,” a song that was then somewhat controversial because of its pioneering use of traditional “gospel changes” (the same chord progression later utilized for “My Babe”) to convey a secular message. “I’ve Got a Woman” was riding high on the R&B charts the week Dixon took part in the Elder Beck session, which was followed immediately (possibly even later the same day) by the Little Walter session that produced “My Babe.”

In his autobiography, Dixon stated that he wrote “My Babe” specifically with Little Walter in mind, but that he had a hard time convincing Walter to record it. A first, awkward attempt utilizing similar lyrics but an unchanging, Howlin’ Wolf-ish droning musical arrangement was recorded in July 1954 but went unreleased. But with an unknowing nudge from Elder Beck and Ray Charles, Dixon’s stars aligned in January 1955, resulting in one of the biggest hits of that year and of his career.

The success of Little Walter’s recording of “My Babe” led to dozens of cover versions over the years by artists as diverse as Elvis Presley, rockabilly cats Dale Hawkins, Narvell Felts, and Sonny Burgess, pop singers Cliff Richard and Ricky Nelson, 1960s pop-folk duo Peter & Gordon, country stalwarts Ronnie Milsap and Conway Twitty, jazz artists Ramsey Lewis, Grant Green, Coleman Hawkins, and Gene Ammons, British Invasion acts the Animals and the Spencer Davis Group, plus the Steve Miller Band, Lou Rawls, Ike & Tina Turner, and countless others. Chess Records, which had released the original version on its Checker subsidiary, even “updated” Little Walter’s original 1955 recording in 1961 by overdubbing a female vocal chorus and reissuing it as a new single. Although many blues fans feel that this was tantamount to painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa, the revised version actually achieved some success by crossing over from R&B onto the *Billboard* pop charts briefly that year.

SCOTT DIRKS

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THOMAS, BLANCHE

b. 16 October 1922; New Orleans, LA
 d. 21 April 1977; New Orleans, LA

Singer; performed with jazz and blues musicians in New Orleans from the 1940s until her death. Among her notable appearances outside Louisiana were the Elvis Presley film *King Creole* (1959) and a USO tour of Vietnam and Thailand with Louis Cottrell.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris

Discography: Lord; LSFP**THOMAS, CHRIS**

(See *King, Chris Thomas*)

THOMAS, EARL

b. Earl Thomas Bridgeman, Jr., 29 August 1960; Pikeville, TN

Earl Thomas first began gigging in the 1980s at clubs in Arcata, California, while attending Humboldt State University. By the early 1990s, he had relocated to San Diego and was a mainstay of the local music scene.

Heavily influenced by Ike and Tina Turner and other 1960s rhythm and blues acts, Thomas has a powerful, classically trained voice coupled to a strong pop sensibility. He writes highly melodic songs in a classic 1960s soul style. While Thomas tours and performs regularly, his recorded output has been sporadic, making it hard for fans to follow him.

When his mother died in 2001, his father, Earl T. Bridgeman, Sr., relocated from Tennessee to San Diego and began performing and recording as a blues singer-guitarist under the family name.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

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THOMAS, ELMER LEE

b. 18 December 1946; Oakland, CA

Son of Elmerlee Thomas who sang with folk group the Gateway Singers. Thomas worked in various styles of music from the 1970s, but from the mid-1980s he devoted himself to acoustic blues as vocalist and guitarist. He recorded three albums between 1992 and 1996 and also one backing his mentor, Brownie McGhee.

RAY ASTBURY

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Jung, Maureen. "Acoustic Blues in Oakland: Elmer Lee Thomas." *Living Blues* no. 126 (March/April 1996): 37–39.

Selected Recordings

Elmer Lee Thomas Blues Revue. *Radio Blues* (MOT 1220CD).

THOMAS, FRANK, JR.

b. 12 February 1937; near Jackson, MS
 d. 23 October 1976; Chicago, IL

Chicago West Side guitarist; influenced by Muddy Waters and Jimmy Rogers. He performed in the Illinois Flames in the late 1950s, then with various groups in the 1960s. From 1963 to 1973 he was in Mississippi, most of that time in prison, allegedly for a shooting. He returned to Chicago in 1973. He was murdered in 1976 by his mother's boyfriend after an argument over who loved Thomas's mother more.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Wisner, Steve. "Frank Thomas, Jr." [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 30 (November/December 1976): 7, 41.

THOMAS, GEORGE

b. ca. 1885; Houston, TX
 d. 1930; Chicago, IL (also shown as 1936; Washington, DC)

Aka Clay Custer. Thomas was the brother of Hersal and Hociel Thomas and of Sippie Wallace. He was partner with Clarence Williams in a music publishing firm in 1914–1919. As a pianist he is credited with recording an antecedent if not early example of a

THOMAS, GEORGE

“walking” boogie bass in “The Rocks” (1923, OKeh 4809).

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

THOMAS, HENRY “RAGTIME TEXAS”

b. 1874; Big Sandy, Upshur Country, TX

d. Unknown

Thomas was one of the oldest singers to be recorded, a pre-blues singer who laid down a rich recorded legacy of blues, folk songs, dances, and ballads. He was one of nine children and left home to wander rural communities, playing for his livelihood. Some reports have him appearing at the Columbia Exposition in 1893 and the World’s Fair in St. Louis in 1904.

He recorded twenty-three sides for Vocalion between 1927 and 1929, demonstrating a rich, expressive voice and a percussive strumming guitar style and, on eight tracks, playing the ancient panpipes or quills, once a common instrument among slave populations but rarely heard in blues. It is easy to trace the instrument back to African roots, but Thomas uses it as a blues singer would, punctuating the melody or adding special effects. It all adds to his special appeal as a first-generation bluesman.

Despite the archaic nature of much of his music, Thomas could play the blues as well as anybody, as evidenced on “Shanty Blues,” which is played with a driving slide guitar accompaniment that builds enormous tension. But it is the older material, such as “Charming Betsy,” “Old Country Stomp,” and others that preserve fragments of another age and that make Thomas’s material so valuable to folklorists.

According to researcher Mack McCormick, Thomas may have been active as late as 1949, perhaps even been recorded on a wire recorder. In any event, Thomas’s ultimate fate is unknown.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

AMG (Barry Lee Pearson); Harris; Larkin; Santelli McCormick, Mack. Notes accompanying “*Ragtime Texas*” *Henry Thomas: Complete Recorded Works 1927–1929 in Chronological Order* (1975, Herwin H 209, two-LP set).

Discography: DGR

THOMAS, HERSAL

b. ca. 1910; Houston, TX

d. 3 July 1926; Detroit, MI

Hersal Thomas was inspired to learn piano by his older brother, pianist-publisher-composer George Thomas. By age twelve he was playing regularly at house parties and socials. Hersal played for his sister, blues singer Sippie Wallace, at New Orleans clubs until the two moved to Chicago to live and work with George in 1923. While in Chicago, Hersal recorded with Wallace and his niece Hociel Thomas (George’s daughter) as well as recording some of his own material in 1925. He would also get the chance to work alongside jazz greats such as Louis Armstrong and King Oliver. Hersal’s life was tragically cut short at age sixteen due to food poisoning.

ROBERT SORICELLI

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; Lord

THOMAS, HOCIEL

b. 10 July 1904; Houston, TX

d. 22 August 1952; Oakland, CA

Singer and pianist; daughter of pianist George W. Thomas, aunt of pianist Hersal Thomas, and niece of Sippie Wallace. Thomas moved to New Orleans in 1916 to live with Wallace, and there she began singing. It is believed she moved to Chicago in about 1924. Her four 1924–1925 recording sessions for Gennett and OKeh are with Hersal Thomas as pianist, and two of them with cornetist Louis Armstrong.

After Hersal Thomas’s sudden death from food poisoning in 1926, she maintained her career through theater appearances through the early 1930s, then apparently was inactive in music through the mid-1940s, moving to Oakland in about 1942. Shortly after World War II, she was rediscovered by jazz record collectors, and she revived her performing from 1946 through 1948, playing piano as well as singing. In 1948 a fight with her sister left her blinded and her sister dead; in the ensuing trial, she was acquitted of charges of manslaughter. She died of heart disease in 1952.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Uncle Dave Lewis); Harris; Larkin
 Hofer, George. “Tragedy Mars Comeback of a Former Blues Star.” *Down Beat* 16 (December 16, 1949): 11.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP**THOMAS, IRMA**

b. Irma Lee, 18 February 1941; Ponchatoula, LA

Soul and gospel singer nicknamed the “Soul Queen of New Orleans.” Young Irma Lee was discovered in 1959 by bandleader Tommy Ridgley, while she was a waitress at the Pimlico Club. From 1960, Irma Thomas released several singles for small labels such as Ronn, Bandy, Minit, Chess, Canyon, Roker, and Cotillion. Her first single was recorded when she was only nineteen, “You Can Have My Husband (But Please Don’t Mess with My Man),” and among her early R&B successes was “Ruler of My Heart” (1962), composed by Naomi Neville and later adapted by Otis Redding for his song “Pain in My Heart.” In the early years of her career, Irma Thomas was a protégée of producer Allen Toussaint.

A song appearing on the unnoticed B-side of her 1964 Imperial single, “Anyone Who Knows What Love Is (Will Understand),” became a huge hit in England when the Rolling Stones recorded it and later performed it on *The Ed Sullivan Show*; its title was “Time Is on My Side.” Irma Thomas’s overlooked, original version of “Time Is on My Side” was intense and spirited, with fine backing vocals, organ, and a similar guitar solo, in the tradition of R&B. The overseas cover of the song did not help Thomas’s career; because she was not the author of the song, she did not earn any royalties. For some time, she avoided singing that title on stage.

Thomas continued her career but did not attain the level of success she desired. She more or less left the profession in 1970 but came back after a few years. Among many recordings, she issued a fine live album, *Irma Thomas Live*, recorded in 1977, taken from a television program made for WVLA-TV in Baton Rouge. In a synthesis of soul and soft rock, Irma Thomas revisits some of her 1960s songs (“It’s Raining,” “Gone”) and often proves that she can be a powerful singer, with stunning performances of “Cry On” (composed by Allen Toussaint) and “Don’t Blame Him.”

During the 1990s, she did her first European tour and released a CD with ten gospel and Christmas songs, titled *Walk Around Heaven: New Orleans*

Gospel Soul (1994), with her own version of “Holy Night.” Her song “It’s Raining” was rediscovered when it appeared on the soundtrack of the Jim Jarmusch movie *Down by Law* (1985). Her later CDs are catchy, and she has earned much praise since her affiliation with songwriter Dan Penn.

YVES LABERGE

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 “Irma Thomas.” Soulful Kinda Music website, <http://www.soulfulkindamusic.net/ithomas.htm>.

Discography: AMG

See also Toussaint, Allen

THOMAS, JAMES “SON” “FORD”

b. 14 October 1926; Eden, MS
 d. 26 June 1993; Greenville, MS

Delta bluesman and folk artist James “Son” Thomas was born a sharecropper in the hills of Yazoo County, Mississippi. Thomas learned guitar from his uncle as a child and would often sneak off to see Elmore James and Aleck Miller “Sonny Boy Williamson II” in area juke joints. Inspired by Tommy McClennan and Arthur Crudup, he developed his raw guitar style and expressive singing voice by playing house parties and local clubs. In 1961, Thomas moved to Leland, Mississippi, and continued to play music while working as a gravedigger to support himself, an occupation he would hold for thirty years.

In the late 1960s, Thomas was discovered by blues researcher William Ferris, who recorded and filmed him and featured him extensively in his book *Blues from the Delta*. Thomas appeared as the subject of a 1971 documentary and performed at festivals throughout the 1970s. In 1980, he was recorded at his home in Leland for the L+R label, and albums followed on the Swingmaster, Black and Blue, and Rooster labels.

Thomas’s material consisted largely of Delta standards, but his plaintive vocals and occasionally suggestive lyrics made him one of the most popular traditional Delta bluesmen of the 1970s and 1980s at festivals at home and abroad. He was also renowned for his clay and plaster of Paris sculptures, with showings at galleries in New York, Los Angeles,

THOMAS, JAMES “SON” “FORD”

and Washington, D.C. His health drastically declined in 1991 when he was operated on for a brain tumor. In 1993, Thomas suffered a stroke and died shortly after in a Greenville, Mississippi, hospital at age sixty-six.

GENE TOMKO

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recordings

James “Son” Thomas. *Hard Times* (2000, Black and Blue CD BB440.2).

Various artists. *Living Country Blues—An Anthology* (1999, Evidence ECD 26105-2).

THOMAS, JESSE “BABYFACE”

b. 3 February 1911; Logansport, LA

d. 13 August 1995; Shreveport, LA

Blues singer and guitarist. Jesse “Babyface” Thomas is the younger brother of Willard “Ramblin’” Thomas. In his teens Jesse was influenced by Blind Blake and especially Lonnie Johnson. In 1929 Jesse recorded four songs, and he made postwar recordings from 1948 onward. In the late 1950s Jesse moved back to Shreveport, Louisiana. In the final years of his life he made a comeback and even performed in the Netherlands in 1990.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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AMG (Bruce Eder); Herzhaft; Larkin Bonner, Brett J. “Jesse Thomas.” *Living Blues* no. 124 (November/December 1995): 56–57.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

THOMAS, JOE

b. 19 June 1909; Uniontown, PA

d. 3 August 1986; Kansas City, MO

Tenor saxophonist; not to be confused with New Orleans musician “Brother Cornbread” Joe Thomas

(1902–1981). Thomas’s early success was with Jimmie Lunceford from 1933 through 1947, paving the way from swing to rhythm and blues with his flashy saxophone solos. He later led his own groups, including an octet with which he recorded “Tearing Hair” for the King label in 1948.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Penny, Dave. “Joe Thomas” [obituary]. *Blues and Rhythm* no. 23 (October 1986): 14.

THOMAS, LAFAYETTE JERL “THING”

b. 13 June 1928; Shreveport, LA

d. 20 May 1977; Brisbane, CA

Lafayette Jerl Thomas was born June 13, 1928, in Shreveport, Louisiana, and was encouraged musically by his uncle, Jesse “Babyface” Thomas, whose brother was country bluesman Willard “Rambling” Thomas. The family moved to San Francisco soon after his birth, and there he learned to play both piano and guitar. In the 1940s he played with Al Simmons’s Rhythm Rockers, Candyman McGuirt’s band, and Little Bob Young’s band. He was nicknamed “The Thing” due to his acrobatic style of playing. He started working club dates with Jimmy McCracklin’s band in 1948, eventually replacing guitarist Robert Kelton. He remained intermittently with McCracklin for most of his career. His first records were for Sam Phillips and were issued on Chess Records under the name L. J. Thomas and His Louisiana Playboys. During this period he played on records by Jimmy Wilson, Juke Boy Bonner, James Reed, and Big Mama Thornton.

His own records were made for small labels such as Jumping, Hollywood, and Trilyte, also cutting titles at McCracklin’s 1950s sessions for Modern, Peacock, Chess, and King. He moved briefly to New York in 1959 to work for pianist Sammy Price and cut sides for Savoy before returning to the West Coast. While in New York he also did session work for the Prestige label, appearing on records by Little Brother Montgomery and Memphis Slim. His final recordings found him sharing one album session with pianist Dave Alexander and L. C. “Good Rockin’” Robinson in 1968 for World Pacific. He remained semiactive in the early 1970s, working with Sugar Pie Desanto and again with Candyman McGuirt’s band. He died on May 20, 1977, in Brisbane, California, of a heart attack.

JEFF HARRIS

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 Leadbitter, Mike, ed. *Nothing But the Blues*. New York: Oak Publications, 1971.

Discography: LSFP

See also **Chess/Aristocrat/Checker/Argo/Cadet; McCracklin, Jimmy; McGuirt, Clarence "Candyman"; Modern/Flair/Meteor/Kent/RPM; San Francisco; Thomas, Jesse "Babyface"; Wilson, Jimmy**

THOMAS, LEON

- b. Amos Leon Thomas, Jr., 4 October 1937; East St. Louis, IL
 d. 8 May 1999; New York City, NY

Vocals, composer, percussion. Leon Thomas emerged in the 1960s as a uniquely powerful vocalist who incorporated West African-styled yodeling passages into his attack. His collaboration with Pharoah Sanders, *The Creator Has a Master Plan*, is a jazz classic. Thomas worked with Grant Green, Jimmy Forrest, Hank Crawford, Count Basie, Mary Lou Williams, Randy Weston, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Oliver Nelson, Pharoah Sanders, Freddie Hubbard, Louis Armstrong, and Carlos Santana.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

Larkin; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

Karma (1968, Impulse; with Pharoah Sanders); *Facets* (1969, Flying Dutchman); *Spirits Known and Unknown* (1969, Flying Dutchman; 2002, RCA-Victor); *In Berlin* (1970, Flying Dutchman; 2002, RCA-Victor); *The Leon Thomas Album* (1970, Flying Dutchman); *Gold Sunrise on Magic Mountain* (1971, Mega Records); *Blues and the Soulful Truth* (1972, Flying Dutchman; 2002, RCA-Victor); *Full Circle* (1973, Flying Dutchman; 2002, RCA-Victor); *Precious Energy* (1987, Mapleshade Records); *Leon Thomas Blues Band* (1988, Portrait Records); *The Leon Thomas Anthology* (1998, Soul).

THOMAS, ROBERT

- b. 1929; Hurtsboro (Russell) County, AL

Acoustic guitarist and partner of Albert Macon from ca. 1959 until the latter's death in 1993.

EDWARD KOMARA

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THOMAS, RUFUS

- b. 26 March 1917; Cayce, MS
 d. 15 December 2001; Memphis, TN

Singer, broadcaster, comedian, and Memphis icon Rufus Thomas was born in the small community of Cayce, Mississippi, located five miles south of the Tennessee border. When Thomas was still a baby, his family moved to nearby Memphis, and by age six he had made his onstage debut in a play at Beale Street's Grand Theatre. While attending Booker T. Washington High School, he formed a friendship with Nat D. Williams, who was his history teacher and emcee of amateur contests held at Beale's Palace Theater. By 1931, Thomas was performing in comedy acts with Williams and tap-dancing for tips on Beale Street.

Upon graduation, Thomas toured the South for several years with the Rabbit Foot Minstrels, entertaining audiences with his tap dancing, comedy, and scat singing. He returned to Memphis in 1940 and wed high school sweetheart Lorene Wilson, a marriage that would last fifty-nine years and produce three children, including musicians Carla and Marvell. That year, Thomas took over for mentor Williams as emcee of the Palace Theater's amateur show and hosted it until 1951, during which he helped launch the careers of many Memphis-based musicians, including B. B. King, Rosco Gordon, and Bobby "Blue" Bland. He also formed a comedy team during this time with Robert "Bones" Count, which lasted into the early 1950s.

Thomas made his recording debut on the Star Talent label in 1949, and the following year he began working as a disc jockey at Memphis's WDIA. Throughout the early 1950s, he recorded for producer Sam Phillips, who leased six of his recordings to Chess. In 1953, Thomas recorded "Bear Cat" for Phillips's newly formed Sun label, and the song quickly reached number three on the R&B charts, giving the label its first hit. In 1960, Thomas's recording "Cause I Love You" with daughter Carla for the newly formed Satellite Records became that Memphis label's first successful record. Satellite soon changed its name to Stax, and Thomas would go on to record many of the influential label's hits during the next fifteen years. His energetic mixture of soul, funk, and blues helped establish both Stax and the city

THOMAS, RUFUS

of Memphis as important contributors in shaping American popular music.

Thomas repeatedly made the R&B and pop charts with hits such as “Walking the Dog,” “Do the Funky Chicken,” “The Breakdown,” and “(Do the) Push and Pull (Part 1).” His popular live shows typically featured his outlandish stage attire, off-the-wall humor, and charismatic stage presence. Being in his late forties and fifties during his greatest success, his youthful enthusiasm garnered him the title of “World’s Oldest Teenager.”

Thomas recorded sparsely throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with a 1990 release on Alligator being most notable. A regular visitor to downtown Memphis, he was regarded as “The Ambassador of Beale Street,” and a section of Hernando Street was renamed Rufus Thomas Boulevard in his honor. In the late 1980s, he returned to WDIA to host his popular blues radio show and continued the weekly broadcasts into 2000. Rufus Thomas, who personified the very soul of Memphis music, died of natural causes in Memphis at age eighty four.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

- That Woman Is Poison* (1990, Alligator CD 4769).
Can’t Get Away from This Dog (1992, Stax SCD-8569-2).
Do the Funky Somethin’: The Best of Rufus Thomas (1996, Rhino CD 72410).

THOMAS, TABBY

b. Ernest Joseph Thomas, 5 January 1929; Baton Rouge, LA

Guitarist, pianist, singer. The father of singer/guitarist Chris Thomas King and “the Godfather” of the Baton Rouge blues scene, Tabby Thomas began his career with some early recording work in San Francisco after serving in the Army. He moved back home in 1953 and recorded regularly on a regional level, scoring his biggest hit in 1962 with “Voodoo Party” on Excello Records. Thomas started his own record label in the early 1970s but became better known for his Blues Box nightclub, the epicenter of live blues activity in southern Louisiana. Thomas continued performing into his seventies, becoming

a regular at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

THOMAS, WILLARD “RAMBLING”

b. 1902; Logansport, LA

d. ca. 1945; Memphis, TN

Singer and guitarist; brother of Jesse “Babyface” Thomas. His commercial recordings reveal typical east Texas–west Louisiana blues of the pre–World War II era, reminiscent of the performances of Blind Lemon Jefferson and of Lonnie Johnson. He is considered by some experts to have influenced Oscar “Buddy” Woods and Black Ace. It is believed he died in Memphis, perhaps in the 1930s but no later than 1945.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

THOMAS, WILLIE B.

b. 25 May 1912; Lobdell, MS

Guitarist, street preacher. Crippled by a back injury during the mid-1930s. He was musical partner to Butch Cage beginning in about 1930, initially on kazoo, then on guitar after 1939.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography

- Country Negro Jam Session* (Folk-Lyric FL 111; reissued by Arhoolie on LP 2018 and CD 372).

THOMPSON, ALPHONSO “SONNY”

b. 22 August 1916; Memphis, TN
 d. 11 August 1989; Chicago, IL

Pianist and record executive. Thompson began working in combos while in Phillips High and went on the road for extended periods after graduating. In the late 1930s he worked in the Erskine Tate band and began working as a leader in 1940. He made his first recordings under his name for Sultan Records in 1946. During 1947–1950, Thompson recorded for Miracle Records, using the Sharps and Flats as his rhythm section and frequently adding Eddie Chamblee’s tenor sax.

He reached the peak of his performing career at Miracle, striking gold with one of the biggest R&B hits of the late 1940s, “Long Gone” (1948). After Miracle folded, Thompson moved to King Records in 1950 and recorded extensively for that company (occasionally doing session work for Vee-Jay and other labels). One of his King artists was his wife, blues singer Lulu Reed. Thompson handled A&R for the label until 1964, when King closed its Chicago office, but continued as a free-lance producer for a few more years.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: LSPF**THOMPSON, DAVID “LITTLE DAVE”**

b. 21 May 1969; Jackson, MS

Contemporary Delta bluesman Little Dave Thompson started playing guitar at age nine, inspired by his musician father, who played throughout the Greenville, Mississippi, area. By age fourteen Thompson was playing in an Indianola, Mississippi–based gospel group and soon formed a blues band in nearby Leland. He joined Roosevelt “Booba” Barnes’s band at age fifteen and toured internationally with him until Barnes relocated to Chicago in the early 1990s. Thompson’s 1995 debut on Fat Possum featured his searing brand of raw electric blues, with nods to influences Albert King and Little Milton. Thompson

signed with JSP in 2001 and continued to be a leading exponent of modern electric Delta blues.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

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THOMPSON, MAC

b. Mac Johnson, 28 January 1934; Lamar, MS
 d. 10 October 1991; Chicago, IL

Bassist and guitarist best known for his Cobra and Delmark studio recordings with Magic Sam Maghett. Thompson was born in Lamar and raised in Michigan City, Mississippi. His father, Sam Johnson, had performed with John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, and his brothers were Syl Johnson and Jimmy Johnson. He moved to Chicago in 1952 and worked in weekday jobs for the rest of his life. He began playing guitar informally with Magic Sam in the 1950s and also became associated with Billy Boy Arnold.

In 1957 he assisted as second guitarist on Magic Sam’s “All Your Love” session for Cobra. Soon afterward he switched to electric bass guitar, performing and/or recording with Billy Boy Arnold, Mighty Joe Young, Eddie Shaw, and Eddy Clearwater. He again assisted Magic Sam on the latter’s two albums for Delmark, *West Side Soul* (1967) and *Black Magic* (1969). He was crushed by Maghett’s 1969 death, but he continued playing bass in recording sessions and European tours, and he joined Clearwater’s band in the early 1970s. He recorded a single for Rooster, “Something’s Wrong”/“Goblin,” in 1980. He died of cancer at age fifty seven.

EDWARD KOMARA

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THOMPSON, ODELL

b. 9 August 1911; Orange County, NC
 d. 28 April 1994; Mebane, NC

THOMPSON, ODELL

Banjo player in dance and blues styles. Thompson often performed locally in his spare time with his fiddler cousin Joe Thompson. In the early 1970s they were discovered and brought to wider notice by researcher Kip Lornell, including performances at the National Folk Festival and the Festival of American Folklife.

EDWARD KOMARA

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no. 118 (November/December 1994): 63.

THOMPSON, RON

b. 5 July 1953; Oakland, CA

Electric slide guitarist. Thompson began learning guitar at age eleven. In the early 1970s, he was performing with Little Joe Blue. In 1975 he accepted an invitation from John Lee Hooker to join his band, staying with him for three years. In 1980, he formed his group the Resistors, with whom he recorded albums and CDs for Takoma, Blind Pig, and Winner labels through 1990.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG (Bill Dahl and Stephen Thomas Erlewine)

THORNTON, WILLIE MAE "BIG MAMA"

b. 11 December 1926; Montgomery, AL
d. 25 July 1984; Los Angeles, CA

Singer. As intimidating a figure as any in the blues, Big Mama Thornton more than lived up to her name in both size and attitude. A large and confrontational woman who dressed like a man, Thornton had a wide-ranging career, but she is most remembered for recording two signature songs, one a part of the 1950s rise of rock and the other in its late 1960s psychedelic explosion, that became modern standards. But in each case her versions were overshadowed by superstar renditions, relegating her role to that of influence

instead of leading to the fame and fortune the songs generated for others.

Thornton went on the road with Sammy Green's Hot Harlem Revue when she was only fourteen and toured throughout the South. But she ultimately tired of the road and quit the revue in 1948 when it rolled into Houston. She established herself on the local scene and then signed with Duke/Peacock Records, making her recording debut in 1951 with "Partnership Blues." A second single did little but her third time in the studio was a charm. With the Johnny Otis Band backing her, she recorded the original version of "Hound Dog," one with considerably more bite to it than the later Elvis Presley take, and the song spent seven weeks at the top of the R&B charts in 1953.

With a major hit to her credit, Thornton went back on the road, performing as part of highly successful Duke/Peacock package shows that also included Bobby "Blue" Bland, Johnny Ace, and Junior Parker. She also toured widely with her friend and producer Johnny Otis. A 1956 West Coast tour with Gate-mouth Brown led to her relocation, first to Los Angeles and then to San Francisco. A decade later Janis Joplin would astound a 1967 Monterey Pop Festival with Thornton's "Ball 'n' Chain."

Through all the travel Thornton kept releasing singles on Duke/Peacock, attempting to duplicate the success of "Hound Dog." Songs such as "I Smell a Rat" and "Just Like a Dog" became minor R&B hits, but in the wake of Elvis's famous rendition of "Hound Dog" in 1956, she was unable to fully capitalize on the hit.

The 1960s were a relatively inactive period, although Thornton continued to release singles. She took to showcasing her harmonica work, correctly noting that she was one of the few female practitioners of the instrument in the blues, but bookings and record sales dropped off in the United States. She did, however, continue to perform in Europe, recording a live album with the Muddy Waters band at the conclusion of a 1965 tour.

Known as a no-nonsense bandleader, Thornton was always accompanied by top-tier talent, including everyone from Mississippi Fred McDowell to Buddy Guy, on her recordings. Her live bands were sometimes a different matter, so demanding was she on and off the stage. Houston guitarist and Duke/Peacock session star Clarence Hollimon actually hid from her the first time she came calling to recruit him for her group. But in testimony to her strong will, Hollimon naturally ended up on the bandstand behind her.

Thornton recorded two albums, *Stronger Than Dirt* and *The Way It Is*, for Mercury Records in the late 1960s and several more, including *Sassy Mama* in



Big Mama Thornton performs at the Newport Folk Festival, Newport, Rhode Island, July 1969. (Photo by Fred Ramsey, Jr., © Frank Driggs Collection)

1975 with guitarist Cornell Dupree and the live *Jail*, done in front of prison audiences, for Vanguard Records in the 1970s. Another live album done in Europe also surfaced during the mid-1970s.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

THOROGOOD, GEORGE

b. 24 December 1951; Wilmington, DE

Originally a minor-league baseball player, slide guitarist George Thorogood formed his band the Destroyers in 1973. The band established themselves as regulars in the Boston blues club circuit and by 1979 had released their first album *Better than the Rest* for the Rounder label, which included an extensive version of "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer." Thorogood's 1978 cover version of Hank Williams's "Move It On Over" on its release received much rock radio airplay.

Thorogood and the Destroyers enjoyed considerable success with the album *Bad to the Bone* (1982) after signing with EMI. The Destroyers spent the rest of the 1980s recording and touring. Their three albums after *Bad to the Bone* all went gold. Thorogood continues to tour and record.

ROBERT SORICELLI

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Discography: AMG

TIBBS, ANDREW

b. Milton or Melvin Andrew Grayson, 2 February 1929; Columbus, OH

d. 5 May 1991; Chicago, IL

Uptown Chicago blues singer popular in the immediate post-World War II era. Tibbs, who wailed his ballads and jump tunes with a clear, emotive voice, superbly exemplified the jazz-influenced blues style (sometimes called uptown blues) that dominated the market in the late 1940s. His accompaniment featured some of Chicago's best jazz musicians, notably sax men Tom Archia, Dave Young, and Sax Mallard, who enhance his recordings immensely with their exciting blowing.

Tibbs's recording career for the Chess brothers' Aristocrat (soon to become Chess) label began after he was discovered singing in the brothers' bar, the Macomba Lounge. The company put out seven releases of Tibbs, two of which achieved moderate success, "Married Man's Blues" and "I Feel Like Crying," and one of which achieved some notoriety, "Bilbo Is Dead," an uncomplimentary remembrance of a racist Mississippi politician.

After Muddy Waters emerged as the company's biggest blues artist with his down-home style, Chess lost interest in Tibbs. He left Chess in 1950, but his subsequent recording career was intermittent, cutting sides for Peacock (1951), Savoy (1951—never issued), Mercury (1951–1952), Atco (1956, with his older brother Kenneth), and M-Pac! (1965). By the mid-1960s Tibbs had moved to a day job in the computer industry, where he remained for the rest of his life, though he still sang at parties and occasional engagements.

ROBERT PRUTER

TIBBS, ANDREW

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Discography: LSFP

TIGHT LIKE THAT

Written by Tampa Red (Hudson Woodbridge, b. January 8, 1904, Smithville, Georgia; d. March 19, 1981, Chicago) and Georgia Tom Dorsey (Thomas A. Dorsey, b. July 1, 1899, Villa Rica, Georgia; d. January 23, 1993, Chicago) in 1928, this song is an excellent example of what was known as the hokum style. "Tight Like That" is in a twelve-measure (4 + 8) verse and refrain lyric form, with the four-measure verse consisting of two two-measure rhyming couplets, often of sexual double-entendre. On its release, the record was a massive hit, spawning several sequels by Tampa Red and Dorsey and countless imitations by other artists. The tune itself remained in blues music practice as the main hokum melody through the beginning of the 1940s. The title as recognized catchphrase in the Chicago African American community went beyond blues audiences to jazz, as indicated on Louis Armstrong's patter at the beginning of his classic jazz instrumental "Tight Like This" in late 1928.

Taken up and popularized by jug and hokum bands, hokum, either in country or blues motifs, became a racy musical art form characterized by up-tempo rhythms and bawdy subject matter and lyrics. After the release of "Tight Like That," Tampa Red continued hokum material throughout the remainder of his career, but Dorsey changed course during the early 1930s and became the "Father of Gospel Music."

TOM FISHER/EDWARD KOMARA

TIMMONS, TERRY

b. Teresa Walker, 12 April 1927; Cleveland, OH
d. 3 August 1970; Cleveland, OH

Post-World War II rhythm and blues singer whose clear, tart, and deeply expressive style, and an oeuvre of uptown blues and standards, called forth comparisons to Dinah Washington. She began her career in 1945, when she married Van Leonard Timmons. She first signed with Chicago-based Premium (1950–1951), recording several fine blues songs on

her own and in duets with Memphis Slim, with whom she toured. Her successive moves to Mercury (1951), RCA-Victor (1951–1953), and United (1953) failed to produce hits—despite some excellent recordings—and she retired in 1954.

ROBERT PRUTER

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TINSLEY, JOHN E.

b. 10 February 1920; Chesnut Mountain region, Franklin County, VA

John Tinsley learned guitar from neighbor Fred Holland and listened to and was influenced by Buddy Moss and Blind Boy Fuller. In 1949 he shot and wounded in self-defense his stepfather, for which he served six months in prison. Upon release he moved to Bassett, Virginia, where Dee Stone ran the Mutual record label. In 1952, Tinsley recorded for Mutual with Holland. For more than twenty years he was inactive in music, but in 1977 he returned to performing.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

TIP TOP

Chicago soul music label of the 1960s. The company was founded in 1961 by Charles Colbert, Sr., and partners Charles Colbert, Jr., Bob Catron, and Doc Oliver. The company's first imprint was Nike, but in 1962, following a reorganization in which Catron and Oliver left, the principal imprint became Tip Top. Three other labels associated with Tip Top were Cool, Jive, and Mellow (the latter added in 1966 by Colbert, Jr.).

The company's biggest hitmaker was a vocal group, the Daylighters, who hit with "Cool Breeze" (1962) on Tip Top. Soul singer Marvin L. Sims had a modest hit with "What Can I Do?" on Mellow. Blues

artists recorded by the operation were Al Perkins and Jody Williams (on Jive), Jimmy Burns and Detroit Junior (on Tip Top), and A. C. Reed (on Cool). By the late 1960s, the company was increasingly placing its productions with larger companies, and Nike and Tip Top were closed by 1967 and Mellow by 1968.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

TISDOM, JAMES “SMOKESTACK”

b. 1912; Texas

d. 1995; Lockhart, TX

Houston-area singer and guitarist of blues, cowboy songs, and Mexican corrido. Tisdome recorded in 1949–1950 for the Universal-Fox label and in 1951 for Original/Rio Grande. In a 1967 interview he claimed to have taught singer/guitarist Manny Nichols.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSPF

TOBA

TOBA—the Theater Owners’ Booking Association—was a black vaudeville circuit that featured entertainment in theaters located in cities and small towns of the United States primarily in the South and Middle West. TOBA was founded in 1920 by black actor (comedian)/musician Sherman H. Dudley and white theater owner Milton Starr. In early 1921 an organization was formed, officials were elected, and current stockholders were presented/listed. Additionally, a list of prospective stockholders was compiled. The meeting was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The elected officials or stockholders were interracial while the performers were black. Two major black, national

weekly newspapers, *Chicago Defender* and *Pittsburgh Courier*, reported on TOBA activities.

In 1921 TOBA controlled eighty of the 107 theatres presenting black road shows and vaudeville entertainment. Some of the performers on the circuit were performer/producers who mounted fully contained shows that could last more than an hour. More than fifty of these companies and approximately 179 vaudeville acts found employment on the TOBA circuit. Many black entertainers and musicians, particularly those in the 1920s to early 1930s, used the TOBA to develop and enhance their talent by becoming performers in these companies.

Among the performers were comedians, dancers, and singers, especially blues, but also popular, who were usually accompanied by a jazz band. The blues singers were a very popular asset to the TOBA and were usually the stars, capable of drawing large audiences. The blues they sang was more in name than in actuality. They sang published blues in a cabaret or vaudeville style, and it was this style of blues that was first recorded. In August 1920 OKeh recorded Mamie Smith singing “Crazy Blues.” Her recording was so successful that it became the standard bearer for recordings by other blues singers such as Sarah Martin and Clara Smith, who were also performers of the TOBA circuit.

Other blues singers of note were Lottie Beamon, Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, and Ida Cox, TOBA performers also, but with a more blues feeling than that of vaudeville stylings. Lottie Beamon was from Kansas City, Missouri, and her blues singing also included her whistling like a bird. This fact may have been more vaudevillian than blues styling, but it did not take away from her powerful and strong feeling.

Gertrude “Ma” Rainey was considered to be the “mother” of the blues because she was the first star in this style. The blues she sang was what she had heard from her childhood in Columbus, Georgia, an unaffected, southern, black sound. She had a relatively short recording career (1923–1928), and although their technical quality may be unsatisfactory, many recordings are available in reissue.

The so-called “Queen without a Crown,” Ida Cox had a very long recording career, from 1923 to 1940. Overshadowed by both Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, she nevertheless was thought of as their equal. Her first recordings were more in vaudeville style but gradually progressed to that of her own nasal, melancholy blues sound.

“Empress of the Blues” Bessie Smith was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and died controversially and tragically in 1937 in Mississippi. As a very young child she began her career as a comedienne,

dancing and singing in vaudeville. She met Ma Rainey in 1913 when she became a member of the Rabbit Foot Minstrels, where Rainey was the star. Rainey was to have a lasting impression on Bessie's selection of material and style. "Downhearted Blues"/"Gulfcoast Blues" (1923, Columbia), was her first recording and was very successful. In fact, Bessie Smith and her recordings were, and perhaps still are, unrivaled.

In the days before motion pictures and television, dancehalls, record players, and theaters provided the overwhelming majority of entertainment for most of the public. TOBA, controlling more than half of the theatres presenting black road shows and vaudeville entertainment, was in an enviable position: full houses, an ample supply of talent, and free advertisement, particularly when blues singers had recordings. The recording industry helped to increase the variety and style of blues singers by also recording male singers of the rural and country tradition of blues.

Papa Charlie Jackson, born in New Orleans, was the first commercially successful country blues performer, but not the first to be recorded; that distinction is held by Sylvester Weaver (November 1923) and Ed Andrews (April 1924). Jackson accompanied himself with a four-string banjo and recorded a 78 in August 1924, "Papa's Lawdy Lawdy Blues"/"Airy Man Blues" (Paramount). He also at times accompanied classic blues singers Ma Rainey and Ida Cox. Blind Lemon Jefferson, from Texas, represented the rural blues and recorded "Long Lonesome Blues" (Paramount) in 1926. He was to record more than eighty songs from 1926 to 1929.

The Theater Owners' Booking Association was a very important conduit for the blues and many of America's stellar musicians and performers from its inception in 1920 to its decline in 1930 and beyond.

MONICA J. BURDEX

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TOMATO RECORDS

Independent label founded in the late 1970s by producer Kevin Eggers, taking from his former label Poppy Records, founded in 1968. Eggers was known as the manager/producer for songwriter Townes Van Zandt. With cover art and graphics designed by

Milton Glaser, Tomato Records was eclectic in musical genres but included electric blues artists such as Albert King, Chris Smither, Doc Watson, Townes Van Zandt, and Robert Cray. The company went out of business in the early 1990s. Some of its operations were taken over by Rhino Records in the 1990s, such as the CD reissue of *The Tomato Sampler* (1994 [1991]).

In 2002, founder Kevin Eggers tried a comeback with a multimedia company named Tomato Music, in New York City, reissuing compilations such as *In the Key of Lightnin' Hopkins* (2002), *Tomato Delta Blues Package* (2002), and *Great Tomato Blues Package* (2002 [1989]), but also new recordings.

YVES LABERGE

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Various artists. *The Great Tomato Blues Package* (2002, Tomato Music; reissue of 2-LP set from 1989).

The Robert Cray Band. *Too Many Cooks* (1989, Tomato LP 2696531; reissue of *Who's Been Talking?* from 1980).

See also Cray, Robert; King, Albert; Rhino; Smither, Chris

TONE-COOL

Located in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, and distributed in the United States by Island Def Jam Music Group, Tone-Cool Records specializes in blues and World Music since 1985.

Founded by producer Richard Rosenblatt, Tone-Cool released Taj Mahal and the Hula Blues's *Hana-pepe Dream* (2003) and Hubert Sumlin's *About Them Shoes* (2005) but also white blues artists, such as Susan Tedeschi, Mark Hummel, Monster Mike Welch, Rod Piazza, and the Mighty Flyers. The CD booklets accompanying Welch's *Axe to Grind* (1997) and Piazza's *Tough and Tender* (1997) included lyrics, which is uncommon in contemporary blues.

YVES LABERGE

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Tone-Cool website, <http://www.tonecool.com>.

TOO TIGHT HENRY

b. Henry L. Castle, ca. 1899, place unknown
d. 16 August 1971; Chicago, IL

An itinerant twelve-string guitarist, Castle recorded a tour de force of musical impressionism, the two-part “Charleston Contest,” in 1928. He later played in Jed Davenport’s Beale Street Jug Band and stayed long enough in Memphis to be remembered by other musicians, but regrettably he made only one more recording.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: DGR

See also Davenport, Jed

TOP CAT

Dallas, Texas, label that has specialized in new releases of blues and electric blues artists active in east Texas, such as Jim Suhlar, Robin Sylar, and Big Gilson. It has also issued vintage performances by Muddy Waters and by Big Mama Thornton.

EDWARD KOMARA

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TOPICAL BLUES: DISASTERS

Introduction

In their capacity as African American bards, blues artists have always sung about the catastrophes that hit them and their communities. The incidence of disaster songs in blues music is difficult to estimate, but it is certainly very prominent among topical themes if one considers their specificity. For want of a more inclusive principle of subdivision and in keeping with the development of blues criticism and its terminology in the past fifty years, it has been thought convenient to divide the subject of topical blues on disasters into two main subheadings, accidental

disasters and natural disasters. Each section comprises a discussion of some of the historically most relevant tragedies that were immortalized by blues musicians in their commercial and noncommercial recordings.

Though the two subheadings are rather comprehensive, they cannot cover all the different types of catastrophes dealt with in the various disaster songs. Compositions on large generic topics, such as war tragedies, diseases, and the depression, or on extremely popular themes such as the ravages caused by the boll weevil, account for so many recordings as to require separate studies. This survey has no pretensions to exhaustiveness and will deal in particular with blues topical recordings (and a few closely related gospel songs) relevant to each event and not with nontopical or generic songs mentioning it in passing.

Some thematically diverse disaster songs have been grouped in four sometimes overlapping subsections—air, earth, fire, and water blues—to remind readers of the basically folkloric origin of the blues. Topical disaster blues are also ways of chronicling events in the oral culture, so some consideration of how older blues were readapted to recount more recent facts will be given whenever possible. Whether the subdivision into accidental and natural disasters also presupposes different ways of dealing with them will be discussed in the conclusion.

Natural Disasters

The Mississippi River Flood (1927)

The 1927 Mississippi River flood was one of the greatest natural disasters in the history of the United States. The dramatically growing importance of blues and gospel at the time certainly contributed to increasing the number of topical songs on this natural calamity by both black and white musicians and the popularity of the theme well beyond the seven states where the tragedy occurred.

As David Evans (2005) has shown, “Back-Water Blues” by Bessie Smith can be considered as the first blues on the Mississippi River flood even though she recorded it in New York for Columbia in February, that is, two months *before* the bursting of the levee at Mound Landing, near Greenville, Mississippi, on April 21. Her now classic and repeatedly covered song recounted a flood she had experienced in Nashville, Tennessee, in December 1926. This flood contributed to the rising waters of the Mississippi River that reached flood stage four months later.

A mere four days after the catastrophe in Greenville, Lonnie Johnson, the most prolific composer of flood blues, recorded for OKeh "South Bound Water," a generic flood blues backed by a cover of Smith's composition. On May 2, the mysterious Blue Belle (Bessie Mae Smith) recorded "High Water Blues" for the same company. Presumably only a few days later, Paramount played its ace, recording star Blind Lemon Jefferson, who sang "Rising High Water Blues" accompanied by George Perkins on piano. The last topical blues to be waxed immediately after the flooding of the Mississippi was Sippie Wallace's "The Flood Blues," an interesting song recorded for OKeh on May 6.

One month later, Laura Smith, a veteran vaudeville singer about to retire, recorded the first two Victor sides on the flood, "Lonesome Refugee" and "The Mississippi Blues." Though not real blues compositions, these songs' lyrics and vocal delivery convey a bluesy flavor. Atlanta, Georgia, blues guitarist Barbecue Bob's (Robert Hicks) "Mississippi Heavy Water Blues," recorded for Columbia in June, ranked second only after Bessie Smith's commercial hit, selling about thirteen thousand copies. After describing the desperate search for his woman in the (possibly Greenville) refugee camp along the levee, Barbecue Bob envisions, by contrast, his personal distress caused by sexual abstinence.

In about July 1927, vocalist Alice Pearson recorded two blues for Paramount on the Mississippi River flood, "Greenville Levee Blues" and "Water Bound Blues," whose texts seem to suggest that the singer was in Greenville the day the levee broke and spent a few days in the refugee camp there. Five months after "Back-Water Blues," Columbia Records recorded Bessie Smith's "Homeless Blues," an interesting mix of personal and community commentary on the consequences of the flood.

In January 1928, the same month Paramount cut the only topical sermon on the flood, Moses Mason's "Red Cross the Disciple of Christ Today," Vocalion made its debut on the market of flood recordings, coupling Luella Miller's "Muddy Stream Blues" with her "Tornado Groan," another topical disaster song on the St. Louis cyclone. Both compositions had already been recorded by Miller the previous October but remained unissued.

Miller's well-balanced flood song makes a good contrast with Lonnie Johnson's accusatory "Broken Levee Blues," recorded for OKeh on March 13, 1928. His blues depicts matter of factly the situation in Helena, Arkansas, and in all the other towns along the river, where colored people were either forced to risk their lives working on the levees or be imprisoned. Exactly one year after the levee break at

Greenville, Barbecue Bob recorded a follow-up blues for Columbia, "Mississippi Low-Levee Blues," which is a mix of the themes in his earlier song.

In about July, James Crawford and an unidentified combo cut "Flood and Thunder Blues," an original composition containing some cryptic racial references. "The 1927 Flood" by Elders McIntorsh and Edwards, the only topical gospel song on the disaster, was followed in June 1929 by "The New Fallin' Rain Blues," Lonnie Johnson's third working-out of the flood theme for OKeh. Much more interesting was Kansas Joe (Wilber McCoy) and Memphis Minnie's (Lizzie Douglas) debut on record, "When the Levee Breaks," recorded on June 18, 1929, for Columbia. The lyrics focus on dangerous working conditions and develop a secondary love theme.

After a variant of Crawford's topical song, Mary Dixon's "Fire and Thunder Blues," recorded in August 1929, came Charley Patton's two-part topical saga of "High Water Everywhere," recorded for Paramount ca. October 1929 in Grafton, Wisconsin, and adapted by David "Honeyboy" Edwards in 1999. Patton's was one of the last (though commercially and artistically speaking, most successful) attempts to re-create and convey the same sense of desperation experienced by the people living along the Mississippi River banks at the time of the flooding. Judging from the low appeal of this theme among postwar blues musicians, who merely covered prewar original compositions on this calamity, it is reasonable to conclude that by the end of World War II the 1927 flood theme had largely been forgotten by the blues community.

The St. Louis Cyclone (1927)

Only five months after the flooding of the Mississippi River, precisely on September 29, a cyclone struck the city of St. Louis, killing dozens of people in five minutes and causing damages of one million dollars. The lesser impact of this disaster in comparison to the previous one is shown by the mere four topical recordings released on the subject, three blues and a sermon, which were all cut within the period of four months.

The first was "St. Louis Cyclone Blues," recorded by Lonnie Johnson in New York City four days after the catastrophe. In October Reverend J. M. Gates delivered a sermon titled "God's Wrath in the St. Louis Cyclone," in fact an excursus on a variety of natural disasters. The third topical recording was a shorter version of Johnson's song by Elzadie Robinson for Paramount in about November of the same year. The last were the two versions of "Tornado Groan"

that Luella Miller recorded for Vocalion, the first less than two weeks after the event, the second on January 24, 1928.

The Dry Spell (1930)

Because of its exceptional duration and intensity, the drought that affected a vast area of the United States starting from the spring of 1930 had a tremendous impact, especially on the African American population living in the southern states, such as the Arkansas and Mississippi river deltas, whose economy was based on cotton. Although its severity was on a par with the 1927 Mississippi River flood, the so-called Dry Spell of 1930 elicited only three topical blues and a cover.

The first original songs were Eddie “Son” House’s two-part “Dry Spell Blues” and Charlie Patton’s “Dry Well Blues,” both on Paramount. Though *Blues and Gospel Records 1890–1943* (pp. 404 and 708) lists these tracks as having been recorded at the same session in Grafton, Wisconsin, on May 28, 1930, the devastation of the drought did not hit until after that, as shown in literature and extensive newspaper coverage from that time. The third topical recording on the Dry Spell bears the same title as Son House’s composition and is credited to “Spider” Carter, who recorded it for Brunswick on September 13, 1930. In 2000 John Mooney recorded a version of House’s original song.

Though presenting some textual similarities, the three accounts of this weather phenomenon differ in many respects from the stylistic viewpoint. In the wake of his own extremely popular “High Water Everywhere, Part One and Two,” Patton’s “Dry Well Blues” is a six-stanza blues depicting the effects of drought in Lula, Mississippi, the small country town where Patton and House were living at the time of the natural disaster. At the beginning, Patton’s composition deals with the consequences suffered by the community of Lula, then it depicts a sort of sexual drought for its inhabitants. Son House’s two-part “Dry Spell Blues” is a blues prayer addressed to God (Monge, forthcoming). “Spider” Carter’s “Dry Spell Blues” is a piano blues with generic and unimaginative lyrics, which develop no consistent theme.

The Tupelo Tornado (1936)

Among all the topical blues on natural disasters, the songs on the calamity that occurred in Tupelo, Mississippi, present the most puzzling series of

mistakes, cross-references with other disasters, and coincidences. It is a fact that Tupelo was struck by a tornado on April 5, 1936, on a Sunday evening (Monge, 2005).

The first musical testimonies of this disaster were two recordings probably collected by Herbert Halpert for the Library of Congress. The first song is attributed to Lulu Morris accompanied by an African Methodist Church congregation, the second to Will C. Thomas. According to *Blues and Gospel Records 1890–1943* (pp. 664 and 921), the two field recordings bear the same title, “Tupelo Destruction,” and were collected on May 8 and 17, 1939, respectively. The former song is also preceded by Morris’s spoken “Introduction to Tupelo Destruction.”

Two more accounts of the Tupelo catastrophe are reported by Alan Lomax (1993, pp. 35–36 and 52) to have been composed by Charles Haffer, Jr., and Turner Junior Johnson, but their titles do not appear in the above-mentioned standard prewar blues and gospel discography. As late as 1952 Henry Green recorded “Storm Thru Mississippi,” a version of the gospel songs recorded for the Library of Congress in 1939.

Nowadays, the chronicle of this event is associated with John Lee Hooker, who recounted it at least six times in the postwar period. His first recording, “Tupelo Blues,” was cut in April 1959 for Riverside. The second and third, simply known as “Tupelo,” were recorded live at the 1960 and 1963 Newport Folk Festivals. The fourth was also recorded live with a band, at Palo Alto, California, in September 1977. His last two Tupelo songs were solo studio recordings in July 1993 and in 1995. Whether in the spoken introduction or directly in the lyrics, Hooker provides two different dates for the catastrophe (1932 and 1936) and states that it was a flood (not a tornado) and that it occurred on a Friday (not Sunday). Hooker’s biographer, Charles Shaar Murray, adds to the mix-up, maintaining that “Tupelo” is a composition dealing with the 1927 Mississippi River flood.

Accidental Disasters

The Sinking of the Titanic (1912)

Not surprisingly, the sinking of the *Titanic* on the night of April 14–15, 1912, is the accidental disaster that has generated the greatest number of topical compositions in the white and black musical traditions. Because of the popularity and resilience of the theme, which is only in part consequential to the

international relevance of the event and was boosted by other factors such as theological, social, and racial issues inherent in the fact, the exact estimate of the number of topical songs is difficult.

Though mainly a tragedy that hit whites, the death of more than fifteen hundred people on board the “unsinkable” transatlantic ship sailing from Southampton in England to New York impressed artists so much as to be the subject of songs covering music genres as diverse as country, blues, rhythm and blues, and gospel, as well as formats such as instrumentals, toasts (Smith, 1996, pp. 223–224), and so on. Sheet music on the sinking of the *Titanic* is known to have been published since the catastrophe occurred (see *Titanic* songs entry in the discography; Oliver, 1984, pp. 222–226).

Because the shipwreck took place when blues as a commercially recorded music genre was in its natal period, most of the earliest original compositions on the catastrophe were written by whites in ballad format. Consequently, very few prewar African American original songs dealing with the *Titanic* were twelve-bar accounts of the tragedy made by self-accompanied blues singer-guitarists. Rather, they were ballad-like compositions or more-or-less moralistic gospel interpretations of the historical fact and were usually recorded by women or songsters. They include two takes (only one issued) of Ma Rainey’s “Titanic Man Blues” (1925) and two takes (only one issued) of Virginia Liston’s “Titanic Blues” (1926), Richard “Rabbit” Brown’s “Sinking of the Titanic” (1927), William & Versey Smith’s “When That Great Ship Went Down” (1927), and Huddie Ledbetter’s (Leadbelly) noncommercial recording titled “The Titanic” (1935), which is known to have formed part of his repertoire under the title “Fare Thee Well, Titanic” when he used to play with Blind Lemon Jefferson the same year the ship went down (Wolfe and Lornell, 1994, pp. 44, 46).

Among the most influential sacred recordings is Blind Willie Johnson’s “God Moves on the Water” (1929), a close version of which was collected by Dorothy Scarborough and published in 1919 (Oliver, 1984, pp. 223–224). Almost certainly religious in content are also some unreleased commercial sides, such as Reverend Edward W. Clayborn’s “Sinking of the Titanic” (1927) and the Jubilee Gospel Team’s two-part homonymous song (1930).

Six more prewar noncommercial topical songs on the subject are known to have been recorded for the Library of Congress. They are two songs bearing the same title, “The Titanic,” both recorded in the Darien, Georgia, area and attributed to J. Silence (1927) and Unidentified Singers and Groups

(ca. 1926–1928). The three remaining 1930s field recordings were made in different locations and are credited to Washington (Lightnin’) (“God Moves on the Water,” 1933), to Walter Roberts (“Sinking of the Titanic,” 1936), and to Will “Shorty” Love (“The Titanic [God Moved on the Waters],” 1939).

A *Titanic*-related song titled “When That Great Ship Went Down” is reported to have been sung by a black musician in the Durham, North Carolina, area in 1920, but black folk songs about the disaster had been collected in Alabama, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Mississippi as early as 1915 (Newman White, quoted in Smith, 1996, pp. 214–215). The only known prewar twelve-bar AAB blues on the sinking of the *Titanic* is “Hi” Henry Brown’s “Titanic Blues” (1932), a seemingly narrative—in fact a sharp and polemic—“anti-gospel song” (Smith, 1996, p. 221). This blues composition’s apparent objectivity in describing the historical event conceals the drama of a subtle, methodically corrosive, racial revenge toward the whites for not allowing the blacks on board the ship. This racial issue can be found in both of Leadbelly’s recordings on the *Titanic*, which purport that Captain Smith refused to board the first colored heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson, maintaining that he wasn’t “hauling no coal.” On introducing the 1948 version, Leadbelly conceded he would not sing the probably fictional Jack Johnson stanza when performing for black people.

In the postwar period, the popularity of the *Titanic* theme has shown no signs of diminishing over time. After Leadbelly’s repositioning of his Library of Congress title (1948), some traditional renderings were made—among others—by songsters Pink Anderson, who recorded “The Ship Titanic” (1950) and “The Titanic” (1961), Bill Jackson, who made “Titanic Blues” (1962), and Mance Lipscomb, who stated that he had learned “The Titanic” (1963, 1964, 1966) directly from Blind Willie Johnson.

A rhythm and blues version titled “Titanic” was cut by Paul Williams in 1956, while Bessie Jones immortalized the tragic event twice, first with her Georgia Sea Island Singers (“The Titanic,” 1961) and then solo (“Titanic,” 1973). Subsequent topical songs, such as Flora Molton’s “The Titanic” (1980) and Cousin Joe’s piano blues “What a Tragedy” (1985), often insisted on the fact that the poor were allowed to participate in the maiden voyage of the ship only in steerage. More adaptations or original compositions on the foundering of the transatlantic ship are John Koerner’s “Titanic” (1992), Rory Block’s “Titanic” (1998), Ben Andrews’s “Titanic” (1999), Fruteland Jackson’s “Titanic Blues” (1999), and Abi Wallenstein’s “Titanic” (2003).

The Natchez Fire (1940)

The horrible death of more than two hundred people (including bandleader Walter Barnes and all of his group except two musicians) in the Natchez, Mississippi, Rhythm Club fire on Tuesday, April 23, 1940, has so far produced no less than ten original compositions and four covers (two by white musicians) in almost sixty years. It is a relatively high number of songs if one considers this topic's minor historical importance and mostly regional resonance in comparison with internationally or nationally renowned disasters such as the sinking of the *Titanic* and the 1927 Mississippi River flood.

The durability of this theme is the result of two concurrent factors: African Americans' strong sense of popular conscience associated with, and expressing itself through, the creative power of memory and the fact that this tragedy struck almost exclusively the black population of Natchez and surrounding areas (Monge, 2005). Specifically blues or blues-related compositions dealing with the Natchez fire account for more than ninety percent of the total number of songs on the catastrophe.

The first two sides were recorded in Chicago by the Lewis Bronzeville Five only sixteen days after the tragedy. "Mississippi Fire Blues" and "Natchez Mississippi Blues" were vocal harmony songs reflecting the fashion of the period. On June 4, 1940, exactly six weeks after the burning of the Rhythm Club, another topical 78 rpm was cut in Chicago. "The Natchez Fire" is credited to Gene Gilmore accompanied by Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston on piano and Robert Lee McCoy (Robert Nighthawk) on harmonica. Its flip side, "The Death of Walter Barnes," was sung by Caston accompanying himself on piano with harmonica by Nighthawk. The last prewar recording on the Natchez Fire was a noncommercial religious ballad collected by Alan Lomax in Clarksdale for the Library of Congress on July 23, 1942, and sung by Charles Haffer, Jr., one of the greatest and most neglected African American composers of disaster songs. "The Natchez [Theatre] Fire Disaster" is an unaccompanied ballad containing a condemnation of the dancers' sinful behavior.

The first postwar song on the holocaust was Howlin' Wolf's "The Natchez Burnin'," which was recorded in Chicago for Chess on July 19, 1956, and remade by the Mississippi bluesman twelve years later for the label's subsidiary Checker, which did not release it. This blues would prove to be the most successful and most covered recording on the subject.

After one more religious field recording on the theme, made by Robert Gilmore and collected by

Harry Oster in Louisiana during his 1956–1957 trip, the subsequent three compositions on the Natchez holocaust were recorded by John Lee Hooker. The first and second were studio recordings for Riverside (1959) and Galaxy (1961), respectively, the third a live recording at the 1963 Newport Folk Festival. All of Hooker's tributes to the victims of the burning report the wrong year in which the tragedy took place. The reason for the mistake is very likely due to Hooker's muddling of the years in which the Natchez Fire and the Tupelo disaster occurred.

Unsurprisingly, the importance of the Natchez Fire theme started to diminish thirty years after the burning, but it did not die out. The white rock-blues group the Groundhogs (1969) and Captain Beefheart (1972) covered Howlin' Wolf's original recording, which was later also reprised by black down-home blues musicians Willie Wright (1976) and Elmo Williams and Hezekiah Early (1997).

Air Blues

Tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, and similar weather phenomena have frequently swept, and often still sweep, the American continent. This explains why generic and topical songs on these subjects have always been popular since blues was first recorded. Among such compositions are Alger "Texas" Alexander's "Frost Texas Tornado Blues" (1930), Lucille "Bessie Jackson" Bogan's "Mean Twister" (1933), Kokomo Arnold's "Mean Old Twister" (1937), Jimmy Oden's "Florida Hurricane" (1948), John Lee Hooker's "Twister Blues" (1948 or 1949), and Matthew "Hogman" Maxey's "Lightnin' Blues" (1959), just to name a few. In 1994 Big Jack Johnson recorded "Ice Storm Blues," an original two-part composition on the great ice storm that left Clarksdale, Mississippi, without electricity for many weeks in February of that year. Interestingly, Johnson sings his verses to the tune of Howlin' Wolf's "The Natchez Burnin'." Five years later, James "Boo Boo" Davis recorded "Ice Storm," another blues on the event, where he sings imitating Howlin' Wolf's voice. Both compositions show the persistence and flexibility of African American blues lyrics.

Beside the above, numerous topical recordings dealing with air-related natural calamities were made in the prewar period, often during fieldwork. Some of these songs are still unissued in any format. Among them are Sin-Killer Griffin's "Wasn't That a Mighty Storm" (1934), Mose Andrews's "Mississippi Storm" (1935), Mamma Hagar Brown's "Ballad of the '93

Storm” and “Story of the ’93 Storm” (1936), Mrs. Lillie Knox’s “Ballad of the ’93 Storm” (1936), Tom Bell’s “Storm in Arkansas” (1940), and Roosevelt Charles’s “Hurricane Audrey Blues” (1960).

Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins, who was certainly one of the most prolific blues artists to record disaster songs, reveals a sort of obsession with hurricanes and storms, which may also help explain his pathological fear of flying. Hopkins’s long career is replete with generic and topical blues songs dealing with natural calamities, including “That Mean Old Twister” (1946, 1959), “Dark and Cloudy” (1950), “Hurricanes Carla and Esther” (1961), “California Showers” (1961), “Ice Storm Blues” (1962), “Heavy Snow” (1962), “The Twister” (1964), “Hurricane Betsy” (1965), “Hurricane Beulah” (1967), and “California Mudslide” (1969).

Among accidental tragedies, in June 1937 Leadbelly recorded for the Archive of Folk Song two different takes of “The Hindenberg Disaster” (*sic*), a mainly narrative account of how the German airship *Hindenburg*—the so-called “Titanic of the Sky” in that it was the largest aircraft ever to have flown—crashed immediately before landing at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey, on May 6, 1937 (Wolfe and Lornell, 1994, p. 208).

Earth Blues

Although California and many other states are very seismic areas, relatively few topical blues on earthquakes have been recorded. After escaping the Mississippi River flood, Alice Pearson may also have experienced the earthquake that shook Memphis on May 7, 1927. About two months later, she recorded “Memphis Earthquake,” the first of the three disaster songs she cut during her only session for Paramount. Robert Lowery’s “Earthquake Blues” (1989) is a recording about an earthquake that hit Santa Cruz, California.

Fire Blues

Besides the consistent corpus of songs on the Natchez fire, we are acquainted with a few nonthematic blues compositions that have fire as the main subject, but topical blues on fire disasters are infrequent. Among them are Roosevelt Sykes’s “Fire Detective Blues” (1929), Leola Manning’s “The Arcade Building Moan” (1930), perhaps Sam Collins’s unissued ARC take of “Atlanta Fire” (1931), “Sleepy” John Estes’s “Fire Department Blues (Martha Hardin)” (1938),

Lightnin’ Hopkins’s “Mister Charlie” (1960), and Rod Piazza’s “California Fire Blues” (1993).

In 1995 Big Bo McGee cut “The Burning,” an account of a black Natchez schoolhouse arson during Lyndon Johnson’s presidency. Independent of whether it depicts a true fact, the song sheds light on the technique of blues composition because it borrows the introductory stanza of Howlin’ Wolf’s “The Natchez Burnin’” and then develops a completely different theme.

Water Blues

Alongside gospel songs, sermons, and other religious compositions, a broad array of blues songs not specifically related to the 1927 flooding of the Mississippi River were recorded, especially in the prewar period, when similarly severe catastrophes occurred in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and other states. Among them are Ruby Gowdy’s “Florida Flood Blues” (1928), in fact on a hurricane causing flooding, Ivy Smith’s “Southern High Waters Blues” (1929), George Carter’s (probably Charlie Hicks) “Rising River Blues” (1929), Mattie Delaney’s “Tallahatchie River Blues” (1930), Sonny Scott’s “Rolling Water” (1933), Leroy Carr’s “Muddy Water” (1934), and Joe Pullum’s “Mississippi Flood Blues” (1935).

As a result of more floods in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland, Casey Bill Weldon recorded “Flood Water Blues No. 1 & 2” (1936) and Carl Martin cut “High Water Flood Blues” (1936). In 1937, Bumble Bee Slim’s “Rising River Blues,” Big Bill Broonzy’s “Southern Flood Blues” and its flip side “Terrible Flood Blues,” Kokomo Arnold’s “Wild Water Blues,” Sleepy John Estes’s “Floating Bridge,” and Lonnie Johnson’s “Flood Water Blues” and possibly also his “South Bound Backwater” (1938) were recorded on the floods that took place along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

Many years after the 1937 floods, Roosevelt Charles recorded for Harry Oster (1975, pp. 283–284) the unissued “Where Were You When the Archeta River Went Down?” (1959). Because of the decrease in the number of disastrous floods in the postwar period, fewer original songs on this phenomenon have been recorded. Among them are Lil’ Son Jackson’s “Cairo Blues” (1949), based on Blue Belle’s song, Larry Davis’s “Texas Flood” (1958), K. C. Douglas’s “High Water Rising” (1974), Michael “Hawkeye” Herman’s “The Great Flood of ’93” (1994), Fruteland Jackson’s “Chicago Flood Song” (1991), Guy Davis’s “Georgia Flood” (1998), Tom Townsley’s “Knob Creek Flood” (1998), and Chris Thomas King’s “Flooded in the Delta” (2001).

Conclusion

In addition to the different perspectives of religious and secular songs on both natural and accidental disasters (Smith, 1996; Evans, 2005; Monge, 2005) as well as to black blues people's less narrative and more personal approach to historical facts than that of white blues people, the following brief conclusions can be drawn from this survey of topical blues on disasters:

1. Regardless of their nature, scope, historical, social, economic, and geographical impact, number of victims, and so on, the diachronic development of how each disaster has been delved into is somewhat revelatory of its importance for blues musicians. Even the catastrophes they have overlooked have played a role of their own, if only because they were of minor appeal to the performer/composer both as an individual and as a spokesperson for his/her community. This may explain why a tragedy such as the burning of the Rhythm Club, which affected a geographically restricted area, acquires new meaning and goes beyond regional boundaries if it is seen as a doleful event that struck not only the Natchez black community but also the African American community as a whole.
2. When recording companies did not urge their artists to write and/or cut disaster songs with the aim to exploit a favorable market (especially in the wake of some early topical recordings' commercial success) and folksong collectors did not ask them to do the same in their effort to document and preserve the most genuine manifestations of popular music, the blues musicians' main purpose in composing such songs seems to derive from the need to urge their people not to forget. The fact that a singer makes recourse to the unifying power of memory is a sign of great maturity and awareness, and it is particularly significant for the poor, oppressed, and uneducated African American community at the dawn of blues recordings.
3. This partial study of the most popular disaster themes shows that, possibly because of their higher occurrence in the early days of the blues, natural disasters seem to have inspired blues people's imagination more than accidental disasters. But this is merely a statistical datum. If we compare the two greatest twentieth-century tragedies, the *Titanic* theme has shown itself to be more malleable and resilient than the 1927 Mississippi River flood. Original songs on the sinking of the *Titanic* are occasionally still being composed, while the flooding has elicited little (if any) new material in the last sixty years. This turns out to be true also for disasters that had a comparatively minor artistic impact, for instance, natural calamities (the Dry Spell, the Tupelo storm, the St. Louis cyclone) as opposed to accidental catastrophes (the Rhythm Club fire). This leads one to think that there might be an underlying logical explanation. By intuition, one such reason could be found in the fact that accidental disasters are more subject to elicit biting comments than natural disasters because of the latter's casualness, and it may not seem fortuitous that the two accidental catastrophes examined here specifically concerned either an exclusively black or white group of people. Indeed, upon closer examination there seem to be no clear-cut different attitudes in the way natural and accidental disasters are treated by blues people in their lyrics. A more-or-less covert theme of protest sporadically runs through topical blues on natural calamities (see Lonnie Johnson's "Broken Levee Blues"). Conversely, in their songs on accidental disasters blues people are not always prone to make harsh critical remarks on the facts that have occurred (see Howlin' Wolf's "The Natchez Burnin'"). The main feature distinguishing songs on natural and accidental disasters, therefore, remains their quality to stand the test of time. Topical compositions on a specific subject should not be examined as events in a timeline but as a survey of history and perspectives.
4. Some songs, such as Howlin' Wolf's "The Natchez Burnin'," have worked both as catalysts and "preservatives" for subsequent original compositions on the same or other disaster topics. Others, such as Bessie Smith's "Back-Water Blues" and Blind Willie Johnson's "God Moves on the Water," have mainly produced a great number of cover versions, bringing about relatively minor variations to lyrics and music. The consequences of disasters are sometimes used to symbolize sex problems for the singer and his/her community in a typical blues mode. The most explicit example is Barbecue Bob's "Mississippi Heavy Water Blues," where water is the logical element to

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be used as a metaphor for sexual insemination, especially in a prevalently rural community at the mercy of weather conditions.

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TOPICAL BLUES: SPORTS

Sports contests involving individuals of African descent in America date from the early colonial era when slaves trained horses for racing and cocks for fighting. During the years leading up to the Civil War, blacks competed only with each other in a variety of sports as well as hunted and fished. In the late nineteenth century, blacks competed in organized sports clubs of their own and on college campuses. Following World War I, blacks competed against whites in a limited number of organized sports contests. After World War II, blacks successfully integrated most organized sports and achieved social recognition as champion athletes. This effort to compete equally with whites and to achieve championship status for blacks informed the lyrics of blues music.

Blacks participated in sports activities, as Arthur Ashe notes, from their earliest arrival in colonial America. They ran foot races, fenced with sticks, wrestled, boxed, and played ball games. Slaves distinguished themselves and attended mixed social events by training horses and gaming birds for their white owners. Laws prohibited, however, all other sporting contests between whites, slaves, and free men of color.

In the early nineteenth century, two black American men achieved international recognition as boxers. William Richmond, a freeborn black man in New York, boxed his way to contention in England, where he challenged and lost a bout for the championship. Tom Molineaux, born a slave in Virginia, showed such prowess that he won large sums of money for his white owner. He eventually won his freedom from slavery by his successful boxing matches. Molineaux traveled to London, where he trained with William Richmond to fight for the championship. Like Richmond, he lost in a rigged bout. Judges waived the rules in both bouts to the benefit of the white defending English champion, Thomas Cribb. In a subsequent rematch, Molineaux again lost to Cribb.

Blacks in America excelled and dominated the sport of horse racing during the nineteenth century. This sport grew in popularity during this era, and all social classes, including slaves, watched these racing events. The first Match Race in 1823 pitted the best horse and jockey of the North and South against each other in a series of four-mile heats before a crowd of thousands of people. By the time of the Civil War, the best jockeys and trainers were slaves as no one matched their abilities.

Ashe further notes that the Young Men’s Christian Association or YMCA in 1853 and later the YWCA for women in 1893 opened their doors to “colored” branches and provided both athletic facilities as well as temporary housing for blacks. By the late nineteenth century, black land-grant colleges developed sports programs for their students. The Second Morrill Act passed by Congress in 1890, however, hindered these colleges. This act dictated that federal funding for land-grant colleges was to be distributed at the discretion of individual state legislatures. In the rising tide of Jim Crow laws across the South, many states used this opportunity to restrict their funding for the black land-grant colleges. Sports facilities in many black schools suffered because of this for most of the next century.

By 1908, blacks boxed in all weight classes for world championship status except for the heavy-weight title. In that year, a black heavyweight, Jack Johnson, claimed the championship and held it for the next seven years. Other black boxing champions

of the era included George Dixon, Joe Gans, Aaron Brown, and Joe Walcott.

Even as black athletes persevered in the face of racial restrictions during the early twentieth century, they participated in more integrated sporting contests with each passing year. William Dehart Hubbard won the first gold medal as a black athlete competing in an individual event during the 1924 Paris Olympics. Jesse Owens astonished the world by claiming four gold medals in the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

Joe Louis emerged in 1937 as the heavyweight champion of the world when he knocked out James Braddock in Chicago's Comiskey Park. Louis had lost the previous year to Max Schmeling but beat him in a rematch in 1938 to retain the heavyweight crown that he held until 1949. The achievement of Louis came after a period of years when blacks were again excluded from heavyweight championship bouts. Harry Willis was a superior heavyweight boxing talent who never fought against Jack Dempsey in the 1920s only because he was black.

Ashe also notes that Chicago became the black sporting capital of the country after World War I. The *Chicago Defender* newspaper covered black sporting events in detail and found national distribution along the railroad systems radiating from the city. Basketball, baseball, and tennis flourished, with popular citywide support. The Chicago Cardinals fielded teams with black players that competed in the National Football League.

After World War II, more sports organizations opened their doors to black participation. Perhaps the most celebrated event in the postwar period was the arrival of Jackie Robinson to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. It would take twelve more years, however, before every major league team had a black player. Before Robinson's arrival with the Dodgers, blacks had played a form of baseball since the early nineteenth century. Black soldiers played organized baseball games during the Civil War. Excluded from major league baseball, black businessmen organized and financed the Negro National League in 1920. The NNL produced many superlative athletes such as James Bell, Josh Gibson, and Leroy Paige.

Equality issues remain. In recent years sports has sought to provide equal access to athletic facilities for women through a change in federal law with the passing of Title IX. Although black players have integrated successfully in most organized sports programs, there is still limited black participation at the administrative and management level.

Black sports experience and achievement in horse racing, baseball, and boxing inspired a number of blues songs. No less than nine blues songs chronicle the events of Joe Louis and his success as a boxer.

Songs such as "Champ Joe Louis (King of the Gloves)" recorded by Bill Gaither in 1938 express the pride and desire for acceptance that many felt following his championship effort.

BILL GRAVES

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TOPICAL BLUES: URBAN RENEWAL

Urban renewal efforts in America grew out of the squalid social conditions found in cities dating from the late nineteenth century. Early social reformers first called attention to impoverished neighborhoods and the need for improvements. The Progressive movement followed in the early twentieth century and inspired New Deal legislation that addressed housing problems. After the end of World War II, the federal government directed larger urban renewal projects. The social conditions that surrounded the need for urban renewal also influenced the lyrical content of blues songs.

The Census Bureau declared the American frontier officially closed in 1890. At that time, only a third of the population lived in cities. From 1890 until World War I, a major population shift occurred as millions of people teamed into industrial cities to live and work. City governments in the late nineteenth century operated political machines that exploited their constituents. These local machines ignored the overall well being of their inhabitants as more and more people lived in inadequate housing.

Reformers such as Jane Addams in Chicago and Lillian Wald in New York brought the social problems that grew out of these living conditions to the public's attention. Other social reformers took up the fight and passed local tenement laws in an effort to improve living conditions. With the establishment of

the Public Works Administration in 1933, the New Deal of President Franklin Roosevelt cleared slums and built low-rent housing.

The Housing Act of 1937 followed but fell short of its purpose to improve the safety and sanitary living conditions in America's cities. While more slums were cleared, the building of low-rent housing units did not keep pace with the number of housing units demolished. The Housing Act of 1949 again attempted to develop standard housing for individuals and families living in poor neighborhoods. The results of Title I of this act, however, saw the transfer and subsidy of low-income housing properties into the hands of private developers, who often used this property for purposes other than housing. Because of this act, more people became displaced.

The Housing Act of 1954 focused more on the rehabilitation of houses and the preservation of existing neighborhoods. If slums were cleared, cities were required to show that displaced families were relocated to adequate housing in redeveloped areas. Another feature of the Housing Act of 1954 was that it allowed citizen participation in the urban renewal effort. While the initial response to this act was very optimistic, few urban renewal areas actually succeeded.

Social conditions for southern blacks in America in the early twentieth century forced them to make hard choices in their lives. They could stay in the sharecropping system and live with the restrictions of Jim Crow laws in the South or they could move to a city in hopes of finding better opportunities for work. The living conditions for many blacks in the South were squalid—dilapidated houses without toilets, baths, running water, heat, gas, or electricity. With optimism and determination, many individuals and families chose to move.

The outbreak of World War I brought the offer of jobs in northern cities. The black populations of cities such as Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and New York began to expand more rapidly than their neighborhoods could adequately house. This crowding resulted in “hot bed” apartments, where three groups of tenants shared a dwelling with each group having access to the space for eight hours during a twenty-four-hour day. Multiple families shared one toilet. People lived in dark, stale basements. Tenants often paid high rents for these living conditions. Those who could not afford rent slept on sidewalk grates or in doorways.

While a growing number of black migrants found better jobs and a decent place to live for their families, many were forced to deal with criminal predators. Con artists swindled unsuspecting people out of their money. Desperate young women worked as

prostitutes. Local churches, community shelters, and traveler's aid groups sprang up and addressed these social conditions. These efforts provided temporary housing, job postings, and assistance for children. The National Urban League, which was founded in 1911, helped members of black communities in northern cities. The league addressed the larger societal needs of its members in securing better working and living conditions.

After World War I, the federal government expanded its role in finding solutions to urban blight, and higher expectations came to bear on these solutions. Often these expectations went unmet, with efforts for successful urban renewal falling short. The level of frustration reached its high point during the Great Society years of President Lyndon Johnson. Funding for urban renewal projects was redirected instead to support the war in Vietnam. As the Great Society failed to adequately address social problems, riots broke out in a number of American cities in the 1960s.

While some improvements succeeded in cities, federal plans often introduced new problems in trying to correct past mistakes and subsequently failed. A number of factors contributed to the failures. Political concerns challenged urban renewal from the beginning. Many city governments condoned the racist practice of confining people to specific neighborhoods while private businesses restricted the sale of insurance or the extension of credit by policies known as redlining. Even as late as 1950, the National Real Estate Board restricted the sale of property and prevented people from living anywhere they could.

Many cities touted a reform agenda while they continued machine politics as usual. Patronage often took a higher priority than urban renewal. Chicago professed to be the “city that worked” when in fact substandard housing existed in many neighborhoods. Chicago aldermen ignored the failure of high-rise public housing for many years because they did not want to dilute their voting constituency at election time.

Local interests often never reached consensus as citizen interest groups became splintered in their demands. Conflicts resulted on how best to develop urban areas, with calls for social reforms remaining narrowly focused. Political agendas for cities changed over time and reduced the public interest in the success of many urban renewal projects. In an effort to maintain fiscal responsibility, communities often ignored the indirect social costs of urban blight. The frequent shifts in market forces hindered private investment in the business of urban renewal.

Blighted areas in cities have been linked to a number of social problems. High population density can

lead to high rates of death, social welfare, illiteracy, juvenile crime, sex offenses, joblessness, divorce, social diseases, alcohol and drug abuse, mental disorders, murder, and suicide. These urban conditions inspired a number of blues songs.

Charlie Jackson recorded “Maxwell Street Blues” in 1925, in which the difficulties of a young vagrant woman in Chicago are lamented by her boyfriend after she has been arrested for prostitution and taken to a police station. In 1938, Huddie Ledbetter recorded “The Bourgeois Blues,” a song about the frustration and humiliation of a couple searching for a place to live in a white neighborhood.

Alberta Hunter was the first of many blues artists to record “Down South Blues” in 1923, in which she sang about the difficulties of falling behind in the rent during wintertime and the prospect of returning to the Jim Crow South, which at least would be warm.

The difficulties of urban life informed the early songs of Bob Dylan, whose musical roots include the blues. In his song “Hard Times in New York Town” written in 1963 there are echoes of Huddie Ledbetter’s “The Bourgeois Blues.” In Dylan’s song “Only a Hobo” written in 1963, he sings about the death of a homeless person defeated by urban life.

BILL GRAVES

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TOURE, ALI FARKA

b. 1939; Niafounke, Mali

Guitarist and singer. Almost fifty at the time of his international discovery, Toure’s back-to-the-source stylings provided a fascinating insight into blues

cross-pollination, especially when paired with Western players such as Ry Cooder, Taj Mahal, and Gatemouth Brown.

Toure, who defied tribal tradition to become a musician despite his noble birth, began his career on indigenous single-string instruments before taking up the guitar. He heard American music for the first time in the late 1960s and was struck by the similarity of sound between John Lee Hooker and his own rumbling, low-register vocals and droning, midtempo rhythms drawn from the music of Mali. The world had the resemblance brought to its attention with the 1994 release of *Talking Timbuktu*, a collaborative effort with Cooder that won a Grammy and went to the top of *Billboard*’s world music charts.

Toure sang in eleven African languages in addition to occasional English. After his eponymous debut in 1988 he recorded steadily, adding three more titles, including *African Blues*, *The Source*, and *The River* before the success of *Talking Timbuktu*. He continued recording, returning to a more roots-oriented approach with *Niafunke* in 1999 but also maintained his native, nonmusic occupation as a Niger river rice farmer.

MICHAEL POINT

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TOUSSAINT, ALLEN

b. 14 January 1938; New Orleans, LA

Allen Toussaint ranks among America’s most influential and versatile musical figures, having excelled as a songwriter, arranger, session pianist, and producer. His influence extends across the popular music landscape, and though he’s most often associated with the tunes from his native New Orleans, Toussaint has enjoyed success in R&B, jazz, country, blues, and pop. His playing blends the wealth of Crescent City styles, some barrelhouse blues, some marching band references, jazzy intervals, and sweeping octave leaps and passages. Indeed, Toussaint made his initial mark as a player, replacing Huey “Piano” Smith in Earl King’s band and then being hired to provide the piano backgrounds for Fats Domino at a recording session by Dave Bartholomew whenever Domino’s schedule made him unavailable.

By the late 1950s, Toussaint was already cranking out hits and frequently doubling as the keyboard player and/or producer on releases by Irma Thomas, Jessie Hill, Benny Spellman, and many others. He sometimes took the pen name Naomi Neville, but whatever he called himself, Toussaint stayed busy through the 1960s. A pair of relatively lightweight instruments Toussaint penned became huge pop standards, “Java” for Al Hirt and “Whipped Cream” for Herb Alpert (later also the theme for the forgettable television show *The Dating Game*).

The second phase of Toussaint’s career came when he teamed with Marshall Sehorn during the late 1960s and created Sansu Enterprises. He later opened a premier recording operation in Sea-Saint Studios during the 1970s and continued enjoying big hits working with Lee Dorsey, the Meters, Dr. John, and Labelle and providing arrangements for records featuring the Band (“Rock of Ages”) and Paul Simon (“Kodachrome”). He also started a solo recording career, issuing releases for Scepter and Warner Brothers.

Ironically, Toussaint’s solo releases have often tended to be inconsistent at best and disposable at worst. Still, the good moments from such albums as *Southern Nights* and *From a Whisper to a Scream* have been superb, and Glen Campbell’s version of “Southern Nights” eventually won the Country Music Association Song of the Year honors for 1977 and a BMI citation as Most Performed Song of the Year. As the 1970s and 1980s continued, Toussaint tunes were covered by the Pointer Sisters, Bonnie Raitt, the Judds, and Robert Palmer, among others.

Yet another element of Toussaint’s talent was illuminated during the 1980s, when he contributed to the award-winning off-Broadway play *Staggerlee* as well as writing both words and music to the play *William Christopher*. Toussaint was both principal composer and musical director of the 1991 Broadway production of *High Rollers Social Aid and Pleasure Club*. The documentary *Piano Players Rarely Ever Play Together* spotlighted both his skills and competitive fire as he performed alongside New Orleans keyboard giants Professor Longhair (the person he considers his main mentor) and Tuts Washington.

Besides receiving the Louisiana Lifetime Achievement Award, Toussaint was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998. In recent years, he has been playing frequently at clubs in the French Quarter and presiding over the NYNO (New York & New Orleans) label in New Orleans. His late 1990s release *Connected* showcased the complete range of Toussaint material from driving blues and gritty R&B to country-influenced soul and pop, and it also bridged multiple generations of Crescent City

performers with guest stints from trumpeter Dave Bartholomew, guitarist Leo Nocentelli, drummer Russell Batiste, and saxophonist Amadee Castenell.

RON WYNN

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Discography: AMG

TOWNSEND, HENRY

b. 27 October 1909; Shelby, MS

Townsend had a typical, almost clichéd, early life for a blues singer, moving a number of times from Mississippi to Cairo, Illinois, in his childhood before running away from home at age nine. There he shined shoes at a speakeasy and acted as a go-between with bootleggers before working briefly in a refining and rubber plant. As he said himself in his autobiography, “I knew how to live without doing too much of anything.”

He was inspired to take up the guitar after hearing a friend of his father, although his first instrument was harmonica. A girlfriend bought him a guitar, which he eventually destroyed in frustration at not being able to get it to sound right.

In 1929, he recorded four sides for Columbia in the distinctive St. Louis style, with its attractive upper string figures and melodic rhythm—a style heard in archetypal form in the two recordings by the older Henry Spaulding. Further sessions followed between 1931 and 1937 for Paramount and Victor/Bluebird, and Townsend remains the sole early bluesman to have recorded at least once in every decade to the end of the century.

He worked closely with other bluesmen in St. Louis, including Lonnie Johnson, Roosevelt Sykes, J. D. Short, and Walter Davis (whom, Townsend insists startlingly, he taught how to play piano), and lived the life of an urban bluesman in clubs, bars, and dances. In the 1950s he formed a band with dancing girls, and he officially retired at age sixty eight, only to reappear after a break. He also appeared in the films *Blues Like Showers of Rain* (1970) and *The Devil’s Music* (1976) and in a TV documentary called *That’s the Way to Do It* (1986).

In recent years he has been a regular guest at festivals in the United States and Europe and despite his advancing years has remained a highly competent

performer. In 1985 he was presented with a National Heritage Award from the National Endowment for the Arts and with a plaque calling him “the Patriarch of St. Louis Blues” in the St. Louis Walk of Fame. And he rounded off the century with an album called *My Story* (APO 2014), playing guitar and piano on twelve newly written songs.

It’s probably fair to say Townsend’s best work dates back to the 1920s and 1930s when his inspiration was fresh, and numbers such as “Mistreated Blues” “Sick with the Blues,” and “Jack of Diamonds Georgia Rub” (strongly influenced by Clifford Gibson) stand as excellent examples of the slightly urbanized country blues. But he’s had a long and creative career as a thoughtful and impressive artist, never quite first rank but never far removed.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

TOWNSEND, VERNELL PERRY

b. 5 April 1930; Brinkley, AR

d. 21 September 1995; St. Louis, MO

Townsend moved with her family to St. Louis while young. She met and married Henry Townsend in the mid-1960s and occasionally performed with him. Some recordings of her with her husband were issued on the Adelphi, Nighthawk, Wolf, and Southland labels.

EDWARD KOMARA

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TRANSATLANTIC

British record company established by Nathan Joseph in 1963, devoted primarily to folk music. Important blues issues, especially on the budget Xtra label, included original 1966 recordings by Doctor Ross. Material derived from Folkways included unissued recordings of Big Joe Williams. Trading ceased in

the 1970s and subsequent revivals have not been important for blues.

HOWARD RYE

TRANSCRIPTION

Definition: A rendering from one medium to another. In the blues, this may have two meanings: (1) a close imitation or a rearrangement of an instrumental accompaniment for another instrument, such as piano accompaniment rearranged for guitar, or a guitar accompaniment rearranged for a band of several instruments; (2) a rendering of written words and notated music, from live performances or sound recordings. This entry will concern itself with the second sense of this term.

Completed transcriptions are secondary sources to the musical primary source, but they may be useful as illustrations to a written or oral presentation, as resources toward analytic comparison of several blues performances, and as a helpful aid to the recovery of content should the recording be later damaged. Also, the very act of transcribing puts a student in an excellent position to observe the habits or tendencies in a blues musician’s lyric formulation and/or musical style. The best transcriptions not only convey the words but have notes on their meanings and overall functions within the whole song.

Lyric Transcription

Method

For a faithful lyric transcription, the best copies of the original issues, or the clearest sounding reissues, of the selected performances should be used. The compact disc laser technology permits repeated playings of a passage without damage to the disc. Some transcribers make a cassette tape of the performance, then play back the tape on a special player that rewinds at short lengths (a foot-pedal control for rewinding is recommended, so as to leave the hands free for writing or typing).

The lyric transcriber should be aware of any historical aspects of the recording, such as when it was made and from where the musician came. Hence, knowledge of local or regional lore is helpful. So also is knowledge of slang and phrases particular to the musician’s culture and times. Reading interviews of the musician and of his/her contemporaries is a good way to prepare. Three dictionaries of slang will

be of use: Harold Wentworth and Stuart Flexner's *Dictionary of American Slang*, 2nd supplemental edition (New York: Crowell, 1975), Robert L. Chapman's *New Dictionary of American Slang* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), and Eric Partridge's *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8th edition (New York: Macmillan, 1984).

As the transcriber gains practice, he or she will become aware of several plays of word exercises, such as these described in the *Blues* entry: appropriation; phrase formulas; phonetic imitation; paraphrase; substitutions; telescoping; rhythmic conversion; adaptation of locale or gender; and lists. Study of these devices, and identification of others yet to be discerned, will aid toward the clear, purposeful understanding of a set of lyrics.

To resolve incomplete or garbled lyrics, or to determine meanings of rarely used slang words, the transcriber will need to find instances of a word or phrase occurring in different song lyrics. Works that take textual lines or lyrics and organize them by words used in common are called concordances. For the blues, one such concordance has been prepared by Michael Taft (1979) with a body of selected lyrics from pre-1942 blues. With ongoing transcription efforts aiming toward a rendering of most if not all pre-1942 blues and sacred music, we will be in a position to prepare a new concordance, then perhaps a dictionary of terms used in those records.

Problems and Challenges

Worn and damaged recordings pose the greatest challenges for transcription. A troublesome group is the 12000/13000 Paramount label records, which were pressed on a cheap and noisy shellac mixture, and many of the later issues released in 1930–1932 survive in five copies or less. Among these older recordings, some classic examples may be examined:

1. For the first chorus of Louise Johnson's "On the Wall" (1930, Paramount), Taft transcribed the opening lyric as

I'm going up to Memphis, goin' to Cincinnati'.

The high surface noise distorts the final word. Also, what little is known about Johnson indicates she was active in Memphis and north Mississippi, but not in Cincinnati. Informed by Memphis history, the line is better rendered as

I'm going to Memphis, goin' to Jim Kinnane's,

in reference to his Monarch saloon.

2. Charlie Patton recordings are a special challenge, not only because of the poor physical shape of the surviving copies but also because of his indistinct singing, even in person. The lyrics for "Some Summer Day" (1930, Paramount) appear to be difficult to distinguish, until the transcriber recognizes that the tune is the same as for that of the Mississippi Sheiks' "Sitting on Top of the World" (1930, OKeh). Playing the two records side by side, the transcriber will find many concordant appropriations from the clear-sounding Mississippi Sheiks performances in the Patton record.
3. A similar case is Jabo Williams's "Ko Ko Mo Blues" (1932, Paramount), for which all reissued copies have much surface noise. Comparison with other performances in the "Kokomo" song group (see *One Time Blues* entry) such as Kokomo Arnold's "Original Old Kokomo Blues" (1934) and Robert Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago" (1936) yield the "one and one is two" numerical game buried beneath the surface noise of the Williams record.
4. Son House's "Dry Spell Blues Parts I and II" (1930, Paramount) has been transcribed many times. One typical transcription of the final line of Part II is Robert Macleod's rendering as

For it's very likely, goin' to rain no more,

a respectable effort in view of House's raised voice and the high surface noise near the end of that disc side. Dick Spottswood (2001) offers this line as

God sent Elijah, but there ain't no word,

in reference to Elijah's initial appearance in the Bible at I Kings 17:1. Such an offering becomes plausible when it is remembered that House was a preacher as well as a bluesman.

When working with performances recorded to magnetic tape (1940s on), in stereo (1950s on), and by digital means (1980s on) and pressed onto vinyl LPs (1940s on) or compact discs (1980s on), the degree of difficulty is considerably lessened. But even on the clearest fidelity recordings, lyrics may become distorted or disfigured when sung to a melody, particularly one in a high register, or to a rhythm different from that of the words as spoken. The transcriber needs to be reminded that blues are sung, rarely spoken; also, the manners of speaking may change from era to era and from one generation to the next. Hence, there is no time like the present to transcribe, even recent and contemporary blues.

Publications

The following are full citations of works mentioned above and of classic lyric transcription presentations now considered standard:

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EDWARD KOMARA

Music Transcription

Methods

Transcription involves the translation of music from live or recorded performance to musical notation. The process is facilitated by a number of devices, the most significant being the human ear. An individual possessing perfect (absolute) pitch—the innate ability to identify tones without the assistance of external sources—has a natural advantage for transcribing. Through thorough ear training, though, one can develop relative pitch, i.e., the ability to identify pitches within context.

A typical ear-training course commences with an examination of intervals—the building blocks of music. An interval describes the relationship between two pitches; in Western music, intervals are spelled according to the number of diatonic scale degrees contained and the number of semitones (half-steps) between pitches, expressed in both numbers and letters (for example, minor third: m3, perfect fifth: P5). Prerequisite to transcription is the ability to aurally identify simple and compound intervals (more than an octave apart), both melodic and harmonic

(simultaneous). From intervals come chords, modes, and scales; the ability to recognize these pitch collections, and their placements on musical staves, is also crucial. Blues music is often colored with microtones—intervals smaller than semitones; therefore, the ability to recognize these minute pitch variations is useful.

Ear-training and transcribing also involve rhythmic cognition: a perception of the temporal placement and division of sounds, and the ability to transform these relationships into visual symbols. Developing rhythmic cognition necessitates an understanding of meter—the pattern in which a regular series of pulses is distributed—and the study of various rhythmic devices, including syncopation, that is, the shifting of an accent from a strong to a weak beat. Blues transcription calls for an understanding of the genre's basic rhythmic feels (boogie, shuffle, or the like) and an awareness of common rhythmic devices, including swing, and rushing ahead or laying behind the beat.

In addition to advanced aural skills, transcription requires general musical knowledge. Key is an awareness of the standard rules of music notation, in addition to any specialized forms and symbols, such as tablature—a graphic representation of the guitar fretboard. An understanding of a given instrument's characteristic timbre, range, key, and technical capabilities is useful. For the purpose of blues transcription, it is most beneficial to be acquainted with guitar, upright and electric bass, harmonica, piano, and assorted reed and percussion instruments. One should be familiar with the blues' performance practices and forms (eight, twelve, and sixteen bars). In transcribing, though, it is important to listen objectively, that is, not to let knowledge of the genre influence aural cognition. This sort of bias often results in erroneous transcriptions.

Transcription benefits from a variety of electronic and other aids. For a transcriber lacking perfect pitch, reference points are critical. Common tools include the pitch pipe, the electronic keyboard, and the digital tuner. Prior to the advent of digital technology, transcribers typically worked from records and cassettes. On those formats, repeated listening could deteriorate music and distort its pitch. In addition, it was more difficult to transcribe fast passages from a decelerated record or cassette, because the pitch was proportionally affected; slowing a cassette to half-speed, for example, would make the music sound an octave lower.

Currently, it is most practical to transcribe recorded music from a digital source. Multispeed compact disc players and computer software programs have been commercially available since the

1990s. Digital devices feature more efficient cueing and reviewing functions. They offer looping and fine-tuning controls and are advantageous for comprehending swift passages; a number of user-friendly computer programs are capable of slowing down recordings in varying increments while maintaining their exact pitch levels. In addition, some digital devices are capable of partially or totally obscuring vocal parts, thereby assisting instrumental transcription; graphic equalizers can further enhance the frequencies of a given instrument.

In conjunction with a faithful playback device, headphones are also useful for transcription. A high quality, full frequency pair can reveal details not apparent in loudspeaker listening. Because transcribing can be a lengthy process, headphones with soft, comfortable earpieces are preferable.

Problems and Challenges

In transcribing, a number of problems and challenges can arise, especially when the sources are early recordings—often hosts to various anomalies. Blues guitar transcription can be especially difficult. Any given note can be played in numerous locations on the instrument's neck, and alternate tunings are possible, disrupting the strings' interval relationships. Further, a host of nonstandard techniques is possible; without the benefit of witnessing a performer live, it may be difficult to ascertain the means of his or her sound production.

Such was the case with Robert Johnson, an enigmatic musician who, when recording in the 1930s, performed with his back to onlookers. Following the publication of misleading transcriptions some six decades later, it took a small research team to uncover Johnson's actual techniques. It was not until analyzing the performer's antecedents—including St. Louis blues pianists and harmonica players—that the team realized Johnson's specialized tunings, which deviated from standard blues practice. A more accurate volume, *Robert Johnson: The New Transcriptions* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard) was published in 1999.

Conversely, some music can be easy to comprehend yet difficult to notate. Unintentional pitches, which insignificantly contribute to a transcription, may also be present. Many guitar transcriptions of the 1980s suffer from hypertranscription. A cumbersome amount of symbols and footnotes were used to account for incidental noises, effectively masking the music. Thus, it is important to view transcription as supplemental to live or recorded music.

Publications

The Hal Leonard company has an excellent series of blues transcription folios, including the aforementioned Robert Johnson book. Each book contains note-for-note transcriptions of recorded versions. Additional notated music transcriptions have been published by Mel Bay Publications in blues, rock, and various old-time music styles, including transcribers such as Woody Mann and Lenny Carlson. Among magazines, *Guitar One* also features quality blues transcriptions, in a streamlined, easy-to-read presentation.

ADAM PERLMUTTER

TRENIERS

Vocal group. Formed in 1947, the Treniers (Milt Trenier, Cliff Trenier, Claude Trenier, Don Hill, and Eugene Gilbeaux) were organized by brothers Cliff, Claude, and Milt Trenier as a high-powered show band. They recorded a string of imaginative early 1950s R&B hits and enjoyed a long run as a popular Las Vegas lounge act.

JOHN SINCLAIR

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AMG (Richie Unterberger); Larkin (as Trenier Twins) McGarvey, Seamus. "Rockin' Is Still His Business." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 47 (October 1989): 18–23.

Discography

Singles "Poontang," "(Uh Oh) Get Out of the Car," "Rockin' Is Our Business," "Go! Go! Go!" (Epic Records).

The Treniers on TV (1955, Epic).

Rockin' Is Our Bizness (1983, Edsel Records).

Cool It Baby (1988, Bear Family).

Hey Sister Lucy (1988, Bear Family).

They Rock! They Roll! They Swing! The Best of The Treniers (1995, Epic/Legacy).

TRIBBLE, THOMAS E. "TNT"

b. 5 August 1921; Ferrel, PA

Drummer and singer active in Washington, D.C. After World War II army service, he joined and led various bands, then in 1949 he joined Frank Motley's Motley Crew for three years. From 1952 he has led his own groups, touring the East Coast performing R&B, early rock 'n' roll, and soul music.

EDWARD KOMARA

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 Bruder, Jay. "R&B in Washington DC: The TNT Tribble Story." *Blues and Rhythm* no. 45 (July 1989): 4-7.

Discography: LSFP**TRICE, RICHARD**

b. 16 November 1917; Hillsborough, NC
 d. 6 April 2000; Durham, NC

Guitarist in Piedmont style; brother of Willie Trice. In the 1930s he performed with and was influenced by Blind Boy Fuller. In the 1940s he moved to Newark, New Jersey, but in the following decade he returned to North Carolina. In later years he was performing sacred music and refused all offers to play blues.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris; Larkin
 Mills, Fetzer, Jr. "Richard Trice: You Can't Smoke a Cigarette at Both Ends." *Living Blues* no. 141 (September/October 1998): 44-47.

Discography: DGR; LSFP**TRICE, WILLIAM AUGUSTA "WILLIE"**

b. 10 February 1910; Hillsborough, NC
 d. 10 December 1976; Durham, NC

Guitarist whose principal influence was Reverend Gary Davis. He performed with his brother Richard Trice in the 1930s, and they made records for Decca in 1937. He stayed in North Carolina his entire life, playing music. In his last years he was recorded again, the resulting LP issued before his death.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris; Larkin
 Lowry, Pete. "Willie Trice." *Living Blues* no. 31 (March/April 1977): 6, and no. 32 (May/June 1977): 6.

Discography: DGR, LSFP**TRILON**

Oakland label, operated by Rene Lamarre and others from 1946 to 1948. Jazz and gospel formed a

significant part of its almost fifty issues, but there were records by R&B group the Four Aces and pianist/vocalist Viviane Greene as well as blues by Lowell Fulson and Jimmy McCracklin.

RAY ASTBURY

Discography: McGrath

See also Fulson, Lowell; McCracklin, Jimmy

TRI-SAX-UAL SOUL CHAMPS

A trans-generational saxophone summit that soulfully melded blues, funk, and jazz stylists on the 1990 Black Top release "Go Girl," the Tri-sax-ual Soul Champs combined decades of elite experience. Grady "Fats" Jackson, on vocals and alto and tenor saxes, played with Elmore James in Atlanta and Chicago and was in Little Walter's mid-1950s touring band. Tenor saxist Sil Austin brought extensive jazz experience via stints with Roy Eldridge, Tiny Bradshaw, and the Cootie Williams Big Band. Austin's "Ping Pong" was recorded by Ella Fitzgerald, and he had R&B hits, such as "Slow Walk," on his own. Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff, on alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones, is the most widely recorded hornman in modern blues, working with Earl King, Long John Hunter, Hubert Sumlin, and literally dozens of other major blues figures. He also has extensive credits as a producer and arranger, in addition to leading the Texas Horns.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

Point, Michael. "Riffs." *Down Beat* 57 no. 10 (October 1990): 14.

Discography: Lord**TRIX**

Trix Records was founded in 1973 by blues musicologist Pete Lowry, who ran the label out of his hometown of New Paltz, New York. The label was devoted to releasing the music of the blues artists whom Lowry had researched and recorded while conducting fieldwork in the American Southeast. Many of these musicians represented the "Piedmont blues" style. The artists Lowry recorded for Trix include Roy Dunn, Peg Leg Sam, Robert Jr. Lockwood,

TRIX

Pernell Charity, and Guitar Shorty (Kearney). In 1997, the Trix catalog was acquired by 32 Jazz, which has rereleased many Trix recordings.

STEVEN GALBRAITH

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TROUT, WALTER

b. 6 March 1951; Ocean City, NJ

Veteran guitarist honed his chops during two decades as sideman to John Lee Hooker, Big Mama Thornton, and John Mayall. He spent most of the early 1980s as a member of Canned Heat but began fronting his own band in the late 1980s, playing a guitar-based jam-rock blues hybrid similar to Savoy Brown.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

- Life in the Jungle* (1990, Ruf 1086).
- Transition* (1992, Provogue 70442).
- Positively Beale Street* (1997, Provogue 71042).
- Relentless* (2003, Ruf 1083).

TRUCKS, DEREK

b. 8 June 1979; Jacksonville, FL

Nephew of Allman Brothers Band drummer Butch Trucks, guitarist Derek Trucks has found fame both as a member of his uncle's legendary band and leading his own combo, which plays a more rhythm and blues-oriented music with streaks of jazz. By the time he was asked to join the Allman Brothers Band at age twenty, Trucks had already recorded three albums

(although *Soul Serenade* would not be released until 2003) under his own name. Since then, he has divided his time between the Allman Brothers Band and his own band, touring nearly constantly with one or the other.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG

Selected Recordings

- The Derek Trucks Band* (1997, Landslide 1020).
- Joyful Noise* (2002, Columbia 86507).
- Live at Georgia Theatre* (2004, Columbia/Sony 92598).

TRUMPET RECORDS/GLOBE MUSIC/ DIAMOND RECORD COMPANY

Lillian Shedd McMurry (1921–1999) and her husband Willard McMurry (1906–1998) established the Diamond Record Company in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1951 as an outgrowth of their Record Mart and furniture store on Farish Street. Trumpet was the main label, with Globe active as a subsidiary in 1954–1955. The name "Trumpet" was a reference to the angel Gabriel and a reflection of the McMurrays' interest in gospel music, which they recorded with the Southern Sons as well as the Argo Singers and the Famous Blue Jay Singers of Birmingham.

The label was best known for producing the first recordings of Aleck Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson II) and Elmore James. Among Williamson's Trumpet hits were "Eyesight to the Blind" (1951, Trumpet 129), "Mighty Long Time" (1951, Trumpet 166), and "Mr. Downchild" (1951, Trumpet 168). The label's biggest hit was with James's "Dust My Broom" (1951, Trumpet 146). Other top Mississippi blues talent for the label were Big Joe Williams, Arthur "Big" Crudup, and Willie Love. A third interest was in country music, with artists Jimmy Swan, Werly Fairburn, and Lucky Joe Almond, but these sessions produced mostly flops, with a few minor hits.

With their leading artists dying (Love), disbanding (the Southern Sons), or gone to other labels (James, Williamson), the McMurrays ceased the label in 1956. Since 1985 the Diamond Record Company files have been maintained in the Blues Archive of the University of Mississippi. Reissues of the blues and gospel sessions have been released on the labels

Arhoolie, Acoustic Archives, Alligator, Collectables, and Cleopatra.

EDWARD KOMARA

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TUCKER, BESSIE

Flourished late 1920s

Tucker first recorded in Memphis in 1928, accompanied by pianist K. D. Johnson. At the time she lived on Central Street in Dallas. Two more sessions in Dallas followed in 1929, again with Johnson, and with guitarist Jesse Thomas. A splendid, passionate singer with an acerbic, melancholy edge, her themes are often dark, such as “Penitentiary,” and contain frequent references to railroads, as in “Forth Worth and Denver Blues.”

BOB HALL

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Santelli

Discography: AMG; DGR

TUCKER, IRA

b. 17 May 1925; Spartanburg, SC

Ira Tucker joined the Dixie Hummingbirds as baritone lead in 1938. Tucker’s career evolved in parallel with the Birds, developing as a songwriter, arranger, and producer. Sacred and secular vocalists alike emulated his growling lead vocal style, including Bobby Bland, Hank Ballard, and Jackie Wilson.

JERRY ZOLTEN

See also Dixie Hummingbirds

TUCKER, LUTHER

b. 20 January 1936; Memphis, TN

d. 18 June 1993; San Rafael, CA

Luther Tucker came to Chicago at age nine, after juvenile delinquency in Memphis. His path toward trouble remained undeterred until, after a stint in

the South Side clinker for auto theft, he met guitarist Lee Jackson. Once he got serious, Tucker studied guitar technique with Robert Lockwood. Tucker followed Lockwood’s trail, first taking his mentor’s old spot behind pianist Sunnyland Slim, then in 1954 assuming his vacated role behind harmonica great Little Walter. Tucker played with Walter on hits such as “Last Night,” “Boom Boom Out Go the Lights,” and “Confessin’ the Blues.” He was appreciated by harmonica players; he also made key recordings with Sonny Boy Williamson (Aleck Miller) and James Cotton (*Pure Cotton*).

In the early 1960s with drummer Willie Smith, Tucker joined Muddy Waters’s band, injecting some youth into the group yet maintaining a classic feel, especially on recordings such as “She’s 19 Years Old” and “Five Long Years.” Tucker, a fluid player with a touch of flash—he appreciated both the accompanist’s role and the opportunity to solo—also made recordings with John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Rogers, and Otis Rush and later with Charlie Musselwhite, Pinetop Perkins, and even Peter, Paul, and Mary.

ROBERT GORDON

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Gordon, Robert. *Can’t Be Satisfied: The Life and Times of Muddy Waters*. New York: Little, Brown, 2002.

Discography: AMG

James Cotton. *Pure Cotton* (1968, Verve 3038).

Little Walter. *His Best* (1997, MCA/Chess 9380).

Luther Tucker. *Sad Hours* (1990, Antone’s AMT 0026).

TUCKER, TOMMY

b. Robert Higginbotham, 5 March 1933; Springfield, OH

d. 22 January 1982; Newark, NJ

Singer, songwriter, and organist, forever identified with his composition “Hi-Heel Sneakers,” which has been recorded hundreds of times since its original appearance in 1964.

Born Robert Higginbotham, Tucker learned the organ at an early age and joined several jazz and doo-wop groups in Springfield and Dayton, Ohio, and was briefly a Golden Globes boxer. After relocating to Newark, New Jersey, in 1961, Tucker signed with Atco Records, releasing a few recordings under

TUCKER, TOMMY

the name Tee Tucker, and performed at the Lighthouse nightclub in New York with a young Jimi Hendrix in the band.

Atco's founder, Atlantic Records executive Herb Abramson, would soon leave the label and took Tucker with him to produce him independently. Abramson brought Tucker into the studio and recorded "Hi-Heel Sneakers," a twelve-bar blues shuffle reminiscent of Jimmy Reed's "Big Boss Man," featuring Tucker's gritty vocals, his chunky organ playing, and an enthusiastic guitar lead played by Dean Young. The tape was leased to Checker Records (Checker 1067) and it peaked at #11 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart in February 1964. Abramson continued to produce Tucker through the 1970s for Checker and Abramson's own Festival label, but their efforts were unable to match the popularity of his one hit. Among the hundreds of recordings of the song were versions by Billy Boy Arnold, Clifton Chenier, Bo Diddley, José Feliciano, Elvis Presley, and Stevie Wonder, but Tucker's favorite was by Magic Sam. Tucker died of food poisoning after eating a bad hamburger in 1982.

MORRIS S. LEVY

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Hess, Norbert. "Tommy Tucker, 1933–1982" [obituary].
Living Blues no. 53 (Summer 1982): 46–47.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

TURNER, IKE

b. Izear Luster Turner, Jr., 5 November 1931; Clarksdale, MS

Ike Turner first started to play piano at his boyhood friend Ernest Lane's house, where Joe Willie "Pinetop" Perkins would practice his boogie-woogie pieces. Pinetop showed the youngsters the rudiments of the instrument, and Ike became so enthused he persuaded his mother to buy him a piano. In his teens Ike started to spin discs on WROX, Clarksdale's local radio station that also featured a live lunchtime spot by Robert Nighthawk. Ike would spin discs by Louis Jordan, Roy Milton, and Jimmy Liggins plus a lot of country records, soaking up the rhythms and the blues he would replicate and develop in his own music. At school, Ike played in a group called the Tophatters with Ernest Lane and Clayton Love, which soon became the first

incarnation of his Kings of Rhythm. He also played separately with Nighthawk in clubs throughout the Delta region.

By 1951 the nineteen-year-old bandleader was ready to record and with his Kings of Rhythm cut his first sides at Sam Phillips's Memphis studio. Four songs were recorded, but the killer cut was the wild and wonderful "Rocket 88." This pounding boogie, based on Jimmy Liggins's "Cadillac Boogie," is a tour de force, well deserving the frequent accolade of being the first rock 'n' roll record. "Rocket 88" was Ike's composition, on which he played the pounding piano. However, much to his displeasure, the song was released on Chess records as being by Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats, with composer credit given to Brenston, who was vocalist and one of three saxophonists in the band. "Rocket 88" was a huge hit, reaching number one on the R&B charts in May 1951.

Ike Turner was not to be deflected by the setback, and while playing piano on B. B. King's first hit, "3 O'Clock Blues," he struck up a relationship with the Bihari brothers, owners of Modern Records. The Biharis hired Ike as talent scout and musician and within a short period, Turner recorded with Howlin' Wolf, Elmore James, and Little Milton, among others, in addition to his own recordings with the Kings of Rhythm. By 1953, Ike was playing guitar and had developed a distinctive style, and for the rest of the decade he recorded with an amazing array of artists, many backed by his band. In Memphis he recorded with Billy "The Kid" Emerson; at his own studio in Clarksdale he cut Eugene Fox, Dennis Binder, and Clayton Love; in St. Louis he recorded Johnny Wright and in Cincinnati Billy Gales and Jackie Brenston. The year 1958 found him in Chicago, recording with Otis Rush, including the blues classics "Double Trouble" and "All Your Love (I Miss Loving)," Buddy Guy, and Betty Everett. During this period, he also recorded under his own name as well as the pseudonyms Lover Boy and Icky Renrut (Turner spelled backward).

Ike Turner has always moved with the musical trends and by 1959 musical trends were on the move. Fortunately, at about this time Ike met Annie Mae Bullock, and as Ike and Tina Turner his music moved from blues, through R&B, to soul and eventually rock. However, Turner never lost the essence of the blues, and with Tina as a perfect vocal vehicle, he cut some very raunchy blues-based sides such as "A Fool in Love" and "So Long, Goodbye." In 1968 the duo recorded a couple of straight blues albums for Blue Thumb that included many blues standards Ike knew from the early days, including

"Five Long Years," "Dust My Blues," and "Mean Old World."

The Ike and Tina period (1960–1975) was Ike's most commercially successful time, in which he and Tina, helped immeasurably by two tours supporting the Rolling Stones, became worldwide stars. Relocated in California, in 1970 he opened his Bolic Sound Studio in Inglewood, patronized by rock and soul stars from Frank Zappa to Stevie Wonder. Unfortunately, with success came excess, and fueled by drugs, Turner's darker side emerged, abusing and misusing Tina to a point where she left and subsequently exposed his misogyny when she became a superstar in her own right. Turner was ostracized by the music business and the public in general, and it was a decade and a prison sentence before he began rebuilding his career. Since the mid-1990s, Ike has been recording and performing again with a new band.

FRED ROTHWELL

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Discography: AMG; LSPF

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The Travelling Record Man, Historic Down South Recording Trips of Joe Bihari & Ike Turner (ACE CDCHD 813 [UK]).

TURNER, JOSEPH VERNON "BIG JOE"

b. Joseph Vernon Turner, 18 May 1911; Kansas City, MO

d. 24 November 1985; Inglewood, CA

Big Joe Turner was a blues shouter in jazz blues, urban blues, jump-blues, and R&B who had his heyday in the 1940s and 1950s.

In his teens, Joe Turner had various jobs: bouncer, barman, and cook in Kansas City nightclubs. From 1926, he teams with boogie-woogie pianist Pete Johnson and they compose their first hits, such as "Roll 'Em, Pete," released in 1938 on Vocalion, and covered by many other artists such as Jimmy Reed. Turner often teamed with pianist Pete Johnson until

the mid-fifties, when both musicians revisited their early repertoire (including "Roll 'Em, Pete"), with an LP titled *The Boss of the Blues*.

In the mid-1940s, Joe Turner's style owes much to jazz and swing, with various pianists and horn arrangements ("Nobody in Mind," "Doggin' the Blues," "I Got My Discharge Papers," "Miss Brown Blues," "My Gal's a Jockey"). His songs often contain raunchy lyrics ("Sunday Morning Blues"). Although lesser known recordings, these sides from 1941–1947 remain fundamental and reappeared on CD on Melodie Jazz Classics (1941–1946) and Savoy (1945–1947).

Having signed up with Atlantic Records, Big Joe Turner recorded extensively; he covered Walter Davis's song "Sweet Sixteen" in 1952, well before B. B. King. From 1953, guitarist Elmore James appeared as a sideman on some Turner recordings: "TV Mama," "Well All Right," and "Morning, Noon, and Night." Among other memorable songs of Big Joe Turner are "Cherry Red" (1956), plus his covers of Leroy Carr's "In the Evening" (1954) and Blind Lemon Jefferson's "Corrine, Corrina" (1956).

In 1954, Big Joe Turner's career got a new boost when arranger Jesse Stone (under his pen name, Charles Calhoun) wrote "Shake, Rattle and Roll" specially for him; that hit was covered by Bill Haley and his Comets in 1954 and with even more audience by Elvis Presley. In only a few months, Turner followed with similar tunes: "Flip, Flop and Fly" (1955), "Well All Right," and "Boogie Woogie Country Girl." Big Joe's strong voice and style were quite influential in the birth of rock 'n' roll.

Since World War II, Big Joe Turner had appeared in short films made for the U.S. soldiers abroad and later in movies such as *Harlem Rock and Roll* (1955) and *Shake, Rattle, and Rock* (1956). He was also featured in the U.S. documentary *The Last of the Blue Devils* (1974), directed by Bruce Ricker.

Big Joe Turner toured in Europe from the 1950s to the mid-1960s and returned to the nightclub circuits afterward, perhaps because his repertoire faded into pop music and easy listening from the 1960s. He toured with the Count Basie Orchestra in the 1970s, with newer versions of his older standards. During the 1980s, Big Joe Turner was sometimes accompanied by Roomful of Blues or guitarist Ronnie Earl. In 1983, Big Joe Turner was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Hall of Fame and posthumously into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987. With a recording career covering almost half a century, Big Joe Turner is often referred to as the "Boss of the Blues."

YVES LABERGE

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- "Big Joe Turner." In *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll*, edited by Holly George-Warren and Patricia Romanowski. Updated third edition, p. 1010. New York: Fireside, 2001 [1983].

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Countless labels, from Vocalion and Decca to Atlantic (1951–1956), Coral (1964), Blues Time (in 1969), Trojan Records (in 1973), LMI (in 1974), Spivey Records (in 1977), and Pablo. Many are now on CD on Melodie Jazz Classics (1941–1946), Savoy (1945–1947), and Rhino.

See also James, Elmore; Presley, Elvis Aron; Walker, T-Bone

TURNER, OTHAR

b. 1908; Rankin County, MS

d. 26 February 2003; Gravel Springs, MS

First name sometimes shown as Otha. Through his performances at major festivals and appearances in documentary films, Turner introduced many listeners to fife and drums, an African American pre-blues musical tradition melding the marching music of colonial militia bands with African syncopation and poly-rhythms. Turner handcrafted his own cane fifes and began playing the instrument as a teenager, learning from a neighboring fife player, R. E. Williams.

During a life of sharecropping and subsistence farming in the north Mississippi counties of Tate and Panola, Turner was an integral figure in the area's rich musical culture, often performing at local picnics as a drummer in the band of another accomplished fife player, Napoleon Strickland. Turner introduced folklorist Alan Lomax to blues guitarist Fred McDowell and was later recorded by Lomax himself, as well as for anthologies on the Testament, Arhoolie, and L+R labels.

In the 1970s Turner and his Rising Star Fife and Drum Band, featuring members of his family, began performing outside Mississippi, initially at festivals in New Orleans and Chicago. In 1992, he was awarded the National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. While in his early nineties, Turner was featured in the PBS series *The Blues*, had a song included on the soundtrack for the film *Gangs of New York*, and recorded two full-length albums on

the Birdman label. All the while, he continued to host his celebrated annual fife-and-drum picnics on his small farm in Tate County.

DAVID NELSON

Bibliography

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- Steber, Bill. "Othar Turner: They Say Drums Was a Calling." *Living Blues* no. 144 (March/April 1999): 36–47.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

TURNER, TROY

b. 25 August 1970; Baton Rouge, LA

Singer and guitar player Troy Turner had the benefit of growing up in a rich community of the blues in his hometown of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, drawing inspiration from Tabby Thomas, the Neal family, Guitar Kelly, and Silas Hogan. At age eighteen, Turner had already established a recording deal, and at twenty his contemporary style of blending blues and rock led him to share the stage with B. B. King, Buddy Guy, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. In 1989, Kingsnake Records signed him and released his first album, *Teenage Blues from Baton Rouge*, followed in 1991 by *Handful of Aces* on the Ichiban label. Turner, who continues to perform and record, was awarded the Jay D. Miller award.

HEATHER PINSON

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Discography

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- Handful of Aces* (1992, Kingsnake KIN TT1).
- Blues on My Back* (1999, Telarc 83448).

TURNER, TWIST

b. Steve Patterson, 22 December 1954; Seattle, WA

Jobbing drummer with extensive playing, touring, recording, and songwriting credits. Received early help from Odie Payne and Nate Applewhite after relocating to Chicago. Worked two years with Junior

Wells at Theresa's. Also a studio owner/engineer and columnist who has chronicled his adventures as a sideman.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

Turner, Twist. “Blues with a Twist” [column]. *Blues Access* nos. 33–48 (1998–2002).

TV SLIM

b. Oscar Wills, 10 February 1916; Houston, TX
d. 21 October 1969, Kingman, AZ

True to his nickname, Oscar Wills owned a TV repair shop while singing with a hoarse voice and playing guitar. With an uncanny ability for humorous, witty lyrics, Slim had a surprising hit in 1957 with “Flatfoot Sam,” which was followed by numerous recordings of the song “Don't Go Reaching Across My Plate” that were issued on several labels of his own.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

T.V. Slim (2001, Official CD 5660).

TWINGH/TWILIGHT

Chicago soul label of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Twinight was founded in 1967 by a former All State Distributors' promotion man, Howard Bedno, and artist-management executive Peter Wright. The company began as Twilight but changed its name after the first four releases. Syl Johnson was virtually the only hitmaker, whose “Come On and Sock It to Me” (1967) began a whole string of hits for Twinight. The company specialized in hard soul, and besides Johnson its artists included Johnny Williams, Buster Benton, Elvin Spencer, Josephine Taylor, and Jimmy Jones. Twinight had a few vocal groups, notably the Notations, who got a national hit with “I'm Still

Here” (1970). The principal producers and A&R men were Peter Wright and Syl Johnson, and the principal arranger was Johnny Cameron. Serving as studio musicians were two bands, the Deacons (which included blues man Jimmy Johnson) and the Pieces of Peace. The company shut down in 1972 after Syl Johnson moved to Hi Records.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

TYLER, ALVIN “RED”

b. 5 December 1925; New Orleans, LA
d. 3 April 1998; New Orleans, LA

Saxophonist. Tyler began playing in the navy. He joined Dave Bartholomew in 1949 and played on Fats Domino's first recordings, establishing himself as a leading blues and rhythm and blues session player in New Orleans, specializing in baritone saxophone. He was part of the elite session team known as the Studio Band, noted for their spontaneous feel as well as their ability to play to order anything required. Tyler was featured on records by Little Richard, Lee Dorsey, Aaron Neville, and many others and played tenor saxophone on club dates, often in a modern jazz setting. He recorded with Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown in 1981 for Rounder and later made two jazz albums as leader for the label.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Hannusch, Jeff. “Alvin ‘Red’ Tyler” [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 141 (September/October 1998): 50–51.

Discography

Rockin' and Rollin' (1959, Ace 1006).
Twistin' with Mr Sax (1962, Ace 1021).
Heritage (1986, Rounder 2047).
Graciously (1987, Rounder 2061).

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UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

Before the Second World War, the blues in Britain was virtually unknown. A few blues 78s were issued by British companies such as Brunswick and Decca, which released a Sleepy John Estes record, and Parlophone, which released a few Lonnie Johnson instrumentals. Boogie-woogie records were also issued by Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, and Pete Johnson. British recordings of American blues artists were even rarer. In 1934, Alberta Hunter recorded in London with Jack Jackson's British dance band but no selections were blues. A few American artists who recorded blues performed in Britain prewar but these were almost exclusively females of the "classic" school who performed in theatrical revues. Lena Wilson and Edith Wilson played in London in 1926, as did Ethel Waters in 1929. Eva Taylor was a chorus girl in a 1906 review that visited London and, amazingly, in 1913 a fifteen-year-old Jimmy Yancey performed at Buckingham Palace for King George V and Queen Mary, but as a dancer not a pianist.

During the war years, with the influx of American GIs, U.S. musical culture began to permeate the British psyche. The Office of War Information broadcast radio concerts on the BBC by Leadbelly, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGee, and Josh White. In the 1950s bluesmen began to tour Europe and the United Kingdom: Josh White in 1950; Big Bill Broonzy in 1951, 1955, and 1957; Lonnie Johnson in 1952; and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee in 1958. This direct exposure to the blues inspired a dedicated coterie of British musicians to attempt the blues. Chris

Barber, who led a traditional jazz band, was a founding father of British blues, ceaselessly promoting the American bluesmen and touring with Sonny and Brownie, Louis Jordan, and, in 1958, Muddy Waters and Otis Spann. Muddy's first tour was not well received by some sections of the English audiences who considered his Telecaster guitar to be just too loud and brash.

Barber's banjo player, Lonnie Donegan, was a keen blues fan who chose his stage name in honor of Lonnie Johnson. In 1958, he released his version of Leadbelly's "Rock Island Line" and it was a surprising hit in both the United Kingdom and the United States, leading to a successful U.S. tour. Donegan's simple and direct approach to the music sparked the short-lived but highly influential skiffle craze, which inspired countless young men in the United Kingdom to take up the guitar, many becoming the backbone of R&B bands in the 1960s. In 1958, British teenagers were also in the grip of rock 'n' roll fever, eagerly devouring any American records they could get. Among the rock 'n' roll, some blues-based records were issued, mainly on the London American label. Little Richard, Fats Domino, and Chuck Berry all had U.K. hit records and were to have a significant influence on British teenage musicians, as the fifties became the sixties and rock 'n' roll metamorphosed into rhythm and blues.

A contemporary of Barber and Donegan was Alexis Korner, sometimes called the father of British blues. Korner formed the first British blues band which, until 1962, included vocalist and harmonica

player Cyril Davies. Korner tired of playing a secondary role to jazz bands in the numerous clubs in London and persuaded the Ealing Jazz Club to solely feature blues. His reputation grew and soon blues enthusiasts from the south of England would gather to listen and jam with the band. These included Brian Jones, Paul Jones, Mick Jagger, and Keith Richards, young men who would soon have a phenomenal effect on British blues. By 1963, Cyril Davies had left the Korner band to form his own Rhythm and Blues All Stars and recorded an outstanding harmonica-led instrumental, "Country Line Special."

Inspired by the Korner band, Jones, Jagger, and Richards together with Charlie Watts, Korner's Blues Incorporated's drummer, and bassist Bill Wyman, formed the Rolling Stones. The Stones were younger, wilder, and louder than anything before experienced in the United Kingdom and, in the wake of the Beatles beat boom phenomenon, they introduced their brash version of the blues to British teenagers and reintroduced the blues to American teenagers, most of whom were unaware of their own heritage. Early Stones sets would include songs by Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Howlin' Wolf, Jimmy Reed, and Slim Harpo. Brian Jones would emulate Elmore James on slide guitar, the first Englishman to play in this way. Their early recordings were peppered with blues and in 1964 "Little Red Rooster" reached the top of the U.K. charts, an extraordinary feat for a pure twelve-bar blues. This success inevitably led to a host of pop and beat groups jumping onto the blues bandwagon.

However, there were those who had developed a love of blues independently and coincidentally to the Rolling Stones. The Animals had been playing blues at the Club A Go Go in Newcastle in 1963 and celebrated the fact in their 1965 recording of that name. Their greatest success, however, came with "The House of the Rising Son," a folk blues of indeterminate age, usually associated with Josh White or Leadbelly, but found by the Animals on Bob Dylan's first LP. The Animals version, arranged by keyboard player Alan Price, with a totally convincing guttural vocal by Eric Burdon, was a number one hit in both the United Kingdom and United States.

In March 1964, the Yardbirds recorded a live album at the Marquee, one of London's premier blues venues. *Five Live Yardbirds* included songs by Chuck Berry, Howlin' Wolf, Eddie Boyd, and Slim Harpo and featured on guitar, a superstar in the making, Eric Clapton. Their first two singles were versions of blues by Billy Boy Arnold and Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson." However, by 1965 the group was recording pop songs, and so blues devotee Clapton left.

The Mann-Hugg Blues Band, a jazz-based group, by 1963 became Manfred Mann, fronted by Paul Jones, their vocalist and harmonica player. They hit with their third single "54321" when the hippest pop show on British TV, *Ready Steady Go*, used it as its theme song. The song's popularity was clearly due to the blues-laden harp playing of Paul Jones. Meanwhile in Belfast, Van Morrison's Them were tearing up the town with their great version of "Baby Please Don't Go" coupled with the equally exciting "Gloria." Morrison would move on to mainstream success but has always kept faith with the blues, dueting in the 1990s with John Lee Hooker. From Birmingham came the Spencer Davis Group, named after the band's guitarist but featuring the sixteen-year-old Stevie Winwood, an excellent musician blessed with extraordinary vocals who would sing Ray Charles numbers and Leadbelly songs with equal aplomb. Their first single was a highly individual take of John Lee Hooker's "Dimples." Georgie Fame's and Zoot Money's bands played at the Marquee and Flamingo Clubs in London and featured organ-led jazz-based blues. Fame was the more successful with his mix of Mose Allison vocals and Jamaican blue-beat rhythms.

The enthusiasm for the blues engendered by the British acts led to the release of the real thing by U.K. labels, and blues only previously available on expensive U.S. imports became accessible in high street shops. In particular, Pye International began to issue the Chess Records product and Vee-Jay Records were issued on the Stateside label. Howlin' Wolf's "Smokestack Lightnin'," Jimmy Reed's "Shame, Shame Shame," John Lee Hooker's "Dimples," Bo Diddley's "Pretty Thing," and Tommy Tucker's "Hi Heel Sneakers" all reached the lower end of the British charts.

The blues had arrived in the United Kingdom in a big way and the trickle of blues men who came to perform became a torrent. The most important vehicle for these artists was the European-promoted American Folk Blues Festival, which ran for a decade starting in 1962. Included were a vast array of artists from the most famous, like Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson" and Lightnin' Hopkins, to then unknowns Cousin Joe and John Henry Barbee. A similar tour, the Blues and Gospel Caravan, was recorded by Granada TV at a disused railway station on the outskirts of Manchester and the English fans saw Muddy Waters, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Reverend Gary Davis, and others in their living rooms. Soon individual bluesmen began to tour pubs and clubs the length of the land. The Twisted Wheel in Manchester, the Cavern in Liverpool, the Club A Go Go in Newcastle, and even small provincial towns would regularly feature U.S. blues artists. Some like Sonny

Boy stayed for extended visits, and Champion Jack Dupree even made England his home for a while. University campuses provided ideal venues and many colleges developed blues societies. In the course of a couple of years at Leeds, for instance, students could witness acts as diverse as Son House, Juke Boy Bonner, Arthur Crudup, Freddy King, and Jimmy Witherspoon. Later Jim Simpson's Birmingham-based Big Bear organization promoted U.S. blues artists with a series of American Blues Legends tours, which were recorded and issued on Big Bear Records. Many British bands learned their trade by backing the visiting bluesmen. Sonny Boy performed and recorded with the Animals, the Yardbirds, and the Brian Auger Trinity. Perhaps the most enduring relationship was John Lee Hooker and the Groundhogs led by Tony McPhee who took their name from a Hooker song and backed and recorded with him.

Eric Clapton continued his blues career by joining John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. Mayall never achieved widespread popularity but he was extremely influential in the development of British blues. His ever changing and evolving group included many individuals who would go on to greater success with bands of their own. Between 1966 and 1970, Eric Clapton, Peter Green, and Mick Taylor played guitar in his band; John McVie and Jack Bruce played bass; and Hughie Flint, Keef Hartley, Mick Fleetwood, and Jon Hiseman played drums. All of these musicians would go on to greater success in blues-based bands, most notably Clapton in Cream; Green, McVie, and Fleetwood in Fleetwood Mac; and Taylor in the Rolling Stones. Mayall's music was based on the harder edged West Side Chicago school of blues, taking its lead from Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, and Freddy King. Mayall also featured the saxophones of Dick Heckstall-Smith and Alan Skidmore, two stalwarts of the British blues scene, and set the trend for a broader approach to the blues than the more common guitar and harmonica approach.

Running concurrently with these developments was another school based on the country acoustic blues. Brother and sister Dave and Jo Ann Kelly led the way, featuring the songs of Blind Willie McTell, Memphis Minnie, Fred McDowell (with whom Jo Ann recorded), and Robert Johnson. Jo Ann, in particular, was blessed with a powerful, totally convincing blues voice, Britain's answer to Memphis Minnie. Brother Dave, a great slide guitarist, continues to ply his trade with the Blues Band. Ian Anderson's Country Blues Band and the Panama Limited Jug Band represented jug band music while one-man-band Duster Bennett ploughed his own particular blues furrow, starting with a recording of G. L. Crockett's "It's a Man Down There."

By the mid-1960s, the first flush of the British blues boom had started to fade but fortunately, a dedicated pair of blues enthusiasts, Mike Vernon and Neil Slaven, came to the rescue with the inauguration of Blue Horizon records. The first releases were by obscure American bluesmen like Hubert Sumlin and Woodrow Adams, but luckily, they hit pay dirt with the signing of Fleetwood Mac and, to a lesser degree, Chicken Shack to the label. These commercially successful bands allowed the label to experiment with other British bands such as Jellybread and Key Largo. They were also able to record collaborative efforts such as Fleetwood Mac's *Blues Jam at Chess* recorded in Chicago and *The Biggest Thing Since Colossus* recorded with Otis Spann in New York. In addition, the label recorded African American artists in the United Kingdom and United States as varied as Champion Jack Dupree and Johnny Young. The label also licensed material from American labels such as Excello and Cobra for release in the United Kingdom, opening a completely new spectrum to the British blues fan.

Fleetwood Mac was based around guitarist/vocalist Peter Green and slide guitarist Jeremy Spencer. Green loved B. B. King while Spencer's hero was Elmore James and these bluesmen's music featured heavily in the Mac's early repertoire. Peter Green was also blessed with an expressive blues voice that he used to great effect on hits such as "Black Magic Woman" and "Oh Well." Green and Spencer left the band in the early 1970s and Fleetwood Mac became a hugely successful mainstream rock band. Chicken Shack was Blue Horizon's other successful band. Led by guitarist Stan Webb they featured the music of Freddy King in their early repertoire but it was a cover of Etta James's "I'd Rather Go Blind" with vocalist Christine Perfect that gave them their greatest success in 1969.

Toward the close of the 1960s yet another subset of the blues emerged, a loud, hard rock version, whose main exponents were Cream, Led Zeppelin, and Jimi Hendrix. Cream, formed by Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce, and Ginger Baker, became the archetypal rock power trio but their music was clearly steeped in the blues, which included a tremendous rendition of "Crossroads." Led Zeppelin was responsible for what became heavy-metal rock but also included blues on their first two albums, including their take of Muddy's "You Shook Me." Hendrix was, of course, an African American but it needed the acumen and vision of British ex-Animal Chas Chandler to discover and transform him from an unknown chitlin circuit guitarist to a rock superstar.

The 1970s were a particularly slim time for blues in the United Kingdom. The Stones rolled on and

included the odd blues in their recordings such as “Love in Vain” and “Shake ‘Em On Down.” However, for the British blues fan, the 1970s was a time for contemplation and education. There is a long tradition of blues research in the United Kingdom, from Paul Oliver’s seminal books to the United Kingdom’s first blues magazine *Blues Unlimited*, started by Mike Leadbitter and Simon Napier in May 1963. The two standard discographies, *Blues and Gospel Records 1890–1943* and *Blues Records 1943–1970* were both compiled by Englishmen. This research and enthusiasm has continued to this day with publications such as *Juke Blues* and *Blues and Rhythm*. *Blues in Britain* is a current publication dedicated to the promotion of homegrown blues.

On radio, ex-pirate radio deejay Mike Raven moved to the BBC and his 1960s long-running rhythm and blues show was immensely influential, introducing fans to all manner of blues and soul. Alexis Korner continued this tradition well into the seventies with his BBC show. Visiting bluesmen like Arthur Crudup and Juke Boy Bonner would record live sets for John Peel’s BBC programs, for those with the patience to sit through the progressive rock that formed the majority of his shows. On Radio London, Charlie Gillett’s *Honky Tonk* show mixed blues, country, rock ‘n’ roll, soul, and rhythm and blues. The emphasis in the United Kingdom had been on guitar/piano/harmonica blues, and Charlie opened many fans’ ears to more sophisticated R&B artists such as Louis Jordan and Eddie Vinson. TV also got into the act, notably with Giles Oakley’s excellent five-part blues documentary, *The Devil’s Music*. Currently Paul Jones rules the blues airways with his weekly show on national BBC Radio 2 and his longer weekend program on London’s Jazz FM. Since the introduction of commercial radio into the United Kingdom in the seventies, blues and related programs have proliferated to a point where dozens exist.

Around the mid-1970s, U.K. blues fans were able to purchase a wonderful array of music thanks to two homegrown reissue companies, Charly Records and Ace Records. Charly was the first company to reissue the Sun catalog in any semblance of order. They also comprehensively reissued Chess in the United Kingdom until they lost the legal battle with MCA. Ace has, however, gone from strength to strength to become possibly the world’s premier reissue label, releasing music from the Specialty, Modern, Excello, Stax, and many other great labels. John Stedman’s U.K.-based JSP label has become a leading outlet for black U.S. artists who cannot get a domestic record deal.

In the late seventies, new bands emerged from the punk rock/pub rock explosion. Dr. Feelgood and Nine Below Zero played in a back to basics,

hard-edged rocking style. Ex-Manfred Mann vocalist Paul Jones also emerged from blues exile to form the Blues Band with Dave Kelly and Tom McGuinness (also from Manfred Mann). Initially started as a pastime, the band has gone from strength to strength, currently playing regularly in the United Kingdom and Europe with seventeen albums to their credit.

As in the United States, during the eighties and nineties, blues festivals in the United Kingdom proliferated. The two main festivals are the Burnley National Blues Festival, which started in 1988, and the Great British R&B Festival, started in 1989. Both feature a wide array of U.S. acts but also showcase the best of the homegrown blues talent. These have included Big Joe Louis and His Blues Kings who, with harp player Little George Sueref, produced a very authentic 1950s Chicago blues sound; the Big Town Playboys, whose pianist/vocalist Mike Sanchez sang in a West Coast 1940s style; and King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys, who swing like born-again Louis Jordans. In an ever evolving scene, Sanchez and Sueref now front their own bands, while Big Joe now sings with the Big Town Playboys. Paul Lamb, a world class harp player, currently leads his Kingsnakes while old timers have also reappeared such as Peter Green’s Splinter Group and Bill Wyman’s Rhythm Kings. Blues, in all its guises, while not as mainstream as it became for a short period in the 1960s, is, nevertheless, healthy and thriving in the United Kingdom.

FRED ROTHWELL

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UNITED STATES

Editor’s Foreword

Initially a group of thirteen English colonies in North America, the United States successfully fought a

Revolutionary War (1775–1783). After some years governing itself under the Articles of Confederation, the United States adopted its present form of government under the Constitution beginning in 1788. After the thirteen former colonies ratified the Constitution, additional North American territories were settled, developed, and admitted to the government. The prevailing economic system has been capitalism, with supply and demand as commercial elements. A Civil War (1861–1865) erupted over the matter of states' rights including the right to hold slaves. The government won, and slavery was abolished in the war's aftermath. The history of blues in the context of national history and civil rights is presented in the *Blues* entry. The present entry discusses the United States in the contexts of geography, sociology, and commerce.

EDWARD KOMARA

The geographical entries in the *Encyclopedia of the Blues* provide a great deal of evidence that blues activities remain focused within the U.S. borders in certain geographical areas. This entry provides an explanation for the geographical focus of the blues. Briefly, a blues artist tends to maintain a face-to-face relationship with a particular community—a relationship that sustains the artist directly. These face-to-face communities tend to be located in the geographical area in which the artist's professional personality was formed. The most viable communities provide a cluster of activities that facilitate the growth of the artist's career—promotion, production, and distribution. However, the enterprise as a whole tends to be trapped in a negative ambience that limits its economic and geographic growth.

Under occasional, favorable conditions the blues profits from a broader phenomenon. Innovations in technology (e.g., railroads, sound recordings, websites) have enabled “imagined” blues communities in every part of the world (Titon, 1994). Several of these communities are larger and more influential than the face-to-face communities. Others, too small, too numerous, and too fragmented, escape our notice.

Before describing geographical and sociological influences on the blues once it became an identifiable, U.S. enterprise, it seems important to sketch the development of the blues related to the territorial expansion of the United States—an expansion from the thirteen original seaboard states to forty-eight contiguous states (accomplished with the Gadsden Purchase in 1853). One might point to several watermarks, both geographical and ideological, that would significantly influence the development of the blues. The Great Awakening in the late 1700s provided the earliest context for an encounter between Anglo-American and African American religious practices. With the

Louisiana Purchase (1803), the United States doubled in size and all the territory drained by the Mississippi became open to westward migration. The Missouri Compromise (1820) marked growing tension over the issue of slavery that would become a desperate crisis during the U.S. Civil War. Past the Gadsden Purchase (1853) and aside from the Civil War, it is crucial to note the importance of industrialization and the availability of mass-marketed goods, the development of the railroads (often a subject of the blues), the inestimable influence of minstrelsy and the development of an entertainment industry, the effects of flood control in the Mississippi Delta, and the crippling effects of the Reconstruction. With such a backdrop in mind, we may begin a description of influences after 1900.

Blues artists and enterprises as a whole have always been torn between (1) the need to maintain close contact with their original, base communities, (2) a need to follow their audience in migration, and (3) the need to cultivate a broader audience outside their base community. For example, we know that Robert Johnson was constantly on the move. We also know that he continually gravitated back to his base community, “using Helena, Memphis and Greenwood in addition to Robinsonville as his base” (Guralnick, 1989, p. 18). Blues artists have tended to remain both psychologically and economically dependent on their base communities. Their dependence stems from aspects embedded in the very nature of blues as a functional, oral agent in the face-to-face community.

The blues is an intensely introspective form of expression. An artist begins a performance by accessing a deeply reflective state of mind. At the same time, he or she has a responsibility to communicate this state of mind, vividly, to the audience. To access and communicate this state of mind as efficiently as possible, a performer tends to call on his or her most *essential* musical ideas and gestures, imagining that the audience has a rich understanding of all the intricacies and shades of meaning that are expressed in the details of the performance. These details carry a wealth of meaning within the face-to-face community. Since a blues artist tends to draw the psychological and emotional energy that he or she needs from this kind of contact, it behooves him or her to remain in close contact with the community. Here we arrive at an explanation of why the blues remains a relatively small-scale and geographically circumscribed activity.

Owing to the nature of the blues as an introspective activity, most effectively carried out in the company of a fairly specific audience, the enterprise as a whole tends to be trapped in a negative economic ambience. As blues musician Elvin Bishop told Frank-John Hadley, “Albert Collins once told me that every 10 years a new generation of blues fans is born. Blues has its

peaks and its valleys, and we're in a valley right now; but it is and it probably always will be an alternative form. It ain't going to be like rap and take over the world. Blues is for people who take music a bit more serious. For the average person, music has a place in their life like a hair style or fad clothes, a temporary icing on the cake" (Hadley, 2003). In listening to Robert Johnson one is required to visit some pretty dark places—depression, homelessness, alcoholism, sexism—places outside the experience of a mainstream audience. Typically, outsiders must forego a need to understand all the lyrics and images. More directly, novice listeners are asked to listen beyond surface of the sound, beyond the pops and scratches. They are asked to forego the modern preference for a broad frequency and dynamic range. All of this is a great deal to ask of someone outside the face-to-face and imagined communities. Novice listeners are far more likely to be drawn to more mainstream entertainments.

As a second aspect of the negative ambiance that surrounds the blues, enterprises and communities that directly support blues artists tend to retain a reverence for earlier artists and recordings. Innovation is not often encouraged. In comparison, the enterprises that underlie mainstream entertainments guarantee their own growth and dominance through participation in a "process of creative destruction" (Schumpeter, 1950). Joseph Schumpeter held "that in dealing with [market] capitalism we are dealing with an evolutionary process . . . [that] not only never is, but never can be stationary." In a "perennial gale of creative destruction, a capitalist enterprise . . . incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one." In a viable popular music enterprise, the constant aim is to create new sounds through the application of new technology and a constant hybridization process. The new sounds destroy the value of the old sounds, availing the enterprise an opportunity to turn over product rapidly and constantly.

As we will see, blues entrepreneurs have occasionally participated successfully in the process of creative destruction during certain periods and under certain circumstances. However, they have failed to sustain an ongoing commitment to the process. Why? (1) It is expensive both in terms of the energy expended in keeping abreast of what is current and in terms of the necessity to update equipment and engineering knowledge. (2) The financial return on investments in the blues rarely encourages ongoing commitment to the enterprise. Rather, the enterprise tends toward a spiral of diminishing returns. Explanation: Producers of mainstream enterprises tend to become involved owing to the lure of financial rewards while producers of the blues tend to become involved out of

a love for the art form—more likely, a particular blues "sound" or artist. Producers of mainstream enterprises quickly discover the benefits that accrue from change and innovation. On the other hand, the aficionado is likely to be conservative in his or her tolerance for change and innovation.

A brief illustration of the effects of a conservative approach illustrates one aspect of the negative economic ambiance that circumscribes the growth of the blues. Producers of the blues have a need for products with proven reliability; members of the communities that sustain the blues tend to hold a genuine reverence for earlier artists and recordings. As a result, certain ideas about what constitutes a successful sound prove indelible. Contemporary artists are encouraged to devote their energies to emulating successful artists and sounds from the past, rather than innovating fresh, contemporary approaches. Examples abound: At the point at which the market for Muddy Waters's recordings began to slip, the Chess brothers pushed him to reprise his own earlier recordings in *The Real Folk Blues*. Blues artist Doug Sahm was encouraged to "make a real [San Antonio] blues record like the old days, back on the east side" (Sahm, 1980). The product was his *Hell of a Spell*. A recent recording by Buddy Guy, *Sweet Tea*, evokes the Fat Possum recordings of R. L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough. Locked into re-creations of earlier "sounds," it is easy for blues enterprises to become musical backwaters. Without change and innovation, blues enterprises tend to stagnate.

Nonetheless, blues performers do experience periods of growth and wider acceptance. The problem is that these periods are rarely long enough or profitable enough to sustain the artist though the lean periods. And the lean periods are long. With little hope of accessing a mainstream audience, artists have to remain responsive to the particular needs and circumstances in which they find themselves, capitalizing on regional subject matter, performance practices, and support systems.

A brief description of the environment that gave rise to and encompassed Chess Records illustrates several ideas and systems described in this study: a face-to-face community (itself an imagined community) sustaining the career of an individual artist; a positive economic environment, facilitating participation in the process of creative destruction; and an imagined community building on the basic Chess formula toward surprising growth and innovation.

Chess records (Chicago) is often regarded as one of the most successful blues enterprises to date. However, it seems important to place the success of the label in perspective. One of Chess's most popular releases was Muddy Waters's single "Hoochie-Coochie Man."

According to Sandra Tooze this cut “sold 75,000 copies” in 1954 (Tooze, 1997, p. 120). That same year, the Ames Brothers’ “The Naughty Lady of Shady Lane” sold “over one million copies” (Jasen, 2002, p. 144).

As a main terminus for the Great Migration of African Americans from the deep South, Chicago’s South Side became the locus for one of the strongest and largest face-to-face blues communities in the United States. An expatriated population (itself, one of the world’s most fecund imagined communities) seeking a connection to home in the Mississippi Delta gave rise to and sustained the careers of a number of gifted performers from the Delta. More to the point, a ready market existed for an urbanized form of the Delta blues. Muddy Waters arrived in Chicago in 1943. While enormously talented, charismatic, and resourceful, he was utterly dependent in the early part of his career on family members already living in Chicago and a close-knit group of musicians and followers. He maintained a close connection to that base community throughout his life.

The larger world became aware of Muddy Waters owing not only to the efforts of his label, Chess Records, but also to the positive business environment that surrounded Chess. A positive business environment includes (1) a market, sufficient in size and with sufficient disposable income to allow the enterprise to develop and innovate; (2) a sufficient pool of raw materials—in this case, talented performers. Both of these aspects are described above. The positive environment will also include (3) entrepreneurs with sufficient investment capital and an understanding of the various activities involved in the enterprise; (4) a means of creating the product, and if it is to continue to be successful, a means of continuing to innovate; and (5) a means of publicizing and distributing the product. There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that Leonard and Phil Chess, the founders of Chess Records, proved to be the right personalities, ideally placed, at the right time. While their success was directly related to the enormous energy they invested in their enterprise, they were ideally positioned.

Leonard and Phil Chess were Polish-Jewish immigrants whose business sensibilities developed in relation to the location of their homes and businesses. Their business was located, both geographically and ideologically, in the margin between African American and Jewish Chicago. Of particular importance was their Macomba Lounge situated in the Cottage Grove area, a lean and hungry entertainment district “with businesses owned almost exclusively by whites, but now frequented by blacks” (Cohodas, 2000, p. 22). As a result of where they lived and their business acumen, the Chess brothers brought several

important abilities to the table: an ability to communicate across racial, ethnic, and class lines; the necessary energy and ambition to see a process through to a profitable end; the ability to listen carefully, combined with sufficient experience to recognize marketable musical ideas; and the self-confidence to act decisively and to recognize their limitations.

This last aspect was particularly important. They seemed to know when to get out of the way and allow others to do the things they could not do. A major part of their success must be attributed to Willie Dixon, an African American who served as their bass player, their composer-arranger, and their means of appropriate contact with artists. Willie Dixon notes: “The Chess brothers would say ‘Dixon, go over there with these folks and straighten up their thing. Get a better introduction on there. Get ’em to sing the words right and get the tune in shape to record’” (Dixon, 1989, p. 90). Their ability to know when to get out of the way may also be recognized in their decision to utilize the facilities and know-how available to them at Universal Recording Studios.

While Chess’s target audience was anxious for a taste of home, an exact replica of the sounds that they remembered from juke joints in the Delta would not have sufficed. A great many developments had taken place in the intervening period. Amplified instruments allowed the music to sound more muscular; at the same time, more subtle nuances became audible. Hand in hand with these developments were developments in both recording and playback devices. While the Chess brothers made several attempts at establishing their own recording facilities, they turned to Universal Recording Studios for their important recordings. At Universal, it was possible to achieve a state-of-the-art recording quality known as “high fidelity.” These recordings tended to sound larger than life, particularly when played on improved home playback systems and on the full-spectrum jukebox. In exploiting developments in technology, the Chess brothers participated actively in the process of the creative destruction. In truth, Chess’s participation in the process of creative destruction is part of a larger history.

Stephen Struthers (1987) notes that one of the important trends that may be noted in the development of sound recordings is a gradual shift away from the original intention of reproducing live performances toward the intention of producing a larger-than-life illusion. Prior to the formation of Chess, RCA Bluebird had already moved blues recordings well into the realm of illusion. With access to state-of-the-art recording facilities and knowledgeable engineers such as Malcolm Chisholm, the Chess brothers took the next step—into high-fidelity recordings.

From the 1970s forward, labels such as Alligator Records have picked up where Chess left off. A history of the process of creative destruction in the blues might be traced as follows.

Label	Format	Market medium and means of promotion
Bluebird	78-rpm records; monophonic	Jukebox; Race record catalogs
Chess	78s → 45s → LPs; Mono → HiFi → stereo	Jukebox, radio → home; radio and television on regional scale
Alligator	LPs → CDs; Stereo → digital	Same plus major print/multimedia on global scale

Additional aspects of the positive business environment that surrounded Chess are suggested above. The Chess brothers enjoyed access to radio stations such as WGES, devoted to a blues and R&B format. In 1947, the year in which Aristocrat (parent of the Chess enterprise) was incorporated, the company listed three distributors. However, the Chess brothers tended to maintain tight control over their product. Nadine Cohodas vividly describes Leonard Chess's visit to an important distributor—Stan's Record Shop in Shreveport, Louisiana. Leonard arrived in his own car, "packed with records, stacked on the backseat, floorboards, and in the trunk" (Cohodas, 2000, p. 49). By 1952, Chess was associated with a number of distributors. However, their primary distribution remained confined largely to three areas: Chicago, Memphis through arrangements with a company called Music Sales, and Atlanta through Southland Distributing.

Again, Chess Records was situated in an ideal location both ideologically and geographically. All the systems were readily at hand to locate and cultivate artists, to record their performances in a state-of-the-art manner, and to popularize and distribute their recordings. Why did the brothers' blues enterprise never become a mainstream success? As noted earlier, the blues is simply not a mainstream music. In addition, the already limited market for blues began to collapse in relation to the market for more contemporary black music. It must be remembered that by the late 1950s there was a new generation of black Chicagoans, once removed from a desire for "down-home" music. Chess diversified their activities, moving particularly toward jazz (their own musical preference) and toward more contemporary rhythm and blues, genres that had demonstrated their potential for crossover success.

Nonetheless, an interesting phenomenon was occurring by the mid- to late 1960s—a second life for Chess blues in "imagined communities." As noted earlier, performances of the blues are structured to access a deeply personal and powerful emotional state. Though the artist imagines himself or herself to be performing for a community that has a deep understanding of the nuances that are being expressed, there is always a contingent of the audience that exists outside the knowledge and concerns of the face-to-face community. While the emotions that are being evoked are powerful—capable of providing a sense of community, capable of summoning profound grief or exhilaration—the actual ideas and images that are evoked are likely to be very broad and flexible, very different from the ideas and images the artist thinks he or she is communicating. The power of the blues is felt way beyond the actual, blues-based community. More to the point, Chess recordings enjoyed unexpected popularity in Great Britain. Luckily, artists such as the Rolling Stones were honest about the degree to which they were influenced by Chess artists. As a result, a young U.S. audience, heavily under the second-hand influence of blues-based, British groups began seeking out Chess recordings, often available as cutouts. In this, we begin to understand why and how the blues exerts an appeal well beyond the community that actively supports it. We begin to understand why a group of musicians in London might decide to call themselves the Rolling Stones.

MICHAEL FARLEY

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Waters, Muddy. *The Real Folk Blues* (1987, Chess; CD).

UNITED/STATES

Chicago rhythm and blues label of the 1950s. United was launched in July 1951 by Leonard Allen (1900–1985), a tailor shop owner, in partnership with Lew Simpkins (1918–1953), a veteran record man who had worked for Miracle and Premium and brought many of their former artists to the new label. United enjoyed early success, scoring hits by Tab Smith (“Because of You”), Jimmy Forrest (“Night Train”), and the Four Blazes (“Mary Jo”). The company was able to expand and open a new imprint called States in May 1952. The owners built a substantial roster of blues artists, usually urban players such as Roosevelt Sykes, Memphis Slim, Harold Burrage, and J. T. Brown, but also such down-home blues artists as Robert Nighthawk, Big Walter Horton, and Junior Wells. United and States had a substantial roster of jazz artists, including Tab Smith, Jimmy Forrest, Chris Woods, Gene Ammons, Paul Bascomb, Tommy Dean, Jimmy Coe, Eddie Chamblee, and Cozy Eggleston. Gospel was represented by Robert Anderson, the Caravans, Singing Sammy Lewis, and the Little Lucy Smith Singers. R&B harmony groups were represented by the Dozier Boys, Moroccos, Shepards, Five Chances, and Danderliers (who had the company’s last hit, “Chop Chop Boom,” in 1955). After Lew Simpkins died in April 1953, United began a long decline. By the end of 1956 Allen sold off half of the house music publishing to pay taxes. During the label’s last year it recorded some rock ‘n’ roll, but the effort came too late. The company closed in 1957.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

UPCHURCH, PHIL

b. 19 July 1941; Chicago, IL

Guitarist; also plays electric bass. Highly regarded across a range of genres, including blues, rhythm and blues, funk, jazz, and jazz-fusion; self-taught. Upchurch began his career in rhythm and blues groups in 1957, and recorded with Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed, and others. On his return from the army (1965–1967), he worked with artists like Jimmy Smith and Dizzy Gillespie from jazz, and soul acts like Donny Hathaway. He performed with Ramsey Lewis (1969–1970) and George Benson (ca. 1976–1981); also recorded with Cannonball Adderley, Grover Washington, Jr., Crusaders, Mose Allison, and others. Upchurch led his own small groups throughout his career and had a hit with “You Can’t Sit Down” in 1961). He formed the twenty-piece Phil-Harmonic Orchestra in 1998. Upchurch is an imaginative and highly accomplished soloist and accompanist with a distinctive personal style.

KENNY MATHIESON

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You Can’t Sit Down (1961, Boyd 1026).

Feelin’ Blue (1967, Milestone 9010).

Free and Easy (1982, Jam 007).

Phil Upchurch Trio (1987, King 6459).

Whatever Happened to the Blues (1996, GoJazz 5019).

USA

Chicago blues and rock label of the 1960s. All-State Record Distributing head Paul Glass began the USA

USA

label in Milwaukee in 1959 in partnership with deejay Lee Rothman. By 1961 Glass had taken complete control of USA and had moved it to Chicago. Initially, most of the artists were blues performers, notably Willie Mabon, Junior Wells, Ko Ko Taylor, Ricky Allen, and Fenton Robinson. Other USA bluesmen were Andrew Brown, Eddy Clearwater, A. C. Reed, Jesse Fortune, Jimmy Burns, and Homesick James. Producers on these records included Willie Dixon, Al Perkins, Al Smith, and Mel London. Beginning in 1966, the label began concentrating on rock acts, such as the Buckingham and the Flock. Rock producers Jim Golden and Bob Monaco joined

Glass as co-owners of the label at this time. However, occasional blues and hard soul acts continued to be released, such as Mighty Joe Young and Bobby Jones. USA closed down in 1969. During the early 1970s, the USA label was briefly revived under different ownership, releasing singles by Lonnie Brooks and Jackie Ross, among others.

ROBERT PRUTER

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V

VALENTINE, CAL

b. 28 May 1937; Dallas, TX
d. 1 January 1997; Oakland, CA

Guitarist and vocalist. First recorded with vocal groups, then with his brother as the Valentines for King in 1960 and with his band as the Texas Rockers for Lyons. Moved to Oakland, recording for Galaxy with the Right Kind (1968–1969) and much later cutting an album for Black Magic.

RAY ASTBURY

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Selected Recording

Cal Valentine—The Texas Rocker (Black Magic CD 9027).

See also **Black Magic; Fantasy/Prestige/Bluesville/Galaxy/Milestone/Riverside; King/Federal/Queen**

VALERY, JOE

(See *Blue, Little Joe*)

VAN RONK, DAVE

b. 30 June 1936; Brooklyn, NY
d. 10 February 2002; New York City, NY

Initially a jazz guitarist, his interest in folk music began after working with Odetta in 1957, and later with Josh White. With his gruff voice, he gained an early reputation for singing blues. His early LP records were on Lyricord, Folkways, and Prestige. From the mid-1960 he added ragtime and jug band music to his interests. From the 1970s he seemed less visible, but in 1974 he joined Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs onstage in singing Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind."

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: Larkin

VAN SINGEL, AMY

b. 10 October 1949; Chicago, IL

Editor, writer, publisher, photographer, and blues disk jockey. Copiloted *Living Blues* from its inception in 1970 until 1983. Author, with Jim O'Neal, of *Voice of the Blues* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

PAUL GARON

VANGUARD

Founded as the Vanguard Recording Society in 1950 in New York City by brothers Seymour and Maynard Solomon, Vanguard became one of America's leading independent labels, specializing from the outset in the then relatively new LP format at a time when other labels were still focusing on 45s and 78s. Initially a classical label that branched out into jazz and folk, Vanguard became an important source for blues in the 1960s, starting with folk-blues of the type featured at the Newport Folk Festival (which Vanguard recorded each summer from 1959 to 1965) and soon expanding into electric blues (as exemplified by the three-volume *Chicago/The Blues/Today!* series produced by Sam Charters). Vanguard LPs were typically bought by college-educated whites and folk revivalists, many of whom were being introduced to authentic blues for the first time.

Traditional acoustic blues artists recorded by Vanguard included, most notably, Mississippi John Hurt, Skip James, and Gary Davis. Vanguard's electric blues roster focused on Chicago-based artists such as Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, James Cotton, Otis Spann, Charlie Musselwhite, and Siegel-Schwall, but also included Big Mama Thornton and Pee Wee Crayton. John Hammond, Jr., recorded both acoustically and electrically for the label. After periods of relative inactivity, forays into dance singles and jazz-fusion, and a 1986 sale to the Welk Music Group, Vanguard's new recordings since the 1990s have focused on singer-songwriters. The label also keeps in print CD reissues from its catalog and a historically significant box set of the "From Spirituals to Swing" Carnegie Hall concerts (1938–1939), packaged with a reproduction of the original concert program booklet.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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VANLEER, JIMMY

b. 24 September 1939; Dickson, TN
d. 8 May 1996; Chicago, IL

A Chicago rhythm and blues producer and record company owner. Vanleer made his mark most notably

during the early 1970s when he achieved success producing soul acts, notably Jackie Ross, Southside Movement, and Barbara and the Uniques. In the blues vein, Vanleer recorded Little Milton from 1980 to 1983. Vanleer was a prolific composer and wrote most of the songs for the acts he recorded. He placed most of his acts with 20th Century Fox Records in California and Scepter/Wand in New York, but he also placed acts on his Sedgwick and Golden Ear labels.

ROBERT PRUTER

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**VANN WALLS, HARRY EUGENE
"PIANO MAN"**

(See Walls, Harry Eugene Vann "Piano Man")

VARSITY

The main label of the United States Record Corporation (USRC), founded in 1939 by Eli Oberstein, a former RCA-Victor executive, as a cut-price competitor to the majors. The popular 8000 series included a performance of "T-Bone Blues" by T-Bone Walker with Les Hite's Orchestra. The seventy-four issues in the 6000 Race series were mainly reissues of older material from Paramount, Gennett, and Crown, apparently acquired through Crown, and often using bizarre pseudonyms such as Sally Sad (who is variously Hattie Snow, Ivy Smith, Eithel Smith, and Mae Glover). An issue credited to Poor Bill is thought to be the only original blues recording. USRC ceased trading in late 1940. The Walker recording was reissued on Oberstein's new Elite label (active 1941–1942), and later appeared on Blue Note and Commodore.

HOWARD RYE

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VAUGHAN, JIMMY

b. 20 March 1951, Dallas, TX

Vaughan began playing guitar in his early teens. He later became a founding member of the Texas-style blues-rock group the Fabulous Thunderbirds. He is also the brother of the late blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan. Soon after the death of his brother in 1990, Vaughan left the Fabulous Thunderbirds and started a solo career and continues to release guitar-oriented blues recordings.

BRYAN GROVE

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Discography: AMG

See also **Fabulous Thunderbirds**

VAUGHAN, STEVIE RAY

b. 3 October 1954; Dallas, TX
 d. 27 August 1990; East Troy, WI

One of the greatest blues guitarists of all time, Stevie Ray Vaughan is credited with igniting the blues renaissance of the 1980s. Though Vaughan was acknowledged as the leading exponent of the Texas style in the post-rock era after 1970, he drew from a number of traditional sources including the Chicago blues of Howlin' Wolf, Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, and Muddy Waters; the Memphis styles of B. B. King and Albert King; rock guitarists Lonnie Mack and Jimi Hendrix; soul artist Stevie Wonder; and jazz musicians Eddie Harris and Kenny Burrell. Vaughan developed a highly personal sound and approach that were immediately recognizable, even when performing in the role of sideman on the occasional pop or R&B recording such as David Bowie's *Let's Dance* album, James Brown's "Coming to America," and a Don Johnson recording project. Vaughan bridged the gap between rock and blues like no guitarist since Jimi Hendrix and attained iconic status

in the eighties. His tragic and untimely death in 1990 underscored his significance as a blues artist and emphasized his contributions to the genre, which still have not been surpassed or equaled. When asked about his legacy in 1986, Vaughan responded that he wanted to be remembered for "taking the color out of the blues"—an admirable feat that he accomplished masterfully in the span of seven short years.

Early Years

Vaughan was born on October 3, 1954, in Dallas, Texas, the son of Jimmie Lee Vaughan and Martha Jean Cook. His father worked on various construction sites in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, requiring the family to live a vagabond lifestyle before settling in Oak Cliff, a suburb of Dallas. There Vaughan was raised, attended school, and performed in his first bands. He dropped out of high school in 1971 when he was seventeen and moved to Austin, Texas, to pursue a career in music.

Stevie Ray Vaughan began playing the guitar in 1963 at age eight. Though he was an avid student of the blues, he was not scholarly or clinical in his assimilation of the genre's musical language. His earliest influence was his older brother, guitarist Jimmie Vaughan (1951–), three years his elder. Vaughan's tutorial and training consisted of listening to countless recordings, copying phrases and riffs by ear, and gleaned insights from his brother. As a youth his tastes were eclectic, ranging from traditional blues artists Albert King, B. B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Slim Harpo, Lightnin' Hopkins, and T-Bone Walker to R&B performers Chuck Berry and Larry Williams and rock 'n' roll instrumentalists and groups Johnny and the Hurricanes, Lonnie Mack, Dick Dale, the Ventures, and Santo and Johnny. He also admired jazz artists Kenny Burrell, Jimmy McGriff, and Brother Jack McDuff. When the British Invasion changed the course of popular music in the sixties, Vaughan added Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Jimi Hendrix to his studies. Reflecting on his informal education spent listening and absorbing, Vaughan remarked, "They were my books."

First Bands and Early Professional Years

Vaughan played in a number of amateur bands during his junior high school years. He worked out many of his ideas and developed the beginnings of his style

in these semiprofessional ensembles, some of which acquired jobs in night clubs. Vaughan's first studio session took place in 1971 with the Cast of Thousands, a local Dallas band led by future actor-director Steve Tobolowsky. Vaughan's earliest recorded work was documented on the Dallas garage band compilation *A New Hi*.

When Vaughan dropped out of high school in winter of 1971 he relocated to Austin, Texas, and joined the city's active blues milieu. There he began performing professionally. In 1972 he worked with Christian Plicque's sextet, Blackbird. Vaughan joined Krackerjack later in 1972. There he developed a relationship with his future bassist Tommy Shannon, of Johnny Winter fame. When Krackerjack self-destructed, Vaughan joined the Nightcrawlers, a rock group that contained future collaborator Doyle Bramhall. The Nightcrawlers backed guitarist Marc Benno in 1973. The band traveled to Los Angeles with Benno and recorded eight songs for A&M Records, produced by David Anderle. Marc Benno and the Nightcrawlers also performed in concert with Humble Pie and the J. Geils band in this period. A&M ultimately rejected the recordings and Vaughan returned to Austin with the Nightcrawlers minus Benno.

In 1975 Vaughan joined the Cobras, a popular local quartet formed and led by singer Paul Ray which featured guitarist Denny Freeman. The Cobras worked in clubs and bars in the Austin area in the mid- to late 1970s. Vaughan became a bandleader in 1976 when he formed the Triple Threat Revue, a quintet that included vocalist Lou Ann Barton, saxophonist Johnny Reno, bassist Jack Newhouse, and drummer Chris Layton. When Barton left the group in 1978, the band continued performing under the name Double Trouble, a title borrowed from an Otis Rush song, with Vaughan as the guitarist and lead singer. The group became a trio when Reno departed in 1979. Bassist Tommy Shannon replaced Newhouse in 1981.

Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble

In the period preceding their breakthrough and commercial success, Vaughan and Double Trouble built a reputation in and around the Austin area. They obtained business representation in the person of Joe Priesnitz and his Rock Arts booking agency, who got the group jobs throughout Texas as well as Northern California. During this period Vaughan opened for Muddy Waters in Houston.

The year 1982 was a pivotal one for Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble. A party and showcase at New York's Danceteria night club arranged by the Rolling Stones generated considerable publicity. The group performed on July 17 at the Montreux Festival in Geneva, Switzerland, and attracted the attention of pop star David Bowie. Bowie asked Vaughan to appear on *Let's Dance*, a multiplatinum album that garnered tremendous public recognition. Vaughan also impressed singer-songwriter Jackson Browne who offered the band studio time in Los Angeles, where the earliest Double Trouble professional demos were recorded in fall of 1982. Famed impresario and talent scout John Hammond subsequently signed Vaughan to a recording contract with Epic Records and produced his first album *Texas Flood*, released in June of the next year.

In 1983 Vaughan and Double Trouble began to experience incremental success. They received four Grammy nominations, winning the Best Traditional Blues category for the Montreux version of "Texas Flood." They also taped audio-video concert footage in Toronto, Canada, later issued as *Live at the Mocambo*, and appeared in their first Austin City Limits concert. Additionally Vaughan and musical role model Albert King recorded a studio session in December, later issued as *In Session: Albert King/ Stevie Ray Vaughan*. Vaughan's 1984 sophomore effort *Couldn't Stand the Weather* continued the momentum. The album debuted at 144 on the *Billboard* pop chart, remained on the charts for thirty-eight weeks, and became his first million-selling record. He was subsequently awarded two prestigious accolades at the fifth annual W. C. Handy Awards: National Blues Entertainer of the Year and Blues Instrumentalist of the Year.

As his career progressed Vaughan took on special projects and extracurricular musical ventures. In 1985 he produced and played on his idol Lonnie Mack's comeback recording *Strike Like Lightning*. He also began to appear as a guest artist on various studio sessions including the 1985 *Rocky IV* soundtrack with James Brown. In 1987 Vaughan performed "Pipeline" with Dick Dale in *Back to the Beach*. In 1988 Vaughan performed an all-acoustic set on MTV.

Vaughan added keyboardist Reese Wynans, on Hammond B-3 organ and piano, to his band line-up in 1985. The first album to feature the new quartet sound was 1985's *Soul to Soul*. This recording would be the penultimate studio album made by Vaughan in his lifetime. The enlarged group was also featured on the *Live Alive* (1986) concert collection.

In 1989 Vaughan and company recorded their final studio album *In Step*, which earned a Grammy for

Best Contemporary Blues Recording. In that year he toured with blues-rock guitar icon Jeff Beck. A special limited edition compilation of the artists' work was gathered for *Fire Meets the Fury* (1989, Epic tour sampler). A second Austin City Limits appearance was also recorded that year. That performance and the earlier 1983 concert were later compiled and issued as a video package in 1995.

In 1990 Vaughan and Double Trouble toured with Joe Cocker. Vaughan also recorded *Family Style* (Epic) with brother Jimmie. On August 27, 1990, Vaughan died in helicopter crash near Alpine Valley, Wisconsin. It was the fourth anniversary of his father Jimmie Lee Vaughan's death. He had just finished performing in concert with Eric Clapton, Robert Cray, Buddy Guy, and brother Jimmie.

Personal Life

Vaughan married Lenora (Lenny) Bailey on December, 20, 1979, between sets at the Rome Inn in Austin, Texas. The instrumental piece "Lenny," an important composition in the Vaughan repertoire, was written as a tribute to his new wife. Vaughan met Janna Lapidus while touring New Zealand in 1986. In 1987 he filed for divorce from Lenny. The final decree was granted in June 1988.

Vaughan was plagued by substance abuse (methamphetamine, cocaine, and alcohol) in his early professional years. He entered formal rehabilitation in 1986 and successfully freed himself from drug and alcohol addiction with the help of Dr. Victor Bloom, who was also instrumental in Eric Clapton's recovery from heroin addiction. Vaughan's triumph over substance abuse was celebrated on *In Step*. The title refers to the twelve-step program and many of the songs gravitate to themes of renewal and rehabilitation. Vaughan remained sober until his death.

Instruments and Sound

Throughout his career Vaughan was a highly visible player of the Fender Stratocaster, an instrument associated with a school of blues guitarists like Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Pee Wee Crayton, Eric Clapton, Robert Cray, Jimmie Vaughan, and Jimi Hendrix. He owned and played several but was most often seen with a trademark battered, early-1960s sunburst model affectionately called "Number One." This iconic guitar was honored in a Fender Stevie Ray

Vaughan artist signature model, still in production, and a special tribute model, which is a detailed custom-shop reproduction.

On rare occasions Vaughan played a semi-hollow Gibson ES-335 and a Gibson Johnny Smith archtop electric. He generally used several Fender combo amplifiers in combinations, favoring the Vibroverb 1×15 and Super-Reverb 4×10 models, and preferred heavy-gauge strings (0.013-0.060) tuned down one half-step. Vaughan's main sound effects were an Ibanez TS-808 or TS-9 Tube Screamer distortion unit and a Vox or Crybaby wah-wah pedal. He sometimes added an Octavia, Fuzz Face, or Fender Vibratone rotating speaker device.

At the time of his death Vaughan's possessions were a matter of public record, revealing that he owned 34 guitars, 12 speakers, and 31 amplifiers.

Texas Flood (1983, Epic), *Couldn't Stand the Weather* (1984, Epic), *Soul to Soul* (1985, Epic), *Live Alive!* (1986, Epic), and *In Step* (1989, Epic) are the albums released by Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble during his lifetime. *The Sky Is Crying* (1991, Epic) and *In the Beginning* (1992, Epic) were issued posthumously as were the compilations *Greatest Hits* (1995, Epic), *The Real Deal: Greatest Hits 2* (1999, Epic), *Blues at Sunrise* (2000, Epic), *SRV* (2000, Legacy; boxed set), and *The Essential Stevie Ray Vaughan* (2002, Legacy).

Several concert performances by Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble were released posthumously in various formats. These include *Live at the Mocambo* (1991, Sony video), *Live from Austin, Texas* (1995, Epic video), *Live at Carnegie Hall* (1997, Epic), and *Live at Montreux 1982 and 1985* (2001, Legacy CD and DVD).

Vaughan also appeared as a guest musician on studio recordings by Bob Dylan, David Bowie, Stevie Wonder, James Brown, Lonnie Mack, A. C. Reed, Teena Marie, Jennifer Warnes, Roy Head, Johnny Copeland, Brian Slawson, Bill Carter, Bennie Wallace, Don Johnson, and Marcia Ball.

WOLF MARSHALL

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VAUGHAN, STEVIE RAY

The Sky Is Crying—Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, transcribed by Dave Whitehill. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1992.

VAUGHN, JIMMY

b. 20 March 1925; Chicago, IL
d. 9 March 1991; St. Louis, MO

Pianist and singer raised in Alton, Illinois, who learned some piano from one-time Paramount/Decca recording artist Thomas “Barrelhouse Buck” MacFarland. After army service in World War II, he played mostly in clubs. In the mid-1950s he was pianist and arranger for Albert King, then the same for Little Milton in the early 1960s. Until the mid-1980s he was active in blues on the West Coast. In his last years he lived in Alton, and recorded four tracks for the Modern Blues label anthology.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

VAUGHN, MAURICE JOHN

b. 6 November 1952; Chicago, IL

Chicago-based singer and multi-instrumentalist. Birth date has also been given as May 10, 1949. Started out playing saxophone in jazz and R&B outfits in the late 1960s. Emphasizing his guitar repertoire in the late 1970s, he gigged behind Professor Eddie Lusk, Phil Guy, Son Seals, Luther Allison, and Valerie Wellington before issuing a debut album on his own label in 1984.

Generic Blues displayed a style based on Chicago electric blues, but mixed with funk and jazz. Vaughn has a warm, tenor voice, and writes songs with strong melodic hooks. Despite positive reviews in the blues press for *Generic Blues*, Vaughn did not release another album until 1993's *In the Shadow of the City*.

JIM TRAGESER

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: AMG

Generic Blues (1984, Alligator Records 4763).
In the Shadow of the City (1993, Alligator Records 4813).
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VAULT

Los Angeles label established in 1963 by Bill Wenzel. Many of its releases were by the Challengers, and one by Lightnin' Hopkins.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

VEE-JAY/ABNER/FALCON

Chicago rhythm and blues label of the 1950s and 1960s. Vee-Jay was the country's largest black-owned label until the advent of Motown in the 1960s. The company was founded in Gary, Indiana, by James Bracken (1908–1972) and Vivian Carter (1920–1989) in 1953. Before the end of the year, Bracken and Carter would be married and the company would relocate in Chicago. Other principals of the company were Vivian's brother, Calvin Carter (1925–1986), who served as producer and A&R man; and Ewart Abner Jr. (1923–1997), who starting in early 1955 was the company's general manager and later president. A secret investor in the company was Art Sheridan, who had earlier been partners with Abner in Chance Records.

Vee-Jay was enormously successful from the beginning, recording bluesman Jimmy Reed, who would become one of the best-selling blues artists of the 1950s, and a doo-wop group, the Spaniels, one of the best known groups of the decade. Other blues artists recorded by Vee-Jay included John Lee Hooker (who gave the company several hits), Billy Boy Arnold, Eddie Taylor, Memphis Slim, and Roscoe Gordon. The company also had hits with such R&B acts as Wade Flemmons, Gene Allison, the Dells, and the El Dorados. Vee-Jay also had a substantial gospel line, recording such groups as the Staple Singers and the Swan Silvertones. A successful jazz line was begun in 1959. In the 1960s the label prospered, recording soul music by Dee Clark, Jerry Butler, Betty Everett, and Gene Chandler and releasing rock 'n' roll by the Beatles and the Four Seasons. As the company grew it added subsidiary imprints, namely Abner, Vivid, and Tollie. In 1963 Abner was forced out of the company, and a new management team moved Vee-Jay to Los Angeles in early 1964. The company returned to Chicago in 1965 with Abner back in the helm, but went bankrupt in 1966.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

Callahan, Mike, and David Edwards. "The Vee Jay Story," Both Sides Now website, <http://www.bsnpubs.com/vee/jay/veejay.html> (accessed December 13, 2004).

**VENSON, TENNER "PLAYBOY"
"COOT"**

b. 4 January 1913; Belzoni, MS
d. 24 February 1985; Chicago, IL

Harpist/drummer; lived and played in the Maxwell Street neighborhood from the early 1940s. In later years, accompanied Big Walter Horton, Honeyboy Edwards, Floyd Jones, Homesick James, and other veterans on the street and in clubs. Venson recorded with Big Joe Williams for Storyville in 1964, and with John Wrencher and Buddy Thomas on Barrelhouse in 1969.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Whiteis, David. "Playboy Venson" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 66 (1985): 44–45.

Discography: LSFP (listed under John Wrencher, as a sideman; also as "Coot Venson" playing harp on the Big Joe Williams release on Storyville)

VERVE

Founded in Los Angeles in 1956 by jazz promoter Norman Granz, following his break with Mercury Records to concentrate on managing and producing Ella Fitzgerald, Verve Records largely reflected the taste of its owner. Granz had worked as a film editor at the Metro Goldwyn Mayer film studio in the early 1940s when he began producing record sessions and promoting jazz concerts at Los Angeles's Philharmonic Hall. The concerts were recorded and Granz issued the recordings a few years later when he formed his first record company, Clef, initially with the backing of Mercury Records. Granz continued to promote his *Jazz at the Philharmonic* (JATP) concerts and tours, releasing the resulting recordings on Clef and Norgran, but when the U.S. Decca recording contract of his most celebrated client, Ella Fitzgerald, expired in 1956, Granz celebrated by founding a new record company, Verve, and Fitzgerald became his first signing.

For the next four years, Granz recorded many fine jazz recordings, but little blues or R&B was ever issued by him; some of Illinois Jacquet's recordings approached an R&B style and were popular with the dancers, but during the 1950s, only Paul Williams's band, Big Bill Broonzy and Meade Lux Lewis enjoyed one-off sessions with the label. In 1959, however, Granz formed a new LP label, Verve-Folkways, and he implemented reissues of earlier Leadbelly and Terry & McGhee material, and new recordings by Lightnin' Hopkins and Memphis Slim & Willie Dixon. Granz sold Verve to M-G-M Records in 1960, and the company continues to thrive today as the major jazz imprint of the Universal International group of labels.

DAVID PENNY

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The Bill Broonzy Story (1999, Verve CD 547555-2).

VICKSBURG BLUES

"Vicksburg Blues" is the title given by Little Brother Montgomery to the generic blues theme otherwise known as "44 Blues" or "The Forty-Fours." The origins of the latter titles are obscure, but may refer to Train Number 44, which ran on the Illinois Central line close to Vicksburg, or to the caliber of a .44 revolver. According to Little Brother, he first heard the tune in a rudimentary form when he was a teenager in Ferriday, Louisiana, played by two barrelhouse pianists, Long Tall Friday and Dehlco Roberts. Other pianists who played the tune in its formative period included Johnny Eager (or Yega) and Nub-Handed Son Crooks (or Cooks).

In 1922 Ferriday was flooded and Little Brother moved to Tallulah, Louisiana, where he met Ernest "44" Johnson, another prominent exponent of the theme. At this time the tune had no words, as Little Brother confirmed: "It's a blues, it's a barrelhouse, honky-tonk blues. People danced by that, did the shimmy by that." Little Brother taught the piece to Lee Green when they spent time together in Soudheimer, Louisiana, and Green in turn taught the tune to Roosevelt Sykes. Some time later the tune acquired

VICKSBURG BLUES

lyrics, although there appears to have been no consensus as to the vocal melody. Sykes was the first to get to a studio, and his June 1929 recording of "44 Blues" was a hit. Green followed with "Number Forty-Four Blues" two months later. A year later in 1930 Little Brother recorded his own composition as "Vicksburg Blues." The popularity of the theme can be judged by the fact that between them Sykes, Green, and Little Brother recorded it on ten occasions between 1929 and 1936.

Sykes and Little Brother sang two distinct versions of the vocal melody line and composed several different collections of verses. Sykes sings a succession of falling phrases, whereas Little Brother's searing vocal line rises and falls, creating a pronounced tension and emphasizing the flattened seventh in the melody. Both employed a highly recognizable rumbling, ascending bass line and a double time right-hand pattern, which, as Little Brother commented, is "the hardest barrelhouse blues of any blues in history to play because you have to keep two different times going in each hand."

Sykes's tour de force, with its menacing introduction, is the version that is most often covered by other artists. (James "Boodle-It" Wiggins, accompanied by Blind Leroy Garnett, produced their cover as early as October 1929.) Sykes himself performs the triplets of the right-hand melody with great panache and gradually increases the complexity of the accompaniment throughout the piece, adding a complex obbligato behind the vocal on the later choruses. Few other pianists could equal Sykes's and Little Brother's prowess on the piano with this piece.

Echoes of the "Forty-Fours" continue to reverberate. Mae Glover recorded a version in 1931 and Johnny Temple in 1936. Vocal patterns bearing at least some relationship to the melody occur in the work of other Mississippi artists such as Louise Johnson ("By the Moon and Stars," 1930) and Charley Patton ("It Won't Be Long," 1929).

The "Forty-Fours" theme enjoyed great longevity, with outstanding later versions by Big Maceo ("Maceo's 32-20," 1945), Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup ("Crudup's Vicksburg Blues," 1947), Howlin' Wolf ("Forty Four," 1954), and Otis Spann ("Vicksburg Blues," 1966).

BOB HALL

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VICTOR

Record company founded in Camden, New Jersey, by Eldridge R. Johnson in 1901. It shared with the Gramophone Company the rights to the HMV "dog-and-gramophone" logo. In the early 1920s popular recording was directed by Edward T. King, who was unsympathetic to African American music. Auditions for a Race series in 1921 were abandoned and seven 1923 issues by such as Lizzie Miles and Rosa Henderson remained isolated. King's replacement by Nat Shilkret in November 1926 led to rapid change. Extensive field trips were undertaken. The Memphis Jug Band, Cannon's Jug Stompers, Jim Jackson, Tommy Johnson, Ishman Bracey, Frank Stokes, Furry Lewis, and John Estes were all recorded in Memphis, where the first-named's Will Shade acted as Race A&R man. "Rabbit" Brown was recorded in New Orleans, and Roosevelt Sykes (using the name Willie Kelly) in Louisville. Originally included in the general series, Race items had a dedicated V38000 series from January 1929, replaced in March by a separate V38500 series for vocal items. On January 4, 1929, Victor was taken over by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) but its principal label continued to be known as Victor until 1946. Both Race series were discontinued in 1930; new series started in 1931 were the 23000s for instrumentals and the 23250s for vocals. Race issues were later concentrated on the subsidiary Bluebird label.

HOWARD RYE

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Rust, Brian. *The Victor Master Book, Volume 2: 1925–1936*. Pinner, Middlesex: Author; Stanhope, NJ: Walter C. Allen, 1970.

VINSON, EDDIE "CLEANHEAD"

- b. 18 December 1917; Houston, TX
d. 2 July 1988; Los Angeles, CA

Alto saxophonist and blues singer, Cleanhead Vinson's music spanned from jump-blues to bebop. He served his apprenticeship in the late 1930s in Milton Larkin's orchestra, which included fellow Texas saxmen Arnett Cobb and Illinois Jacquet. He played with Big Bill Broonzy's band in 1941 and the Cootie Williams Orchestra from 1942 to 1945—his distinctive vocals were featured on two wartime hits: "Cherry Red" and "Somebody's Got to Go." Cleanhead formed his own big band in 1945. With Mercury Records he had R&B chart-toppers with "Old Maid Boogie" and his signature tune "Kidney Stew Blues." In 1947 young alto saxophonist John Coltrane joined his band—Cleanhead, an alto player, was responsible for switching Coltrane to tenor saxophone. From 1949 to 1952 he was signed to King Records on which he had another hit "Somebody Done Stole My Cherry Red." In later years, he recorded with Big Joe Turner, Etta James, and Roomful of Blues.

DENNIS TAYLOR

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Chilton, John. *Who's Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*. 4th ed. London: Macmillan; New York: Da Capo, 1985.

Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

VINSON, MOSE

b. 2 June 1917; Holly Springs, MS
d. 16 or 23 November 2002; Memphis, TN

Pianist/vocalist; played Memphis clubs around the 1930s to 1950s; appeared on James Cotton's Sun debut, "Cotton Crop Blues," in 1954. In the 1980s, he began work as resident pianist at the Center for Southern Folklore, and eventually became one of Memphis's most respected blues elder statesmen.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Witter, David. "Mose Vinson: Barrelhousing a Bygone Era." *Living Blues* no. 97 (1991): 31.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

VINSON, WALTER

b. 2 February 1901; Bolton, MS
d. 22 April 1975; Chicago, IL

Blues singer and guitarist. Walter Jacobs Vinson [Vincson] was a guitarist who made recordings under his own name and as a member of the Mississippi Sheiks from 1929 to 1941. His vocals were relaxed, his lyrics interesting, and his guitar style impressive. An attempted comeback in the seventies was only partly successful.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Harris; Larkin; Santelli; Southern

Discography: DGR

VIOLENCE AS LYRIC CONCEPT

Violence in blues lyrics serves as both real and fictive oral history, moaning to a rhythmic dance beat the folk experiences of those on the outside of society, who by its mores have "done somebody wrong." In most American folk music ballads, the folk figures were strong, conquering the Wild West, taming if not killing savage beasts during safari expeditions, building the Hoover dam, and in the process making America great. Yet, the early "Blues ballads" about Frankie, Stagolee, and Railroad Bill were replete with violent lyrics. What was their appeal to listeners and their function to audiences during performances?

One answer is suggested by a 1937 *Life* magazine article about Leadbelly, entitled "Bad Nigger Makes Good Minstrel." Many early blues recordings had lyrics on jail themes, offering a window's view for outsiders, and a mirrored memory for insiders. If an American cultural virtue holds that a man's honor rests with the power to retaliate, usually with force, is it so unusual that blues is reflective of an American model of virtue?

Another answer is that violence permeated the Deep South in the 1890s and 1900s, both in the terms of white on black violence, and black on black violence. An ubiquitous example of the later is the numerous versions of the "Stag-O-Lee" (spellings vary) songs, with Mississippi John Hurt's "Stack O Lee" being one of the more well known of the at least sixty-three recorded versions. The protagonist of the Stagolee songs sung by Walter "Furry" Lewis, Ma Rainey, and Jessie Fuller kills a man for stealing his

hat. These artists and others sing the protagonist into a state of heroism complete with escape from justice, while others depict a fierce black man who meets his demise at the gallows. Alan Lomax in *The Land Where the Blues Began* speculates, "... Stackolee ... was pure anger and he killed out of irritability to relieve his pent-up rage."

Black life among the levees and within Jim Crow society in general sparked a need for musicians to romanticize about we today would call Black Power. To personify this power in song was a great deal safer than to do so in real life, even if it meant depicting themselves and fellow black men as violent. In succeeding generations, as blues musicians continued to live in and perform for local communities prone to violence, the lyrics would continue to reflect such incidents.

PHOENIX SAVAGE-WISEMAN

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VITA

Pasadena, California, label; active 1955–1959 as a subsidiary of Mambo Records owned by Larry Mead and Mike Gradny. Notable artists were Riff Ruffin, Willie King with Ike Turner, and Harmonica Slim.

EDWARD KOMARA

Discography: McGrath

VITACOUSTIC

Short-lived Chicago pop label of the late 1940s. The company was formed in March 1947 by Lloyd Garrett and Jack Buckley with Bill Putnam (one of the co-owners of Universal Recording). Vitacoustic was originally oriented toward white pop music, with a special emphasis on harmonica players. The

company's name served to emphasize the use of the new echo recording technique devised by Putnam. Vitacoustic started off with an enormous hit—"Peg o' My Heart" by Jerry Murad's Harmonicats, which reportedly sold 1.4 million copies. In August 1947, Putnam left the operation, taking the Harmonicats with them. Vitacoustic tried to adapt by moving into R&B as well as country. Vitacoustic issued five singles by the Todd Rhodes band out of Detroit, via an arrangement with Sensation Records, and recorded jazz trumpeter Howard McGhee, traditional jazz cornetist Jimmy McPartland, modern jazz altoist Johnny Bothwell, R&B singers Christine Randall and Kitty Stevenson, and the harmony group Four Shades of Rhythm. Only the Four Shades would see release. The company was liquidated in October 1948.

ROBERT PRUTER

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Discography: McGrath

VOCALION

Record label of the Aeolian Company, piano manufacturers of New York, introduced in 1920 to replace its original Aeolian-Vocalion label. It was sold about November 1924 to Brunswick, which maintained Vocalion as a separate label but with much interchange of masters. Vocalion participated in the vaudeville blues boom of the early 1920s with sides by Rosa Henderson, Edna Hicks, Viola McCoy, Monette Moore, and others. A Race series, the Vocalion 1000s, recorded under the supervision of Jack Kapp, was established in March 1926. In late 1927, direction passed to J. Mayo Williams, who turned the series into a major blues label with Jim Jackson, Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe, Tampa Red and Georgia Tom, and many more.

Vocalion passed to Warner Brothers in April 1930 and then sold in December 1931 to Consolidated Film Industries, owners of the American Record Corporation (ARC), who discontinued the 1000 series in July 1933 at 1745, but resumed Race issues in September 1933 in a 25000 series, later changed to an 02500 series running parallel with the general series, the zero prefix signifying a Race record (numbers were sometimes

used both with and without the prefix). Big Bill Broonzy, Amos Easton, Lil Johnson, Memphis Minnie, and Peetie Wheatstraw were among the most prolific contributors; some artists were shared with ARC's other labels, including Blind Boy Fuller and Robert Johnson. Vocalion issues continued until 1940 when new owners CBS substituted the OKeh label name from 05621, continuing the numerical series; many earlier Vocalion recordings were re-pressed on OKeh with the original numbers.

HOWARD RYE

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VOGUE

Record company established by Charles Delaunay and others in France in 1948 and under his A&R direction. Recordings of visiting American artists included blues, notably 1951–1952 recordings by Big Bill Broonzy. In the 1960s Memphis Slim, Champion Jack Dupree, and Jimmy Dawkins appeared on Vogue. The company's licensed material included R&B issues derived from King.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography

Ruppli, Michel. *Vogue*. Paris: AFAS, 1992.

W

WALKER, BLIND WILLIE

b. 1896; SC

d. 4 March 1933; Greenville, SC

East Coast guitar virtuoso “Blind” Willie Walker perfectly embodies underrecorded yet very influential pre-war artists. Although he cut only four sides for Columbia in 1930, he is often acknowledged as a master of the ragtime style and was recalled by Reverend Gary Davis as an excellent bluesman. Little is known about his life. Blind from birth and a full-time professional musician until he died of congenital syphilis, in his teens Walker was already proficient to play with Davis in the Greenville string band. Walker’s only issued coupling, “Dupree Blues” b/w “South Carolina Rag,” features his laid-up vocal delivery functionally complementing his fast, brilliant guitar technique.

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: DGR

WALKER, CHARLES

b. 26 July 1922; Macon, GA

d. 24 June 1975; New York City, NY

Singer and guitarist; son of blues musician Freeman “Boweavil” Walker. Walker began performing in 1955 in Newark, New Jersey. He recorded in 1956, 1959, and 1963 for the Holiday, Vest, and Atlas labels. He retired from music in 1963 but returned after his wife’s death in 1968. His Oblivion label LP *Blues from the Apple* appeared in 1974. He died following surgery, reportedly for lung cancer.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

WALKER, DENNIS

b. 1943; Grants Pass, OR

Bassist, producer, and recording studio collaborator with Bruce Bromberg. Walker acquired his early interest in black music from his father’s record collection. In high school band he played trumpet. He moved to Los Angeles in 1964 and met Bromberg through a job at Dot Records. Much of their early work in 1964–1966 was performing with Luke “Long Gone” Miles, with Bromberg on lead guitar and Walker on electric bass guitar. In 1967–1970 Walker served in the U.S. Army; afterward he resumed working with

WALKER, DENNIS

Bromberg. Significant and acknowledged influences on Walker's songwriting were Lowell Fulson and Percy Mayfield. From the late 1970s, he and Bromberg worked with Robert Cray on Tomato, HighTone, and Mercury releases. When the Polygram label group acquired Cray's recording contract, Walker stayed with Cray.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WALKER, GEORGE "CHICKEN GEORGE"

b. 12 March 1937; Memphis, TN
d. 30 November 1986; Memphis, TN

Walker's early career was with Wilroy Sanders, initially in the Jets in 1953, later in the Binghampton Boys in the early 1960s, then in Leroy Hodges's Funky Four through 1974. After Sanders's departure to form the Fieldstones, Walker continued and recorded with the Funky Four Minus, the Hollywood All-Stars, and the Blues Busters.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WALKER, JIMMY

b. Jules James Walker, 8 March 1905; Memphis, TN
d. 16 October 1997; Chicago, IL

Chicago-based blues and boogie-woogie pianist/vocalist. Walker began working the rent party circuit on Chicago's South Side in the 1930s. He recorded as sideman with Walter Horton, Johnny Young, and John Lee Granderson, as duet partner with fellow pianist Erwin Helfer, and occasionally as leader. Often praised for his soulfulness, Walker performed widely around Chicago well into old age.

JOHN KIMSEY

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Discography: LSFP

WALKER, JOE LOUIS

b. 25 December 1949; San Francisco, CA

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter. One of the most versatile and virtuosic of modern bluesmen, Walker recorded in a variety of creative contexts with uniformly impressive results. His gospel-trained vocals and expansive guitar abilities enabled him to successfully explore diverse blues styles with authority and originality, preserving and showcasing his unique musical personality in every setting and situation.

While rooming with guitarist Mike Bloomfield, Walker undertook a series of youthful experiments with San Francisco-area blues and rock groups. He performed as an opening act on blues bills at the Fillmore, meeting his early mentor Earl Hooker in the process, and briefly checked out the Chicago scene. Then he left secular music completely. Beginning in 1975, Walker devoted the next decade purely to gospel music as a member of the Spiritual Corinthians. But a blues epiphany at the 1985 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival redirected his musical attention, and he returned to the West Coast determined to make a career for himself as a bluesman.

Walker's initial activities were overseas, playing a European tour with the Mississippi Delta Blues Band and then was part of a package tour of Japan with New Orleans greats Earl King and Johnny Adams. Walker made his blues recording debut the next year with the HighTone Records release *Cold Is the Night*, a musically mature effort that emphatically announced the arrival of a fully developed blues talent. Walker's belated reentry into blues was an almost immediately successful one: He won the 1988 W. C. Handy Award for best contemporary male artist in the wake of pervasive radio airplay and raving reviews of his album and live performances. His group the Bosstalkers would ultimately receive its own Handy, winning the best band prize in 1996.

Walker released two more studio sessions and two volumes of *Live at Slim's* from 1990 shows in San Francisco on HighTone before signing with Verve Records, where he made his debut in 1993 with *Blues Survivor*, a characteristically eclectic session

featuring his former bandmates the Spiritual Corinthians on two tracks. Subsequent albums, such as *JLW*, which included everything from an acoustic Dobro and harp duet with James Cotton to more involved settings featuring jazz saxist Branford Marsalis, the Gospel Hummingbirds, and the Tower of Power horns, continued his adventurous eclecticism while adding slicker production values.

Walker's 1997 showcase *Great Guitars* was the finest example of the unusual depth and diversity of his playing as he matched licks with Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Bonnie Raitt, Ike Turner, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, Taj Mahal, Robert Lockwood, and others in a full spectrum of styles that no other modern blues guitarist was capable of performing. He also successfully delved into a personalized version of Memphis soul the following year with producer Steve Cropper, leading an assortment of Muscle Shoals session stars on *Preacher and the President*.

MICHAEL POINT

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Aldin, Mary Katherine. "Joe Louis Walker: 'My Whole Thing Was Playing Music.'" *Living Blues* no. 87 (July/August 1989): 14–20.

Discography: AMG

WALKER, JOHNNY MAYON "BIG MOOSE"

b. 27 June 1929; Greenville, MS
d. 27 November 1999; Chicago, IL

Johnny "Big Moose" Walker recorded a few albums as a leader during the course of his almost fifty-year musical career, but he is best known and most widely revered for his work as a sideman. A multi-instrumentalist in his youth, he soon settled on piano and organ as his primary instruments and had begun playing juke joints and clubs and touring regionally with blues ensembles by the late 1940s. By the early 1950s he was in broader demand as a session and touring musician and worked with such established artists as Ike Turner, Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson," and Elmore James.

A three-year stint in the Army took him out of circulation until his discharge in 1955, at which point he returned to the blues scene and made additional recordings with Ike Turner and Lowell Fulsom before moving to Chicago, where his popularity as a sideman

increased. There he worked with Elmore James, Magic Sam, and Otis Rush, among others; he also found time to play guitar on recordings by Curtis Jones and to tour as a bass player for Muddy Waters. During these years, his solo albums (some of which were released under the name "Moose John") achieved modest success.

His health began to fail by the late 1980s, though he continued to sit in on occasional studio and club dates; a stroke led him to retire completely from music in 1992, and he died in Chicago seven years later.

RICK ANDERSON

Bibliography

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Discography: LSFP

Blue Love (1996, Evidence 26082).

WALKER, JUNIOR

b. Autry DeWalt, Jr., 14 June 1931; Blytheville, AR
d. 23 November 1995; Battle Creek, MI

Saxophonist and recording group leader best known for his 1965 Motown hit "Shotgun." Walker and his band the All-Stars stayed with Motown and Soul labels until 1979, then returned four years later. He was also a session musician in demand, such as the saxophone soloist on the rock group Foreigner's 1981 hit single "Urgent."

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: Larkin

WALKER, PHILLIP

b. 11 February 1937; Welsh, LA

Singer and guitarist Phillip Walker was born the son of farmers Malvin and Viola Walker in the rural community of Welsh, Louisiana, located near the Texas border and just east of Lake Charles. Walker's first musical inspirations came from his Cherokee mother's side of the family; both her father and

WALKER, PHILLIP

several of her brothers were area musicians who performed in the 1920s and 1930s.

In 1945, the family moved to a farm near Port Arthur, Texas, and soon Walker began taking a strong interest in the blues, inspired by listening to records on the family's wind-up Victrola and radio broadcasts from Nashville. He initially picked the harmonica as his instrument but soon switched to practicing on his older brother's guitar upon hearing the recordings of T-Bone Walker and Lightnin' Hopkins.

By 1953, the underage Walker was living with his sister in Port Arthur and began sneaking into area nightclubs to hear musicians such as Guitar Junior (Lonnie Brooks), Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, and B. B. King. He soon began playing guitar in clubs around the city, and in 1954 zydeco pioneer Clifton Chenier asked him to join his band. Walker spent the next three years touring the country with Chenier, often as part of popular R&B packages, and recorded with him for the Specialty and Chess labels.

In 1957, Walker left Chenier to form his own band, and he settled in the bustling West Texas city of El Paso. He often worked with local guitar favorite Long John Hunter in nearby Juarez, Mexico, whose rousing playing style would make a strong impression on him. Walker cut his first recordings as a leader in Los Angeles for Elko Records in 1959 and later that year teamed up with singer/songwriter Ina Beatrice Gilkey. Following his relocation to Los Angeles, the two married in 1960 and worked and recorded together during the next nine years, often billed as "Phil and Bea Bopp."

After a stint with Little Richard's band in 1969, Walker worked with producer Bruce Bromberg, and the resulting collaborations produced several excellent recordings throughout the following years, including the critically acclaimed *Bottom of the Top* for Playboy Records in 1973. He continued to tour nationally, and by the late 1970s he was performing regularly throughout Europe. Walker recorded steadily throughout the 1980s and 1990s with releases on Rounder, HighTone, JSP, and Black Top. His very fluent guitar playing and commanding vocals made him and his veteran, horn-punctuated band a standout on the contemporary blues scene.

In 1991, Walker's beloved wife and songwriting partner Ina Beatrice, who had retired from her blues-singing career in the 1970s, succumbed to lung cancer. Walker reunited with his longtime Texas mentors Lonnie Brooks and Long John Hunter in 1999 on the successful *Lone Star Shootout* for Alligator Records, which in turn led to many prestigious live appearances with the group, including headlining the

Chicago Blues Festival in 2000. Walker continued to record and tour internationally and remained an outstanding exponent of the Texas/West Coast blues tradition.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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WALKER, ROBERT "BILBO"

b. 19 February, 1937; Borden Plantation, New Africa, MS [near Clarksdale]

Vocalist, guitarist, pianist. Walker performed locally in Mississippi, then later in Chicago (often as "Chuck Berry, Jr.") through the 1970s. He eventually returned to Mississippi, then moved to Bakersfield, California, and now divides his time between California and Mississippi. He recorded for Rooster Blues.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Discography: AMG

WALKER, T-BONE

b. Aaron Thibeaux Walker, 28 May 1910; Linden, TX
d. 16 March 1975; Los Angeles, CA

Guitarist, singer, songwriter. One of the most important and enduring icons of blues development, the charismatic Walker radically transformed and

upgraded the music with a combination of instrumental virtuosity and stylistic and technical innovation during a career of unusual longevity and legendary significance.

The exact origins of most blues breakthroughs are open to debate, but the true source of electric blues guitar is universally acknowledged to be Walker, who began playing the instrument in the mid-1930s. He brought guitar, previously buried in the ensemble background as a mere rhythmic device, to center stage, as not only a lead instrument but as the dominant sound of the genre for decades to come.

Walker not only invented the electric blues guitar concept but also the sound identified with it. Walker, incorporating jazz changes with blues innovations of his own design, created a new guitar sound with a horn-like richness that was emulated by guitarists everywhere, but especially in his home state. "Everybody that picked up a guitar in Texas wanted to sound like T-Bone," said Gatemouth Brown, who got his big blues break as an impromptu replacement for Walker at a Texas gig. Walker's sensational showmanship brought another sort of electricity to the blues, and his athletic approach was directly responsible for later similarly extroverted stage antics by Chuck Berry, James Brown, and Jimi Hendrix.

Walker moved to the Dallas/Fort Worth area with his mother when he was two years old. He grew up in an unusually musical household and as a young teen became proficient on a variety of stringed instruments, including violin, mandolin, banjo, and guitar. He also got to meet and hear seminal blues creator Blind Lemon Jefferson, a family friend who played with Walker's bassist stepfather and uncle in impromptu jams.

By the mid-1920s Walker was performing, both as a dancer and musician, in touring carnivals and medicine shows. He backed blues singer Ida Cox for a while and also played at country dances and house parties and on street corners when necessary. Walker was obviously a born entertainer, but his abilities weren't on prominent display until he won an amateur talent contest at a Cab Calloway show in Dallas that featured a week's work with the band as the prize. He caught the eye and ears of a record company talent scout at the show in Houston, and suddenly he was no longer just a street corner sensation.

Walker's sound at this time was solidly in the rural folk-blues tradition, and his recording debut in 1929 for Columbia Records reflected this approach, one he would discard in the future in favor of a more jazz-inflected urban style. The Columbia singles, "Trinity River Blues" and "Wichita Falls Blues,"

although credited to "Oak-Cliff T-Bone," made Walker a recording artist. But it would be another decade before Walker recorded again and a dozen years before his first legitimate hit.

After fronting a combo at Gem Hotel in Dallas in 1934, Walker relocated to California. He soon found musical employment, but it was as a dancer with saxophonist Big Jim Wynn's band. Walker upgraded his status in 1939 when he moved to the microphone as the featured vocalist with the highly popular Les Hite Cotton Club Orchestra, with which he recorded "T-Bone Blues" on Varsity Records the next year. Walker also toured with the Hite Orchestra, playing the Apollo Theatre in Harlem and other major showcase venues of the era.

With Walker's plugged-in guitar, which he would occasionally play behind his back, adding an extra jump to his blues and his onstage acrobatics, complete with signature splits, energizing the proceedings, he quickly became a major attraction in his own right on the active Los Angeles scene, regularly drawing overflow crowds to the clubs he played as word spread about the excitement generated by his live show.

Walker also returned to the studio, now on both vocals and guitar, recording "Mean Old World" and "I Got a Break Baby" with pianist Freddie Slack and His Orchestra in 1942. These sides, which represent the first true expression of his unprecedented musical fusion of urban sophistication and rural roots, presage in sound and sensibility the revolutionary recordings he would make five years later.

Walker was deemed unfit for military duty due to his flat feet, but he played a series of USO shows as his contribution to the war effort. Chicago, or more precisely the Windy City's Rhumboogie Club, served as Walker's alternate base of operations during World War II. He played extended residencies at the venue and in 1945 recorded with the house band, the Marl Young Orchestra.

Those recordings, like the ones Walker made the next year in Hollywood with the Jack McVea All-Stars and the Al Killian Quintet, were noteworthy but nevertheless forgotten when Walker signed with Black & White Records and began work on a series of trailblazing singles that gave his career an exponential boost while simultaneously accelerating the evolution of blues.

Walker's 1947 recordings for the Black & White label found him at the peak of his powers as he fused his creativity and technical expertise to present a fully developed new blues sound. Beginning with "They Call It Stormy Monday," the song B. B. King said was his blues inspiration, the sessions produced a series of classic compositions that would form



T-Bone Walker in 1945. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

the core of the live blues repertoire for the next half-century. The definitive version of Walker's trademark "T-Bone Shuffle," the song that served as the timeless template for all Texas blues shuffles to follow, was another product of the landmark sessions.

The Black & White sessions were historic, but they were by no means the full extent of Walker's recorded legacy. He moved to Imperial Records in 1950 for a five-year stint that infused another series of blues standards into the genre's basic repertoire and experimented with a funky New Orleans sound behind bandleader Dave Bartholomew. A subsequent affiliation with Atlantic Records was equally successful and somewhat more eclectic as he recorded an atypical Chicago-style session with Junior Wells and Jimmy Rogers and later featured his instrumental expertise in a session with jazz guitarist Barney Kessel.

The popular appeal of Walker's sophisticated blues approach was overwhelmed by pop frenzy and rock volume in the 1960s. His appearance at the American Folk Blues Festival in 1962 was a major media event, but it did little for his commercial fortunes. Walker continued recording and even won a Grammy in 1970 for "Good Feelin'," but his American momentum was minimal. He remained wildly popular in Europe and did several historic festival dates there, but his health, impacted by an automobile accident,

prevented him from capitalizing on his status as a living legend.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSPF

WALLACE, SIPPIE

b. Beulah Thomas, 11 November 1898; Houston, TX
d. 1 November 1986; Detroit, MI

Superb singer in the 1920s "classic blues" idiom, who remained a vibrant performer into the 1980s. Her father was George W. Thomas, Sr., deacon at Shiloh Baptist Church, and her mother's name was Fanny Bradley. She had twelve siblings, including pianist George W. Thomas, Jr., with whom she lived briefly in New Orleans around 1910, and pianist Hersal Thomas; a niece, Hociel Thomas, was raised as part of the family from the age of two weeks. She attended school into her teenage years. An early marriage in about 1914–1917 was to Frank Seals, and in about 1917 she married Matt Wallace. She began her professional singing in tent shows in the Houston area. Since her religious parents did not approve of blues or jazz, she would tell them she was visiting a brother.

In 1923 she moved to Chicago with brother George. By the end of that year she began recording with OKeh Records, and her renditions of "Shorty George" and "Up the Country Blues" became hits. By the end of her initial recording career in 1928, she had performed in the studio with cornetists King Joe Oliver and Louis Armstrong, with pianist Clarence Williams, and with her brothers George and Hersal.

In 1926 Hersal Thomas died of food poisoning (later, in a *Cadence* magazine interview, Wallace would maintain he died in 1936). In 1929, not long after a Victor session, she moved to Detroit. From then into the early 1970s, she was organist for the Leland Baptist Church. She also served in the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. Her husband Matt Wallace and brother George died in 1936. Occasionally she would perform blues in public, and she recorded with Albert Ammons in 1945, with



Sippie Wallace ca. 1924. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

the Fine Arts Trio in 1959, and with the James Cohen Trio three years later.

Her full-time return to blues performing was in 1966 on the encouragement of Victoria Spivey. She performed on the 1966 American Folk Blues Festival tour, during which she recorded the Storyville album *Sippie Wallace Sings the Blues*, which included her classic song "Women Be Wise, Don't Advertise Your Man." Another tape of her singing in top form, recorded on October 31, 1966, in Copenhagen, Denmark, was released on Alligator some years later.

She regularly performed at colleges and festivals into the 1980s, despite having a stroke in 1970. Late-career associations were with pianist James Dapogny and with singer/guitarist Bonnie Raitt, who named Wallace as a significant influence. Raitt helped the older singer sign with Atlantic Records in 1982, and they performed together on the David Letterman television show that same year.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

WALLACE, WESLEY

b. Unknown

d. Unknown

From Alton, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. His recorded legacy, a single 1929 coupling and a few accompaniments, are scant tribute to a most original pianist. Quirky, highly idiosyncratic, and with little regard for conventional bar lengths or sequences, Wallace imbued the slow boogie "Fanny Lee Blues" with a haunting, mesmerizing quality. His celebrated "No. 29" has a quick, unaccented 6/8 bass and rocks along, the treble phrases echoing the sounds of the train, which ran on the Illinois Central Line.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

WALLS, HARRY EUGENE VANN "PIANO MAN"

b. 24 August 1918; Middlesboro, KY

d. 24 February 1999; Montreal, Quebec, Canada

A studio pianist and arranger for Atlantic (1949 to 1955), Walls contributed scintillating keyboard work to hits by Big Joe Turner, Ruth Brown, and various vocal groups. Emigrating to Canada, he was rediscovered in 1987.

CRAIG MORRISON

Bibliography

Larkin

Discography: LSFP

WALTON, MERCY DEE

WALTON, MERCY DEE

- b. 3 or 30 August 1915; Waco, TX
- d. 2 December 1962; Stockton (or Murphys), CA

Pianist and vocalist Mercy Dee Walton blended the biting confessional singing style of traditional blues with the more sophisticated phrasing and keyboard approach of the jump and shuffle stylists. Despite not having a sizable number of major hits, he issued several intriguing releases for such labels as Imperial, Specialty, Flair, and most notably Arhoolie and Prestige. His 1961 sessions with guitarist K. C. Douglas, harmonica player Sidney Maiden, and drummer Otis Cherry are arguably his finest.

RON WYNN

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

WALTON, WADE

- b. 10 October 1923; Lombardy, MS
- d. 10 January 2000; St. Louis, MS

Barber, singer, and storyteller, Wade Walton grew up in Goldfield, Mississippi, a small town five miles from Parchman Penitentiary. As a youth he entertained at house parties and dabbled in vaudeville, occasionally attending field trips to sing for the prisoners. In 1940 he left for barber college in Memphis and lived for a time in Chicago before settling in Clarksdale, Mississippi. He presided over the Big Six barbershop, playing guitar as time warranted or singing songs while beating time on a razor strop. Walton's work brought him into contact with the local musicians of the day, and the unique society of the barbershop served as ear to his stories as well as his impromptu numbers.

One of the musicians who happened into the Big Six was Ike Turner. He and Walton became friends—what Walton would later insist was mentoring—in 1944 and were for a time bandmates in Turner's Kings of Rhythm. Steady gigs, including a spot at Jake's in St. Louis, gave Turner a fever for success, but Walton felt insecure about leaving Clarksdale. Preferring the settled life, Walton bowed out of the Kings in 1946 but continued to enliven the air of various barbershops for the next twenty years.

In the ensuing decades, Walton's reputation as a civic treasure grew steadily; he opened two shops in Clarksdale, in 1960 and in 1972, and recorded two albums in the early 1960s. As Clarksdale's unofficial ambassador of the blues, he has played host to blues enthusiasts from around the world, appeared in blues documentaries, and played countless area festivals and civic events.

JOHN OTIS

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Discography: LSFP

WARD, ROBERT

- b. 15 October 1938; Luthersville, GA

Guitarist/singer Robert Ward has had three significant impacts on rhythm and blues: He played guitar behind Wilson Pickett on the Falcons' 1962 hit "I Found a Love"; he founded the Ohio Untouchables, which later became the Ohio Players; and he enjoyed a remarkable artistic renaissance in the 1990s.

Born and raised in Georgia, Ward began his musical career there after serving in the Army. Moving north to Dayton, Ohio, in the early 1960s, he formed the Ohio Untouchables. Signed to the Detroit-based Lupine label, the band recorded several singles. But when they backed Pickett's band, the Falcons, for the "I Found a Love" session, Ward became a hero to young guitarists across the country. The Magnatone amplifier he used at that time produced a haunting, vibrato-like effect—Lonnie Mack credits Ward as one of his main inspirations.

In the late 1960s, Ward left the Ohio Untouchables to serve as a session guitarist for Motown. (Shortly after he left, the band changed its name to the Ohio Players.) In the mid-1970s, Ward's wife died and he moved back to Georgia, largely disappearing from public view.

In 1990, he connected with Black Top Records for a solo album, *Fear No Evil*, that revived interest in his unique sound on guitar. Ward's original compositions and his warm vocals combined with his guitar playing to help him release a series of four well-received albums for Black Top. He has continued to stay active, performing and recording.

JIM TRAGESER

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WARDLOW, GAYLE DEAN

b. 31 August 1940; Freer, TX

Collector, writer, and historian, specializing in pre-1943 Mississippi blues. At age seven, he and his family moved to Meridian, Mississippi, where he was raised. He became interested in early blues after reading Samuel Charters's 1959 book *The Country Blues*, and he recognized there was much to be rediscovered about Mississippi blues.

During the 1960s, he was a newspaper reporter for the *Meridian Star* and the *Jackson Daily News*, and while on out-of-town reporting beats, he would canvass the black neighborhoods for old records and information about blues performers. In 1963, he and Bernard Klatzko made an important fact-finding trip to the Mississippi Delta regarding Charley Patton, the results of which were published as the notes accompanying the second Origin Jazz Library LP of Patton (OJL-7).

An early contact was Ishmon Bracey, whom Wardlow met in Jackson in 1963. Another was H. C. Speir, the former talent scout for Paramount, OKeh, and the ARC labels before World War II. Less well known but valuable sources were former juke joint operator Elizabeth Glynn Moore, her husband Willie Moore, and Delta blues musicians Booker Miller and Hayes McMullan. Their information would provide the backbone of Wardlow's contextual research on the music and cultural times of Patton, Tommy Johnson, and Robert Johnson.

Since 1966 Wardlow has published his findings in *Blues Unlimited*, *78 Quarterly*, *Living Blues*, and *Storyville* magazines. Many of these articles have been collected in the volume *Chasin' That Devil Music* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman, 1998). In 1989 he and coauthor Stephen Calt published *King of the Delta Blues: The Life and Music of Charlie Patton* (Newton, NJ: Rock Chapel Press, 1989).

EDWARD KOMARA

WARREN, ROBERT HENRY
"BABY BOY"

b. 13 August 1919; Lake Providence, LA
 d. 1 July 1977; Detroit, MI

The Warren family moved to North Memphis in November 1919. His father Lee died in 1920 and he was raised by his mother Beulah and sister Hattie. An older brother taught him the basics of guitar and soon he played on street corners and in the late 1930s toured Arkansas and Mississippi with Howlin' Wolf, Johnny Shines, Sonny Boy Williamson (Aleck Miller), Willie Love, Robert Lockwood, and others.

He moved to Detroit in the early 1940s and had a day job with General Motors that he kept until the mid-1970s, which prevented widespread touring. He played the blues at night and began his recording career in 1949 with Gotham, Staff, Swingtime, Blue Lake, Cadet (whose masters were issued on Sampson), Drummond, JVB, and Excello. Very active locally, he played regularly in Detroit blues clubs and helped create the Motor Town's blues scene with John Lee Hooker, Eddie Burns, Bobo Jenkins, and others.

He retired in the early 1960s through ill-health and disenchantment with the music business but was "rediscovered" in 1967. He practiced again and his comeback was a success: He toured Europe in 1972 and appeared at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival, but he had little time to enjoy a second career: Sick again and inactive, he died of a heart attack in 1977. He will stay in blues history as a very talented songwriter whose songs and lines were boosted by a great voice and expressive guitar licks.

ROBERT SACRÉ

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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WASHBOARD

(See *Rubboard*)

WASHBOARD DOC

b. Joseph Doctor, 8 September 1911; Charleston, SC
 d. 16 September 1988; Brooklyn, NY

WASHBOARD DOC

Percussionist who used washboards, spoons, cow-bells, and frying pans. For the most part he was a street musician in New York City, and he recorded in various capacities for the Spivey label. He toured Europe in 1980.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: LSFP

WASHBOARD SAM

b. Robert Brown, 15 July 1910; Walnut Ridge, AR
d. 13 November 1966; Chicago, IL

As the Chicago blues world enjoyed commercial success during the period from the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s, one of the most popular artists was singer, songwriter, and washboard player Robert Brown, known as "Washboard Sam." While Big Bill Broonzy's claim that Brown was his half-brother has never been verified, it is known that Brown moved from his birthplace in Arkansas to Memphis in the 1920s and then to Chicago in the early 1930s.

He began his recording career in 1935 (with several early records released under the name "Ham Gravy") and recorded more than 160 songs over the next seven years, many for producer Lester Melrose on the Bluebird label. He collaborated with many of the most prominent and prolific Chicago musicians of the period, including Broonzy, Jazz Gillum, Memphis Slim, Roosevelt Sykes, and Black Bob. One factor in his success was the combination of his muscular voice and his percussive instrument; as blues historian Paul Oliver noted, "[H]e sang with a very marked vibrato and this pulsation in the notes, coupled with the hardness of his loud singing, produced a sound which was admirably suited to that of the washboard."

With the rise of electric blues his popularity waned. He recorded and performed infrequently after 1950 and died in 1966 without having participated significantly in the blues revival of that era.

ROBERT RIESMAN

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AMG (Stephen Thomas Erlewine and Cub Koda); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR; LSFP

WASHBOARD SLIM

b. Robert Young, 5 June 1900; Marshall, TX
d. 2 June 1990; Philadelphia, PA

Once a singer, multi-instrumentalist, and comedian active in North Carolina. A stroke in the 1930s limited his performance to playing washboard, pans, and bells. He recorded with Buddy Moss and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee in 1941. He spent the second half of his life in Philadelphia.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WASHBOARD WILLIE

b. William Paden Hensley, 24 July 1909; Phoenix City, Russell County, AL
d. 24 August 1991; Detroit, MI

Drummer and percussionist who began performing at age six. He moved to Detroit in 1945 and formed his Super Suds of Rhythm. He recorded for labels owned by Joe Von Battle. In 1973 he toured Europe.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin; Harris

Discography: LSFP

WASHINGTON (STATE)

To get a full picture of the history of live blues in Washington State, one could study the socioeconomic history of the state itself. While Seattle is the biggest city, Tacoma, Spokane, Bellingham, and other towns have had live blues in nightclubs for a long time.

The economic history of the Seattle area includes heavy and high-tech industry. World War II industries and Boeing Aircraft helped Seattle to prosper and change. A huge labor force was needed for Boeing and also for Bethlehem Steel. As a result, black labor arrived, increasing the city's black population, which provided cultural diversity and influence, especially in music through blues and jazz. During World War II, Howlin' Wolf often came to Seattle while stationed in the Army; Fort Lewis is near Tacoma,

which later grew to have as many blues bars as Seattle. Since the late 1970s, Microsoft has been the prevailing employer and economic force.

In recent years, Paul Allen, a cofounder of Microsoft, created the Experience Music Project (EMP) museum, which in part documents the history of jazz, blues, and rock in Seattle. In the late 1940s and 1950s, Jackson Street was where many black clubs were located, including those where Ray Charles and Quincy Jones performed as young musicians. In the early 1950s, Little Bill Engelhart and the Blue Notes were active; the EMP museum describes them as among the first rock 'n' roll bands. The museum also contains exhibits about Jimi Hendrix, who grew up in Seattle. Also, a statue of Hendrix stands in front of the offices of AEI Music Networks on Broadway Avenue (north of Pine Street) in the Capitol Hill district of Seattle.

The blues-rock styles of 1960s rock, including the music of Hendrix, led many young people in Seattle to seek and support blues musicians. The veteran local blues performers who have been active for twenty-five years or more recall that ten or so nightclubs in the Pioneer Square area were only, or mainly, blues at times from the 1980s through the early 1990s.

There are a large number of blues musicians in the state of Washington, and it has even been claimed that Seattle has more blues guitar players than any city in the world, although its numbers would have to be compared to Chicago, New Orleans, and Portland. Among those who are leading and longstanding acts are guitarists Tom Boyle (trained by Ronnie Earl at one time), Scott Lind (with the Charles White Band), Rod Cook, Tim Sherman, Nick Vigarino, Henry Cooper, C. D. Woodbury (with Polly O'Keary and the Rhythm Method), Brian Feist, Alice Stuart, "Fat James," Mark Whitman, Tim "Too Slim" Langford, Tim Turner, Jack Cook, Jerry Miller, Eric Maddis, and Billy Stapleton, to name a few. The harmonica is strong in representation in the area as well, including Paul Green, Jeff Herzog, Jim King, and Steve Bailey.

Some of the blues bars today are in the two places of most significance to the early city, Alki and Pioneer Square. The Alki Tavern has live blues jams on Sunday afternoons. The New Orleans Restaurant in Pioneer Square is in the old part of Seattle's downtown and is one of the favorite venues of local fans.

Other notable blues clubs can be found outside Seattle. The Wild Buffalo in Bellingham, north of Seattle and near the Canadian border, features blues on most nights, with national or regional blues bands.

In the old milltown of Snohomish, there is the Oxford Saloon, in an old nineteenth-century building

with a colorful past, including a time as a brothel and as the haunted site of a gun duel around 1900.

Since the mid-1980s, the Washington Blues Society has been active in its stated mission "to promote, preserve, and advance the blues" in the state. Among its activities and services are its monthly *Bluesletter*, with feature articles on regional musicians and lists of blues performances, clubs, and blues bands; its Best of the Blues Awards (BB Awards) to Washington State blues musicians in twenty-four categories; its Washington Blues Hall of Fame, whose past inductees include Robert Cray, Taj Mahal, Little Bill Engelhart, Rich Dangel, and Alice Stuart; its Musicians' Relief Fund; and its Centrum Blues Workshops for youths in Port Townsend, whose guest instructors have included pianist Pinetop Perkins.

ROBERT HORN

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WASHINGTON, ALBERT

- b. 17 August 1939; Rome, GA
d. 23 October 1998; Columbus, OH

Albert Washington was born in Rome, Georgia, on August 17, 1939. He moved with his family to Cincinnati when he was ten years old and began frequenting clubs in Newport and Cincinnati, where he heard Charles Brown, Big Maybelle, and others perform. Although his mother admonished him to stay in the church, Washington began performing as vocalist-guitarist-pianist with his own blues group even as he performed with the Religious Gspelaires and the Washington Singers.

Washington performed for many years at the Vet's Inn, Gus's Place, and the Sha Rah Lounge, where he had a large and loyal following for original songs such as "I Haven't Got a Friend," "I'm the Man," "Turn On the Bright Lights," "Loosen These Pains," and "Wings of a Dove." He began recording in 1962 and released blues, soul, and gospel music on a variety of labels up until his death on October 23, 1998, in Columbus, Ohio.

STEVEN C. TRACY

WASHINGTON, ALBERT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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WASHINGTON, DINAH

b. Ruth (Rutha) Lee Jones, 29 August 1924; Tuscaloosa, AL

d. 14 December 1963; Detroit, MI

Singer. In an unfortunately condensed career Washington brought the expressive gospel vocal approach into the mainstream of American music with a series of singles that deeply influenced future R&B soul hit-makers such as self-professed “number one fan” Aretha Franklin. Her sophisticated phrasing and precise enunciation were juxtaposed with an ability to infuse deep emotion into even the most trivial of lyrics.

Washington’s family moved north from her Alabama birthplace to Chicago’s South Side in 1928. As soon as she was old enough to leave the house, Washington started singing in public. Performing as Ruth Lee Jones, Washington played piano and sang in Baptist gospel groups as a teenager in Chicago. She wasn’t opposed to more secular sounds, however, and after she won the prestigious Regal Theatre amateur talent contest as a fifteen-year-old, her abilities were too obvious to be ignored by the thriving Windy City music scene. Washington turned professional and was soon hired to sing in high-profile nightclubs, beginning with the Flame Show Bar. She was spotted by an agent and recommended to vibist/bandleader Lionel Hampton, who offered her a job with his highly popular big band.

Dubbed “Miss Blues” by the bandleader, Washington was the featured vocalist with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra from 1943 to 1946, a period when the big band, which included the extroverted Texas tenor of saxophonist Arnett Cobb, was in its most blues-oriented phase. After establishing herself as a show-stopping big band singer, Washington left the Hampton Orchestra for a solo career. She began recording under her own name and dominated the R&B charts in the late 1940s and 1950s with a wide-ranging series of hit singles.

Washington’s career took a major commercial leap forward with the release of the lushly produced ballad “What a Difference a Day Makes.” The single entered the *Billboard* charts in August 1959 and ultimately spent two months as a top twenty pop hit, with its

musical and emotional maturity offering fans a stark contrast to the teenybopper pop of Paul Anka, Fabian, Ricky Nelson, and the others also on the charts. Although the success of the song locked her image into the public mind as balladeer, Washington was back on the pop charts in 1960 with two relaxed, good-time duet hit singles with Brook Benton, “A Rockin’ Good Way” and “Baby (You Got What It Takes).”

Washington claimed her original influence was Billie Holiday, another singer whose evocative expertise more than compensated for a relatively limited vocal range, and she exhibited her affinity with Holiday’s genre by recording several critically acclaimed jazz albums, such as *Mellow Mama*, working with Charles Mingus, Clifford Brown, Ben Webster, and other significant jazz stars of the day. Her final recording, the ballad-heavy Roulette album *Dinah 63*, once again showcased her popular ballad style.

Washington’s messy personal life, which included more than a half-dozen marriages and episodes of substance abuse, the last of which apparently led to her accidental death at age thirty nine, was a direct contrast to the carefully crafted beauty of her music. Her career was cut short but her seminal approach to singing lives on in the sound of almost every modern female vocalist.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; DGR; Lord

WASHINGTON, ISIDORE “TUTS”

b. 24 January 1907; New Orleans, LA

d. 5 August 1984; New Orleans, LA

New Orleans pianist of blues, boogie, ragtime, and jazz. Contemporaneous with Champion Jack Dupree and Archibald.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin; Santelli

Discography

New Orleans Piano Professor (recorded 1983; Rounder 11501).

WASHINGTON, LEROY

b. 1 March 1932; Palmetto, LA
d. 29 June 1966; Oakdale, LA

Singer and guitarist active in Louisiana. His best known song was “Wild Cherry,” which he recorded for Excello in 1958.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Santelli

**WASHINGTON, MARION
“LITTLE JOE”**

b. 1 March 1939; Houston, TX

Washington was born March 1, 1939, into Houston’s famous Third Ward blues scene, which spawned such legends as Lightnin’ Hopkins. Informally trained on drums, piano, and guitar, Washington’s professional debut was at fifteen as a drummer for Albert Collins’s band. Washington earned his nickname performing in Houston clubs with cousin-in-law Joe “Guitar” Hughes. By age twenty, Washington was playing guitar all over the Southwest, eventually settling in El Paso, Texas, where he played the raucous clubs near the Mexican border. He had a steady gig for more than a decade at the infamous Lobby Bar in Juarez, where he performed with Long John Hunter.

In the early 1960s Washington recorded a few singles for the Federal and Donna labels in California. He eventually returned to Houston, where he lived as a marginally homeless person, darting into blues clubs to play before passing his hat. His freewheeling, stream-of-consciousness guitar playing often leads to such antics as playing with his tongue and crotch, but at his best Washington can skillfully merge a Negro spiritual and a Charlie Parker jazz riff.

In 2001 Washington began a steady gig at Houston’s Continental Club, and in 2002 he played the Blues Estafette Festival in Utrecht, The Netherlands, and the Park Tower Blues Festival in Tokyo, Japan. In 2003 he recorded his first album for Dialtone Records.

JENNIFER MATHIEU

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Discography

“Hard Way Four”/“The Last Tear” (1962, Donna).
“Someone Loves Me”/“She’s Mine” (1963, Federal).
Houston Guitar Blues (2003, Dialtone Records).

WASHINGTON, TONI LYNN

b. Dorothy Helen Washington, 6 December 1936; Southern Pines, NC

Singer who performed in various styles and groups before establishing her career as a blues vocalist later in life. Washington came from a fervently religious extended family and sang in gospel choirs in her hometown. Her grandmother taught her hymns and spirituals, and she was captivated by the popular singers of the day, among them Bing Crosby, Doris Day, and Ella Fitzgerald. At thirteen, she left Southern Pines, North Carolina, to be united with her mother and stepfather in Boston. Once there, she discovered rhythm and blues music—as sung by Ruth Brown and Johnny Ace—and she began nosing around the clubs on Boston’s South End. By sixteen she was competing in talent shows and sitting in with bands at various places, and by eighteen she was married to a military man and moving to New Orleans.

By her early twenties, her career was picking up. Her single “Dear Diary” for the Conti label did well in New Orleans and prompted several appearances in the area. She met pianist Edward Frank, who helped her develop her performance style. She followed her husband to Pensacola, Florida, and to California, and she performed in groups on the various military bases.

In Los Angeles, the Frank Lane Agency put her in contact with a producer for the Fifth Dimension, who wanted to create a new vocal group. Though the recording sessions were never released, the group Sound Seventy stayed together and eventually became part of the USO tour. A short stint with Sister Love, a girl group featuring ex-members of Ray Charles’s Raelettes, followed. She returned to Boston, where she did assembly line work for a time before becoming a receptionist. Two decades then passed, but in 1992 she reemerged leading the Toni Lynn Washington Band with cofounder and collaborator Bruce Bears.

In 1995, the Tone-Cool label released the first of three CDs of Washington. Since then, she has been nominated for two Handy Awards, and she tours regularly.

JOHN OTIS

WASHINGTON, TONI LYNN

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Discography: AMG

**WASHINGTON, WALTER
"WOLFMAN"**

b. 20 December 1943; New Orleans, LA

Guitarist, singer. A prime purveyor of swamp soul and a stalwart of the New Orleans live music scene for decades, Washington established a strong working relationship with many of the Crescent City's most significant musical figures, recording and performing with Lee Dorsey, Irma Thomas, Little Willie John, Fats Domino, Gatemouth Brown, and especially vocalist Johnny Adams.

Washington had a quarter of a century of experience working with local legends before his first album, *Wolf Tracks*, on Rounder Records, was released in 1986. *Out of the Dark* in 1988 was more representative of his live act, using his working band the Roadmasters, reinforced with keyboardist Jon Cleary, to back him.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG

**WATERFORD, CHARLES "CROWN
PRINCE"**

b. 21 October 1919; Jonesboro, AR

Singer in blues shouter style. His full nickname, "Crown Prince of the Blues," came during his year with Jay McShann (1945). His best-known recordings were with pianist Pete Johnson for the Capitol label in 1947. He continued singing into the early 1960s, but afterward he was reported to be devoting his time to church.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Burke, Tony, and Dave Penny. "Charles Waterford: 'Crown Prince.'" *Blues and Rhythm* no. 18 (April 1986): 4–7.

Discography: LSFP

WATERMAN, RICHARD A. "DICK"

b. 14 July 1935; Plymouth, MA

Photographer; promoter and manager. With Phil Spiro and Nick Perls, Waterman located Son House in Rochester, New York, in June 1964. He would manage House's revived career, and through his Avalon agency he promoted other blues legends to clubs and festivals. He also assisted Bonnie Raitt to begin her performing career. In recent years he has written about the blues artists he worked with, and he has recovered and published his blues photographs.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WATERMAN, RICHARD ALAN

b. July 10, 1914; Solvang, CA

b. November 8, 1971; Tampa, FL

Anthropologist who pioneered the scientific study of the music of Africa and especially the African diaspora (Brazil, Caribbean, United States).

FRED J. HAY

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WATERS, ETHEL

b. Ethel Howard, 31 October 1896; Chester, PA
 d. 1 September 1977; Chatsworth, CA

Singer and actress. Waters was born into dire poverty. Following an unsuccessful marriage at age thirteen, she worked as a domestic for several years. Waters became a professional entertainer in 1917, working in black vaudeville in the Philadelphia area, then in Edmund's Cellar, a New York cabaret. Black Swan Records entrepreneur Harry Pace heard her in an Atlantic City club and signed her to his label; she would be its biggest star. She made numerous fine blues recordings in the 1920s.

From the late 1920s onward, Waters seldom sang blues, instead winning great success as a pop singer, and later as an actress on stage, in films, and on television. As a blues singer, she was less earthy than Bessie Smith, reflecting instead the cabaret end of the commercial blues spectrum, along with Alberta Hunter, Lucille Hegamin, and others.

ELLIOTT S. HURWITT

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Discography: DGR, AMG, Lord**Selected Recordings**

The following are representative of blues-oriented records from the first five years of Waters's recording career.

"At the New Jump Steady Ball" (New York, March 21/22, 1921; Cardinal 2035); "Oh Daddy" and "Down Home Blues" (New York, April/May, 1921; Black Swan 2010); "One Man Nan" and "There'll Be Some Changes Made" (New York, ca. August 1921; Black Swan 2021); "Dying with the Blues" (New York, ca. August 1921; Black Swan 2038); "Georgia Blues" (Long Island City, ca. May 1922; Black Swan 14120); "Memphis Man" and "Midnight Blues" (Long Island City, ca. March 1923; Black Swan 14146); "You Can't Do What My Last Man Did" (Long Island City, ca. June 1923; Black Swan 14151); "Craving Blues" (Chicago, March 1924; Paramount 12313); "Black Spatch Blues" (Chicago, March 1925; Paramount 12230), "Loud Speakin' Papa" (New York, August 25, 1925; Columbia 472-D); "Maybe Not at All" (New York, October 28, 1925; Columbia 14112-D); "Shake That Thing" (New York, December 23, 1925; Columbia 14116-D); "Make Me a Pallet on the Floor" and "Bring Your Greenbacks" (New York, January 22, 1926; Columbia 14125-D); "If You Can't Hold

the One You Love" (New York, February 20, 1926; Columbia 14134-D); "Ev'rybody Mess Around" (New York, July 29, 1926; Columbia 14153-D).

See also **Black Swan Records; Delaney, Thomas Henry "Tom"; Down Home Blues**

WATERS, MISSISSIPPI JOHNNY

b. John Sandifer, 24 May 1935; Jackson, MS
 d. 30 January 1987; Oakland, CA

Waters changed his name in honor of Muddy Waters, a major influence as singer and guitarist. He moved to Oakland, California, in 1956 and performed songs by Waters, Chuck Berry, and Fats Domino. During the 1970s he performed with harmonica player Mark Hummel and the Blues Survivors. Despite a 1983 lung operation, he continued performing as a senior member of the Bay Area blues scene.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WATERS, MUDDY

b. McKinley A. Morganfield, 4 April 1913; Jug's Corner, MS
 d. 30 April 1983; Westmont, IL

Muddy Waters is, in many ways, the archetypal bluesman. He was raised as a sharecropper in the Mississippi Delta, where he learned to play an acoustic guitar. He went to Chicago in 1943, and the band he assembled established the electric blues sound. During the next three and a half decades, his band became a springboard for many of his sidemen, launching a prominent school of blues performers.

Muddy Waters was born McKinley A. Morganfield on April 4, 1913, at a small enclave in Issaquena County, Mississippi, known as Jug's Corner. The nearest town on the map, where the family went for commerce and mail, was in neighboring Sharkey County, a small place called Rolling Fork that was on the train tracks. Muddy usually cited Rolling Fork as his home. The area, near the Mississippi River, was wet, and his grandmother nicknamed him because of the mud puddles in which he played.

Muddy's mother died when he was very young, and her mother raised him. She moved north to the

Stovall Plantation outside Clarksdale before Muddy was three years old. He stayed there, for the most part, until he was thirty. Muddy had cousins in the area, including Eddie Boyd, who would later have hits in Chicago. At about five years old, Muddy started playing music on a harmonica. Around his grandmother's house, he beat on a kerosene can, squeezed an old accordion, and fooled with the limited sounds of a Jew's harp.

The guitar was popular, and he bought his first around 1930. Muddy always had a strong voice, and a regional string band, the Son Sims Four, enlisted him as a vocalist. Sims, a multi-instrumentalist, gave Muddy some guitar instruction. However, seeing Son House perform set a fire under Muddy. House played with a bottleneck slide, and Muddy began learning the style.

From an early age, Muddy hustled to earn extra money. Sharecroppers earned a subsistence wage at best (though conditions at Stovall were better than on many other farms), and Muddy collected bottles for the bootlegger as a kid; later he ran his own whiskey and trapped animals for fur, and when he learned to make music, he performed for tips and hosted house parties. Another sideline indicates Muddy's willingness to embrace technology. At a time when horses were as fast as cars, and as dependable, Muddy bought a 1934 V8 Ford. He earned extra money driving neighbors to and from towns, but more than anything, the car's importance is indicative of a mind open to change. In a few years, he would effect a musical revolution.

Muddy's first recordings came about through his growing reputation as a musician. As he became more accomplished, he traveled with the Son Sims group, including a performance in nearby Farrell when the Silas Green traveling tent show came through (contrary to myth, he did not travel with the show). In August of 1941, two field recordists showed up in Coahoma County, where Clarksdale and Stovall are, on a mission to research the role music played in African American daily life. The project had begun with John Work III, an African American musicologist at Fisk University; in his appeal for funds, he encountered Alan Lomax at the Library of Congress. When asking about talented musicians in the area—they were seeking someone in the style of Robert Johnson—they were repeatedly referred to Muddy Waters at Stovall.

When Muddy heard a white man was looking for him, he assumed it was a revenue agent there to bust his whiskey still. Only after Lomax drank water out of the same cup Muddy drank out of did the bluesman trust him. The recording equipment was set up at Muddy's cabin, and among the sides he cut that

day were "Country Blues" and "I Be's Troubled," which were soon issued by the Library of Congress as part of a folk music collection.

It may have been the confidence gained by this session that inspired Muddy to travel to St. Louis within the year. Chicago seemed too far away, and St. Louis proved too intimidating; he returned to Stovall. The Fisk–Library of Congress trip returned in July of 1942, and Muddy recorded several more sides for them, some alone and some with the Son Sims group.

In the summer of 1943, after a fight with the plantation overseer, Muddy left the south for Chicago. He had friends and family there, and he got a factory job the day after he arrived. He never sought any real jobs in Chicago, devoting himself instead to developing his musical reputation by performing at house parties. His reputation grew quickly; by 1944, he was meeting established musicians such as Big Bill Broonzy, Memphis Slim, and Tampa Red. Muddy's uncle, who preceded him to Chicago, gave him an electric guitar soon after he arrived. The acoustic guitar had been fine in rural Mississippi, where the only sounds at night were the shallow breathing of God at rest and the steady percussion of crickets and cicadas. In Chicago there were the clanging streetcars, trains, and automobiles out late on a party. Muddy took to the new instrument, even incorporating thumb picks into his style to further increase the volume.

By 1946, Muddy had come to the attention of record producers. He cut one side for J. Mayo Williams, an African American independent producer. The side was "Mean Red Spider," and it was released with James "Sweet Lucy" Carter's name on the label. He also recorded for Lester Melrose, a publishing giant and talent scout for Columbia and RCA (which controlled Bluebird, the popular blues label). Muddy's three tracks were for Columbia and remained unreleased for decades.

His next session was for Aristocrat Records, owned in part by Leonard Chess. This session, though not particularly successful, inaugurated a relationship that would continue past Leonard's death, into the early 1970s when Chess, as Aristocrat became known, had undergone two ownership changes. At the third session with Leonard, as they were preparing to wrap up, Muddy asked if he could do one his way—which meant without the piano. Leonard obliged and Muddy reprised "Country Blues" as "Can't Be Satisfied" and "I Be's Troubled" as "Feel Like Going Home," though on the electric guitar and with the rhythm of city life. The songs had a new feeling. The single sold out its first weekend and Muddy Waters had his first taste of stardom.

As early as 1946, Muddy had met Jimmy Rogers, who would become his guitarist, and Little Walter, his

harmonica player. The trio developed the urban blues sound and became popular in the clubs. Calling themselves the Headhunters, they'd rove the South Side on their off nights, sitting in on others' gigs, winning new fans. They enlisted Baby Face Leroy Foster on drums, but the group didn't have the opportunity to record together until 1950. By then, Muddy had further built his reputation with songs such as "Train Fare Home" and "Screamin' and Cryin'." Muddy and his band returned south triumphant in late 1949, with their own show on KFFA; for many in the delta, it was the first time they saw an electric guitar.

In Chicago, however, Muddy's sound was just what the large population of southern expatriates were awaiting. When Aristocrat became Chess Records in 1950, Muddy's "Rollin' Stone" was one of its first releases. (It later named a magazine and a band.) "Rollin' Stone" is a song about power, about rootless—and ruthless—independence. Muddy doesn't tell all. His pause asks us to fill the emptiness; it draws out our emotions, feelings, fears, compelling us to add meaning.

Lyrical, most of Muddy's songs were about sex—sex with someone else's wife, someone else's girlfriend, sex and trouble. But it was always a trouble he survived, a scrape he escaped. Sex was sex, but sex also became an analogy for a kind of freedom, a freedom to serve himself, to damn the torpedoes, the shift supervisor, and the overseer's big gun. The sound of the songs reflected the newfound ebullience: Muddy, near the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, corralled the sense of postwar possibility and excitement. The have-nots were finally having—not having much, but even a little was a lot. The muscle of his electric guitar and the force of his ensemble sound and the fierce assertiveness of his voice unleashed the exuberance of a people. There was cause for celebration, and Muddy was the vehicle.

Muddy's classic band lineup was rounded out in 1951, with Elgin Evans replacing Foster on the drums and with the addition of Otis Spann on piano. These five players defined the blues—and rock 'n' roll—band template and created many of the licks that are still emulated and repeated by bands around the



Muddy Waters Blues Band, Chicago, 1953. From left: Muddy Waters (guitar), Henry Armstrong, Otis Spann (piano), Henry Strong (harmonica), Elga "Elgin" Edmonds (drums), Jimmy Rogers (guitar). (Image courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

world. The whole band didn't get to record together until 1953; Leonard Chess was enjoying success with smaller combos and didn't want to change a good thing. Between 1951 and 1956, Muddy had fourteen songs on the national charts, including "Still a Fool," "Hoochie Coochie Man," "Just Make Love to Me," "I'm Ready," and "Mannish Boy."

When Chuck Berry came to Chicago in 1955, he asked Muddy Waters where he should record. Muddy directed him to Leonard Chess and, after hearing "Maybellene," told Chess, who was hesitant, that he should release it. Chuck Berry's success, and the new rock 'n' roll sound, diminished the popularity of the blues. The national tours grew scarce for Muddy in the latter 1950s, and he mostly stayed in Chicago.

In 1958, when Muddy accepted an invitation to perform in England, he was unaware they were expecting him to play an acoustic guitar. One critic wrote that each time Muddy touched the knobs on his electric instrument, the volume got louder, forcing the critic farther back in the audience until he was out the door. Those who left became the old school; the kids stayed, and many soon bought electric guitars and amps. Muddy returned two more times in the early 1960s, solidifying his role as an instigator of the British Invasion.

In the United States, Muddy had a similarly electrifying effect on white audiences through his 1960 performance at the Newport Jazz Festival. The budding love generation responded to his rock 'n' rolling versions of "Got My Mojo Working" and "I Feel So Good," and Muddy had a new audience. His work in the 1960s was marked by experimentation and manipulation, as Chess Records tried to broaden his audience. While many songs were successful, the album concepts were less so, especially the pairing of Muddy's blues with a large horn section on *Muddy, Brass, and Blues* and the psychedelic blend *Electric Mud*.

The beginning of the end of Chess Records occurred with the sale of the label in 1969 from the family to a corporation, followed by the sudden death of Leonard Chess. Muddy stayed with Chess, famously stating that he would be with the label as long as a Chess was there. He recorded *The Woodstock Album* with members of the Band, produced by Band drummer Levon Helm. But when the label was sold again in 1975, Muddy terminated the nearly thirty-year relationship.

In 1976, Muddy made an album for the Blue Sky label, in association with CBS Records. The larger company gave him a boost, as did working with blues/rock star Johnny Winter as producer. The resulting album, *Hard Again*, won a Grammy and initiated a comeback for Muddy that lasted six more

years and had him opening arenas for Eric Clapton and jamming with the Rolling Stones. Muddy lived to record three more albums, the next two also winning Grammy awards. In addition to strong album sales, he settled a lawsuit with Arc Music, his publishing company, allowing him to live his final years in financial comfort.

In Chicago, a stretch of 43rd Street has been renamed Muddy Waters Drive. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987 and given the Record Academy's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1992. A guitar has been made from a plank off his Stovall cabin, and the cabin itself has been dismantled, sent on a tour, and then placed in the Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale, MS.

Playing in Muddy's band proved a springboard to a solo career for many of his sidemen. Both Jimmy Rogers and Little Walter became stars in the 1950s. Later, Otis Spann, James Cotton, Paul Oscher, Luther "Georgia Boy" "(Creepin') Snake" Johnson, Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson, Jerry Portnoy, Bob Margolin, and Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, among others, enjoyed careers of their own.

ROBERT GORDON

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Selected Recordings

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 Various artists. *The Aristocrat of the Blues* (MCA CHD2 9387).

WATKINS, BEVERLY "GUITAR"

b. 6 April 1939; Atlanta, GA

Influenced as child by her grandfather, Luke Hayes, a banjo player, and the recordings of Rosetta Tharpe, Watkins learned trumpet, piano, and guitar while still

a teenager. She began playing with Piano Red at seventeen and later played with Eddie Tigner of the Ink Spots. She is still active today.

GAILE WELKER

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Discography

Back in Business (1999, CD MM 91007).

WATKINS, JOHN "MAD DOG"

b. 19 July 1953; Chicago, IL

Guitarist; nephew of Jimmy Johnson. Watkins spent his early years performing in local clubs with Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Koko Taylor, and Son Seals. Later, in the 1970s he toured and recorded with Willie Dixon and James Cotton. His first solo album was *Here I Am* (1984), and since then he has led his own groups.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Larkin

Discography: Larkin

WATSON, EDDIE LEE

(See *Lee, Lovie*)

WATSON, JOHNNY "DADDY STOVEPIPE"

b. 12 April 1867; Mobile, AL

d. 1 November 1963; Chicago, IL

Among the oldest songsters known to play blues, Watson was also one of the first recorded. He traveled widely, within Mississippi, to Texas and Mexico, and up to Chicago, where he spent his last years. Between 1924 and 1935 he and his wife Sarah, and he and a mysterious man known only as "Whistlin' Pete," recorded sixteen sides, a dozen of which are reissued on DOCD-5166. Interviewed by Paul Oliver

in *Conversation with the Blues*, he described busking Riverboats in Greenville, Mississippi, with Sarah, going to Mexico when she passed, and playing "Christian music" for his street patrons in Chicago.

ANDREW M. COHEN

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Discography: DGR (as Daddy Stovepipe)

WATSON, JOHNNY "GUITAR"

b. 3 February 1935; Houston, TX

d. 17 May 1996; Yokohama, Japan

Growing up in Houston, Johnny "Guitar" Watson learned piano from his father before being taught the rudiments of guitar by his grandfather. Watson was inspired by the city's rich pool of blues talent, especially that of Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, whose stinging guitar and flashy playing style he would emulate.

After his parents' separation in 1950, Watson moved with his father to Los Angeles, where transplanted Texas guitar legend T-Bone Walker provided further inspiration. Watson began playing piano around the city and was discovered at a talent show by saxophonist Chuck Higgins, which led to his 1952 recording debut with Higgins on "Motor Head Baby."

The following year, Watson signed with Federal and his aggressive and innovative guitar playing came into fruition, epitomized on his 1954 instrumental scorcher "Space Guitar." In 1955, he switched labels to Modern and recorded several hits, including a cover of Earl King's "Those Lonely, Lonely Nights," which made the R&B top ten. Watson's confident bravado and ladies-man persona was a significant part of his appeal, exemplified on his signature song, "Gangster of Love," which he recorded several times throughout his career.

After a stint with King in the 1960s, Watson's music went through various phases of funk and contemporary R&B throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. In 1994, following several years of inactivity, his comeback release *Bow Wow* on Bellmark was nominated for a Grammy in the contemporary blues

WATSON, JOHNNY "GUITAR"

category. Watson's career was in resurgence when he died of a heart attack while performing on stage in Japan. He was sixty-one.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

Blues Masters: The Very Best of Johnny "Guitar" Watson (1999, Rhino CD R2 75702).

WATSON, MIKE "JUNIOR"

b. 1950; California

California electric guitarist who had lengthy stints with Rod Piazza and the 1980s–1990s version of Canned Heat. His 1994 Black Top solo CD showed a versatility with jump-blues styles.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Dan Forte)

Discography: AMG (Dan Forte)

WATTS, LOUIS THOMAS

b. 20 June 1934; Sturgis, MS
d. 13 April 1970; Beverly Hills, CA

Harmonica player; aka Kid Thomas, Tommy Louis/Lewis. Watts began performing in Chicago in the 1950s and then moved to California in 1959. He had releases on various labels, including Federal, Muriel, and Cenco. He was shot and killed by the father of a boy whom Watts had killed by auto accident the previous year.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Harris; Larkin
"Kid Thomas" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 2 (Summer 1970): 36.

Discography: LSFP

WATTS, NOBLE "THIN MAN"

b. 17 February 1926; DeLand, FL
d. 24 August 2004; DeLand, FL

Tenor saxophonist. Watts came to notice with the Griffin Brothers Orchestra in 1951–1952 and then played with Paul Williams until 1956. Both bands featured him prominently, playing in the overtly emotional style through which swing techniques were adapted to jump/rhythm and blues and eventually simplified to become rock 'n' roll (for example, the Griffin Brothers' "Shuffle Bug," 1951, Dot 1071, and Williams's "South Shore Drive," 1956, Vee-Jay 568). As the house band for the *Showtime at the Apollo* TV series (1955), Williams's band can be seen in compilation films derived from it, with Watts well featured.

Watts also accompanied many blues and rhythm and blues singers, including Amos Milburn ("Let's Have a Party," 1953, Aladdin 3218) and Margie Day ("Take Out Your False Teeth Baby," 1954, Decca 48317). In 1957–1959, he recorded some instrumentals for Baton featuring guitarist "Wild" Jimmy Spruill, of which "Hard Times" (aka "The Slop"; 1957, Baton 249) was a minor hit, leading to further records in this vein during the 1960s for various small labels. He then returned to Florida to play with local bands. In the late 1980s, he worked with the Midnight Creepers, a blues-rock band, and made a "comeback" album, *Return of the Thin Man* (King Snake KS003) with them in 1987. He continued working as a session musician into the 1990s.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

WEATHERSBY, CARL

b. 24 February 1953; Jackson, MS

Popular contemporary-style guitarist and singer. Weathersby spent most of his childhood in Meadville, Mississippi. He moved to East Chicago, Indiana, with his parents when he was thirteen. He has cited this "half-rural, half-urban" upbringing as an important influence on his style, which melds traditional Delta blues with modernist tendencies adapted from pop, rock, and R&B. His early influences included

soul/blues performers such as Tyrone Davis, along with pop and soul artists such as the O'Jays, Sam Cooke, and Johnnie Taylor. Albert King, also based in Northwest Indiana, was another important role model.

Weathersby's first instrument was the drums. He picked up the guitar in the late 1960s, receiving pointers from King himself, among others. After serving in the U.S. Army from 1971 to 1977, he joined King's band in 1979; he stayed off and on until 1981. He also toured with Little Milton during this period. In about 1982, he joined harpist Billy Branch's Sons of Blues, for whom he eventually became musical director. He remained with the S.O.B.s for fifteen years. His debut solo album, 1996's *Don't Lay Your Blues on Me* (Evidence) was nominated for a Handy award. He has recorded several more well-received disks on Evidence since then.

Although known these days mostly for his aggressive, arpeggio-laden leadwork, he remains capable of silencing a room or even a festival with heartfelt deep-soul balladry—his appearance at the 2002 Sweet Soul Music Festival in Poretta, Italy, was one of that event's highlights.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Discography: AMG

WEAVER, JAMES "CURLEY"

b. 25 or 26 March 1906; Covington, GA
d. 20 September 1962; Covington, GA

Guitarist and singer. James Weaver was the son of Savannah "Dip" Weaver, who is reported to have taught him, Barbecue Bob, and Charlie Hicks (Lincoln). He moved to Atlanta with the brothers and harmonica player Eddie Mapp in 1925.

He recorded "No No Blues," which was so similar to Bob's version that he wasn't asked back. He then recorded for QRS with Mapp, guitarists Slim Barton and Guy Lumpkin, and harmonica player Eddie Moore and made further records for several other companies throughout the 1930s. He also recorded effectively with Bob and the young Buddy Moss as the Georgia Cotton Pickers, and Fred McMullen and Moss as the Georgia Browns, and the wonderful

interplay between the musicians produced some of the finest rural group records of the 1930s.

His partnership with Blind Willie McTell generated numerous relaxed sides under various names, in which the guitars complement each other with uncanny empathy. He left music for a while but rejoined McTell for a session of twenty-one titles with Regal in 1949. Few of the sides were issued, perhaps because the whole session of blues and gospel seemed quaint and archaic.

Weaver made four more sides for the Sittin' In With label in 1950 but interest was low. He became blind and retired to live with relatives until his death.

DAVID HARRISON

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

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WEAVER, SYLVESTER

b. 25 July 1897; Louisville, KY
d. 4 April 1960; Louisville, KY

Blues singer and guitarist. Sylvester Weaver accompanied Sara Martin on "Longing for Daddy Blues," an OKeh record from October 24, 1923. It makes him the first black blues guitarist to record with a singer. The novelty combination was quite successful.

Weaver was a resident of "Smoketown" in Louisville, Kentucky, an area inhabited by the poor lower class. He became known as "the Man with the Talking Guitar," and his most influential recording was the 1923 instrumental "Guitar Rag," which became a favorite of Western swing and country and western artists. Bob Wills's 1936 recording of the tune became a big hit. In 1927 Weaver accompanied the then fourteen-year-old Helen Humes, who later wrote of Weaver that he played the TOBA circuit and traveled the South. For his final session Weaver teamed up with the obscure guitarist Walter Beasley, an imaginative lyricist.

After 1927 Weaver drifted off in obscurity, working as a chauffeur in his beloved Louisville. He died in 1960 of carcinoma of the tongue. His second wife, Dorothy, later turned up a scrapbook from her

WEAVER, SYLVESTER

husband's recording years, which provided a wealth of fascinating research material.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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AMG (Uncle Dave Lewis); Larkin O'Neal, Jim, and Paul Garon. "Kentucky Blues Part 2: The Sylvester Weaver Scrapbook." *Living Blues* no. 52 (Spring 1982): 15–25.

Discography: DGR

WEBB, "BOOGIE" BILL

b. 24 March 1924; Jackson, MS

d. 23 August 1990; New Orleans, LA

Boogie Bill's style is known for its disregard of standard tunings, conventional chord changes, and consistent rhythms. He learned the basics of blues guitar as a child from Mississippi Delta bluesman Tommy Johnson, who was a friend of Webb's mother. Fats Domino brought Webb to Imperial Records in 1953, for which he would record four sides. Webb was never able to support himself solely by music, however. It wasn't until an appearance at the 1984 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival that his status as a performer grew beyond local circles. Webb released his first album, *Drinkin' and Stinkin'*, in 1989 on the Flying Fish label.

ROBERT SORICELLI

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

WEBB, WILLIE "JITTERBUG"

b. 28 September 1941; San Antonio, TX

d. 31 October 1997; San Antonio, TX

Singer and guitarist in San Antonio for more than forty years. Through the 1970s Webb performed with the Good Timers, which consisted of former Ike Turner sidemen. He toured with the Monkees rock group in 1970, then with Johnny Otis later that

decade. From 1987 until his death he led the Super Crew, a band with a horn section.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

WEBSTER, KATIE

b. Kathryn Jewel Thorne, 11 January 1936; Houston, TX

d. 5 September 1999; League City, TX

Pianist, singer. The "Swamp Boogie Queen," Webster won the W. C. Handy award as best traditional female artist in 1991, 1995, and 1996 and was always an extroverted entertainer with an unusually expansive repertoire.

Webster's mother was a missionary and a classically trained pianist, so there was no shortage of musical encouragement, as long as her playing didn't stray from sacred music. But she moved in with more secular relatives in Louisiana when she reached her teenage years and immediately put her talent to professional use, becoming a recording session star at age fifteen while working with Lazy Lester, Lonnie Brooks, Clarence Garlow, and other major swamp blues figures. She subsequently toured with a succession of regional blues and R&B stars, including Ashton Savoy, Lazy Lester, and Juke Boy Bonner, in the 1950s and recorded several singles under her own name between 1959 and 1961.

After seeing her band the Uptighters in Lake Charles in 1964, Otis Redding hired her for his road show, and she toured with him until his death. Only the fact that she couldn't fly because she was pregnant saved her from Redding's tragic fate. Webster was devastated by the tragedy, and when her ailing parents in Oakland needed her, she withdrew from music until the early 1980s, when she began touring Europe.

The 1987 Arhoolie album *I Know That's Right* announced her return, and the following year a star-studded cast of fans and friends including Bonnie Raitt, Kim Wilson, and Robert Cray participated in the sessions for her Alligator Records release *Swamp Boogie Queen*. She followed its success with *Two-Fisted Mama* in 1990 and *No Foolin'* in 1991. A stroke in 1993 slowed her down but didn't stop her from continuing to perform her crowd-pleasing live shows.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG; LSFP**WEEPIN' WILLIE**

b. William Lorenzo Robinson, 6 July 1926; Atlanta, GA

Vocalist. Weepin' Willie began his entertainment career in the mid-1940s, emceeding in a Trenton, New Jersey, nightclub. He moved to Boston in about 1959 and performed locally. In 1999, he released his debut CD (produced by vocalist Mighty Sam McClain) on the APO label. He is still active.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Discography: AMG**WELCH, "MONSTER" MIKE**

b. 11 June 1979; Boston, MA

Guitarist-singer Mike Welch was part of the wave of teenage guitar aces (Jonny Lang, Kenny Wayne Shepherd) who hit the blues scene in the 1990s. He plays electric blues with some crossover rock influences, but his guitar licks are the focus. He was given his nickname by former Blues Brother Dan Aykroyd after a gig at age thirteen.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG**Selected Recordings**

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Catch Me (1998, Tone-Cool 1167).
Axe to Grind (1999, Tone-Cool 1159).

WELDING, PETE

b. 15 November 1935; Philadelphia, PA

d. 17 November 1995; Alta Loma, CA

Peter John "Pete" Welding was one of the premiere documentarians of the 1960s blues revival. Welding began recording and interviewing Philadelphia-based blues and gospel artists (including Doug Quattlebaum and Blind Connie Williams) in the late 1950s for a folk music radio program he hosted on WHYY. In 1959 *Down Beat* magazine initiated Welding's column "Blues and Folk," one of the first print media forums devoted to blues, and in January 1962 he moved to Chicago to work as an editor for the magazine.

In Chicago Welding sought out "the nonprofessional, informal activities of older musicians," including Jimmy Walker, John Lee Granderson, Ted Bogan, Carl Martin, Johnny Young, Johnny Shines, and Floyd Jones, often using Big Joe Williams as a scout and a recording agent. Welding formed Testament Records as an outlet for his fieldwork, and among the label's twenty-five albums were the first release of Muddy Waters's plantation recordings and a collection of songs written about the death of President John F. Kennedy (*Can't Keep from Crying*). Welding's recordings also appeared on Blue Note, Prestige, Storyville, and Milestone.

Welding wrote liner notes for dozens of albums and articles for *Down Beat*, *Blues Unlimited*, *Living Blues*, and other publications. In the mid-1960s Welding moved to California and worked in A&R at Epic, Playboy, and ABC Records before becoming director of A&R for Capitol Records' Special Markets Division in the mid-1970s. His productions there included the Imperial Records Legendary Master Series and the Capitol Blues Collection series.

SCOTT BARRETTA

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WELDON, CASEY BILL

WELDON, CASEY BILL

b. Will Weldon, 10 July 1909; Pine Bluff, AR
d. Unknown

Guitarist with “Hawaiian” slide technique who recorded for the blues labels in the 1930s. He was married to Memphis Minnie in the 1920s, later recording with her.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Ron Wynn); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

WELLINGTON, VALERIE

b. Valerie Eileen Hall, 14 November 1959; Chicago, IL
d. 2 January 1993; Maywood, IL

Vocalist. Wellington began performing at age twelve and was trained as a classical singer and pianist at the American Conservatory of Music (Chicago). She entered the blues circuit after befriending several Chicago musicians including Magic Slim, who appeared on her first album. She portrayed Ma Rainey in the play *The Little Dreamer: The Life of Bessie Smith*. Wellington was crucial in establishing the Chicago Blues Artists Coalition, an organization that helps struggling blues musicians. Her repertoire included diverse blues styles. Her first album, *Million Dollar Secret*, was recorded in 1983.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

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Discography: AMG

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Life in the Big City (1991, GBW 002).

WELLS, JUNIOR

b. Amos Wells Blakemore, Jr., 9 December 1931; West Memphis, AR
d. 15 January 1998; Chicago, IL

Early Life and Formative Years

Junior Wells was a popular and influential postwar Chicago harmonica player. His birth name was Amos Blakemore, Jr. His mother, Lena Blakemore, worked as a domestic in the Memphis area before moving to Chicago. When he was about nine years old, Amos traveled north to join her, although he seems to have returned south frequently. He remembered that as a boy he befriended Junior Parker, who lived in West Memphis; he also told of following Aleck Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson II) around, pestering him for lessons. In Chicago he listened to John Lee Williamson (the original “Sonny Boy”) and, after Williamson’s death in 1948, Little Walter.

Wells’s first onstage appearance was alongside guitarist Tampa Red and pianist Johnnie Jones at a Chicago South Side gin mill called Miss Tifford’s, on the corner of 22nd and Prairie. He also shared stages—as a tap dancer, as well as playing harp—with Sunnyland Slim, Robert Lockwood, Muddy Waters, and others. He later claimed that the tips he



Junior Wells. (Photo by Tom Copi, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

received from these guest stints sometimes totaled more than the band itself was earning.

1950s and 1960s—Era Activity in Chicago

In about 1948, he and fretmen Louis and Dave Myers came together as the Three Deuces (later the Three Aces). They became the Four Aces (and eventually, just the Aces) after drummer Fred Below joined them. Below had been a jazz drummer, and Louis Myers was a versatile stylist, influenced by jump-blues guitarists and horn men (Dave played mostly “guitar bass,” using the bottom strings of his instrument). The Aces’ sound thus fused the Delta-to-Chicago sound with a jazz-tinged sophistication.

Wells left the Aces in 1952, when Little Walter left Muddy Waters’s band and took Wells’s place as harpist for the band (renamed the “Jukes” after Walter’s breakout hit). Wells then joined Muddy. The following year he was drafted into the Army, from which he went AWOL on several occasions. In June of 1953, Wells began his tenure at Leonard Allen’s States label, for which he recorded some of his trademark numbers, including “Hoodoo Man” and “Tomorrow Night.” In 1957, Mel London recorded him for Profile, Chief, and U.S.A., among other labels. His “Little by Little” on Profile hit the national R&B charts in 1960. During this period he also cut “Come On in This House” and “Messin’ with the Kid,” which became his signature tune.

By the mid-1960s, the folk-blues “revival,” and the blues-rock that followed in its wake, had made the Chicago sound palatable to young white aficionados. In 1965, Wells recorded *Hoodoo Man Blues* (Delmark), an album now recognized as one of the decade’s most important. Significantly, *Hoodoo Man Blues* was not solely a twelve-bar Chicago blues outing—the opening track, for instance, was “Snatch It Back and Hold It,” a fatback-drenched funk-blues.

The following year Wells continued on in that same direction and in so doing reestablished himself among his original audience. Jack Daniels, a West Side producer and record label owner, released a series of soul-fashioned 45s on him, with horn charts arranged by Monk Higgins. These included “I’m Losing You” (a remake of “Little by Little”), “Up in Heah” (with an introduction adopted from “Messin’ with the Kid”), and “I’m Gonna Cramp Your Style” on Bright Star, as well as “It’s All Soul” on the Hit Sound label. “You’re Tuff Enough” (on Blue Rock, a Mercury subsidiary for which Daniels was A&R man) catapulted Wells onto the national R&B charts for a

second time in 1968. Although some purist critics have accused Wells of pandering to “pop” tastes with these outings, in fact such fusions represented a radical innovation by blues standards; in effect, Junior Wells was playing “soul-blues” before “soul-blues” had a name.

Later Years

Wells’s eventual success as a worldwide blues “celebrity,” however, was due largely to white fans’ perception of him as traditionalist Chicagoan. By the 1970s the team of Junior Wells and Buddy Guy was one of the most popular blues acts in the world. They toured Europe regularly, they opened shows for the Rolling Stones, and their recordings included a session on Atco, *Buddy Guy and Junior Wells Play the Blues*, on which they received support from pop stars such as Eric Clapton and Dr. John.

Eventually they disbanded, but Wells continued to tour steadily, now fronting his own group. For many years he also held down simultaneous gigs at Theresa’s and the Checkerboard, on Chicago’s South Side; there, he served as something of a local blues ambassador, welcoming tourists and locals alike into his realm with his air of cocky dignity and irrepressible cool.

He also continued to record; notable latter-era efforts include 1990’s *Harp Attack* (Alligator), a summit between Wells, Carey Bell, Billy Branch, and James Cotton, and *Come On in This House* (Telarc), a mostly acoustic outing released in 1996. In general, his recorded work from this latter period is entertaining, occasionally brilliant, and almost always good-timey, but it falls short of the emotional depth and instrumental virtuosity he had displayed in his younger days. Nonetheless, he maintained a rigorous touring schedule, and on a good night his flamboyant showmanship and intermittent but determined harp work provided admirable flashes of the old days.

Wells was diagnosed with lymphoma in 1997; a heart attack ensued, and he eventually slipped into a coma. He died on January 15, 1998. His funeral, at A. A. Rayner and Sons Funeral Home on 71st Street, was attended by numerous dignitaries from the blues world. His place in blues history is secure, both for his influence and versatility on their own terms and for the dedication with which he carried the Chicago blues torch to new audiences—and, eventually, new countries—throughout his life.

DAVID WHITEIS

WELLS, JUNIOR

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Discography: AMG, LSFP

WELLS, MICHAEL "LIGHTNIN' "

b. 15 April 1952; Wheeling, WV

Wells is known for his expertise on Piedmont blues. An accomplished guitarist and singer, he has worked with Richard "Big Boy" Henry, Algia Mae Hinton, and George Higgs. Wells has also produced several recordings by Piedmont artists. He currently serves on the board of Music Maker Relief Foundation.

GAILE WELKER

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Selected Recordings

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Ragged But Right (Music Maker MM 26).
Ragtime Millionaire (New Moon NM 9820).

As Producer/Coproducer

- Algia Mae Hinton. *Honey Babe Blues: Folk Tunes and Gospel from North Carolina* (Hin/Tone CD 82929); *Piedmont Folk Traditions* (Audio Arts 009; 45 rpm EP).
Big Boy Henry. "Mr. Ball's Warehouse" (Audio Arts 008; 45 rpm); "Mr. President" (Audio Arts 007; 45 rpm); *Beaufort Blues* (Music Maker CD MM 26); *Poor Man's Blues* (New Moon NM 9508).

WELLS, VIOLA

(See *Miss Rhapsody*)

WEST, CHARLIE

b. 27 September 1914; Andalusia, AL
d. 16 April 1976; Chicago, IL

Singer and pianist; first name sometimes shown as "Charley." West was active in Chicago from 1929 until shortly before his death. He recorded for ARC and Bluebird labels there in 1937. After 1957, he appeared to play mostly for parties and informal occasions.

EDWARD KOMARA

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"Charlie West" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 30 (November/December 1976): 6.

Discography: DGR

WESTON, JOHN

b. 12 December 1927; Lee County, AR

Singer, harmonica player, songwriter. Weston's formative influences on harmonica were Aleck Miller "Sonny Boy Williamson II" and Willie Cobbs. He began performing in public in the 1970s as a member of Speckled Rhythms. However, his first solo appearances in 1988 and his first Fat Possum label CD in 1992 show his blues composing abilities.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WESTSIDE

British record label established in March 1997 under the aegis of MCI by Bob Fisher, who had previously operated the Sequel label from the same London address. The label was devoted to specialist licensed material, with noteworthy blues compilations derived from RCA/Groove, including the complete RCA Johnny Moore catalog, King/Federal, Rhythm, Cobra, Abco, Planet, and J.O.B. The catalog of Johnny Vincent's Ace label was purchased outright, yielding several important compilations of its blues holdings. After the MCI group was purchased by Kingfisher in late 1998, direction of the label passed to Tony Rounce from March 1999 for about two years, after which operations were merged with those of Demon and Edsel and new releases slowed to a trickle.

HOWARD RYE

WHEATSTRAW, PEETIE

b. William Bunch, 21 December 1902; Ripley, TN
 d. 21 December 1941; East St. Louis, IL

William Bunch, better known as Peetie Wheatstraw, “The Devil’s Son-in-Law,” was born in either Ripley, Tennessee, or Cotton Plant, Arkansas. It is difficult to pin down details of the lives of blues musicians, but Bunch’s death certificate indicates Ripley as his place of birth. He is buried at Growders cemetery in Cotton Plant, Woodruff County, Arkansas. Born to James Bunch and Mary Burns, Wheatstraw became famous as a blues musician in the 1930s. Not much has been unearthed regarding his early years. As reported in Paul Garon’s biography, Bunch lived in East St. Louis, Illinois, for at least twelve years prior to his death in 1941.

On November 25, 1941, in Chicago, Illinois, he recorded his final songs, “Give Me Flowers While I’m Living,” “Hearse-Man Blues,” “Don’t Put Yourself on the Spot,” “Old Organ Blues,” “Pawn Broker Blues,” “Southern Girl Blues,” “Mister Livingood,” “The Good Lawd’s Children,” and “Separation Day

Blues.” One month later he was dead. A car carrying Wheatstraw and two other passengers crashed into a standing boxcar belonging to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company at 3rd Street and Illinois Avenue, just a few blocks from his home on 3rd Street. Ironically, Bunch’s death certificate lists both his date of birth and his date of death as December 21.

Bunch recorded more than 160 songs during an eleven-year recording career under the name Peetie Wheatstraw “The Devil’s Son-in-Law, The High Sheriff from Hell.” His death certificate listed his occupation as “musician.” Within the first two years of his recording career, Wheatstraw recorded twenty sides for the Vocalion and Bluebird labels of the American Record Company. Of these twenty, all were composed by Bunch, who accompanied himself on piano or guitar.

Bunch memorialized his infamous persona on a side entitled “The Devil’s Son-in-Law” for the Bluebird label on September 28, 1931. On that same day he recorded three other songs, which concluded his recordings for the Bluebird label. His Decca recordings took place between 1934 and 1938, totaling one



Peetie Wheatstraw, aka “The High Sheriff of Hell” and “The Devil’s Son-in-Law,” ca. 1945. (Photo courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

hundred sides. While Wheatstraw continued to accompany himself on the majority of these songs, he increasingly used lyrics written by others. St. Louis Jimmy (James Oden) is credited with having written nearly a dozen of Wheatstraw's blues songs.

Peetie Wheatstraw is described in *The History of the Blues* as a "potato-headed pianist and singer, who delivered his lyrics in a slightly tipsy fashion and punctuated his verses with an annoying cry of 'ooh well well'"—so much so that, according to David Peel, this ending phrase "crops up no fewer than ninety times, an average of twice a line," in the three songs "Mama's Advice," "Don't Hang My Clothes from No Barb Wire Line," and "Ain't It a Pity and a Shame." Wheatstraw's lyrical themes centered largely on themes of women and poverty. He played both guitar and piano and was influenced by the styles of Roosevelt Skyes, Henry Brown, Lee Green, Stump Johnson, and Walter Davis.

During the 1930s, Wheatstraw's style of singing was ubiquitous in St. Louis and East St. Louis. He influenced blues musicians such as Alec Seward, Louis Hayes, John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, and Robert Johnson. While Wheatstraw's musical influences are seen in other contemporary blues musicians—in song, style, and even sobriquet—it is his persona as the Devil's son-in-law that makes him a cultural icon. His style of self-boasting is present in today's hip-hop genre and is best personified in Ralph Ellison's novel *The Invisible Man*.

"I'm a seventh son of a seventh son bawn with a caul over both eyes and raised on black cat bones high john the conqueror and greasy greens" begins the introduction of Peter Wheatstraw to a Southern stranger new to "up North." Ellison's character is directly modeled after blues musician Peetie Wheatstraw, "The Devil's Son-in-Law." The whole point of both Ellison's character and the persona created by Bunch is to break through the barriers of Jim Crow America. In the novel Ellison's Wheatstraw proclaims himself to be a man full of "a little shit, grit, and mother-wit." Many of the real Wheatstraw's songs were full of such self-aggrandizement. Wheatstraw delivers many of his lyrics as a demarcation of his territory in the larger scheme of black manhood. In addition, both Ellison's and Bunch's personalities have at least one foot in the supernatural world. In *Invisible Man*, Ellison has carefully identified all the symbols of authentic Southern hoodoo, including seventh sons of seventh sons, the evil eye, black cat bones, and high john the conqueror. The "greasy greens" he also mentions are an artistic license: they are a staple food of Southern black culture.

As for William Bunch, being seen as the son-in-law to the Devil not only places him in a position of awe

and entitlement to supernatural powers but further indicates his strength as a mortal being: one capable of marrying the Devil's daughter. While Bunch seldom sings of issues directly discernible to hoodoo, his lyrics are steeped in cyclical natural law: what goes around comes around. From Wheatstraw's earliest recordings to the last, he sang of retribution.

The concept of retribution plays a fundamental role both in Wheatstraw's music and black Southern hoodoo. One of the most misunderstood threads in the lexicon of hoodoo is the use of hexing acts for the purpose of revenge. Both hoodoo and blues served as social mediation tools in a marginalized environment. The issue of revenge in hoodoo and blues music is not fundamentally any different from the role of revenge in codified laws: An act of transgression is committed, and a counteraction relative to its own cultural norms is required to restore order. Whether conscious of this analysis or not, blues musicians performed not solely as acts of entertainment but like African griots, each with a specific, personal message. In the case of William Bunch, "The Devil's Son-in-Law, The High Sheriff from Hell," his message was retribution.

PHOENIX SAVAGE-WISEMAN

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Discography: DGR

WHEELER, GOLDEN "BIG"

- b. 16 December 1929; Baconton, GA
 d. 20 July 1998; Chicago, IL

Harmonica player; brother of guitarist James Wheeler. While a taxi driver in Albany, Georgia, in the late 1940s through 1951, he was encouraged by customer Buster Brown to take up the harmonica. After stints in New Jersey and Youngstown, Ohio, he moved to Chicago in 1954. The next year he became serious with the harmonica, playing in the manner of Jimmy Reed, and formed his first band. By 1958 he had met Little Walter and become influenced by him musically

and personally. Until the late 1980s, when he retired as a mechanic, he performed on a part-time basis. In 1993 and 1997 he recorded two CDs for the Delmark label, and he began pursuing music full time. The earlier of his two CDs, *Big Wheeler's Bone Orchard*, was in the 1950s Chicago style, and *Jump In* was more current. He also assisted on James Wheeler's *I'm Ready*.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WHEELER, JAMES

(See *Piano C. Red*)

WHEELER, THOMAS JAMES "T. J."

b. 16 April 1952; Bremerton, WA

Wheeler grew up in Bremerton, Washington, and later in Bainbridge Island near Seattle. After seeing local performances of Buddy Guy and of Son House, he became serious about learning blues guitar. In 1973 he sought and performed with Babe Stovall in New Orleans, then the next year he learned from Furry Lewis and Bukka White in Memphis. In 1975 he moved to the New England area, where he has been based, although he spent 1984 in Italy with Duck Baker and Jerry Ricks. In January 1985 he founded the Blues Bank Collective and began its educational programs, including the Blues in the School presentations. He continues to perform as acoustic and electric guitarist.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WHISTLER'S JUG BAND

Active 1920s–1930s

Group from Louisville, Kentucky, that recorded for Gennett, OKeh, and Victor labels from 1924 through 1931, led by Buford Threlkeld, known as "The Whistler." Their instrumentation included guitar, banjo, fiddle, and jug, with Threlkeld singing or performing on nose whistle. Precious newsreel footage of the

group was shot locally by a 20th Century Fox/Movietone newsreel crew in 1930.

EDWARD KOMARA

Videography

20th Century Fox/Movietone newsreel footage (1930), in *Times Ain't What They Used to Be* (Yazoo Home Video DVD 512).

Discography: DGR

WHITAKER, "KING" HERBERT

b. 1927–1928

d. 19 April 1995; Toronto, Canada

Saxophonist; birth year also cited as 1929. Whitaker began his career in Washington, D.C., in the late 1940s. From 1951 through 1966 he performed with Frank Motley, moving with the band to Toronto in the late 1950s. He led his own bands from 1966 through 1985 and worked days at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto until his health began to fail in 1993.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WHITE, ARTIE "BLUES BOY"

b. 16 April 1937; Vicksburg, MS

Vocalist. White sang gospel as a youth. He moved to Chicago in the mid-1950s and switched to secular music in 1966. Since then he has recorded and performed, primarily in the soul-blues style and for the southern chitlin circuit audience. His 1977 single "(You Are My) Leanin (sic) Tree" (Altee) was one of the few blues records to hit the national R&B charts in the disco era. White was given the nickname "Blues Boy" by Bobby "Blue" Bland.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Discography: AMG

WHITE, BUKKA

b. Booker T. Washington White, 12 November 1906; Houston, MS

d. 26 February 1977; Memphis, TN

The son of Lula Davison and railroad worker and multi-instrumentalist John White, Bukka White was born on the farm that belonged to his grandfather, the preacher Punk Davison, in Chickasaw County, Mississippi. White learned guitar from his father. As a youth, he moved to the Delta to stay with an uncle. It was at his uncle's that White learned to play piano ("I don't go for no piano player, but I can play good enough until the piano player gets there").

White began hoboing as a teenager, often playing music in the vicinities of St. Louis (where he settled for a period) and Memphis. By the mid-1920s, White was back in Houston, Mississippi, and married to Jessie Bea. The marriage was short-lived; Jessie Bea died in 1928.

In Memphis, in 1930, White made his first records in a mobile studio for Victor. Two blues songs and two religious numbers (by "Washington White, the Singing Preacher") were released. The session was arranged by Itta Bena, Mississippi, businessman and sometimes talent scout Ralph Lembo. White was accompanied by Napoleon Hairiston on guitar; a "Miss Minnie" harmonized with White on the gospel songs.

The 1930s often found White working with Alabama-born harmonica player George "Bullet" Williams. During the 1930s, White married Williams's niece Susie Simpson and lived itinerantly throughout the eastern United States, playing music, boxing, and even pitching baseball for the Negro League team the Birmingham Black Cats.

In early September 1937, White recorded two songs for Vocalion in Chicago. One of them, "Shake 'Em on Down," was an instant hit. Covers have been recorded by the likes of Big Bill Broonzy, Tommy McClennan, Eddie Taylor, Doctor Ross, Savoy Brown, and many others. It was also in 1937, in Monroe County, Mississippi, that White was convicted of murder and given a life sentence in Parchman Farm, Mississippi's notorious prison farm. How White regained his freedom after serving only two years is not clear.

While an inmate, White recorded two Delta standards ("Sic 'Em Dogs On" and "Po' Boy") for John Lomax of the Library of Congress. After his release from Parchman, White returned to Chicago and in March 1940 recorded twelve songs, accompanied by Washboard Sam on washboard, for the Vocalion and OKeh labels. All twelve were issued and they

include White classics such as "Fixin' to Die" (covers include those by Bob Dylan, Buffy St. Marie, and Andy Williams), "Parchman Farm," and "Aberdeen Mississippi." Hurley and Evans refer to this session as "the artistic high point of Bukka White's career," and Simon Napier has described these recordings as "astonishingly beautiful."

White legally separated from Susie, who still lived in Aberdeen and by whom he had two children, moving to Chicago and in 1942 to Memphis. He worked for the U.S. Defense Depot in Memphis, followed by twenty years' employment at the Newberry Equipment Company. Music became less important as a source of income, but White continued to play locally for both black and white audiences. He sometimes worked with Frank Stokes, Jack Kelly, or Willie Borum.

In the late 1940s, White's first cousin, B. B. King, moved to Memphis and stayed with White. In later years, White told various stories of his having given King his first guitar in the 1930s when King was about six years old. Years later, White provided him with room and board, got him a job at Newberry Equipment Company, bought him a new guitar, and helped him get established in the music business.

In 1963, two college students from the University of California at Berkeley, John Fahey and Ed Denson, wrote a letter addressed to "Booker T. Washington White (Old Blues Singer), c/o General Delivery, Aberdeen, Mississippi." Miraculously, it eventually reached White in Memphis. More importantly, it led to the students visiting Memphis and arranging for White to come to California to perform for the growing folk music audience. Thus began White's new career as a folk-blues musician performing mostly for young white audiences.

While in California, White made his first records since 1940. Fahey and Denson released an LP *Mississippi Blues: Bukka White* on their Takoma label, and Chris Strachwitz released two volumes of *Sky Songs* on Arhoolie. These three records are superb and demonstrate that White was still in fine form as a musician and still actively creating new music. The two Arhoolie records are especially impressive because on them White improvises freely, making new music for the occasion. The Takoma record was the first upon which White played piano in addition to guitar. In 1970, Columbia reissued the influential 1937 and 1940 sides on the LP *Parchman Farm*.

White continued to make new records for Blue Horizon, Adelphi, L&R, and other labels, including the celebrated 1973 Biograph LP *Big Daddy*. He performed at colleges and for folk and blues festivals throughout North America (including the Newport



Bukka White at the Newport Folk Festival, Newport, Rhode Island. (Photo by Julie Snow, courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

Folk Festival and the Smithsonian's American Folklife Festival), toured Europe (including stints with the American Folk Blues Festival), and played at the Olympics in Mexico City.

White suffered from late-onset diabetes toward the end of his life. While performing in Massachusetts in 1976, he suffered a stroke; more were to follow. Pancreatic cancer was the ultimate cause of Booker T. Washington White's death in Memphis on February 26, 1977. White is buried in Memphis's New Park Cemetery.

A great raconteur as well as poet, White frequently told different versions of events to different people; he warned audiences "I lie some of the times but not all the time." It is, therefore, unclear whether or not White ever met Charley Patton, but there is no doubt that he was influenced by him. White was a powerful guitar player with a fierce, raspy voice. Despite the physical force with which he handled his guitar and with which he sang, White was a sophisticated slide guitarist whose playing featured the use of complex rhythms and intricate voice and instrument combinations.

FRED J. HAY

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

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Sky Songs (1990, Arhoolie 323).
1963 Isn't 1962 (1994, Genes 9903).
The Complete Bukka White (1994, Columbia 52782).
Big Daddy (1996, Biograph 145).

WHITE, CLEVE "SCHOOLBOY CLEVE"

b. 10 June 1928; Baton Rouge, LA

Guitarist and harmonica player active in Louisiana in the 1950s. White performed and recorded with Lightnin' Slim for Feature in 1954. He moved to Los Angeles in about 1960, then to San Francisco ten years later.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

WHITE, GEORGIA

b. 9 March 1903; Sandersville, GA
 d. presumed ca. 1980

Vocalist/pianist; made one recording session as Georgia Lawson, possibly her real or married name. White worked Chicago clubs in late 1920s and 1930s when she was a star of Decca's race series with material such as "Trouble in Mind"/"I'll Keep Sittin' on It If I Can't Sell It" (1936, Decca 7192). She played piano in Big Bill Broonzy's Laughing Trio (1949–1950) and continued working around Chicago until at least 1959.

HOWARD RYE

Bibliography

AMG (Joslyn Layne); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

WHITE, JOSHUA DANIEL “JOSH”

b. 11 February 1914; Greenville, SC
d. 5 September 1969; Manhasset, NY

Folk-bluesman whose career had two acts. Act one began in the Carolinas, where White served as “lead boy” and apprentice to a number of blind blues and gospel guitarists, including Blind Blake and Blind Joe Taggart, and became a virtuoso Piedmont-style guitarist who recorded both blues (usually under the pseudonym Pinewood Tom) and gospel (billed as Joshua White, *The Singing Christian*).

Act two was centered in New York City, where during the 1940s on the strength of his strong voice and undeniable charisma he became a fixture on the politically progressive, racially diverse coffeehouse and cabaret scene, along with artists such as Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly, Burl Ives, and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. He continued to play straight blues but also performed folk ballads such as “John Henry,” protest songs such as “Free and Equal Blues,” and folk-pop such as “One Meatball.”

White had show business magnetism—his clarion voice was a powerful tool, and he used it to dramatic effect—and became an increasingly sophisticated performer and an international star, with appearances in radio, theater, film, and television. Having performed at the White House for Franklin Roosevelt, he performed there again two decades later for John Kennedy. He recorded prolifically during those years, including a long association in the late 1950s and early 1960s with Elektra. By 1963, he was America’s third-best-known male folksinger, ranked below only Harry Belafonte and Pete Seeger.

White’s character and determination enabled him to overcome major setbacks during his life, most notably an accident in the early 1930s that caused paralysis in one hand (through constant exercise and practice during a five-year period, he regained his guitar-playing ability) and ostracism in the United States during the McCarthy era of the early 1950s (he spent much of that decade playing for European audiences). His son Josh White, Jr. (b. 1940, New York), followed in his footsteps, becoming an accomplished folksinger and actor in his own right.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

WHITE, LYNN

b. 6 August 1953; Mobile, AL

Singer, songwriter. While other artists such as Koko Taylor, Denise LaSalle, and Etta James are often referred to as modern “Queens of the Blues,” Lynn White is a more recent vocal Queen—of Southern Soul Blues. Her style of singing is most heavily influenced by Aretha Franklin but also by Bessie Smith, Nina Simone, and Billie Holiday and by the spirituals she sang in her neighborhood church while growing up in Mobile.

Her first single, “Blues in My Bedroom” (1977), was produced by Big Ike Darby, a blues singer who later married White. Her records from *Blues in My Bedroom* (1982) up through *Touching Me* (1998) show a wide range of singing, from funky, down and dirty tunes such as “Home Girl” and “You Left Your Homework Undone” to slow, sensuous songs such as the Bessie Smith inspired “Slow and Easy” or “Take Your Time” and to powerful blues ballads such as her passionate rendition of Joe Simon’s “Your Time to Cry.” Her live, growling rendition of “Baby, What You Want Me to Do?” (available as a studio single from Icehouse Records) gives the pure “blues” listener a taste of White’s blues presence. However, Lynn’s best performances are live, so she should be near the top of any serious blues fan’s list of “have to see” artists.

JUSTIN WERT

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Discography

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Slow and Easy (1985, Waylo 13001).
Home Girl (1991, Creative Funk 7011).
At Her Best (1999, Blues Works 5502).

WHITE, MISS LAVELLE

b. 3 July 1929; Amite, LA

Singer. A classic blues lounge chanteuse, White's career began in 1950 when she met guitarist Clarence Hollimon in Houston, where she had moved in her mid-teens. She became involved with the thriving Duke/Peacock Records scene, writing songs for Bobby "Blue" Bland and, with the assistance of Johnny Copeland, recording a couple of singles. She established herself as a live act, and after an extended residency at the Kingston Mines in Chicago she returned to Texas, ultimately moving to Austin in 1987, and recorded *Miss Lavelle* in 1994 and *It Haven't Been Easy* in 1996. White, who relocated to New Orleans in 2003, released *Into the Mystic* the same year.

MICHAEL POINT

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Discography: AMG**WIGGINS, PHIL**

b. 8 May 1954; Washington, DC

Harmonica player; influenced by Sonny Terry, Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller), Little Walter, Junior Wells, and Big Walter Horton, along with pianists and horn players.

Wiggins honed his skills performing with Mother Scott's band and accompanying street singer and guitarist Flora Molton. He met guitarist John Cephas in 1976 at the Smithsonian National Folklife Festival and formed the Barrelhouse Rockers with James Bellamy (bass) and Wilber "Big Chief" Ellis (piano).

After Ellis's death (1977), Phil and John formed the duo Cephas and Wiggins. Following in the footsteps of Sonny (Terry) and Brownie (McGhee), they were quickly heralded as contemporary bearers of the Piedmont style. Touring Europe and Africa (1981–1982), they soon developed an international reputation. Their recordings include two albums for the German Lippman & Rau's label (1981, 1983), three records for Flying Fish (1984, 1989, 1992), and three CDs to date for Alligator (*Cool Down* in 1996, *Home-made* in 1999, and *Somebody Told the Truth* in 2002). In 1986, they won two W. C. Handy Awards (Traditional Artists and Entertainers of the Year).

While Wiggins's melodic and highly rhythmic solos and energetic rhythmic accompaniments distinguish his harmonica style most clearly from other players, he employs a range of styles, from a spare, expressive approach to a more chordal one. In addition, Wiggins contributes vocal harmonies, occasionally sings lead, and has written some excellent songs, including "Evil Twin Blues," rich with traditional blues irony and humor, the poignant and timely "Cool Down" about teen violence, and the light-hearted and celebratory "Fools Night Out," an anthem at the week-long blues camp in Elkins, West Virginia, where he has been a core faculty member for many years.

MARIA V. JOHNSON

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Discography: AMG (under Cephas)**WILBORN, NELSON ("RED NELSON," "DIRTY RED")**

b. 31 August 1907; Sumner, MS

Nelson Wilborn, better known as Red Nelson, or Dirty Red, was born in Sumner, Mississippi, in 1907. A fine, capable vocalist, he moved to Chicago in the early 1930s and was a prominent recording artist from 1935 to 1947. His recordings with pianist Clarence Lofton, especially "Streamline Train" and "Crying Mother Blues," are probably his best work. In the 1960s he performed locally with the Muddy Waters Band.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin

Discography: DGR; LSFP**WILEY, GEECHIE**

Active 1920s–1930s

Singer and guitarist who recorded for Paramount in 1930–1931. Among Wiley's few surviving songs are "Last Kind Words Blues" and "Eagles on a Half."

Ishman Bracey related to researcher Gayle Wardlow what little is certain about Wiley: She came from Natchez, Mississippi, lived in Jackson during the late 1920s, where her lover was Charlie McCoy, and left Jackson shortly after the time of her Paramount sessions. Her guitar style suggests she performed with and learned from musicians in the east Texas–south Louisiana–southwest Mississippi strip.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: DGR

WILKINS, JOE WILLIE

- b. 7 January 1923; Davenport, MS
- d. 28 March 1979; Memphis, TN

Although not a major figure in the genesis of the blues, Joe Willie Wilkins played an important role in the development of this musical genre. Wilkins incorporated in his playing the intensity of down-home blues, the elegance of jazz, and the power of urban sounds. His achievement transcends the quantity of recordings he left and has more to do with quality and originality.

The only child of Frank Wilkins, an accomplished bottleneck guitarist, Joe Willie became interested in music at a very early age. Young Wilkins taught himself harmonica and often played with his father at local parties and dances in the Bobo, Mississippi, area, where his family had moved in 1933 to work on a farm. After being taught some fiddle by "Fiddlin'" Sam Harris and accordion by Walter "Pat" Rhodes, Wilkins learned guitar from his father, the members in his band, and phonograph records so well that he was nicknamed "The Walking Seeburg" (a brand of jukebox).

After playing in the Mississippi streets and barrel-houses with Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller) and Robert Lockwood, Wilkins briefly served in the U.S. Navy. From 1942 he regularly participated with his mentors and other fellow musicians in the famous radio program *King Biscuit Time* over KFFA in Helena, Arkansas, and with Robert Nighthawk (whose sister he married) in the *Bright Star Flour* show. At the end of the decade Wilkins often toured the South with a group known as the Four Aces (Sonny Boy Williamson II, Willie Love, Willie Nix).

Wilkins first entered a studio as late as 1951, when he played guitar on the historical recordings Sonny

Boy Williamson II made for Lillian McMurry's Trumpet Records in Jackson, Mississippi, where Wilkins acted as house guitarist for two years. Thanks to his eclecticism and flair, Wilkins recorded as sideman for many artists, such as Willie Love and Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup (for Trumpet), Walter Horton (for Modern), Willie Nix (for Sun), and Roosevelt Sykes, with whom he toured into the 1960s. The latter proved difficult years for Wilkins, though. In 1959 his father died and Joe Willie moved from West Memphis to Memphis, where he worked mostly outside music until about 1970. Despite bad health, Wilkins took up guitar again as a result of his wife Carrie's encouragement and of blues writer and promoter Jim O'Neal's support, often playing with Houston Stackhouse. Wilkins also made appearances at the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival and at the Memphis River City Blues Festival.

In 1973 Steve LaVere's Mimosa label released Wilkins's first recordings under his own name, a 45 rpm that included his most representative song, "Mr. Downchild," one of the rare occasions on which he ventured to play slide guitar and sing. A full-length album released by Adamo that included some live performances cut with his King Biscuit Boys at the Memphis Blues Caravan Show followed. In 1976 Wilkins also played the Monterey Jazz Festival and appeared in the Giles Oakley BBC Television series *The Devil's Music: A History of the Blues*.

LUIGI MONGE

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WILKINS, LANE

- b. 15 June 1955; Memphis, TN

Singer, guitarist, writer. Wilkins is the granddaughter and biographer of Reverend Robert Wilkins and a lecturer on Memphis music history.

EDWARD KOMARA

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**WILKINS, REVEREND ROBERT
TIMOTHY "TIM"**

b. 16 January 1896; Hernando, MS
d. 26 May 1987; Memphis, TN

Singer, composer, and guitar player of blues and gospel in the Memphis tradition. In his early twenties, "Tim" Wilkins leaned to play guitar with his friends Jim Jackson and Frank Stokes. At thirty two, Wilkins released his first recording (and biggest success from that period), titled "Rolling Stone" (a song completely different from the Muddy Waters song), in 1928. Among his nineteen sides for Vocalion, Victor, and Brunswick, he released "That's No Way to Get Along" (1929), a song that he would later revise to tell the parable of the prodigal son. Although it went unnoticed at the time, the song would later make Wilkins popular.

In 1936, Robert "Tim" Wilkins allegedly quit music after witnessing a violent altercation while he was playing in a private house. His last recording from that period remains "Dirty Deal Blues" (1935). It was in 1950 that Robert Wilkins became a minister of the Church of God in Christ, a predominantly African American Pentecostal denomination.

In 1964 Robert Wilkins was still a minister and gave advice about herb medicine. He recorded for the Piedmont label *Memphis Gospel Singer*, an LP composed of eight folk/gospel songs, with Wilkins accompanied only by his acoustic guitar. Wilkins also took part in the Newport Festival and performed a song from that album, titled "Prodigal Son."

The song "Prodigal Son" appeared on the Rolling Stones' album *Beggars Banquet* (1968), with the same title, melody, and lyrics but without the mention of its composer's name. Both parties went to court and came to a settlement: Wilkins's name would appear as the sole author on all subsequent reprints of the Rolling Stones' LP. Moreover, the British group played "Prodigal Son" along with Robert Johnson's "Love in Vain" during their American tour in 1969.

Reverend Robert Wilkins was not a prolific composer or a popular artist. His records have always been hard to find. His early work nevertheless remains a fine representation of Memphis blues, and his later gospel/folk releases have been highly acclaimed and influential. He passed away at ninety.

YVES LABERGE

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

See also Piedmont (label); Rolling Stones

WILLIAMS, ANDRE "MR. RHYTHM"

b. Zephare Andre Williams, 1 November 1936; Bessemer, AL

Vocals, composer, arranger, producer. Andre Williams ("Mr. Rhythm") sang on local hits for Detroit's Fortune Records in the mid-1950s, was a staff producer for Motown, Mercury, Duke, and Stax, and captivated a new audience in the 1990s as "The Black Godfather."

JOHN SINCLAIR

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Paulus, George. "Andre 'Mr. Rhythm' Williams Comes Clean about Jail Bait, Bacon Fat, Pullin' Time and Greasy Chickens." *Blues & Rhythm* no. 108 (April 1996): 4–8 [part 1]; no. 109 (May 1996): 4–9 [part 2].

Discography: AMG

WILLIAMS, ANDY "TOO-HARD"

b. Unknown
Active since 1959

Left-handed guitarist active in Houston, Texas. Williams grew up in Sunnyside, Texas. He moved to Seattle, Washington, in 1959 to work at Boeing. There he encountered Jimi Hendrix, who showed him how to restring a guitar for a left-handed performer. He moved to Los Angeles in 1969, then to Houston in 1977. His nickname came from a Houston music writer who commented that Williams played "too hard."

EDWARD KOMARA

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WILLIAMS, ARBESS

WILLIAMS, ARBESS

b. 23 May 1946; San Diego, CA

Powerful Sacramento-based vocalist and songwriter. Williams worked in music in San Diego until 1979, when she moved to Sacramento. After some years outside music she began to work with Johnny Heartsman and with the Silent Partners and then formed her own band, recording two albums for the Have Mercy label.

RAY ASTBURY

Bibliography

Jung, Maureen. "Sacramento Blues, Part One." *Living Blues* no. 114 (April 1994): 58–65, esp. 64–65.

Selected Recordings

Don't You Call Me Mama (Have Mercy HMCD-02).

See also **Heartsman, Johnny**

WILLIAMS, ARTHUR LEE "OSCAR MISSISSIPPI"

b. 8 July 1937; Tunica, MS

Chicago-raised harmonica player Arthur Williams backed Elmore James and Eddie Taylor before he returned to Mississippi in 1958 and recorded with Frank Frost and Sam Carr for Jewel in 1966. Settling in St. Louis in 1972, he recorded for the Fedora and Rooster labels. In the 1990s, he performed regularly with Big Bad Smitty.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: LSFP

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Midnight Blue (2001, Rooster CD 2646).

WILLIAMS, "BIG" JOE LEE

b. 16 October 1899 (or 1903); Crawford, MS

d. 17 December 1982; Macon, MS

Big Joe played a nine-string guitar and growled the blues for more than four decades, finally coming to represent the epitome of the Delta bluesman. As his



Big Joe Williams in the studio at Columbia Records, Chicago, in 1947. (Photo courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

career drew to a close, he had established a legacy on 78-rpm releases as well as on more than twenty LPs. His theme song, "Baby, Please Don't Go," has become a blues standard.

Life

Big Joe Williams, also known as Po' Joe Williams, Joe Lee Williams, or simply Joe Williams, should not be confused with the jazz singer Joe Williams, who performed with Count Basie. Big Joe, as he came to be known in his later years, was the paradigmatic wandering blues singer, one of sixteen children born to Cora Lee Williams and John Williams. He was part Native American (on his father's side), while from his mother and her family he inherited his musical disposition. His grandfather Bert Logan as well as his uncles Bert and Russ Logan all sang blues, as did his cousin Jesse Logan.

Joe's first instrument was a home-made guitar, but he experimented with the flute and the accordion as well. By the time he reached his late teens, he was a competent and skilled musician. His father was replaced by a stepfather in 1918, and the latter's hostility forced Joe out of the house. The unhappy

years were memorialized in Joe's "Stepfather Blues." After staying with the Logans for a short period of time, Joe struck out on his own. Between working for the Doc Bennett Medicine Show in Mobile, Alabama, shortly after leaving home and playing with the Birmingham Jug Band in the Rabbit Foot Minstrels traveling show nearly a decade later, Joe worked the rough-and-tumble world of levee camps, mining camps, logging camps, juke joints, and barrelhouses.

Joe's base was still the Delta farmlands, but he traveled throughout the country, playing at turpentine camps, country suppers, and anywhere there was a dollar to be made. He met bluesmen Charlie Patton, David "Honeyboy" Edwards, Tommy McClennan, and other Mississippi musicians before putting down roots in St. Louis, where he had a cousin, J. D. Short. Joe was soon part of the Lester Melrose stable of blues artists, and he continued to work for Melrose for another ten years or so, often acting as a scout and returning to the Delta to bring back blues singers to record.

Joe had an active recording career, which may have been slowing down in the 1950s, but the folk revival soon took him up as a hero, and before long he was turning out frequent LPs and traveling to Europe and Japan either on his own or as part of blues package tours. During these years, he spent as much time in Chicago as he did in the South, but by 1982 he was back in Mississippi again, where he died at the age of eighty three.

Music and Influence

Big Joe had several trademarks, among which were his nine-string guitar and his theme song, "Baby, Please Don't Go." At times, Joe played a six-string guitar, usually in open G or "Spanish" tuning, but it was most often a six-string guitar to which he had added three more strings, usually doubling in unison the first, second, and fourth strings; this unique arrangement resulted in an unusual and characteristic sound, making his playing instantly recognizable.

He adapted the work song "Another Man Done Gone" into his own blues piece, "Baby, Please Don't Go." He first recorded it at his second Bluebird session in 1935, but he did not obtain a copyright on it until 1943. He renewed the copyright in 1963. He continued to play "Baby, Please Don't Go" until the end of his career.

His recording career properly began a few months before the above session, however, when he and another St. Louis artist, Henry Townsend, accompanied pianist Walter Davis on eight sides for the Victor

subsidiary Bluebird, on February 25, 1935. When Davis had finished, Joe and Townsend continued to record six songs released under the name Joe Williams. Among these was "My Grey Pony," a version of Charlie Patton's "Pony Blues," and "49 Highway Blues," the first version of several Joe would record, and another piece that came to be identified with Big Joe. Few highway blues were recorded in the 1920s, and only several preceded Big Joe's in the 1930s (Sonny Scott, Jack Kelly), but none of these obtained the fame that Big Joe's "49 Highway Blues" did.

Joe began to record with Sonny Boy Williamson (John Lee Williamson) at his third Bluebird session, in May of 1937 at the Leland Hotel in Aurora, Illinois. Theirs was a partnership that would continue on and off until Sonny Boy's murder in 1948. Sonny Boy nearly always accompanied Big Joe at Joe's recording sessions, but Williamson's own sessions used other guitar players such as Tampa Red, Willie Lacey, or Big Bill Broonzy.

Big Joe's earliest solo guitar work tended to be both frenetic and jagged, each note having a percussiveness often found in St. Louis-based country blues guitarists. His early sides with Sonny Boy were characterized by more control and a more subtle interplay between the harmonica and guitar. By 1947, when Joe began to record for Columbia—still under the aegis of Lester Melrose—his sides took on a hard, driving combo sound, supported by the powerful drumming of Judge Riley.

On his 1951 sides for the Trumpet label, Joe's guitar was again given well-deserved solo status, and this was the sound that carried him through the folk revival years until his death. His recordings for Delmark, Arhoolie, and Folkways stand out (the latter recorded by Robert Koester of Delmark) as superior work by a superior artist.

PAUL GARON

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Bloomfield, Michael, and S. Summerville. *Me and Big Joe*.
San Francisco: Re/Search Productions, 1980.
Moon, D. Thomas. "Big Joe Williams." *Blues Revue* no. 16
(March/April 1995): 36–46.

Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

Selected Recordings

"Baby Please Don't Go" (1935, Bluebird 6200).
"49 Highway Blues" (1935, Bluebird 5996).
Piney Wood Blues (1989, Delmark DD-602).
Shake Your Boogie (1993, Arhoolie CD315; contains all of
Tough Times [1960, Arhoolie LP 1002]).

WILLIAMS, BILL

WILLIAMS, BILL

b. 28 February 1897; Richmond, VA
d. 6 October 1973; Greenup, KY

Guitarist of songster material including blues, rag-time, ballads, and popular music. Williams was discovered when he was seventy three. He recorded two albums and performed occasional concerts and television shows.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

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Ware, Burnham. "Bill Williams" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 15 (Winter 1973/1974): 6–7.

WILLIAMS, CHARLES MELVIN "COOTIE"

b 10 July 1911; Mobile, AL
d 15 September 1985; New York City, NY

Trumpeter Cootie Williams rose to prominence in the 1930s performing with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. His unprecedented expressiveness combined the blues with a strong swinging rhythmic sense and the use of various mutes, including the growl and plunger.

Throughout his expansive career he performed with leading figures in jazz and blues, including Ellington, Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, Benny Goodman, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, George Treadwell, Joe Guy, Money Johnson, and many others.

JASON ROBINSON

Bibliography

New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

WILLIAMS, CLARENCE

b. 8 October, probably 1893; Plaquemine, LA
d. 6 November 1965; New York City, NY

Pianist, singer, dancer, composer, record producer, and music publisher. In terms of blues, Williams was an outstanding accompanist for singers Bessie Smith, his wife Eva Taylor, and many others. He was equally important as a promoter, publishing numerous blues compositions in the 1920s and 1930s.

PETER MUIR

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Discography: DGR; Lord

As Soloist

"Decatur Street Blues" (1921, Chappelle and Stinette 5005); "The Weary Blues" (1923, OKeh 4893); "Gravier Street Blues" (1924, OKeh 40172); "Temptation Blues" (1924, OKeh 8204); "Organ Grinder Blues" (1928, OKeh 8604); "Farm Hand Papa" (1928, Columbia 14341-D); "Michigan Water Blues" (1930, OKeh 8806).

As Bandleader (selected)

"Wild Cat Blues"/"Kansas City Man Blues" (1923, OKeh 4915); "'Tain't Nobody's Bus'nness If I Do" (1923, OKeh 4966); "Coal Cart Blues"/"Santa Claus Blues" (1925, OKeh 8245); "Jackass Blues" (1926, OKeh 40598); "P. D. Q. Blues" (1927, Vocalion 1088); "Longshoreman's Blues" (1928, QRS R-7040); "Beer Garden Blues" (1933, Vocalion/OKeh 2541); "Crazy Blues" (1934, Ban 33261); "Milk Cow Blues" (1935, Vocalion 2927); "Yama Yama Blues" (1935, Vocalion 2991).

As Accompanist (selected artists)

Bessie Smith, Mamie Smith, Eva Taylor, Sippie Wallace (see DGR for discographies).

WILLIAMS, ED "LIL' ED"

b. 8 April 1955; Chicago, IL

Contemporary Chicago bluesman Lil' Ed Williams's slash and burn approach to slide guitar playing has earned him an international reputation with his band the Blues Imperials. Williams learned the craft from his uncle, legendary slide master J. B. Hutto, and was playing professionally with the Imperials by 1975. Bandmate and half-brother James "Pookie" Young was a student of Hutto's also. The pair worked menial day jobs as they struggled to make it in the West Side clubs, earning a steady spot at Big Duke's Blue Flame. They established a solid regional fan base during the 1970s with their raucous brand of up-tempo blues-rock, and their reputation as a band of infectious energy soon caught the attention of Alligator Records' Bruce Iglauer, who signed them in 1985.

Early recording sessions with Iglauer intended for a multiartist compilation were so dazzling that an agreement to record a full-length album was made on the spot. The recordings that became the Imperials' first Alligator release, *Roughhousin'*, were made in one evening; they document a confident band of crack

musicians playing with fire, spontaneity, and gusto. With the assistance of major label promotion, the band toured nationally on college, club, and festival circuits. Later they would tour Canada, Europe, and Japan, garnering a loyal following of self-proclaimed “Ed heads” wherever they went. The Imperials continued to record for Alligator, with five albums as of 2002. During a hiatus in the mid-1990s, Williams recorded two CDs with Earwig Records.

JOHN OTIS

Bibliography

AMG (Jim O’Neal and Sandra Brennan); Larkin; Santelli Wilcock, Donald E. “Lil’ Ed Williams.” *Living Blues* no. 95 (January/February 1991): 18–22.

Discography: AMG

WILLIAMS, EMERY

(See *Detroit Junior*)

WILLIAMS, GEORGE “BULLET”

b. Unknown
d. Unknown

Flourished 1928–1930; harmonica player thought to be from Alabama, active across north Alabama and north Mississippi, including the Delta. Williams’s 1928 Paramount label recordings of “The Escaped Convict” and “Frisco Leaving Birmingham” are known for their imitative effects of shrieks and trains. Much of what is known about him is related by Bukka White, who traveled with him in 1928–1930.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Stephens, Cal. “Booker White on Bullet Williams.” 78 *Quarterly* no. 6 (1991): 83–85.

Discography: DGR

WILLIAMS, HENRY “RUBBERLEGS”

b. Henry Williamson, 14 July 1907; Atlanta, GA
d. 17 October 1962; New York City, NY

Singer and dancer in the 1920s–1940s vaudeville and club circuits. Williams recorded for the labels Continental, Manor, and Savoy in 1945. The

Continental session is celebrated in bebop jazz lore: Williams drank by mistake saxophonist Charlie Parker’s coffee and Benzedrine mixture, then sang under heightened influence.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; New Grove Jazz

Discography: Lord

WILLIAMS, J. MAYO

b. 25 September 1894; Monmouth, IL
d. 2 January 1980; Chicago, IL

One of the few African American music executives in the first half of the twentieth century, Williams signed so many blues stars to recording contracts with Paramount, Brunswick/Vocalion, and Decca in the 1920s and 1930s that he acquired the nickname “Ink.” A talent scout and producer, he worked mostly out of Chicago, with forays to New York.

He entered the music business around 1923–1924, when the fledging Paramount label hired him to spearhead its “race” series at its newly opened Chicago office. His first major signings were two popular singers from the black vaudeville circuit, Ma Rainey and Ida Cox. Within three years, he added two of the most talented rural blues artists, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Blind Blake, to Paramount’s roster. He also set up the Chicago Music Publishing Company, the label’s publishing arm, which reportedly paid flat fees rather than royalties to its songwriters.

Leaving Paramount in 1927, he launched his own label, Black Patti, which quickly folded. He then linked with the Chicago-based Brunswick/Balke/Collender company, which launched two race series under Jack Kapp’s direction on its newly established Brunswick label and its newly acquired Vocalion label. Williams’s signings for Brunswick/Vocalion included Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, Tampa Red and Georgia Tom (Dorsey), Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe (McCoy), and Bertha “Chippie” Hill. Huge hits such as Leroy Carr’s “How Long How Long Blues” and Tampa Red & Georgia Tom’s “It’s Tight Like That” (both 1928) cemented Williams’s reputation within the blues industry.

With the Great Depression taking its toll on the record industry and Brunswick sold to new owners, Williams left music to coach football at Morehouse College in 1932 but returned two years later and was reunited with Jack Kapp, who had been hired to

operate the new Decca label, with offices in Chicago and New York. During the next seven years, with Williams scouting talent and supervising sessions, Decca released hundreds of rural and urban blues sides by artists such as Memphis Minnie, Kokomo Arnold, Peetie Wheatstraw, Georgia White, Sleepy John Estes, the Harlem Hamfats, Blind Boy Fuller, Alberta Hunter, and Trixie Smith. Some of these artists Williams had worked with at his prior labels. Perhaps his most notable signing to Decca was future superstar Louis Jordan, who was a relative unknown leading the house band at the Elks Rendezvous club in Harlem when Williams first recorded him in December 1938.

After leaving Decca in the mid-1940s, Williams ran a series of small, independent labels, including Ebony Records in Chicago and Harlem Records in New York, and continued doing so with limited success until ill health forced his retirement in the early 1970s.

Before entering the music industry, Williams made his mark in athletics. A track star and All-American football player at Brown University, he was (along with Paul Robeson and Fritz Pollard) one of three blacks to play in the National Football League's first season (1920).

Like many music executives of his day, Williams was alleged to be less than scrupulous in his business practices, withholding royalties and taking songwriting credits. In his own defense, he stated: "I've been better than fifty percent honest, which in this business is pretty good."

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Calt, Stephen. "Paramount, Part 2. Anatomy of a Race Label: The Mayo Williams Era." *78 Quarterly* no. 4 (1989): 9-30.
Dixon, Robert, and John Godrich. *Recording the Blues*. New York: Stein & Day, 1970.

WILLIAMS, JABO

- b. Unknown
d. Unknown

Jabo Williams was a highly talented pianist/vocalist hailing from Birmingham, Alabama, which is probably where he was discovered by Paramount in 1932. A contemporary photograph of Williams shows him in a wide-brimmed hat and in the company of guitarist Robert McCoy (Robert Nighthawk). Williams also spent some time in St. Louis and was well remembered by pianist Joe Dean as a slim, medium-brown man who played piano in a pool hall on 15th and Biddle. His later whereabouts are unknown.

Williams's recordings were released in the depth of the depression and are desperately rare. They reveal him to be a forthright, two-handed pianist in the barrelhouse tradition, who used mostly eight-to-the-bar boogie bass patterns and highly individual treble phrases, including a characteristic coda with which he ended many of his pieces. "Ko Ko Mo Blues Parts 1 and 2" has similarities to the later "Sweet Home Chicago" and is a medium boogie with a lazy, slurred vocal. "Pratt City Blues," which is a different tune from the Chippie Hill title, refers to a suburb of the Ensley District of Birmingham. Both this boogie and the stride "Jab Blues" are outstanding instrumental compositions with a relentless drive.

"My Woman Blues" and "Pollock Blues" revert to medium boogie tempo, the latter taking its name from a part of East St. Louis. Williams shared a disregard of bar lengths with his fellow Birmingham pianist Walter Roland, who subsequently recorded another of Williams's songs, "House Lady Blues." "Fat Mama Blues" is a bawdy house song having a lyrical piano melody and an unusual bass line, ending with a characteristic Williams coda.

BOB HALL

Bibliography

Santelli

Discography: DGR

WILLIAMS, JIMMY LEE

b. 26 July 1925; Worth County, GA

The uncle of famed harp player Buster Brown, Jimmy Lee Williams lived on a farm, playing and singing the blues on the side. As with many Georgia bluesmen, he was discovered and recorded by George Mitchell in the late 1970s. That led him to more recordings and a recognition from the blues world for his deep down-home blues style.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography

- Georgia Blues Today* (1981, Flyright LP 576).
Blues by Jimmy Lee Williams (1988, Swingmaster LP 2115).

WILLIAMS, JOE

b. Joseph Goreed, 12 December 1918; Cordele, GA
d. 29 March 1999; Las Vegas, NV

Vocalist and pianist. Williams began his career in Chicago performing with gospel quartets. He toured from the 1930s until the 1960s, including with bands led by Jimmie Noone, Coleman Hawkins, Lionel Hampton, and Count Basie. The years 1954 to 1961, during which Williams performed with Count Basie's band, established his reputation as a blues and jazz singer. His first international hit was Memphis Slim's "Everyday I Have the Blues." In 1961 Williams began a solo career that continued well into the 1990s.

ROBERT WEBB FRY II

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Gourse, Leslie. *Every Day: The Story of Joe Williams*. New York: Quartet Books, 1985.

Discography: Lord; LSFP**Selected Recordings**

Memories ad Lib (1958, Roulette 52021).
Everyday I Have the Blues (1959, Roulette 52033).
Just the Blues (1960, Roulette 52054).
Here's to Life (1993, Telarc 83357)

WILLIAMS, JOHNNY (1)

b. 15 January 1942; Tyler, TX
d. December 1986

Soul-style singer. Williams moved to Chicago in 1956, where he remained based. He recorded for Chess in 1966, Twinight in 1967, and Bashie in 1969, but his lone national rhythm and blues hit was "Slow Motion Part 1" in 1972 for Philadelphia International.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Larkin

WILLIAMS, JOHNNY (2)

b. 15 May 1906; Alexandria, LA

Singer and guitarist associated with Little Walter, Johnny Young, and various Chicago Maxwell Street

musicians of the 1940s. After a conversion experience in 1959, he entered the Baptist ministry. Although no longer performing blues, he remains a valuable informant to historians.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WILLIAMS, JOSEPH "JO JO"

b. 1920; Coahoma MS

Guitarist. Williams was raised initially in the Mississippi Delta, where in the 1930s he saw Son House and Willie Brown perform. He lived in Memphis during the 1940s, moving to Chicago in 1953. Much of his known career has been with Lazy Bill Lucas and Mojo Buford. His activity since the 1970s is unknown.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin
Titon, Jeff. "'All Pretty Wimmins': JoJo Williams." *Blues Unlimited* no. 64 (July 1969): 13–14 [part 1]; no. 65 (September 1969): 13–14 [part 2].

Discography: LSFP**WILLIAMS, JOSEPH LEON "JODY"**

b. 3 February 1935; Mobile, AL

One of Chicago's first great electric blues guitarists, Jody Williams played harmonica as a child but switched to guitar in his teens after meeting Bo Diddley at a talent show and hanging out with Muddy Waters in clubs. Influenced by the single-string solos of T-Bone Walker and B. B. King and the jazzy sophistication of Charles Brown's guitarist Johnny Moore, the versatile Williams became a Chess studio guitarist.

While leading Howlin' Wolf's band in 1954, Williams played on Wolf classics such as "Evil," "Who Will Be Next?" and "Forty Four" and added scorching guitar to Diddley tunes such as "Who Do You Love?" "Mona," and "Hey, Bo Diddley." Recording for small labels, often under pseudonyms, he recorded his own tunes such as "Lucky Lou" and "You May" while continuing to record with Billy Boy Arnold, Otis Spann, Otis Rush (who turned "Lucky Lou" into "All Your Love"), Billy Stewart (whom he

WILLIAMS, JOSEPH LEON "JODY"

discovered), B. B. King, Floyd Dixon, Jimmy Rogers, and others. He also toured with Bobby Bland, Junior Parker, Memphis Slim, and Charles Brown.

Disgusted with the music business after unsuccessfully suing an imitator, he quit playing music in 1970 to raise a family and worked for twenty-four years as an electronics technician at Xerox and for a few years after that as a bank-machine troubleshooter. In the late 1990s, encouraged by a growing interest in classic Chicago blues, he again appeared in clubs, played festivals in Europe, and recorded, showing renewed power as a guitarist, songwriter, and singer.

MARK HOFFMAN/JAMES SEGREST

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AMG (Bill Dahl); Harris; Larkin
Whiteis, David. "Jody Williams: An Unsung Guitar Hero Returns." *Living Blues* no. 161 (January/February 2002): 10–18.

Discography: AMG

WILLIAMS, L. C.

b. 12 March 1924; Crockett, TX
d. 18 October 1960; Houston, TX

Harris gives the birth year as 1930. A deep voiced singer and tap dancer, Williams was one of the cohorts surrounding Lightnin' Hopkins, who made it possible for him to cut some incredibly down-home sides under his own name. Somehow, L. C. managed also to record Texas rhythm and blues tracks such as the jumping "Louisiana Boogie," his only hit. L. C. died of tuberculosis.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

Bibliography

Harris; Larkin
Oliver, Paul, and Mack McCormick. "L. C. Williams." *Jazz Monthly* no. 1 (March 1961): 15.

Discography: LSFP

Reissues include *Texas Blues* (1992, Arhoolie CD 352); *Texas Guitar Killers* (Capitol 72438 33915).

WILLIAMS, LARRY

b. 10 May 1935; New Orleans, LA
d. 2 January 1980; Los Angeles, CA

R&B pianist/singer Larry Williams signed with Specialty Records in 1957 as a replacement for Little

Richard, who had left the label to become a minister. He had a few hits in Richard's style, including "Short Fat Fanny" (Specialty 608) and "Bony Moronie" (Specialty 615) and would later be admired by John Lennon of the Beatles. Williams's career had a brief renaissance in the 1960s as a duet partner with Johnny "Guitar" Watson. He continued in music as a performer and record producer until his death. The circumstances surrounding his death by a gunshot wound to the head remain mysterious, and his death date has been reported variously as January 2, 7, or 10, 1980.

MORRIS S. LEVY

Bibliography

AMG (Stephen Erlewine); Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Selected Recording in Reissue

Bad Boy (1992, Specialty 7002).

WILLIAMS, LEE "SHOT"

b. 21 May 1938; Lexington, MS

Vocalist. Williams sang gospel as a youth, but he also admired R&B artists such as Louis Jordan, Hank Ballard, and Bobby "Blue" Bland. After moving to Chicago in the late 1950s, he worked with musicians such as harpist Little Mack Simmons and guitarist Little Smokey Smothers. He eventually joined Magic Sam's band, in which he and Sam shared bandleader duties, forming a combination that fused the rawness of Sam's West Side guitar style with Williams's gruff-voiced but urbane soulfulness. He also worked for a time with guitarist Earl Hooker.

In the early 1960s Williams recorded for deejay Richard Stamz's Foxy label; he also cut four sides on Federal (one of which, "Welcome to the Club," was later covered by Little Milton). His biggest local hit, though, was "I Like Your Style," recorded in about 1969 on Syl Johnson's Shama imprint. His first album, released in 1997 on the TK label, sold moderately; he recorded a few sides for small labels in the 1980s, and then in 1995 he cut *Cold Shot* (Black Magic), a disk that introduced him to the predominantly white international blues audience. But he remains primarily based on the Southern U.S. chitlin circuit.

Since the mid-1990s he has recorded on Ecko (including 1996's waggishly titled *Hot Shot*) and, more recently, Wilson, a label owned by Mississippi-based soul/blues vocalist Charles Wilson. Williams

maintains close contact with his old Chicago stomping grounds, dropping into joints such as Guess Who's Water Hole on the West Side whenever he is in town. He also occasionally plays festivals, both domestically and overseas.

DAVID WHITEIS

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Sharp, Steven. "Lee Shot Williams: Gold Blues." *Living Blues* no. 121 (May/June 1995): 44–49.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

WILLIAMS, LESTER

b. 24 June 1920; Groveton, TX
d. 13 November 1990; Houston, TX

Electric guitarist inspired by Texas artist T-Bone Walker. Lester's first single, "Wintertime Blues," was recorded for Macy's label, and his 1952 hit "I Can't Lose with the Stuff I Use," covered by B. B. King, led to an appearance at Carnegie Hall. He remained active locally and toured Europe in 1986.

STEPHANIE POXON

Bibliography

AMG (Jason Ankeny); Harris; Larkin Govenar, Alan. *Meeting the Blues*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1988.

Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Walker, T-Bone

WILLIAMS, NATHAN

b. 24 March 1963; St. Martinville, LA

Williams is a protégé of Buckwheat Zydeco and the younger brother of Sid Williams, the owner of El Sid O's Blues and Zydeco club in Lafayette, Louisiana, where he replaced Buckwheat as the house band. One of a younger generation of zydeco accordionists with a more urban sound than Keith Frank, his recordings

with his band the Zydeco Cha-Chas has helped him establish a national reputation.

JARED SNYDER

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Discography: AMG

See also Buckwheat Zydeco

WILLIAMS, PAUL "HUCKLEBUCK"

b. 13 July 1915; Lewisberg, TN
d. 14 September 2002; New York City, NY

Alto and baritone saxophonist. Raised in Detroit, Williams played in school bands at Northeastern High and Cass Technical High. A five-year residency at the Morris Cafe with trumpeter Lloyd "Chainey" Henderson ended in 1941. He played with Clarence Dorsey at the Sensation Club in 1945, then joined King Porter. He formed his own band in 1947 and in September with "Hastings Street Bounce" (Savoy 659) began a long series of jump/R&B recordings on Savoy until 1951 (some under the name of tenor saxophonist Wild Bill Moore) and on other labels up to 1956. From 1952 Noble Watts was the tenor saxophonist. Williams was mainly featured on baritone sax.

The success of "The Huckle Buck" (1948, Savoy 683) in the R&B charts led to nationwide touring, often in package shows accompanying a wide variety of singers, with the basic eight-piece band enlarged as needed. They were the house band for the *Showtime at the Apollo* TV series (1955) and can be seen in compilations derived from it. He accompanied Ruth Brown at Small's Paradise, New York, in 1958, but in the early 1960s worked mainly with soul artists, giving up music altogether in 1964. From 1968, he ran a booking agency in New York.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

WILLIAMS, ROBERT PETE

b. 14 March 1914; Zachary, LA

d. 31 December 1980; Rosedale, LA

Robert Pete Williams was one of the truly original country bluesmen to have been discovered in the postwar period. His idiosyncratic guitar playing and singing drew little inspiration from other musicians and were in turn inimitable.

Life

One of nine children born of unknown sharecroppers, Robert Williams (Pete was a teenage nickname) was raised on Mr. Anderson's place in Zachary, Louisiana, and worked in the fields there from childhood. Uneducated, in 1934 he started to practice on a home-made guitar made up of a cigar box and five copper strings, and subsequently he played parties, dances, and fish fries in his native area and in Baton Rouge into the 1950s.

In 1948 Williams married his third wife, Hattie Mae. He had a total of ten children. Despite his assertion



Robert "Pete" Williams. (Photo by Tom Copi, courtesy of Frank Driggs Collection)

of having killed in self-defense, from April 6, 1956, to December 1, 1959, Williams served time for murder at the State Prison Farm in Angola, Louisiana, where he was traced and recorded throughout 1959 by folklorist Harry Oster. Thanks to Oster and Richard Allen, Robert Pete was released from prison on a five-year servitude parole in Denham Springs, Louisiana, after which he obtained a full pardon.

During his limbo, in fact a real state of bondage, Williams was not allowed to travel and had to turn down a few opportunities to play at festivals. In 1960, however, he cut for Prestige/Bluesville in different locations and in 1966 for Takoma in Berkeley, California. In the wake of these recordings Williams was invited to the most prestigious festivals, such as the Newport Folk Festival in 1964 and the Berkeley Folk Festival in 1966. That same year he toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival and recorded for Fontana and Roots. In 1968 Williams moved to work outside music in Maringouin, Louisiana, where two years later he made a recording session for Saydisc/Ahura Mazda.

Though retaining his job as scrap iron collector and seller until his death, Williams participated in an incredible array of concerts and festivals, including the Ann Arbor Blues Festival in 1970, the University of Chicago Folk Festival in 1971, and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival for many years in a row, and again flew back to Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival in 1972 and alone in 1974.

In the early 1970s Williams also appeared in a number of films, among them *Roots of American Country Music: Country and Urban Music, Part 1* (1971) and *Along the Old Man River* (1972), and recorded for the 77 label (1971), Blues Beacon and Storyville (1972), and Sonet (1973). In the second half of the 1970s, more European tours and recording sessions followed. In 1977 Williams recorded a live LP for the Italian label I Dischi della Quercia, while in 1979 he was last recorded in Paris for Free Bird. Posthumous albums were released by—among others—Southland and Wolf.

Music

The merit (and perhaps also the defect) of Robert Pete Williams's music lies in the strong improvisational character that makes it unique and instantly identifiable, even when he interprets songs composed by other performers. When Williams is inspired, his lyrics and musical accompaniment form a perfect blend that epitomizes all the best qualities of blues as music conveying a personal as well as universal mood and feeling. By unanimous agreement, Williams achieved

that high a level of expressiveness, particularly in his first recordings.

Because Williams went unrecorded in the 1930s and 1940s, we are now familiar with only one aspect of his music. As Williams stated in an inevitably often quoted portion of an interview with David Evans and Alan Wilson, he changed his style around 1942 when he discovered he could play more notes on the guitar. Prompted by Evans and Wilson to explain the reason for the change, Williams answered, “The sound of the atmosphere, the weather changed my style. But I could hear, since me being an air-music man. The air came in different, with a different sound of music. Well, the atmosphere, when the wind blowing carries music along. I don’t know if it affects you or not, but its a sounding that’s in the air, you see? And I don’t know where it comes from—it could come from the airplanes, or the moaning of automobiles, but anyhow it leaves an air current in the air, you see. That gets in the wind, makes a sounding, you know? And that sounding works up to be a blues” (quoted in Alan Wilson, 1998 [1966]). Paraphrasing Bukka White’s original definition of sky songs, Williams’s music can thus be described as air songs.

Williams’s guitar playing is unusual in country blues for its extensive use of minor harmonies. The complexity and originality of Williams’s music have been examined in detail by Alan Wilson (1998 [1966]). Textually, Williams was no less innovative. His output as a whole has been described as an alternation of relatively worked-out lyrics and a completely spontaneous stream-of-consciousness approach in which the lines do not rhyme (Wilson, 1998 [1966]). “(I’ve Grown So) Ugly” is given as an example of the former, “Prisoners Talking Blues” of the latter.

The themes of his blues range from man–woman relationship (“I’m Blue as a Man Can Be”) and sexual double entendres (“Rub Me Until My Love Come Down”) to purely autobiographical accounts of his life experiences (“Pardon Denied Again,” “Broke My Mother’s Rule”). Also, Williams often sang spirituals (“Motherless Children Have a Hard Time”). Because of his personal approach to music, Williams interpreted relatively few real covers (“Louise,” “See That My Grave Is Kept Clean,” “Matchbox Blues”) yet remained a typical country blues musician in his way of combining traditional elements learned from his predecessors.

Influence

The above also helps explain why discussing influences in Robert Pete Williams’s music leads to

different conclusions from those drawn for most blues musicians. Blind Lemon Jefferson’s (and other players’) influence, though acknowledged by Williams himself, can hardly be detected in the Louisiana bluesman’s compositions. Williams’s relatively small appeal to subsequent musicians is certainly due to his late recording career and, consequently, to the fact that his music was prevalently addressed to and enjoyed by a young white audience. The obvious result is that very few blues players followed Williams’s example, which was rather appropriated by white progressive blues rockers, such as Captain Beefheart.

Still, it is clear from Williams’s statement above on the origin of his music that it is mainly in the strongly individualistic and highly abstract—almost metaphysical—nature of his art that one should find the chief cause of such lack of appeal to other musicians. Though Robert Pete Williams has unanimously been acclaimed as the real deal, the quantity of in-depth studies on his music is not on a par with his importance in the musical genre. Only recently did Arhoolie, Takoma, and Fat Possum release reissues of his music. Besides Wilson’s above-mentioned booklet notes and other interesting book-length articles on his life and music, the main lyric and musical transcriptions of Williams’s songs remain those made by his discoverer, Harry Oster (1969).

LUIGI MONGE

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also Hopkins, Sam “Lightnin’”; Jefferson, Blind Lemon

WILLIAMS, ROOSEVELT THOMAS

(See *Grey Ghost*)

WILLIAMS, WALTER

(See *Dizz, Lefty*)

WILLIAMS, WILLIE “ROUGH DRIED”

b. 13 March 1922; Lake Village, AR

d. 8 December 1988; Chicago, IL

Chicago-based drummer much associated with Howlin' Wolf from the 1950s through the early 1970s. During his early years in the South, Williams was a guitarist and a professional tap dancer known as “Fast Feet.” On his own in the 1970s, he scored a Chicago-area jukebox hit “Wine-Headed Woman” (Supreme label).

EDWARD KOMARA

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WILLIAMSON, JAMES

(See *Homesick James*)

WILLIAMSON, SONNY BOY I (JOHN LEE WILLIAMSON)

b. 30 March 1914; Jackson, TN

d. 1 June 1948; Chicago, IL

Confusion exists about Sonny Boy Williamson's name. John Lee Williamson, “Sonny Boy I,” was born in 1914 and performed from about 1930 until his death in 1948. Aleck “Rice” Miller, “Sonny Boy Williamson II,” was born earlier (any time between 1898 and 1912), performed daily on KFFA radio in Helena, Arkansas (beginning in 1941), and died in 1965. Both were harmonica players of extraordinary skill and were prolific writers and performers. Sonny Boy Williamson II adopted his moniker to catch some of John Lee's stardust. John Lee resented this improper use of his name but never actively sought to change things because at that time, he was the only artist recording under that name.

Sonny Boy I was born in Jackson, Tennessee, to Ray Williamson and Nancy Utley. He began his career as a child in the Madison County, Tennessee, area. He received his first harmonica from his mother as a Christmas present; he taught himself the basics

and perfected his unique style, acquiring skill as he went. He traveled widely in the South during his formative years, learning the blues in Chicago and St. Louis as well as Jackson, Tennessee. He performed in a gospel quartet called the Four Lambs at Blair's Chapel Church. As a teenager, he performed with Sleepy John Estes, Homesick James, Big Joe Williams, and Yank Rachell.

In 1934, Williamson moved to Chicago and was active in the growing blues scene there. A flood of young musicians with strong country roots relocated to the industrial north and blended their styles with urban performers of the area. Williamson was one of the first, if not the first, of the modern blues harp performers. He developed a unique sound that brought the harmonica to the front on the ensemble as a lead instrument, rather than its traditional place and an accompanying member of the group.

At about this time, Williamson began perfecting a new country blues harp sound. He utilized a squeezed note style and a “cross-harp” style, as he called it. Many musicians imitated his unique style and they, in turn, spread this technique widely among other blues performers. Williamson had introduced a new sound and elevated its position in the hierarchy of blues arrangements. In his versatile repertoire, Williamson utilized several harmonica styles: straight, cross-harp, ragtime, and straight blues. Peers who used similar styles were Noah Lewis and Hammie Nixon, Aleck “Rice” Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson II), and Big Walter Horton.

In 1937, Williamson recorded his first tracks for Bluebird Records, a subsidiary of Victor Records. A blues standard from that moment on, “Good Morning Little Schoolgirl” was subsequently recorded by dozens of blues stars and remains a signature song. Williamson recorded for Victor from 1937 through 1945, and virtually every release met popular and critical success. During those first sessions, Williamson recorded “Sugar Mama,” “Early in the Morning,” “Check Up on My Baby,” and “Bluebird Blues.” All were extremely successful as well as influential. He recorded often with Big Joe Williams, the famed blues twelve-string guitar player and vocalist. A skilled and charismatic performer, Williamson was able to hold his own with Williams. His country/urban style and driving tempos were a perfect match to Williams's style.

Early on the morning of June 1, 1948, Williamson left a Chicago nightclub and was beaten and stabbed to death.

As an influence on the blues, Sonny Boy was a wellspring of style and material; he was copied by many contemporary artists of the times and influenced thousands of young performers of succeeding

generations with his work. His recordings have been covered by dozens of artists, both traditional and contemporary. Sonny Boy Williamson I was inducted into the W. C. Handy Blues Hall of Fame in 1980.

TOM FISHER

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSFP

WILLIAMSON, SONNY BOY II (ALECK MILLER)

- b. Aleck Ford Miller, 5 December 1899; Glendora, MS
 d. 25 May 1965; Helena, AR

The fact that the late Sonny Boy Williamson II remains one of the most enduringly legendary figures in the fabric of the blues four decades after his death is undoubtedly due at least in part to the numerous mysteries surrounding his life—although much more of it is owed to his towering, influential talent as singer, harmonica player, and composer. It was a talent that outshone even that of John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, from whom Sonny Boy II took his stage name.

But the unknowns are what lend the legend of Sonny Boy II much of its air of romance, and they begin immediately, with the date of his birth. While the most widely accepted date is December 5, 1899, other dates ranging from 1894 to 1910 are also reported. Writer Paul Oliver notes that Sonny Boy's gravestone offers a date in 1908, his passport reads April 7, 1909, and in conversation Sonny Boy himself once offered up December 5, 1897. Meanwhile, the dates on the Tutwiler, Mississippi, tombstone placed by friend and Trumpet Records owner Lillian McMurry are March 11, 1908–June 23, 1965.

Nor is his given birth name known with any great certainty, having been variously reported as Aleck, Alex, or Willie Ford or Miller. It seems accepted that he was born to a woman named Millie Ford and perhaps took the surname Miller at a later time after his stepfather. "Rice" was apparently a nickname.

Little else is known with any certainty about his upbringing or childhood. Oliver, who was acquainted with Sonny Boy II and interviewed him numerous times, wrote that "Sonny Boy is seldom consistent with the details: the theme runs roughly the same, like one of his blues, but it lends itself to fabrication and embroidering and he seldom misses the opportunity" (p. 254.) It is, as Oliver also noted, "maddening, of course, for the would-be historian."

We do know that by the late 1920s, a young man by then known as Rice Miller was performing as a professional singer and harmonica player in the Mississippi Delta. As an itinerant musician during this period, he would have taken paying jobs wherever he could find them—whether a juke joint or fish fry, or even playing on a street corner. Various accounts have him using stage names ranging from Little Boy Blue to Willie Williams, Willie Williamson, and Willie Miller during this period. He performed with such legendary blues artists as Robert Johnson, Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf, and Robert Lockwood during this time. While there are reports that he claimed later in life to have made some recordings during this period, none have been verified. There are reports that Howlin' Wolf credited Sonny Boy II with teaching him to play harmonica, and it is reliably reported that Sonny Boy II's first wife was either Howlin' Wolf's sister or half-sister.

In the late 1930s or early 1940s (little is ever certain with Sonny Boy II), he began performing on the early afternoon *King Biscuit Flour Time* show on radio station KFFA in Helena, Arkansas, alongside Lockwood. While many accounts point to the radio show as the time when he took the stage name Sonny Boy Williamson, after the popular Chicago-based John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, others report that he may have already been performing under the name before landing the radio spot.

However it came about, during most of the 1940s, there were two regionally popular harmonica-playing bluesmen performing as Sonny Boy Williamson. Given the marginalized social status of African Americans at the time, the lack of a national media, and the fact that neither man traveled to the other's home turf, it was a situation that managed to exist until John Lee Williamson was murdered in 1948. (Oliver notes that Sonny Boy II claimed late in life that he was the original Sonny Boy Williamson and that John Lee Williamson stole the "Sonny Boy" name from him. Oliver treated this claim with doubt, and it isn't given much credence by other music historians.)

The KFFA show brought Sonny Boy II his first taste of fame, as he was at least a semiregular on the

WILLIAMSON, SONNY BOY II (ALECK MILLER)

show through 1948 and continued making appearances on it until his death. Toward the late 1940s, he also began touring more, with some accounts having him based out of Memphis, Tennessee. However, he was also still appearing on KFFA.

Despite his growing fame via KFFA, it wasn't until 1951, well into his middle years, that Sonny Boy Williamson II made his first recordings that we can verify—for Lillian McMurry's Trumpet Records in Jackson, Mississippi. During the next three years, he recorded dozens of songs for McMurry, both singing and playing harmonica, generally backed by Dave Campbell or Clarence Lonnie on piano, Joe Willie Wilkins on guitar, and Clifton Givens singing the bass lines. Among the songs from the Trumpet sessions are "Crazy About You Baby," considered one of Sonny Boy II's classic compositions. (Many of the Trumpet sides are now available in CD on *King Biscuit Time* from Arhoolie.)

In 1954, he moved north, first to Detroit, then possibly Milwaukee and/or Cleveland, and finally Chicago, where John Lee Williamson was just a memory, having been murdered seven years earlier.

More important, by 1955 Sonny Boy II was recording for Chess Records' Checker subsidiary,



Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller), ca. late 1930s/early 1940s (Photo courtesy Frank Driggs Collection)

which gave him unprecedented exposure and distribution. In August of that year, he had his first recording session for Chess, which produced the track "Don't Start Me to Talkin'." Future sessions with Chess reunited him with KFFA cohort Lockwood on guitar, and Sonny Boy II enjoyed a successful run of recordings on Chess throughout the late 1950s and into the early 1960s, continuing recording for Chess until his death.

In 1963, Sonny Boy II received an invitation that would seal his reputation as a major figure in postwar blues: The American Folk Blues Festival (AFBF) asked him to participate in a tour of Europe. While it was his first time traveling abroad, he was greeted warmly by fans across Europe who knew of him through his many recordings. Sonny Boy II took to Europe so much that he remained in England for a few months after the tour was over.

During his English stay, Sonny Boy II performed with a local white blues band, The Yardbirds, live on a recording date. The guitarist for the band was a teenager named Eric Clapton, and this session marked his recording debut. Another session featured Sonny Boy II being backed by another young band, The Animals. Sonny Boy II returned to Europe the following year with another AFBF tour and again was greeted as conquering hero by blues fans throughout the continent and Britain.

In 1965, his health failing, Sonny Boy II made his last recordings for Chess, then returned home to Arkansas, resuming his place behind the mike at KFFA and once again playing the local club scene. On May 25, 1965, he died of an apparent heart attack in bed at a boarding house in Helena, Arkansas.

Those who knew Sonny Boy II personally described him as proud and tough. As a young man, he had a reputation for never backing down from a fight.

As a musician, Sonny Boy II is remembered not as a technical innovator on harmonica like Little Walter but as an outstanding songwriter, evocative singer, and passionate harpist. His songwriting was deeply rooted in the rural blues of his youth but incorporated an accessibility and modernity not always found in the music of his contemporaries. Listening to his recordings in the early twenty-first century shows that his songs and performances are as modern sounding and timeless as any recorded in the years since his passing.

Just as, if not more, important, Sonny Boy II served an important role as a bridge from the prewar Delta blues of Robert Johnson to the younger postwar generation of both blacks and whites who embraced the blues during the 1960s folk boom. Having played with Robert Johnson and Elmore James in the 1930s, a young B. B. King in the 1940s, and Eric Clapton in the 1960s, the importance of Sonny Boy II

as a cross-generational conduit of blues tradition, style, and folklore probably cannot be overemphasized.

Sonny Boy Williamson II was a larger than life character, a sophisticated showman who created his own public persona while keeping much of his personal life intensely private. He taught and influenced blues musicians who are still playing in the early new millennium, and who in turn are influencing the generations to follow.

Seen in that light, Sonny Boy Williamson II, by whatever names he adopted, is one of the most important figures the blues will ever produce.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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WILLIS, AARON

(See *Little Sonny*)

WILLIS, HAROLD "CHUCK"

- b. 31 January 1928; Atlanta, GA
 d. 10 April 1958; Atlanta, GA

Back in the late 1950s, almost every R&B fan had a copy of Chuck Willis's *The King of the Stroll*. It was one of the ten essential LPs, upon which all R&B was based. "That Train Is Gone," "C. C. Rider," "Betty and Dupree," "It's Too Late"—all were classics whose influence could be felt in dozens of performers who followed. We thought that the R&B masters of the 1950s were Bobby Blue Bland, James Brown,

Ray Charles, Chuck Willis, and Jackie Wilson; there were more, for sure, but we knew these guys were near the top of the list.

Chuck began on the Columbia Records subsidiary Okeh label, where he recorded "My Story" and a cover of Fats Domino's "Going to the River," with moderate success. Columbia let his contract lapse and Willis moved to Atlantic in 1956, where he found success with "It's Too Late" and the string of R&B hits that followed. "C. C. Rider," his first R&B number one hit, was a two-edged sword for Willis's career; its popularity gave him a new, larger audience, but he became too identified with the song's dance craze, the Stroll. The Atlantic years were wonderful for Willis, however; he found the audience for easy delivery and powerful phrasing. He also wrote hits for Lavern Baker, Ruth Brown, Elvis Presley, and others.

Poignantly, two of his final cuts were "What Am I Living For" and "Hang Up My Rock 'n' Roll Shoes." They were released and, as fans were noticing his latest work, he passed away from peritonitis, resulting from ulcers, a condition from which he suffered for years. Unfortunately, Willis postponed surgery until it was too late. He had two posthumous releases: "My Life" and "Keep-A-Drivin'" late in 1958.

TOM FISHER

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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Tribute to Chuck Willis (1958, Epic 3728).
I Remember Chuck Willis (1963, Atlantic 8079).

WILLIS, RALPH

- b. 1910; near Birmingham, AL
 d. 11 June 1957; New York City, NY

Born in Alabama but having lived in the Carolinas and New York City, Ralph Willis absorbed much of the Piedmont guitar style of Blind Boy Fuller and his friend Brownie McGhee, with whom he recorded subsequently thoughtful compositions such as "In-come Tax Blues" and "Church Bell Blues" or driving, almost proto-rockabilly pieces such as "I Wanna Rock."

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

WILLIS, RALPH

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Herzhaft

Discography: LSFP

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WILLIS, ROBERT LEE “CHICK”

b. 24 September 1934; Cabiness, GA

Vocalist and guitarist who was for three years driver and valet to his cousin Chuck Willis. During this time Willis learned the guitar (much influenced by Guitar Slim) and also made his first record in 1956 for Ebb. When Chuck died in 1958, Chick became a journeyman blues artist, traveling all over the country and recording whenever the opportunity offered. Singles appeared on Bay-Tone of Oakland, California, and LaVal of Kalamazoo, Michigan (1960–1961), on Alto of New York (1962), on various of Henry Hines’s Greenville, Mississippi, labels, and on Mark IV of Atlanta, Georgia (1968).

In 1972 his big break came, back on LaVal with a risqué song “Stoop Down Baby,” which became a huge seller. LaVal attempted to repeat the successful formula, but the company went bankrupt and Chick formed his own Stoop Down label, issuing a succession of singles and an LP up to 1985. There were also singles on Kris (1976) and True Soul (1982) and an album on the MT label. Then in 1987 he was signed by Ichiban, for whom he made half a dozen albums up to 1994, which gave him much greater visibility and enabled him to tap into the white blues audience. Since then he has recorded albums for William Bell’s 5 Star label (1998), for Ifgam (1999), Rock House (2001), and Deep South (2002). His act will inevitably always include “Stoop Down Baby” or similar material, but he is now a solidly reliable blues artist, not just a one hit wonder.

RAY ASTBURY

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

See also **Guitar Slim; Ichiban; Willis, Harold “Chuck”**

WILLIS, WILLIE

b. 12 December 1932; Fairfield, TX

d. 29 April 2000; Dallas, TX

The year 1931 has also been cited for his birth. Willis began playing guitar in high school. He served in the U.S. Army in Korea and moved to Dallas in 1955 and was active in local blues until his death. He recorded for the labels Ride, Soul Staff, Trix, and Fedora.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WILLSON, MICHELLE

b. 5 January 1958; Boston, MA

New England–based vocalist with a full-bodied, dark-hued, slightly nasal voice that recalls Dinah Washington. The resemblance goes beyond sonic similarities, as Willson readily admits identifying with Washington on many levels, sharing the late diva’s earnest approach to art and life, her potent and conflicting combination of self-confidence and angst, and her willingness to explore multiple musical genres. The sassy Ruth Brown is another major influence on Willson’s music.

Having sung since childhood and performed in Boston-area pop bands, Willson won the Blues Foundation’s blues competition in 1993, soon after forming her first blues group, Evil Gal (named, not surprisingly, after a Dinah Washington tune). This led to an appearance at the King Biscuit Blues Festival and a signing to the Bullseye Blues subsidiary of Rounder, for which she cut four albums.

Although best known for her work in a retro-swing and jump-blues style, she is a restless artist who resists comfort zones and through her music seeks emotional release as much if not more than commercial success. She once told an interviewer that she didn’t want to be pigeonholed in a “rollicking blues mama schtick,” and her evolving repertoire includes southern soul, funk, and jazz in addition to blues.

STEVE HOFFMAN

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WILMER, VAL

b. Valerie Sybil Wilmer, 7 December 1941; Harrogate, England

Writer and photographer. Wilmer fell in love with jazz and blues as a teenager and immersed herself in the music world. Widely published as both writer and photographer, she has conducted many interviews for the oral history collection at the National Sound Archive of the British Library. She is best known for her ground-breaking books *Jazz People* and *As Serious as Your Life* (a "social history of the new music") and also wrote a frank autobiography, *Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This*. Her revealing photographs of blues artists are featured in Paul Trynka's *Portrait of the Blues*. She is working on further books on black music in Britain.

KENNY MATHIESON

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WILSON, AL

b. 4 July 1943; Boston, MA
 d. 3 September 1970; Torrance, CA

Harmonica player, guitarist, and writer. Early in his career Wilson worked and performed on harmonica with Son House during the first year after the latter's return to performing. His 1965 *Broadside* (Boston) series on House remains one of the most important publications on him. Later he was a founding member of Canned Heat.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WILSON, CHARLES

b. 27 January 1957; Chicago, IL

Contemporary singer of blues and soul; nephew of Little Milton. During his early performing years, Wilson was the opening act for Bobby Rush, Z. Z. Hill, Tyrone Davis, and Bobby Bland. His 1991 Ichiban release *Blues in the Key of C* helped to establish him in the American South and Midwest. His recent records are on Ecko Records.

EDWARD KOMARA

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AMG (Andrew Hamilton)

WILSON, EDITH

b. Edith Goodall, 2 September 1896; Louisville, KY
 d. 30 March 1981; Chicago, IL

Singer. Wilson had an act with Lena Wilson and her pianist brother Danny, whom Edith married. She worked and recorded with trumpeter Johnny Dunn from late 1921, including "Evil Blues"/"Pensacola Blues" (1922, Columbia A3746). Her revue appearances included the *Plantation Revue* in London (1923), residency at Club Alabam, New York (1924), *Blackbirds of 1926*, *Connie's Hot Chocolates* (1929–1930), and *Blackbirds of 1933/34*. She was mainly an actress after 1940 until a 1971 comeback, frequently appearing with Little Brother Montgomery.

HOWARD RYE

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 O'Neal, Jim. "Edith Wilson" [obituary]. *Living Blues* no. 50 (Spring 1981): 44.

Discography: DGR**WILSON, HARDING "HOP"**

b. 27 April 1921; Grapeland, TX
 d. 27 August 1975; Houston, TX

Aka "Harp," "Poppa," "Poppy." Wilson's parents had a large family of thirteen children and moved to Crockett (East Texas), where he was raised from

WILSON, HARDING "HOP"

childhood. Influenced by Blind Lemon Jefferson, he learned guitar and harmonica as a teenager and worked outside music to earn a living for himself and his family.

Wilson got his first steel guitar in 1939 and played in Houston clubs and juke joints, influenced by the steel players of hillbilly and Western swing bands. He served in the U.S. Army (1942–1946) then held odd jobs again in Crockett before moving to Houston in the early 1950s, where he teamed with King Ivory Lee Semien in 1956 to tour clubs and dance halls in Texas and Louisiana. He let the harmonica aside but he beautifully played an electric Hawaiian steel slide guitar, and this led to recordings for Eddie Shuler's Goldband Records in 1958 and 1959 in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and Houston and for the Ivory label in 1958–1962 in Houston.

He influenced Texas guitarists such as L. C. "Good Rockin'" Robinson and Sonny Rhodes, but because he was not keen on touring, shy, and in poor health, Wilson's own popularity stayed fairly local. After 1961, he worked in and around Houston, in clubs and bars, with Ivory L. Semien until 1970 and solo until his death in 1975. Unhappily, he turned down offers to make more recordings.

A great singer with a deep and gloomy voice ideally suited to the blues and a skillful, intense and lyrical guitarist, Hop Wilson will stay as one of the most original Texas bluesmen of his time.

ROBERT SACRÉ

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

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WILSON, JIMMY

b. 1921 or 1923; near Lake Charles, LA
d. 5 February 1965; Dallas, TX

Wilson's mournful, bluesy voice ensured him a huge hit in California in 1953 with his version of "Tin Pan Alley," a masterpiece with an unmistakable gloomy tone. Unfortunately, Wilson's drinking habit prevented him from cashing in on his success and he went back to Louisiana, where he recorded again for local labels such as Goldband.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: LSFP

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WILSON, KIM

b. 6 January 1951; Detroit, MI

Singer and harmonica player most associated with the Fabulous Thunderbirds. Wilson moved with his family to Goleta, California, in 1960; at about that time he was playing guitar and trombone. He began playing harmonica at seventeen and soon met and learned from Eddie Taylor, George Harmonica Smith, Albert Collins, Lowell Fulson, and Peewee Crayton.

Wilson lived in Minnesota in 1973–1974, moving to Austin, Texas, in October 1974. In the winter of 1974–1975 he and Jimmie Vaughan formed the Fabulous Thunderbirds, which received early encouragement from Muddy Waters and important bookings from Clifford Antone. The Fabulous Thunderbirds eventually enjoyed mainstream success with the 1986 Epic/Associated LP *Tuff Enuff*, but Jimmie Vaughan left in 1990. Since then, Wilson has maintained the Thunderbirds with new lineups as well as developing his own Kim Wilson Band, playing up to two hundred nights per year between the two groups.

EDWARD KOMARA

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Discography: AMG

See also *Fabulous Thunderbirds*

WILSON, LENA

b. ca. 1898; Charlotte, NC
d. ca. 1939; New York City, NY

Vocalist. Wilson was in a trio with her pianist brother Danny and his wife Edith Wilson in 1918–1920 and

moved to New York in 1921. Her recordings during 1922–1924 include “Four Flushin’ Papa” (1924, Brunswick 2590). She appeared in many revues and recorded again during a 1929–1931 residency at the Lenox Club in New York with Cliff Jackson. She died of pneumonia.

HOWARD RYE

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Discography: DGR

WILSON, QUINN

b., 26 November 1908; Illinois
d. 14 June 1978; Chicago, IL

Chicago bass player who played on innumerable jazz, rhythm and blues, and blues recording sessions in the post–World War II era. Wilson began his career as a tuba player and first recorded with Jelly Roll Morton in 1926. By the end of the 1920s he had switched to string bass, playing in Erskine Tate’s pit band. During 1931–1940, Wilson played in Earl Hines’s house band at the Grand Terrace Ballroom. After World War II, Wilson performed and recorded as a member of the Aristokats. During the 1950s, he performed with guitarist Lefty Bates and pianist Horace Palm in the Lefty Bates Trio. At the same time, the members of the trio became some of the most in-demand session musicians for Chicago’s burgeoning black recording industry.

ROBERT PRUTER

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“Jazz Composer, Bassist Quinn Wilson Dead at 69.” *Chicago Sun-Times* (June 16, 1978).

WILSON, SMOKEY

b. Robert Lee Wilson, 11 July 1936; Glen Allan, MS

Born and raised in the Mississippi Delta, Robert Lee “Smokey” Wilson made his first guitar out of broom-wire and nails attached to the family house, after being inspired to duplicate the recordings of Memphis Minnie, Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup, and Blind Boy Fuller. During his teens, Wilson caught performances by Elmore James and Howlin’ Wolf in juke joints

around nearby Greenville. Starting out on the bass, Wilson soon switched to guitar and by the late 1950s was working with Delta musicians Big Jack Johnson, Sam Carr, Frank Frost, and Little Milton. He also worked regularly with harmonica player Roosevelt “Booba” Barnes in juke joints around Greenville.

In 1971, he relocated to Los Angeles and opened The Pioneer club in Watts. Wilson’s raw Mississippi juke joint blues was a hit with its Southern California clientele, and soon the club was also showcasing emerging local talent such as William Clarke, Rod Piazza, and Hollywood Fats, as well as established acts such as Pee Wee Crayton, Big Joe Turner, and Albert Collins. Wilson made his first recordings in the late 1970s for Big Town Records, followed by a release each for Murray Brothers and Black Magic in the early 1980s.

He finally gained national attention when he signed with Bullseye Blues in the early 1990s and produced several highly acclaimed albums, including his notable label debut *Smoke N’ Fire*. Wilson’s gritty vocals and intense juke joint–style guitar playing delighted fans on the international blues festival circuit. In the early 2000s, Wilson was plagued by a series of strokes that curtailed his performing career.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG

Smoke N’ Fire (1993, Bullseye Blues CD BB 9534).

WILSON, U. P.

b. Huary Perry Wilson, 4 September 1935; Shreveport, LA

Singer and guitarist in Texas-style and soul blues. Wilson moved to the Dallas area in the 1950s, where he became associated with Mercy Baby, Zuzu Bollin, and Frankie Lee Sims. Later he moved to Fort Worth. He became prominent in the 1980s through regional tours and in the 1990s on JSP label releases.

EDWARD KOMARA

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly); Larkin

Discography: AMG

WINSLOW, VERNON

(See *Dr. Daddy-O*)

WINTER, JOHNNY

b. 23 February 1944; Beaumont, TX

Guitarist, singer, producer. Combining a strong and seasoned voice belying his youth and frail frame with rapid-fire guitar solos seemingly defying physical possibilities, Winter emerged as one of the prime popularizers of blues during its discovery by rock fans in the late 1960s. He also became an unfortunate example of the rock scene's ability to corrupt and commercialize the sensibilities and sound of anyone attempting to play roots-oriented music.

Winter and his multi-instrumentalist brother Edgar, who would ultimately enjoy a bit of rock stardom himself with the hit "Frankenstein," were precocious show business kids who began playing music before they were old enough to attend school. After winning talent contests and performing on local television with Edgar, Winter formed his first band, Johnny and the Jammers, at age fourteen. The group released several regional singles and Winter's professional career was off and running. By the mid-1960s Winter had made several regional recordings under his own name, moved to Chicago briefly, and toured the Southeast in a series of funk, rock, and blues bands.

Winter eventually focused his musical activities and furious but fluid guitar lines directly on Texas blues. A 1968 *Rolling Stone* story drew attention to his Austin-based Progressive Blues Experiment with drummer Uncle John Turner and bassist Tommy Shannon, the latter of whom would later play behind Stevie Ray Vaughan as a member of Double Trouble. Winter signed a highly publicized deal with Columbia Records and the label pulled out all the stops to make him a rock star. Winter responded by delivering a series of blues-flavored rock albums that sold well while slowly eroding his blues reputation as each successive release moved him and his music farther away from his original sound. His self-titled debut was an energetic exploration of blues, but the law of diminishing returns set in, and by his third release he was playing with the pop band the McCoys and doing songs such as "Rock 'n' Roll, Hoochie Koo."

Winter regained his blues credibility in 1977 as the catalyst for bringing Muddy Waters back into the blues spotlight as the producer of the legend's Grammy-winning landmark *Hard Again*. Winter, who also played on the sessions, produced three more Muddy Waters releases, including *I'm Ready*, and won two more Grammy awards for him in the process. And

Winter took advantage of the opportunity to record a straight-ahead blues album of his own, cutting *Nothin' but the Blues* with the Muddy Waters Band backing him.

Winter, who produced and performed on Sonny Terry's "I Think I Got the Blues," also did guest spots on John Lee Hooker's *Mr. Lucky* and albums by Lonnie Brooks, James Cotton, and several fellow Texans, including guitarists Rocky Hill and Bugs Henderson and, of course, brother Edgar. Recurrent physical problems, both self-induced via substance abuse and hereditary via his albinism, took Winter out of action several times in the 1980s. But Winter rebounded in the 1990s, garnering Grammy nominations for his 1991 album *Let Me In* and *Hey, Where's Your Brother* released the following year. He continued to regularly record and tour, combining the two on his *Live in NYC 1997* album.

MICHAEL POINT

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AMG (William Ruhlmann); Harris; Larkin; Santelli Romano, W. "Johnny Winter: Still Alive and Well." *Blues Revue* no. 75 (April/May 2002): 23–24.

Discography: AMG

WITHERS, ERNEST C.

b. 7 August 1922; Memphis, TN

Renowned Memphis photographer of local black culture, including music, sports, and the Civil Rights era.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WITHERSPOON, JIMMY

b. 18 August 1921; Gurdon, AR

d. 18 September 1997; Los Angeles, CA

Perhaps no artist in blues or jazz so wholly personified the boundary-defying spirit of the 1960s as vocalist Jimmy Witherspoon, whose music was equal parts jazz, blues, R&B, and rock. 'Spoon, as he was affectionately known to fans and friends alike, had such broad stylistic range that he is likely the only person

to ever sing (or perform any instrument, for that matter) with both jazz luminary Art Tatum and the British Invasion rock band the Animals.

Some sources give an alternate birth date of August 8, 1923. Raised up in the gospel of his family's church—he was soloing in choir by age five—Witherspoon moved to Los Angeles at sixteen, where he met and performed with T-Bone Walker and Tatum. When World War II broke out, he joined the Merchant Marines and ended up singing over Armed Forces Radio with Teddy Weatherford's orchestra during a shore leave in India.

While back home visiting family in 1944, he got a chance to audition for Kansas City bandleader Jay McShann, a job he got and kept for the next several years. While with McShann, Witherspoon made his first recordings, using McShann's band for his own solo studio work, including a number one hit in 1949 with the blues single "Ain't Nobody's Business."

As did many musicians of his generation, Witherspoon struggled as popular musical tastes changed in the 1950s. At one point, he apparently sought bankruptcy protection. But he kept plugging away, by now having left McShann to perform as a solo act. In the late 1950s, he began to move away from the blues and to sing in a more purely jazz vein. A live album from the 1959 Monterey Jazz Festival sold well and reestablished his presence in the music public's mind. For the early part of the 1960s, Witherspoon concentrated rather successfully on straight-ahead jazz, but as the public's musical palate began to broaden—with the arrival of the folk revival and the rock 'n' roll counterculture—Witherspoon began reincorporating his blues and R&B roots into his repertoire.

His recordings from the mid-1960s through the late 1970s again reflected popular tastes, and Witherspoon achieved his greatest commercial success. Although he never again charted at number one, he was a popular draw on the blues, jazz, and soul circuits, and as late as 1975 he had a moderate R&B hit with "Love Is a Five Letter Word." For his 1972 tour, Witherspoon hired young guitarist Robben Ford, starting a friendship and professional relationship that would last the rest of his life.

In the early 1980s, throat cancer and the resultant radiation therapy robbed Witherspoon of his once powerful vocals. He continued to perform and record, and his audience still loved him despite the new limitations on his voice. Listening to recordings made after the cancer, it is easy to see why his fans stayed with him: The passion that always drove his music is even more obvious through his tattered vocal cords than it was when he was in strong voice. His *Live at the Mint* album with Ford was even nominated for a Grammy for best traditional blues album.

Just a year after that recording was released, however, Witherspoon died of natural causes, bringing to a close a remarkable career that stretched from the big band swing era to rock 'n' roll and soul.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography: AMG; Lord; LSFP

Selected Recordings

Jimmy Witherspoon at the Monterey Jazz Festival (1959, Hi Fi 421).

Live at the Mint (1996, Private Music 82137; with Robben Ford).

Singin' the Blues (1959, Pacific Jazz/Blue Note 94108).

The Blues Is Now (1967, Verve 5030).

WOLF/BEST OF BLUES

Record company formed in Vienna, Austria, in 1982 by members of the Vienna Blues Fan Club, including Dr. Herbert Pessiak and Hannes Folterbauer, to put out reissues of prewar blues programmed by Johnny Parth and to issue new recordings of Chicago blues. The former endeavor, which also used a subsidiary Best of Blues label, continued into the CD era in the early 1990s, after which the material was progressively repackaged on Parth's own Document label.

The success of a Magic Slim release in 1986 established Wolf as a major player in contemporary blues. The catalog includes important work by such artists as Vance Kelly, Vaan Shaw, Nick Holt, Johnny B. Moore, John Primer, Michael Coleman, and more than fifty issues in the Chicago Blues Session series documenting the city's blues scene. Wolf has also issued systematic documentations of defunct small labels such as Bea & Baby, Abco, La Salle, and Elko.

HOWARD RYE

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WOLFMAN JACK

b. Robert Weston Smith, 21 January 1938; Brooklyn, NY

d. 1 July 1995; Edenton, NC

U.S. disc jockey who contributed to the increased visibility of African American music from the early 1960s.

A pioneer disc jockey on American radio stations, Wolfman Jack began his career in the media as Bob Smith, after various jobs. In 1963, Smith became a radio announcer for XERF-AM, a super-powered station located south of Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, which could be heard almost anywhere in the United States. Partly inspired by bluesman Howlin' Wolf, he created a wild and enigmatic character who would howl in his late-night show: "This is the Wolfman Jack! Gonna get you some soul! Get naked!"

Instead of the conventional top forty, his audience could listen to African American popular music at a time when U.S. radio waves were still segregated in content. Located outside the United States but dedicated to the American audience, such border radio stations could escape any control or regulators.

Wolfman Jack was not the first deejay to advocate African American music, but his influence was unequaled. He remained audible all over America from 1963, and his musical choices were often imitated by other deejays. Until he appeared in his own character in the George Lucas movie *American Graffiti* (1973), many listeners of Wolfman Jack's radio shows thought this unusual deejay was African American since he played mostly R&B, soul, and blues combined with rock 'n' roll music.

In 1974, Canadian rock group The Guess Who got a hit with a song titled "Clap for the Wolfman" that included spoken prerecorded comments by the famous deejay. A similar tribute was made by Freddy King. From the mid-1970s, Wolfman Jack had his own TV shows, *The Midnight Special* followed by *Rock 'n' Roll Palace*, before returning to a syndicated radio show for Liberty Broadcasting in 1994. Wolfman Jack died of heart failure at fifty-six, just after the publication of his autobiography.

YVES LABERGE

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See also Marketing; Radio

WOMEN AND THE BLUES

From classic blues singers such as Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith to modern blues singers such as Etta James and Koko Taylor, women have always been essential contributors to blues songwriting and singing. Though far less prevalent, there have also been some notable female blues instrumentalists, such as Memphis Minnie and Geechie Wiley and, more recently, Jessie Mae Hemphill and Deborah Coleman, all of whom have accompanied themselves on guitar.

Throughout the "classic blues" era of the 1920s and up to the present, women blues singers have developed unique yet universal expressions of their experiences. Their songs express themes such as love, sex, poverty, betrayal, loneliness, domestic violence, and travel. The majority of songs performed by women blues artists were written by others (often men, in fact); however, both Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, the two most popular "classic blues" singers, did write or cowrite a large number of the songs they recorded: Rainey, forty-eight; Smith, forty-five. But even the songs not written by the performers—especially in the case of Rainey, Smith, Ida Cox, Victoria Spivey, and Sippie Wallace—were personalized through vocal style, subtle changes in wording, or changes in lyrical emphasis. Bessie Smith was particularly adept at improvisational vocalizing, in part reflecting her association with such great jazz musicians such Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet.

As blues singers these women had an extremely large influence on a variety of musicians, for instance, Bessie Smith's influence on Mahalia Jackson and the popularity of Ma Rainey's "See See Rider Blues." These singers were just as inspirational to African American women, who saw these performers as successes. Whereas the average woman of African descent in the 1920s and 1930s hardly ever traveled or enjoyed personal freedom, these blues women experienced a wide variety of American life and often translated those experiences into song. Moreover, singers such as Rainey and Smith sang about the specific personal/social problems of African American women at a time when their problems were ignored and/or ridiculed by American culture at large.

Despite the often demeaning, blackface depictions of black men and women in their advertisements, the "race records" sold by record companies such as Columbia and OKeh helped to popularize these blues singers and their messages throughout the urban and rural African American populace, making many of these singers household names and, in effect, some of the first African American popular entertainers.

Beyond the "classic blues" era, women blues singers have continued to be vital influences on other

musicians, the African American community, and American popular culture at large. Blues women such as Etta James, Denise La Salle, Koko Taylor, Big Mama Thornton, and many lesser-known artists such as Lynn White and Peggy Scott-Adams have continued the tradition of voicing the personal and social concerns of African American women, proving that blues music still packs a powerful punch in songs such as La Salle's "Lick It Before You Stick It," James's "Wet Match," and Taylor's "Stop Watching Your Enemies." Besides the "classic blues" themes, these singers deliver a variety of straightforward messages and advice to the listener. Moreover, some instrumentally inclined modern female performers such as Katie Webster and Jessie Mae Hemphill and, more currently, Deborah Coleman have recorded a number of blues albums garnering critical acclaim.

JUSTIN WERT

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WOMEN AS LYRIC SUBJECTS

(See *Women and the Blues*)

WOODFORK, "POOR" BOB

- b. 13 March 1925; Lake Village, AR
d. June 1988; Chicago, IL

Guitarist, mostly as sideman to Chicago blues musicians. Woodfork learned some guitar as a youth. While serving in the U.S. Army in England during the 1940s, he was recruited to perform in the USO. For much of his Chicago career, he assisted Otis Rush, Jimmy Rogers, Howlin' Wolf, George Smith, and Little Walter Jacobs.

EDWARD KOMARA

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WOODS, JOHNNY

- b. 1 November 1917; Looxahoma, MS
d. 1 February 1990; Olive Branch, MS

Johnny Woods was a rough, rhythmic Delta blues harmonica player who was able to back his friend Fred McDowell, as well as playing moving unaccompanied solos that gained him a huge reputation in his native Mississippi.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography: LSFP

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WOODS, MITCH

- b. 3 April 1951; Brooklyn, NY

Pianist; blues and boogie revivalist who carries the torch of late 1940s–early 1950s jump-blues. Woods took classical piano lessons as a youngster in Brooklyn and taught himself to play boogie-woogie piano, primarily by listening to records, carefully studying the technique of boogie-woogie pioneers such as Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, and Pete Johnson.

Attending college in Buffalo, New York, Woods sat in with local groups and began focusing on music as a career. In 1970, he moved permanently to San Francisco and formed Mitch Woods and His Red Hot Mama (with singer Gracie Glassman). In 1980, he formed his full-fledged jump-blues band, Mitch

WOODS, MITCH

Woods and His Rocket 88s, and began performing around the United States and Europe. Since 1984, he has recorded five albums for Blind Pig and one for Viceroots/Lightyear.

In addition to mastering the boogie-woogie piano techniques of his early heroes and picking up tips from living piano masters such as Pinetop Perkins and Johnnie Johnson, Woods was greatly influenced by the musical style and jaunty showmanship of jump-blues stars Louis Jordan and Cab Calloway. As his career developed, he also incorporated elements from the rich piano-playing tradition of New Orleans; a 2004 DVD project paired him with veterans from Fats Domino's band. For a time in the 1990s, Woods's career benefited from the a revived swing dance craze.

Members of the Rocket 88s have included notable West Coast guitarist Danny Caron and saxophonist John Firmin (Johnny Nocturne).

STEVE HOFFMAN

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Discography: AMG

WOODS, OSCAR "BUDDY"

- b. ca 1900; Shreveport, LA
d. 1956; Shreveport. LA

Aka "The Lone Wolf." Woods was an important part of the Shreveport blues scene, performing at parties on his sonorous slide guitar, which he played flat on his lap. He recorded for Victor in 1930 with Ed Shaffer as the Shreveport Home Wreckers, but some of the Home Wreckers' best work was heard backing country singer Jimmie Davis. Woods recorded again in 1936, both solo and with Kitty Gray's Wampus Cats, and performed four songs for the Library of Congress. He continued playing but died in 1956, largely forgotten.

DAVID HARRISON

Bibliography

Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin; Santelli

Discography: DGR

WORK WITH ME ANNIE

"Work with Me Annie" is the first in an "Annie" series of top ten 1954 and 1955 R&B hits. It was cowritten by Henry Glover, eastern A&R director of King Records, and Syd Nathan, president of King Records, who used the pseudonym Lois Mann. The song was recorded by singer/songwriter Hank Ballard with the Midnighters group and became immensely popular. The lyrics were sexually suggestive, causing many radio stations not to play it, thus adhering to the strict censorship rules of the time.

This censorship had been promoted by a group from the South—the Houston Juvenile Delinquency and Crime Commission—who promoted themselves as being arbiters of morality and taste. They compiled a list of recordings that they deemed objectionable—without stating why they were—and strongly suggested that the radio stations not play those on the list. There were more than thirty titles on the list, and black performers, or those on rhythm and blues recording labels, were prominently listed.

In spite of this censorship, the song became so popular that it was one of the top ten hits on the rhythm and blues lists for 1954. In England, where the blues was very popular, "Work with Me Annie" sold well enough to record a million sales for 1954. This occurred despite the fact that it had not been listed on the general hit lists in the United States.

The song is a shuffle ballad with a "rolling eight note figuration in the bass and a wailing blue note in the melody." It also has a strong backbeat (where the second and fourth beats are stressed instead of the first and third). The popularity of "Work with Me Annie" gave rise to two answer records, "Roll with Me Henry," and "Dance with Me Henry." "Roll with Me Henry" was less sexually explicit than "Work with Me Annie" and was actually the first line of the eventual title "Wall Flower." Co-written by singer Etta James, who recorded it, and bandleader/drummer/record producer Johnnie Otis, the song was a top ten R&B hit. "Dance with Me Henry," a cover of Etta James's "Roll with Me Henry" by white singer Georgia Gibbs, was a top hit—#13 on the pop charts—and million seller.

Hank Ballard answered the "Henrys" with his own Henry, "Henry's Got Flat Feet (Can't Dance No More)." This title also made the Houston Commission's list but did not have the success of the "Annie" series or the two other "Henrys." Two sequels, "Annie Had a Baby" and "Annie's Aunt Fannie," as well as another answer record, "Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore," were derived from the popularity of "Work with Me Annie." "Annie Had a Baby," as had "Work with Me Annie," became a number one

1954 R&B hit, and while "Annie's Aunt Fannie" made the 1954 top ten R&B list, it did not make the number one spot. The answer record "Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore" was recorded by the Platters but did not quite have the success of other of their songs.

MONICA J. BURDEX

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WORLD WAR II

The Second World War started in 1939 with Adolf Hitler's invasion of Poland on September 1. American blues singers such as Leadbelly, the Florida Kid, Frank Edwards, and Doctor Clayton warned against Hitler and his Italian ally Benito Mussolini in 1940 and 1941. The most outspoken black tirade against Hitler on record was recorded by an unidentified man for the Library of Congress in 1942.

From his Baptist pulpit Reverend J. Gates preached about Hitler and Hell a few weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The Japanese bombs were made of American brass and scrap iron, Doctor Clayton bitterly commented after the attack. The resultant anti-Japanese sentiment led to racist songs by African Americans. The most virulent of these was recorded by the Lucky Millinder band. The foremost Pearl Harbor saga was recorded by the Selah Jubilee Singers. It was later augmented in recordings by the Soul Stirrers and Blind Connie Williams. In blues and gospel music Japan was not personified by the Emperor Hirohito but by General Hideki Tojo, who was hanged for war crimes in 1948.

For President Roosevelt, General Douglas MacArthur, with his presidential ambitions, was one of the most dangerous people in the United States, but by the blues and gospel singers he was hailed as the war hero par excellence. Willie "61" Blackwell, Son House, Sonny Boy Williamson, and many more sang his praises.

In 1943 Stalin was still praised by the Golden Gate Quartet after the German invasion of Russia.

Rationing was an unfortunate side effect of the war and blues singers such as Wee Bea Booze, Louis Jordan, and Buzz Ezell lamented the shortage of clothes, drink, groceries, meat, oil, rubber, and tobacco on 78 records.

One of the most unpopular wartime agencies was the Office of Price Administration, the OPA, and

artists such as Ann Sorter-McCoy and Louis Jordan vented their dissatisfaction with it.

John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson recorded three songs in which he imagined himself the pilot of a warplane. The minds of the soldiers at war were often haunted by worries about the women left behind, and songs about the Jody Man who took care of the women back home were quite popular. Many blues songs were recorded for Victory Discs and broadcast to the armed forces. Louis Jordan, "the Global G. I. Favorite," was one of the most popular of these blues artists.

In early 1945 James McCain sang that he had voted for Roosevelt because there was still a war to win. In blues and gospel music Roosevelt was idolized as the ideal leader, who had mobilized the army in time and who was bound to secure an American victory. However, at the beginning of his fourth term, on April 12, 1945, Roosevelt suffered a fatal hemorrhage. The many memorial songs by artists such as Jack Dupree and Big Joe Williams virtually canonized him. The foremost Roosevelt tribute was recorded by Miami disc jockey Otis Jackson. Upon Roosevelt's death, Harry Truman was sworn in as his presidential successor, and he led the United States through the remaining months of the war in Europe and in Japan and into the postwar era from August 1945 through 1952.

GUIDO VAN RIJN

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WRENCHER, "BIG" JOHN THOMAS

b. 12 February 1923; near Sunflower, MS

d. 15 July 1977; Clarksdale, MS

Aka "One-Arm John." Generally considered a Chicago musician, singer, and harmonica player, John Wrencher also lived for several years in St. Louis and Detroit and throughout his life kept ties to his native Mississippi. Reputedly he lost his left arm in a traffic accident in the 1950s down south. In Detroit during the 1950s he played the club and tavern circuit, frequently with Little George Jackson and also Baby Boy Warren, with whom he is said to have recorded. Beginning in the early 1960s he was a regular performer on Chicago's Maxwell Street and became inextricably associated with it through

WRENCHER, "BIG" JOHN THOMAS

his two decades of playing there and also for the LP *Maxwell Street Alley Blues* (1974, Barrelhouse), also notable for its cover by cartoonist Robert Crumb.

Wrencher also recorded a single on Ja-Wes, "Tell Me Darlin'" b/w "Memphis to Maxwell Street," and appeared on Testament LPs with Johnny Young, John Lee Granderson, and Carl Martin (Chicago String Band) and with Robert Nighthawk (*Modern Chicago Blues*). Wrencher sings and plays three numbers, accompanied by Nighthawk, on *And This Is Maxwell Street* (P-Vine/Rooster). He toured Europe in the 1970s, where he recorded two Big Bear LPs, *Big John's Boogie* and *American Blues Legends 1974*, with Eddie Taylor and others.

Though meager by most measures, Wrencher's fine body of work has nonetheless been anthologized on numerous collections. Wrencher possessed an authoritative, powerful voice, and his strong boogie-style harp playing, unhampered by his handicap, was marked by a vigorous vibrato that drew on his physicality and stamina.

Despite his muscular playing style and engaging personality, he made infrequent club appearances, although he held a weekly gig at Elsewhere in Chicago for more than a year with Floyd Jones before traveling to visit his father in Clarksdale, Mississippi, where he died in his sleep.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Bibliography

AMG (Cub Koda); Harris; Herzhaft; Larkin

Discography: AMG; LSFP

Maxwell Street Alley Blues (Barrelhouse BH-02).

WRIGHT, BILLY

b. 21 May 1932; Atlanta, GA

d. 27 October 1991; Atlanta, GA

Vocalist Billy Wright remained an Atlanta, Georgia, phenomenon throughout his career. He came to the attention of Sammy Green, owner of the 81 Theatre and the most influential local entrepreneur for African American talent. In 1949, Wright impressed out-of-town headliner Paul "Hucklebuck" Williams, who recommend the vocalist to his label, Savoy Records, owned by Herman Lubinsky. Wright's first release, "Blues for My Baby," hit the national charts, but all the others remained only local successes. The Savoy contract was curtailed in 1952, though Wright later

cut unsuccessful, and in some cases unreleased, tracks for Duke/Peacock and Fire/Fury. Wright kept up his visibility as a topliner in the Atlanta community, befriended a young Little Richard, and influenced the younger man with his flamboyant persona as "Prince of the Blues."

DAVID SANJEK

Bibliography

AMG (Bill Dahl); Larkin; Santelli
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Discography: AMG; LSFP

WRIGHT, EARLY

b. 10 February 1915; Jefferson, MS

d. 10 December 1999; Memphis, TN

Wright moved to Clarksdale, Mississippi, in 1937 and held a series of jobs (including farmer) before becoming a mechanic and opening his own garage. In 1947 he became the first black deejay in Mississippi on radio station WROX; on his legendary nightly "Soul Man" broadcast he presented live interviews, obituaries, and other news until his death in 1999.

ROBERT SACRÉ

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WRIGHT, MARVA

b. 20 March 1948; New Orleans, LA

Vocals, composer, bandleader. Marva Wright turned her powerful voice from gospel to blues in mid-life and assembled a first-rate band of top Crescent City musicians to establish a successful career as New Orleans's modern-day "Queen of the Blues." She has worked with Allen Toussaint, Aaron Neville, Fats Domino, Cyril Neville, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Rockin' Dopsie, Wild Magnolias, and J. Monque'D.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Bibliography

Santelli

Discography

Heartbreakin' Woman (1991, Tipitina's Records).
I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For (1995, AIM).
Marvalous (1995, Mardi Gras).
Born with the Blues (1996, Virgin).
My Christmas Song (1996, Mardi Gras).
Bluesiana Mama (1999, AIM).
Let Them Talk (2000, AIM).

WRIGHT, OVERTON ELLIS "O. V."

b. 19 October 1939; Leno, TN
 d. 16 November 1980; Memphis, TN

Wright was originally a gospel performer while a member of the Harmony Echoes and the Sunset Travelers, signing initially with Peacock Records, a gospel label owned by Don Robey. A prolific songwriter, his secular debut was entitled "That's How Strong My Love Is," also covered by Otis Redding and the Rolling Stones, for Goldwax in Memphis. When Robey learned of his secular success, he forced Wright to honor his contract and record exclusively

on one of Robey's labels, Back Beat. Wright had R&B hits with other of his compositions, including "You're Gonna Make Me Cry" in 1965 and "Eight Men and Four Women" in 1967.

A period of incarceration interrupted his career in the mid-1970s, but Wright reappeared in 1975 with a move to Hi Records. He released "Rhymes" in 1976 and "I Feel Love Growin'" in 1978. Both releases were commercially unsuccessful and did little to enhance his reputation. And, as his career stagnated, his fans wished for a return of the soulful, dynamic O. V. Wright of the mid-1960s. He was a powerful voice of transition from the traditional blues of the 1950s to soul. Wright died in 1980 from a heart attack.

TOM FISHER

Bibliography

Larkin; Santelli

Discography

(If It's) Only for Tonight (1965, Back Beat BLP-61).
Eight Men and Four Women (1968, Back Beat BLP-66).
Nucleus of Soul (1969, Back Beat BLP-67).
A Nickel & A Nail and Ace of ... (1971, Back Beat BLP-70).
Memphis Unlimited (1973, Back Beat BLP-72).

Y

YANCEY, JAMES EDWARD(S) “JIMMY”

b. 20 February 1898; Chicago, IL
d. 17 September 1951; Chicago, IL

Pianist and one of the progenitors of boogie-woogie. His father was a vaudeville entertainer, brother Alonzo a ragtime pianist. Yancey toured the United States and Europe as a tap dancer and singer as a child. He was taught piano by his brother, but he also played baseball and was groundskeeper for the Chicago White Sox from 1925 to 1951.

Yancey played house parties in Chicago. He was never a full-time musician for any length of time, and is not as well known as players like Albert Ammons, Meade “Lux” Lewis, or Pete Johnson. Nonetheless he was a key figure in the development of boogie-woogie piano, and had an important influence on other players. Lewis’s appropriation of his “Yancey Special” led to a court case over the rights to the tune, which Yancey won.

Yancey made his first recordings for the Solo Art label in 1939–1940. They revealed his ability to compensate for his relative technical limitations by investing his playing with real expressive depth. He excelled at slow and medium tempos, where his deep feeling for the blues shone through his often complex left-hand bass figures and melancholy melodies. He went on to record for several other labels in rather desultory fashion, including Victor, Vocalion, Session, Paramount, and Atlantic.

Yancey recorded some sessions with his wife, singer Estelle “Mama” Yancey, and fellow boogie-woogie

pianist Cripple Clarence Lofton, and performed with his wife at Carnegie Hall in 1948. He played at the Beehive Club in Chicago in 1948–1950. He suffered from diabetes, and died after a stroke at his home.

KENNY MATHIESON

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Silvester, Peter. *A Left Hand Like God: The Story of Boogie Woogie*. London: Quartet Books, 1988.

Discography: DGR; LSFP

“Bear Trap Blues”/“Odd Quaker Blues” (1939, Vocalion 5490); “Jimmy’s Stuff”/“The Fives” (1939, Solo Art 12008); “Slow and Easy Blues”/“The Mellow Blues” (1939, Victor 26591); “Tell ’Em About Me”/“Five O’Clock Blues” (1939, Victor 26590); “Yancey Stomp”/“State Street Special” (1939, Victor 26589); “Cryin’ in My Sleep”/“Death Letter Blues” (1940, Bluebird 8630); “Yancey’s Bugle Call”/“35th and Dearborn” (1940, Victor 27238).
With Mama Yancey: “At the Window” (1943, Session 10-005); “How Long Blues”/“Pallet on My Floor” (1943, Session 12-003); “Yancey Special” (1943, Session 12-001).

YANCEY, MAMA ESTELLE

b. Estelle Harris, 1 January 1896; Cairo, IL
d. 4 May 1986; Chicago, IL

Lived in Chicago from age six months; sang in church choirs and learned guitar and piano in childhood. She was married to blues/boogie-woogie pianist, Jimmy Yancey. Although she was inhibited from performing in public first by her father and then by her husband, she sang often with her husband at home, at house parties, in clubs, and in Carnegie Hall (New York) and Orchestra Hall (Chicago) in 1948. She recorded with her husband in 1943 and in 1951 just before his death. Subsequently she recorded with Don Ewell (1952), Little Brother Montgomery (1961), Art Hodes (1965), Erwin Helfer (1983), and Axel Zwingenberger (1988). She performed with Erwin Helfer at the Indianapolis Jazz Club (1956), at the University of Chicago Folk Festival (1977–1978), the Chicago Jazz Festival, and at Elsewhere (late 1970s), and with Earl Hines at Northwestern University (1978). She also performed at the Limelight Club (1962), Red Lion Club (1962), and Touch of Olde Club (1964) in Chicago, and at Barbara Dane's Sugar Hill Club in San Francisco (1961).

Yancey recorded twenty-four different songs, seven of them several times: "How Long Blues," "Make Me a Pallet," "Monkey Woman Blues," "4 O'Clock Blues," "Santa Fe," "Weekly Blues," and "Trouble in Mind." She used a great deal of incremental repetition in her lyrics varying them considerably from version to version. Her melodies and singing style changed after Jimmy's death in part due to the different styles of her new accompanists. Yancey was an outgoing, fun-loving, proud yet unassuming singer and storyteller. In her words—"I can stand more trouble than any little woman my size" ("How Long Blues," 1951).

MARIA V. JOHNSON

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Discography: AMG; DGR; LSPF

YARDBIRDS

Formed 1963; broke up 1968. Re-formed intermittently since 1984. Along with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, the

Yardbirds were among the first British bands to play Chicago-style electric blues for a young rock audience. The Yardbirds differed from the others in mixing the blues with rock 'n' roll and, later, psychedelia, to create a new hybrid.

The band is best remembered for a string of hit songs in the mid-1960s and for having rock guitarists Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Jimmy Page as members. Blues fans will be most interested in the band's first incarnation, with Clapton; *Five Live Yardbirds* is the band's most blues-oriented album.

The Yardbirds was formed in 1963 by singer Keith Relf, with guitarists Anthony "Top" Topham and Chris Dreja, bassist Paul Samwell-Smith, and drummer Jim McCarty. Relf named the band after Charlie "Yardbird" Parker, the jazz saxophonist. Topham soon left the band, and was replaced by Clapton. That fall, the band backed a visiting Sonny Boy (Aleck Miller) Williamson for a live recording session.

When Clapton quit in early 1965 to join Mayall's Bluesbreakers and was replaced by Beck, the band's focus on the blues was significantly lessened. Page joined the band as a bassist in the summer of 1966, and took over lead guitar when Beck left that fall. By late 1968, all of the original members of the band were gone and Page renamed the band Led Zeppelin.

Relf died in 1976. Original members Dreja and McCarty have performed and recorded under the band's name intermittently since 1984. A 2001 two-disc collection, *The Yardbirds Ultimate!*, contained their most popular and influential 1960s recordings.

JIM TRAGESER

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Discography

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Sonnyboy Williamson & The Yardbirds (1966, Mercury SR-61071).
The Yardbirds Ultimate! (2001, Rhino R2 19825).

YAZOO

(See *Shanachie/Yazoo/Belzona/Blue Goose*)

YOUNG, JOHNNY

- b. 1 January 1918; Vicksburg, MS
 d. 18 April 1974; Chicago, IL

Well known in the mid-1940s on Maxwell Street, an associate of men like Floyd and Moody Jones and Snooky Pryor, singer, guitarist, and mandolinist Young was involved in some of the earliest postwar recordings of southern-style Chicago blues. With singer/guitarist Johnny Williams he cut “Money Taking Woman” and “Worried Man Blues” (Ora Nelle) in 1947, and with Williams and Pryor “My Baby Walked Out” and “Let Me Ride Your Mule” (Planet/Old Swingmaster) in 1948. Fifteen years later, beached by the tides of the more modern Chicago blues styles, he participated in sessions for Pete Welding’s Testament label that further documented the quieter small-band music of those earlier days. *Modern Chicago Blues*, in particular, illustrates his flair for drawing varied groups of compatible musicians from a pool that included Otis Spann, Jimmy Walker, and Little Walter. The skill no doubt grew from his long and varied experience, but it was perhaps somewhat surprising in a man whom not all his contemporaries regarded with affection. A similar air of professional competence hangs over his subsequent albums for Arhoolie, made with Spann, Walter Horton, and James Cotton, and other labels. His own talents were respectable rather than remarkable, but his singing, though limited in range, was by no means unexpressive. Also, as European enthusiasts discovered when he visited during a 1972 blues festival package, he could hold an audience alone with just a mandolin, which at that date made him an endangered species. He spent his last years working with pianist Bob Riedy’s band.

TONY RUSSELL

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Discography: LSFP

See also McCoy, Charlie; Rachell, Yank; Riedy, Bob; Williams, Johnny (2)

YOUNG, “MIGHTY” JOE

- b. 23 September 1927; Shreveport, LA
 d. 24 March 1999; Chicago, IL

Singer/guitarist Mighty Joe Young learned guitar as a boy from his father, and spent time as a teenager in

Los Angeles before relocating to Milwaukee around 1945. There, Young continued to study music and worked briefly as an amateur boxer. By 1950, he had devoted himself to music and began playing various clubs in the area. He temporarily moved back to Louisiana in 1955 and cut his first record for the tiny Jiffy label. In 1956, Young moved to Chicago and played for years on the South and West Sides, often behind Jimmy Rogers, Billy Boy Arnold, and Otis Rush. He recorded for Atomic-H in 1958, and throughout the 1960s had releases on a variety of labels including Fire, U.S.A., and Webcor. He also recorded behind Magic Sam, Otis Rush, and Jimmy Dawkins on several landmark 1960s Delmark sessions.

Young’s aptly titled 1970 Delmark LP, *Blues with a Touch of Soul*, combined his tough West Side guitar playing with his powerful, soul-tinged vocals. He went on to record two excellent albums for Ovation in the 1970s and continued to be a very popular and much-loved Chicago bandleader throughout the 1980s, but surgery to correct a pinched nerve in 1986 sadly ended his ability to play guitar. Young’s anticipated 1997 comeback album on Blind Pig, *Mighty Man*, was praised by critics, but in 1999, he elected to have a second operation in hopes of restoring the feeling in his fingers that would allow him to play guitar again. Tragically, Young died of complications from the surgery at age seventy-one.

GENE TOMKO

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Discography: AMG; LSFP

- Blues with a Touch of Soul* (1971, Delmark DD-629).
Mighty Joe Young (2002, Blind Pig BPCD 5073).

YOUNG, ZORA

- b. 21 January 1948; West Point, MS

Chicago-based vocalist. Young got her start singing in church; she also sang on radio station WROB, along with her mother and stepfather. When she was about eight, she moved with her family to Illinois—first to downstate Carbondale, then to Chicago. Although the blues were forbidden in her home, she heard the music emanating from clubs and on the radio.

In the 1970s she joined a show band called Cleaning Company Number Three, with whom she worked

soul/blues revues with stars like Denise LaSalle and Little Milton. In Chicago she also performed on the burgeoning (predominantly white) North Side circuit; pianist Sunnyland Slim was an important mentor during this period. In 1981, she toured France, an engagement that led to 1982's *Blues with the Girls* (Paris), which cofeatured Bonnie Lee and Big Time Sarah. She also appeared with Sunnyland on his "She Got a Thing Goin' On" (Earwig).

Young's self-produced *Stumbling Blocks* and *Stepping Stones* was issued in 1983; that same year she initiated a three-year run with the play *Heart of the Blues*, in which she portrayed Bessie Smith. Subsequent recordings have included 1992's *Travelin' Light* (Deluge), *I Got a Right to Sing the Blues* (1995, Blues Rock Connection), and, in 2002, *Learned*

My Lesson (Delmark). She continues to perform regionally and nationwide, as well as on frequent overseas tours. Her onstage presence combines regal dignity with a gritty sass that is accentuated by her raspy voice, flamboyant outfits, and saucy, self-confident demeanor.

DAVID WHITEIS

Bibliography

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Discography: AMG

Z

ZIEGLER, JOHN LEE

b. 12 April 1929; Kathleen, GA

A plumber for a living and a deep Georgia bluesman playing in juke joints every weekend nights, John Lee Ziegler developed a highly personal, rhythmic approach to the guitar, playing left handed and upside down, accompanied only by percussions. Discovered by George Mitchell in the 1970s, he has since been recording sporadically for several labels.

GÉRARD HERZHAFT

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Discography

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Came So Far (1994, Music Maker CD CF130).

ZINN, RUSTY

b. 3 April 1970; Long Beach, CA

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter. Guitarist Luther Tucker, who Zinn befriended at a jam session when he was eighteen, and harpist/bandleader Kim Wilson,

who hired him in 1993, were the catalysts for Zinn's career. With Tucker as his mentor, Zinn joined the Mark Hummel Band. He met Wilson at the San Francisco Blues Festival and was recruited for the harpist's solo album *Tigerman*. Wilson subsequently coproduced Zinn's 1996 *Sittin' and Waitin'* debut on Black Top Records, which helped earn him a W. C. Handy Award nomination for best new artist. In addition to his own *Confessin'* and *The Chill* albums, Zinn also recorded with Jody Williams on *The Legend Returns* and with Little Charlie & the Nightcats on the group's *That's Big*.

MICHAEL POINT

Bibliography

AMG (Richard Skelly)

Discography: AMG (Richard Skelly)

ZZ TOP

Founded 1970. Guitarist Billy Gibbons, bassist Dusty Hill, and drummer Frank Beard are among a handful of trios that have maintained a devotion to blues, yet also enjoyed rock superstardom. Their long beards and legendary antics both on the road and during live performances shouldn't obscure their long blues advocacy. One of their first big hits, "La Grange," was based directly on John Lee Hooker's

ZZ TOP

“Boogie Chillen,” and they have been intimately involved in fund-raising and support activities for the Delta Blues museum in Clarksdale. Gibbons is both a magnificent technical player and great showman, and the original line-up has remained intact since the group’s formation in 1970.

RON WYNN

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Discography: AMG

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