



Chicago WLS / Z-95 Music Surveys Series: The Eighties 1980-1990 *from Rich Gardner Archives*

The **Chicago WLS / Z-95 Music Surveys Series: The Eighties 1980-1990**, captures the vibrant 1980s Chicago music scene through full-size weekly surveys. These artifacts reveal radio's power, record sales influence, and listener tastes, offering a valuable glimpse into the cultural trends of an era dominated by radio and physical media.

The 1980s were transformative for popular music, and WLS radio played a pivotal role in shaping Chicago's musical landscape. A key aspect of this influence was the unique distribution of weekly WLS Music Surveys in record stores, which captured the dynamic interplay between radio, record sales, and listener preferences. These surveys significantly influenced record sales in the area, with a featured song often gaining greater popularity.

Receiving airplay on WLS and being included in the survey marked a major achievement for local artists. It exposed them to a larger audience and enhanced their careers. The surveys fostered a sense of community among music fans, providing a shared reference point that connected them to the local scene.

About the author



Rich Gardner was born and raised on Chicago's South Side. His fascination with music began at a young age, fueled by radio broadcasts of the History of Rock & Roll in the mid-1970s and the legendary WLS Top 89 radio countdowns.

This ignited a passion for collecting WLS surveys and documenting the evolution of popular music. His commitment extended beyond just listening; he eagerly anticipated the weekly WLS record surveys and sought out records at various stores throughout Chicago. Initially, he converted the WLS survey data into typed index cards, Rolodex cards, handwritten notebooks, and computer databases, creating a personal archive of musical history.

When he's not working full-time or spending time with his family, Gardner can be found at his local record store or swap meets, adding new chapters to his ever-growing collection.



Also in the archives:

WLS Hit Parade Music Surveys Series: The Seventies 1970-1979 – Vol 4-6

WLS Silver Dollar Surveys Series: The Sixties 1960-1969 – Vol 7-9



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WLS Music Survey Vol 2, 1984-1987

WLS Z-95 Music Surveys Vol 1, 1980-1983



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WLS / Z-95 Music Survey Vol 3, 1988-1990