

Home Town Skiffle



MSESET10
6 CD set

**Matchbox
Bluesmaster
Series - set 10**

**Blind Boy Fuller
vols 1 & 2,
Sonny Boy
Williamson,
Country Girls,
Early Folk Blues
vols 1 & 2**



Matchbox Bluesmaster Series - set 10
Blind Boy Fuller On Down - vols 1 & 2,
Sonny Boy Williamson And His Pals
Those Cakewalking Babies From Home - Country Girls
Early Folk Blues –
Home Town Skiffle - vol 1
Skoodle Um Skoo - vol 2



Digitising from vinyl: Norman White

Series Editor: Gef Lucena

** next to track number denotes poor quality original*

MATCHBOX BLUESMASTER SERIES
IS A DIVISION OF SAYDISC RECORDS
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Matchbox Bluesmaster Series

The 42 albums that make up the iconic Matchbox Bluesmaster Series were released by Saydisc Records during the 1980s under the editorship of well known Austrian collector, Johnny Parth. With the erudite notes by Paul Oliver they established a benchmark for releases of early blues, gospel and hokum. Now, some 40 years later, these albums of a mix of little known and well known seminal performances are introducing this entertaining, influential and historically important music to a new generation, as well as to time honoured collectors and followers of black music, on 7 x 6CD sets at an affordable price.

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This 10th set consists of the two albums devoted to Blind Boy Fuller and the singers he influenced, Sonny Boy Williamson in various combinations, an album of *Country Girls* and the fascinating two albums of early folk blues which shows the blues development and tradition in a new light.

Details of all the **Matchbox Bluesmaster Series** releases can be seen on **matchboxbluesmaster.co.uk** and on the Saydisc website **www.saydisc.com**

Gef Lucena - Series Producer

SET 10: DISC 1: Blind Boy Fuller On Down - Vol. 1**40:10**

Originally released on LP in May 1969 as Matchbox SDR 143

- 1 What's That Smells Like Fish - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr),
Bull City Red (wbd) (1938) (SC-19-1) 2:40
- 2 Weeping Willow - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (1937) (62369-A) 3:11
- 3 Worn Out Engine Blues - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (1940) (26593-) 3:08
- 4 New Oh Red - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (1937) (20650-) 2:51
- 5 Mean And No Good Woman - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr)
(1938) (22675-1) 2:38
- 6 Corrine What Makes You Treat Me So - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr)
(1937) (62370-A) 3:00
- 7 Get Your Yas Yas Out - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr), Sonny Terry (hca),
Bull City Red (wbd) (1938) (SC-27-1) 2:32
- 8 Why Don't My Baby Write To Me? - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr)
(1937) (62354-A) 2:45
- 9 Baby Quit Your Low Down Ways - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr)
(1939) (MEM-103-1) 2:35
- 10 Worried And Evil Man Blues - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (21628-2) 2:50
- 11 Mamie - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (1937) (20649-1) 2:47
- 12 If You See My Pigmeat - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (1937) (62352-A) 3:03
- 13 Put You Back In Jail - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (1937) (62357-A) 3:04
- 14 Where My Woman Usta Lay - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr)
(1937) (62361-A) 2:48

N.B. Bull City Red and Oh Red are both pseudonyms for George Washington)

Sleeve notes: David Harrison, 1969

Cover art: Stuart Mitchell

Original records provided by Stuart Mitchell, Ian Anderson,
Simon Napier, David Harrison.

Our thanks to Paul Oliver and Simon Napier for their assistance in the
making of this recording.

In the 50-odd years of recorded blues, a small number of artists stand out from the mass, not only for the standard of their own work, but also for the influence they have had on other bluesmen.

Tommy Johnson, Robert Johnson, Peetie Wheatstraw, Leroy Carr, John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, Lightnin' Hopkins and Elmore James are just a few in this class. Fulton Allen, or Blind Boy Fuller as he appeared on record, is another.

Floyd "Dipper Boy" Council, Brownie McGhee, Fred McMullen, Ralph Willis, Rev. Gary Davis, Sonny Jones, Curley Weaver, Rich and Welly Trice are just a few of the singers whose vocal or instrumental work bears some traces of Fuller's influence.

Some, like Sonny Jones, are out-and-out imitators using Fuller's songs, guitar figures and vocal inflexions. Others, like Gary Davis or Curley Weaver, inject enough of their own ideas to lift most of their records out of the rut of plagiarism. This two-LP set is planned to illustrate some aspects of Fuller's talent (Vol. 1) and to show just how widespread his influence was among other singers (Vol. 2). The idea is based on a series of articles in *Blues Unlimited* by Simon Napier called *The Carolina Blues – Blind Boy Fuller on Down**.

Fuller was born in Milledgeville, South Carolina in 1903 and died in hospital after a kidney operation in 1940. He started recording in 1935 and over the next five years recorded more than 120 sides, including some untypical gospel (cf Blues Classics BC.18 *The Sanctified Singers Vol. 2*) with his loud steel-bodied National guitar and often with Sonny Terry on harmonica, George "Oh Red" Washington on washboard and Gary Davis, before the latter turned away from "sinful" blues, on second guitar.

Fuller's influence is undoubted. But where did he learn his outstanding and melodic style, the archetype of the so-called North Carolina school of blues? Paul Oliver writes: "To what extent Fuller initiated it and shaped the music of his associates and to what extent he was the inheritor of an existing tradition is by no means clear and may never satisfactorily be explained"**.

Simon Napier, in his *Blues Unlimited* series, suggests Blind Blake's records as having some effect on Fuller's sound and the likeness does seem strong in the rags they both recorded. It is a moot point too whether Buddy Moss, an Atlanta singer who recorded some years before Fuller, had any influence on the Carolinian or whether he had picked up Fuller's style and got it on record first. After all, Fuller was in his thirties before his first session and he was widely known and very popular before then. It is a pity no one seems interested in interviewing Moss on this point as he is alive and apparently still playing well.

According to Sam Charters, Fuller "seemed to have a taste for vulgarity that gave his records a kind of leering fascination. It was like listening to dirty songs told with style and imagination...."

Fuller was a good blues singer and an exciting guitarist and he sang dozens of blues that were less vulgar but he was for Vocalion what Bo Carter was for Bluebird, "a party blues singer"***. Without doubt this is as much an under-estimation of Fuller's style and repertoire as the casual dismissal by the same writer of Bo Carter, a talented and versatile artist.

Perhaps Paul Oliver is nearer the truth when he writes: "some of his blues were unashamedly sexual in their content but he was never a salacious party singer: there was no need for a singer and musician of his calibre to attempt to win over audiences by shallow suggestiveness"***.

The place of double entendre and sexual metaphors in the blues is a controversial subject****. Whether such records as *What's That Smells Like Fish* fit Charters' or Oliver's description depends on whether you judge the lyrics from the English moon-June-tune standpoint or as harmless party fun in the same mould as rugby songs.

But not all of Fuller's records were "vulgar" or "unashamedly sexual". He plays happy dance pieces (*New Oh Red*, *Get Your Yas Yas Out of Doors*, *Put You Back In Jail*), many with distinct ragtime echoes, and sensitive blues (*Corrine*, *Weeping Willow*, *Mean and No Good Woman*).

Like most of the bluesmen who have recorded a large number of sides, Fuller uses the same tunes, often with different embellishments, over and

over again. It is a strong measure of his talent that he manages to add something different and interesting to even the most well worn themes.

NOTES:

* See *Blind Boy Fuller on Down* by Simon Napier in *Blues Unlimited* Nos. 38-42.

** Sleeve notes to *Blind Boy Fuller* (Blues Classics 11). This is the only other LP wholly devoted to Fuller's work at present available. The notes, by Paul Oliver, were written after many interviews with people like Brownie McGhee who knew Fuller and are the best reference source by far for anyone wanting details of Fuller and his music. We gratefully acknowledge Mr. Oliver's permission to quote from the notes.

*** *The Country Blues* by Sam Charters. Michael Joseph Ltd., London (1959).

**** See *Screening the Blues* by Paul Oliver (Cassell, London 1968). Also *The Damn Tinkers* by Mack McCormick and *Playing the Dozens* by Roger Abrahams, both in *American Folk Music Occasional No. 1* (1964).

Other tracks by Blind Boy Fuller on *Blind Boy Fuller* (Phillips BBL 7512 long deleted), *The East Coast States* (Roots RL 318), *Rural Blues* (RBF and Xtra), *Country Blues Vol 2* (RBF 9), *Blues Classics Vol. 2* (BC 6), *Blues Fell This Morning* (Phillips BBL 7369 long deleted).

DAVID HARRISON, 1969

SET 10: DISC 2: Blind Boy Fuller On Down - Vol. 2**47:54**

Originally released on LP in August 1969 as Matchbox SDR 168

- 1 Crow Jane Blues - Julius Daniels (vcl/gtr) (1927) (40350-2) 3:34
- 2 Walking And Looking Blues - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr)
(1937) (62358-B) 3:02
- 3 Working Man Blues - Blind Boy Fuller (vcl/gtr) (1937) (62362-A) 3:22
- 4 Tricks Ain't Walking No More - Buddy Moss (vcl/gtr) (1934) (15548) 2:59
- 5 Cross And Evil Woman Blues - Blind Gary Davis (vcl/gtr)
(1935) (17860) 3:01
- 6 I'm Throwing Up My Hand - Blind Gary Davis (vcl/gtr)
(1935) (17859) 2:49
- 7 Mississippi River - Bull City Red (vcl/gtr) (1935) (17902-1) 3:17
- 8 Pick And Shovel Blues - Bull City Red (vcl/gtr) (1935) (17882-1) 3:21
- 9 Love Me With A Feeling - Sonny Jones (vcl/gtr)
(1939) (MEM-118-1) 2:55
- 10 Dough Roller - Sonny Jones (vcl/gtr) (1939) (MEM-139-1) 2:41
- 11 I'm A Black Woman's Man - Blind Boy Fuller No. 2
(Brownie McGhee) (vcl/gtr), Bull City Red (Oh Red) (wbd)
(1941) (C-3786-1) 3:01
- 12 Got To Find My Little Woman - Blind Boy Fuller No. 2 (vcl/gtr),
Bull City Red (wbd), Jordan Webb (hca) (1941) (C-3785-1) 2:35
- 13 Mama Mama Blues - Sleepy Joe's Washboard Band with
Ralph Willis (vcl/gtr), Pete Sanders (wbd) (1947/8) (35164) 2:52
- 14 Shake Boogie - Jammin' Jim (Ed Harris) (vcl/gtr) (c.1952)
with unk. drums (A-23002) 2:51
- 15 Lemon Man - Dan Pickett (vcl/gtr) (1948) (DP-9) 2:56
- 16 Trixie - Curley Weaver (vcl/gtr) (1950-52) (J.482) 2:10

Sleeve Notes: David Harrison, 1969**Cover Art:** Stuart Mitchell**Original records** provided by: David Harrison, Dave Williams, Trevor Huyton and Ted Griffiths, Ian Anderson, Simon Napier, Richard Noblett.

The rigid pigeon-holing of blues singers into "Schools" or regional groups is a popular one for compilers of anthologies. The idea has a lot to recommend it – it provides variety, niches for artists with only a few issued sides, and in many cases a rough guide to the prevalent musical style recorded by artists from a certain region.

There is a strong danger however of placing too much emphasis on such classification. The borders which some people try to set up are in many cases artificial and unsound in practice.

Take for instance the case of Ma Rainey. To many collectors, particularly the younger ones brought up in the period when the emphasis was on Mississippi country blues, Ma Rainey is a corny vaudeville singer with various jazz bands. Yet her songs were sung by the revered Mississippi bluesman Charlie Patton, Atlanta 12 string guitarist Charlie Lincoln and even the white country group The Carter Family.

Nevertheless, some classifications are valid as long as the emphasis is on flexibility. One such grouping is what has become known as Blind Boy Fuller on Down.

Volume One of this set presented 14 tracks by the highly influential Carolina singer and guitarist, Fulton Allen, or Blind Boy Fuller as he recorded. And there is little doubt that his influence can be detected in the work of many other artists who were either his contemporaries (Bull City Red, Gary Davis, Buddy Moss) or his successors (Brownie McGhee, Ralph Willis, Jammin' Jim).

The aim of Volume Two is to illustrate the work of some of the blues singers who took Fuller for their model. The list is by no means exhausted – we haven't got tracks by Dipper Boy Council, Virgil Childers or Rich and Welly Trice, for instance. But the artists on this record can clearly be grouped (as far as these tracks are concerned anyway) into a Fuller-influenced "school" while not denying their own integrity and varying talents.

Julius Daniels: Julius Daniels is not a member of the Fuller On Down group but is one of the few songsters (John Hurt and Rabbit Brown are

others) who were recorded in the 1920s. He apparently came from North Carolina and made eight titles in 1927, eight years before Fuller recorded. His version of *Crow Jane* is included as an example of the traditional song which was later adapted by blues singers. Many bluesmen in the Eastern States sang this song or variants based on it and there are recordings of it by such diverse artists as Bo Weavil Jackson and Carl Martin.

Blind Boy Fuller: Fuller's two tracks show him at his best with just his own guitar in accompaniment. His trio recordings with Bull City Red and Sonny Terry tended to keep to the same ragtime-influenced trot and it is in his solo records that Fuller's warmth and emotion come over best. These tracks are included not only because they deserve reissue but also to act as a comparison to the other tracks.

Buddy Moss: A brilliant guitarist from Georgia, Moss's work was greatly influenced by the Carolina style of Fuller, rather than the great 12-string guitarists of his own state. *Tricks Ain't Walking* was a popular number among the East Coast Singers (see Curley Weaver) even if none managed to match the moody, magnificent version by Lucille Bogan. The song is about the lack of custom for the whore-houses during the Depression.

Gary Davis: These are the only two secular sides recorded by Gary Davis until recent years, although he accompanied Fuller and Bull City Red on various numbers. A close contemporary of Fuller, it is difficult to know who actually influenced whom, although Gary Davis' post war religious sides and buck dances use many of the guitar phrases which Fuller made his own.

Bull City Red: Red, or George Washington, was a washboard player who accompanied Fuller on many sides and was long thought to be on the Bukka White 1940 sessions until Bukka confirmed it was Washboard Sam. Here he plays very good guitar in the Fuller mould on the standard *Mississippi River* and the more original *Pick And Shovel Blues*, and sings in a pleasantly gritty voice.

Sonny Jones: Jones was quite simply a blatant Fuller copyist, here using the same guitar work and vocal inflexions on two of Fuller's songs. It is

interesting to note that *Love Me With A Feeling* was recorded at the same session that Fuller put down three religious sides as Brother George. Nothing is known about Jones, who only recorded four sides, including one with Sonny Terry and Bull City Red.

Blind Boy Fuller No. 2: This is of course Brownie McGhee, one of the most recorded of blues singers. After Fuller's death he carried on his tradition so faithfully that it is often difficult to tell the two apart. Here McGhee, Jordan Webb and Bull City Red recreate the rhythmic sound of Fuller's raggy trio sides.

Sleepy Joe: Sleepy Joe is Ralph Willis, a Carolina singer who recorded extensively in the immediate post war years. Here he gives a new working to an old Fuller favourite with Pete Sanders on washboard. Note how, more than ten years after Fuller's death, the guitar work and vocal are still very close to the original.

Jammin' Jim: Jammin' Jim, Lazy Slim Jim, Country Paul and Carolina Slim were all pseudonyms for Ed Harris, a fine singer-guitarist in the Carolina style whose delivery is very close to Fuller's. Again the song presented here can be easily traced back to Fuller originals from 15 years before

Dan Pickett: Pickett, an Alabama artist, shows wider influences than most of the other singers on this album in his small recorded output. They range from Leroy Carr to pure Fuller (on this track) but Pickett's skill and originality make him much more than a copyist like Sonny Jones.

Curley Weaver: Weaver recorded extensively in the late twenties and early thirties and was closely associated with Blind Willie McTell throughout his recording career. The couple, who are both from Georgia, often played on each other's records, both pre- and post-war. *Trixie* is in fact *Tricks Ain't Walkin' No More* (which he first recorded in 1935 with McTell) and it makes an interesting comparison with Moss's 1934 version. A much under-rated artist, he died shortly after McTell's last session a few years ago.

DAVID HARRISON, 1969

SET 10: DISC 3: Sonny Boy And His Pals**41:46**

Originally released on LP in July 1969 as Matchbox SDR 169

- 1 Tell Me Baby - Sonny Boy Williamson (vcl/hca), Walter Davis (pno), Big Bill Broonzy (gtr) (Chicago 1939) (040541) 2:52
- 2 Honey Bee Blues - Sonny Boy Williamson (vcl/hca), Walter Davis (pno), Big Bill Broonzy (gtr) (Chicago 1939) (040542) 3:12
- 3 Decoration Day Blues No. 2 - Sonny Boy Williamson (vcl/hca), Joshua Altheimer (pno), Fred Williams (dms) (Chicago 1940) (049199) 2:53
- 4 Love Me Baby - Sonny Boy Williamson (vcl/hca), Big Bill Broonzy (gtr), Blind John Davis (pno), Alfred Elkins (imit. bs) (Chicago 1942) (074656) 3:22
- 5 I'm Gonna Catch You Soon - Sonny Boy Williamson (vcl/hca), Ransom Knowling (sbs), Blind John Davis (pno) (Chicago 1941) (064490) 2:51
- 6 Miss Stella Brown Blues - Sonny Boy Williamson (vcl/hca), Blind John Davis (pno), Ted Summitt (gtr), Armand Jump Jackson (dms) (Chicago 1944) (D4-AB-324) 2:52
- 7 Desperado Woman Blues - Sonny Boy Williamson (vcl/hca), Blind John Davis (pno), Ted Summitt (gtr), Armand Jump Jackson (dms) (Chicago 1944) (D4-AB-325) 2:43
- 8 Lonesome Man Blues - Elijah Jones (vcl), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), Yank Rachel (mdl), unk. (gtr) (Aurora, Ill. 1938) (020123-1) 3:02
- 9 I'm Wild And Crazy As I Can Be - Yank Rachel (vcl/mand), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), Elijah Jones (2nd. gtr) (Aurora, Ill. 1938) (020129) 3:11
- 10 Army Man Blues - Yank Rachel (vcl/gtr/mand), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), William Mitchell (imit. bs), Washboard Sam (wbd) (Chicago 1941) (064106-1) 3:02

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 11 | Tappin' That Thing - Yank Rachel (vcl/gtr), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), Alfred Elkins (sbs), Washboard Sam (wbd) (Chicago 1941) (070474-1) | 2:54 |
| 12 | Worried Blues - Yank Rachel (vcl/gtr/mand), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), William Mitchell (imit. bs), Washboard Sam (wbd) (Chicago 1941) (064108-1) | 2:57 |
| 13 | 38 Pistol - Yank Rachel (vcl/gtr/mand), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), William Mitchell (imit. bs), Washboard Sam (wbd) (Chicago 1941) (064107-1) | 2:53 |
| 14 | Vitamin A Blues - Big Joe Williams (vcl gtr), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), Jump Jackson (dms) (Chicago 1945) (D5-AB-357) | 2:46 |

Sleeve Notes: David Harrison, 1969

Cover Art: Stuart Mitchell

Original records provided by: Dave Williams, Jack Parsons, David Ackling

Compiled by: Dave Williams

Our thanks to Pete Moody for his assistance in the preparation of this album

The sound of Sonny Boy Williamson and his pals is the sound of the forties. Theirs was a transitional music, bridging the gap between the more primitive country style of the twenties and early thirties and the slick, often banal, rhythm and blues which has all but superseded it.

Sonny Boy, who was born in Jackson, Tennessee, never lost the country sound in his harmonica work, even on the later sides with a full band. Perhaps it was this echo of an earlier music which made Sonny Boy so popular with the residents of Chicago's South Side, many of them country born and bred themselves.

But Williamson welded this country sound to the blues of the forties, the piano-bass-drums combination which appeared on so many records of this period. The forties were a time of change generally. At the beginning of the decade, Bukka White was cutting the last of the great delta recordings as swing vied with the New Orleans revival in the jazz field.

In the last years of the period, Muddy Waters, greatest of the modern Chicago singers, made his first, albeit country, sides, and bop had superseded Goodman and Miller. And Sonny Boy Williamson lay dying in a Chicago alley, brutally murdered.

He had been recording for just over ten years and in some ways his death marked the end of an era. True, his friends and colleagues continued to record in the same styles; some well into the fifties. But the times were against them. In the outbacks, the recording companies realised the strong demand which had grown again for the old country blues sound and a new recording boom started with such artists as Drifting Slim, Baby Face Turner and an elderly harmonica player who called himself Sonny Boy Williamson and claimed he had used the name first. Perhaps he did.

In the cities the emphasis was on fast dance music with electric guitars turned up so loud that the words didn't really matter any more. The new heroes were Howling Wolf, Elmore James, Muddy Waters and B. B. King.

But the Sonny Boy Williamson sound lived on through dozens of singers and harmonica players who copied, sometimes note for note, his fierce driving instrumental work and gobbled tongue-twisting vocals.

One has only to listen to such post-war recordings as those on *Memphis On Down* (PWB) or *Memphis and the Delta* (BC) to see the kind of impression Williamson made on the rural singers, who, like their counterparts of 20 years previously, often made one or two sides and then disappeared back into obscurity.

But the records on the first half of this album show Williamson himself in a cross section of his work. His accompanists are often worthy of note too, in particular the pianists Blind John Davis and Joshua Altheimer.

The second half features five sides by Yank Rachel, Big Joe Williams and Elijah Jones accompanied by Sonny Boy. Rachel is one of the handful of blues mandolinists to record and is often associated with Sleepy John Estes because of the superb records they made together in 1929-30 and since their rediscovery in more recent years.

Yank's mandolin is only heard fully on one track here – in accompaniment to the little-known singer-guitarist Elijah Jones.

Four of Rachel's own tracks find him mainly on guitar with a solid rhythm accompaniment by Washboard Sam. *38 Pistol* is yet another song extolling the virtues of various calibres of guns in keeping wandering women under control while *Tappin' That Thing* is a standard hokum song based on the incredibly popular *It's Tight Like That*.

Big Joe and Sonny Boy made a wonderful partnership as can be seen from the 1945 version of Joe's perennial *Vitamin A*.

Indeed the second half of the album supports the view of many collectors that Williamson in fact gave his best performances supporting other artists.

Sonny Boy Williamson was greatly mourned when he died so uselessly. Luckily he recorded many more sides than most blues singers and no written tribute can offer a better memorial than these to this superb and influential artist.

DAVID HARRISON, 1969

Notes: A vivid and detailed account of Williamson's death was written by Francis Smith for *Blues Unlimited 48*. Many of the details plus an added commentary were used for Paul Oliver's excellent notes to *Sonny Boy Williamson Vol. 2* (Blues Classics Vol. 20).

Other examples of Sonny Boy's work can be found on: *Sonny Boy Williamson* (Blues Classics 3), *Big Bill and Sonny Boy* (RCA RD-7685), *Sonny Boy Williamson Vol. 2* (Blues Classics 20), *Big Joe Williams and Sonny Boy Williamson* (Blues Classics 21), *Bluebird Blues* (RCA RD 7768) *Mississippi Blues* (RBF 14). There is also a 10" French RCA LP No. 130.238 which is worth looking out for.

Examples of the influence of Sonny Boy Williamson can be found on *Memphis on Down - Post War Blues* (PWB 2) and *Memphis and the Delta* (BC15).

Yank Rachel is represented (with John Estes) on *Sleepy John Estes* (RBF 8), *Missouri and Tennessee* (Roots RL310) and *Down with the Game Vols. 3 and 5*. A post war recording with Joe Williams, John Estes and Hammie Nixon can be found on *Mandolin Blues* (77 LA12/23).

Joe Williams is represented on too many LPs to mention here

SET 10: DISC 4: Those Cakewalking Babies From Home**48:31**

Originally released on LP in 1969 as Matchbox SDR182

- 1 Jug Band Blues - Sara Martin and her Jug Band [Clifford Hayes (vln), Curtis Hayes (bjo), Earl McDonald (jug)] (1924) (72825-B) 3:18
- 2 Don't You Quit Me Daddy - Sara Martin and her Jug Band [as for track 1] (1924) (72832-B) 3:12
- 3* Long Tall Mama - Bernice Edwards (vcl/pno) (1928) (20362-1) 3:09
- 4 Mean Man Blues - Bernice Edwards (vcl/pno) (1928) (20361-1) 2:41
- 5* Death Bell Blues - Madlyn Davis (vcl), Georgia Tom (pno), Tampa Red (gtr) (1928) (20907-2) 2:59
- 6 Gold Tooth Papa Blues - (as for track 5) (1928) (20906-1) 2:47
- 7 You're Going To Leave The Old Home, Jim - Lulu Jackson (vcl/prob. own gtr) (1928) (645) 3:06
- 8 I Ain't Givin' Nobody None - Mae Glover (vcl), John Byrd (gtr/speech) (1929) (15395-A) 2:40
- 9 Red Beans And Rice - Gladys Bentley (vcl/with poss. own pno) (1929) (401749-B) 3:09
- 10 Big Gorilla Man - (as for track 9) (1929) (401748-B) 3:02
- 11* Seaboard Blues - Lucille Bogan (vcl), Walter Roland (pno) (1933) (13589-1) 2:56
- 12* Troubled Mind - (as for track 11) (1933) (13605-1) 2:53
- 13 Deceived Blues - Annie Turner (vcl), Little Brother Montgomery (pno), Walter Vincson (gtr) (1936) (02638-1) 3:29
- 14 Workhouse Blues - (as for track 13)) (1936) (02639-1) 2:59
- 15 I'm Not A Bad Gal - Memphis Minnie (vcl/gtr), Little Son Joe (gtr), Unknown (sbs) (1941) (C-4090-1) 2:50
- 16 It Was You, Baby - (as for track 15) (1941) (C-4094-1) 3:03

Note: The Mae Glover track was originally issued under the pseudonym of Flossie Brown and those of Lucille Bogan under the name of Bessie Jackson.

Sleeve notes: David Harrison, 1969

Cover Art and Design: David Harrison & Gef Lucena

Original Records provided by: David Williams, Ted Griffiths, Bob Groom, David Froggatt

In 1928 a singer named Madam Hurd Fairfax recorded *They Needed A Songbird In Heaven So God Took Caruso Away* for the highly esteemed Paramount race series. The few people who have heard this epic (and I'd love to) agree that the blues interest is negligible, yet it was issued alongside such artists as Son House and Lemon Jefferson.

Anyone who reads through *Blues & Gospel Records 1902-42* by Godrich and Dixon will realise that the Paramount race series included a lot of material which, by no stretch of the imagination, could be called Negro orientated or even based on the Negro folk forms. Yet this same label issued some of the finest blues material ever recorded by such legendary characters as Charley Patton, Willie Brown, Ma Rainey, Lucille Bogan and the above-mentioned Lemon Jefferson.

But the still popular legend that anything on Paramount must be good is obviously an insupportable generalisation. The point I am trying to make is this: Firstly, the record buyers of those dim and distant days didn't care whether the music they bought was *art* as long as it was good to listen to and to dance to. Secondly, the list of artists I mentioned who recorded for Paramount included two women – and here lies the reason for this record.

Not only Paramount, but also all the other record companies, recorded a very large number of women singers of all styles yet still within the blues idiom. Indeed, a quick glance through Godrich-Dixon shows that the women probably outnumbered the men! Yet a large number of record collectors today are still prepared to dismiss these important – and in some cases influential – artists as either pop singers, jazz vocalists or in the same class as Madam Fairfax.

Let us just consider the sort of music covered by the term blues. It includes: folksongs, ordinary 12-bar blues, vaudeville duets, vocal refrains to jazz instrumentals, pop music of the day, piano solos, jug band instrumentals, comedy and even recitations on the dulciana and stovepipe.

To dismiss the female exponents of these forms as outside the pale is clearly wrong. Unfortunately, a minor art like blues goes through phases of popularity like painting and music (try admitting you like Landseer or Holman Hunt or the gothic barbarism of Wagner rather than the sad symbolism of pop art, or the delicate mosaics of Bach). At present the scales are tipped against the female singers of all types. They are the least popular and least well researched of all the blues idioms

A Ma Rainey LP will sell to jazz collectors for the backings, but few modern blues fans will bother to listen to that strong, and soulful (in the best sense of the word) voice through the crackles of forty years.

Even the unapproachable Bessie Smith has her detractors among the heroes of the white blues revival (if such an unaesthetic and destructive idiom can be called a revival) because she sings *Alexander's Ragtime Band* or *After You've Gone*. The fact that she can squeeze more blues feeling from one line of the hackneyed *St Louis Blues* than the so-called white blues groups can find in the whole country blues song book is carefully ignored.

Comparisons are invidious but useful: so let's compare the output of the highly-rated Charley Patton with the tracks on this album.

Patton recorded harsh 12-bar blues about women and whiskey – we offer the mean-voiced, bawdy Lucille Bogan. Patton's light-hearted hokum music is highly prized – but Mae Glover does it better. Patton even recorded a ballad – may we introduce Lulu Jackson and Jim.

To go on is pointless. Suffice it to say that for every male blues singer in every blues idiom, there was a female counterpart. The words refer to mean men and gold-toothed papas instead of big fat mamas but the sentiments are exactly the same.

In this volume we are presenting some of the more country-styled

performers whose records are equally as valid and as entertaining (a quality often forgotten in blues criticism) as their male colleagues.

Sarah Martin was one of the first blues singers to record and her two tracks here find her in the company of the nucleus of some of the greatest jazz style jug bands ever to record – Clifford Hayes and Earl McDonald. Her performance is gentle compared with the rich voiced renderings of such double entendre classics as *Kitchen Maid Blues* in her later career, but here is one of the great city singers in country mood.

Bernice Edwards – *Moaning Bernice* – plays her own piano on two out and-out country blues. She came from Texas and was associated with Funny Paper Smith, Rambling Thomas and Black Boy Shine with whom she recorded. A fine artist, her sides are rare enough to warrant reissue despite the patina of age.

From *Moaning Bernice* to *Red Hot Shakin'* **Madlyn Davis** whose two sides are enhanced by the fine accompaniment by pianist Georgia Tom and the slide guitar of Tampa Red. She recorded ten sides between 1927 and 1928 but little is remembered of her.

Lulu Jackson provides a complete contrast with her gentle voice and limited guitar playing. She recorded eight ballads in 1928 including the two laments for Jim, a song which was a favourite with several of the more sophisticated singers, but this is still a country ballad sung in country style.

Mae Glover made some beautiful records in 1929 with 12-string guitarist John Byrd, some of which included highly competent yodelling. This track comes from a 78 which is believed to be one of less than five left in the world and is a fine example of her style.

Gladys Bentley provides more contrast with her more sophisticated rendering of two country standards. A sleek performance if not up to the standard of Lucille Bogan, one of the greatest country blues singers of all on wax. Lucille also has the distinction of being one of the few to get the unexpurgated version of the bawdy standard *Shave 'Em Dry* on wax. Here she is in sombre mood with fine accompaniment from her regular pianist, Walter Rowland.

Annie Turner made her four sides at one of the most celebrated recording sessions in blues history – at the St Charles Hotel, New Orleans, in October 1936 together with Little Brother Montgomery, the Mississippi Sheiks, Sonny Boy Nelson and Willie Harris. A capable vocalist, her sides are enhanced by sympathetic backing from Montgomery and Sheik, Walter Vincson.

And so to **Memphis Minnie**, probably the greatest bluesette of all. She had a long recording career from 1929 until the early 1950s and, with the exception of a gentle ballad called *Tonight I Smile With You*, can be said to have made not one bad recording.

Country girls? *Not all of them.* Country style? *Definitely.* Country Blues? *Listen and see!*

SET 10: DISC 5: Skoodle Um Skoo - Early Folk Blues, Vol 1 **55:47**
Originally released on LP in 1970 as Matchbox SDR 199

STOVEPIPE NO. 1 (Sam Jones): (vcl/hca/gtr/stovepipe)

New York City – August 19, 1924

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | I've Got Salvation In My Heart (81927-2) | 3:15 |
| 2 | Lord Don't You Know I Have No Friend Like You? (81925-2) | 3:19 |

New York City – August 20, 1924

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 3. | Cripple Creek And Sourwood Mountain, Take 1 (81938-) | 3:13 |
| 4. | Turkey In The Straw (81939-1) | 3:24 |

CHARLIE JACKSON: (vcl/bjo)

Chicago – c. August, 1925

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 5 | Mama Don't Allow It (And She Ain't Gonna Have It Here) (2223-2) | 2:56 |
| 6 | Take Me Back Blues (2208-2) | 3:12 |

Chicago – c. February, 1925

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|------|
| 7* | Shave Em Dry (10042-) | 2:45 |
| 8* | Coffee Pot Blues (10043-) | 2:23 |

<i>Chicago – c. July, 1927</i>	
9 Skoodle Um Skoo (4670-1)	2:56
BANJO JOE: Gus Cannon (vcl/bjo), Blind Blake (gtr)	
<i>Chicago – c. November, 1927</i>	
10* Jonestown Blues (20140-2)	3:18
11 Madison Street Rag (20145-2)	3:06
12 Can You Blame The Colored Man (20148-2)	2:35
JOE JOE: Joe Linthecome (vcl/vcl effects/kazoo/uke)	
<i>Richmond, Ind – November 20, 1929</i>	
13 Humming Blues (15907-)	3:19
WINSTON HOLMES AND CHARLIE TURNER:	
Holmes (vcl./speech/whistling/yodelling); Turner (hca/gtr)	
<i>Richmond, Ind – June 21, 1929</i>	
14 The Kansas City Call (15260)	2:56
15 Rounders Lament (15259)	3:12
WALTER JACOBS AND THE CARTER BROTHERS: prob. Lonnie and	
Bo Chatman (vlns), Walter Vincson (gtr), poss. Charlie McCoy (bjo-mand)	
<i>San Antonio – June 10, 1930</i>	
16 Sheiks Special (404133-8)	3:38
17 Dear Little Girl (404134-B)	3:33
BILLY JAMES AND HIS GUITAR: prob. Blind Blake (vcl/gtr)	
<i>Grafton, Wis – c. June, 1932</i>	
18 Champagne Charlie Is My Name (L-1475-2)	2:29

Original Records for Vols 1 and 2 provided by Johnny & Evelyn Parth, Ted Griffiths & Trevor Huyton, Jack Parsons, Dave Froggatt.

Sleeve notes: Tony Russell, 1970

Cover Design: David Harrison.

Discographical details: Tony Russell, based on *Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1942* by John Godrich and Robert Dixon (Storyville 1969)

Note: Tony Russell is the author of *Blacks, Whites and Blues: The Interaction of Two American Folk Music Traditions* (Studio Vista Blues Paperbacks series, June 1970 (65 np).

"Skoodle Um Skoo" delves into the prehistory of the blues. It shows some of the forms of black folkmusic in the early twentieth century, and the influence upon them of vaudeville, ragtime and the country music of the southern whites. Of blues proper there are only four examples; most of these artists were middle-aged when they recorded, and their repertoires had not been influenced by the blues boom of the early '20s as younger musicians' had. We know painfully little about the working life of a black entertainer in this era; but this album shows very clearly that he drew from all the contemporary pop idioms. Some of the tunes, for instance, are of the sort usually called *hill-billy* – but the term is a question-begging one for pieces like *Turkey In The Straw* which probably developed in black hands as much as in white. Such material belongs not to one race rather than the other, but to a common stock shared and elaborated by both. If black recordings of these old time tunes are rather scarce,¹ it is because the older men who preferred them did not have many chances to put them on disc; and perhaps because white A & R men, having notions about what constituted "race" music, imposed them upon their discoveries.

We can see something of the "blues takeover" in the career of **STOVEPIPE No. 1 (SAM JONES)**. His early records² are low in blues content; he liked the old familiar melodies, and played them with spirit, blowing on his harmonica and the length of stove-piping that gave him his nick-name. His hymns are of venerable age, too; and note how, as if in deference to the content, he lays aside his rather comic home-made instrument when playing them. His later recordings, in 1927 with David Crockett³ and in 1930 with King David (Crockett)'s Jug Band,⁴ have more to do with the blues. A Cincinnati musician, Jones has not been heard of since his last session, and one must presume him long dead.

About the time of Jones' major session – from which all these titles come – "**PAPA**" **CHARLIE JACKSON** was making his first records in New York. His metier was vaudeville, and when he sings a blues it is commonly in the style of the female artists; *Take Me Back Blues* is typical, and *Shave Em*

Dry was closely based on Ma Rainey's 1923 recording (Paramount 12222).⁵ His banjo-playing is best displayed in *Mama Don't Allow It*, *Coffee Pot Blues* – an oddly ballad-like theme – and *Skoodle Um Skoo*. This last piece, which Blind Blake also recorded,⁶ was a favourite of his, and he remade it twice before his death in early 1938.

GUS CANNON's unique approach to the 5-string banjo – Charlie Jackson used the 4- or 6- string models – is shown by *Madison Street Rag*, with its exciting coda, and the plangent phrasing of *Jonestown Blues*.⁷ These are excellent, but even they cannot equal *Can You Blame The Colored Man*, one of the finest and most valuable recordings produced in the Memphis circle of the late '20s. The central figure of the song is black leader Booker T. Washington; the event, his dinner with Theodore Roosevelt on October 16, 1901. "The President had asked Washington to come to the White House to discuss some projected appointments and other matters. The talk took longer than had been anticipated. Mr. Roosevelt, as was his custom in such cases, asked him to dine with the family In the next day's routine news statement from the White House the bare fact was obscurely announced in the local press. A few days later, a southern newspaper correspondent lifted it out of its obscurity and telegraphed it to his paper. For days and even weeks the southern papers sent out shrieks of fury at both the President and Booker Washington Both ... received many threats against their lives The Tuskegee campus had to be policed."⁸ How profound an effect the episode had is witnessed by Cannon's recording a song about it twenty-six years later.

In **JOE LINTHECOME** we see more recent influences working; *Humming Blues* is an elaboration of the melody of the previous year's hit *How Long – How Long Blues*, by Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell (Vocalion 1191). His voice, light and clear, is of the east, possibly Virginia; compare Luke Jordan and Spark Plug Smith.

WINSTON HOLMES and **CHARLIE TURNER** are slightly less shadowy figures. Holmes was a Kansas City promoter, owner of Meritt Records; Turner was an older acquaintance who ran a record store in St. Louis.⁹ *The Kansas*

City Call, like *Kansas City Dog Walk*,¹⁰ is a brisk dance-tune superbly played by Turner on 12-string and harmonica; Holmes comments, whistles and yodels in one of the most extrovert displays of vocal versatility on record. *Rounders Lament* may be an example of an otherwise undocumented form of vaudeville parody, or simply Holmes's own crazy sense of humour.

The group labelled as **WALTER JACOBS AND THE CARTER BROTHERS** was more or less the Mississippi Sheiks, and these tunes, like others in the Sheiks' discography, were issued in Okeh's *Old Time Tunes* series – the “hillbilly” list. Reasonably enough; there's not a world of difference between them and performances by, say, Willie Narmour and Shell Smith, the white fiddle-guitar duo who worked in John Hurt's home town of Avalon, Miss. Both groups show cajun influence, in the broad, blue tone of the fiddling and the heavy rhythm of the back-up guitarist.

The closing track is none other than the Victorian music-hall song, written by *lion comique* George Leybourne, with music by Alfred Lee, and published in 1868. While songs of this sort did pass into American folk-tradition, they were scarcely ever recorded by blacks, and this is a performance of great value. Despite discographers' doubts, we can be fairly sure that this is **BLIND BLAKE**. One of his last recordings, it was also acoustically the best.

If you have any interest in the antecedents of the blues, this collection should give you great pleasure and stimulate a good deal of thought. It is utterly unlike most other anthologies of black music, and it may change many of your ideas about the tradition. If it does, and does it in an enjoyable way, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

TONY RUSSELL, 1970

NOTES:

1. Some examples are: Joe Evans & Arthur McClain, *Old Hen Cackle* and *Sourwood Mountain*, Historical BC-2433-2; Peg Leg Howell, *Turkey Buzzard Blues*, Kokomo K-1000; Henry Thomas, *Bob McKinney*, Origin OJL-3; Mississippi John Hurt, *Pay Day*, Vanguard SVRL19032; Gus Cannon, *01' Hen and others*, Stax 702.

2. Two others are on Roots RL-310.
3. Cf. Philips BBL7369, Roots RL-310, Historical ASC-5829-4.
4. Cf. RBF RF6, Roots RL-311.
5. Cf. Oliver, *Screening The Blues*, pp. 225-232.
6. Cf. Biograph BLP-12003 (*Skeedle Loo Doo Blues*).
7. Both titles remade with Cannon's Jug Stompers; cf. Roots RL-307 and Tax LP-2 respectively.
8. Mathews (Basil), *Booker T. Washington*, p. 233.
9. Cf. Russell (Tony), *The Kansas City Dog Walkers*, in *Jazz Monthly* 168 (February 1969), pp. 8-10.
10. Cf. Piedmont 13159.

SET 10: DISC 6: Home Town Skiffle – Early Folk Blues, Vol. 2 50:25

Originally released on LP in 1970 as Matchbox SDR 206

- 1 You Shall - Beale Street Sheiks (Stokes and Sane) - Frank Stokes (vcl/gtr), Dan Sane (gtr), *Chicago c. September, 1927* (20043-2) 2:40
- 2* Jelly Roll Blues - Excelsior Quartette - male quartet (unac) *New York City c. March 25, 1922* (7827) 3:13
- 3 Too Long - Mississippi Sheiks (Walter Vincson (vcl/gtr), prob. Lonnie Chatman (vln)), *Atlanta, October 24, 1931* (405015-1) 3:07
- 4 She Showed It All - Napoleon Fletcher (vcl), Roosevelt Sykes (pno), Edith Johnson (speech), *Chicago, December 11, 1933* (77318-) 2:46
- 5 I'm Gonna Get It - Hokum Boys (Casey Bill Weldon (vcl/steel gtr), Big Bill (vcl/gtr), Washboard Sam (wbd), unknown (sbs) *Chicago, April 16, 1936* (C-1357-2) 3:18
- 6 Derbytown - Old Ced Odom and Lil 'Diamonds' Hardaway (vcl duets acc by own dms and pno respectively) *Chicago, September, 30, 1936* (90903-A) 3:01
- 7 Hometown Skiffle - Part 1 - Paramount All-Stars [prob. Alex Hill (speech) introducing The Hokum Boys (prob. Hill (vcl), Georgia Tom Dorsey (pno), unk (2nd vcl), Will Ezell (pno/speech); Blind Blake (gtr/speech)]

- Chicago, c. October 1929* (21453-2) 3:07
- 8 Hometown Skiffle - Part 2 - Paramount All-Stars [prob. Alex Hill (speech) introducing Blind Lemon Jefferson (gtr), The Hokum Boys (as above), Charlie Spand (vcl/pno), Papa Charlie Jackson (vcl/bjo)]
same location and date (21454-3) 3:20
- 9 It's A Good Thing - Beale Street Sheiks (as for track 1) (20044-2)
- 10* Kitchen Mechanic Blues - Excelsior Quartet (as for track 2) (7828)
- 11 Skinner - Winston Holmes and Charlie Turner (vcl duet acc by Turner (hca/12 string gtr), *Richmond Ind, June 21 1929* (15261-A) 2:48
- 12 Slave Man Blues - Bumble Bee Slim (Amos Easton) (vcl), prob Arnett Nelson (clt), Black Bob (pno), unknown (sbs)
Chicago, November 4 1937 (C-1648-1) 3:07
- 13 Keep Your Mind On It - Hokum Boys (as for track 5 with speech by Weldon) C-1356-1) 3:28
- 14 Stop Truckin' And Suzi-Q - Tampa Red and the Chicago Five [Tampa Red (vcl/gtr/kazoo), prob Arnett Nelson (clt), Black Bob (pno), Willie B. James (gtr), unknown (sbs)]
Chicago, December 21 1936 (01876 -) 3:07
- 15 Texas Tommy - Yank Rachel (vcl/mand), Sonny Boy Williamson (hca), "Jackson" Jo Williams (gtr), *Aurora, Ill, June 17 1938* (020851-1) 3:14
- 16 Every Time My Heart Beats - The Delta Boys [Son Bonds (vcl/kazoo), John Estes (gtr), Raymond Thomas (sbs)]
Chicago, September 24 1941(064920-1) 3:19

This collection develops the theme of "Early Folk Blues Volume 1 – Skoodle Um Skoo". (SDR199); the music is perhaps a little less "early", even a little less "folk", but its relationship with the blues tradition is equally extensive and possibly even more intriguing. These performances do not have the emotional overtones associated with the blues; theirs is a simpler function, that of entertaining an audience in a relaxed, laughter-seeking mood. And they are, unlike most blues,

theatrical. "I done sung this song," declare the Excelsior Quartette, "ain't gwine sing no more; if you want to hear it again come to another show." This is show music, with many of the characteristics of the old vaudeville stage; but, thanks to the operation of the "folk process", it has lost some of the glitter and hyperbole, and gained a boisterous downhome quality. And it is, of course, race music, every bit as much as the blues. The market for race records was a heterogeneous one, and it's time that reissues began to illustrate this variety.

There was a specially piquant appeal, for the black listener, in the Beale Street Sheiks' *You Shall* for the abbreviated title would not have long concealed the song's message "you shall be free". And it was under this fuller title, oddly enough, that most of the white versions of the song were issued.¹ The piece, which probably had a religious model, can be found over and over again in the early text-collections,² and was probably one of the most popular black songs of the decade before the recording era. Another composition which goes far back, at least into the 1910s, was *Jelly Roll Blues*. This treatment belongs to an utterly unresearched genre: blues sung by gospel quartets. Many of the major groups recorded secular pieces during the '20s,³ and their arrangements are remarkable for their harmonies and lead-swapping. This is believed be the first reissue ever of such music.

"Sheik" was a common term in black circles – a legacy of the Valentino films? – and, to follow Stokes and Sane, here are the Mississippi Sheiks. *Too Long* was evidently a favourite piece of Charlie McCoy, who sometimes played with the Chatmans, and he recorded it twice in the '30s.⁴ For bawdry, of which there was plenty in the Sheiks' repertoire, hear instead the piece by Napoleon Fletcher, with its reminiscence of *The Dirty Dozens*. With Edith Johnson's comments in the background, this sounds like an urbanised version of the dialogues between Blind Willie McTell and Ruby Glaze.⁵

"The Hokum Boys" was a name used by many groups; the association was in the material, which was always allusively sexual. Bill

Weldon sings lead in *I'm Gonna Get It*, Big Bill joining in the refrains. The bawdry is more forthright in Old Ced Odom's *Derbytown*, which is based on the ancient English folksong *The Derby Ram* and uses the equally venerable device of "obliterating ... the final word of each verse through the overlap of the chorus"⁶; something of the sort also happens in Jesse James's *Sweet Patuni*.⁷

Hometown Skiffle is "staged" in a special sense; it offers a sampler of the company's artists, with excerpts from their hits, linked by a compere. A rundown of the performance is in *Blues & Gospel Records 1902 to 1942*.⁸ There were other such records; *Jim Jackson's Jamboree* (Vocalion 1428) was made in the same month, and the six part *OKeh Medicine Show* of white artists a couple of weeks earlier.

Frank Stokes and Dan Sane return with *It's A Good Thing*, a misogynic composition set to a repetitive and probably very old melody; compare the Memphis Jug Band's *Snitching Gambler Blues*. The second item by the Excelsior Quartette uses the line "ain't you glad you're brown skin, chocolate to the bone?" which was taken up successively by Lillian Glynn and Barbecue Bob.

Skinner has been a favourite of mine for years. I couldn't be more pleased to see this delightful little song available at last. Parodies of "Mary had a little lamb" were common on the minstrel and vaudeville stage in the 1910s. All the instrumental work is by Charlie Turner, probably the greatest of all black one-man bands.⁹

The next three performances feature three of the greatest names of the 30s: Bumble Bee Slim, Big Bill and Tampa Red, *Slave Man Blues* is surprisingly individual, but mainly because the lead voice is the clarinet, playing a mellifluous slow drag tune. Big Bill is the prominent singer in the Hokum Boys' *Keep Your Mind On It*: this time Bill Weldon is second vocalist, but his bouncy steel-guitar playing remains up front¹⁰. Tampa Red made many dance records with the Chicago Five, among them *Let's Get Drunk And Truck*: here he has moved on to a new craze.

Trucking was big in 1935-36, another recording of *Let's Get Drunk And Truck* was by the Harlem Hamfats, whose Decca hits were probably the reason why Bluebird created the Chicago five.

If downhome listeners found such stuff too “sweet and hot”, there was always the exhilarating music of Yank Rachel. *Texas Tommy* – which he remade a few years ago¹¹ – is melodically an up-tempo *Stack O' Dollars*. The Joe Williams on guitar is not “Big” Joe, but the man who sang *Haven't Seen No Whiskey* later the same day: “Jackson Joe” Williams, a Tennessee friend of Rachel and John Estes. Estes himself appears on the closing track, supporting Brownsville Son Bonds. How close this music is to the skiffle of 15 years later.

Here then, are nearly 20 years of race market activity. It would be difficult to illustrate more clearly the unquenchable spirit of black music, its rampant joyfulness, its wholehearted refusal to be depressed either by commercial pressures or by social and economic deprivation.

TONY RUSSELL, 1970

1. E.g. Uncle Dave Macon's *Shout, Mourner, You Shall Be Free* (Vocalion 15445, 5007) and Bill and Belle Reed's *You Shall Be Free* (Columbia 15336– D). Cf. also the Carolina Tar Heels' *When The Good Lord Sets You Free* (Victor 20931) and – a recent black recording – Sam Chatman's *You Shall Be Free* (Arhoolie F1005, original issue).
2. Cf. Oliver, *Screening The Blues*, pp. 56-61 and notes thereto.
3. An even earlier version of *Jelly Roll Blues* was by the Norfolk Jazz Quartet (OKeh 4318), made in 1921. Other groups who used secular as well as religious material include the Dunham Jazz/ Jubilee Singers, the Birmingham Jubilee Singers (Birmingham Quartet), the I.C. Glee Club Quartet and the Old South Quartette.
4. Cf. Vocalion 1712 (“Papa” Charlie McCoy) and Bluebird B-6408 (Papa Charlie's Boys).
- 5) E.g. *Rollin' Mama Blues* (on Roots RL-324) and *Mama, Let Me Scoop For You* (on Piedmont 13159)
6. Oliver, *Screening The Blues* p.195

7. Cf. Roots RL-312.
8. See p. 546 (revised edn.)
9. Cf. Saydisc-Matchbox SDR 199 for two more Holmes-Turner pieces
10. A similar Hokum Boys performance is *Caught Us Doing' It*, on *Blacks, Whites And Blues* (CBS Realm 52796)
11. Cf. Delmark DL-606 (77LA 12/23)



Blind Boy Fuller



Sonny Boy
Williamson



Memphis Minnie



Beale Street
Sheiks

Gus Cannon

Charlie Jackson



Matchbox Bluesmaster Series - set 10

