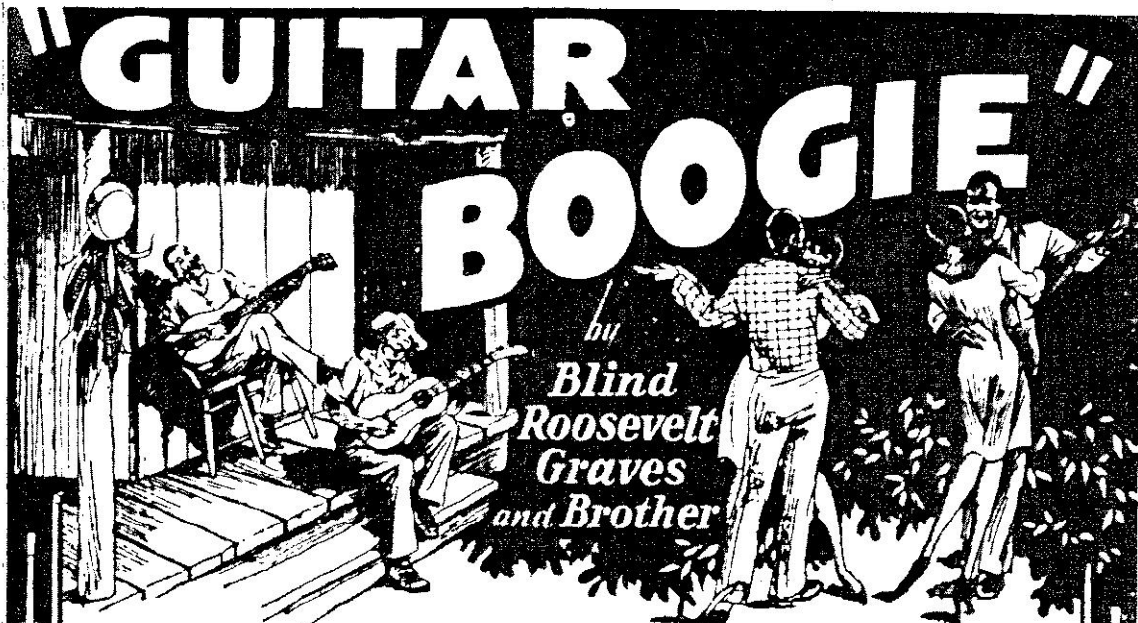


“ACOUSTIC BLUES”

SUMMER 1994

NO. 8

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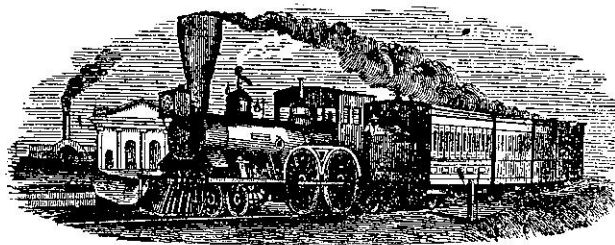
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"ACOUSTIC BLUES"

SUMMER 1994

No.8

£1.00.

EDITOR---MAX HAYMES

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2,Parliament Street,
Lancaster LA1 1DB.
Tel: (0524)64679.

EDITORIAL

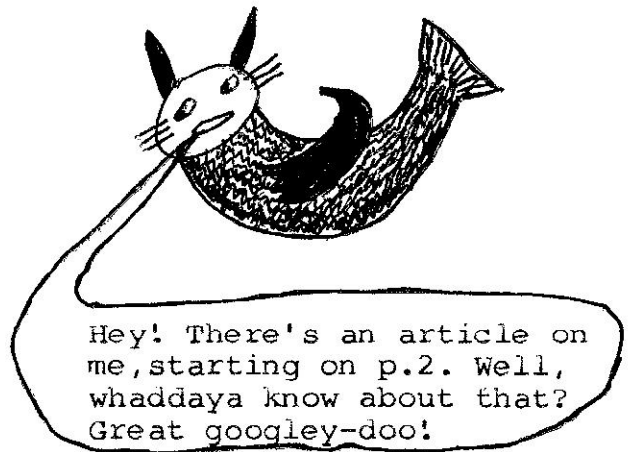
O.K. I know it's a bit late.(So what's new?). So much going on with the Blues,man. Like the National R 'n' B Festival at Colne(26Aug.-29Aug. Ring 0282-865 500 or write to:The Pendle Borough Council,Bank House,61,Albert Rd., Colne,Lancs. BB8 OPB.). That's Bank Holiday week end. I'm running acoustic blues at JIM'S CAFE again --but this time we're OFFICIAL! That's from 27Aug.-29Aug.;12.00 noon 'til late,baby,I mean LATE. Anybody want a spot then give me a shout. O.K.? It's gonna be another mega-groovy blues-time!

I'm also running an accredited course (for Adult Continuing Education) on the early blues "I WROTE THESE BLUES;I'M GONNA SING THEM AS I PLEASE",starting on 27th. Sept. for ten weeks. Featuring over 150 selections from my collection & meeting 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. on a Tuesday. Ring the Storey Institute in Lancaster for enrollment details. No. is 0524-849494 or write:

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Apologies are due to Luther Heavysydes whose musical transcription of "Catfish Blues" will now appear in the next issue "Acoustic Blues". By the way,he has an ANTIQUE WASHBOARD for sale(50 years old!!) - £12.00 o.n.o. Ring 0686-630483.

Also the Sara Martin article,album reviews,womens' blues, Southern recipe,etc. will all be in Acoustic Blues No.9 - due out 1st. Sept. I'm hopin' No. Nine will be on time,mmmm-mmmm!



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"CATFISH BLUES"
(Origins of a blues-2)

This blues reached a peak of popularity in the Mississippi

Delta during the late 1930s and prior to World War II. The sensual haunting melody was later recorded by a world-famous Delta singer in 1950 (and subsequently by other singers) and re-titled "Rollin' Stone". This was of course, Muddy Waters. As Texas blues expert Mack McCormick said; singers like Muddy and Elmore James "worked the catfish theme into a separate song", (1). But we are jumping ahead of the story.

Catfish Blues" was another example of animal-symbolism in blues which according to Paul Oliver (see "Screening The Blues") extended along the lines of the 'black snake' motif made famous in recordings by Victoria Spivey and Blind Lemon Jefferson in the 1920s; interestingly, both from the state of Texas. Blues singers adopted the persona of animal-like characteristics, which is how most Southern whites perceived the blacks, using that persona for powerful, sexual imagery.

Blues lyrics reflect, generally speaking, the singer's environment and fried catfish (see "A.B." No. 5 for recipe!) along with fried chicken has "been a part of the southern diet for two hundred years." (2). Found in both fresh and salt water, the be-whiskered catfish, growing up to 150 lbs. would have been familiar to black fisherman in the interior and on the Gulf Coast and especially in the concentrated black-populated areas in Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama, with their network of rivers including the Tombigbee and the mighty Mississippi. Yet the catfish did not appear in blues lore, as far as is known, until the popular, black medicine-show entertainer and songster, Jim Jackson, included it in a 1928 recording for Vocalion. This was Part 3 of his

monster hit "Jim Jackson's Kansas City Blues". The third verse runs:

"I wished I was a catfish,
swimming down in the sea;
I'd have some good woman,
fishing after me."

Ref: "Then I'll move to Kansas City,
~~Then~~ I'll move to Kansas City;
I'll move to Kansas City,
babe, honey, where they don't 'low you." (3)



Parts 1 and 2 of this record had been issued some 3 months earlier and "reputedly sold 1,000,000 copies! This would thus make it one of the very first gold records". (4). This success prompted Vocalion and Jackson to cut a total of six versions by the end of 1928. The last two as "I'm Gonna Move To Louisiana". But the 'catfish verse' only appeared in Part 3, quoted above. Two of the most well-known 'cover' versions included one by the Memphis Jug Band as "Kansas City Blues", made some 3 weeks after Jackson's best-selling Part 1; and archetypal Delta bluesman, Charlie Patton recorded it as "Going To Move To Alabama" in

in 1929. But both records omitted the 'catfish verse'. However, between these dates, another Delta singer, William Harris, did include a variation in his "Kansas City Blues" which became standard in later versions of "Catfish Blues"/"Rollin' Stone":

"I wish I was a catfish, swimmin'
in the deep bluessea;
I'd have all you women fishin'
after me."(5)

Apparently, Jim Jackson had introduced "Kansas City Blues" to "many potential record buyers before the record was issued".(6) on the medicine show circuit in the Southern states. The singer was born c.1884 in Hernando, Miss. on the Illinois Central line; that's in De Soto County. So quite conceivably, he was singing about the catfish in 1919 or thereabouts. In any event, about a week after recording Part 3 of his million-seller, Jackson moved to Memphis, Tenn. (some 15 miles from Hernando) to live. By now he was one of the most popular black singers on Beale Street and throughout the whole of the South. Ex-member of the Memphis Jug Band, Dewey Corley, remembered "I used to see Jim on stage in medicine shows. There was a gang of people behind Jim as long as a freight train (Jim was the star of the show). They used to set up their tent in South Memphis. It was just like a carnival".(7).

So one or probably all the versions of Jackson's "Kansas City Blues" (in reality the first 4 recorded "parts" were most likely the summation of one continuous live performance) were not only well-known in many areas of the South, but known for some considerable time prior to them being put on disc. Despite all this exposure to a black listening public, the catfish symbolism didn't take off immediately, at least on record. The same could be said for the fish motif generally.

Ma Rainey had cut "Don't Fish in My Sea" as early as December, 1926, but it is quite likely she would have heard Jim Jackson, many years

prior to this, as she also travelled the medicine/tent-show circuit throughout the South in the same period of time that he did. In the same month that Part 3 of "Jim Jackson's Kansas City Blues" was recorded, an East Coast guitarist, William Moore, included an intriguing "Catfish Woman Blues" in his only record session c. January, 1928. Unfortunately, this was never issued and accounts for one of the many lost Paramount masters. Again, it seems likely that Moore was inspired by the immensely popular Jim Jackson record. Not until 1934, when Tampa Red declared:

"Now, I'm a kingfishin' poppa,
an' I know what kind of
bait to choose;
Unk. female (speech) "Yeah!"
I'm a kingfishin' poppa, I
know what kind of bait to
choose.
That's why so many women
cryin' those 'Kingfish
Blues'"(8)

was the world of fishing adopted by the blues singer, adding to the already rich vocabulary of sexual symbolism. The following year, Bumble Bee Slim from Georgia (as was Tampa) recorded "Everybody's Fishing" on the Vocalion label:

"I woke up this mornin' an' I
grabbed my pole,
Can't catch the fish to save
my soul."

Ref: "Everybody's fishin' - yes,
Everybody's fishin';
Everybody's fishin', I'm
gon' fish some too."

"Every little fish like this
bait I got,
My babe home got her skillet
hot."

Ref: "Everybody's fishin'" etc.
(9)

St. Louis-based singer, Alice Moore, took the closing phrase o

of Slim's refrain as the title for her 1936 version "I'm Going Fishing Too". Meanwhile, the catfish imagery had been evolving around Greenwood, Miss. and approximately 100 miles away in Lake Cormorant, Miss., Delta bluesman, Fiddlin' Joe Martin, was to reproduce his version of the Bumble Bee Slim number as "Going To Fishing" for the Library of Congress in 1941. The same year that "Catfish Blues"/"Rollin' Stone" was to make its recording debut.

(Concluding part next time)

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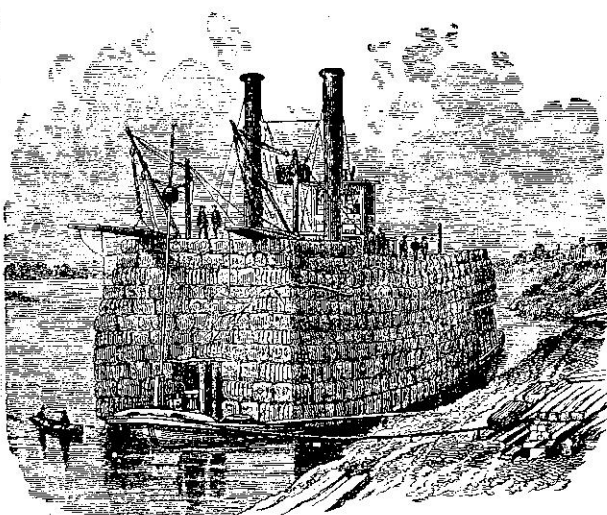
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"Things Acoustic-6th National Burnley Blues Festival"

Colin Kirby now in the company of Ray on second guitar, appear as the BLUES TRAVELLERS, and kicked things off with a number written by Colin "Oh! Child Beside The Waterfall". A great opener with Colin playing harp on a rack. Then Ray joined him and included "Hey, Hey" (from Big Bill) and "Before You Accuse Me". Sung with a deceptive gruffness, they did a difficult, just fine, including a rock-in' instrumental. Playing solo, Colin finished with "Crossroads Blues" featuring some of the finest interpretations of Johnson's guitar style I've yet witnessed.

Continuing this high standard, HARRY GUREVITCH followed a crackling "Going To Germany" (Cannon's Jug Stompers) with some beautiful guitar-picking on "Diving Duck Blues" where he mixed the lyrics in with snatches of "Never Let The Same Bee Sting You Twice" from Richard "Rabbit" Brown (1927). His classic performance though is a transposing of a poem from black poet, Langston Hughes, about the KKK to a melody we know as "Sitting On Top Of The World" as composed by the Mississippi Sheiks in 1930. Just beautiful, Harry! After a storming version of Blind Gary Davis' "You've Got To Go Down" he was joined by Tim Haigh on harp in a great version of Leroy Carr's "Midnight Hour Blues" and switched mid-stream to Robert Johnson's "From Four Until Late". Superb interplay between harmonica and guitar.

TIM HAIGH stayed on stage to back LITTLE WILLIE SLACK (aka. Mike Cooper) on his old steel guitar. Mike included a great rendition of "Me And The Devil Blues", a moving "Sporting Life Blues" and a sensitive version of "Cool Drink O Of Water Blues" which went all the way back to 1928 and Tommy Johnson in Mississippi. Next came Charlie



COTTON-PACKET.
1878.

"Things Acoustic" (cont'd)

Patton's famous "Pony Blues" which Charlie would have been proud of. I don't know of any body else on this side of the pond who does "Pony" and Mike, baby, you did the Delta blues and yourself, just proud. Back with Tommy Johnson and his "Big Road Blues" performed with gusto and an inherent sense of feeling, with Tim backing up admirably. Good! Good! Good!

By now things were beginning to really heat up and the HELLHOUND BLUES notched up another gear with a truly beautiful rendering of the Memphis Jug Band's "K.C. Moan". Rex left the stage while Rich blew a scorching train blues on his harp. Then the 'devil-dog' duo belted out "Bottle Up And Go" a la Tommy McClennan with the blues crowd joining in on the chorus. Staying in the Delta, Rich switched to washboard and Rex to his bottleneck for a tremendous version of Bukka White's "Bukka's Jitterbug Swing". The crowd howled for more.

The MIDNIGHT SPECIALS slipped in a cracking train song backed by two harmonicas, while LYNN BREEZE with MALCOLM on harp also and ? on guitar, sang a great contemporary blues "Ansaphone Blues" - the Blues is relevant, AIN'T THAT RIGHT? AIN'T THAT RIGHT?? Rich T. took over the harp stool and Malcolm returned to his sax, playin' it low-down an' dirty for a lovely traditional no. "Careless Love". These were only some of the highlights on Friday.

Due to parking problems our opening act was running late so REX HAYMES (not he of the Hellhound Blues, surely??) stood in on vocals/ guitar and gave us some fine, mellow blues like "Ain't No Tellin'", "Untrue Blues", "Cigarette Blues", by Mississippi John Hurt, Lightnin' Hopkins and Bo Carter, respectively. It's a long time since I heard you solo, my boy; I'm glad to hear you'll feature some of this stuff in future gigs. By now with his car well an' truly parked, LUTHER HEAVISYDES tore

into some dazzling guitar work a la Blind Blake, followed up by a fine "Broke, Hungry, Ragged, An' Dirty Too". After a frenetic "Mama Don't Allow!" our ears were treated to a magnificent version of Skip James' "Hard Time Killing Floor Blues" using his own topical lyrics: "Follow that", I thought; and he did, with some great and original lyrics on a self-penned number "Daddy Was No Slave". Great stuff, my man!

The place was fairly jumpin' and up steps Z.Z. BIRMINGHAM and CARMEN PIRAHNA. Z.Z. started out with one of his own songs "Good Morning Miss Brown" with Carmen complementin his guitar with her laid-back washboard. She then joined in on vocals for a sizzling rendition of Jim Jackson's "Wild About My Lovin'". Carmen laid aside her trusty 'board and sang "Ain't Misbehavin'" (of Fats Waller fame!) and switched to "Beale Street Blues" - great singing, gal, Alberta Hunter would really have dug that. Then it was time for Z.Z. to do a solo. This was a rockin' and frantic harp version of "John Henry". One of the finest and most original covers of this well-worn traditional blues-ballad I've ever heard.

What next? GYPSY BILL WILLIAMS that's what next. Straight into an acapella (unaccompanied to you!) item "John The Revelator" with audience response; spine tingling gospel. Then picking up his guitar he did Son House's "Shet and Pony Blues", grabbing the blues by the throat and squeezed 'em near dry!! Joined by DAVE on piano they changed the tempo for a rollicking "Down In The Alley" and knocked 'em dead. Solo once more, Bill did "You Gotta Move" with chilling slide played in eerie unison with his dramatic vocal. they don't get any better than this.

Undaunted, "Beale St." Bill Roberts of BETTY'S BLUES started in ~

on some fine boogie as only Bill can play! Then Liz scorched in with the blues. She hit 'em smack between the eyes. Then a rocking "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens" which knocked 'em dead. With an adroit switch of mood, this duo then did a harrowing "St. James' Infirmary" laced with some of Liz's wicked humour in the line "...stretched out on a long white table, so cold, so sweet, so dead" Some mo' Louis Jordan in the shape of "Caldonia" had the crowds singing along and screaming for "more".

Following this was gonna be hard and everybody stared as young 14-year old DANIEL HEARN took the stage, sat down and promptly disappeared behind his guitar! Wondering what would happen next, Dan, with his voice still unbroken, said he would start with a tune by Mississippi John Hurt. Performed as a guitar solo, he got so near to Hurt's sound it wasn't true-great pickin', Dan. He followed this up, at this same high level of guitar-manship(???) with a vocal outing "Mary Don't You Weep, Don't You Moan". You sure you only 14, man? Then he picked the hell out of Big Bill's "Hey, Hey". You could almost hear the jaws dropping in the large crowd, which included some of Britain's finest blues artists. "He may be good, but you're not a real blues man until you can play slide." muttered one of the audience, darkly. To complete this speaker's misery, Dan announced a self-penned no. featuring bottleneck guitar! This performance left the crowd gasping for breath, I mean oxygen-type air. You are good already and that's from a blues purist. But when your voice breaks, bluesmen up and down the line will be singing: "There's a Daniel Hearn on my trail, mmmmm-mmmmm". Have mercy now!!

Even an experienced musician like JET MARTIN who came on next must have felt some trepidation on introducing his opening number. But he tore straight into Robert Wilkins' "Prodigal Son" on guitar and bass drum. A really mean version, Jet. Then a raunchy "Baby Please Don't Go" hit you straight in the solar plexus. You never played better-I mean with the

feeling! Jet changed instruments at this point, bringing out a 12-string National steel! He then treated us to some delicious slide including a frenetic "Roll And Tumble Blues" and the place was jumpin'. He finished all too soon with one of the finest versions of that old jazz standby "When The Saints Go Marching In" done as a superb instrumental. A fitting close to Saturday's acoustic session at the Mechanics, and a spring-off for the following day, being Sunday.

Today kicked off with an excellent guitarist from Edinburgh, ALLEN JONES singing a low down, smooth an' mellow "Betty And Dupree". He featured some beautiful picking, and sensitive slide work on Tampa Red's "King fish Blues" (from 1934). At the end of his set Allen gave us a belting version of Charlie Patton's "Moon Going Down". Featuring a great vocal and a real driving rhythm that Charlie could not have faulted. This is the only time I've heard this blues done live. Great stuff, my man!

From Hull came ANGIE SCARR and her steel guitar. Sensitivity is the key in many of the early blues and Angie has it with a capital "S". She included a great and unusual personal interpretation of Robert Johnson's "Me And The Devil" and the most spine-chilling slide on his "Come On In My Kitchen" since the original. More delicious bottleneck was heard on a superb instrumental of "Pearline" a la Son House. A change of pace (and guitar) for a hard-pushing "If Love Was A Train" and a fantastic "My Heavy Load" with Angie coming on real strong now. Back with her slide guitar and the first new version of Blind Willie Johnson's "Bye And Bye I'm Going To See The King", I've yet heard. Although this is a gospel item, Angie played in a style

that was drenched with the blues. Angie, baby, you jus' keep getting better an' better.



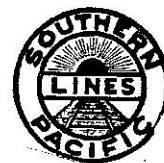
Two guys calling themselves DEL RIO comprised of ? vocal/gtr. and Mark on vocal/imitation bass. Start-ing with a fine version of Lil' Son Jackson's "Roberta", they includ-ed a rollicking "Keep Your Hands Off Her" from Big Bill. Mark slaps his tea chest bass with a wallet! He took over the vocal spot for a thumping "Mystery Train" (Junior Parker) with Mark doing the train whistle vocally! Great, guys-definitely your best number.



At my suggestion Mark joined up with Al Peters and Leigh Marle who are the BLUESMEN. Their twin guitars, Al's raucous vocal and a pounding solo from Mark contributed to the finest performance of Muddy's "Can't Be Satisfied" I've heard 'em play. Embellished with some incisive slide work. Mark's 'chonking' bass sounds fitted in so perfectly with the barrelhouse flavour of the Bluesmen that he played for the rest of the set. A moving "Wee Wee Hours" was followed by some real foot-stomping blues via "Hi-Heel Sneakers" and "Key To The Highway". After a great version of Johnson's "Crossroads" they finished with a truly frenetic "Every Day I Have The Blues"; the crowded atmosphere was white-hot, boys. The three of you complement each other perfectly and I reckon Mark 'the wallet slap-

-ping fool! should become one of the Bluesmen, on a semi-permanent basis at least.

Entirely in keeping with this mood was MICK CRAIN on vo./gtr. and 2 harps from the MID-NIGHT SPECIALS. After a Cajun song taken at a rollicking tempo they did a superb version of Jimmy Rogers' (the black^{one}, that is) "Chicago Bound" with localised place names. Then one of the harp players, DOCTOR MIDNIGHT stepped to the front and did some really fine train blues sounds on his moanin' harp. Good one, my man, good!



In complete contrast, LONG JOHN SLIDER was up to his usual high standard of sensitive slide guitar, to no more telling effect than on his variation of "Come On In My Kitchen". Indeed, the several versions of this Johnson no. we heard during the Festival all reflected the haunting qualities of this song, admirably. After an impeccable instrumental (self-penned) he switched to a raunchy "Groundhog Blues" from the John Lee Hooker song book.

On arrival at the Mechanics around 11.30 a.m. on the Monday, I discovered that the P.A. + the stage had been removed from the Acoustic Bar!! Due to a cock-up by the administration. So after some frenetic running around we had the Acoustic Session down in the basement in the Mid-Pennine Gallery. No P.A. or piano and only 'cool can beer' - but that's the Blues! ROOT SAP kicked off and tore the place up - the joint was packed and both the doors blew back - whoo-eee! HELLHOUND

BLUES, LITTLE WILLIE SLACK, MIKE CRAIN, PETE BOLTON and MIKE JACKSON gave their all and the crowd loved it.

At 4.30 I asked Mike Cooper to take over as M.C. while I checked out Big Boy Henry in the Tudor Room. I left "Beale St." Bill stomping all over the boogie woogie blues.

BIG BOY HENRY at 72 years young is a guitar-man from Beaufort, S.C. on the Eastern seaboard and was accompanied by a young white ex-Chicagoan, GARY ERWIN on washboard, and our own DAVE PEABODY on guitar. Big Boy was suffering from arthritis in his right hand but did play one number - Piedmont blues from Blind Boy Fuller on down; Lord have mercy! He also related anecdotes about his early life in the South, including a fishing trip at midnight when he checked his nets and found a bull alligator that was longer than his fishing boat!!! THAT'S THE BLUES??? See ya later, alligator!

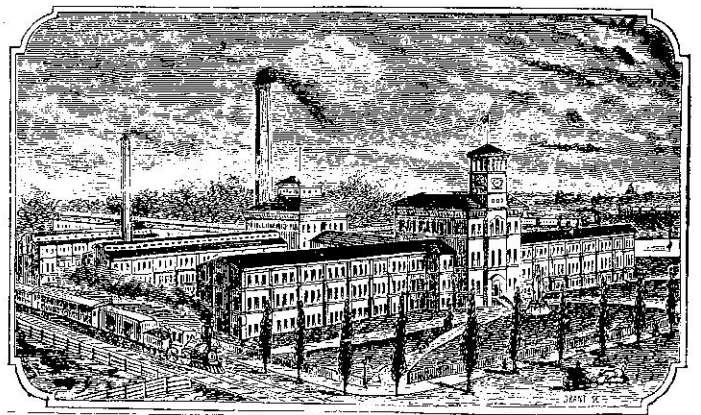


Later in the evening on the Main Festival Stage, Gary had switched to piano (his first instrument) and they knocked the socks off the blues! The place was heaving-whatta a good time, mmm-mmmm! I headed on back to the Sparrowhawk Hotel when they finished, to catch the late-night concert with ROOT SAP. This brother/sister duo are world class performers and everything they did was brilliant (makes you sick, don't it?). J.C.'s thrilling slide and frenetic ukelele-playing has to be seen to be believed. While Angelina with her beautiful/unique vocals and compelling guitar takes you way out yonder. My favourite is still the haunting "Viola Lee Blues" from

Noah Lewis/Cannon's Jug Stompers' repertoire.

Unfortunately, one of the few low spots (from an acoustic point of view) of the Festival was booked to close it! HELEN FOSTER is a good singer for her chosen style of music - BUT IT WASN'T BLUES!! Picking up the negative vibes, she finished some 45 minutes before the end. But blues fans did not want to leave a 5-day Festival on a damp squib, and when I asked the crowd "do you wanna a blues jam session?" the crowd screamed back "YEAHHH!" So musicians piled on the stage. The Hellhounds were there, so was Little Willie Slack, J.C. and Angelina plus Lynn/Breeze and Malcolm on his rootin' tootin' sax, and others I've forgotten. But various combinations of this motley crew?? pounded their way through old favourites like "Sweet Home Chicago", "Dust My Broom", "Rollin' AN' Tumblin'", et al. The place went beserk and yours truly joined in with the boppin' on the barroom floor. Now THAT'S the way to end a Festival - with a BANG!!

See you at Colne in August?



The Elgin National Watch Co. at the company town of Elgin, Illinois. c.1878. Featured in several early blues including Blind Blake, Elgin (with a hard or soft 'g') watches were celebrated by Robert Johnson in his line "she got Elgin movements from her head down to her toes".

"DISCOVERING THE BLUES"

by Dan Hearn (aged 14)

The Blues was always there. Buried adapted, changed and copied in so much rock and pop like that beautiful blues shuffle in "That'll Be The Day".

Nov '91 - My first guitar was a cheap classical model, "Beginners only" almost complete with 'L' plates. Taught myself basic chords and started to finger pick some easier Beatles' melodies. I got my hands mobile and feeling at ease across the frets. Then it was day trips to Manchester and spending hours in the big guitar shops. Got my hands on every guitar I could. But it was always the steel strings I returned to. It was something to do with that twang.

1992 - Got me a steel string. Eric Clapton releases "Unplugged" C.D. This is some playing. Looked at the sleeve notes: so not all the songs are written by Eric Clapton? Who are these other song writers? Big Bill Broonzy, Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson? Haven't seen them on Top Of The Pops? I check it out. So Eric Clapton is playing

music written half-a-century ago (Right back to the 1920s in fact - Ed.).

1993 - Buy, listen to, play, imitate, adapt everything I can from these guitarists. This is real music. I can hear hands of real skill, voices of real feeling. This is completely different to so much lousy machine-like inhuman chart music. These guys are not posing and bored (like artists) on Top Of The Pops, hitting a key marked 'X' every couple of seconds. Some crackling recording of Lonnie Johnson and Eddie Lang recorded on Wednesday, 9th. October, 1929 in New York. A sound travelling across time and space and I can hear the skill of the fingers and power of the voice exactly fifty years before I was born. And yet, it's like they are playing just for me. These guys are like acrobats of the guitar. These are who I must live up to.

1994 - A Thursday night.



It's like a ritual. Lying in bed listening to the Paul Jones "Rhythm and Blues Show". Hear something new, I make a note and check it out. There is so much to learn. This particular night I hear a name I haven't heard before. It's Max Haymes. They want Acoustic Blues Guitarists in Burnley. They must mean me.

April 2nd. 1994 - Find myself on the Burnley Mechanics Acoustic Stage, in the Theatre Bar; and the rest, as they say, is.....

Nice one, Dan. And if you want to check this guy out, he'll be coming to Max's Blues Club here in Lancaster, on Saturday, 9th July, to dig the blues and feature in a guest spot during the evening.

Right! Now to put you out of your misery concerning Professor No-hair's Amazing Cryptic Blues (type thing) Crossword (oops! sorry Rich); featured in No.7.

ANSWERS TO BLUES CROSSWORD

1. Taylor.
2. Peetie.
3. & 12. Dr. Ross.
4. Alexander.
5. Jesse Fuller.
6. Lucille Bogan.
7. Little.
8. Memphis.
9. Curly.
10. Will Shade.
11. Gus Cannon.
13. Montgomery.
14. Rice.

Bold squares anagram reads:

"Son Brimmer".

Diagonal reads: "Terraplane".

How many did you score, then? Oh! no you didn't. I bet you peeked at this lil' ol' page number ten! Watch this space for bluesy brain bashers from Professor No-hair. That can't be his real name, can it?

Well now, reader Les Anderson from Belfast lists some of his favourite blues.

Just a few favourites in no particular order.

"LES' TOP TWENTY BLUES"

1. "WRITE ME A FEW LINES".
Mississippi Fred McDowell.
 2. "LONG HAIRD DONEY".
R.L. Burnside.
 3. "DARK WAS THE NIGHT".
Blind Willie Johnson.
 4. "SMOKESTACK LIGHTNING".
Howling Wolf.
 5. "CANDY MAN".
Mississippi John Hurt.
 6. "MOJO HAND".
Lightnin' Hopkins.
 7. "WOMAN BE WISE".
Sippie Wallace/Bonnie Raitt.
 8. "DEATH LETTER".
Son House.
 9. "HOOCHIE COOCHIE MAN".
Muddy Waters.
 10. "JR. BLUES".
Junior Kimbrough.
 11. "BUKKA'S JITTERBUG SWING".
Bukka White/Catfish Keith.
 12. "DUST MY BROOM".
Elmore James.
 13. "SITTIN' ON TOP OF THE WORLD".
Johnny Shines.
 14. "FOX CHASE".
Peg Leg Sam.
 15. "BABY PLEASE DON'T GO".
Big Joe Williams.
 16. "SHAKE 'EM ON DOWN".
David 'Honey Boy' Edwards.
 17. "DAMN RIGHT I'VE GOT THE BLUES".
Buddy Guy.
 18. "HELP ME, SOMEBODY".
Son Seals.
 19. "SLIDEWINDER".
J.B. Hutto.
 20. "TAKE FIVE".
Hound Dog Taylor.
- No Magic Sam, John Lee Hooker or B.B. King. Sorry! (Cheers, Les. You can't get 'em all in - Ed.)





"GONNA WRITE ME A LETTER,MAIL IT
IN THE AIR"

I was most interested to read your magazine which is an excellent read. I wish I knew about it earlier! I like your reviews of local artists performing the blues;it gets names known who can be picked up on when appearing in my neighbourhood. Which brings me to my main reason for writing.

Your suggestion of a blues network deserves support; I'm sure there are many small clubs promoting acoustic blues players,possibly in isolation. My suggestion is to invite your subscribers to provide information about such clubs in their area; in this way a framework of national blues centres can be built up.

Having said all that,I cannot really offer much in the way of an acoustic blues scene down here! Most places are "roots/folk" clubs,but venues where I have heard acoustic blues include the "Concorde Bar" and Ranelagh Arms in Brighton;the Crown in Eastbourne; the Seven Sisters in Seaford,and the "1066" in Battle,near Hastings. I hope this provides a start.

P.S. Do you know anyone who would be interested in exchanging tapes of acoustic blues - both "new and old"? I find this a great way of hearing blues players I wouldn't otherwise come across.

Martin Kenny.
10,Mallory Rd.,
Hove,
East Sussex BN3 6TB.

(Well,this starts the ball rolling,and read on for news of 2 clubs in Hull & Cleveland. For tapes exchange,contact Martin - not "Acoustic Blues". O.K.?-Ed.).

Straight over to Angie and Steve in Hull's seamy 'Southside'.

"The 'ROYAL WILLY' ACOUSTIC
BLUES CLUB -MONDAY NIGHTS
IN HULL"

by Angie Scarr & Steve Swales

There should be a sign outside our Blues Club: "Lovers of order and predictability....stay away". So many complaints have been levelled at us over the non-management of the nights we call a club,for the sake of a label.

It started off in the old King Billy pub,now sadly gone the way of most real 'Real Ale' houses; but now has moved into the smaller,semi-regal and semi-scandalously named Royal Willy. Proud and upstanding,it resides in the red light district,though not visited by those too busy to get the blues on a Monday.

The idea was a good one,though when Steve and I found it,it was sadly under-attended;it was a crossover between a folk session and a blues night. Those who attended semi-regularly were fighting a losing battle and the word on the street was that it was 'crap' (yes,that was the word). We didn't think it was crap,we just thought it was a shame when every couple of weeks,nobody would turn up to play and a few turned up to listen.

We started dragging friends, relatives,students,and everyone we could,in by advertising it as 'the place to be' before it actually was. Within a couple of

1882 advert.
in an attempt
to counter-act
the mass of
black workers
leaving the
South in the
post-Reconstr-
uction era.

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THE SOUTH-WESTERN IMMIGRATION CO.
will mail on application, free of cost, postage prepaid, books with maps, giving reliable information of
Texas, ARKANSAS, or Western Louisiana. Address [1882] B. C. DUVAL, Sec'y, Austin, Tex.

weeks you couldn't move in the place. There was good beer, enough good musicians willing to play for expenses and beer money and enough space for the rest of us to make a right horrible noise in between. It was more like a front room jam than a gig and that's the way it's stayed, in spite of all attempts to change it by adding 'just a microphone...for the vocals' or 'just one amp for the bass guitar' or 'why don't you announce the musicians?'. We've even had 'this place is a disgrace, where's your organisation, call yourselves promoters' blah blah! Actually we don't. But what we do, perhaps to the chagrin of some of our critics, is to fill the place week after week with people who want to showcase and develop their blues skills, and those who want to listen to it. Gradually even some of the early sour grapes have sweetened.

Some of our critics have stayed away, some have come back and the latter are in the majority. The audience are always there, often too loud and thoughtless. It's a trial by fire for anyone with a large ego.

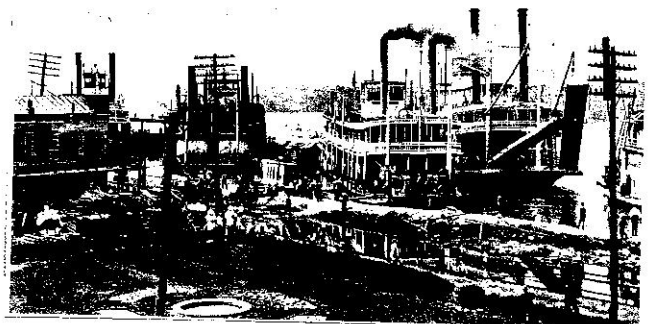
We have no prior advertising of artists (stops people from choosing to stay away), we have no M.C.... announce yourself if you want more attention, we have no admission charge, blues lovers like beer...that's how the landlord can pay the expenses. We have no serious expenses, our guests play for the love of the workshop-type experience. If we paid them properly, it would be a serious gig (like all the others that no-one attends). This is the most difficult bit to explain except by saying that the musicians get as much out of it as the audience who are mostly musicians themselves.

Of course we believe that musicians should be paid properly for their work...most of our guests are fairly regularly in other guises in amplified bands at other venues. Some are part-time bluesmen and some are dedicated semi-professionals like Harry Gurevitch, the country blues guitarist who has a very popular s

style and distinctive vocals and Tim 'Honey Chile' Haigh, the Burnley '93 harmonica champ who we sometimes jokingly ask to stay away, 'cos he's too flamin' good. We have had the mean and moody Dave Whatt, who I personally rate as the best living Delta blues guitarist I've heard, and his friend Steve Bennett who together or separately are well worth listening to as acoustic musicians, but are more often heard as part of a hefty Chicago-style electric blues band, known as "Fat Slim" which also includes Tim Haigh.

We have crossover musicians who pay regular visits, such as Frankie and Pete (aka. "Mambo Jambo") who play all styles from Latin-American and jazz, etc. but play blues just for us. We get folk blues, ragtime blues, even Chicago, but played on acoustic instruments. But the real stars of the show are the 'wannabees' and the 'getting theres'...some times terribly good and some times just terrible, sometimes terrified but always appreciated by those who understand the concept. Yes, the club can be criticised for many things, unpredictability amongst them, but boring and empty it never is.

Unfortunately, since the writing of this article, the club's venue may once again be under threat. We do have a future venue in mind, but will it be finished in time? Watch this space.



Down on the levee at Vicksburg, Miss. c.1890.

"MR. K'S COUNTRY BLUES-WHO?"

by Chris Snowdon

You might have noticed the name on leaflets advertising their shows over the last 12 months or you might be one of the select few who managed to get to see American Bluesman John Jackson at the Marine in Saltburn on Easter Sunday, and now you're wondering "who the hell are they?"

Quite simply, they are a bunch of acoustic (country) blues enthusiasts who have started to put on quality blues musicians in Cleveland on a break even basis. Following the demise of the Redcar Festival which had managed to feature a couple of acoustic sessions, "Mr. K's Country Blues" decided to carry on, for their own benefit as well as others, and bring the best blues musicians to Cleveland instead of having to travel the length and breadth of the U.K. to see them.

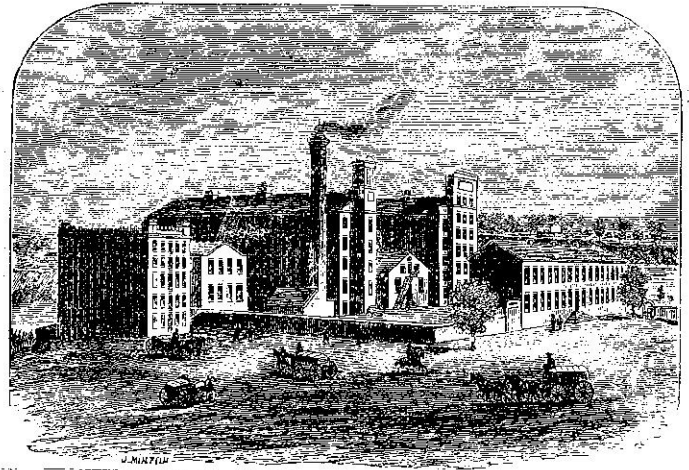
Their first show was in the Victoria, Saltburn, last June, and featured "Catfish Keith", well-known slide guitarist from the U.S.A. Due back on 25th May, the following year, the 100-strong audience voted him 'an act not to be missed'. "Bob Greenwood's Rhythm Rascals" was the next show in Nov. 1993, at the Marine - again in Saltburn. Having done the folk and roots circuits for many years, this show gave the Rhythm Rascals a chance to feature more of their blues and was well received.

The biggest success was on Easter Sunday, 1994, when "Mr. K's" brought, at great expense, John Jackson (from Virginia - Ed.) to the Marine. A capacity crowd were treated to an unforgettable evening of authentic country blues. The only drawback was the lack of space and having to turn people away at the door. Local musicians "The Same Old Blues" (Stan Croft and Geoff Atkinson) and Redcar's Jim Wright have provided the support at all of the shows so far.

(For more info. re' mailing

lists, playing at the club, etc. ring Chris on Middlesbrough (0642) 321559. - Ed.).

Like Angie says, keep watchin' this space for mo' acoustic blues clubs - ain't that the truth?



A Southern cotton mill - c.1878.

"Womens' Blues"

"Spotlight On Lucille Bogan"
(Conclusion)

I stated at the outset of this feature on Lucille Bogan, that it was sometimes of dubious value to attribute the truth, in a literal sense, to the lyrics sung by blues singers. Having said that, lacking much factual evidence on Bogan, that is precisely what I have done in the last 4 issues of "A.B." concerning the 'truth' about this singer. Conversely, characteristics and the personality of a blues artist can often be gleaned from their blues, which if not always literally true for the singer, would be for many of the people listening to the blues.

From recurring themes and more than casual detail in her recorded lyrics, we can assume, fairly safely, that Lucille

Bogan was a self-assured, tough and outward-going character with a warm, vulnerable, inner being. She was involved in prostitution and bootleg booze and seemed to have an amoral/atheistic attitude to life. She married/lived with at least one man who worked on a Southern railroad. She insisted on being a woman, free, black, and herself; in a society constrained by the oppression of whites, and the male chauvinism of both races, in the South. Like Charlie Patton from the Mississippi Delta, she was her own person and did her own 'thing', against seemingly, insurmountable odds.

These details and summary of Lucille Bogan seem entirely in keeping with some fresh facts related to me by blues collector Paul Swinton from Fleet, Hants, to whom I'm deeply indebted. This information originally came from the U.S.A.

In 1914, Lucille Anderson (born 1st April, 1897) married Nazareth Bogan, a blues singer and railroad man. On the 4th Sept. in either 1915 or 1916, Lucille, while still a teenager, gave birth to a son, Nazareth Jr. The latter eventually settled in Compton, Ca. with his wife Mary, where Bob Eagle interviewed him on 28th Dec. 1974. Bogan told Eagle he had a sister who died a long time ago. He could only recall one of his mother's accompanists: Will Ezell. But Eagle did not ask him anything about this artist. (more's the pity). Nazareth Jr. explained that Lucille wrote all her songs at home (in Birmingham, Ala.) and only travelled to New York and Chicago to record.

After a divorce from Nazareth Sr. (who outlived her), Lucille, near the end of her life, married James Spencer (born 1919), some 22 years younger than herself. Only 8 weeks after following her son to California, Lucille Bogan died on 10th Aug. 1948 at her home on 1913, East 114th St., Los Angeles, Ca. (1). Dying of coronary sclerosis, she was buried in "Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery, Los Angeles,

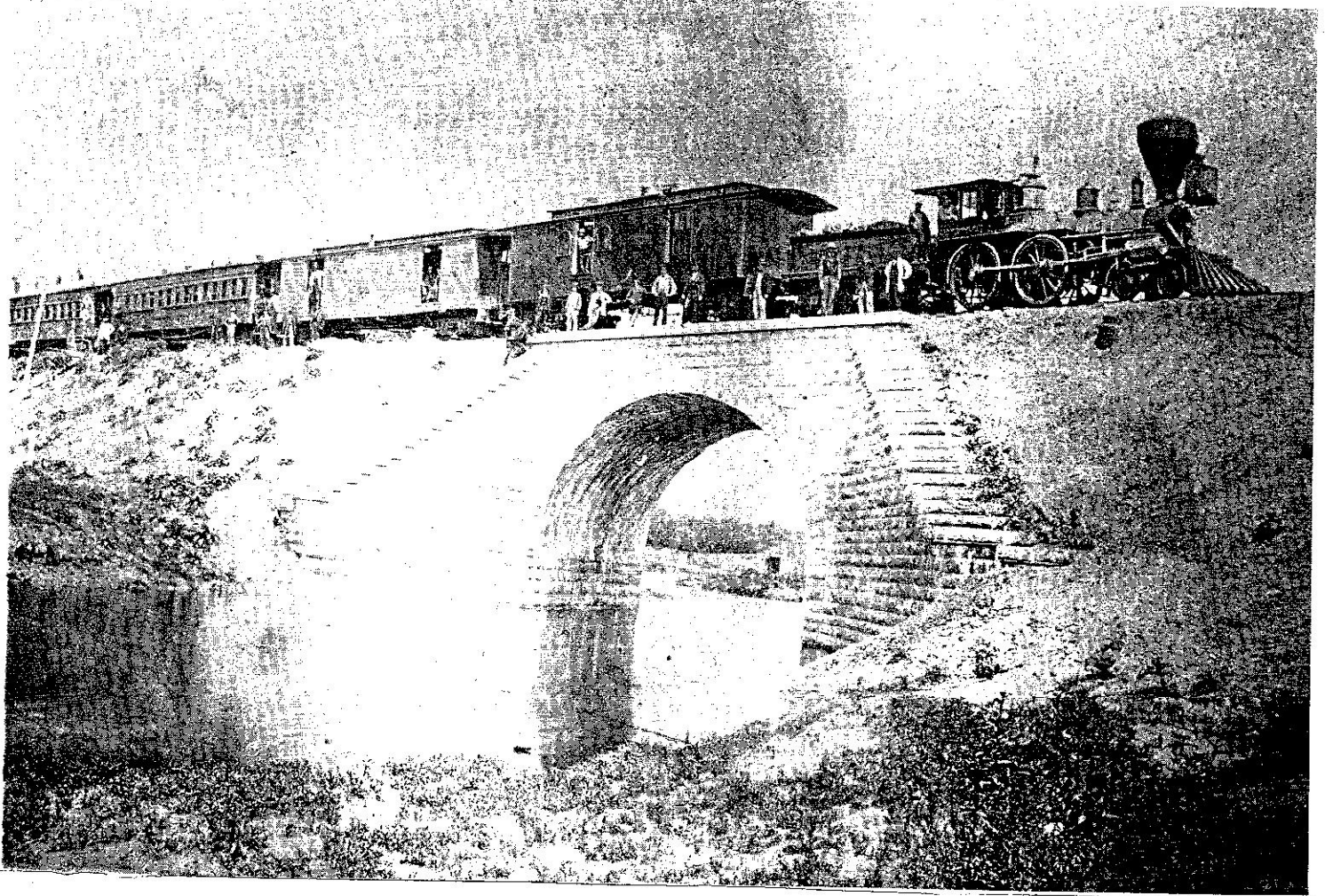
CA" (2).

Also from the same indirect U.S. sources we learn that Ms. Bogan was definitely a prostitute at some stage in her life, and had strong connections with the black underworld in Birmingham, Ala. It is possible that she knew Pete Harris, an excellent slide guitarist from Texas. He had recorded 12 sides for Library of Congress in 1934. Bogan also might have known a pianist from her home town by the name of Wilbert 'Big Chief' Ellis (b. 1914) who did not get to record until 1945.

This report confirms that of the one by Sheldon Harris in 1989 concerning her dates of birth and death, the name of her 2 (known) husbands and the fact she had two children. (3). Van Rijn, in the notes to a later L.P. release "Trouble Done Bore Me Down" (with various artists), said that the writing of the sleeve notes to the Lucille Bogan L.P. on the same label (Agram) coincided with a then forthcoming article on Bogan by Bob Eagle "the Australian Alabama expert", in "Living Blues" No. 44 in 1979 (referred to in "Acoustic Blues" No. 4). As Eagle only corrected some misconceptions in the draft copy of his notes, they are sadly now incomplete.

Lucille Bogan was also a music promoter/entrepreneur who "managed Bogan's Birmingham Busters group" (4) in the late '30s in Birmingham. It transpires that this group was fronted by Nazareth Bogan Jr. - then around 20 years old. "In 1937 she brought her son's group... to the studio. The group recorded without her that same year". (5). There is no mention in "Blues & Gospel Records 1902-

(cont'd on p.16.)

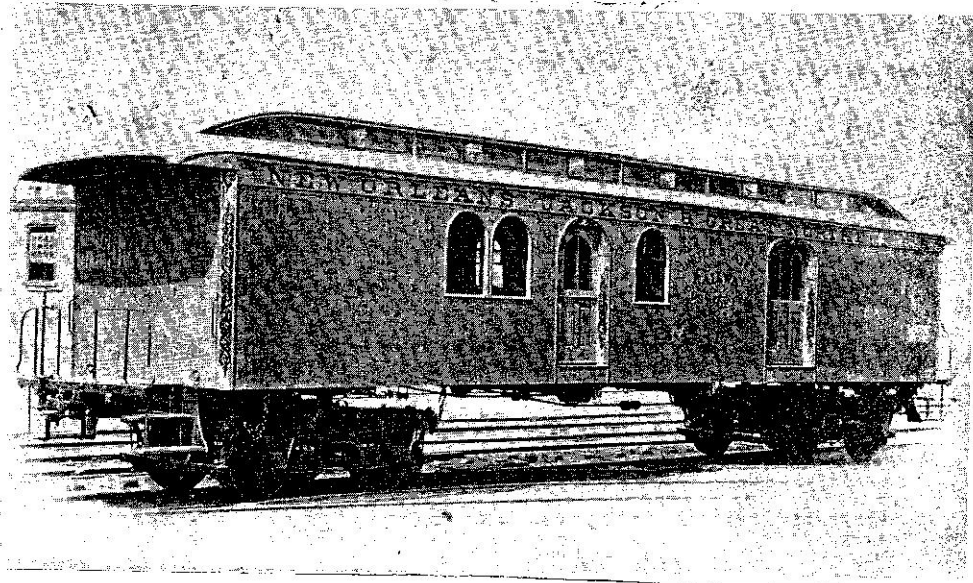


1. A Chicago North Western train at Rockford, Ill. in 1867.

"I'm leavin' this mornin', if I have to ride the blinds"
 ("Walking Blues". Robert Johnson. 1936)

The "blinds" refer to the first vehicle (the mail car) which has no access door to the locomotive. So the hobo is out of reach of the railroad police or white train conductor. Seen more clearly in:

2. A later Railway Post Office car of the N.O.J. & N. C. 1875, below.



(cont'd from p.14)

1943" of any session by this group.

However, another member of Bogan's

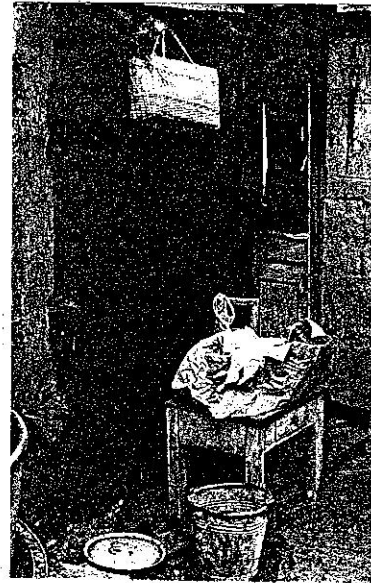


"Bogan's Birmingham Busters" -
c.1938. McCoy 2nd. from right.

Birmingham Busters was pianist Robert McCoy who had first recorded in 1930 accompanying Alabamian harp-blower, Jaybird Coleman. Again, in a support role, McCoy was on a 1937 A.R.C. session with Charlie Campbell and His Red Peppers; featuring guitar, bass, and washboard as well as McCoy's piano. Van Rijn notes "In 1937 a lot of Alabama artists recorded for ARC sessions at the instigation of renowned singer Lucille Bogan" (6). Elsewhere, Robert McCoy is referred to as "Lucille Bogan's protege" (7). So as well as being a blues singer, Ms. Bogan was a promoter of the music. After World War II, McCoy "...made some trial discs with Lucille for a New York Co. Lucille was mad when the records were rejected" (8). It is tantalising to think those tests are still in existence - somewhere?

These then are the few facts we have on Lucille Bogan. Unfortunately, in the passing on of even this scant information, to U.S. collectors, possible inaccuracies and a downright error appeared in print! Renowned blues collector, Richard Spottswood recorded that Bogan had died some 10 years earlier than she actually did (c.1938) in a car accident! This was some time ago, and later on the correct cause of death and the right date came to light. But then

in 1993, another well-respected name in U.S. blues circles Lawrence Cohn (who incidentally is the producer of the superb "Roots 'n' Blues" Series on Columbia) edited a book entitled (rather unoriginally) "Nothing But The Blues". By all accounts this is one of THE essential books on the Blues. But Cohn reproduces the erroneous quote from Spottswood: "Bogan died in a car-crash in the mid-1930s" (9) with no further detail or information. Quite clearly, Cohn took Spottswood at his word, without checking.



LUCILLE BOGAN
AND
WALTER ROLAND
1930-1935

ALABAMA
BLUES

ROOTS RL-317

1st. L.P. reissue devoted to Bogan (Roland on piano only) Austrian Roots label c.1965.

Often, reliable conclusions about Lucille Bogan can be drawn from lyrics of her, fortunately, prodigious recorded output between 1923 and 1935; as I have discussed at some length already in earlier parts of this article. For instance, Bogan in 1933 abandons her usual atheistic/amoral stance when she fell in love, and in a unique plea (for her) resorts to prayer:

"Gon' fall down on my knees,
pray to the Lord above;

Fall on my knees, pray to the Lord
above.
Please send me back the only man
that I love." (10)

It was only 3 days later that she recorded "Mean Twister" where she expresses her frustrated anger at God for causing the death of "the man I love". (see Part 3). This was probably about the same man referred to in "Black Angel Blues" in 1930 (see Part 3). With the later facts, presented in this issue, it is obvious Ms. Bogan had had her affair with Will Ezell the barrelhouse pianist, and been divorced by her first husband Nazareth Bogan Sr., sometime prior to 1929. It is also obvious this man cannot be James Spencer, her second husband, either. He didn't come on the scene until the 1940s, not long before Bogan died. So the 'real thing' happened for Lucille Bogan sometime between c.1930 and 1933.

Regarding her physical features, by her own admission she was "a big fat woman with the meat shakin' on my bones" ("Struttin' My Stuff" (see Part 3), and Van Rijn & co. state that "she may have been remembered by H.C. Speir as the 'red haired woman'". (11). Speir was the no.1 blues-talent scout and a white Mississippian, who was responsible for getting on record, Charlie Patton, Son House, Tommy Johnson, Skip James, Robert Johnson, and many more besides.

Lucille Bogan was not only a great blues singer but an influential one as well. Her line "you can mis-me now but you can't when I go home" ("Walkin' Blues") in 1933 crops up in a variation by fiddler Chasey Collins on a different song of the same title in 1935; that variation makes up the name of Tommy McClennan's "You Can Mistreat Me Here" which was his 1st. recorded blues in 1939. Her "Sloppy Drunk Blues" (1930), a piece that is "possibly related to the "Vicksburg Blues" (12), was covered by Leroy Carr, and Walter Davis in the 1930s, Sonny Boy Williamson No.1 in 1941, and Chicagoan Jimmy Rogers in 1954. Jaybird Coleman recorded her "Coffee Grindin'

Blues" of 1929, nearly a year later; while her "Black Angel Blues" was made famous, via Tampa Red's version in 1934, by B.B. King in post-war years.

Apart from several unissued titles, Bogan's complete recordings can be found on C.D. "Lucille Bogan Vols 1,2,&3" on Blues Document BDCD 6036/37/38. Check out your specialist record shop or try Red Lick Records on mail order.

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1. Telephone conversation with Paul Swinton 28/2/94.
2. "Blues Who's Who". Sheldon Harris. Da Capo. N.Y. 1989 (Reprint).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Notes to "Women Won't Need No Men". L.P. Lucille Bogan. Agram AB 2005. Guido Van Rijn & Hans Vergeer. c.1978.
6. Notes to Robert McCoy L.P. Oldie Blues OL.2814. Guido Van Rijn. c.1977.
7. Notes to "Piano Blues Vol.10". L.P. Various. Magpie PY4410. Bob Hall & Richard Noblett. 1979.
8. Notes to Agram AB 2005. Ibid.
9. Paul Swinton. Ibid.
10. "T.&N.O. Blues". Lucille Bogan as "Bessie Jackson" vo; Walter Roland pno. 17/7/33. New York City.
11. Notes to Agram AB 2005. Ibid.
12. "Deep South Piano". Karl Gertz zur Heide. Studio Vista. 1970.

GIG GUIDE

- Lancashire
MAX'S BLUES CLUB at the YORKSHIRE HOUSE, 2, Parliament St., Lancaster LA1 1DB. (0524-64679)
- Jun.24---RAPHAEL CALLAGHAN & CHRISTINE PURNELL.
Jul.1----SWAMP STOMPERS.
9----PETE OAKLEY & ROBIN WALTON.
15---GYPSY DAVE SMITH.
22---HARRY GUREVITCH.
29---HELLHOUND BLUES.
Aug.5----RAPHAEL CALLAGHAN & CHRISTINE PURNELL.
13---GOING AWAY BLUES.
19---JET MARTIN.

GIG GUIDE(cont'd)

Aug.26---AL DICKINSON.

SUMMER SUNDAY BLUES(12.30-2.30p.m)
at BURNLEY MECHANICS,Manchester
Rd.,Burnley. BB11 1JA.(0282-30005)

Jun.26---JET MARTIN.

Jul.3----RAPHAEL CALLAGHAN & CHRI-
STINE PURNELL.

10---LYNN BREEZE + MALCOLM &
STEVE.

17---BETTY'S BLUES.

24---BLUES TRAVELLERS.

31---HELLHOUND BLUES.

Aug.7----ANGIE SCARR.

14---THE BLUESMEN.

21---BETTY'S BLUES.

Humberside

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ROYAL WILLIAM Pub,Waterhouse Lane,
Hull.

Every Mon. evening. For details
contact 0482-227297 or the Royal
William.

Yorkshire

"MR. K'S COUNTRY BLUES CLUB. For
details ring Chris on 0642-321559.

London

"AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT",20,Kingley St.
London W1R 5LB(071-2870514).

Jun.24---COLIN JOHN & BEN WATERS.

25---JOHN CLEARY(from New Ori-
eans).

27---Jam night with HELLHOUND
BLUES.

28---DAVE PEABODY & Guest.

29---BIG JOE LOUIS & LITTLE
GEORGE.

30---GILES HEDLEY.

Some CATFISH KEITH U.K. dates:

Jun.24--THE STAR HOTEL,Worcester.

29--BAND ON THE WALL,Manchest-
er.

30--KINGS ARMS,Bristol.

Jul.2---Concert at St.Helier,Jer-
sey,C.I.

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Chris Snowdon.

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1928.
Ad.

