

# The Original Blues Guys

## Mississippi born



# A Brief History of the Development of Blues

The origins are attributed to the slaves working on plantations in America's South in 1800s.

Work songs, hymns, field hollers.

To understand its origins you need to understand the history of the African American in the USA.

They were brought in as slaves, predominantly in the southern states. Their treatment through the years in general was appalling. They had no rights and most viewed them as a lower form of life.

Even as the generations went on, they were still viewed as lesser human beings. Many viewed their lives as worthless. The onset of the "white supremacist" organisation Ku Klux Klan (KKK) made things worse. Hangings, murders etc. Even in the 50's and 60's things were still difficult.

First Klan 1865-1872. Second Klan 1914 - 1944. Third Klan 1946 - present. [US Civil War (1861-1865) was fought primarily over the concept of slavery]. The KKK was basically an extreme right wing terrorist organisation.

The south was steeped in racism & segregation eg buses, schools, toilets etc. Signs such as "Colored Waiting Room", "We cater to white trade only", "We want white tenants in our white community", "No dogs, negroes or Mexicans".

African Americans began protesting and fighting against their oppression.

In December 1955 – Montgomery Alabama – Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus for white passengers.

The ban on interracial marriage was tested in 1958 by Richard and Mildred Loving.

Martin Luther King was the most positive force for change (he was assassinated 4 April 1968 in Tennessee).

With this heritage in mind, it is clear how the "Blues" began - particularly the Delta Blues. Delta referring to the Mississippi Delta.

It's popularisation is predominantly associated with a particular group of African American Male Musicians from the 1920s through to 1960s. Most of these musicians were born the southern states of the USA. Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Georgia and Texas.

Most notably B B King, Elmore James, Howlin Wolf, John Lee Hooker, Leadbelly, Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson and Willie Dixon. They are noted for their prolific writing, the quality of songs and the quantity of artists covering their songs.

The earliest recordings were by Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Bill Broonzy, Blind Willie McTell, Son House, Skip James, Big Joe Williams, Robert Johnson, Blind Boy Fuller and Leadbelly. Their recordings were done in the 1920s and 1930s.

The three most famous female blues singers were Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday and Ma Rainey (credited with writing C C Rider / See See Rider – a song covered by numerous artists including Leadbelly, Elvis Presley, The Animals. Their work was mainly in the 1920s and 1930s and also crossed over into Jazz.

In particular, because of the songs the likes of B B King, Howlin Wolf, Elmore James etc wrote and the number of white musicians scrambling to perform them, the blues began to develop a significant following.

This interest was most notable with bands from England in the 1960s. Artists such as Eric Clapton, The Rolling Stones, The Yardbirds, Cream, Them, The Animals, John Mayall and Fleetwood Mac.

Chuck Berry transitioned into Rock'n'Roll very early in his career. Bo Diddley was a blend of Rock'n'Roll and Blues.

It is said that the only reason Chuck Berry became so successful was that people didn't realise he was "black". Remember, radio was the main medium in the 50s.

Eric Clapton was the most enthusiastic when it came to blues covers, having released two albums entirely of Robert Johnson songs and releasing a collaborative album with B. B. King – “Riding with the King”.

Post 60’s we also had George Thorogood and the Destroyers, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Johnny Winter and The Allman Brothers Band.

America was slower than England to embrace this musical genre unless it was reworked by white artists.

## Blues Genres

There are numerous blues genres and below are just a few. Further, many artists crossed over various styles during their career.

**Boogie Woogie Blues** - pre 1920s - closely related to jazz - often played with piano. Pinetop Smith in the 1920s. More modern boogie woogie style flowing into rock’n’roll as epitomised by Fats Domino, Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis.

**Delta Blues** - refers to the Mississippi Delta which takes in North-West Mississippi and parts of Arkansas and Louisiana. It is one of the earliest types of blues and one of the most significant. Freddie Spruell's "Milk Cow Blues" is believed to be the first recording of Delta Blues. Often featuring slide guitar and harmonica. Charley Patton, Robert Johnson, Son House, Muddy Waters, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Sonny Boy Williamson II, Skip James, Big Joe Williams, Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, John Lee Hooker, Howlin Wolf, Elmore James and Lead Belly number among the more prominent. Some of the Delta Bluesmen eventually moved to Chicago - Muddy Waters, Arthur Crudup, Howlin Wolf, Elmore James and Detroit - John Lee Hooker

**Gospel Blues** - origins in religion eg Rev Gary Davis, Blind Willie Johnson

**Memphis Blues** - created in the 1910s through 1930s; associated with Beale St (Memphis) - initially artists such as Frank Stokes, Sleepy Joe Estes, Furry Estes and Memphis Minnie; post WWII artists left the Mississippi Delta area and moved to Memphis. The sound became more electric with artists such as Howlin Wolf, Willie Nix, Ike Turner and B B King performing on Beale St. Sam Phillips recorded Howlin Wolf in Memphis for his Sun Records label prior to him moving to Chicago.

**Chicago Blues** - much harder edged - accompanied by a transfer from acoustic to amplified guitar sound. eg Muddy Waters, Howlin Wolf, Buddy Guy, John Lee Hooker, Willie Dixon. Heavily influenced the development of rock’n’roll and artists such as Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry. Chess records (and also Checker label) founded in 1950 in Chicago by Leonard Chess and Phil Chess. Artists signed to Chess / Checker included Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Bo Diddley, Bo Diddley, Howlin Wolf, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Memphis Slim, Elmore James and Sonny Boy Williamson.

**Swamp Blues** - 1950s - Louisiana based - slow tempo, focused on rhythm; Slim Harpo

**Texas Blues** - jazz swing influenced - 1920s - Albert Collins, Big Mama Thornton, Bobby Bland, Lightnin Hopkins, Blind Lemon Jefferson.

**New Orleans Blues** - influenced by Caribbean sounds - evolved from the guitar-harmonica style to incorporate keyboard, saxophone and percussion eg Professor Longhair, Guitar Slim [James Brown]

**West Coast Blues** - movement of Texas blues players to California in the 1940s. Piano influenced with jazzy guitar solos. T-Bone Walker - song "Call It Stormy Monday"; Percy Mayfield - famous for writing "Hit the Road Jack" which was later recorded by Ray Charles. Other exponents include Etta James, Johnny Otis, Big Mama Thornton, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Ike & Tina Turner.

**Piano Blues** - obviously focused around piano - Dr John, Ray Charles.

**Jump Blues** - born from boogie woogie and swing (a pre-cursor to rock'n'roll) - usually involves horn section eg Louis Jordan, T-Bone Walker, Big Joe Turner.


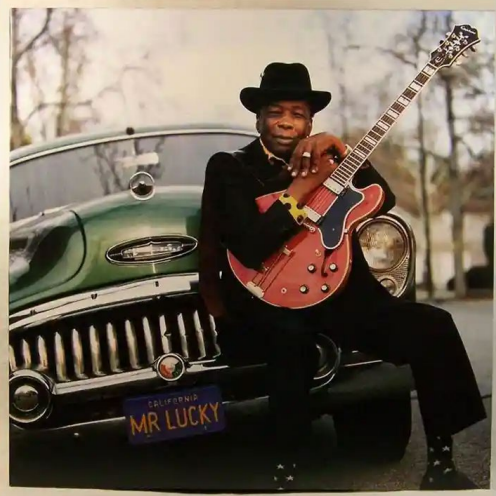

**Country Blues (also referred to as Folk Blues or Down-home blues)** -pre 1930s - eg "Black Betty" - Leadbelly; Solo vocal with acoustic fingerstyle guitar other artists who performed Country Blues at some point include Muddy Waters, Blind Boy Fuller, Sleepy Joe Estes, Big Bill Broonzy, Lighnin' Hopkins, Son House, Skip James, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Robert Johnson, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Brownie McGee, Blind Willie McTell, Charly Patton, Tampa Red, Sonny Terry, Sonny Boy Williamson II

**Doo-wop** originated in 1940s, mainly in large cities like New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Baltimore, Newark, Detroit, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles. It was basically vocal harmony groups whose songs had catchy melodies, a simple beat and featured little or no instruments.

## The Blues Guys





Category 1 - The Main Men	Category 2 (born pre 1935)
B B King (1925-2015) Mississippi	Big Bill Broonzy (1893-1958) Chicago, Illinois
Bo Diddley (1928-2008) Mississippi	Big Joe Williams (1903-1982) Mississippi
Elmore James (1918-1963) Mississippi	Blind Boy Fuller (1904-1941) North Carolina
Howlin Wolf (1910-1976) Mississippi	Blind Joe Reynolds (1904-1968) Arkansas
Jimmy Reed (1925-1976) Mississippi	Blind Lemon Jefferson (1893-1929) Texas
John Lee Hooker (1912-2001) Mississippi	Blind Willie Johnson (1897-1945) Texas
Leadbelly (1888-1949) Louisiana	Blind Willie McTell (1898-1959) Georgia "Statesboro Blues"
Muddy Waters (1913-1983) Mississippi	Brownie McGee (1915-1996) Tennessee
Robert Johnson (1911-1938) Mississippi	Champion Jack Dupree (pianist) (1910-1992) New Orleans, Louisiana
Son House (1902-1988) Mississippi	Charley Patton (1891-1934) Mississippi
Willie Dixon (1915-1992) Mississippi	Doctor Ross (1925-1993) Mississippi
	Jimmie Rogers (1924-1997) Mississippi
<b>Female Blues Singers</b>	Lightning Hopkins (1912-1982) Texas
Bessie Smith (1894-1937) Tennessee	Little Walter (1930-1968) Mississippi
Big Mama Thornton (1926-1984) Alabama "Ball and Chain"	Memphis Slim (piano) (1915-1988) Tennessee (John Len Chatman)
Billie Holiday (1916-1959) Pennsylvania (Elanora Fagan)	Mississippi Fred McDowell (1904-1972) Tennessee
Ma Rainey (1886-1939) Georgia	Mississippi John Hurt (1893-1966) Mississippi
	Otis Rush (1934-2018) Mississippi
<b>Piano Players</b>	Skip James (1902-1969) Mississippi
Louis Jordan (saxophone) (1930-2004) Arkansas	Sleepy Joe Estes (1899-1977) Tennessee
Professor Longhair (Piano) (1918-1980) Louisiana	Slim Harpo (1924-1970) Louisiana (James Moore) "I'm A King Bee"
Ray Charles (piano) (1930-2004) Georgia	Sonny Boy Williamson (? - 1965) Mississippi
	Sonny Terry (1911-1986) Georgia
<b>Category 3 more exponents</b>	T-Bone Walker (1910-1975) Texas
Albert King (1923-1992) Mississippi	Walter Vinson (1901-1975) Mississippi
Big Joe Turner (1911-1985) Missouri	William "Hambone Willie" Newbern (1901-1965) Tennessee
Buddy Guy (1936 - ) Louisiana	
Freddie King (1934-1976) Texas	
Taj Mahal (1942 - ) Harlem, New York (Henry St Claire Fredericks Jnr)	



# The Songs [bold means they actually wrote the song as well]

<p><b>B B King</b> (1925 - 2015) [Riley King] b. Mississippi</p> <p>Name of his guitar "Lucille"</p>	<p><i>Sweet Sixteen</i> (Joe Josea) <i>Every Day I Have The Blues</i> (Peter Chatman) <b>Rock Me Baby</b> <b>Paying The Cost To Be The Boss</b> <b>Why I Sing The Blues</b> <b>Sweet Little Angel</b> <b>Country Girl</b> <i>The Thrill Is Gone</i> (Roy Hawkins, Rick Darnell) <i>When Love Comes To Town</i> (U2) <i>Let The Good Times Roll</i> (Sam Theard, Fleecy Moore)</p>	
<p><b>John Lee Hooker</b> (1912 - 2001) b. Mississippi</p>	<p><b>Boogie Chillen</b> <b>Crawlin King Snake</b> <b>Boom Boom</b> <b>Dimples</b> <b>One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer</b> <b>Louise</b> <b>Don't Look Back</b></p>	
<p><b>Robert Johnson</b> (1911 - 1938) b. Mississippi</p>	<p><b>Sweet Home Chicago</b> <b>Ramblin On My Mind</b> <b>Come On In My Kitchen</b> <b>Walking Blues</b> <b>If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day</b> <b>Hellhound On My Trail</b> <b>Stop Breaking Down</b> <b>Love In Vain</b> <b>I Believe I'll Dust My Broom</b> <b>You Got A Good Friend</b></p>	



<p><b>Muddy Waters</b> (1913 - 1983) [McKinley Morganfield] b. Mississippi</p> <p>other blues musicians to work with Muddy Waters include Willie Dixon, Little Walter, Jimmy Rodgers, Otis Spann</p> <p>Chess Records</p>	<p><b>Rollin' and Tumblin'</b> <b>Rolling Stone</b> Long Distance Call <i>Hoochie Coochie Man</i> (Willie Dixon) <i>I Just Want To Make Love To You</i> (Willie Dixon) <i>Baby Please Dont Go</i> (Big Joe Williams) <i>Early In The Morning</i> <i>Walkin Blues</i> <i>Good Morning Little Schoolgirl</i> (Sonny Boy Williamson) <b>I'm A Man (Mannish Boy)</b> (also Ellas McDaniel) <b>Honey Bee</b> <b>Got My Mojo Working</b> <b>Key To The Highway</b> <b>Trouble No More</b> <b>Two Trains Running</b> <b>Gypsy Woman</b> <b>I Wonder Who</b> <b>Commit A Crime</b></p>	
<p><b>Bo Diddley</b> (1928 - 2008) [Ellas Otha Bates / Ellas McDaniel] b. Mississippi</p> <p>Chess Records / MCA</p>	<p><b>Bo Diddley</b> <b>I'm A Man</b> <b>Before You Accuse Me</b> <b>Diddy Wah Diddy</b> <b>Who Do You Love</b> <b>Roadrunner</b> <b>Pretty Girl</b> <b>Here 'Tis</b> <b>Cadillac</b> <b>Ride On Josephine</b> <b>I Can Tell</b></p>	
<p><b>Howlin Wolf</b> (1910 - 1976) [Chester Burnett] b. Mississippi</p> <p>Chess Records</p>	<p><b>How Many More Years</b> <b>Smokestack Lightning</b> <i>Sitting On Top Of The World</i> (Walter Vinson) <i>Spoonful</i> (Willie Dixon) <i>Wang Dang Doodle</i> (Willie Dixon) <i>Red Rooster</i> (Willie Dixon) <i>I Aint Superstitious</i> (Willie Dixon) <i>Crawling King Snake</i> <b>Evil</b> <b>Forty-Four</b> <b>Tell Me</b> <b>Love Me Darlin</b> <b>May I Have A Talk With You</b> <i>Back Door Man</i> (Willie Dixon)</p>	

<p><b>Willie Dixon</b> (1915 - 1992) b. Mississippi</p> <p>He was more an "in-house" muso / composer for Chess Records (Leonard Chess)</p>	<p><b>I Just Want To Make Love To You</b> <b>Hoochie Coochie Man</b> <b>I'm Ready</b> <b>Back Door Man</b> <b>Diddy Wah Diddy</b> <b>I Aint Superstitious</b> <b>I Can't Quit You Baby</b> <b>Bring It On Home</b> <b>Mellow Down Easy</b> <b>Let Me Love You Baby</b> <b>You'll Be Mine</b> <b>Close To You</b> <b>Help Me</b> <b>Little Red Rooster</b> (co written with J B Lenoir) <b>Just Like I Treat You</b></p>	
<p><b>Elmore James</b> (1918 - 1963) b. Mississippi</p>	<p><i>Dust My Broom</i> (Robert Johnson) <b>Madison Blues</b> <b>Can't Stop Lovin</b> <b>Goodbye Baby</b> <b>Shake Your Moneymaker</b> <b>Done Somebody Wrong</b></p>	
<p><b>Leadbelly</b> [Huddie William Ledbetter] (1888 - 1949) b. Louisiana</p>	<p><b>Black Betty</b> <b>C C Rider</b> <b>Cotton Fields</b> <b>The Gallows Pole</b> (1939) <b>Goodnight Irene</b> <b>Out On The Western Plain</b> <b>House Of The Rising Sun</b> <b>Midnight Special</b> <b>Rock Island Line</b></p>	
<p><b>Jimmy Reed</b> (1925 - 1986) b. Mississippi</p>	<p><b>Baby What you Want Me To Do, Bright Lights Big City, Aint That Loving You Baby, I Aint Got You</b></p>	

<b>Son House</b> (1902 - 1988) b. Louisiana	<b>Walking Blues</b> <b>Empire State Express</b>	
<b>Charley Patton</b> (1891 - 1934) b. Mississippi	<b>Pony Blues</b>	

**Songs attributed to some other artists that have been covered by contemporary artists**

**(i) William "Hambone Willie" Newbern** (1901 - 1965) - "Rollin and Tumblin'" (covered by Cream- 60's *supergroup with Eric Clapton on guitar, Cyndi Lauper, Muddy Waters*)

**(ii) Blind Joe Reynolds** (1904 - 1968) - "Outside Woman Blues" (covered by Cream)

William Newbern



**(iii) Doctor Ross** (1925 1993) - "Cats Squirrel" (covered by Cream)



**(iv) Skip James** - "I'm So Glad" (covered by Cream)

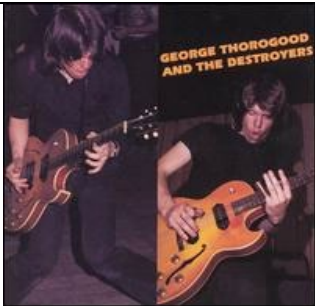

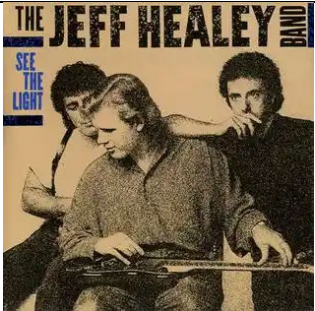
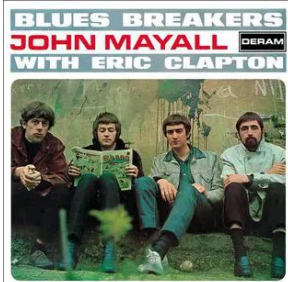

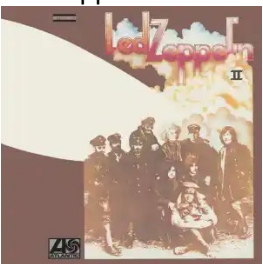


**(v) Walter Vinson** (1901 - 1975) - "Sittin On Top Of The World" (covered by Cream)

**(vi)** Another song covered by blues acts is "Born Under a Bad Sign" was written by Stax Records in house musician and songwriter **Booker T** (b 1944) of Booker T and the MG's fame - not one of the original blues guys but the song is worthy of mention. The song was covered by Cream in 1968, but originally written in 1967 for Albert King (on the Stax label).

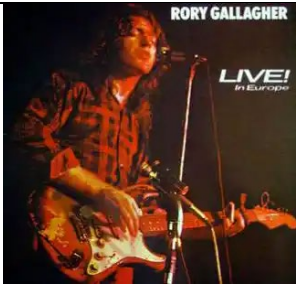










White artists inspired by these artists and who have recorded one or more of these songs include

AC DC	Baby Please Don't Go (credited to Big Joe Williams)		
Allman Brothers Band	Trouble No More(Muddy Waters), Hoochie Coochie Man(Willie Dixon), Statesboro Blues (Blind Willie McTell), Stormy Monday (T-Bone Walker)		
Canned Heat	Rollin and Tumblin (Hambone Willie Newbern), Bring It On Home(Willie Dixon), Dust My Broom (Robert Johnson), Evil(Howlin Wolf), I'm So Glad (Skip James)		
Cream (featuring Eric Clapton)	Spoonful(Willie Dixon), Sitting On Top Of The World (Walter Vinson & Lonnie Chapman), Crossroads(Robert Johnson), Rollin and Tumblin (Hambone Willie Newbern), I'm So Glad (Skip James)		
Eric Burden and the Animals	Roadrunner(Bo Diddley), Boom Boom(John Lee Hooker), Talkn Bout You (Ray Charles), Bright Lights Big City (Jimmy Reed), Hallelujah I Love her So (Ray Charles)		
Eric Clapton 	The Sky Is Crying (Elmore James), Before You Accuse Me (Bo Diddley), <i>plus all the following and many more Robert Johnson songs:</i> Steady Rollin Man, Hellhound On My Trail, Love In Vain, If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day, Sweet Home Chicago, Ramblin On My Mind		
Fleetwood Mac	Hellhound On My Trail, Shake Your Moneymaker (Robert Johnson), No Place To Go (Chester Burnett), Dust My Broom (Elmore James/Robert Johnson), Coming Home (Elmore James), Hi Ho Silver (Big Joe Turner)		

George Thorogood	I'm Ready, Can't Stop Lovin, Goodbye Baby, One Bourbon One Scotch One Beer, Madison Blues, Kind Hearted Woman, Who Do You Love, The Sky Is Crying, That Same Thing (Willie Dixon), So Much Trouble (Brownie McGee) <i>plus many more</i>	
Jeff Beck Group (featuring Rod Steart)	You Shook Me, I Aint Superstitious, Sweet Little Angel	
Jeff Healey	Evil (Willie Dixon), Hideaway (Freddie King), I'm Ready (Willie Dixon), Stop Breaking Down (Robert Johnson)	
John Mayall [UK]	Rambling On My Mind (Robert Johnson), Hideaway(Freddie King), All Your Love(Otis Rush), What'd I Say(Ray Charles), It Aint Right(Little Walter), I Cant Quit You Baby Willie Dixon), Stormy Monday (T-Bone Walker), Double Trouble(Otis Rush)	
Johnny Winter	Rollin and Tumblin, Forty-Four, Good Morning Little Schoolgirl (Sonny Boy Williamson), When You Got A Good Friend, Country Girl, Shake Your Moneymaker, Bright Lights Big City, Dust My Broom(Jimmy Reed)	
Led Zeppelin 	You Shook Me, I Can't Quit You Baby, Bring It On Home, Whole Lotta Love(Led Zeppelin / Willie Dixon),  Done Somebody Wrong, How Many More Years,	
Paul Butterfield	Shake Your Moneymaker(Robert Johnson), I Got My Mojo Working(Muddy Waters), Mellow Down Easy, Two Trains Running, Walkin Blues, Double Trouble(Otis Rush)	

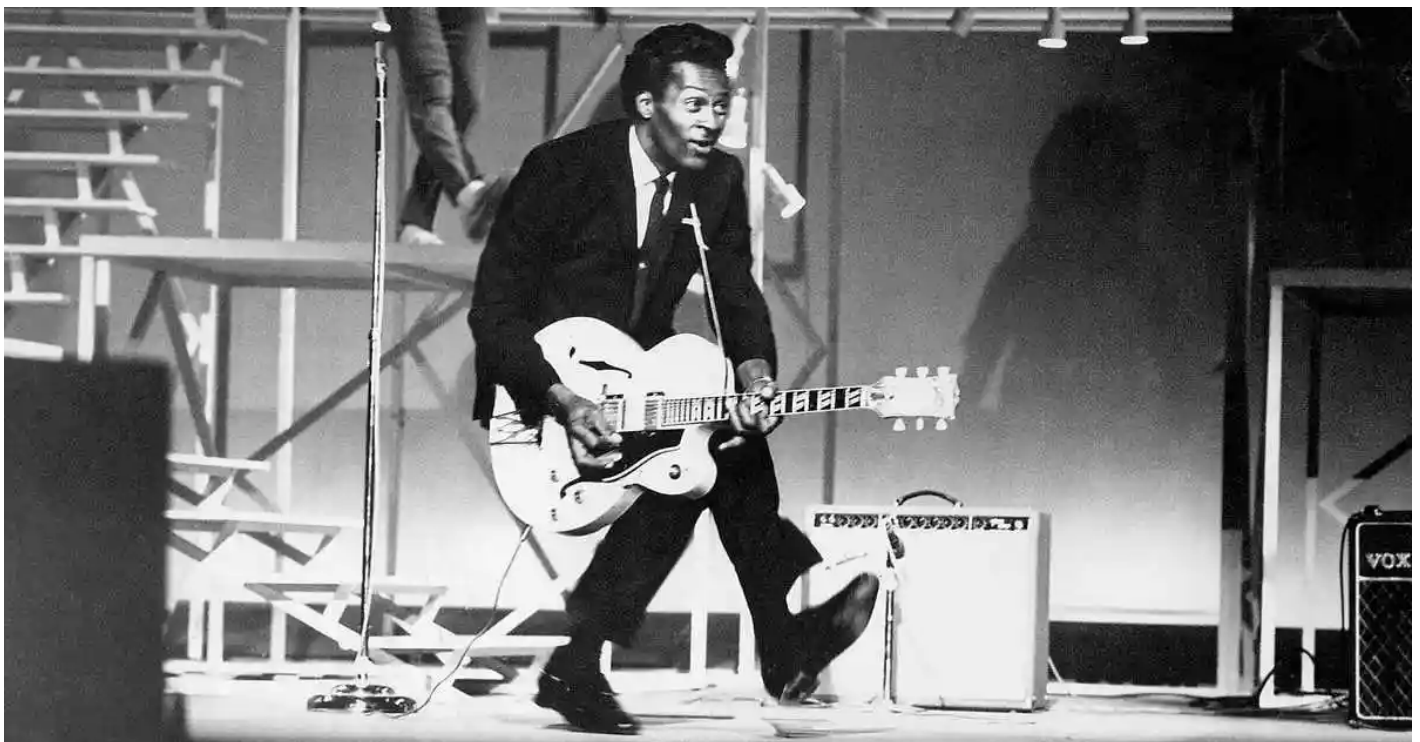


Rory Gallagher	Gypsy Woman, I Wonder Who ( <b>Muddy Waters</b> ), It Takes Time ( <b>Otis Rush</b> ), Pistol Slapper Blues ( <b>Blind Boy Fuller</b> ), Messin With The Kid ( <b>Junior Wells</b> ), Bankers Blues ( <b>Big Bill Broonzy</b> ), Out On The Western Plain, Empire State Express ( <b>Son House</b> )	
Stevie Ray Vaughan	Tell Me, Mary Had A Little Lamb ( <b>Buddy Guy</b> ), Hideaway ( <b>Freddie King</b> ), You'll Be Mine, Let Me Love You Baby, Leave My Girl Alone ( <b>Buddy Guy</b> ), Love Me Darlin , The Sky Is Crying, Close To You ( <b>Willie Dixon</b> ), May I Have A Talk With You	
Ten Years After	Spoonful, Help Me ( <b>Willie Dixon</b> ), Good Morning Little Schoolgirl ( <b>Sonny Boy Williamson</b> )	
The Doors	Back Door Man ( <b>Willie Dixon</b> )	
The Rolling Stones	Stop Breaking Down, Love In Vain ( <b>Robert Johnson</b> ), I Just Want To Make Love To You, Little Red Rooster, Just Like I Treat You, I Can't Quit You Baby ( <b>Willie Dixon</b> ), Commit A Crime ( <b>Muddy Waters</b> ), Just Your Fool ( <b>Little Walter</b> ), I Gotta Go ( <b>Little Walter</b> ), Hate To See You Go ( <b>Little Walter</b> ), Blue and Lonesome ( <b>Little Walter</b> )	
The Yardbirds (featuring Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page). 	Smokestack Lightning ( <b>Howlin Wolf</b> ), I'm A Man, Pretty Girl, Here 'Tis, ( <b>Bo Diddley</b> ), Five Long Years ( <b>Eddie Boyd</b> ), Louise ( <b>John Lee Hooker</b> ), Too Much Monkey Business ( <b>Chuck Berry</b> )	

Them (featuring Van Morrison)	Bring It On Home, Baby Please Don't Go ( <b>Big Joe Williams</b> ), Don't Look Back ( <b>John Lee Hooker</b> ), Baby What You Want Me To Do ( <b>Jimmy Reed</b> ), Bright Lights Big City ( <b>Jimmy Reed</b> ), Stormy Monday ( <b>T Bone Walker</b> ), I Got A Woman ( <b>Ray Charles</b> ), Hello Josephine( <b>Fats Domino</b> )	
Van Morrison	Good Morning Little Schoolgirl ( <b>Sonny Boy Williamson</b> ), Boogie Chillen ( <b>John Lee Hooker</b> ), Stop Drinking ( <b>Lightning Hopkins</b> ), Cadillac, Ride On Josephine, I Can Tell ( <b>Bo Diddley</b> ), Mean Old World, Stormy Monday ( <b>T-Bone Walker</b> ), Automobile Blues ( <b>Samuel Hopkins</b> ), Bring It On Home To Me ( <b>Sam Cooke</b> )	

#### Early Blues Record Labels : [Chess](#), [Vee Jay](#), [Sun](#)

All those African-American artists (pages 4 to 8) defined the driving influence for rock'n'roll. As you can see, iconic artists like The Rolling Stones, Van Morrison, Eric Clapton were majorly influenced by these artists.



Chuck Berry, pictured above, is more a Rock'n'Roll artist from the 50's and 60's rather than a blues artist.

He is included here because he started his career on the iconic blues label, Chess Records, and more than any other artist, epitomised the new Rock'n'Roll.

His first single "Maybelline" was released in 1955.



# Rhythm'n'Blues & Soul

Emerged as a force in the 1960's although its origins were in the 1950's.

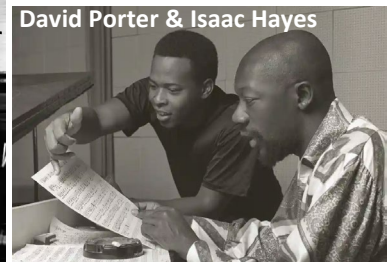
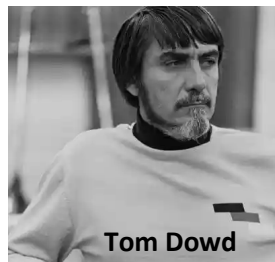


The main record labels for this genre were Atlantic Records/ATCO Records (founded in 1947 by Ahmet Ertegun Turkish immigrant and Herb Abramson – Jewish American) and Stax Records/Volt (originally "Satellite Records" - founded in Memphis in 1957 by Jim Stewart – born in Tennessee and his sister Estelle Axton – distant relative of Hoyt Axton ). Stax/Volt records were pressed and distributed by Atlantic Records, so the lines were slightly blurred. Jim **ST**ewart & Estelle **AX**ton.

**Studios:** Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, Georgia; Stax Studio at 926 E McLemore Ave in Memphis, Tennessee.

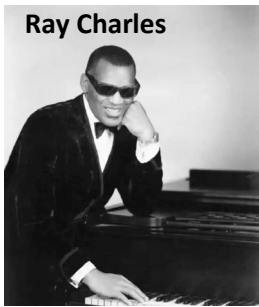


**Major Related Producers:** Jerry Wexler, Tom Dowd

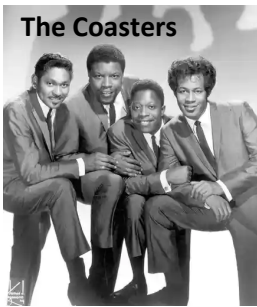


**Songwriting Teams:** Lieber and Stoller wrote for Atlantic up to 1962. David Porter and Isaac Hayes at Stax.

**Atlantic Records Artists:** **Big Joe Turner** "Shake Rattle and Roll" - 1954; **Ruth Brown** "Lucky Lips" (1957 written by Lieber and Stoller), "Mama He Teats Your Daughter Mean" - 1952; **Ray Charles** - "I Got a Woman"(1954), "What'd I Say"(1959), "Hallelujah I Love Her So"(1956) - all written by Ray Charles and produced by Jerry Wexler; **The Drifters** "Money Honey" (1953); **The Coasters**(ATCO); **Aretha Franklin** "(You Make Me Feel Like A) Natural Woman(1967) - written by Gerry Goffin, Carole King & Jerry Wexler, "Respect"(1967) - written by Otis Redding, "Chain of Fools"(1967); **T-Bone Walker**; **Wilson Pickett** "In The Midnight Hour" (1965) - written by Wilson Pickett & Steve Cropper, "634 5789"(1965) - written by Eddie Floyd & Steve Cropper, "Mustang Sally"(1966) - written by Mack Rice, "Land of a 1000 Dances"(1962), "Everybody Needs Somebody"(1964) - written by Jerry Wexler, Bert Berns and Solomon Burke; **Champion Jack Dupree**; **La Vern Baker**, **The Chords** "Sh-Boom"(1954); **Percy Sledge** "When A Man Loves A Woman"(1966);



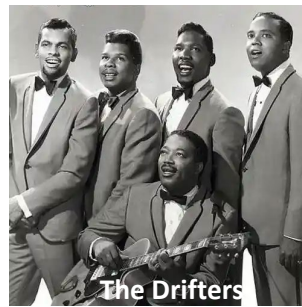
Ray Charles



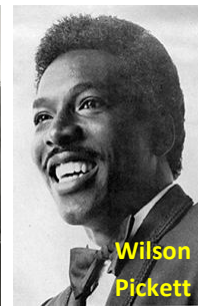
The Coasters



Aretha Franklin



The Drifters



Wilson Pickett

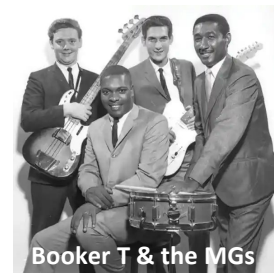
**Stax Records Artists:** **Otis Redding** - "Security"(1964), "Respect"(1965) - both written by Otis Redding, "Dock of the Bay"(1968), "Try A Little Tenderness"(1967); **Booker T and the MGs** - "Green Onions"(1962); **Sam and Dave** "Hold On I'm Coming"(1966), "Soul Man"(1967) - both written by Isaac Hayes & David Porter, **The Staple Singers** and **The Mar-Keys**; .



Otis Redding



The Staple Singers



Booker T & the MGs



Sam & Dave

**Stax House band** by 1962 was Steve Cropper (guitar), Donald "Duck" Dunn (bass), Booker T Jones - piano & organ, Al Jackson Jnr - drums; whenever Booker T was unavailable, he was replaced by Isaac Hayes. Wayne Jackson and Andrew Love on horns and David Porter songwriting partner. These were in fact Booker T and the MGs while Steve Cropper had featured in the Mar-Keys.

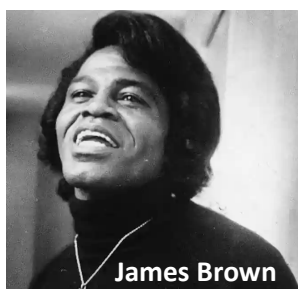
**Other artists:** the record label is in brackets [ eg *Epic / Columbia / RCA / Keen / United Artists / Arista* ]

**James Brown** "Please Please Please"(1956), "Think"(1960) - written by James Brown [Federal Records]; "Papas Got a Brand New Bag"(1965), "I Got You"(1965) – [ both on *King Records* ] and written by James Brown.

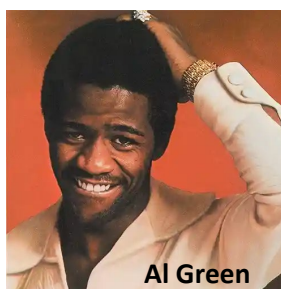
**Sam Cooke** - "You Send Me"(1957) - written by Sam Cooke, "Only Sixteen"(1959), "Wonderful World"(1960) –[ on *Keen Records*], "Chain Gang"(1960), "Cupid"(1961), "Twisting The Night Away"(1962), "Bring It On Home To Me" (1962), "Another Saturday Night"(1963) - [the last five were released through *RCA Records*]. All songs were written by Sam Cooke.



Sam Cooke



James Brown



Al Green



The O'Jays

**Johnny Otis** (*Greek American heritage*) "Willie and the Handjive" (1958) [*Capitol Records*]

**Al Green** "Let's Stay Together"(1971), "Take me To The River"(1974) - both written by Al Green [*Hi Records*]

**Freda Payne** "Band of Gold"(1969) - written by Holland-Dozier-Holland [*Invictus Records*]

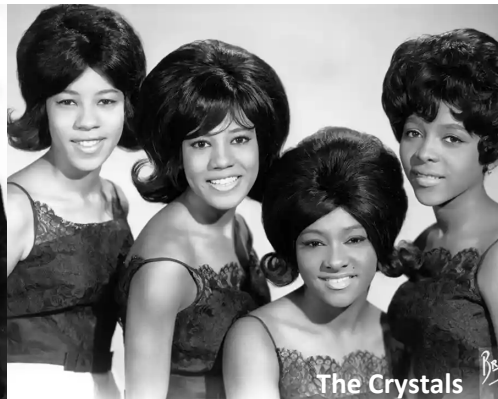
**The Exciters** "Tell Him"(1962) - written by Bert Berns [*United Artists*]

**The O'Jays** "Backstabbers"(1972), "Love Train"(1973) [*Philadelphia International/Epic*]



**War** "The World Is A Ghetto" (1972), "The Cisco Kid" (1972), "Why Cant We Be Friends" (1975),  
"Low Rider" (1975) [United Artists]

**Jackie Wilson** "Reet Petite"(1957), "Higher and Higher"(1967) [Brunswick]



**Bobby Bland** "Farther Up The Road"(1957), "Turn on Your Love Light"(1961) [Duke Records] "That's The Way Love Is"(1962)

**Willie May "Big Mama" Thornton** "Ball and Chain"(1968) written by Big Mama Thornton [Arhoolie], "Hound Dog"(1952) - written by Lieber and Stoller [Peacock Records]

**The Tymes** "So In Love"(1963) [Parkway Records], "Wonderful, Wonderful"(1963) [Columbia Records]

**The Spaniels** "Goodnight Sweetheart Goodnight"(1953) [Vee-Jay Records] - written by The Spaniels.

**The Crystals** "He's A Rebel"(1961) - written by Gene Pitney [Philles - label owned by Phil Spector], "Da Do Ron Ron"(1963), "The He Kissed Me"(1963) - the last two both written by Phil Spector, Jeff Barry, Elle Greenwich

*Because The Crystals were on tour frequently, not all songs released by the Crystals were actually recorded by The Crystals. For example, "He's a Rebel" was in fact recorded using Darlene Love and the Blossoms and then released as The Crystals. (Trivia: Darlene Love is Danny Glover's wife in all the Lethal Weapon movies with Mel Gibson).*

**Sly and the Family Stone** "Everyday People" (1968) [Epic]



**Ike and Tina Turner** "A Fool In Love"(1960) - written by Ike Turner [Sue Records], "River Deep Mountain High"(1966) - produced by Phil Spector and written by Ellie Greenwich & Jeff Barry and released through A&M Records. Their version of River Deep, Mountain High is in fact the definitive version of that song. In the UK it reached #4 on the charts, in Australia #14 and in Spain #1. But in the USA it did very little because radio stations refused to play it - R'n'B stations thought it sounded too white and white radio stations thought it sounded too black. As a result it barely made it into the top 100 in the USA?!!!\*@!??? Says a lot about the USA!

Ike and Tina finally cracked it big across the entire USA with their version of the Creedence Clearwater Revival song "Proud Mary" in 1971. Following the success of Proud Mary, Ike built his own recording studio "Bolic Sound". All subsequent albums were recorded in this studio.



"Nutbush City Limits" released in 1973 became a classic that would live on indefinitely.

The couple separated in 1976 divorced in 1978 and their final album was released in 1980 "The Edge". Tina then moved onto a solo career.

With the release of her 5th album "Private Dancer" in 1984 and the release of the single "Whats Love Got To Do With It" Tina became a worldwide superstar in her own right. The single was a #1 smash hit around the world. [ Capitol ]





Some of the previously mentioned artists crossed over into blues (Big Mama Thornton, Bobby Bland), some were doo-wop vocal groups (The Chords, The Tymes, The Spaniels). Some blended R&B, soul, blues, funk and rock'n'roll - Sly and the Family Stone, Ike and Tina Turner.

The labels Epic and Columbia were owned by one of the majors, CBS Records, which eventually became Sony Music.

Atlantic's Studio was the first to install multitrack machines developed by Ampex.

The coining of the term "Rhythm & Blues" was credited to Jerry Wexler of Billboard magazine in 1948. Jerry Wexler became a partner in Atlantic Records in 1953. Subsequently recording artists such as Wilson Pickett, Aretha Franklin and many more. It was through his efforts Atlantic became a major force in the recording industry.

And if you weren't on Atlantic or Stax then you were on Motown!!!

# Motown!!!

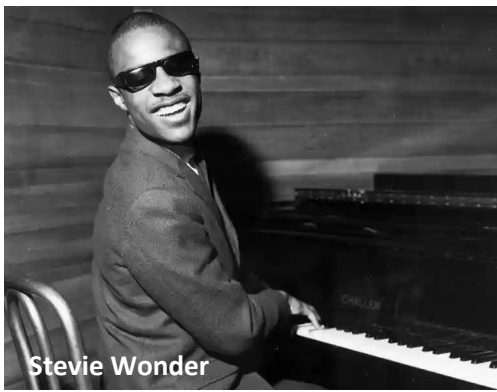
[Smokey Robinson & the Miracles](#), [Gladys Knight and the Pips](#), [The Supremes](#), [The Temptations](#), [The Miracles](#), [Four Tops](#), [The Marvelettes](#), [Mary Wells](#), [Jr. Walker & the All-Stars](#), [Stevie Wonder](#), [Marvin Gaye](#), [Tammi Terrell](#), [Martha and the Vandellas](#), [The Jackson Five](#), [Commodores](#), [Barrett Strong](#), [Jimmy Ruffin](#), [The Contours](#), [Eddie Holland](#), [The Velvelettes](#), [Kim Weston](#), [The Spinners](#), [The Isley Brothers](#), [Brenda Holloway](#), [Lionel Richie](#), [The Elgins](#), [The Monitors](#), [Marv Johnson](#), [Shorty Long](#), [Mable John](#)

Motown was a whole separate creature. Founded as Tamla Records in Detroit, Michigan in 1959 by **Berry Gordy Jr** and incorporated as Motown Music Group in 1960. Motown would become a giant of the music industry. The name Motown was a contraction of Motor Town. Detroit was the home of most major US car manufacturers. The name Tamla-Motown was also used, but for international releases. The name Tamla had its origins in a Debbie Reynolds movie "Tammy and the Bachelor".



**Holland-Dozier-Holland** (Lamont Dozier, and brothers Brian and Eddie Holland) were the major songwriting team. They were responsible for numerous hits by The Supremes, Martha and the Vandellas, The Marvelettes, Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, Four Tops, The Isley Brothers, Kim Weston, Jnr Walker and the Allstars. Their many songs became timeless and covered by numerous artists for decades to come.

Later **Smokey Robinson** (from The Miracles), signed to Motown, became involved in the songwriting. Smokey Robinson wrote or cowrote nearly all the songs for The Miracles which brought him to prominence as a songwriter. For Motown he wrote "My Girl" for The Temptations, "My Guy" for Mary Wells, "I'll Be Doggone" for Marvin Gaye along with songs for The Supremes, The Marvelettes, The Contours, and The Jackson 5.



Stevie Wonder



Jackson Five

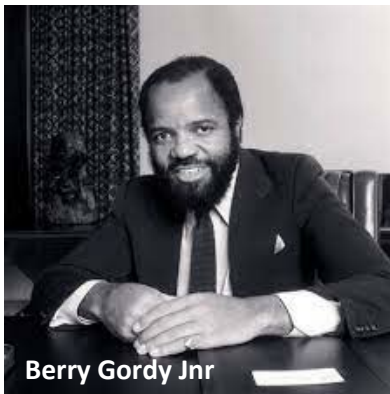


Marvin Gaye

"Shop Around" by the Miracles (credited to Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy) was Motown's first million selling record.

Prior to Motown, Gordy had been involved in songwriting. In part, responsible for "Reet Petite" by Jackie Wilson, he continued to write six more hits for Jackie Wilson.

Initial songwriting and production was done by Berry Gordy. The songs were usually cowritten with someone else. His sister Gwen (as with Reet Petite), Marv Johnson for his single "Come to Me"(1959), his secretary Janie Bradford for Barrett Strong's "Money (That's What I Want)"(1959)



Berry Gordy Jr



Holland-Dozier-Holland



Gwen Gordy

The Motown sound was distinctive and powerful, although still soul, it was also very pop oriented and captured the mainstream commercial market. Its string of Number 1 hits in the 1960's became legendary. In fact it had 79 Top Ten hits as listed on Billboard Magazine between 1960 and 1969. And from 1961 – 1971 the company had 110 top 10 hits; there were actually a number of labels that music was released on - "Tamla", "Motown", "Gordy", "Soul", "V.I.P.", "Tamla-Motown".

Other songwriting credits went to **Norman Whitfield** (Marvin Gaye: "Pride and Joy" & "Too Busy Thinking About My Baby", The Velvelettes: "Needle in a Haystack" – later covered by Australian group The Twilights (featuring Glenn Shorrock of Little River Band fame) and then extensively with The Temptations (including production) "Ain't Too Proud To Beg", "(I Know) I'm Losing You" and many more for the Temptations.

**Barrett Strong** also came in for co-songwriting credits including "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" with Norman Whitfield for Gladys Knight and the Pips, "Too Busy Thinking About My Baby" & "Wherever I Lay My Hat" with Norman Whitfield for Marvin Gaye, "Just My Imagination", "Ball of Confusion" & "Papa Was A Rolling Stone" with Norman Whitfield for The Temptations, "War" with Norman Whitfield for Edwin Starr.

## Songwriting Credits - selected

Songwriters	Artists	Songs	Co Songwriting credit
<b>Berry Gordy</b>	The Jackson 5	I Want You Back ABC I'll Be There	Perren, Mizell, Richards Perren, Mizell, Richards West, Hutch, Davis
<b>Smokey Robinson</b>	Mary Wells	My Guy	
	The Temptations	My Girl The Way You Do The Things You Do Get Ready	
	The Miracles	Shop Around You've Really Got A Hold On Me Ooh Baby Baby The Tracks Of My Tears Going To a Go-Go More Love I Second That Emotion The Tears Of A Clown	Berry Gordy - Moore Moore, Tarplin Moore, Tarplin - Al Cleveland Stevie Wonder
	Marvin Gaye	I'll Be Doggone Aint That Peculiar	Moore, Tarplin Moore, Tarplin
<b>Norman Whitfield</b>	The Temptations	Aint Too Proud To Beg I Know I'm Losing You I Can't Get Next To You Cloud Nine Ball Of Confusion Papa Was A Rolling Stone Wish It Would Rain Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me)	Holland Grant, Holland Barrett Strong Barrett Strong Barrett Strong Barrett Strong Barrett Strong Barrett Strong
	Gladys Knight and the Pips	I Heard It Through The Grapevine	Barrett Strong
	Marvin Gaye	Too Busy Thinking Bout My Baby	Barrett Strong
<b>Brian Holland</b>	The Marvelettes	Please Mr Postman	
<b>Holland-Dozier-Holland</b>	The Miracles	Mickeys Monkey	<i>Brian Holland - LaMont Dozier - Eddie Holland</i>
	Martha and the Vandellas	Come and Get These Memories Heatwave Quicksand Nowhere To run Jimmy Mack	
	The Supremes	Where Did Our Love Go Baby Love Come See About Me Stop! In The Name Of Love Back In My Arms Again I Hear A Symphony You Can't Hurry Love You Keep Me Hanging On Love Is Here and Now You're Gone The Happening	
	The Four Tops	Baby I Need Your Loving I Can't Help Myself It's The Same Old Song Standing In The Shadows Of Love Bernadette	

<b>Holland-Dozier-Holland</b>	Marvin Gaye	Can I Get A Witness You're A Wonderful One How Sweet It Is Little Darlin I Need You	
<b>Marvin Gaye</b>	Martha and the Vandellas	Dancing In The Street	
	Marvin Gaye	Stubborn Kinda Fellow Pride and Joy What's Going On Trouble Man	Norman Whitfield
<b>Ashford - Simpson</b>	Marvin Gaye	Aint No Mountain High Enough Aint Nothing Like The Real Thing	
<b>Stevie Wonder</b>	Stevie Wonder  From 1971 onwards ALL songs were credited to/written by Stevie Wonder only	Uptight (1966) I Was Made To Love Her (1967) Shoo-Be-Doo-Da-Day My Cherie Amore (1989) Never Had A Dream Come True Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I'm Yours  1970 Album "Where I'm Coming From"	Cosby, Moy Cosby, Moy Cosby, Moy Cosby, Moy Cosby, Moy Wonder, Syreeta Wright  All songs Wonder / Wright
<b>Ron Miller</b>	Stevie Wonder	For Once In My Life Yester-Me, Yester-You, Yesterday	Murden Wells



**Diana Ross and the Supremes**



## General Information

**Jimmy Ruffin** who had a hit for Motown with "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted" was elder brother of David Ruffin from the Temptations.

**The Temptations** original name **The Elgins** - signed to Motown in 1961 and named changed to The Temptations due to there being another group called The Elgins. Later, in 1965, Berry Gordy would rename another of his acts The Downbeats as The Elgins. **Eddie Kendricks**, one of the founding members, would go on to have a reasonable solo career. **David Ruffin** had potential, but career failed due to drug addiction.

**The Supremes** main line-up from 1962: Diana Ross, Florence Ballard and Mary Wilson; In 1967 Florence was replaced by Cindy Birdsong and in 1970 Diana Ross left.

**Holland -Dozier-Holland** left Motown in 1967 over royalty-payment disputes.

**Stevie Wonder** continued under the Tamla label and then the Motown label(1978) and produced many great albums including "Talking Book", "Innervisions", "Songs In The Key Of Life", "Fullfillingness' First Finale", "Hotter Than July" with all songs credited solely to Stevie Wonder. One of the few artists to spend his entire career at Motown, recording over 25 albums.

**The Jackson 5** in 1976 they became The Jacksons and by 1978 Michael Jackson was the predominant songwriter with songs like "Blame It On The Boogie", "Can You Feel It", "Shake Your Body Down To The Ground", "State of Shock" and "Torture".

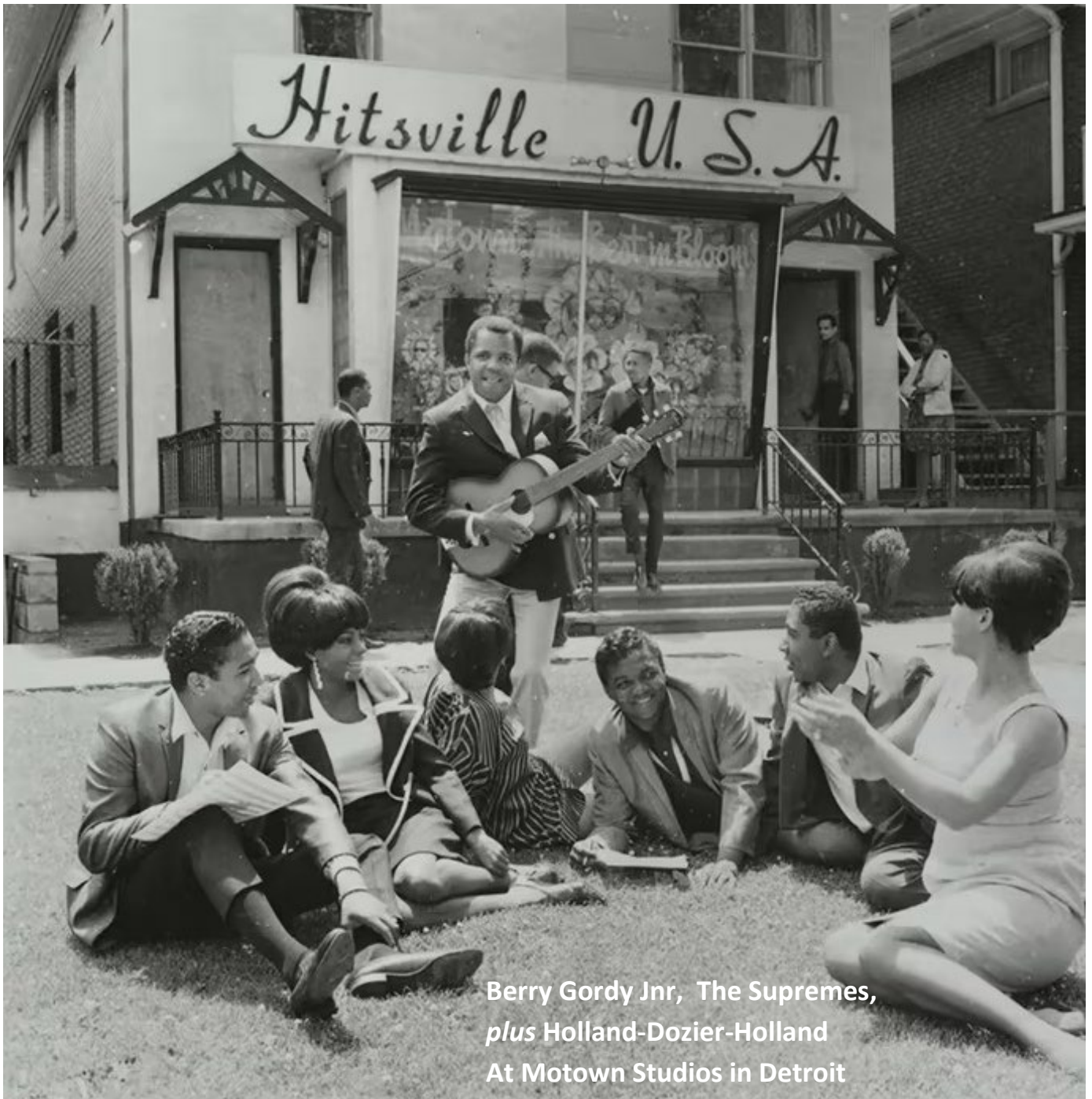
Signed to Motown in 1969 for a seven year deal. In 1976 the group changed labels to Epic Records (due to poor financial return from Motown) and changed their name to the Jacksons (because Motown owned the name Jackson 5). It shows you need to be careful what you sign if you want some degree of control over your own career. They did 10 studio albums for Motown and 6 studio albums for Epic. Their 6<sup>th</sup> and last album was released in 1989 (without Michael). Michael's last album with them was their 5<sup>th</sup> "Victory" in 1984.

Michael (b.1958 d.2009 aged 50) released 4 solo albums for Motown between 1972 and 1975 and for Epic, 5 albums between 1979 and 2001. He would become one of the biggest selling artists of all time.



**The Jackson 5**

*Their recording studio was called Hitsville USA, located in Detroit.*



Berry Gordy Jnr, The Supremes,  
plus Holland-Dozier-Holland  
At Motown Studios in Detroit

Other spin-off labels included Gordy, V.I.P., Soul, Workshop Jazz, Mel-o-d-y, Rare Earth

# Hits listed by Artist

**The Supremes:** "Where Did Our Love Go"(US#1 - 1964); "Baby Love"(US#1 - 1964); "Come See About Me"(US#1 - 1964); "Stop! In The Name Of Love"(US#1 - 1965); "Back In My Arms Again"(US#1 - 1965); "I Hear A Symphony"(US#1 - 1965); "You Cant Hurry Love"(US#1 - 1966); "You Keep Me Hanging On"(US#1 - 1966); "Love Is Here and Now You're Gone"(US#1 - 1967); "The Happening"(US#1 - 1967); "Love Child""(US#1 - 1968); "I'm Gonna Make You Love Me""(US#2 - 1968);

**Smokey Robinson and the Miracles:** "Shop Around"(US#2 - 1960); "You've Really Got A Hold On Me"(US#8-1962); "Mickey's Monkey"(US#8 - 1964); "Ooh Baby Baby"(US#16 - 1965); "The Tracks Of My Tears"(US#16 - 1965); "Going To a Go-Go"(US#11-1965); "I Second That Emotion"(US#4 - 1967); "The Tears Of A Clown"(US#1 - 1970)

**Mary Wells:** My Guy(US#1 - 1965)

**Marvelettes:** Please Mr Postman(US#1 - 1961);

**The Temptations:** The Way You Do The Things You Do"(US#11 - 1964); "My Girl"(US#1 - 1964); "Aint Too Proud To Beg"(US#13 - 1966); "I Know I'm Losing You"(US#8 - 1966); "I Can't Get Next To You"(US#1 - 1969); "I Wish It Would Rain"(US #4 - 1968); "Cloud Nine" (US#6 - 1968); "Just My Imagination(Running Away With Me);

**Gladys Knight and the Pips:** "Heard It Through The Grapevine"(US#2);

**Jimmy Ruffin:** "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted"(US#22)

**Martha and the Vandellas:** "Come and Get The Memories"(US#29 - 1963); "Heatwave"(US#4 - 1963); "Quicksand"(US#8 - 1963); "Dancing In The Street"(US#2 - 1964); "Nowhere To Run" (US#8 - 1965); "Jimmy Mack"(US#10 - 1967)

**Four Tops:** "Baby I Need Your Loving"(US#11 - 1964); "I Can't Help Myself"(US#1 - 1965); "It's The Same Old Song"(US#5 - 1965); "Standing In The Shadows Of Love" US#6 - 1966); "Bernadette"(US#4 - 1967); "Walk Away Renee"(US#14 - 1968);

**Marvin Gaye:** "Stubborn Kinda Fellow"(US#46 - 1962); "Pride and Joy"(US#10 - 1963); "Can I Get A Witness"(US#22 - 1963); "You're A Wonderful One"(US#15 - 1964); "How Sweet It Is(To Be Loved By You)"(US#6 - 1964); "I'll Be Doggone"(US#8 - 1965); "Aint That Peculiar"(US#8 - 1965); "Little Darlin I(I Need You)"(US#47 - 1966); "It Takes Two"(US#14 - 1966 with Kim Weston); "Aint No Mountain High Enough"(US#19 - 1967 - with Tammi Terrell); "Aint Nothing Like The Real Thing"(US#8 - 1968); "I Heard It Through The Grapevine"(US#1 - 1968); "Too Busy Think 'bout My Baby"(US#4 - 1969); "What's Going On"(US#2 - 1971); "Trouble Man"(US#7 - 1972)

**Stevie Wonder:** "Fingertips Part 1"(US#1 - 1963); "Uptight"(US#3 - 1965); "I Was Made To Love Her"(US#2 - 1967); "Shoo-Be-Doo-Da-Day"(US#9 - 1968); "For Once In My Life"(US#2 - 1968); "My Cherie Amor""(US#4 - 1969); "Yester-Me, Yester-You, Yesterday""(US#73 - 1969); "Signed Sealed Delivered I'm Yours"(US#3 - 1970); "We Can Work It Out"(US#13 - 1971);

**The Jackson 5:** "I Want You Back"(US#1 - 1969); "ABC"(US#1 - 1969); "I'll Be There"(US#1 - 1969); "Never Can Say Goodbye"(US#2 - 1971);





Martha and the Vandellas



Four Tops



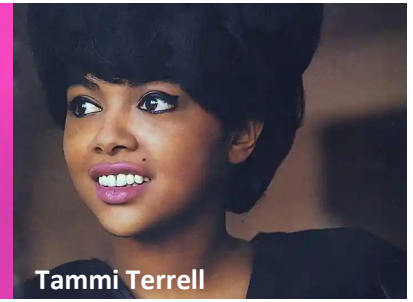
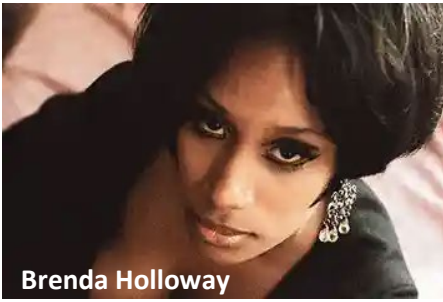
The Supremes



Gladys Knight and the Pips



## Other Female Solo Artists on Motown



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The [Hitsville U.S.A.](#) Motown building, at 2648 West Grand Boulevard in Detroit, Michigan - Motown's headquarters from 1959 to 1968, became the Motown Historical Museum in 1985.



As of January 2026, Berry Gordy (b. 28 Nov 1929) is still alive and aged 96.

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Of further interest, the first female signed to Motown was a Blues singer named **Mable John**.

She changed labels to Stax / Atlantic in 1966. A label more suited to her genre.

