

More Stories From The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music *the ones that arrived to late to get into Volume One*

Eddie Burton – The In-Memphis, Tennessee

I've got one about The In going to play a gig with The Tiks in Scottsboro, AL when the engine on my 58 Rambler station seized up on me. No oil. Not a drop. We stopped in front of this house and so we took a chance to see if anyone there would be willing to help some broke down musicians. We needed to get at least one guy there because our bass player had already arrived at the venue and he could come back and get us and the equipment. Well this guy came to the door and he had no arms. No kidding, no arms. It was a birth defect. We asked him if he could possibly give one of us a ride to Scottsboro and he said, 'sure no problem.' Greg, he pulled a VW Beetle out of the garage and drove that sucker with his knees, changing gears and everything, all the way there and back up those narrow mountain roads. We offered to pay him for his gas and he wouldn't hear of it so we promised him a copy of our first single "In The Midnight Hour" and when we got the first box of 25 from Hickory Records, we took the first one off the top and we all signed it and sent it to him. Now that was the real road. These kids today in these big buses, that ain't the road. We guys from the 60's were on the real road.

I used to work with Dee Clark who had "Raindrops" and "Hey Little Girl In The High School Sweater". We traveled around the south mostly in South Carolina, Birmingham and many venues. We did shows with Chuck Berry and the Honey Combs and one time we were playing in Augusta at the Godfather and Jackie Wilson was at a little club down on Broadway and Dee took me there for the late show. It was a small club that only seated about 65 if that and we had a ringside table. Jackie was playing with an all white 4 piece rock n roll band and he was kicking butt and taking names. Greg he was so close to us when he'd swirl around doing one of those incredible dance moves, the sweat from his head would fly off and land on us. I have many stories about those days on the road in the south traveling with a black entertainer who liked to play golf. Finding a place for us to play together wasn't easy.

Bob Sigman, harmonica player, Orlando, Fla.

In 1951 I was eight and lived in Ocala Florida and loved to listen to WLAC AM 1510 Nashville, TN in my bed at night. I heard this same amazing music that our black maid, Gussie used to sing while she worked in our home. She was like a second mother to me. They aired locally produced music programming, with on-air personalities including John R. (Richburg), Gene Nobles (Droopy drawers blues), and Bill "Hossman" Allen. I tuned in nightly to hear the latest rhythm and blues hits, gospel music and sermons by Rev. C.L. Franklin (Aretha's Father) along with ads selling Randy's Record Shop-Gallatin TN, Ernie's Record Mart, Royal Crown Hair Dressing, and "live baby chicks." Since my grandfather played the harmonica amazingly well I also I fell in love with the sounds of blues harmonica musicians. I was a closet Jimmy Reed clone and fan and practiced with my "A" marine band harmonica

which I paid \$1.50 for at Jack Kranic Music in Ocala. After playing along with every song on the "I'm Jimmy Reed" album for another 8 years I suddenly emerged a decent blues harp player.

I finally got my chance to see Jimmy Reed live in Gainesville Florida at the University of Florida Field House in 1960. Five of my friends and me found our way back stage to visit with Jimmy. We had each swiped a little bit of our fathers booze and mixed it all in a rinsed out glass Clorox jug. The stuff was rank but we offered Jimmy a swig and he liked it so much that he gave us each one of his harmonics. It blew me away to see my Jimmy drinking from that Clorox jug. He was already pretty drunk and his eyes were as blood shot and looked like an Alabama road map. Jimmy was begging us to find some guy named Gary who had swiped his pearl inlayed guitar the night before. Jimmy kept swigging and finally some guy saw us getting him drunker and threw us out.

Jimmy came on and the first thing he said was "Would Gary please bring back my pearl box, I am heart broken about loosing that box"! Jimmy started the set with "Going to New York" and got his harp brace caught up in the mic and fell off the stage. His band helped him back to the dressing room but the place was screaming Jimmy Jimmy, where's Jimmy. I stood up in my seat near the front and started wailing out "Big Boss Man" on my new harp and the crowd went nuts. The band motioned me to come up and I did and played the rest of the night with them. Jimmy was sleeping it off in the back. I still have the Marine Band "A" harp Jimmy gave me as well as the cardboard box it came in.

That night caused Jimmy Reed to be banned from ever playing any at any Land-Grant Colleges in the US for the rest of his life. That broke all our hearts but I later found out that Jimmy Reed had epilepsy as well as being an alcoholic so his epilepsy might have been a contributing factor to his passing out that night.

I was in the Air Force and stationed in Panama City, FL from 1963-1967 and used to sit in on harmonica with bands like the Swingin' Medallions and John Townsend and Johnny Wyker's Rubber Band at the Old Hickory, Sam the Sham and the Pharos at Charley Browns in Birmingham AL and a whole load of different bands at the Old Dutch and the Beach Party in PC.

Johnny Wyker and I dated the Anders sisters and when I first met him he had on no shirt, sleeping on the floor in my motel room and looking for his allergy pills nursing a big hangover. He was allergic to just about everything and had to take a pill to counteract most things in his life. My current wife was then going out with Cliff Ellis and I remember helping him get his record put on the juke box at the Mexico beach. FL dance pavilion...

Small World. Bob