

1. **Mississippi Baby** (2:15)(3) – vocal by Ralph & Felix
2. **The Leaves Is Falling On The Ground** (1:50) (3) – vocal by Ralph & Felix
3. **Fifty Years Waltz** (2:30)(3) – instrumental
4. **It Won't Be Long** (2:40)(3) – vocal by Ralph
5. **Bile Dem Cabbage Down** (1:25)(1) – fiddle instrumental
6. **On The Banks Of The Ohio** (2:40)(2) – lead vocal by John White with Ralph & Felix
7. **Hooknose In Town** (1:25)(2) – lead vocal by John White with Ralph & Felix
8. **Carroll County Blues** (2:35)(1) – instrumental
9. **Watermelon Hangin' On The Vine** (2:25)(1) – vocal by Felix & Ralph
10. **Little Church House On The Hill** (2:35)(3) – vocal by Ralph & Felix
11. **Charmin' Betsy** (2:50)(1) – lead vocal by John White with Ralph & Felix
12. **Never Alone Waltz** (2:55)(2) – fiddle instrumental
13. **Bogue Chitto Fling Ding** (1:55)(1) – instrumental
14. **Six White Horses** (2:55)(1) – vocal by Felix
15. **Ida Red** (1:45)(2) – fiddle instrumental

16. **Lonesome Valley** (4) – vocal by Ralph & Felix
17. **Jack's Back In Town** (4) – fiddle instrumental
18. **Bogue Chitto Waltz** (4) – guitar instrumental
19. **Everybody's Rockin'** (4) – lead vocal by Ralph with Felix
20. **The Bubble Gum Boogie** (4) – guitar instrumental
21. **It Won't Be Long** (5) – vocal by Ralph & Felix

Felix Hodges - fiddle & vocals
Ralph Hodges - guitar, mandolin, & vocals
James Hodges - rhythm guitar
John White - string bass & vocals

Selections # 16 - 20 are previously unreleased

Items marked (1) were recorded by Chris Strachwitz at WAPF in McComb, MS in 1960. **Those marked (3)** same, but in 1969.

Items marked (2) were recorded by John White in 1960.

Items marked (4) were recorded by the Hodges Brothers - unknown date

Item marked (5) was recorded in Jackson, MS on December 1, 1951 for the Trumpet label (78 - # 160 - DRC 77 - ACA 2107) and was one of the first commercial recordings released by the Hodges Brothers

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 10341 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530

The Hodges Brothers



Bogue Chitto Flingding
Old Time Mississippi Country Music





OLD TIME MISSISSIPPI COUNTRY MUSIC THE HODGES BROTHERS

It took the American record industry almost a quarter of a century after its inception before they realized that authentic rural American fiddle music could be marketed successfully. It was Texas fiddler Eck Robertson who made the very first Country record, the instrumental "Sally Gooden" in 1922, even though many of the major recording firms had for years already sent scouts around the world to document all sorts of ethnic musicians including many fine fiddlers of various nationalities. However it was the older, more colorful and extrovert Fiddlin' John Carson from Atlanta, Georgia, who began about a year later to put traditional American fiddle music into millions of homes and continued to do so for many years. Singers, however, almost instantly dominated the country music field especially on records because they could be heard loud and clear. Crooner Vernon Dalhart with his many versions of the "Prisoner's Song," became the first "cross-over" singer followed in the late 1920s by

the blue yodler, Jimmie Rodgers. Yet fiddle bands remained popular especially at square dances and other public events in the days before public address systems. Radio and records helped the singers to be heard and by the mid 1930s amplifiers gave them all a more or less equal chance at the local schoolhouse, auditorium or dance hall!

Thirty years later, by the early 1950s, the fiddle remained the leading instrument with many country bands. Envision a present day musical group with a sound of down-home, earthy, hillbilly harmonizing reminiscent of the Monroe Brothers, Dixon Brothers, or Blue Sky Boys of the 1930s and you have the Hodges Brothers of Bogue Chitto, Mississippi. But they were up to date and blended their old timey singing with Felix's fiddle tunes for square dances and included some honky tonk, heart songs and a taste of rock-a-billy in their repertoire.

Thanks to Mrs. McMurphy of the Trumpet record company in Jackson, MS,



I found out that the Hodges Brothers lived in Bogue Chitto just south of Brookhaven, Mississippi, and so I paid them a visit on my first trip through the South in 1960. Since they worked regularly at radio station WAPF in McComb with DJ and bass player John White, I was sort of obligated to record them in his company although I was originally impressed by the duet singing of the brothers on the Trumpet 78 which you can hear at the end of this CD. John considered himself a pretty good singer and sort of dominated the more old-timey, raw, earthy sound of the brothers. After I returned to California I wrote to the Hodges brothers and asked them to make me some tapes without John – just the three brothers. Several of these numbers are incorporated in this new edition of the album which was first issued in 1961.

All three brothers were born and raised in the small, rural settlement called Bogue Chitto, Mississippi – just south of Brookhaven (and north of McComb). Before the new Interstate went through there, in 1960 this area impressed me as someplace out of the past century.

Someone was still using a mule to turn the sugar cane press to make molasses near where the Hodges brothers lived. The brothers themselves lived in a small "shotgun" house with their mother and the chickens would sleep in the trees at night. They got their water from a well in the back yard and they hunted, fished and worked their small garden/farm. So perhaps it's not such a surprise that their music harks back to a past era and the people for whom they played in the neighborhood and nearby small communities also seemed to prefer the old music over the new flashy Nashville product. The Hodges Brothers were indeed local musicians who played for local audiences.

Felix, who was born in 1923 (and died in 1979), learned many of the fiddle tunes from his uncle John Stewart and his ex-father-in-law supposedly was quite a whiz on the banjo. Felix was to my ears one of the most delightful fiddlers I had ever heard. He knew many old time fiddle tunes but could also play the blues and fine backing to the vocals on the all important "heart" songs.

Ralph, born in 1927 (and died in 1976) was brought up with the mandolin but by 1960 was playing mostly lead guitar and did most of the singing. James, the youngest, was born March 13, 1932 and supplied the solid rhythm guitar backing. James still lives today in Bogue Chitto! John White came originally from Bell County, Kentucky. All of them have traveled about the area with various shows and variety acts. They also played for dances, picnics, carnivals, even political rallies and with their strong gospel background also appeared at local churches.

The songs on this album reflect the wide range of their repertoire from old-time fiddle tunes, to breakdowns, honky tonk, heart songs, blues, sacred songs, ballads, instrumentals, and novelty tunes. I hope you enjoy the Hodges Brothers and their timeless old timey Mississippi country music. Perhaps you can drop a note to James, the only survivor who has been a bit under the weather lately suffering from arthritis. (We will forward all correspondence to him.)

- Chris Strachwitz - 1971, rewritten
and up-dated April 2003



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