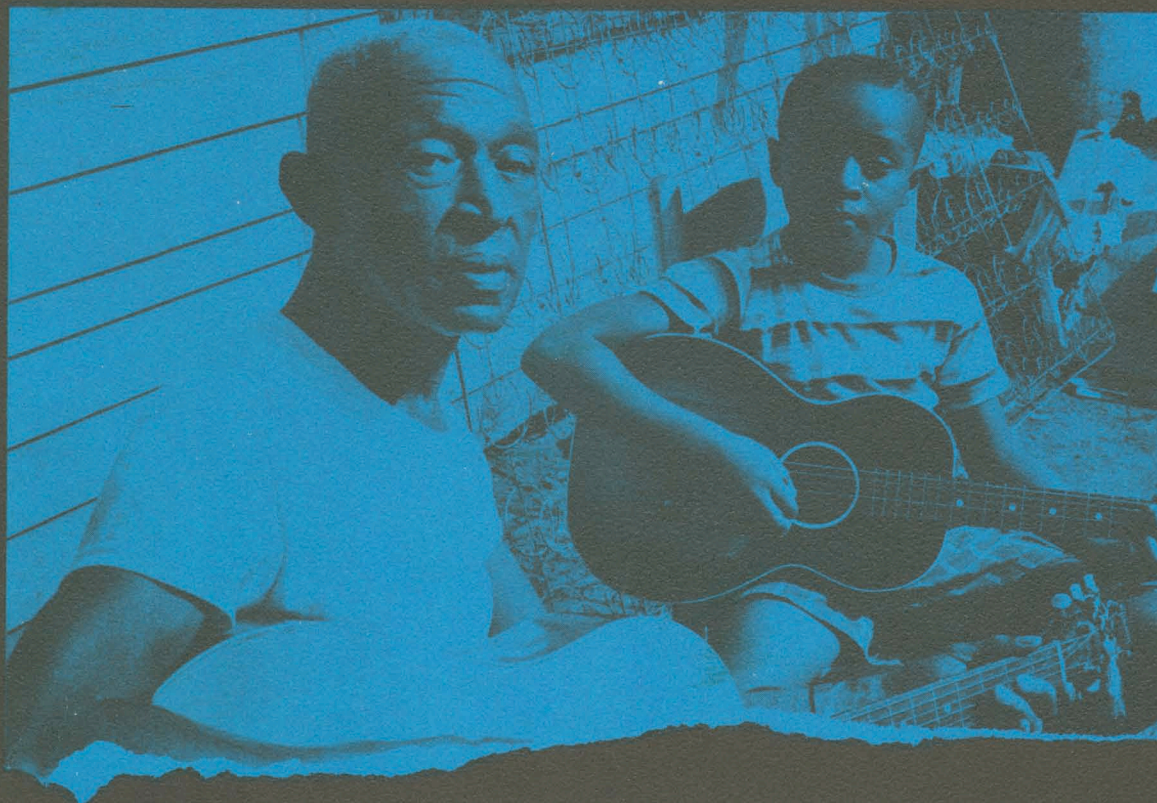


Asch Records 101

THE BLUES

Music from the Film by Samuel Charters



With

J. D. Short

Pink Anderson

Furry Lewis

Baby Tate

Memphis Willie B.

Gus Cannon

Sleepy John Estes



M
1630.18
B6582
1967

MUSIC LP

ASCH RECORDS 101

SIDE I

Band 1: INTRODUCTION - ALONE IN THE EVENING
HOURS. J. D. Short , Memphis Willie B.

Band 2: SLIDIN' DELTA, J.D. Short, with Guitar,
Harmonica & Drum

Band 3: OLD COTTON FIELDS OF HOME
Pink Anderson and his Son

Band 4: JOHN HENRY. Furry Lewis, with Furry's
Street Sweeping

Band 5: BAD BLUES, Baby Tate

SIDE II

Band 1: SITTING HERE THINKING. Memphis
Willie B. & Gus Cannon with Guitar,
Harmonica & Jug

Band 2: LONESOME GROUND. Sleepy John Estes

Band 3: IF I COULD HOLLER LIKE A MOUNTAIN
JACK. Baby Tate

Band 4: WHEN I FIRST STARTED HOBOING.
Baby Tate

Band 5: WEEPING WILLOW BLUES. Pink Anderson

THE BLUES

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN CHARTERS

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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A NOTE

The film "The Blues" was begun as an effort to document aspects of the blues that couldn't be put on to a phonograph record. In 1961 and 1962 I was doing a great deal of recording in the South, and in Memphis I became interested in not only the sound of Furry Lewis's guitar style, but in the patterns of movement in his hands and fingers as he played. Out of this came the long trip through St. Louis, Memphis, Louisiana, and South Carolina in the summer of 1962 that led to the film. It was shot under very severe limitations of equipment and film knowledge with a hand held Bolex 16 mm camera, and the sound track was recorded with a portable Ampex machine and a small battery operated Uher. It was a hot, dusty summer, and some of the unrelieved swelter of the July afternoons and nights left its impression on the film, as well as the difficulties of synchronizing musical sequences filmed with elementary film techniques. When I returned to New York in the fall of 1962 John Cohen had also just returned from shooting his first film in Kentucky, and he helped with the problems of finding editing equipment and laboratory facilities, as well as with considerable encouragement. During this period he was editing his own film "The High Lonesome Sound," and for some of the editing we shared the same equipment and the same problems. "The Blues" was finished early in 1963, and was premiered at the University of Chicago Folk Festival in January, 1963.

SIDE ONE

- Band 1. Introduction by J. D. Short and ALONE IN THE EVENING BLUES by Memphis Willie B.
- Band 2. SLIDIN' DELTA by J. D. Short, with guitar, harmonica, and drum.
- Band 3. OLD COTTON FIELDS OF HOME by Pink Anderson and his son.
- Band 4. JOHN HENRY by Furry Lewis, with Furry's street sweeping.
- Band 5. BAD BLUES by Baby Tate

SIDE TWO

- Band 1. SITTING HERE THINKING by Memphis Willie B. and Gus Cannon, with guitar, harmonica, and jug.
- Band 2. LONESOME GROUND by Sleepy John Estes.
- Band 3. IF I COULD HOLLER LIKE A MOUNTAIN JACK by Baby Tate.
- Band 4. WHEN I FIRST STARTED HOBOING by Baby Tate
- Band 5. WEEPING WILLOW BLUES by Pink Anderson. Recording by Samuel Charters, with Ann Charters, technical assistant.

Band 1. ALONE IN THE EVENING BLUES
by Memphis Willie B.

Willie B., Willie Borum, is better known for his two albums on the Prestige Bluesville series where he plays both harmonica and guitar, as well as singing in a strong 1930's blues style influenced by Sonny Boy Williamson. He began as a musician in the late '20's playing the harmonica, and the solo that he did for the background during the transition sections of the film was learned in part from the Memphis harmonica player Noah Lewis.

Band 2. SLIDIN' DELTA by J. D. Short.

J. D. was born and raised in Mississippi, but he moved to St. Louis in 1925, and his blues style reflected a number of influences. He had always had difficulty finding men to work with him; so he rigged up a small bass drum that he played with his foot. The beater was a child's rubber ball on the end of an old metal rod. He played two harmonicas mounted on his guitar, as well as singing in a strong and intense voice. J. D. had spent a number of months in and out of hospitals in the year and a half before the film was made, and he died in St. Louis a few weeks afterward; leaving this few moments of film to document his music.

Band 3. OLD COTTON FIELDS OF HOME
by Pink Anderson and his son

Pink Anderson is a veteran medicine show performer who has given up his itinerant life and lives in a small frame house in Spartanburg, South Carolina. For nearly fifty years Pink spent all summer and fall traveling with the small tent shows that were still playing in small country towns throughout the South, and he has been passing some of his songs and his guitar style on to his son, who was six years old when they sang together in the little yard behind Pink's house for the film.

Band 4. JOHN HENRY by Furry Lewis.

Furry was one of the most distinctive and musical of the blues men working out of Memphis in the '20's, and when he was found in Memphis in 1959 he was still playing in his old style and singing most of his old songs. He works days as a street sweeper for the city of Memphis, and the opening sequences were filmed of Furry working at his job.

Band 5. BAD BLUES by Baby Tate

Baby Tate lives not far from Pink Anderson in Spartanburg, South Carolina. His style has many similarities to Blind Boy Fuller's, and he remembers meeting and

playing with Blind Boy in the '30's. BAD BLUES was a guitar solo that he did as the background for a sequence of southern "White Only" signs.

SIDE TWO

Band 1. SITTING HERE THINKING by
Memphis Willie B. and Gus Cannon.

Like most southern cities Memphis is a melting pot of blues styles, and at little neighborhood parties old men and young men will sit down and try their numbers together, just to see what they'll sound like. Gus Cannon was one of the old medicine show banjo players and entertainers in Memphis before the first World War, and he led his famous "Cannon's Jug Stompers" for a group of memorable Victor recordings in the late '20's. He and Memphis Willie B. were filmed in a radio repair shop and rehearsal room that Willie has built behind his house in Memphis. Gus was playing the jug and Willie played the amplified guitar and harmonica.

Band 2. LONESOME GROUND
by Sleepy John Estes.

When John was filmed he was still living in his sharecropper's shack outside of Brownsville, Tennessee. For his singing he had to come over to a neighbor's house where there was electricity to operate the recorders. Since then he has begun appearing regularly at folk festivals and folk clubs around the country, and he has recorded three albums for Delmark Records, Chicago, Illinois. I would like to thank Bob Koester, who owns Delmark, for granting permission for John's appearance on this record.

Band 3. IF I COULD HOLLER LIKE A
MOUNTAIN JACK by Baby Tate

Band 4. WHEN I FIRST STARTED HOBOING
by Baby Tate

Band 5. WEeping WILLOW BLUES
by Pink Anderson

When Pink and Baby were trying to decide what they wanted to do for the film they recorded several "alternates" as possibilities for the sound track. These selections are three of the left over blues, all of them in the easy, supple style that is typical of the Carolina blues men.

"THE BLUES" IS DISTRIBUTED BY
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