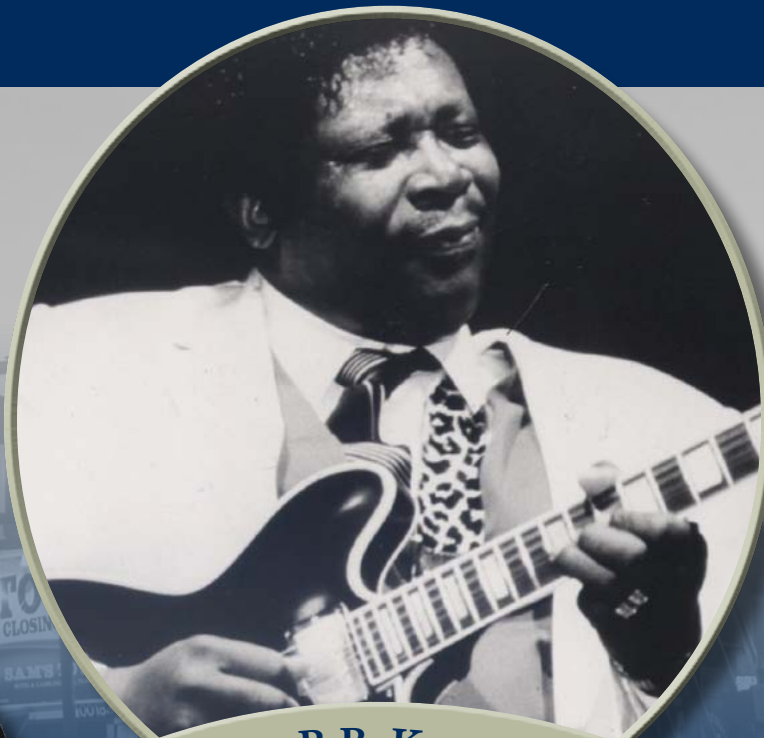


THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE



B.B. KING



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THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

BY SHELBY FOOTE

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<http://www.americanheritage.com/content/%E2%80%9Cplace-good-abode%E2%80%9D>

By the middle of the present century, Mr. Crump—West Tennessee’s presiding political genius from 1909 to his death in 1954—could boast that Memphis had more churches than it had service stations. This was true, and it followed a tradition dating back to long before Billy Sunday and Gipsy Smith held court in the region. One such preacher, early on, was Elijah Coffey, a sometime shoemaker and Free-Will Baptist. He’d left a wife and a shaky reputation up in Illinois, but Memphis cared nothing for that. His pulpit style was more important, and an eyewitness has left us a description of it: “In the delivery of his sermons he held his left hand to his ear and slashed around with his right in a frightful manner, taxing his lungs to their fullest capacity.” When a ranter like Coffey came along, there was a bullpen padded with straw for the physical safety of those most violently afflicted with the “shakes.” Out on the rim of the uproar, young people also had their fun, taking the opportunity for courting. “For a mile or more around the campground,” the same witness testified, “the woods seem alive with people. Every tree or bush has its couple, while hundreds of others are seen prowling around in search of some cozy spot.” Hallelujah!

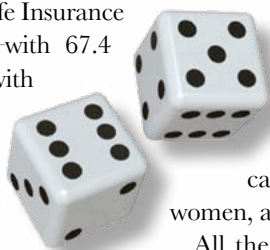
Other excesses developed and expanded down the years. Crime, for instance, especially murder. In 1922 a Prudential Life Insurance Company statistician announced that Memphis—with 67.4 murders per 100,000 population, as compared with far-north, sinful New York City’s 5.8—was “the murder capital of America.” Big Shelby—so called because it is the seat of the county named for Isaac Shelby, the first governor of Kentucky and one of the city’s prospective founders—had been badmouthed before and even took pride in some of the accusations made when it was a roisterous bluff-top stopping-off place for



Beale Street, Memphis, Tennessee

flatboatmen bound downriver with a load of steam that would not wait for Natchez. But this was different; this affected business, particularly the insurance business, which Mr. Crump personified. Moreover, the charge was unfair, to a considerable degree. Half-murdered victims from miles around were rushed to Memphis for emergency hospital treatment, and if one didn’t survive, he swelled the grim statistics. In much the same way, field hands and high rollers, up from the Mississippi Delta and down from the Missouri boot-heel, came to town and got into shootouts over dice and cards and women, and those outlanders who died were added to the list.

All the same, this murder-capital tag was just too much, and the answer was fairly clear. Though Mr. Crump had never discouraged good times in all forms, the gamblers and the



THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

— CONTINUED —

madams and their houses had to go, along with their hangers-on and easy riders. So go they did, across the Mississippi line and over the Harahan Bridge to Arkansas. Yet in many ways they took the vibrant soul of Memphis with them.

Repudiating her earthy heritage, the bluff-top city got clean and quiet and almost holy and began to brag about it on roadside billboards welcoming tourists into town: “America’s Cleanest City” and “America’s Quietest City,” awards it won in the early days of the Depression. By way of lagniappe, movie theaters were required to remain dark on Sundays.

But this too changed with time; there have been many Memphises on the Lower Chickasaw Bluff. Just as she had survived three horrendous bouts with yellow fever—one of which reduced her into becoming merely the “Taxing District of Shelby County”—so too did she survive this uncharacteristic stretch of prudish respectability and emerge as a city on the boom and on the make, in some ways more akin to Chicago or Cleveland, say, than to Charleston or to Atlanta, her archrival; sometimes, in fact, her boosters get carried away and talk rather like out-of-state Texans. Still, operating as they do behind a Deep South facade—“The Place of Good Abode,” as the Chamber of Commerce dubbed her at one time—these same boosters remember that “charm” is one of their homegrown products too, and they shrug and smile as if to say it doesn’t matter. But it does; it matters a great deal. Big Shelby’s charm, like that of a Southern belle broadening her drawl in Manhattan, is nearly always based on something practical. A North-South East-West crossroads, her manner is as much Western as it is Southern, both at once. As a stranger you are welcomed, Western style, but then, if you don’t quite measure up to expectations, the Southern deep freeze sets in.

As for me, though, who’s been living here for better than forty years, my favorite Memphis is the Memphis of my youth, when I used to come up from the Delta to have fun. Here we saw our first skyscraper—sixteen floors!—and took our first ride on a roller coaster, first tasted whiskey mixed with anything but Coca-Cola, and in some benighted cases first encountered hot and cold spigots and ladies with no sleeves in their dresses. Going up there was like visiting another world. The Peabody lobby, where “drummers” sat in overstuffed chairs with Elks teeth on their watch chains and big cigars in their faces, was bigger than any barn down home and as grand as anything in *The Arabian Nights*. Downstairs in the coffee shop the waitresses called you honey, but Alonzo in the main dining room always knew your name, along with everyone else’s. Up in bed at last, if you liked to sleep with the patter of rain in your dreams, you could leave the shower running all night long. Traffic sounded faint and far, down on the streets below, like the dwindled strain of fox horns three fields off, and next morning you’d be going out to Overton Park to watch the zoo men feed the lions.

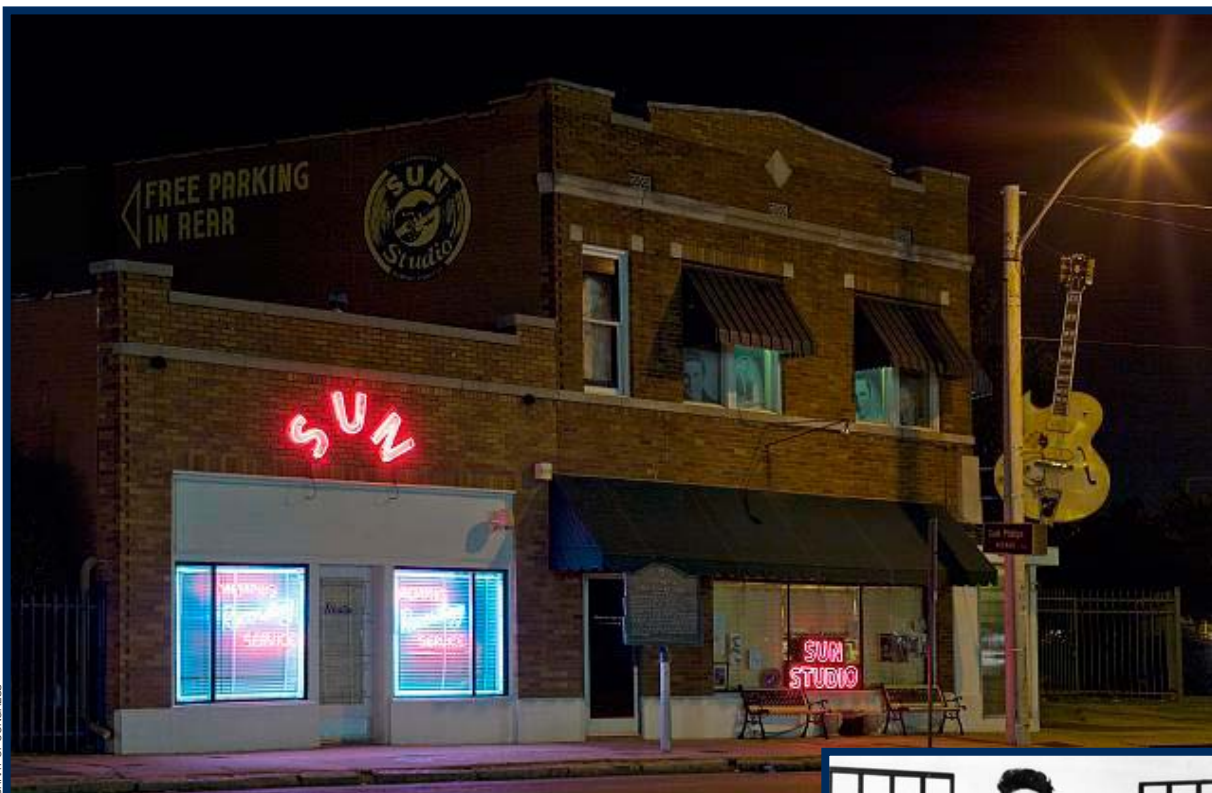
My mother told me once about a turn-of-the-century dance down home that had Bud Scott’s band at one end of the floor and W. C. Handy’s at the other. I would certainly like to have been there, even though it would have me crowding a hundred by now. Handy, not Elvis, is for me the providing and presiding spirit of Memphis. “I’d rather be here than any place I know,” he said of his hometown in the 1917 “Beale Street Blues,” and later, when words were added to “The Memphis Blues” of 1911—the first ever put on paper—he offered an explanation of why he loved the place. “It wraps a spell around your heart,” he sang. And so it does. So it does. ♣



THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

SUN RECORD STUDIOS

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010630851/>



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Sun Records Studio,
Memphis, Tennessee

Description: Sun Records Studio where Elvis Presley got his break into the music business. Sun Studio was opened by rock pioneer Sam Phillips at 706 Union Avenue in Memphis, Tennessee, on January 3, 1950. It was originally called Memphis Recording Service, sharing the same building with the Sun Records label business. Reputedly the first rock-and-roll single, Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats' "Rocket 88" was recorded there in 1951 with song composer Ike Turner on keyboards, leading the studio to claim status as the birthplace of rock & roll.

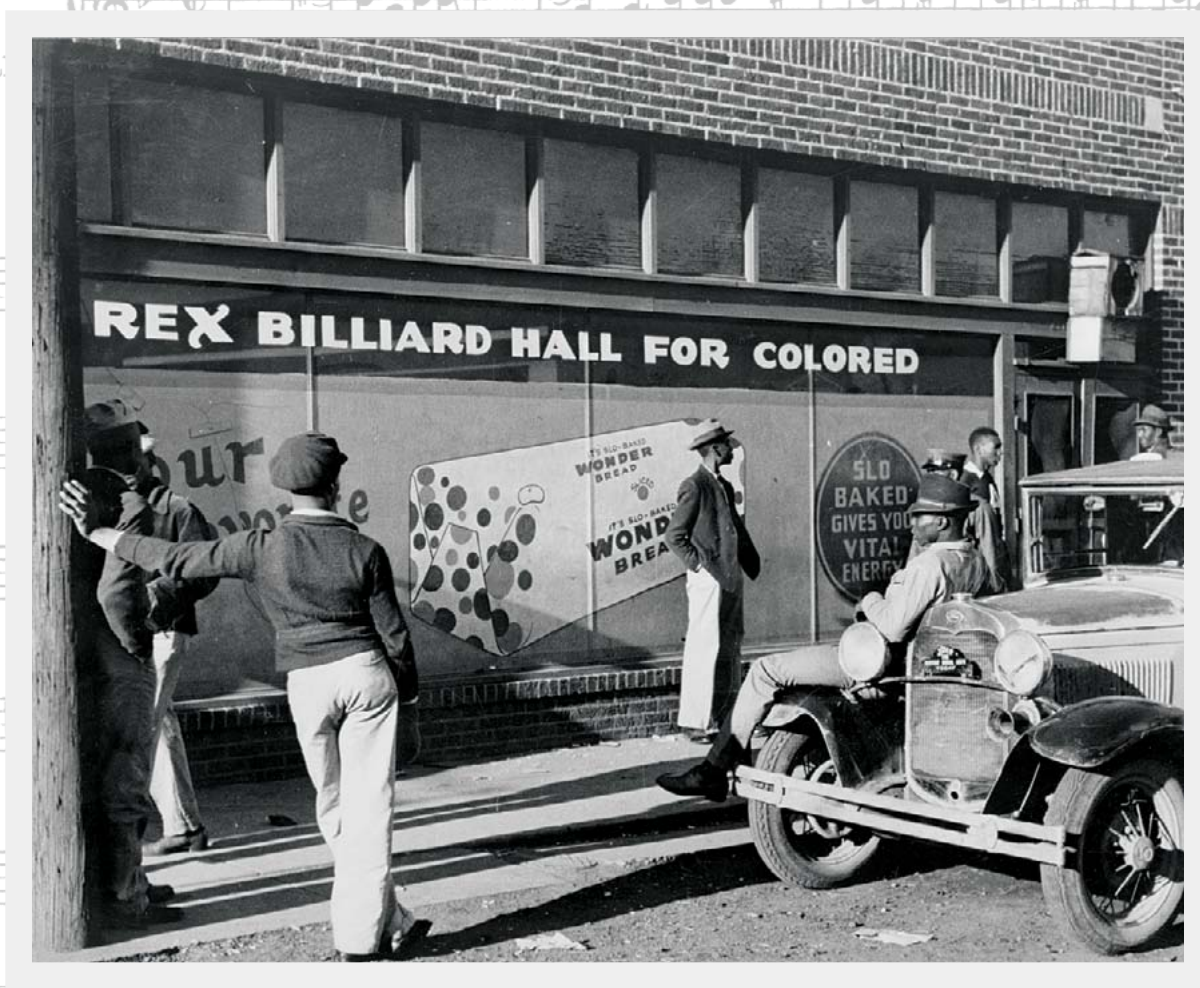


Elvis Presley
(*Jailhouse Rock*, 1957)

THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

BEALE STREET, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998013763/PP/>



"Beale Street,
Memphis, Tennessee"
Marion Post Wolcott
October 1939

Street down by the Fris - co Bay, _____ I've strolled the

THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE IS MEMPHIS THE BIRTHPLACE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL?

BY MARJIE LAMBERT

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/08/06/2923661/is-memphis-the-birthplace-of-rock.html>



Sun Records Studio where Elvis Presley got his break into the music business. Sun Studio was opened by rock pioneer Sam Phillips at 706 Union Avenue in Memphis, Tennessee, on January 3, 1950. It was originally called Memphis Recording Service, sharing the same building with the Sun Records label business. Reputedly the first rock-and-roll single, Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats' "Rocket 88" was recorded there in 1951 with song composer Ike Turner on keyboards, leading the studio to claim status as the birthplace of rock & roll.

MEMPHIS, TENN. — This port city on the Mississippi River calls itself the birthplace of rock 'n' roll. Its credentials? The Memphis Recording Service, forerunner of Sun Studio, in 1951 recorded Rocket 88 by Jackie Brenston & His Delta Cats, which some people say was the first rock 'n' roll record.

Several other cities make the same claim, including Wildwood, N.J., where Bill Haley and His Comets performed the first song with "rock" in the title (Rock Around the Clock) in 1954; Cleveland, where DJ Alan Freed coined the term rock 'n' roll and organized the first rock concert; and Detroit, home of Motown Records.

It's hard to argue against Memphis, where some of the earliest practitioners of the blues and rock 'n' roll got their start at Sun Studio, Stax Records or Hi Records: Johnny Cash, B.B. King, Carl Perkins, Booker T. and the MGs, Jerry Lee Lewis, Rufus and

kitschy souvenir shops for blue suede shoes, and in my hotel, where a painting of B.B. King is part of the jazz-and-blues theme. At night on Beale Street, the competing music from clubs clashes in the street.

Each of the music-related museums has its own soundtrack, and I could spend days just listening to their playlists of historically significant tunes: the original Hound Dog, recorded by "Big Mama" Thornton in 1952, four years before it was covered by Elvis. Cause I Love You, the first record by Carla Thomas, in a duet with

her father, Rufus Thomas, himself a rhythm and blues singer. Early recordings by Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett on which Booker T and the MGs performed as

the Stax house band.

On this trip, it's tempting to visit the Civil Rights Museum, watch the ducks march at the Peabody Hotel, take a dinner



THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE IS MEMPHIS THE BIRTHPLACE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

— CONTINUED —

cruise on a paddle wheeler, and go to a minor league baseball game, which has charms lacking in the big leagues.

But I grew up in the '50s and '60s, still own the scratched 45s I collected as a kid, and view rock 'n' roll proudly and possessively as the music that distinguished my generation from the previous one. So I choose to immerse myself in Memphis's music—related landmarks, all of which, in some sense, are museums. I will find that in different proportions, all are part bragging, part recounting history and part spreading a love of music.

First stop: the Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum, located on the party stretch of Beale Street. Created by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of American History, it grew out of the history museum's traveling exhibition about American music. Unlike the other museums, which generally focus on a particular niche, this museum is an overview of rock and soul. Exhibits trace the history of American music to gospel music, field hollers and work songs of sharecroppers in the '30s, examining how social and cultural forces shaped music.

Also on display are guitars signed by Jimmie Vaughan and Robert Cray, a sequined jacket and hat worn by Sam of Sam the Sham and the Pharoahs, the organ on which Mark James wrote *Suspicious Minds*, a speaker cabinet used by U2 and much more..

MAKING MUSIC

Across the street is the Gibson Guitar factory. Our tour guide hands out safety goggles and makes it clear that taking them off won't be tolerated. Neither will stepping outside the lines on the factory floor. This is a factory where chemicals are used, we're reminded, and wood dust floats in the air. No

photography is allowed.

It's a Saturday, but a crew of luthiers is making hollow-bodied guitars. There are no automated assembly lines here. The top and back wooden panels are cut, rims pressed into shape, center blocks glued on, rims glued on, tops and necks attached and bound. There is sanding, filling, buffing, staining and drying.

The process of making a guitar takes three weeks or longer, I learn later; the factory noise drowns out most of what our tour guide says.

Sun Studio, the smallest of the museums, is in midtown Memphis, a mile from the Rock 'n' Soul Museum, which offers a free shuttle. It began life as Memphis Recording Studio, but Sam Phillips soon turned it into a record label. This is where Jackie Brenston & His Delta Cats, with Ike Turner on piano, recorded *Rocket 88*, an ode to an Oldsmobile. The recording was distinctive because of the distortion caused by a damaged amplifier. Phillips liked the distortion and kept it.

Three years later, Elvis Presley recorded his first record here. Phillips had not been enthused about Presley's initial efforts, until he heard him casually sing a sped-up version of Arthur Crudup's *That's All Right*. The song became Presley's first single on the Sun label.

Phillips also signed Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl

Perkins, who came together with Elvis on one memorable night in an impromptu jam session that inspired the Broadway production *Million Dollar Quartet*.

The upstairs exhibit includes photos and concert posters of various Sun Studio artists, Elvis memorabilia including his high school diploma and other materials. In the downstairs recording studio, guitars lean against the walls, which are



Making guitars at the Gibson Guitar Factory in Memphis, top, and an impromptu jam session at Sun Studio on December 4, 1956 with the "Million Dollar Quartet", bottom. (L to R: Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash.)

THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

“Is Memphis the Birthplace of Rock ‘n’ Roll”

— CONTINUED —

hung with blown-up photos of musicians. Guests are invited to take photos of each other handling the microphone that Elvis once used.

The Stax Museum of American Soul Music is in Soulsville, a neighborhood about 2 1/2 miles south of Beale Street, close to the spot where the Stax recording studio was built in a former movie theater. The studio opened in 1960 but was later torn down. The museum, opened in 2003, has a touch-screen map that illustrates how the studio was part of a larger community where Aretha Franklin, Booker T. Jones (of Booker T. and the MG’s) and other musicians once lived.

Displays tell the history of Stax Records, an R&B label founded by Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton, white brother and sister, most of whose recording artists were black. Among the artists — some in a convoluted arrangement with Atlantic Records — were Sam and Dave, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, the Staple Singers, Isaac Hayes, Rufus and Carla Thomas, most of them backed at some point by Booker T and the MG’s.

The museum has the “Express Yourself” dance floor with videos from Soul Train, an authentic Mississippi Delta AME chapel that was disassembled and rebuilt in the museum, and a wealth of memorabilia: stage costumes; equipment trunks; Isaac Hayes’ tricked-out Cadillac; the tape machine on which Otis Redding recorded; the piano used for Green Onions.

GOING LIVE

Now it’s Friday night, and I’m out with a group looking for music. The pedestrian-only section of Beale Street is crowded with people drinking from plastic takeout cups, wandering

through music and souvenir stores, and watching the Beale Street Flippers, athletic young men who perform a sort of combination cartwheel/somersault across the cobblestones for tips. The scene hasn’t reached frat-party status, but on some nights, it does.

With live music, most of the clubs have a cover charge, but they’re still busy. Our group tries Mr. Handy’s Blues Hall first, but it has standing room only, and we end up in Rum Boogie Cafe, where the music is not so loud that it drowns out conversation.

A block away is the Brass Note Walk of Fame, which celebrates more than 100 people who contributed to Memphis’s musical history with brass notes embedded in the sidewalk between Second and Third Streets in the style of the stars on Hollywood Boulevard’s Walk of Fame.

Finally, there is Graceland, which will host Elvis Week Aug. 10-18, when fans will mark the 35th anniversary of the death of the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll.

Graceland’s importance to Memphis as a musical destination can’t be understated. Graceland opened for tours on June 7, 1982, five years after Elvis’s death. It wasn’t until after those tours starting drawing in music lovers that Sun Studio and Stax Records followed suit, the Smithsonian opened the Memphis Rock ‘n’

Soul Museum, or that Beale Street began its comeback.

Tours of Graceland are self-guided, so visitors proceed at their own pace, but most stop longest at the Jungle Room, with its waterfall, shag-carpeted walls and jungle motif; the billiard room, in which the walls and ceiling are covered with elaborately pleated print fabric; the displays of gold records and glitzy jumpsuits; and the Meditation Garden, where Elvis, his parents and other family members are buried. 🌿



The Stax Museum of American Soul Music is a museum located in Memphis, Tennessee, at the former location of Stax recording studio, top. Graceland, a twenty-three room limestone mansion was the home of Elvis Presley, bottom.

THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

CLEVELAND'S ROCK HISTORY

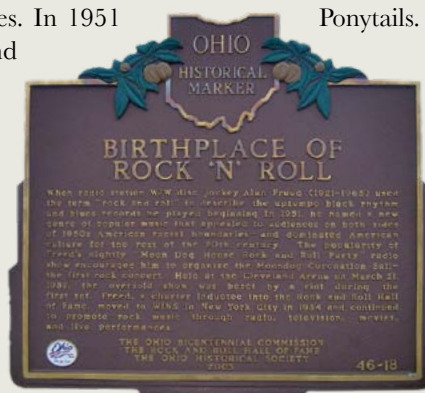
<http://www.positivelycleveland.com/rock/rock-history/>

WHY IS THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM LOCATED IN CLEVELAND, OHIO?

The city lobbied for it primarily based on the legacy of Alan Freed (1921-1965), a deejay credited with coining and popularizing the term “rock and roll” when promoting the latest in rhythm and blues. In 1951 Freed took to the airwaves in Cleveland using the name “Moondog.” And, in March 21, 1952, Freed promoted “The Moondog Coronation Ball” at the Cleveland Arena. The momentous event ended early due to issues with overcrowding, but is still recognized as the first rock and roll concert.

Freed was part of the first group of inductees into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Cleveland embraced rock and roll, making it a hot record-buying, radio and live concert market. According to the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History: “Radio stations like WERE-AM, WKYC-AM, WHK-AM, and WIXY-AM in the 1950s and 1960s established a national “break-out” market by playing new records and artists.



WERE's jocks, Tommy Edwards, Bill Randle, Phil Mclean and Carl Reese, chose to play unknown rockers like Elvis Presley, the Everly Brothers, Buddy Holly, and a local group, the Ponytails. WKYC-AM, the city's first formatted rock station, was followed by hit stations WHK (Color Radio) and WIXY. Progressive rock stations WNCR and WMMS established a strong FM market.”

The Cleveland *Plain Dealer's* Jane Scott became the first established rock writer when she began a teen music column in 1962. She went on to become known as the “oldest living rock critic,” staying on the paper until 2002.

Although there is a list of songs that reference Cleveland, there are two lyrics that seem to stick in visitors minds linking the city with its rock and roll legacy. One is the “Heart of Rock and Roll” by Huey Lewis and the News and Ian Hunter’s “Cleveland Rocks,” which solidified its status as an anthem for the city when it became the theme from *The Drew Carey Show*. 🌸

NOTABLE MUSIC ACTS FROM CLEVELAND PLUS

15 60 75/The Numbers Band

Joseph Arthur

Alex Bevan

The Black Keys

Bone Thugs N Harmony

Eric Carmen

Tracy Chapman

Johnny Cymbal

The Choir

The Damnation of Adam Blessing

The Dazz Band

Death of Samantha

Devo

Glass Harp

James Gang

Kid Cudi

Amazing Pink Holes

Levert

Macy Gray

Marilyn Manson

Michael Stanley Band

Mr. Stress

Mushroomhead

New Salem Witch Hunters

Nine Inch Nails

O'Jays

Pere Ubu

The Pretenders

Raspberries

Robert Lockwood, Jr.

Rocket from the Tombs

Rubber City Rebels

Screamin' Jay Hawkins

Tin Huey

Tiny Alice

The Twilights

Waitresses

Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs

THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

ROCK 'N' ROLL

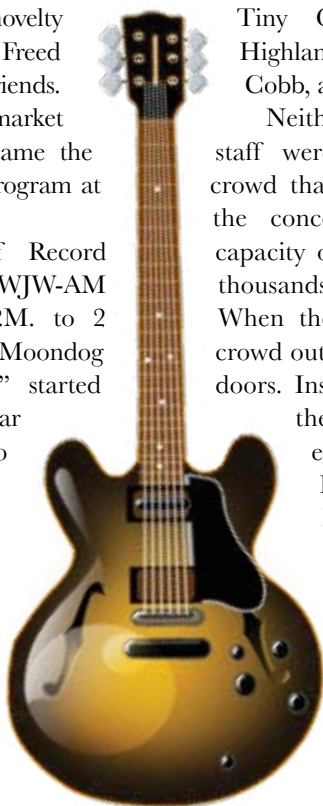
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CLEVELAND HISTORY

<http://ech.case.edu/ech-cgi/article.pl?id=RR>

ROCK 'N' ROLL. Through a series of interesting personalities and promotions, rock 'n' roll was invented in Cleveland in the early 1950s. In the late 1940s, Leo Mintz, the owner of Record Rendezvous, saw the decrease in sales of big band records. Mintz, however, saw how his young customers would dance around his store when the manager played Rhythm & Blues (R&B) records. In order to eliminate the racial tone of this music from the deep south, he called it rock & roll. The term "rock 'n' roll" had been used since the early 1920s as a blues song lyric meaning sexual intercourse. Mintz tried to get airplay for R&B records, but the 6 radio stations in Cleveland played only music by white musicians.

Mintz finally met a young, brash disc jockey from WAKR-AM in Akron, Alan Freed. Freed was impressed with Mintz's customers' reaction to rock 'n' roll and began playing a rock 'n' roll record on his afternoon show as a novelty song sometime in early 1949. Freed and Mintz became good friends. Freed entered the Cleveland market in April 1950, when he became the host of an afternoon movie program at WXEL-TV (Ch. 9).

With the sponsorship of Record Rendezvous, Freed started at WJW-AM in July 1951. His 11:15 P.M. to 2 A.M. radio program, "The Moondog Rock & Roll House Party," started as a mixture of popular hits and R&B records. With Leo Mintz sitting in the studio at his side, handing him records, the music mix evolved into the first rock 'n' roll radio format. Although disc jockeys across the country were playing R&B records on the radio, Freed was the only one calling it rock 'n' roll. Freed's



radio style, howling and yelling "rock & roll," while pounding on a telephone book, his wit and his ambition were the sparks that fueled his popularity with the teens in the black neighborhoods. They were attracted to the music, but it was Freed's Moondog persona that created a very loyal audience, the Moondoggers.

After several months at WJW, Freed began promoting dances that featured the R&B bands he played on his radio show. After a few events, with promoter Booker Brooks, Freed formed a partnership with Lew Platt. After a few dances in Akron, Canton, and Vermillion, they promoted a large show at the arena on 21 Mar. 1952. Advertised as "the most terrible ball of them all," the event was called the "Moondog Coronation Ball" because Freed intended to crown himself the "King of the Moondoggers." The show featured

Paul Williams & The Hucklebuckers, Tiny Grimes & The Rockin' Highlanders, the Dominoes, Danny Cobb, and Varetta Dilliard.

Neither Freed or the Arena staff were prepared for the large crowd that showed up the night of the concert. After admitting the capacity of the hall, there were still thousands outside waiting to get in. When the music started, the huge crowd outside broke down the Arena doors. Inside, fighting broke out in, the audience and the concert ended after the first song. It took the Cleveland Police Department and the Cleveland Fire Department several hours to clear the Arena and to stop the fighting. City Council immediately passed an ordinance making it illegal to oversell the capacity of a public



Alan (Moondog) Freed was the first disc jockey to play rock 'n' roll on the airwaves during his afternoon show at WAKR-AM in Akron, OH in 1949. He moved to WJW-FM in 1951, where he created "The Moondog Rock & Roll House Party", which evolved into the first rock 'n' roll radio format.

building. Despite Freed's denial that the show was oversold, he was accused of exposing his young audience to danger. The local newspapers gave the incident front page coverage and the wire service spread the story around the world. Suddenly, the press was talking about rock 'n' roll and its evils.

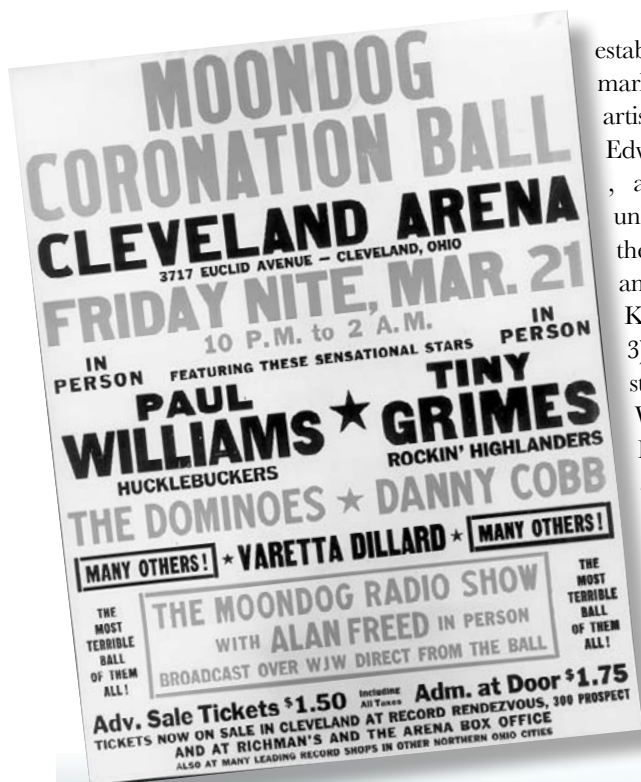
Freed's popularity soared after the Moondog Ball. Both his radio program and his concert business thrived. Freed moved to WINS-AM in New York City on 15 Aug. 1954. His success on the radio and in the concert business would make rock 'n' roll a household word. In 1959 Freed was indicted on payola charges by an FTC congressional committee. Freed died broke in 1964.

Freed left behind a city of rock 'n' roll fans. Their acceptance and enthusiasm for new bands, musical trends, and recordings made Cleveland a hot music market. Radio stations like WERE-AM, KYC (AM) "see WKYC (Channel 3)," WHK-Am, and WIXY-AM in the 1950s and 1960s

THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

ROCK 'N' ROLL THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CLEVELAND HISTORY

— CONTINUED —



established a national “break-out” market by playing new records and artists first. WERE’s jocks, Tommy Edwards, Bill Randle, Phil McLean, and Carl Reese, chose to play unknown rockers like Elvis Presley, the Everly Brothers, Buddy Holly, and a local group, the Ponytails. KYC (AM) “see WKYC (Channel 3),” the city’s first formatted rock station, was followed by hit stations WHK (Color Radio) and WIXY. Progressive rock stations WNCR and WMMS established a strong FM market.

Jane Scott of the *Plain Dealer* was the first established rock writer when she began a teen music column in 1962. The *Cleveland Press* followed with writers Judy Prusnek, Bruno Bornino, and

Harriet Peters. Independent entertainment papers like the *Great Swamp Erie da da Boom*, *After Dark*, and *The Scene* followed.

Freed was forgotten until 1971 when English writer, Charlie Gillett, published his book *The Sound of the City—The Rise of Rock & Roll*. With a perspective of 15 years, Gillett credited Freed’s role in starting rock ‘n’ roll and saw the Moondog Coronation Ball as the beginning of rock ‘n’ roll. In 1972 WMMS program director, Billy Bass, coined the phrase “Cleveland--The Rock ‘n’ Roll Capital of the World.”

In the mid-1980s, disc jockey Norm N. Nite used Freed’s Cleveland activities and the Moondog Coronation Ball to rally public and civic support to bring the Rock and Roll’s Hall of Fame and Museum to Cleveland. The museum, located on the lakefront, opened to the public in Sept. 1995. ❖



Cleveland, Ohio’s Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

THE PLACE OF GOOD ABODE

Growing Up in Motown

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1749003>



“Growing Up in Motown”

Hank Rosenfeld

March 5, 2004

Audio file from NPR’s All Things

Considered: Rosenfeld talks about the immediacy and relevance of Motown, where he grew up seeing Marvin Gaye mow his lawn.



Motown musician Marvin Gaye.

