THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

Rhythm and Blues Harmony

Presented by Claus Röhnisch
The R&B Pioneers Series - Volume Six of twelve

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The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve

Updated July 10, 2019
Two great "reference" books on Doo-Wop:

**The Doo-Wop Decades, 1945-1965**
by B. Lee Cooper and Frank W. Hoffman
CSIPP, US 2017

**The Top 1000 Doo-Wop Songs**
by Anthony Gribin and Matthew Schiff
Tigpress, 2014
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

Introduction

Of all the countless (and mostly black) vocal groups, who gave us that exciting and wonderful harmony singing in the 1950s, I have selected ten outstanding pioneer R&B groups. Two of them represent the 1930s and 1940s “church” ballads and jazz roots, at least two gospel-influenced groups can be tagged fore-runners of “soul”, two represent the later defined “doo-wop” style (coupled with jump origins), two groups went top pop (well, actually three), and two can truly be called rock ’n’ roll groups. Some of your absolute favorites may be missing (there sure are others – the Ravens, Orioles, Larks, Hollywood Flames, Robins, Swallows, Five Keys, Harptones, Spaniels, Dells, Flairs, Penguins, Cadets/Jacks, Valentines, Five Satins, Falcons, Jayhawks/Vibrations – to name a few). A terrific introduction essay on the rise of vocal group harmony is written by Peter Grendysa for “The Drifters Box” (Rhino, 1996), and Bob Hyde compiled the (probably best) vocal group Box set in 1993 – “The Doo Wop Box” (Rhino 71463). The groups presented in “THE Top Ten” are – in the mind of the editor of this work – the definitive giants of quartet/quintet singing. You will (hopefully among many other surprises) find out that almost all of the groups multiplied (with constant judicial row) as soon as the hits dried out - a trend that had started already with the Ink Spots (and later video) in 1952. The stories here concentrate on the original groups and their recordings.

Thank you Marv Goldberg, Todd Baptista, Peter Grendysa, Jim Dawson, Bill Dahl, Steve Propes, Galen Gart, Billy Vera, Jay Warner, Tony Rounce, Barry Hansen, George Moonogian, Bob Hyde, Mitch Rosalsky, Victor Pearlín, Bruce Eder, Bob Fisher, Peter Burns, Paul Watts, Joel Whitburn, and all others who have contributed to let us know more about the fascinating world of vocal groups. Below you’ll find the total number of R&B Top 3 (and Top 10) Hits for each group, plus their number of Pop Top 10 Hits.

Please note that the years span in parentheses after a singer are approximate membership periods. Also note that the R&B chartings are presented without prefix and that some hits, peaking below the R&B Top 10, may not be listed, although the number of R&B Top hits is presented. Top 20 Pop Hits are marked P1 etc. The total of 25 #1 R&B Hits the groups have mastered are noted with the date (month/day) they first peaked. The chart data is from Joel Whitburn’s “Hot R&B Songs” (2010), “The Billboard Book of Top 40 R&B and Hip-Hop Hits” (2006), “The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits” (2004), and “Top R&B Singles” (1988). I have entered the initials of some of the songs’ lead singers (especially when the singer is not presented as lead). Records could be issued featuring leads, who long before had left the group. The Jasmine 2CD-sets (plus some more) are British “public domain” CDs – most of the others presented here are legal, regular U.S. or European issues. As a special feature a complete Robins Discography is added at the end.

Claus Röhnisch (updated May 16, 2018) Click on / touch artists below for link to youtubes

THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s
Rhythm and Blues Harmony
- presented by Claus Röhnisch
with special thanks to Marv Goldberg and Todd Baptista

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>R&amp;B Top 3</th>
<th>R&amp;B Top 10</th>
<th>Pop Top 10</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>The Dominoes</td>
<td>4 (12)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uncamarvy.com/Dominoes/dom01.html">Link</a></td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>The Clovers</td>
<td>10 (19)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.uncamarvy.com/Clovers/clovers1.html">Link</a></td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>The “5” Royales</td>
<td>2 (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><a href="http://www.soul-patrol.com/soul/royales.pdf">Link</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>The Midnighters</td>
<td>7 (14)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uncamarvy.com/Royales/royales.html">Link</a></td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>The Flamingos</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uncamarvy.com/Flamingos/flamingos.html">Link</a></td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>The Moonglows</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uncamarvy.com/Moonglows/moonglows.html">Link</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>The Drifters (&amp; this one)</td>
<td>10 (26)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uncamarvy.com/Drifters/drifters.html">Link</a></td>
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<td>1954</td>
<td>The Platters</td>
<td>5 (13)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uncamarvy.com/Platters/platters.html">Link</a></td>
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<td>1955</td>
<td>The Cadillacs</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42</td>
<td><a href="http://home.earthlink.net/~jaymar41/cadillacs.html">Link</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>The Coasters</td>
<td>5 (7)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rhythm-and-blues.info/04_Clownprinces.pdf">Link</a></td>
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Read more at
http://doo-wop.blogg.org/ and
http://www.uncamarvy.com/marvart.html
http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~pelican-studio/

The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve

3
THE DOMINOES

Complete singles
As & Bs from their
Federal, King,
Jubilee, Decca &
Liberty years

87-TRACK
3-CD SET

THE DOMINOES

were one of the most important and influential of the vocal groups of the 1950s, bringing together the styles which shaped the vocal group genre from its beginnings in gospel quartets and subsequent development through secular doo wop to the R&B styling that was the basis for ‘60s soul. Led by the legendary singer, writer and entrepreneur Billy Ward, the group’s line-ups provided a stepping stone to solo fame for Clyde McPhatter and Jackie Wilson, both of whose voices were an essential element of the group’s distinctive sound. This collection, a great-value 87-track 3-CD set, is almost certainly the most comprehensive to have been released, including material from the very beginning of their career in 1951, and encompassing the A and B sides of all their single releases for Federal, King, Jubilee, Decca and Liberty up to 1959. It naturally features all their hits, such as the landmark “Sixty Minute Man”. It also includes the two singles where they provided the backing for Little Esther (later known as Esther Phillips). All their fine lead vocalists are featured – not only their leader Billy Ward, and the great Clyde McPhatter and Jackie Wilson, who came to fame with the group before launching solo careers, but also Bill Brown, Charlie White, Johnny Oliver, David McNeil, Milton Merle, Cliff Givens, Prentice Moreland, Milton Grayson, Gene Mumford and Monroe Powell.

The first successful gospel-influenced R&B vocal group - formed by Billy Ward, pianist/composer/arranger, with Rose Marks (died July, 1955) as manager and co-writer of several of their hits in New York City. Group originally called The Ques (no recordings), comprising of two singers from the Mount Lebanon Singers of Harlem (McPhatter and White) and two singers from the 5 International Gospel Singers of South Carolina (Lamont and Brown). Won talent contest at the Apollo in 1950 and debuted on TV that same year as The Domeones. Their “Sixty-Minute Man” (recorded December 30, 1950) was the first R&B hit to “cross-over”, reaching Pop #17 (Ralph Bass producing). Group billed and labelled Billy Ward & His Domeones from December, 1952 (starting with “I’d Be Satisfied”). Lead singer Clyde McPhatter billed as Clyde Ward (brother of coach Billy Ward). The group located to Las Vegas and Los Angeles in 1955.


Records:

Original recording lineup:
Clyde McPhatter, lead (50-ca April 53) born Nov 15, 1932 - died June 13, 1972 - who by the summer of 1953 formed The Drifters and soon went on to a solo career after his military service
Charlie White, ten (50-ca September 51) left for the Checkers; and sang lead with the Clovers in 1953, managed by Lou Krefetz, and also tried his luck as solo singer
William Joe Lamont, bar (50-53) left shortly after Clyde
Bill Brown, bass (50-Feb 52) also left for the Checkers (replaced by Raymond Johnson, who did not record with the group)
Billy Ward (real name Robert Williams), coach/pro (50-65) lead singer on several recordings after 1952. Ward tried to re-form the group several times during the late 60s without any success. Born in Georgia in September, 1921 - died in California February 16, 2002. Early guitarist: Ralph Williams, and later Rene Hall.

Later leads:
Jackie Wilson (Sept 52-Dec 56) born Detroit June 9, 1934 - died January 21, 1984. Jackie did not record with the group until after Clyde had left. Became a soul star (working with Berry Gordy)
Gene Mumford (April 57 - April 58) former lead of the Larks; born Durham, NC June 4, 1925 - died May 29, 1977 - also sang with various lineups of Golden Gate Quartet and Ink Spots. Gene replaced Stanley Mitchell (who was the original replacement for Wilson but did not record with the Domeones)
Monroe Powell (April 58-62) switched to the Ink Spots during the ‘60s. He went on to lead Buck Ram’s Las Vegas stationed Platters for 25 years. Future leads included besides Ward himself, Al Anderson, Lou Ragland and members of the Jack Halloran Singers.

New early members:
James Van Loan, ten (ca Sept 51-56) sang with the Ravens later
David McNeill, bass (ca May 52-late 52) from The Larks. He left for the armed forces and soon joined Charlie Fuqua’s Ink Spots up to Fuqua’s death in 1971 (and kept that group for several further years).

Johnny Oliver (Ward’s valet) guest lead shortly late 1952. That year both Grady Chapman (soon with the Robins), and Jesse Belvin guested the group for at least one show in Los Angeles.

New members from 1953:
Milton Merle (real name Murill), bar (53-65) replacing Lamont
Cliff Givens, bass (ca late 1952-59) had sung with the Ink Spots and with the Golden Gate Quartet

1954 lineup:
Wilson, Van Loan (later shortly replaced by Prentice
Moreland, who also recorded with the group on several sessions later), and Merle, Givens, Ward.
New member 1956-57:
Milton Grayson, ten (repl Van Loan/Moreland)

Lineup from ca April, 1958:
Powell, Robbie Robinson, ten (soon replaced by Eddie Herring), Merle, Givens, and Ward
1960: Powell, Bruce Cloud, Merle and Ward

Essential CD:
Sixty Minute Men - The Best of - Rhino R2 71509 (1993)
or: The Very Best Of - Collectables COL CD-2552 (2006)

Reading:
Clyde McPhatter – A Biographical Essay by Colin Escott with discography by Richard Wilcoz (1987)
THE MIGHTY CLOVERS

The Clovers in August 1956. From left: Buddy Bailey, Billy Mitchell, Matthew McQuater, Harold Lucas, and front Harold "Jerome" Winley and Bill Harris (gtr).

Right: In March, 1953 featuring Charlie White (Harris not imaged).
Recording debut: New York City 1950 Yes Sir That’s My Baby / Come Back To Me (both MM/BB/HW) - Rainbow 122. First for Atlantic February 22, 1951 Don’t You Know I Love You / Skylark (both BB) - Atlantic 934.


Matthew McQuater, ten (50-61) died Dec 19, 2000, aged 73


Later members/leads:

Charlie White (ca Feb – Nov 1953) from the Dominoes and lead on the Checkers’ “Flame In My Heart” in 1951, now substituting for Bailey. Led the Playboys later and turned solo

Billy “Long-Tall” Mitchell (Dec 53-61) sang White’s lead on stage and became sixth member when Bailey returned; born 1931 in Washington, DC; died November 5, 2002

THE CLOVERS

“**The Mighty Clovers**” - Pioneer group of the East Coast tradition, mixing blues with gospel and jazz-crooning styles - and the most popular R&B vocal group of the early 1950s. Formed as a trio by Harold Lucas in 1946 in Washington, DC with Billy Shelton (replaced by McQuater in 1948) and Thomas Woods (replaced by Winley in early 1950). The originals returned to Lucas as he reformed the group during the ’70s and ’80s. Became The 4 Clovers when John Bailey joined. Manager: Lou Krefetz from Baltimore, who after one record for Rainbow introduced the group to Atlantic in late 1950 (coached by Jesse Stone). Many of the Clovers’ early hits were written by Ahmet Ertegun. In 1954 they recorded the ’Covers´ early hits were written by Ahmet Ertegun. In 1954 they

*The Very Best of:*

1954: I Confess (CB)
1954: Blue Velvet #1 (CB)
1955: In The Morning Time (BM)
1956: From The Bottom Of My Heart (BM)
1957: Down In The Alley
1958: There’s No Tomorrow (BB/MMQ)
1958: My Mother’s Eyes (BM)
1959: Love Potion No. 9 #23 (BM)
1959: Stay Awake (BB)
1960: Easy Loving (BB)

**THE CLOVERS**, vocal group “M-FIVE”

1. Buddy Bailey-lead, Matthew McQuater, Harold Lucas, Harold Winley and Bill Harris, gtr (featuring Willis Jackson, sax) - New York, July 12, 1951: A 626 Fool, Fool, Fool - Atlantic 994 (#1, charted 22w total)
2. - New York, December 17, 1951:
   - A 755 One Mint Julep - Atlantic 963 (#12, 10w 1952)
   - Charlie White-lead, McQuater, Lucas, Winley and Harris, gtr (featuring Sam Taylor, sax) - New York March 4, 1953:
     - A 1017 Good Lovin’ - Atlantic 1000 (#1, 18w)
3. - New York, April 16, 1954:
   - A 1262 Your Cash Ain’t Nothin’ But Trash - Atlantic 1052 (#6, 7w)


For Collectors: *The Feelin’ Is Good* - Jasmine 2CD JASCD 576 (2011) (featuring 60 tracks 1953-1959 including the Popular LP)

**Editor’s choice:**

The Clovers and The Clovers DanceParty - Sequel RSA CD 857 and 858 (1997) (with bonus tracks)

**R&B Top 10 Hits:** (of 21 Top 40)
1951: Don’t You Know I Love You / Skylark 1w #1 9/1
1951: Fool, Fool, Fool 6w #1 11/10
1952: One Mint Julep 2w #2
1952: Middle Of The Night 2w #3
1952: Ting-A-Ling 1w #1 9/5
1952: Wonder Where My Baby’s Gone #7
1952: Hey, Miss Fanfare 1w #2
1952: I Played The Fool #7
1953: Crawlin’ 2w #3
1953: Good Lovin’ 4w #2 (CW)
1953: Capin’ On #9 (BB)
1954: Lovey Dovey 5w #2 (CW)
1954: Little Mama #4 (CW)
1954: I’ve Got My Eyes On You #7 (CW)
1954: Your Cash Ain’t Nothin’ But Trash #6 (BM)
1955: Nip Slip #10 (BB)
1956: Devil Or Angel 3w #3 (BB)
1956: Hey, Doll Baby #8 (BB)
1956: Love, Love, Love #4 (BB)

**R&B Top 10 Hits:**


**Editor’s choice:**

The Clovers and The Clovers DanceParty - Sequel RSA CD 857 and 858 (1997) (with bonus tracks)
THE CLOVERS & THE “5” ROYALES: One Per Year (plus) 1951-1960
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

THE CLOVERS & THE “5” ROYALES

Top: Matthew McQuater, Buddy Bailey, Harold Lucas, bottom: Harold Winley, and Bill Harris

The "5" Royales’ original LPs
(note that only 580 and the Dr. Horse LP have the “5” – although inside labels often had the “S”), and note the Royals spelling on 955.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Album Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>The Rockin’ 5 Royales</td>
<td>Apollo</td>
<td>1956</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dedicated To You</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 5 Royales Sing For You</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>1959</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Five Royales</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 All Time Hits</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Hits</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Home</td>
<td>Apollo</td>
<td>(bootleg?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Real Thing</td>
<td>Dr. Horse</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roots of Soul</td>
<td>Charly</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Don’t Do It</td>
<td>Relic</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Laudromat Blues</td>
<td>Relic</td>
<td>1987</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bottom: Jimmy Moore, Johnny Tanner, Lowman Pauling, Gene Tanner, and Obadiah Carter

The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve
Finally inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2015)
The first rock & roll record is a matter of debate. This is not: The first rock & roll group was the "5" Royales, a street-corner-harmony institution from North Carolina powered by guitarist-songwriter Lowman Pauling, Jr., whose meaty swing and solid-body-Gretsch attack marked an early dawn for instrumental soul in the age of doo-wop. This five-CD set brings together the "5" Royales' long run of 45s across the Fifties and Sixties, as they jumped out of gospel (as the Royal Sons) into dynamic, secular harmonizing and Pauling compositions that became turning-point covers for James Brown, Ray Charles and the Shirelles. Also hear Pauling's slashing-treble solos predict Sixties electric-blues and garage-rock guitar in the two takes of 1958's "The Slummer the Slum." More than a half-century later, he and the Royales finally were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Soul 014, 015, 016 – Three 2-set CDs on History of Soul Records and Soul 025 – the 6CD-box http://www.historyofsoul.net/
THE “5” ROYALES

“The Apollo Kings” – “The First Soul Group” - Underrated, but passionate, truly raw church-style high-quality pioneer R&B vocal group (with the tonation on “alets”), Originally a gospel group formed in the late 1940s (some say 1948), named The Royal Sons Quintet in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; consisting of loose members including cousins Lowman (nicknamed “Peter”) Pauling (who became the only one surviving the secular transition) and Clarence Pauling (later Clarence Paul, 1928-1995), Anthony Price, William Samuels, and Windsor King (sometimes also brother Curtis Pauling and pianist Royal Abbit); later also featuring Johnny Holmes. Johnny (John) Tanner and Otto Jeffries joined the group early on. Jimmy (James, sometimes also called Johnny) Moore replaced Tanner around 1949 and stayed with the group when Tanner returned from military service. Obadiah Carter replaced Samuels in late 1951. The group turned secular and transformed into the most down-home sounding R&B vocal group of all. Some albums and reissues were released as The Five Royales. The 5 Royales, and as The 5 Royals (but they themselves preferred The ‘5’ Royales - the group often actually were six singers even during the 1950s). All six members sang leads, although Johnny Tanner took care of most of the songs (written by member Lowman Pauling). The group’s manager: Carl LeBow, Produced by Henry Glover on several King tracks (some possibly by Ralph Bass). Pauling and later the whole group joined the James Brown Revue in the ‘60s.

Secular recording lineup:
Johnny L. Tanner, lead (51-63) born in Forsyth, NC, Nov 28, 1926 - died in Winston-Salem, NC Nov 8, 2005
James (Jimmy) E. Moore, ten (51-ca 64) lead on some early tracks, died in New York August 16, 2008 at the age of 82
Obadiah Carter, bar (51-ca 65) born 1925; died July 1994
Otto Jeffries, bass (51-60) turned road manager and occasional singer when Gene arrived (lived 1912-1975)
Lowman “El” Pauling, gtr (51-ca 66) extra bass vocal. Born July 14, 1926; died from epileptic seizure on December 26, 1973

Recording debut:
Winston-Salem, NC August 1951 as the Royal Sons Quintet (actually with William Samuels, lead – Carter not yet in) Bedside Of A Neighbor / Journey’s End - Apollo 253; first secular recording New York City October, 1951 Too Much Of A Little Bit (OJ) / Give Me One More Chance (JT/OJ) as by The Royals - Apollo 434; then New York City (now a sextet featuring Johnny Holmes, and Carter) August 5, 1952 Come Over Here / Let Nothing Separate Me (JT) - Apollo 566 as the Royal Sons Quintet; and as The “5” Royales same session Courage To Love / You Know I Know (both JM) - Apollo 441.

Records for:

New members (1960-64):
Robert “Pee Wee” Burrus, gtr, subbing for Pauling (and staying)
Royal Abbit, piano ing (born 1932; died 1995)

Later lineup:
Tom “T-Bone” Pratt, gtr and Larry Robinson, lead Larry Taylor and Labronn Washington, vocals

Essential CD:
Monkey, Hips And Rice-Anthology (2CD) - Rhino R2 71546 (1995)
Favorite CDs: All Righty! - The Apollo Recordings 1951-1955
WestSide WESM 591 (1999) (29 great tracks)
It’s Hard But It’s Fair – Ace UK CDCHD 1038 (2005) (26 King gems)
Catch That Teardrop (1960-64) – Ace UK CDCHD 1055 (2007)

Don’t Miss the US and UK newly issued CD-paks (imaged left!)

Reading:
The Real Rhythm and Blues by Hugh Gregory (UK 1998)
### Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

#### The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BILLY WARD and his DOMINOES</td>
<td>I'd Be Satisfied</td>
<td>Cincinnati Oct 17, 1952</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>12105 #8, Nov 1952</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>James Van Loan, Joe Lamont, David McNiel</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charlie White, lead; Sam Taylor, tenor; Matthew McQuater, Harold Lucille, Harold Winley, Bill Harris (gtr)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Alternate version rec in New York April 8, 1953</td>
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<td>James E. Moore, lead; Lowman Pauling, Johnny Tanner, Obadiah Carter, Otto Jeffries</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE MIDNIGHTERS</td>
<td>Don't Change Your Pretty Ways</td>
<td>Cincinnati March 17, 1955</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>12243 (issued Dec 1955)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Hank Ballard, lead; Cal Green, gtr; Henry South, Lawson Smith, Sonny Woods</td>
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<td>THE FLAMINGOS</td>
<td>The Vow</td>
<td>Chicago July, 1956</td>
<td>Checker</td>
<td>846 (issued August 1956)</td>
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<td>Nate Nelson, lead; Johnny Carter, Zeke Carey, Jake Casey, Paul Wilson</td>
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<td>THE MOONGLOWS</td>
<td>219 Train</td>
<td>Chicago January 10, 1954</td>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>1161 (issued Sept 1954)</td>
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<td>Harvey Fuqua, lead; Bobby Lester, Pete Greene, Prentice Barnes</td>
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<td>Rip of Big Bam (#7 Nov 1954)</td>
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<td>Clyde McPhatter, lead; Bill Pinkney, co-lead; Gerhart Thrasher, Andrew Thrasher</td>
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<td>THE PLATTERS</td>
<td>Only You (And You Alone)</td>
<td>Los Angeles May 20, 1954</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>12244 (issued Nov 1955)</td>
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<td>Tony Williams, lead; Buck Ram, pno; Alex Hodge, David Lynch, Herb Reed, Eula Taylor</td>
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<td>The hit version was rec for Mercury April 28, 1955, and issued in May</td>
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<td>Earl Carroll, lead; James Clark, LaCarrie Drake, Gus Willingham, Bobby Phillips</td>
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<td>THE ROBINS</td>
<td>Smokey Joe’s Cafe</td>
<td>Los Angeles July 7, 1955</td>
<td>Spark</td>
<td>122 (Atco 6059 #10, Dec 1955)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carl Gardner, lead; Bobby Nunn, Terrell Leonard, Billy and Roy Richard, pno; Garry Chapman, gtr; Gil Bernal: tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE &quot;S&quot; ROYALES</td>
<td>Think</td>
<td>New York Febr 28, 1957</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>5052 #9 Sept 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Johnny Tanner, lead; Lowman Pauling (vcl/gtr); Gene Tanner, James E. Moore, Obadiah Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COASTERS</td>
<td>Zing! Went The Strings Of My Heart</td>
<td>New York March 17, 1958</td>
<td>Atco</td>
<td>6114 (issued April 1958)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Will &quot;Dub&quot; Jones and Cornel Gunter, leads; Carl Gardner, Billy Guy, King Curtis, tenor sax</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# The Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

## Top Vocal Groups - Collectors’ Favorites – part two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Record</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BILLY WARD and his DOMINOES</td>
<td>Star Dust</td>
<td>Los Angeles c. April/May 1957</td>
<td>Liberty 55071</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m With You</td>
<td>New York Febr 3, 1960</td>
<td>King 5329</td>
<td>Made by Johnny Tanner and Gene Tanner, leads; Lonnie Pauling, James E. Moore, Obadiah Carter</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE CLOVERS</td>
<td>Lovers Never Say Goodbye</td>
<td>New York September 26, 1958</td>
<td>End 1035</td>
<td>Alternate version w Fuqua, lead also recorded</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foolish Me</td>
<td>Chicago c. March 1955</td>
<td>Chess 1598</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woe Is Me</td>
<td>New York October 31, 1967</td>
<td>Date 1617</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DRIFTERS</td>
<td>When My Little Girl Is Smiling</td>
<td>New York October 26, 1961</td>
<td>Atlantic 2134</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You’ll Never Never Know</td>
<td>New York (or Chicago) mid/late 1956</td>
<td>Mercury 70958</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay Awhile</td>
<td>New York June 8, 1959</td>
<td>United Artists 180</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>THE CLOVERS</td>
<td>D. W. Washburn</td>
<td>New York October 31, 1967</td>
<td>Date 1617</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve 13
THE MIDNIGHTERS

Two great CDs featuring Hank Ballard’s very first and very late recordings on Federal / King
(with great inlays written by Marv Goldberg and Tony Rounce).

Later members up to 1963:
Lawson Smith (55-ca 63) returned in late 1954 as temporary substitute for Henry Booth, who was away for awhile, and replaced Sutton, when Booth returned in January, 1955. 
Norman Thrasher (56-65) born June 4, 1944, entered in 1956, replaced Woods in 1958 on recording sessions. He came from Detroit’s Royal Jokers and from the Serenaders. He is cousin to the Drifters’ Thrashers 
Arthur Porter, gtr (54) from early 1954 - succeeded by Cal Green later that year (54-59) born June 22, 1935 in Dayton, Texas, died July 6, 2004 in California.
Green became the leader of The Midnighters’ touring and recording band. He was jailed for 21 months during 1959-62 (substituted by J.C. Billy Davis), rejoined The Midnighters - and later made a solo career. During the very late ‘50s (and in the early ‘60s) not all Midnighters followed Ballard on stage or in the recording studios, when Ballard, despite his newfound “Mr. Rhythm & Blues” fame, together with Davis, concentrated on the touring band (a resemblance to James Brown’s career).

Lineup from ca 1963 or poss earlier:
Hank Ballard, Norman Thrasher (later replaced by Walter Miller), Frank Stanford, Wesley Hargrove. Hank reformed his group several times during later years with guitarist J.C. Billy Davis (born 1938), who also played with Jackie Wilson for several years.

Essential CD:
Sexy Ways - The Best of - Rhino RZ 71512 (1993)
- or: Come On And Get It – Jasmine (2CD) JASC 568 (2010)

Editor’s Choice: The Very Best of the Royals and the Midnighters - Collectables COL-CD2823 (2001)
and: The Very Best of Hank Ballard and the Midnighters - Collectables COL-CD2823 (2001)


Reading: King of the Queen City - The Story of King Records by Jan Hartley Fox (US 2009).

R&B Top 10 Hits: (14 of 20 Top 40)  
1953 Get It (The Royals) #6 (HB)  
1954 Work With Me Annie (formerly known as The Royals) 7w #1 5/22 P22  
1954 Sexy Ways (formerly The Royals) 1w #2  
1954 Annie Had A Baby 2w #1 9/25 P23  
1954 Annie’s Aunt Fannie #10  
1955 It’s Love Baby (24 Hours A Day) #10  
Hank Ballard and the Midnighters  
1959 Teardrops On Your Letter #4  
1960 Finger Poppin’ Time 2w #2 P7  
1960 The Twist (recorded 1958, #16 in 1959) #6 in 1960  
1960 Let’s Go Let’s Go Let’s Go 3w #1 11/7 P6  
1961 The Hoochie Coochie Coo 1w #3  
1961 The Float #10  
1961 The Switch-A-Roo 1w #3  
1961 Nothing But Good #9  

More For Your Delight:  
1952 Every Beat Of My Heart (The Royals) (CS)  
1955 Don’t Change Your Pretty Ways  
1956 Open Up The Back Door  
1956 Tore Up Over You  
1957 Let’ Em Roll (two diff versions)  
1961 The Continental Walk #12

The R&B Pioneers Series - Volume Six of twelve
HANK BALLARD & THE MIDNIGHTERS: ONE (plus) PER YEAR 1953 – 1963

1953 (Hank's first lead with the Royals), 1954 (original issue), and the repressing

1955, 1958, 1957

Recorded 1958 (and a hit in 1959), plus its flip (a hit in 1960), and a 1960 single.

1960, two from 1961, plus 1962, and 1963
The first five of the ultimate Vocal Group CD-series were released in 2012. A total of 15 volumes were to be issued (five in July 2012 – five in August 2012 and five in February 2013). The series spans one year each from 1950-1963 plus volume one of 1939-1949. Each volume is a 1-CD DigiPac (4-plated) with 84-page booklet, mostly more than 30 tracks per CD.

This series has been compiled and annotated by R&B music's foremost scholar, Chicago's Bill Dahl, and every song comes with detailed notes and illustrations. There have been plenty of Doo-Wop compilations, even a few Doo-Wop boxed sets, but this series is the last word on the genre. Truly definitive! Every hit, every underground classic, every song that lit up the airwaves at the dawn of rock 'n' roll.

Detailed info on all volumes:– see the pages at the ending of this publication!!

The History of Doo-Wop

What is this glorious music we call doo-wop? It's a style conveying naivete and young love in a way no genre did before. It's an attitude harking back to the birth of the teenager in the 1950s. For a lot of us, it represents nostalgia for an era we may or may not have experienced. Technically, doo-wop is an amalgam of five key characteristics that are explored in the 24-page booklet that accompanies this CD and richly evidenced in the choice of recordings. This CD, the first in a set of six, covers the formative years of doo-wop, offering astonishing vocal harmonies, vibrant instrumentation and a fun collection of songs that will not fail to please the amateur while being of interest to the serious collector. Compiled and annotated by Anthony J Gribin & Matthew M Schiff, the Doctors of Doo-Wop.

"THE GRANDFATHERS OF DOO-WOP"
THE FLAMINGOS

Original recording lineup:
Jake Carey, bass (53-55) born in Baltimore September 9, 1923 - died December 10, 1997
Zeke Carey, second tenor (53-56, 58-) born January 24, 1933 in Bluefield, Virginia - died in Washington, DC December 24, 1999
Johnny Johnson, first tenor, and sometimes lead (53-56) born June 2, 1934 in Chicago; later sang with the Dells - died August 21, 2009
Sollie McElroy, lead tenor (53-54) born July 16, 1933 in Gulfport, Mississippi - died January 15, 1995. Replaced original non-recording member Earl Lewis
Paul Wilson, baritone (53-ca 77) born January 6, 1935 in Chicago - died in May, 1988. Replaced original non-recording Judah Byrd

New member from late 1954:
Nate Nelson, lead (late 54-61) born April 10, 1932 in Chicago - died June 1 - some files say April 10, 1984. He joined Terry Johnson around 1962, and then the Platters in 1966

Later lineup changes (from July, 1956):
Zeke Carey and Johnny Carter left for Army services substituted by Tommy Hunt (56-61) born June 18, 1933 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – the group now a quartet
Terry Johnson, gtr and vcl (Jan 57-61) born November 12, 1935 in Baltimore, Maryland. The group now a quintet again. Terry started his "Modern Flamingos" in 1961, and still has a Flamingos group.
Carter did not return to the Flamingos, but joined the Dells after his services. Zeke returned in August, 1958 – the group now a sextet. Hunt later went solo and the group again became a quintet.

Recording debut:
Chance 53-54, Parrot 54-55, Checker 55-56, Decca 57-58, End September 58-63; Checker 1964.

R&B Top 10 Hits: (2 of 8 Top 40)
1956: I'll Be Home #5 (NN); 1959: I Only Have Eyes For You #2w #3 (NN) #1

Treat Yourself With These:
1953: Golden Teardrops (SM)
1954: Listen To My Plea (JC)
1954: Jump Children (Vooh-Vooh) (SM)
1955: I'm Yours (NN) - Parrot
1955: I Want To Love You (NN/JC)
1956: The Vow (NN)
1958: Lovers Never Say Goodbye #25 (TJ/PW)
1959: Goodnight Sweetheart (NN)
1960: Mi Amore #27 (NN)

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Rules In Favor Of Flamingos' Hall of Fame by Todd Baptista (October 30, 2008)
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Terry Johnson, who wrote and sang lead on the Flamingos' 1958 doowop smash, "Lovers Never Say Goodbye" and arranged the music and vocals and sang on the group's signature tune, "I Only Have Eyes For You", has scored a major victory with the United States Patent and Trademark Office in regard to the Flamingos name. "Johnson, performing under Terry Johnson's Flamingos, is the only remaining member of the group who currently has Federal trademark protection over a trademark including the term Flamingos," the July 28 ruling states. "It has been my goal to prevent anyone from tarnishing the respected name of the Flamingos with sub par performances and claims of original members," Johnson explained in a previous interview. "I want to make sure that the trademark is respected by the public and that no other person, firm, corporation, or association has the right to use such mark in commerce." The ruling makes note of the Careys' claim that the mark, "is located in, on or attached to goods and services the goods and services of which are not of a kind that are likely to be used in a way that is likely to cause confusion..." The ruling also makes note that the Careys' usage of the mark, "is not, within the meaning of section 32(1) of the Act set out above, the exclusive use of the mark, for goods and services of which the marked goods and services are not the only goods and services of the applicant," and that no other person, firm, corporation, or association has the right to use such mark in commerce. The Careys filed a registration to prevent anyone from tarnishing the respected name of the Flamingos with sub par performances and claims of original members.

THE TOP TEN VOCAL GROUPS OF THE GOLDEN '50S

A qualitative - long-lasting doo-wop (and jump) - vocal group formed in the South Side of Chicago late in the 1950s as the Swallows by Jake and Zeke Carey, Johnny Carter, and Judah Byrd (replaced by Carter's friend Paul Wilson around 1951) - all black Hebrews. They soon changed name to the Five Flamingos or "5 Flamingo Boys" when Earl Lewis entered (neither group any recordings), and due to an already existing Swallows group. The Flamingos are regarded as one of the most versatile groups of early R&B and worked out a professional stage act. The group signed for George Goldner's End Records in 1958, where the big success finally struck. The Careys are not brothers and not cousins - not relatives at all, although Zeke moved in with the Jake Carey family in Baltimore and both left for Chicago around 1950. They still acted with Flamingo lineups in the '60s. The Flamingos were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2001.
THE MOONGLOWS

Important doo-wop, and blues-oriented group, baptized by rock and roll "coiner" Alan "Moondog" Freed. They originally were formed as a trio called the Crazy Sounds (with Harvey Fuqua, Danny Coggins, and Barnes - no recordings) in Cleveland, Ohio 1951. Moved to Chicago in 1953. Several late '50s records by the Moonglows were issued as Harvey & The Moonglows. Bobby Lester was a childhood friend of Harvey in Kentucky, and both toured with Ed Wilson's band in 1950. He sang lead on "Sincerely", recorded October 1954 (and also on some Checker recordings as Bobby Lester & The Moonlighters - who were the Moonglows). Marvin Gaye was a short-time member when Lester quit, but soon after the group disbanded. Fuqua - songwriter and founder of the group created and produced the Spinners in 1961 (after the Moonglows had split) and became heavily involved in the leadership of Motown Records. Later Harvey sometimes acted with the members of the Sheps in a revival Moonglows group. The Moonglows went out of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2000.

**Original line-up:** (The Champagne single)
Harvey Fuqua, Bobby Lester, Danny Coggins. Prentice Barnes

**Famous line-up:**
Bobby Lester, lead (53-58) born Robert Dallas January 13, 1930, Louisville - died October 15, 1980. Childhood friend of Harvey in Kentucky. After leaving the Moonglows he tried his luck with a new group with Pete Graves, Milton Turner and Doc Williams-Green (a new contract with Chess was not to be). In the late 1960s his new group featured Clyde McPhatter’s son Billy, Gary Rodgers, and Robert Ford
Alexander "Pete" Graves, ten (August 53-58) born as Alexander Walton April 17, 1930 in Cleveland, replaced Danny Coggins. After his stint with Lester's new group he recorded as The Moonglows with members from the Velvets for the Lana label in 1964
Prentice Barnes, bass (53-58) born April 25, 1925 in Chatewa, MS - died October 1, 2006 in Magnolia, MS.

Harvey’s "new" Moonglows of 1959-1960:
A sextet with Harvey Fuqua, Chester Simmons, Reese Palmer, James Nolan, Marvin Gaye, and Chuck Barksdale.

**Revived lineup of 1970-72:**
Fuqua, Lester, Graves, Doc Williams and Chuck Lewis

**The Moonglows of 1959:**
Bruce Martin, Gene Kelly, Pete Crawford, and Gary Rodgers.

**Recording debut:**
Cleveland, Ohio early 1953 / Just Can’t Tell No Lie (HF/BL) / I’ve Been Your Dog (PB) - Champagne 7500, Chicago October, 1953
Baby Please - Chance 1147 and Just A Lonely Christmas (both HF) - Chance 1150.

**Records for:**
Chance 53-54, Chess 54-58 ("Sincerely" issued as by The Moonglows'), Checker (as Bobby Lester & The Moonlighters) 1954, RCA 1972.

**R&B Top 10 Hits:** (6 of 7 Top 40)
1955 Sincerely 2w #1 1/22 (The Moonglow’s) (BL) P20
1955 Most Of All #5 (BL)
1956 We Go Together #9 (BL/BL) HF
1956 See Saw #6 (HF) P25
1957 Please Send Me Someone To Love #5 (HF)
1958 Ten Commandments Of Love #9 (Harvey & The Moonglows) P22

**Some Great Amusement:**
1954 Baby Please (HF)
1954 Secret Love (BL)
1954 My Gal (HF)
1954 219 Train (HF/bridgeBL)
1955 Foolish Me (f. Bobby Lester)
1955 Foolish Me (f. Harvey Fuqua)
1956 Don’t Say Goodbye (BL)
1956 Blue Velvet (BL)

Issued as Bobby Lester & The Moonglows 1962
1957 Don’t Be Afraid Of Love (HF)
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

PHOTO GALLERY

Dominoes, Clovers, “5” Royales, Midnighters, Flamingos, Moonglows

The Dominoes, 1957, with Gene Mumford top right;

The Clovers of 1951, with Buddy Baker bottom right, and left image center;

The Clovers in the spring of 1954 with Billy Mitchell center (spring of 1954);

The “5” Royales at the Apollo with Lowman Pauling left and Johnny Tanner at the solo mike.

The “5” Royales/Midnighters with Alonzo Tucker, Charles Sutton, Hank Ballard, Henry Booth, and Sonny Woods.


Hank Ballard and The Midnighters in 1960 with Smith, Thrasher and Booth (1-

The successful Flamingos sextet (Nate Nelson third from left, and newcomers Tommy Hunt and Terry Johnson back, far right.

The Flamingos in 1953 with Sollie McElroy, center; and The Moonglows in 1954.

The “new” Moonglows of 1959 with Harvey in front and Marvin Gaye fourth fr.
PHOTO GALLERY

Drifters, Platters, Cadillacs

THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

PHOTO GALLERY

Drifters, Platters, Cadillacs

Two early Drifters lineups, 1953 and 1954.

The Platters 1956 with Tony Williams, center;

The Buck Ram managed Platters with Edwin Cook, Geno Williams, Monroe Powell, Harold Howard, and Geri Holiday in 1979; and Speedo Carroll and his new Cadillacs in 1981.
THE TOP TEN VOCAL GROUPS of the 1950s

- the “originals”

THE DOMINOES - late 1950

THE CLOVERS - late 1950

THE "5" ROYALES - The Royal Sons Quintet 1951

THE MIDNIGHTERS - (The Royals: Booth, Sutton, Ballard, Woods) 1952/53

THE FLAMINGOS - 1953

THE MOONGLOWS - late 1953/1954
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

The Mount Lebanon Singers - 1949 (most of them later the first Drifters)

The Platters - (Taylor not yet there) 1954

THE DRIFTERS - late 1954/1955

THE DRIFTERS - late 1955/1956

THE PLATTERS - 1955/1956


THE COASTERS - (Gardner, Nunn, Hughes, Guy) late 1955/1956

- (and Guy, Jones, Gardner, Gunter) 1959/1960
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

INTERESTING CD Anthologies by the TOP GROUPS (mostly Jasmine)

- The Feelin' Is Good (1953-59, 60 tracks) – Jasmine 2CD JASCD 576 (2011)

- Most Of All / The Singles As & Bs (1953-60, 57 tracks) – Jasmine 2CD JASCD 59 (2011)


- The Josie Singles As & Bs 1954-1959 (43 tracks, Note: Not the best choice of cover) – Jasmine 2CD JASCD 556 (2010)
- Singles As and Bs 1953-1959 (30 tracks) – Jasmine JASCD 521 (2009)
June 1958 – The Drifters (formerly The Crowns):
Top: Dock Green, James “Poppa” Clark, Elsbeary Hobbs.
Bottom: Benjamin Earl (Ben E. King) Nelson, and Charlie Thomas.
Note. Clark left before the new Drifters made their first recordings on March 6, 1959. Below: Later line-ups of the "new" Drifters
THE DRIFTERS

The Drifters emerged into at least three different touring groups during the 70s: 1. Bill Pinkney’s Original Drifters (by many regarded as “the best”, featuring David Baughan, the Thrasher brothers, Bobby Hendricks, Bobby Lee Hollis, and Jimmy Lewis - on and off - and who have recorded several times - remnants of this group kept touring under Bill’s lead - lately including Clyde’s son Ron). 2. Moore’s “legal” and heavily touring Europe group up to Moore’s death (Bobby Hendricks led Faye Treadwell’s US Drifters after Moore’s death up to around 2003 - but as the UK Drifters awoke again Hendricks started using the name the Bobby Hendricks Drifters). 3. Charlie Thomas’ touring and recording group (that group has been recording since 1972 - often featuring Beary Hobbs – who’s name is nowadays fronting the Larry Marshak group of 2000+). The first Thomas group was managed by Larry Marshak and they actually won the U.S. rights to the name through an early court decision in the 1970s, nowadays rejected (see below), even Ben E. King re-joined both Thomas’ (1970s) and Moore’s (1980s) groups. Just prior to Bill Pinkney’s death, Pinkney, Ben E. King, Charlie Thomas and Bobby Hendricks worked on stage together for a reunion meeting 15-17 May, 2007 (also featuring Pinkney’s Original Drifters and Charlie Thomas’ back-up - Lou Bailey, Jerome Manning and Stephen Brown). Charlie Thomas’ Drifters recorded a CD album “Charlie Thomas’ Drifters Live - The Original Legacy Continues” around 2007. Lately Tina Treadwell’s UK Drifters have called themselves The Official Drifters.


Original lineup: (June, 1953 - Lucille) Clyde McPhatter, lead, who came from the Dominoes; born November 15, 1932 in Durham, North Carolina - died of heart attack in New York City June 13, 1972 David Baughan, ten; William Anderson, ten; David Baldwin, baritone; James Johnson, bass.

Second session lineup: (August, 1953 – Money Honey) Clyde McPhatter, lead; Andrew Thrasher, bar; Bill Pinkney, bass (sometimes also spelled Pinckney); Gerhart Thrasher, ten; Willie Ferbee (Ferbee); Walter Adams, gtr.

Famous McPhatter lineup: Clyde McPhatter, lead (53-July 54) Clyde’s first solo recording, “Everyone’s Laughing” (waxed October 24, 1954 – prior to his military service) issued on Atlantic 1070 in August, 1955 as Clyde McPhatter and Vocal Quartet, has most probably not the Drifters backing – rather the Cues Andrew “Bubba” Thrasher, baritone (53-8/56) Gerhart “Gay” Thrasher, tenor (53-5/58) lead on some 1955-56 tracks, died in 1977 Bill Pinkney, bass (53-8/56) spokesman, who sporadically returned to the group in 1957/58. Born August 15, 1925 in Dalzell (near Sumter), NC. Died in Daytona Beach July 4, 2007 Jimmy Oliver, gtr (54-57) wrote several of the recordings and later joined Clyde McPhatter to help his solo career.

Later 1950s leads:

David Baughan (6/54-8/55) had sung lead on The Checkers’ “House With No Windows” in 1954 (died in 1970, aged 32), David sang lead on the Drifters’ “Honey Bee” (recorded April 21, 1955, but relegated to a flip side in 1961). Sang lead with the Harps later Johnny Moore (8/55-ca 8/57) born December 14 or 15, 1934 in Selma, Alabama - moving to Cleveland, Ohio, where he sang with The Hornets and was spotted by Pinkney. Johnny went to the Army in 1957. Returned to the group in 1963, and moved to England to start a revival career with Treadwell’s Drifters in 1972. He died in London, England on December 30, 1998

Bobby Hendricks (ca 8/57:5/58) Born February 22, 1938. Some information given states Bobbie already sang with the Drifters in 1955. Bobbie had a solo hit in 1959, “It’s a Lonesome Feeling” helped by guitarist Oliver, with a backing probably by the Coasters. Bobbie masqueraded with the fired remnants of the Drifters that same year as “The Coasters”. Rumour has it: Bobby was actually backed by the Coasters on the Drifters’ recording of “Drip Drop” on April 28, 1958

Later members:

Charlie “Carnation” Hughes, tenor (8/56-6/57) replacing Andrew Tommy Evans, bass (8/56-5/58) had led the Carols, and often subbed for Jimmy Ricks of The Ravens, and replaced him later Jimmy Millinder, baritone (8/57-5/58)

Moore and Evans both returned to the second version of the group.
Re-formed lineup from June, 1956: The Crowns became The Drifters. Ben E. King's manager Lover Patterson and James "Poppa" Clark were associated with the Crowns, but Clark did not join, when the new Drifters were formed by the Drifters' manager Treadwell.


Charlie Thomas, lead/tenor (6/58-6/67) from Virginia, born April 7, 1937 — some files say 1939

Dock Green, tenor (6/58-ca 1/63) Born October 9, 1934. Lover Patterson helped Dock to start a real Drifters, featuring Charlie Hughes and Tommy Evans

Elseybeary (Beary) Hobbs, bass (6/58-late 60) born ca 1936 — died May 31, 1996 — other files say in 2000, after several years of touring with Thomas’ group

Reggie Kimber, gtr (58-59)

Leads 1959-1960: Ben E. King only spent his original time with the group from the starting point June, 1958 (with the first recordings in March, 1959) until ca May, 1960. On "Save The Last Dance For Me" The Drifters are co-credited with "Vocal Quartet & Ben E. King". The group singing behind King's solo hits were not the Drifters, but singers possibly recruited by Patterson.

Johnny Lee Williams extra lead a short period 1959/60, as plans for King's solo career were made.

Charlie Thomas continued to sing lead on several tracks up to 1968. He left the Drifters around mid 1967. In 1971 he started his Drifters-group with Hobbs, and was still active in 2016.


Johnny Moore (4/63- ) back again — with short leavings in 79, 82, 86. The Drifters became a singing quintet up to Lewis' death with three great lead singers.

New members during the '60s: Billy "Abdul Samaud" Davis, gtr (mid 59-67) went to Thomas' group for several years. Not identical to McCloud's guitarist or Billy "Roquel" Davis


Gene Pearson, baritone (ca 1/63-9/66) from the Rivileers and Cleftones, replacing Green. Born 1935 — died on April 6, 2000

Johnny Terry, bass (1/63-7/66) replacing Evans. He later joined David Lynch's new "Original Platters", This is not the James Brown Terry


Bill Fredericks, bass/baritone (12/67-74, 81-83) replaced Brent. Dan Danbridge (66) and Charles Basskerville (67) shortly joined. Milton Turner, baritone during 1967-69

Don Thomas entered in 1969 as baritone/bass; left during 1970.

Lineup 1970:

Moore, Sheppard, Don Thomas, Fredericks, Butch Mann (guitar up to 76). Ronald Quinn sang with Moore and Fredericks on their last Atlantic recording in January, 1971 [a tro]

Moore's group moved to England in 1972.

Lineup mid 1970s:

Moore, Clyde Brown, Butch Leake, and Grant Kitigus, soon replaced by Billy Lewis. Billy Blunt replaced Leake in the late 70s.

Lineup 1982: Ben E. King, Fredericks, Ray Lewis and Louie Price

Lineup 1983-1985: Moore, Ben E. King, Clyde Brown, Joe Blunt

Line-up mid 1980s:

Moore, Ray Lewis, Billy Lewis plus different fourth singers

The 1990s: Johnny Moore, Rohan Turner, Roy Emmings, Joe Cofie

Early 2000s: Peter Laman (90/91 and from 96), Patrick Alan, Rohan Turner. Victor Bynoe. UK Drifters today:

Maurice Cannon, Damon Charles, Michael Williams, Ryan King

Essential CDs: The Definitive Drifters (2CD) - WEA WSMCD137 (2003) (58 tracks, whole career) or:

The Definitive Soul Collection (2CD) (2007) - Rhino 77662 or:

The Very Best of - WEA (UK) 029 (1994) (24 tracks)

The Best CDs:

Rockin' & Driftin' (3CD) - Rhino R2 72417 (1996) or:

Let The Boogie Woogie Roll 1953-1958 (2CD) - Atlantic 81927-2 (1988) and


Editor’s choice: The 7CD series: The Drifters Anthology - Sequel RSACD 803, 815, 817, 833, 834, 835, 836 (1997)


Reading:

Save The Last Dance for Me - The Musical Legacy of The Drifters by Tony Allan with Faye Treadwell (Popular Culture Ink, 1993 - updated 2005 in softback)

The Drifters by Bill Millar (UK 1971);

THE Top Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

Essential Bonus Songs:
1955 Someday (You’ll Want Me To Want You) (JJ (CMP/BP)
1956 Your Promise To Be Mine (GT)
1957 Driftin’ Away From You (GT)
1957 I Know (JM)
1958 Drop Drop (BH)
1958 Suddenly There’s A Valley (BH/TE)
1961 Please Stay #13 (RL) P14
1961 Room Full Of Years (CT)
1962 When You’re A Little Girl Is Smiling (CT) P28
1962 Jackpot (RL)
1962 What To Do (RL)
1963 Only In America (RL)
1963 If You Don’t Come Back (JM)
1974 Kissing In The Back Row Of The Movies (JM)
1982 You Better Move On (Featuring Ben E. King)


THE DRIFTERS, vocal group “BIG-SIX”

The Drifters’ original Atlantic LPs:
1956 Clyde McPhatter & the Drifters – Atlantic 8003
1958 Rockin’ & Driftin’ – Atlantic 8022
1960 The Drifters’ Greatest Hits – Atlantic 8041
1962 Save The Last Dance For Me – Atlantic SD8058
1963 Up On The Roof – Best Of – Atlantic SD6873
1964 Our Biggest Hits (In Color). – Atlantic SD8093 (soon rejected)
1964 Under The Boardwalk – Atlantic SD6099
1965 The Drifters – Clarion LP 608
1965 The Good Life With The Drifters – Atlantic SD1103
1965 I’ll Take Your Where The Music’s Playing – Atlantic SD8113
1968 The Drifters’ Golden Hits – Atlantic SD8153
1971 Their Greatest Recordings. – The Early Years. Atco SD33-375

EP right contains four Ben E. King-led songs – all four recorded from March, 1959 to May, 1960 – but the image shows the very first Drifter’s Imp rev featuring new lead singer Rudy Lewis – and the last featuring Hobbs (Lewis, Thomas, Moore and Green). Note: The Drifters Albums Gallery – see page 31.

Court decision Thursday, August 19, 1999 Drifters’ Manager Wins Right to Continued Use of Name
NEWARK, N.J Aug, 6, 1999—

The following is an announcement by the law firm of Epstein Becker & Green. U.S. district court judge overturns jury verdict stating Drifters had abandoned trademark; judge upheld fraud claim by subsequent promoter The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter; the widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter.

The following is an announcement by the law firm of Epstein Becker & Green. U.S. district court judge overturns jury verdict stating Drifters had abandoned trademark; judge upheld fraud claim by subsequent promoter The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter. The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager has won a jury verdict that she was defrauded by a subsequent promoter.

The widow of the Drifters’ long-time manager, Ms. Treadwell, the group’s original manager, from their marriage in 1959 until his death in 1987. Ms. Treadwell has served as the group’s manager since then. Together they had made, in Judge Pottenger’s words, “all final decisions relating to the performances, costumes, appearance bookings, musical content, . . . and personnel changes” in the period in which the classic “Drifters’ hits were first recorded. Indeed, the Treadwell had been responsible for creating the image and sound that made those songs chart-toppers. Judge Pottenger’s decision reverses an August 1998 jury verdict, in which it found that although-promoter Marshall lied his application for federal trademark protection fraudulently, he still held common law rights to the Drifters’ trademark. The jury had made that Marshall was able to obtain common law trademark protection because Ms. Treadwell had not. They used the Drifters’ name in conjunction with performances in the United States for close to a decade. In overturning a 1998 jury verdict, Judge Politan ruled that uninterrupted and continuing royalties from ongoing recording sales and display of original Drifters songs – including There Goes My Baby, Under the Boardwalk and Up On The Roof – constituted continued commercial use of the Drifters’ name in the United States, and therefore abandonment had occurred. The decision has widespread ramifications for the entertainment industry, which is fighting the promotion of music groups that perform under famous names, but with no relation to the original music pioneers behind the hit songs for which the groups are known. A bill introduced in Congress by Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) and Rep. Charlie Norwood (R-Ga), entitled the “Truth in Rock Act,” would help old chart-toppers fend off new names and hit songs from being invariably “franchised” by unscrupulous promoters – some of whom might be too young to even remember when the original songs were hits. Ms. Treadwell’s attorney, James P. Flynn, who represented Becker & Green’s Newark N.J. office said: “We believe the market has seen a boom over the past few years, but many of the industry’s pioneers like Faye Treadwell have been left singing the blues. There’s been a scramble to buy, or sometimes just take, the names of popular groups from the golden era of rock and roll. We see this ruling as a victory not only for our client, but for the many music pioneers who have become dispossessed through certain periods’ clever use of lawsuits and loopholes in the existing laws governing trademarks.” A copy of the complete decision is available upon request. About Epstein Becker & Green Epstein Becker & Green is a full-service law firm with more than 300 attorneys in 11 cities across the United States. The firm practices in the areas of commercial litigation, intellectual property, employment law, healthcare, corporate and securities law, government contracts and elder law. The firm is a founder member of the International Lawyers Network (ILN), a confederation of full-service law firms located in 67 countries on six continents.


May 1964 – mid 1966: Pearson, Terri, Thomas, Moore, Davis.

The Drifters with Ben E. King, Thomas, Green, and Hobbs.

The Drifters in 2000: Lewis, Thomas, Moore, Green.
BEN E. KING: the most Famous Lead of THE DRIFTERS

Born Benjamin Earl Nelson on September 28, 1938, in Henderson, North Carolina, and moved to Harlem, New York, at the age of nine in 1947. He died in Hackensack, New Jersey on April 30, 2015. He began singing with the Lover Patterson managed The Crowns in late 1957 and became lead singer for the original line-up of the second generation of Drifters from June 1958 (although recordings started first in 1959) to May 1960. He also sang with later Drifters: old friend Charlie Thomas' group (sometime in the 1970s) and subbed for Johnny Moore's later group from late 1981 and stayed with them (when Johnny returned) through 1985. There was an interesting Atlantic single with King as lead from 1962, featuring Ray Lewis, Louis Price, and Bill Fredericks ("You Better Move On" b/w a reissued original "Save The Last Dance For Me") which soon was withdrawn (probably some legal difficulties with British Bell/Arista).

Ben E. King Early Discography

Before the The Crowns (originally named The 5 Crowns) - with James Clark replacing Palmer and Dock Green joining in early 1958 - became the new Drifters. Ben sang with them from 1957 (for caravan and for R&B (although no lead)). Charlie Thomas, who joined The Crowns at the same time as Ben, was the natural lead singer (with a voice not far from Ben's). He met a fate similar to Paul Williams in the Temptations – only sporadically allowed to lead on The Drifters' records. Note that King's name is credited on "Save The Last Dance For Me" (Vocal Quartet & Ben E. King). George Treadwell was still The Drifters manager.

There were rumors circulating that Ben E. King's manager Pat "Lover" Patterson used singers from his group the Duvals/Drapers backing King on his early solo recordings (27 October 1961). It sounds more like a mixed male/female back-up group. The Drapers masqueraded as "The Drifters" early on.

The Drifters (Atlantic, New York)

6 March 1959
Ben E. Nelson (King), lead; Charlie Thomas, lead-1, Dock Green, Elsiberry Hobbs.
3396 Hey Senorita 2062, LP 8041
3397 There Goes My Baby 2025, LP 8041
3398 Baltimore -1 2050, LP 8041
3399 Oh My Love 2025, LP 8041

9 July 1959
Ben E. King, lead; Johnny Lee Williams, lead-1, Thomas, Green, Hobbs.
3726 (If You Cry) True Love, True Love -1 2040, LP 8041
3737 Dance With Me 2040, LP 8041
3987 This Magic Moment 2050, LP 8041
3988 Lonely Winds 2062, LP 8041
3989 Temptation unissued

19 May 1960
4565 Save The Last Dance For Me 2071, LP 8059
4566 Nobody But Me 2071, LP 8059
4567 I Count The Tears 2067, LP 8059
4568 Sometimes I Wonder 2151 (issued 1962)

Ben E. King (Atco, New York)

17 December 1959
Ben E. King
3965 Brace Yourself 6156, LP 142
3966 Show Me The Way 6156, LP 142
3967 I Promise Love 6156, LP 142
3968 Hearts Of Stone unissued

7 June 1960
LaVern Baker & Ben E. King
4585 How Often 6104, LP 142
4586 A Help-Each-Other Romance 6104, LP 142

27 October 1960
Ben E. King
5161 Spanish Harlem 6185, LP 142
5162 First Taste Of Love 6185, LP 142
5163 Young Boy Blues 6207, LP 142
5164 Stand By Me 6194, LP 142
5441 Here Comes The Night 6207, LP 142
5442 On The Horizon 6194, LP 142
5451 Amor 29 March 1961
5453 Souvenir Of Mexico 6203, LP 133

Note: 28-29 March, 1961 more recordings, only issued on LP 133, were recorded – and later more songs/singles for LP 142.

THE DRIFTERS: ONE (plus) PER YEAR 1953 – 1966
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

THE DRIFTERS – Atlantic Albums Gallery  (selective after 1971)


The Good Life with The Drifters – 8103 (January 1965), I’ll Take You Where The Music’s Playing – 8113 (September 1966), The Drifter’s Golden Hits – 8153 (February 1968), Their Greatest Recordings: The Early Years – Atco SD33-375 (November 1971 - Atlantic subsidiary label)


THE DRIFTERS: the Lead Singers – their first lead with the group

**Lucille** (R&B #7): **Money Honey** (R&B #1)

Lead: Clyde McPhatter

“Lucille” rec in New York City 28 June 1953

Atlantic 1019 (issued January 1954)

w. David Baughan, William Anderson, David Baldwin, and James Johnson

“Money Honey” rec in New York City 9 August 1953

Atlantic 1006 (issued September 1953)

w. Gerhart Thrasher, Andrew Thrasher, Bill Pinkney, Willie Farbe, and Walter Adams (gtr)

1953

**Honey Bee**

Lead: David Baughan

Rec in New York City 21 April 1955

Atlantic 2096 (issued March 1961)

w. Gerhart Thrasher, Andrew Thrasher, Bill Pinkney, and Jimmy Oliver (gtr)

1955

**Adorable** (R&B #1)

Lead: Johnny Moore

Rec in Los Angeles 19 September 1955

Atlantic 1078 (issued October 1955)

w. Gerhart Thrasher, Andrew Thrasher, Bill Pinkney, and Jimmy Oliver (gtr)

1955

**Steamboat** (R&B #5)

Lead: Bill Pinkney

Rec in Los Angeles 19 September 1955

Atlantic 1078 (issued October 1955)

w. Gerhart Thrasher, Andrew Thrasher, Johnny Moore, and Jimmy Oliver (gtr)

1955

**Your Promise To Be Mine**

Lead: Gerhart Thrasher

Rec in Los Angeles 19 September 1955

Atlantic 1088 (issued February 1956)

w. Johnny Moore, Andrew Thrasher, Bill Pinkney, and Jimmy Oliver (gtr)

1955

**Drip Drop**

Lead: Bobby Hendricks

Rec in New York City 28 April 1958

Atlantic 1187 (issued May 1958)

w. Gerhart Thrasher, Jimmy Millinder (Milliner), Tommy Evans, Jimmy Oliver (gtr)

or: back-up by the Coasters

1958

**Suddenly There’s A Valley**

Lead: Tommy Evans

Rec in New York City 28 April 1958

Atlantic 2087 (issued December 1960)

w. Bobby Hendricks (co-lead) and back-up as on “Drip Drop”

1958

**There Goes My Baby** (R&B #1)

Lead: Ben E. King (Nelson)

Rec in New York City 6 March 1959

Atlantic 2025 (issued May 1959)

w. Charlie Thomas, Dock Green, Elsbeary Hobbs, and Reggie Kimber (gtr)

1959

**Baltimore**

Lead: Charlie Thomas

Rec in New York City 6 March 1959

Atlantic 2050 (issued January 1960)

w. Elsbeary Hobbs (sec-lead), Ben E. King, Dock Green, and Reggie Kimber (gtr)

1959

**If You Cry) True Love, True Love** (R&B #5)

Lead: Johnny Lee Williams

Rec in New York City 9 July 1959

Atlantic 2040 (issued September 1959)

w. Ben E. King, Charlie Thomas, Dock Green, Elsbeary Hobbs, and Bill Davis (Abdul Samad, gtr)

1959

**Some Kind Of Wonderful** (R&B #5)

Lead: Rudy Lewis

Rec in New York City 1 February 1961

Atlantic 2096 (issued March 1961)

w. Charlie Thomas, Dock Green, Tommy Evans, and Bill Davis, gtr

1961

**If You Don’t Come Back**

Lead: Johnny Moore (returning)

Rec in New York City 12 April 1963

Atlantic 2191 (issued May 1963)

w. Rudy Lewis, Charlie Thomas, Eugene Pearson, Johnny Terry, and Bill Davis, gtr

1963
THE LATER “LEGAL” DRIFTERS

The Drifters Now

Lead: Johnny Moore
Johnny’s group moved to England in 1972.
Rec in New York City 1972
Bell LP-219 (UK) (issued 1973)
w. Butch Leake, Grant Kitchings, Bill Fredericks, and Butch Mann, gtr
1972

Live at Harvard University

Lead: Charlie Thomas
Rec in Cambridge, Massachusetts 1976
A&D LP 8001 (issued 1976)
w. Bobby Ruffin, Dock Green, Elsiebeary Hobbs, and Bill Davis (Abdul Samad), gtr
1976

You Better Move On

Lead: Ben E. King
King “guested” both Charlie’s group in the 1970s and subbed for Moore in Johnny’s group from late 1971, and stayed with them up to 1985 after Johnny’s return in 1983.
Rec (prob in New York) in 1982
Atlantic K 17743 (UK) (issued 1982)
w. Bill Fredericks, Ray Lewis, Louis Price
1982
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

TOP TEN VOCAL GROUPS’ LPs 1954-1960

part one


TOP TEN VOCAL GROUPS’ LPs 1954-1960  part two


The Platters – Federal 549 (1956, reissued on King 651 in 1959 – it’s the King LP imaged – Federal, see page 29), The Platters – Mercury MG-20146 (1956)

Note: A total of nine LPs on Mercury (MG20000-series) were issued with The Platters during 1956-1960 – shown on page 24.


The Coasters – Atco 33-101 (November 1957), The Coasters’ Greatest Hits – Atco 33-111 (October 1959), The Coasters One By One – Atco 33-123 (July 1960), Billy Ward and his Dominettes featuring Clyde McPhatter and Jackie Wilson - King 773 of 1961 (which was reissue of LP 548).
"The Flying Platters" - Manager and song-writer Buck Ram’s (died 1991) internationally famous balladeers and the world’s best known vocal group. Originated from a Los Angeles lineup of late 1952 comprising Cornell Gunter, Gaynell and Alex Hodge, and Joe Jefferson, who were called the Flame-ongos - of Los Angeles (no recordings). Curtis Williams (later of The Hollywood Flames and The Penguins) was also a some-time member. In January 1953 bass singer Herb Reed entered (replacing Curtis) and the group changed its name to The Platters, Reed and Gunter sang lead and soon David Lynch replaced Joe. Tony Williams joined as lead in June, 1953. Soon after Gunter left (although he joined them for a short tour in 1957), Gunter’s new group the Flairs was managed by Buck Ram. Around January, 1954 Buck Ram became the Platters’ manager (succeeding Ralph Bass) and soon decided that the group needed a female singer and they found Zola Taylor (16 years of age at that time) rehearsing at Alex Hodge’s house with Gunter’s sister Shirley (who led her group, the Queens featuring Zola). The Platters had already done some recordings with female guest lead by Linda Hayes (Tony’s sister). Zola entered in March, 1954 (replacing by her then fiancée Gaynell). In August, 1954 Paul Robi (who later changed his name to Roby) replaced Alex Hodge. The group was contracted to Mercury when Buck Ram made a deal moving the Penguins to that label. They re-recorded a (by then unissued Federal recording of May 20, 1954), "Only You" (which Ram had composed several years earlier) on April 26, 1955 in Los Angeles. The Platters were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990.

In the 60s Tony Williams activated his own new Platters for some years, since his solo career didn’t work out as hoped. Beyond the many phony groups speculatively acting as Platters, at least seven groups have evolved from Ram’s group: 1. Monroe Powell’s Ram-succession and qualitative group in Las Vegas (still active, mostly in Florida and no longer under the Ram-banne - touring as "Monroe Powell’s Platters Revue" - recently settling their legal matters with Herb Reed’s Platters out of court); 2. Williams’ revived group after several unsuccessful solo years in the early 90s featuring Herb Reed. 3. David Lynch’s "New Platters" formed in 1967 with Roby and Taylor pining. 4. Sonny Turner’s new Platters. 5. Herb Reed’s touring "The Five Platters" lineup (initially including Nate Nelson), nowadays called "Herb Reed’s Platters" stopped by the "Ram"-managed Platters to call themselves just "The Platters"; 6. Roby’s revival group (nowadays managed by Roby’s widow). 7. The Buck Ram Platters (remnants from the original group - without any original Platter and with new management, Jean Bennett, Ram’s former aid). Europe had its own false Platters. The groups to check out live in later years were fully Powell’s in Florida (Monroe also acts with a late lineup of Ink Spots), and Herb Reed’s.

**Famous recording lineup:**
Tony Williams, lead (53-early 60) born April 5, 1928, Elisabeth, New Jersey, died August 14, 1992 in New York. Sang his first solo records already in 1959 (for Mercury) and was replaced on stage by Tony’s friend Johnny Barnes.
David Lynch, ten (53-67) born July 3, 1929 in St. Louis; died January 2, 1981. David left the group in early 1967 to start a new "Original Platters" (Robi and Zola joined him in the new group).
Paul Robi, bar (August 54-65) born August 20, 1931 in New Orleans; died February 1, 1989. Replaced Alex Hodge. He also tried his luck in later years with an own group.
Herb Reed, bass (53-69) originally sharing leads with Cornell Gunter. Born August 7, 1928 (prob not 1931) in Kansas City. Died in Boston, June 4, 2012. Herb was the longest lasting original member, leaving in 1969 to start a rival Platters (originally featuring Nate Nelson).

**Later members:**
Charles "Sonny" Turner, (Feb 60-70, definite lead from October, 1960 – Tony had left by May), born in Fairmont, West Virginia September 24, 1939 and settled in Cleveland, Ohio (and sang lead there with the Metronomes/Five Jades).
Nate Nelson (65-69) from the Flamings, succeeding Robi. Barbara Randolph (replaced Taylor in 1964), soon Betty Jackson arrived (neither one staying long).
Sandra Dawn (became new soprano in 1966), Larry Johnson (replaced Lynch in 1967), Paul Wilson from the Flamings sang with them in 1968, and Milton Bullock and Tony High also were members during the very late 1960s. Further changes in 1970.
Monroe Powell, lead from 1970. He had led the Dominos, now taking over from Turner; and was lead singer for the Buck Ram Platters for over 25 years in Las Vegas (with lots of new lineups).
New lead from 1995: Tyrone Sweet

**Essential CD:**
For the Collector:
Four Platters and One Lovely Dish - Bear Family (9CD) (1994) BCD 15741 II (with all Mercury recordings 1955-64 and 56-page booklet)
Reading: Setting the Record Straight (2007) and Vol 2 (2009) by Anthony P. Musso (Author/ambase)

**Recording debut:**
Los Angeles, California September 15, 1953 Give Thanks (TW) / Hey Now (HR) - Federal 12153, and I’ll Cry When You’re Gone / I Need You All The Time (both TW) - Federal 12181. The final Federal session took place in January, 1955, again featuring Linda Hayes.

**Records for:** Federal 53-55, Mercury 55-64, MusiCor 66-71.

**Original recording lineup** (on Federal – 20 songs plus alternates) (Sept 15, 1953 and March 16, 1954 sessions):
Tony Williams, David Lynch, Alex Hodge, Gaynell Hodge, and Herb Reed.
Third session (Buck Ram new manager) May 20, 1954:
Zola Taylor (repl Gaynell). Not long after Paul Robi replaced Alex.
In 1991. Sue Hackett, a current co-worker of Bennett's says, "She was the lady with The Platters. Took the title of secretary for society to accept her. She was the lady executor."

Today, Bennett maintains her right to the Platters name is still valid and has her own group, which is booked as The Buck Ram Platters, based out of Las Vegas. Current members of this group include Tyress South, Jeffie Harris, Paul Allen, III, Joel Gaines, and J. Michael Davis. While no original members are in this group, J. Michael Davis performed with The Platters during the Ram era in the 1980s. Bennett says she and her company vigorously pursue groups which are illegally using the Platters name. "We don't have a right for people to take money out of our mouth, or anybody else's mouth," says Hackett. At the same time, Bennett has licensed two other groups to perform. A group located in Branson, Missouri, and known as The World Famous Platters (members include Lawrence Randle, Eddie Stove, Walter White, and Dee Dee Hammons) and a group managed by Larry Marshack, New York, which is called The Platters Featuring The Legendary Monroe Powell. She says that Powell refused to sign a contract extension in the mid-1980s and left to perform with his own group. "I put a lot of money and time into it, and I really broke my heart to have it turn into something like this," Monroe maintains that after the 1980 lawsuit between Rob and Bennett, Bennett said the management company to Mary Fanning, where he contained his employment with the Platters. Bennett acknowledges that Powell's statement is indeed true, but that the company under Fanning's direction ended operations all together. Bennett maintains that her current Personnel Productions company continues to own all rights to The Platters name. Recent court rulings have shown Bennett to have rights to the name, but several former Platters vehemently disagrees with this idea. "Jean was there almost from the conception of them, but she, secretary and then a partner to Buck Ram. She feels she owns the "Platters" just because they were in management, how do you own a name?" Bennett responded. "I don't know where she gets the power and authority to license anyone... at least my contribution has been significant to the Platters."

It is evident that Bennett has helped maintained The Platters a very successful and powerful company over the years, but controversy remains over her right to use the name. Along with Bennett, several others have also won rights via the judicial system. What is very clear, is that Bennett was ahead of her time in the music industry. Some sources close to The Platters say Bennett was strictly a secretary, but the facts show she indeed purchased the management company in the mid-1960s from Buck Ram. Sue Hackett says she, "Pioneered, really, for me and other people a positive business world for women.... we were in management, how do you own The Platters name. Recent court rulings have shown Bennett to have rights to the name, but several former Platters vehemently disagrees with this idea. Jean was there almost from the conception of them, but she, secretary and then a partner to Buck Ram. She feels she owns the "Platters" just because they were in management, how do you own a name?"

In 1990, Martha Robi (wife of Paul Robi), sued Bennett and 5 Platters, Inc., and won a total of $3,510,000. This court case also declared that 3 registered trademarks of "The Platters," which Five Platters, Inc. owned, be cancelled. Since that time, Bennett has continued to put on a very successful show with The Buck Ram Platters, and continues to discourage the use of the name. "That's something we're very, very adamant about," Bennett recently said, and a judgement against Monroe Powell, who was performing with the name The Platters Featuring The Legendary Monroe Powell. She says that Powell refused to sign a contract extension in the mid-1980s and left to perform with his own group. "I put a lot of time and money and then I really broke my heart to have it turn into something like this," Monroe maintains that after the 1980 lawsuit between Rob and Bennett, Bennett said the management company to Mary Fanning, where he contained his employment with the Platters. Bennett acknowledges that Powell's statement is indeed true, but that the company under Fanning's direction ended operations all together. Bennett maintains that her current Personnel Productions company continues to own all rights to The Platters name. Recent court rulings have shown Bennett to have rights to the name, but several former Platters vehemently disagrees with this idea. Jean was there almost from the conception of them, but she, secretary and then a partner to Buck Ram. She feels she owns the "Platters" just because they were in management, how do you own a name?"

She says that Powell refused to sign a contract extension in the mid-1980s and left to perform with his own group. The Buck Ram Platters are planning the release of a new album in 2000.

**THE Top Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s**

**R&B Top 10 Hits: (13 of 21 Top 40) & Pop Top 5 Hits of 15 Top 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Only You (And You Alone)</td>
<td>7w #1 10/22 rec.L.A. April 26 P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>The Pretender</td>
<td>11w #1 1/7 rec Chicago 9/25/51 P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>You've Got The Magic Touch</td>
<td>10w #1 9/1 non-chart P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>My Prayer</td>
<td>2w #1 8/18 rec in NYC 4/17 P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>You'll Never Know</td>
<td>9 #1 9/24 rec in L.A. 9/24 P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>On My Word Oh Honor #7</td>
<td>7w #1 11/11 rec in NYC 6/22 P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>His She Mine</td>
<td>5 #1 8/18 rec in NYC 7/25 P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>My Dream</td>
<td>7 #1 5/5 rec in NYC 2/28 P1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Twelfth Time</td>
<td>3w #1 4/28 P1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Smoke Gets In Your Eyes 1w #3 P1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Enchanted</td>
<td>9 #4 5/9 rec in L.A. 4/17 P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>I Love You 1000 Times</td>
<td>6 (ST)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Favourite Smooth and Rhythmic Ones:**

- 1954: Tell The World
- 1954: I Love You
- 1955: Remember When
- 1960: Harbor Lights
- 1961: I'll Never Smile Again
- 1962: It's Zanzibar

**THE ORIGINAL FEDERAL/KING SINGLES (rec in L.A.)**

- 12153 Give Thanks (TW)/My Way Home (HR) - 10/53
- 12165 If You Cry When You're Gone (TW)
- 12181 Roses Of Picardy (HR)/Bear Barrel Boogie (HR) - 4/54
- 12188 Tell The World (TW)/Love All Night (DL) - 6/54
- 12196 Shake It Like Mantis (TW)/Vee-Vee-Ah-Be (DL) - 10/54
- 4792 My Name Ain't (HR)/Love's Callin' (LR) - 10/54
- 12206 Tramp (TW)/In The Air (DL) - 2/55
- 12235 Maggie Don't Work Here Anymore (OLUT) - 12/54
- 4797 Platters Mercy (VH)/Chin Pach (LH) - 8/55
- 12244 Only You (TW)/You You Made Me Cry (DL) - 11/55
- 12255 Thank You (TW)/Tell The World (TW) - 10/55
- 12271 Give Thanks (TW)/Need All The Time (TW) - 1956

(Note: "Only You" on Mercury issued 5/55)

**THE PLATTERS by Cord G. Coslor**

**PATTERNS PERSONALITIES:**

Buck Ram, composer, musical director, and producer, was the driving force behind the success of The Platters. He originally persuaded Mercury Records to sign them to a record deal, and stuck with them until his death in 1991. He was a genius song writer, and is considered the mastermind behind The Platters hits. Ram, who has been credited with writing nearly 1,000 songs, not only penned such hits as "Only You," "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes," and "Twilight Time," for The Platters, but also wrote the hit "I'll Be Home For Christmas" for Bing Crosby. With over 200 personnel changes in the Platters group over the years, it is evident that what draws people to The Platters is their music, much of it written by Ram, not necessarily the members of the group. In 1953, Ram told the Atlanta Journal newspaper, "We've had 200 personnel changes, and people do ask about Tony (Williams) sometimes, but he g"...
THE FLYING PLATTERS

David Lynch, Paul Robi (top), Tony Williams, Herb Reed, and Zola Taylor (ca 1956) - with Bear Family CD “The Ballads of…” BCD 17326 (2013) and "Rock" BCD 17558 (2017)
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

THE PLATTERS – The Early LPs (1956-1961)

The Platters – Federal 549 (1956, reissued on King 651 in 1959 – red cover, see page 31), The Platters – Mercury MG 20146 (April 1956), The Platters Volume Two – MG 20216 (August 1956)


Remember When? – MG 20410 (alternate cover), Reflections – MG 20481 (Nov 1960), Encore Of Golden Hits – MG 20472 (Dec 1959),

More Encore Of Golden Hits - MG 20591 (June 1960), Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries – MG 20589 (October 1960), Encores! – Mercury/Wing MGW 12112 (November 1961)
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

THE MODERN VOCAL GROUPS SERIES

Issued 1999-2001, this is a six-volume series, comprising comprehensive review of vocal group recordings from the Modern stable. Focusing on 1950-54, covering various flavours of doo wop. In addition to the Modern label itself, the Los Angeles based Bihari brothers released vocal group sides on the Crown, Flair and RPM marques. Guiding us through the compilations for the Modern Vocal Groups series have been the guys at EarlyBird Records in Long Island, New York, featuring info-laden annotations by Gordon Skadberg.
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

Some Great Books on Vocal Groups and the definitive Coasters (issued in February 2013)

- They All Sang On The Corner by Philip Groia (1973).

Below:
- The Complete Book Of Doo-Wop.
- The Definitive COASTERS – A Sides & B-Sides.
- Those Hoodlum Friends.
- The Coasters In Stereo.
- Golden’s, Silver Coasters, and Grain Tracks.

… and the CDs: two great public domain Coasters CDs featuring all of the Coasters recordings 1954-1962 (plus some never-before-issued outtakes).
THE CADILLACS


Original lineup second session 1954, and 1955: (No Chance – Speedoo) Earl Wade, second lead (54-ca 64), was still around and worked with Carroll, Phillips, and John Brown in 1979 as The Earls Charles Brooks, bar (54-57) with Carroll, Phillips, and Drake Lineup 1956: Carroll, Phillips, Wade, Brooks, plus James J.R. Bailey (May 56-72) third lead, died in 1980

Lineup second session 1954, and 1955: (No Chance – Speedoo) Earl Wade, second lead (54-ca 64), was still around and worked with Carroll, Phillips, and John Brown in 1979 as The Earls Charles Brooks, bar (54-57) with Carroll, Phillips, and Drake Lineup 1956: Carroll, Phillips, Wade, Brooks, plus James J.R. Bailey (May 56-72) third lead, died in 1980

Second group 1957: James J.R. Bailey, lead; Robert “Bobby” Spencer, ten (57-72); Bill Lindsey, bar; Champ Rollow, bb&bs (real name Waldo Champion)

“”The Original Cadillacs” 1957: Carroll, Phillips, Wade, Brooks, plus sometimes Bailey

“United” lineup November, 1957- January, 1959: Spencer, Carroll, Phillips, Wade (who did not always follow on tours), and Bailey (who did not participate on the screen shows)


THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

THE ORIGINAL JUBILEE (JOSIE) LPS:

The Fabulous Cadillacs – JSM-1045 (1957)
The Crazy Cadillacs – JSM-1089 (1959)
Twisting With The Cadillacs – JGM-5099 (1962)
The Very Best Of The Cadillacs – Murray Hill LP 1195 (1982)
For Collectors Only – Murray Hill SLP Box MUS285 (1983)

Essential CD: The Best of - Rhino R2 70955 (1990) or: Rock - Bear Family BCD 10281 AB (2008) (34 tracks, 44-page booklet)

For Collectors:

Reading:
They All Sang on the Corner by Philip Groia (Edmond Publ 1973)

R&B Top 10 Hit: (1 of 4 Top 40) 1956 Speedoo 2w #3 - recorded September 28, 1955, P17

THE CADILLACS


“The True Street Corners” - Cult group of New York’s Sugar Hill - formed 1953 in Harlem called the Carnations (no recordings). Discovered by Lover Patterson, who brought them to Jubilee’s subsidiary Josie, where they were managed by Esther Navarro and coached by saxophonist Jesse Powell. The group were the first to choose a car name (breaking the tradition of birds giving names to vocal groups). The Cadillacs were also the first to extensively use professional choreography (Cholly Atkins and Honi Coles). They soon turned into two different groups for the same label. Today they have fans all over the world - revived and active, and touring extensively for the last couple of decades. Earl Carroll left the Coasters in late 1979 after almost 20 years away from his origins and revived his old group, back in business again with his old childhood friend and original Cadillac Bobby Phillips.

The Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

Collectors’ Gems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>Josie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Down the Road</td>
<td>EW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Let Me Explain</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Who Is Me</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Betty My Love</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>The Girl I Love</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>About That Girl Named Lou</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Sugar-Sugar</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>My Girl Friend</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Holy Smoke Baby</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Speedo’s Back</td>
<td>BS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Peek-A-Boo #20</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Please Mr. Johnson</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Romeo</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>BS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Tell Me Today</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Rock ‘N’ Roll Is Here To Stay</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Cadillacs - original Josie singles

Note: There are more Josie recordings (LP) and several later singles on Smash, Capitol, Artic, Mercury and Polydor.

1954-1956

The Cadillacs (featuring Earl Carroll, lead; and Bailey*, sec.ten)

765 I Wonder Why - Gloria

769 Wishing Well - I Want To Know About Love

773 No Chance - Sympathy

775 Down The Road - Window Lady

785 Let Me Explain - Speedoo

792 Zoom - You Are

798 Betty My Love* - Woe Is Me*

805 That’s All I Need - The Girl I Love*

807 Shock-A-Doo - Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer*

812 About That Girl Named Lou* - Sugar-Sugar*

1957

The Cadillacs (featuring J.R. Bailey and Bobby Spencer)

820 Broken Heart - My Girl Friend

The Original Cadillacs (featuring Earl Carroll)

821 Hurry Home - Lucy

Earl Carroll and the Original Cadillacs (feat. Carroll and Bailey)

829 Buzz-Buzz-Buzz - Yes Yea Baby

Jesse Powell and The Caddy’s (with Bailey and Spencer)

834 Turnpike (instr) - Ain’t You Gonna

1958-1959

The Cadillacs

(with Carroll, Spencer, Bailey, Wade, and Phillips)

836 Speedo Is Back (EC lead) - A’ Looka Here

842 Holy Smoke Baby - I Want To Know (rec 1957 with Bailey)

846 Peek-A-Boo - Oh, Oh Lolita

857 Jay Walker - Copy Cat (EC lead)

861 Please, Mr. Johnson - Cool It Fool

1959

Speedo and The Pearls (feat Carroll)

865 Who Ya Gonna Kiss - Naggity Nag

The Cadillacs (featuring Spencer, Wade, Bailey and Phillips)

866 Romeo - Always My Darling

870 Bad Dan McGoon – Dumbell

1960

Speedo and The Cadillacs (feat Carroll)

876 Tell Me Today - It’s Love (with Ronnie Bright, bass)

883 That’s Why - The Boogie Man (with Phillips, bass)

1963

The Original Cadillacs

(featuring Earl Wade and Bobby Phillips)

915 If I Never Let You Go - Wayward Wanderer (rec earlier)

Note: Among the only-on-LP issued tracks are the Carroll-led “Dum Dee Dum Dum” (Nov. 1959) and “Rock ‘N’ Roll Is Here To Stay” (June 1960).
THE “STREET CORNER” CADDYS

Main image: Earl “Speedo” Carroll (top), Earl Wade, Bobby Phillips, Charles Brooks, LaVerne Drake (1955)
Inserted: same line-up (1955)
THE CLASSIC TEMPTATIONS – the group who was deeply influenced by The Cadillacs.

David Ruffin, Melvin Franklin, Eddie Kendricks, Paul Williams, Otis Williams (clockwise from bottom left) (c. 1965)
THE CLASSIC COASTERS

Cornell Gunter, Will “Dub” Jones, Billy Guy, and Carl Gardner (1959)
THE COASTERS

All of the early members have launched their off-shoot Coasters’ recording groups during later years. There was Bobby Nunn’s Coasters, Mark II (formed in 1963) - nowadays acting as Billy Richards’ Coasters. Grady Chapman (of the Robins) toured with a “Coasters” group (often featuring Bobby Sheen). Cornell Gunter’s Fabulous Coasters (formed not long after Gunter’s leave from the originals) is still acting with off-spring members as the “Original” Cornell Gunter’s Coasters. Billy Guy has issued records as Billy Guy & The Coasters. Leon Hughes called a group The World Famous Coasters (both Bobby Nunn and later Will Jones have guested) and still leads his own group calling himself “The Original”. And if that isn’t enough, former members of those off-shoots have embarked new bogus Coasters groups. There also was Will Jones’ World Famous Coasters (which often featured Billy Guy). Guy later semi-coached promoter Larry Marshall’s fake group, which now tours in several versions as yet another Cornell Gunter’s Coasters. The true Coasters, though, were still semi-coached by Carl Gardner and by manager Velma Gardner with Carl’s son J.R. as lead singer. When Carl Jr launched his off-spring group in 2011 J.W. Lance became lead.

The Robins lineup on Spark 1954-55: Carl Gardner, lead - debuting with the Robins in Los Angeles February-March, 1954 (Spark)
Bobby Nunn, bass (who sang with Little Esther on the Robins’ “Double Crossing Blues” from December, 1949 and was lead of the Robins for a.o. Savoy, Modern/RPM/Crown, and RCA)
“Ty” Terrell Leonard, tenor
Billy and Roy Richard, baritones
and in early 1954 Grady Chapman, second lead

Original Coasters lineup 1956-57:
Leon Hughes, tenor (55-57) born in California August 26, 1932
Billy Guy, baritone (55-72) was during his last years in the group frequently substituted on stage by Vernon Harrell and later by Jimmy Norman. Billy was born in Texas June 20, 1936; died November 5, 2002
Bobby Nunn, bass (55-57) born in Alabama September 20, 1925; died in L.A. November 5, 1986 – a true West-Coast legend

Famous classic lineup 1958-1961:
Carl Gardner and Billy Guy, with Cornell Gunter, tenor (up to June 1961 including “Little Egypt” recorded in February) former lead with the Flairs; born November 14, 1936 in Coffeyville, Kansas. He died from an unknown gun shot in Las Vegas in his car February 28, 1990
Will “Dub” Jones, bass (up to 1968) former lead with the Cadets, born in Shreveport, Louisiana May 14, 1928; died in Long Beach, California on January 16, 2000.

Later recording members:

"Those Hoodlum Friends" - "The Clown Princes of Rock 'N Roll" - the pre-eminent vocal group of the original rock 'n roll era, and the first to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1987). Originated from the Robins - an R&B vocal group from Los Angeles, who had conquered California since 1949 - and had worked with the young composing/producing team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller on-and-off in 1951, in 1953 and during 1954-55. In September of 1955 Leiber-Stoller and manager Lester Stil decided to launch a professional group for Atlantic’s new subsidiary Atco. The two fore-most lead singers (tenor and bass) of the Robins quit that group and completed the new quartet with two hand-chosen vocalists on the first Coasters recordings in Los Angeles, with several fine ghetto blues. They also most probably backed LaVern Baker on her L.A. recording of “Jim Dandy Got Married” in March, 1957. The remnants of the Robins continued for the second half of the 1950s without significant success. The original Coasters lineup only lasted for a couple of years until the group re-formed (still with Californians) and moved to New York. They used the best musicians on recordings (especially King Curtis on sax from 1958) and reached international fame in 1959. The group was Leiber-Stoller’s favorite vehicle for their 2-minute play-lets and the group worked with them 1954 - 1963, 1966-1968 and 1971-1972.

The Robins of 1954-55; the original Coasters in 1950-56 and today.

"Spark 54” Records for Los Angeles, Los Angeles, February 1955 (Robins)
The Coasters’ recording debut: Los Angeles, January 11, 1956 Down In Mexico / Turtle Dovin’ (both CG) - Atco 6064, released in February, 1956.
Records for:
Spark 54-55 (Robins), Atco 56-66, Date 66-68, King 71-73.

The original Coasters: Carl Gardner, Bobby Nunn, Billy Guy, and knowing Leon Hughes.


The Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve 47
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

The longest lasting lineup circa 1960-1997:
Carl Gardner, Ronnie Bright, Jimmy Norman, Thomas Palmer.

Lineup from 1998:
Alvin Morse, baritone (up to September 2008) born February 1951, replaced by Primo Candelaria
J.W. Lance (aka Joe Lance Williams), tenor (from 2001) born in New Orleans June 16, 1949. Stayed with the group when Jr returned

Essential CD: The Very Best of: Rhino R2 71597 (1994)
The best collections: 50 Coasters’ Classics - Rhino (2CD) R 71090 (1992) (51 tracks)
or: There’s A Riot Goin’ On - THE COASTERS On Atco – Rhino (4CD) RH-85 7740 (2007) (133 tracks) and:
Down Home – Varèse Sarabande 66844 (2007) (12 Date/king tracks)
And Don’t Miss the super great History of R&B sets (see special feature page 54)

Reading: “Yakety Yak I Fought Back: My Life With The Coasters” by Carl Gardner with Veta Gardner (AuthorHouse 2007)

THE COASTERS, vocal group “HI-FIVE”
1. Carl Gardener-lead, Billy Guy, Young Jessie, Bobby Nunn and Adolph Jacobs Jr (featuring Gil Bernal or poss. Plas Johnson, sax)
   - Hollywood, February 11/15, 1957:
   57C-107 Young Blood - Atco 6087 (#1, charted 17w total)
2. as above with Guy-lead (featuring Mike Stoller, prn) - same session:
   57C-108 Searchin’ - Atco 6087 (#1, 21w)
   58C-365 Yakety Yak - Atco 6116 (#1, 14w)
4. as above with Gardener and Guy joint leads, Sonny Forrist, gr (featuring George Barnes and Mickey Baker,bgs) - New York, July 16, 1959:
   59C-3607 Poison Ivy - Atco 6146 (#1, 15w)
5. as above with Guy and Jones leads (featuring King Curtis, sax)
   New York, July 29, 1960:
   60C-4754 Shoppin’ For Clothes - Atco 6178

R&B Top 10 Hits: (7 of 14 Top 40)
1954 Smokey Joe’s Cafe - The Robins (#10)
1956 Down In Mexico #8 (CG)
1957 Young Blood 1w #1 6/3 (CG) P8
1957 Searchin’ 12w #1 6/10 (BG) P3
1958 Yakety Yak 7w #1 6/23 (CG/BG dual) P1
1959 Charlie Brown 2w #2 (CG/BG dual) P2
1959 Poison Ivy 4w #1 10/5 (CG/BG) P7

Extra Hits & Outstanding Entertainment:
1954 Riot In Cell Block #9 - The Robins (guest lead Richard Berry or poss BN)
1955 Framed - The Robins (BN)
1956 Brazil (BN/CG/BG)
1957 Idol With The Golden Head (CG) rec. in Chicago
1957 What Is The Secret of Your Success (BG) Chicago
1958 Zing! Went The Strings Of My Heart (WJ/CoG) New York
1958 The Shadow Knows (BG)
1961 Along Came Jones #14 (unison) P9
1959 I’m A Hog For You (unison)
1960 Wake Me Shake Me #14 (BG)
1960 Shoppin’ For Clothes (BG/WJ)
1961 Little Egypt (Ying-Yang) #16 (BG) P23
1962 The Slime (WJ)
1963 The P.T.A. (BG)
1964 ‘Tain’t Nothin’ To Me #20 (BG/WJ)
1964 I Must Be Dreamin’ (CG/BG)
1965 Let’s Go Get Stoned (BG)
1966 Down Home Girl (BG)
1967 She Can (Talkin’ Bout A Woman) (joint leads)
1968 D.W. Washburn (BG)
1971 Love Potion Number Nine (CG)

With manager Lester Stil and the golden platter of “Yakety Yak” in 1958.
THE ROBINS’ SPARK RECORDS
(the only Robins’ recordings featuring Carl Gardner are on Spark)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>103 6/54</td>
<td>Riot In Cell Block / Wrap It Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107 10/54</td>
<td>Loop De Loop Mambo / Framed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 2/55</td>
<td>If Teardrops Were Kisses / Whadaya Want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113 4/55</td>
<td>One Kiss / Love Parades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116 6/55</td>
<td>I Must Be Dreamin’ / The Hatchet Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122 9/55</td>
<td>Smokey Joe’s Cafe / Just Like A Fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>669 10/55</td>
<td>Smokey Joe’s Cafe / Just Like A Fool</td>
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THE COASTERS’ ORIGINAL SINGLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6064 2/56</td>
<td>Down In Mexico / Turtle Dowin’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6073 7/56</td>
<td>One Kiss Led To Another / Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6087 3/57</td>
<td>Young Blood / Searchin’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6098 8/57</td>
<td>Idol With The Golden Head / (When She Wants Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love’ / My Baby Comes To Me</td>
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<tr>
<td>6104 11/57</td>
<td>Sweet Georgia Brown / What Is The Secret Of Your Success?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6111 1/58</td>
<td>Gee, Golly / Dance</td>
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<td>6116 4/58</td>
<td>Yakay Yak / Zing Went The Strings Of My Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6126 8/58</td>
<td>The Shadow Knows / Sorry But I’m Gonna Have To Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>6132 1/59</td>
<td>Charlie Brown / Three Cool Cats</td>
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<tr>
<td>6141 5/59</td>
<td>Along Came Jones / That Is Rock &amp; Roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6146 8/59</td>
<td>Poison Ivy / I’m A Hog For You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6153 11/59</td>
<td>What About Us / Run Red Run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6163 3/60</td>
<td>Besame Mucho (Parts I &amp; II)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6168 6/60</td>
<td>Wake Me, Shake Me / Stewball</td>
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<tr>
<td>6178 9/60</td>
<td>Shoppin’ For Clothes / The Snake And The Book Worm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6186 1/61</td>
<td>Wait A Minute / Thumbin’ A Ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6192 4/61</td>
<td>Little Egypt (Ying Yang) / Keep On Rollin’</td>
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<tr>
<td>6204 8/61</td>
<td>Girls Girls Girls (Parts I &amp; II)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6210 1/62</td>
<td>Ain’t That Just Like Me / Bad Blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6219 2/62</td>
<td>Ridin’ Hood / Teach Me How To Be Shy</td>
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<tr>
<td>6224 9/62</td>
<td>The Climb (vocal &amp; instrumental)</td>
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<td>6251 1/63</td>
<td>The P.T.A. / Bull Tick Waltz</td>
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<tr>
<td>6287 2/64</td>
<td>T Ain’ Nothin’ To Me / Speedo’s Back In Town</td>
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<td>6300 5/64</td>
<td>Bad Detective / Lovey Dovey</td>
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<td>6321 10/64</td>
<td>Wild One / I Must Be Dreamin’</td>
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<td>6341 2/65</td>
<td>Lady Like / Hungry</td>
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<td>6356 5/65</td>
<td>Let’s Go Get Sinced / Money Honey</td>
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<td>6379 9/65</td>
<td>Crazy Baby / Bad Bottom Slacks And A Chinese Kimono (She’s My Little Spodee-O)</td>
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<td>6407 3/66</td>
<td>She’s A Yum Yum / Saturday Night Fish Fry Date</td>
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<td>1052 3/67</td>
<td>Soul Pad / Down Home Girl</td>
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<tr>
<td>1607 5/68</td>
<td>She Can / Everybody’s Woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>1617 7/68</td>
<td>D.W. Washburn / Everybody’s Woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>754 1969</td>
<td>Act Right / The World Is Changing</td>
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<tr>
<td>6385 11/71</td>
<td>Love Potion Number Nine / D.W. Washburn</td>
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<tr>
<td>6389 4/72</td>
<td>Cool Jerk / Talkin’ Bout A Woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>6404 1973</td>
<td>Soul Pad / D.W. Washburn</td>
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<tr>
<td>8103 1976</td>
<td>Hush Don’t Talk About It / The World Keeps On Turning</td>
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THE COASTERS – the original US LPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
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<tr>
<td>Atco</td>
<td>33-101</td>
<td>The Coasters (featuring 7 Robins Spark tracks and 7 early Coasters; reissued in “simulated stereo” 1960)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>33-111</td>
<td>The Coasters’ Greatest Hits (note: this album has several complete different masters than on the mono LP, which also is the case of the Clarion LP next, and for some tracks on 33-115)</td>
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<td>33-123</td>
<td>The Coasters One By One</td>
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<td>33-135</td>
<td>Coast Along With The Coasters</td>
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<td>Clarion</td>
<td>LP 605 (SD-605) That Is Rock &amp; Roll</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Atco SD33-371</td>
<td>Their Greatest Recordings – The Early Years</td>
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<td>King KS1146-498</td>
<td>The Coasters On Broadway 1958 72 (12)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trip TOP 16-7</td>
<td>16 Greatest Hits 1975 (16)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Atlantic Deluxe (2-LP compilation)</td>
<td>2-4003 Young Blood 07/82 (24)</td>
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The Coasters in Arizona prob late 1958, Gardner, Jones, Jacobs, Guy, Gardner, and a DJ.

The Coasters in 1965 with Gardner, Jones, Carroll, and Guy.
The Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

The Coasters – One Record Per Year – Part 1: 1954 - 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
<th>Record Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Down In Mexico</td>
<td>Atco 6064 (2/56)</td>
<td>R&amp;B #8 (4/56)</td>
<td>Rec in Los Angeles January 11, 1956, lead: Bobby Nunn, Billy Guy, Leon Hughes. feat Gil Bernal, tenorsax; Chico Guererro, congas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Yakety Yak</td>
<td>Atco 6116 (4/58)</td>
<td>R&amp;B #1 (6/58)</td>
<td>Rec in New York March 17, 1958, leads: Carl Gardner and Billy Guy; Cornell Gunter, Will &quot;Dub&quot; Jones. feat King Curtis, tenorsax; Clifton Best, banjo; Alan Hanlon, gtr; Chino Pozo, congas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Shoppin' For Clothes</td>
<td>Atco 6178 (9/60)</td>
<td>Cash Box Pop #57 (10/60)</td>
<td>Rec in New York July 29, 1960, leads: Billy Guy and Will &quot;Dub&quot; Jones; Cornell Gunter and Gardner. feat King Curtis, tenorsax; Gary Chester, dms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Little Egypt (Ying-Yang)</td>
<td>Atco 6192 (4/61)</td>
<td>R&amp;B #16 (6/61)</td>
<td>Rec in New York February 8, 1961, lead: Billy Guy, intro lead: Cornell Gunter and Jones. feat King Curtis, tenorsax; Barnes and Hanlon gtrs; Stoller, pno.</td>
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The Coasters – One Record Per Year – Part 2: 1962 - 1969

1962

The Climb
Atco 6234 (9/62)
Rec in New York July 31, 1962
Will “Dub” Jones, lead;
Gardner, Guy, Earl Carroll.
feat Alan Lorber, dir; Mike Stoller, elpno
Billy Butler, Bucky Pizzarelli, and
Thomas “Curly” Palmer, gtrs

The P.T.A.
Atco 6251 (1/63)
Rec in New York January 11, 1963
Billy Guy, lead; Gardner, Jones, Carroll.
feat Teacho Wiltshire, dir;
Artie Butler, pno; Buddy Lucas, tensax;
Panama Francis, dms
Written by Tobias-Evans, prod by Leiber-Stoller

1963

1964

T’ Ain’t Nothin’ To Me
Atco 6287 (2/64)
Cash Box R&B #20 (3/64)
Rec live New York November 16, 1963
from Atco LP “Apollo Saturday Night” (33-199)
Billy Guy, lead; Gardner, Jones, Carroll.
feat King Curtis, bandleader and dir;
Thomas “Curly” Palmer, gtr

What Is The Secret Of Your Success?
Rec live at “Shindig” TV-show -
New York February 10, 1965
Billy Guy, lead; Jones, Gardner, Carroll with Thomas Palmer, gtr.
Originally recorded in Chicago July 24, 1957
and issued on Atco 6104 (11/57)

1965

1966

Down Home Girl
Date 1552 (3/67)
Rec in New York November 18, 1966
Billy Guy, lead; Gardner, Jones, Carroll.
feat James Booker and Mike Stoller (arr/dir), keyboards
George Devens, vbs

She Can
Date 1607 (5/68)
- reissued on King 6389 (4/72) as
“Talkin’ Bout A Woman”
Rec in New York October 30, 1967
Carl Gardner, Billy Guy, Earl Carroll, joint leads, and Will “Dub” Jones.
feat Artie Butler, arr/dir/prob keyboard; Pretty Purdie, dms

1967

1968

D. W. Washburn
Date 1617 (7/68)
- reissued on King 6385 (1971) and 6494 (1973)
Rec in New York October 31, 1967
(issued January 4, 1968)
Billy Guy, lead;
Gardner (sec lead), Jones, Carroll.
feat Mike Stoller, tackpiano;
Eric Gale, gtr; Artie Ryerson, banjo

Love Potion Number Nine
King 6385 (11/71) Pop #76 (12/71)
Rec in New York February 13-14, 1968
(issued in late 1971)
Carl Gardner, lead;
Billy Guy and Earl Carroll.
feat Taco Meza, flute (dubbed in 1971)
- Ronnie Bright, bass/vc (poss dubbed in 1971)

1969
PHOTO GALLERY

The Coasters

1965 (Speedo Carroll second from left); and in 1974 with Carroll, Norman, Palmer, Bright, and Carl Gardner (center front).


In Germany 1974 with Bright, Norman, Gardner, and Carroll.

1979 with clockwise: Bright, Gardner, Carroll, and Palmer.


The Coasters in 1974 with Bright, Norman, Gardner, and Carroll.
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve

53
The Definitive Coasters – A Sides & B Sides
A Sides & Hits, B Sides and Bonus Tracks

The Coasters are widely considered to be the pre-eminent vocal group of the original rock ‘n’ roll era both in sound and attitude, and to have created some of the best vocal group harmonies ever waxed. They had made their musical debut as the Robins during the early years of rhythm and blues and as the Coasters they contributed to shape rock’n’roll with some of the most cheeky, exciting and entertaining songs of the 50s. The original line-up disbanded early but the crucial team of singers and their mentors Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, moved from California to New York and created most of the greatest hits we know today. They were important influences for many later artists who covered their songs, such as the Beatles, the Stones, the Who and the Kinks. This compilation includes 19 hits listed in the Billboard pop and R&B charts between 1956 and 1962 and an accompanying 24-page booklet with many rare photos and notes on the group’s evolution.

Those Hoodlum Friends – The Coasters In Stereo
Outtakes, Stereo Versions and Album Tracks

The Coasters had the benefit of recording in the best studios, backed by the best musicians and produced by the top producers of their generation, Leiber and Stoller. Naturally, they were required to run through as many takes of each song as was necessary to satisfy the exacting demands of their mentors. Luckily for us, many of these alternate takes have survived. Mono was the standard recording format until the late 1960s, but many of the big selling artists also recorded alternate versions specifically for the stereo market, which was targeted to the discerning adult listener. Disc One features all the alternate stereo versions of Coasters songs that were issued at the time on album and subsequently on CD. Disc Two takes you deep into the heart of Coasters sessions with composite tracks which combine studio chatter together with the finest moments from various different takes. This disc contains several outtakes which have until now been unavailable anywhere and gives an invaluable insight into the genesis of many well-loved tracks and also into the character and working practice of the Coasters and of their producers Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The accompanying 28-page booklet includes many rare photos and an exhaustive session discography by Claus Röhnisch. A collection for Coasters and early rock ‘n’ roll aficionados!
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

The Definitive Coasters – A Sides & B Sides and Those Hoodlum Friends – The Coasters In Stereo
R001 includes a 24-page booklet featuring a complete career summary, lineups sheet 1954-1967, and a detailed hits chart.
R002 includes a 28-page booklet featuring a single & LP discography, an exhaustive session discography 1954-1962, and a touring schedule of the same period.

Corrections: original album issues.
Disc One: Track 3 Rhino CD R2 71090. Disc Two: Track 2 Clarion LP 605.
Disc Three: Tracks 3-4 CBCD-102; Tracks 9-15 Atco SD33-133; Tracks 17-28 Atco SD33-123...
Disc Four: Track 1 Previously unissued; Track 3 CBCD-102, Track 4 – Mr&R&B LP 102; Track 5 CBCD-102; Track 6 Atco LP SD33-135; Track 10 CBCD-102; Tracks 11-21 parts prev on CBCD-102; Track 14 Rhino Handmade CD RHM2 7740.
Note: “Crocodile” (take 1) only issued on Rhino Handmade. The complete take 12 previously unissued.
### Profiles of the Top Ten Vocal Groups

The list is selected to the early recording lineups. Members after 1964 are strictly limited to the most important. For more accurate details, see the entries of the groups.

| Anderson, William | Drifters (ten) |
| Bailey, James J. R. | Cadillacs (lead/ten) |
| Bailey, John “Buddy” | Clovers (lead) |
| Baldwin, David | Drifters (bar) |
| Ballard, Hank | Midnights (lead) |
| Barnes, Prentice | Moonglows (bass) |
| Baughan, David | Drifters (ten/lead) |
| Booth, Henry | Midnights (ten) |
| Branker, Rupert | Platters (pno) |
| Brewster, “Bobby” Ray | Cadillacs (lead) |
| Bright, Ronnie | Cadillacs (sax) |
| Brooks, Charles | Coasters (bass) |
| Brown, Bill | Cadillacs (bar) |
| Carey, J. C. | Clovers (bass) |
| Carey, Zeke | Flamingos (ten) |
| Carter, Johnny | Flamingos (lead/ten) |
| Carroll, Earl | Cadillacs (lead) |
| Carter, Obediah | Coasters (ten) |
| Clark, James “Poppa” | *5* Royales (bar) |
| Coggins, Danny | Cadillacs (ten) |
| Davis, Billy “Abdul Samad” | Moonglows (ten) |
| Davis, J. C. | Drifters (gt) |
| Davis, Kirk | Midnights (gt) |
| Dawn, Sandra | Cadillacs (bar) |
| Drake, Laverne | Platters (sop) |
| Evans, Tommy | Cadillacs (ten) |
| Ferbie, Willie | Drifters (bass) |
| Fuqua, Harvey | Moonglows (lead/bar) |
| Gardner, Carl | Coasters (lead) |
| Givens, Cliff | Dominos (bass) |
| Graves, Alexander “Pete” | Moonglows (ten) |
| Grayson, Milton | Dominos (ten) |
| Green, Cal | Midnights (gt) |
| Green, Dock | Drifters (ten) |
| Gunter, Cornell | Coasters (ten) |
| Guy, Billy | Platters (lead/bar) |
| Harris, Bill | Clovers (gt) |
| Hendrickson, Bobby | Drifters (lead) |
| Hobbs, Elsbeary | Drifters (bass) |
| Hodge, Alex | Platters (bass) |
| Hodge, Gaynell | Platters (ten) |
| Hughes, Charlie | Drifters (ten) |
| Hughes, Leon | Coasters (ten) |
| Hunt, Tommy | Flamingos (ten) |
| Jacob, Adolph | Coasters (gt) |
| Jeffries, Otto | *5* Royales (bass) |
| Johnson, Billy | Moonglows (gt) |
| Johnson, James | Drifters (bass) |
| Johnson, Terry | Flamingos (gt/ten) |
| Jones, Will “Dub” | Coasters (bass) |
| Kimber, Reggie | Drifters (gt) |
| King, Ben E | Drifters (lead) |
| Lamont, Joe | Dominos (bar) |
| Lester, Bobby | Moonglows (lead) |
| Lewis, Rudy | Drifters (lead) |
| Lucas, Harold | Clovers (bar) |
| Lynch, David | Platters (ten) |
| Martinez, Roland | Cadillacs (ten) |
| McElroy, Sollie | Flamingos (lead) |
| McNeil, David | Dominos (bass) |
| McPhatter, Clyde | Dominos (lead) |
| McQuater, Matthew | Drifters (lead) |
| Merle, Milton | Clovers (ten) |
| Millender, Jimmy | *5* Royales (ten/lead) |
| Mitchell, Billy | Dominos (lead) |
| Moore, Jimmy | Drifters (lead) |
| Moore, Johnny | Dominos (lead) |
| Mumford, Gene | Flamingos (lead) |
| Nelson, Nate | Platters (ten) |
| Norman, Jimmy | Coasters (bar) |
| Nunn, Bobby | Clovers (bass) |
| Oliver, Jimmy | Drifters (gt) |
| Palmer, Thomas “Curly” | Cadillacs (bass) |
| Pauling, Lowman | Drifters (gt/vcl) |
| Pearson, Gene | Dominos (lead) |
| Phillips, Bobby | Cadillacs (lead) |
| Pinkney, Bill | Platters (lead) |
| Porter, Arthur | Platters (sop) |
| Powell, Monroe | Midnights (gt) |
| Reed, Herb | Platters (bass) |
| Robi, Paul | Platters (bar) |
| Smith, Lawson | Midnights (bar) |
| Spencer, Bobby | Cadillacs (lead/ten) |
| Sutton, Charles | Dominos (lead/ten) |
| Tanner, Gene | *5* Royales (lead/ten) |
| Tanner, Johnny Taylor, Zola | *5* Royales (lead) |
| Terry, Johnny | Midnights (ten/lead) |
| Thomas, Charlie | Clovers (lead) |
| Thrasher, Andrew | Dominos (ten) |
| Thrasher, Gerhart | Cadillacs (ten/lead) |
| Thrasher, Norman | Clovers (bass) |
| Tucker, Alonzo | Midnights (bass) |
| Turner, Sonny | Midnights (gt) |
| Van Loan, James | Platters (lead) |
| Wade, Earl | Dominos (ten) |
| Ward, Billy | Cadillacs (ten/lead) |
| White, Charlie | Dominos (pro) |
| White, Gene | Dominos (bar) |
| Williams, Johnny Lee | Clovers (lead) |
| Wilson, Paul | Drifters (lead) |
| Williams, Tony | Flamingos (bar) |
| Willingham, Gus | Platters (lead) |
| Wilson, Jackie | Cadillacs (bar) |
| Winley, Harold “Jerome” | Dominos (lead) |
| Clyde McPhatter (Dominos and Drifters), John “Buddy” Bailey (Clovers), Johnny Tanner (“5” Royales), Hank Ballard (Midnights). Top right: Gene Mumford (Dominos), Lowman Pauling (Flamingos), later joined the Delles). Top next page: Charlie White (Dominos and Clovers), and Sonny Turner (Platters). |
Profiles of the Top Ten Vocal Groups

Jackie Wilson (Dominoes), Billy Mitchell (Clovers), Nate Nelson (Flamingos and Platters), Bobby Lester, and Harvey Fuqua (Moonglows), Ben E. King, Johnny Moore, Charlie Thomas, and Rudy Lewis (Drifters), Tony Williams (Platters), Earl Carroll (Cadillacs and Coasters), Carl Gardner, Billy Guy, and Will "Dub" Jones (Coasters).
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

Super-Sounding “unknown classics” from the Golden Fifties – part 1

Picked from Bar Family’s “Street Corner Symphonies” - CD-series compiled by Bill Dahl 2012.

1953

Baby It’s You – The Spaniels

Vee-Jay 101/Chance 1141 R&B #10 9/53
Rec in Chicago May 4, 1953
James “Pookie” Hudson, lead; Gerald Gregory, bass

Boot ‘Em Up – The Du Droppers

Groove 0046 (9/54)
Rec in New York August 11, 1954
Caleb Ginyard, lead; Bob Kornegay, bass

1954

The Way You Dog Me Around – The Diablos featuring Nolan Strong

Fortune 518 (10/55) R&B #12 1/56
Rec in Detroit 1955
Nolan Strong, lead; George Scott, bass

Bacon Fat – Andre Williams (Mr. Rhythm) and His New Group

Fortune 831 (11/56), Epic 9196 (12/56) R&B #9 2/57
Rec in Detroit 1956
Andre Williams, lead

1955

1955

The Way You Dog Me Around – The Diablos featuring Nolan Strong

Fortune 518 (10/55) R&B #12 1/56
Rec in Detroit 1955
Nolan Strong, lead; George Scott, bass

1956

Rubber Biscuit – The Chips

Josie 803 (1956)
Rec in New York August 3, 1956
Charles Johnson, lead; Paul Fulton, bass

Baby Oh Baby – The Shells

Johnson 104 (summer 1957)
Rec in New York
Little Nate Bouknight, lead

1956

Why Do You Have To Go – The Dells

Vee-Jay 236 (2/57)
Rec in Chicago January 11, 1957
Johnny Funchess, lead; with Verne Allison and Mickey McGill, tenors, Marvin Junior, baritone; and Chuck Barksdale, bass

1957

Deserie – The Charts

Everlast 5001 (5/57)
Billboard’s Pop Charts in July and October
Rec in New York 1957
Joe Grier, lead

1957
Super-Sounding “unknown classics” from the Golden Fifties – part 2

Picked from Bar Family’s “Street Corner Symphonies” - CD-series compiled by Bill Dahl 2012.

1957

Could This Be Magic – The Dubs
Gone 5011 (9/57) Billboard Pop #23 in Nov
Rec in New York August 1957
Richard Blandon, lead

Don’t Say Goodnight – The Valentines
Rama 228 (4/57)
Rec in New York March 15, 1957
Carl Hogan, lead; Richard Barrett, ten; David “Baby Carter” Clowney, ten and pno; Mickey Francis, bar; Ronnie Bright, bass

1957

Four O’Clock In The Morning – Stanley Mitchell and The Tornados
Chess 1649 (early 1957)
Recorded in Chicago 1956
Stanley Mitchell, lead; William Weatherspoon, ten; Charles Sutton, bar; Ben Knight, bass
Alonzo Tucker, road manager

1958

I Met Him On A Sunday – The Shirelles
Tiara 6112 (2/58) / Decca 30688 (Pop #49)
Rec in New York early 1958
Shirley Owens (Alston-Reeves, lead; Addie Harris (McPherson), Doris Coley (Kenner-Jackson), Beverly Lee

http://www.bear-family.de/bear-family-serien/street-corner-symphonies/

Oldies but goodies DooWop El Sillon De Nene: Great DooWop Show (1 Hour Live)
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

Group Harmony - THE REAL ROOTS 1930-1945

MILLS BROTHERS (Piqua, Ohio)
- Formed 1925; originally as The Four Kings of Harmony; Recording from 1931:
  - Famous Hits: Paper Doll (1942), Till Then (1944), Gloria (1948);
  - Hi Profiles: Donald, John Jr (who also played guitar) - replaced by John Mills Sr as singer in 1936 - Harry, and Herbert Mills, plus later guitarist Norman Brown.

INK SPOTS (Indianapolis, Indiana)
- Formed as “King, Jack and the Jesters” and renamed to The 4 Ink Spots in 1934 after relocating to New York. Recording from 1935:
  - Famous Hits: If I Didn’t Care (1939), Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall (1944), The Gypsy (1946);
  - Hi Profiles: Jerry Daniels (soon replaced by Bill Kenny), Charlie Fuqua, Orville “Hoppy” Jones (later replaced by Cliff Owens and later Herb Kenny-Bill’s twin brother), and Deek Watson.

GOLDEN GATE QUARTET (Norfolk, Virginia)
- Formed 1930 as The Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet (up to ca 1941), Recording from 1937:
  - Famous Hits: My Prayer (1940), Atom And Evil (1946), Shadrack (1947);
  - Hi Profiles: Eddie Griffin (soon replaced by William Langford and later Clyde Riddick), Willie Johnson (substituted by Cliff Owens), Orlandus Wilson (bass), Harry Owens, later Caleb Ginyard (from The Jubalaires and The Dixieaires), and Gene Mumford.

THE CATS AND THE FIDDLE (Chicago)
- and DELTA RHYTHM BOYS (Langston, Oklahoma & New Orleans)
  - Cats and Fiddle formed 1937. Recording from 1939:
    - Famous Hit: I Miss You So (1940);
    - Hi Profiles: Austin Powell, Jimmy Henderson (later Tiny Grimes).
  - Delta Rhythm formed 1933 as The Frederick Hall Quartet. Recording from 1940:
    - Famous Hits: Dry Bones (1941), The Honeydripper (1945);
    - Hi Profiles: Lee Gaines (bass), Traverse Crawford, and later Carl Jones.

5 RED CAPS (Los Angeles)
- Formed 1940 as the Four Toppers; Recording from 1943:
  - Famous Hit: I Learned A Lesson I’ll Never Forget (1944);
  - Hi Profiles: Steve Gibson, Jimmy Springs, and later female singer Damita Jo.

THE JUBALAIRES (New Haven, Conn) and BIG THREE TRIO (Chicago)
  - Jubalaires formed as The Royal Harmony Singers ca 1941, recording from 1942-1944: The Royal Harmony Quartet and as The Jubalaires in November, 1945. Famous Hit: I Know (1946);
  - Hi Profiles: Ted Brooks (who wrote “I Know” with John Jennings, and later joined the Golden Gate Quartet, when Willie Johnson from that group joined the Jubalaires), Caleb Ginyard (who went to the Golden Gate Quartet and later formed The Do-Droppers), George McFadden. Orville Brooks (lead). Later came Willie Wright and guitarist Bill Johnson (sixth member).
  - Big Three formed by Willie Dixon (vcl/guitar) and Leonard Caston (vcl/guitar) as The Five Brasses 1939; The Big Three Trio formed 1946 adding Bernard Dennis (vcl/guitar, soon replaced by Ollie Crawford).
  - Famous Hit: You Sure Look Good To Me (1947).
Group Harmony - THE REAL ROOTS 1945-1950

THE BROWN DOTS (New York) and THE FOUR TUNES (New York)

Brown Dots formed 1944 by Ivory “Duck” Watson (who’d left The Ink Spots to real with his old employers); Recording from 1945: Famous Hi: Sentimental Reasons (1945). Hi Profiles: Joe King (soon replaced by Jimmie Nabbie), Jimmy Gordon, and Pat Best.

Four Tunes formed 1946; Recording from 1947: Famous Hits I Want To Be Loved with Savanna Churchill as The Sentimentalists (1947), Care Our Tunes (1948), Ol’ Man River (1948), Ricky’s Blues (1949), Rock Me All Night Long (1950), and more. Famous Hits: It’s Too Soon To Know (1948), Tell Me So (1949), Baby Please Don’t Go (1950). Hi Profiles: Jimmy Ricks (bass lead), substituted by Tommy Evans in 1954 and replacing him in 1955), Ollio Jones – who later formed The Blenders and The Cues (he was soon replaced by Malthe Marshall and later by Joe Van Loan (tenor lead), Leonard Puzey, Warren Stutts (replaced by Louis Heyward), and pianist Howard Bong (replaced by Bill Sanford).

THE SOUL STIRRERS (Trinity, Texas) and THE PILGRIM TRAVELERS (Houston, Texas)


THE RAVENS (New York)

Formed 1946 and recording from that year. Famous Hits: Write Me A Letter (1948), Of Man River (1943), Rock Me All Night Long (1952). Hi Profiles: Jimmy Ricks (bass lead), substituted by Tommy Evans in 1954 and replacing him in 1955), Ollio Jones – who later formed The Blenders and The Cues (he was soon replaced by Malthe Marshall and later by Joe Van Loan (tenor lead), Leonard Puzey, Warren Stutts (replaced by Louis Heyward), and pianist Howard Bong (replaced by Bill Sanford).

THE ORIOLES (Baltimore, Maryland)

Formed as The Vibra-Naires 1947; Recording from 1948: Famous Hits: It’s Too Soon To Know (1948), Tall Me So (1949), Crying In The Chapel (1953). Hi Profiles: Sonny Til (tenor lead), Alexander Sharp, George Nelson (replaced by Gregory Carroll), Johnny Reed, Tommy Gauthier (replaced by Ralph Williams, gr/vcl). The group’s early pianist (and vcl) was Charlie Harris.

THE ROBINS (Los Angeles)


THE (5) LARKS (Durham, North Carolina) and THE SWALLOWS (Baltimore, Maryland)

Larks formed as The Jubilators in the late 1940s (a sextet) and recorded under several “jubilee” names: First record as The 5 Larks in 1950: Famous Hits: My Heart Cries For You (1950) as The Larks. My Reverie (1951). Eyesight To The Blind (Apollo in 1951). Hi Profiles: Herman Ruth (bottom right), Eugene Mumbert (top center), Raymond “Pee Wee” Barnes, and David McNeil (bass-bottom left).

THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

Essential CDs

Rhino: The Very Best of The Clovers (1998)

Some great collector’s gems:


Books


Web sites

http://www.harmonytrain.com/main.htm
http://www.doowopcaferadio.com/HarlemGroups.html
http://www.drifterstoday.com
http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~pelican
http://www.top1000.com
http://www.doowopbio.com/Shponger3/Films05.html
http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~pelican/ref/3rdbutfair.html
http://www.miss8tracks.com/Groups/Drifters.html
http://www.top1000.com/Top1000.htm
http://www.vocalgroupharmony.com/index.htm
http://www.top1000.com/Top1000.htm
http://www.top1000.com/Top1000.htm
http://www.top1000.com/Top1000.htm
http://www.top1000.com/Top1000.htm

Periodicals

Articles in various editions of the下列 magazines.

http://www.harmonytrain.com/main.htm
http://www.doowopcaferadio.com/HarlemGroups.html
http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~pelican/ref/3rdbutfair.html
http://www.miss8tracks.com/Groups/Drifters.html
http://www.top1000.com/Top1000.htm
http://www.vocalgroupharmony.com/index.htm

Collections


THE TOP TEN VOCAL GROUPS

Sources

The list of sources is by no means a full one. Several other books, magazines, and album covers and notes have been studied since 1983, but the list is a list of the main sources used in the work.

THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s


Rhino: The Very Best of The Clovers (1998)

Rhino: The Best of The Flamingos (1991)


Rhino: The Best of The Cadillacs (1990)

Rhino: The Very Best of The Coasters (1994)

Rhino: Sexy Ways

Rhino 2CD: 50 Coastin’ Classics
Rhino 4CD: There’s A Riot Goin’ On
Bear Family 9CD: Acrobat 3CD: The Complete Releases 1953-1964

The Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve

62
## THE TOP TEN VOCAL GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>First LP</th>
<th>Reissues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE DOMINOES</strong></td>
<td>Billy Ward and His Dominoes - Federal 295-94 (10inch) (1955) and Federal 548 (1957)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE CLOVERS</strong></td>
<td>The Clovers (Rock and Roll) - Atlantic 1248 (1956) reissued as The Clovers – Atlantic 8003 (1957) 2nd pressing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE &quot;5&quot; ROYALES</strong></td>
<td>The Rockin' 5 Royales – Apollo 488 (1956) Dedicated To You - King 580 (1957)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE MIDNIGHTERS</strong></td>
<td>Sing Their Hits – Federal 295-90 (10inch) (1954) reissued as Their Greatest Hitson Federal 541 (1957)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE FLAMINGOS</strong></td>
<td>The Flamingos - Chess 1433 (1959)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE MOONGLOWS</strong></td>
<td>Look! It's The Moonglows - Chess 1430 (1958)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE DRIFTERS</strong></td>
<td>Rock &amp; Roll: Clyde McPhatter &amp; the Drifters – Atlantic 8003 (1956)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE CADILLACS</strong></td>
<td>The Fabulous Cadillacs - Jubilee 1045 (1957)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE COASTERS</strong></td>
<td>The Coasters – Atco 101 (1957)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Top Ten Vocal Groups — the tracks (and singles) on their very first LPs - pt. 1

Federal 295-90 - The Midniters: Their Greatest Hits [1954]

Work With Me Annie (12169) Jan 14, 1954 Cincinnati
Moonrise (Hank featured, but Sutton, lead) (12088) May 10, 1952
Sexy Ways (12185) April 24, 1954
Get It (12133) May 2, 1953

//

Annie Had A Baby (12195) July 30, 1954
She's The One

Annie's Aunt Fannie (12200) Sept 23, 1954 Hollywood
Crazy Loving (Stay With Me) *

Federal 295-94 - Billy Ward and His Dominoes [1955]

Sixty Minute Man (12022) Dec 30, 1950 New York
Do Something For Me (12001) Nov 14, 1950
Have Mercy Baby (12068) Jan 28, 1952 Cincinnati
Don't Leave Me This Way (12129) May 14, 1951 New York

//

The Bells (12114) Sep 17, 1952 Cincinnati
I'd Be Satisfied (12105) *
These Foolish Things Remind Me Of You (12129) *
When The Swallows Come Back To Capistrano (12099) Jan 28, 1952

Atlantic 1248 – The Clovers (Rock ’n’ Roll) [1956]

LP reissued as 8009 (1957 - same cover)

Lovey Dovey (1022) Sept 24, 1953
Yes It’s You (969) Aug 7, 1952
Ting-A-Ling (969) March 18, 1952
I Played The Fool (977) *
Hey Miss Fanny (977) Aug 7, 1952
Don’t You Know I Love You (834) Feb 22, 1951

//

Middle of the Night (963) Dec 19, 1951
Blue Velvet (1052) Dec 16, 1954
Little Mama (1022) Sept 24, 1953
Crawlin’ (969) Aug 7, 1952
Here Goes A Fool (1000) April 8, 1953
I’ve Got My Eyes On You (1035) Sept 24, 1953
Devil Or Angel (1083) Nov 11, 1955

Mercury MG 20146 - The Platters [July 1956]

My Prayer (70893) April 17, 1956 New York
Remember When (first version) *

Bewitched, Bothered And Bewildered (71039) April 26, 1955 Hollywood
I Wanna (71032) April 17, 1956 New York
I'm Sorry *

Someone To Watch Over Me (71051) April 26, 1955 Hollywood
Have Mercy (71011) April 17, 1956 New York
At Your Beck And Call *
On My Word Of Honor (71011) April 26, 1955 Hollywood
Heaven On Earth (71032) April 17, 1956 New York
Glory Of Love *

Atlantic 1249 - Federal - The Midnighters: Their Greatest Hits [1954]

Work With Me Annie (12169) Jan 14, 1954 Cincinnati
Moonrise (Hank featured, but Sutton, lead) (12088) May 10, 1952
Sexy Ways (12185) April 24, 1954
Get It (12133) May 2, 1953

//

Annie Had A Baby (12195) July 30, 1954
She’s The One

Annie’s Aunt Fannie (12200) Sept 23, 1954 Hollywood
Crazy Loving (Stay With Me) *
### Atlantic 8003 – Rock & Roll [1956 or 3/1957]

Clyde McPhatter & The Drifters (CMP = Clyde solo)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without Love</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Oct 10, 1956 New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>(There Is Nothing)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someday You’ll Want Me To Want You</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>(1043) March 14, 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasure Of Love</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>March 4, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m Not Worthy Of You</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Aug 25, 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bells Of St. Mary’s</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Feb 4, 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Christmas</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>March 4, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Make Believe</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1117)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Atlantic 8022 - Rockin’ and Driftin’ [10/58]

(not featuring Clyde) * = originally recorded in New York Apr 21, 1955 with "dubs" in L.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moonlight Bay</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Apr 28, 1958 New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby Baby</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Sep 19, 1955 Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drift Drop</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Apr 28, 1958 New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Gotta Get Myself a Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td>June 21, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fools Fall In Love</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Nov 8, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypnotized</td>
<td></td>
<td>Apr 16, 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yodee Yakee</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Know</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier of Fortune</td>
<td></td>
<td>June 21, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drifting Away From You</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Sept 19, 1955 Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Promise to Be Mine</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>(1089)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Was A Tear</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Nov 8, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adorable</td>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Sept 19, 1955 Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steamboat</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1078)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Jubilee JLP-1045 - The Fabulous Cadillacs [1957]

(The Cadillacs’ singles were issued on the sub-label Josie)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td></td>
<td>March 22, 1956 New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(also re: Sept 28, 1955 and ca Feb 1956)</td>
<td>(1117)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Wonder Why</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Autumn 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woe Is Me</td>
<td></td>
<td>May 16, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s All I Need</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sept 28, 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wishing Well</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 1954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Apollo LP-488 - The Rockin’ 5 Royales:

Real Rhythm and Blues [prob late 1956]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Don’t Do It</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct 30, 1952 New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Much Lovin’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 3, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Take All Of Me</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct 30, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage To Love</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aug 5, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Know I Know</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Me Somebody</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 3, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s That</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 24, 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundermat Blues</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct 30, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Righty</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 24, 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Want To Thank You</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put Something In It (With All Your Heart)</td>
<td>(1117)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Like It Like That</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dec 16, 1953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s**

**The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve**

65
The Top Ten Vocal Groups – the tracks (and singles) on their very first LPs - pt. 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love Is A River (1717) Dec 5 or 16, 1956 Chicago</td>
<td>Searchin’ Los Angeles (6087) Feb 15, 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Velvet (EP 5122) *</td>
<td>One Kiss Led To Another (6073) Jan 11, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Love (1701 – in ca 1960) ca June 1958</td>
<td>Brazil (6073) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I'm With You (1629) July 1956</td>
<td>Turtle Dovin’ (6064) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll Never- sic Stop Wanting You (1717) Dec 5 or 16, 1956</td>
<td>Smokey Joe’s Café * (S 122/A 6059) July 7, 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Say Goodbye (1651) *</td>
<td>Wrap It Up * (S 103) ca March/April 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ten Commandments Of Love (1705) Dec 2, 1957</td>
<td>Riot in Cell Block Number Nine * (S 103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Arcade (EP 5123) *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Old Blues (1705) Dec 2, 1957</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeter Than Words (1701 – in ca 1960) ca June 1958</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold Feet (Fuqua lead) unknown (prob 1956/58)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ko Ko Mo (Parrot 812) November 1954 (recorded for Parrot)</td>
<td>Along Came Jones (6141) March 26, 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whispering Stars (Parrot 808) July 1954</td>
<td>Down In Mexico -1 (L.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On My Merry Way' (recorded for Parrot) (846) July 1956</td>
<td>The Shadow Knows (6120) August 8, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vow (853) August 1956</td>
<td>I'm A Hog For You (6146) * edited July 17, 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would I Be Crying</td>
<td>Charlie Brown (6132) December 11, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Kiss From Your Lips (837) ca February 1956</td>
<td>Yakety Yak (6116) March 17, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shilly Dilly (846) August 1956</td>
<td>Zing! Went The Strings Of My Heart (6116) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Love July 1956</td>
<td>That Is Rock &amp; Roll (6141) March 26, 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickie Um Bah ca October 1955</td>
<td>Young Blood -1 (L.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobody’s Love July 1956</td>
<td>Sweet Georgia Brown Los Angeles (6104) Febr 12, 1957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Track marked * are by The Robins (featuring Carl Gardner and Bobby Harris, recorded for Spark and bought by Atco in 1955). Checker bought the Parrot masters in 1956 and 1959.

Track marked -1 (L.A.) also on 33-101.
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ‘50s

THE TOP TEN VOCAL GROUPS – Encore of Photo Gallery
TOP VOCAL GROUPS – THEIR CLASSIC HITS – PART I

THE DOMINOES
SIXTY-MINUTE MAN
(The Dommie)
12022-4A

THE GLOVERS
LOVE POTION NO. 9
(Lead – Arthur)
United Artists 180

APOLLO
BABY DON'T DO IT
(The J. ROYALES)
Apollo 45-34128

FEDERAL
WORK WITH ME ANNIE
(The Midnighters)
Federal 45-12169

45 RPM
END 1046
Vocal

45 RPM
7718
Vocal Group B.M.I.

I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU
(The Flamingos)

SINCERELY
(The Moonglows)

THE ROCHELLE

THE CLOVERS
TOP VOCAL GROUPS – THEIR CLASSIC HITS – PART II

THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden ’50s

TOP VOCAL GROUPS – THEIR CLASSIC HITS – PART II
Eight Great Groups and their Very First Singles

For The Flamingos and The Moonglows – see “The True R&B Pioneers”.

**THE DOMINOES**

Formed in New York City 1950 (imaged 1951)

Billy Ward, Bill Brown, Claude McPhatter, Charlie White, Joe Lamont. James Van Loan and David McNeil replaced White and Brown from early 1952. Johnny Oliver (their vocalist) joined shortly in 1952. From October 1952 the group was billed Billy Ward and His Dominoes.

Peter Wilson joined and soon succeeded Clyde in 1953 (with Milton Merle replacing Lamont, and Cliff Givens replacing McNeil).

**FEDERAL**

12001 Do Something For Me (OMP) / Chicken Blues (BB) - 12/50
12010 Harbors Lights (OMP) / No! Says My Heart (CMP) - 11/51
12016 The Peacocin Moves In (LE/CMP) / Other Lips, Other Arms - Little Esther - 2/51
12022 I Can't Escape From You (OMP) / Sixty-Five-Minute Man (BB) - 3/51
12036 Heart To Heart (LE/CMP) / Lookin' For A Man - Little Esther - 7/51
12039 Weeping Willow Blues (CMP) / I Am With You (CMP/BBI) - 7/51
12059 That's What You're Doing To Me (CMP)

**THE CLOVERS**

Formed in Washington, D.C. 1950 (imaged 1952/1952)


**RAINBOW**

12121 You Sir, That's My Baby (HB/HW) / When You Come Back To Me (BB/HW) - 11-50
12129 All Righty (JT)
12130 From the Bottom Of My Heart (BM)
12133 The Shrine Of St. Cecilia (CS) / I Feel So Blue (CS/H)
12137 What Did I Do (CS) / Someone Like You (HB)
12138 A Love In My Heart (CS/H)
12140 No! Says My Heart (CMP) / No Room (JO) / I'd Be Satisfied (BB) / When The Swallows Come Back To Capistrano (CMP)
12146 Deep Sea Blues (CMP) / Have Mercy Baby (CMP)
12156 Don't Leave Me This Way (CMP) / Things I Really Want (CMP)
12160 That's It (CS) / Someone Like You (HB)
12165 In the Morning Time (BB) / Crawlin' (BB)
12177 I'm Lonely (JO) / Yours Forever (CMP)
12183 Fool, Fool, Fool (BB) / Middle Of The Night (BB)
12188 Hey Miss Fannie (BB)
12191 I Can't Escape From You (CMP) / What Did I Do It For (BB) / My Baby's Gone (BB) - 6/52
12193 You've Got My Eyes On You (CW) / Your Cash Ain't Nothing But Trash (BM) - 6/54
12194 Come Out Our Love (BB) / I'm Lonely (JO) / Yours Forever (CMP) - 10/52
12201 Do Something For Me (OMP) / Chicken Blues (BB) - 12/50
12205 She's The One (HB) / Moonrise (CS)
12206 Work With Me Annie (HB) / Until I Die (HB)
12209 That's It (CS) / Someone Like You (HB)
12212 Annie Had A Baby (HB) / She's The One (HB)
12217 I Confess (CW) / Alrighty Oh Sweetie (BB)
12222 I'll Never Let Her Go (HB) / The Feeling Is So Good (BB)
12225 Don't Leave Me This Way (CMP) / Things I Really Want (CMP)
12226 I Can't Escape From You (CMP) / What Did I Do It For (BB) / My Baby's Gone (BB) - 6/52
12227 I Want To Thank (I.D.)
12231 Good Lovin' (CW) - 6/50
12236 I'm Lonely (JO) / Yours Forever (CMP)
12237 I Can't Escape From You (CMP) / What Did I Do It For (BB) / My Baby's Gone (BB) - 6/52
12239 You've Got My Eyes On You (CW) / Your Cash Ain't Nothing But Trash (BM) - 6/54
12242 Fool, Fool, Fool (BB) / Middle Of The Night (BB)
12243 Hey Miss Fannie (BB)
12250 You're The One I Love / When You Come Back To Me (BB/HW)
12251 I'll Never Let Her Go (HB) / The Feeling Is So Good (BB)
12252 Fool, Fool, Fool (BB) / Middle Of The Night (BB)
12253 Hey Miss Fannie (BB)
12254 Fool, Fool, Fool (BB) / Middle Of The Night (BB)
12256 I Can't Escape From You (CMP) / What Did I Do It For (BB) / My Baby's Gone (BB) - 6/52
12257 Fool, Fool, Fool (BB) / Middle Of The Night (BB)
12258 Hey Miss Fannie (BB)

**THE "5" ROYALES**

Formed in Winston Salem, North Carolina 1951 (imaged 1952)


**APOLLO** (singles recordings as The Royal Sons Quintet)

12556 Bedside of a Neighbour (760/02177) / Journey's End (JTT) - ca 8/51
12666 Come Over Here (JTT/JT) / Let Nothing Separate Me (JTT) - ca 11/51

**APOLLO** (singles recordings, 434 issued as The Royal Sons)

434 Too Much Of A Little Bit (D) / Give Me One More Chance (JTT/JD) - ca 12/51
441 Courage To Love (3M) / You Know I Know (CM) - 9/52
443 Baby Don't Do It (JTT) / Take All Of Me (JTT) - 10/52
446 Help Me, Somebody (JT) / Crazy, Crazy, Crazy (JT) - 4/53
448 Too Much Lovin' (Much Too Much) (JTT) / Landrumtown Blues (JTT) - 8/53
451 I Want To Thank You (JTT) / All Righty (JTT) - 10/53
452 Do It (JTT/GTY) / Good Things (JTT) - 1/54
454 I Like It Like That (JTT) / Cry Some More - 4/54
458 Let Me Come Back Home (JTT) / What's That – 7/54
467 Six O'Clock In The Morning / With All Your Heart - 1/55

**KING**

4740 I'm Gonna Run It Down (JT) / Behave Yourself (JT) - 7/54
4744 Monkey Hips And Rice (JT) / I'm A Little Bit Of A Fool (JTT) - 11/54
4762 One Mistake (JT) / School Girl - 12/54
4770 You Don't Learn It In Home / Every Day Has His Day - 1/55
4775 How I Wonder (JT) / Mohawk Squaw – 3/55

**THE ROYALS / MIDNIGHTERS**

Formed in Detroit 1952 (imaged early 1954)

Alonzo Tucker (bottom left, replaced by Cat Green late 1954), Charles Sutton (up to 1955), Sonny Woods, Lawson Smith (temp out late 52-early 54), Hank Ballard (bottom right – from May 1953), Henry Booth was in the group from the start (temp. out in 1954; not imaged above – it’s Lawson Smith).

**FEDERAL** (The Royals)

12004 Every Beat Of My Heart (CS) / All Night Long (Wynona Harris-quest/SW) - 3/52
12077 Starting From Tonight (CS) / I Know I Love You So (CS/HeBi) - 5/50
12088 Moonrise (CS) / Fifth Street Blues (HeBi) - 7/52
12098 A Love In My Heart (CS/HeBi) / I'll Never Let Her Go (HB) - 9/52
12113 Are You Forgetting (HB) / What Did I Do It For (CS) - 11/52
12121 The Shrine Of St. Cecilia (CS) / I Feel So Blue (HB) - 3/53
12123 Get It (HB/SW) / No It Ain't (HB) - 6/53
12150 Hey Miss Fannie (HB) / I Feel That-A-Way (HB) - 9/53
12160 That's It (CS) / Someone Like You (HB) - 12/53
12169 Work With Me Annie (HB) / Until I Do (HB) - 2/54

**FEDERAL** (The Midnighters)

12169 Work With Me Annie (HB) / Until I Do (HB) - 4/54
12177 Give It Up (HB) / That Woman (HB) - 4/54
12185 Say You (BB) / Don't Say Your Last Goodbye (BB) - 5/54
12195 Annie Had A Baby (HB) / She's The One (HB) - 8/54
12200 Annie's Aunt Fannie (HB) / Crazy Loving (HB) - 10/54
12202 Stingy Little Thing (HB) / Tell Them (HB) - 11/54
12205 She's The One (HB) / Moonrise (CS/CS/HB) - 12/54
THE DRIFTERS

Formed in New York City 1953 (adopted 1953)

ATLANTIC (issued as Clyde McPhatter & The Drifters or The Drifters featuring Clyde McPhatter)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1006 Money Honey (CMP) / The Wall (FADJ)</td>
<td>9/53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1019 Lucille (CMP) / Such A Night (FADJ)</td>
<td>5/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1029 Honey Love (CMP) / Warm Your Heart (FADJ)</td>
<td>5/54*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1043 Somebody Will Want Me To Want You (CMP/BEK) / Big Bam (FADJ)</td>
<td>10/54*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1046 Christmas Bell (FADJ)/ Bells Of St. Mary’s (FADJ)</td>
<td>11/54*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1055 Gone (CMP) / Whatever Gonna Do (FADJ)</td>
<td>2/55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE DRIFTERS (Clyde out and Johnny Moore in)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1078 Adorable (JM) / Steelbound (BM)</td>
<td>10/55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1089 Ruby Baby (JM) / Your Promise To Be Mine (BM)</td>
<td>2/56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1101 Soldier Of Fortune (JM) / Gotta Get Myself A Woman (BM/BEK)</td>
<td>7/56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1123 Puss In Love (JM) / I Was A Tear (BM)</td>
<td>1-5/57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1141 Drifting Away From You (JM) / Hypnotized (JM)</td>
<td>5-5/57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1161 I Know (JM) / Yolanda Yolke (JM)</td>
<td>10-5/57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1187 Drop Drop (BM) / Moonlight Bay (unison)</td>
<td>5-1/58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025 There Goes My Baby (BEK) / Oh My love (BEK)</td>
<td>6-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE COASTERS

Formed in Los Angeles late 1955 (adopted midlate 1956) — group moved to New York City in 1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1031 Hot In Cold Blood (BG) / Wrap It Up (BG/BEK)</td>
<td>6-5/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1034 I Want To Know About Love (BG) / Woe Is Me (BG)</td>
<td>7/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1041 It Isn’t Right (BG) / Tell The World (BG)</td>
<td>8/55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1057 One Kiss Led To Another (BG) / Down In Mexico (BG)</td>
<td>7/56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1061 The Shadow Knows (BG) / Sorry But I’m Gonna Have To Pass (WJ)</td>
<td>11/56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1071 Riot In Cell Block #9 (BG) / One In A Million (BG)</td>
<td>2/57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1081 Glamour ‘50s (BG) / When She Wants Good (BG)</td>
<td>11/56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1091 She’s My Baby (BG) / One Kiss (BG)</td>
<td>6/57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1101 If Teardrops Were Kisses (BG) / Whadaya Want? (BG)</td>
<td>7/56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1133 One In A Million (BG) / What Is The Secret Of Your Success? (BG)</td>
<td>3/57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1161 Drip Drop (BM) / Moonlight Bay (unison)</td>
<td>5-1/58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE PLATTERS

Formed in Los Angeles 1943 (adopted midlate 1954)
Herb Reed, Zola Taylor (replacing Gaynell Hodge from May 1954). Alex Hodge (replaced by Paul Rudi in August 1954), Tony Williams, David Lynch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12188 Tell The World (TW) / Love All Night (DL)</td>
<td>6-5/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12181 Roses Of Picardy (HR) / Beer Barrel Boogie (HR)</td>
<td>4-5/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12272 I Need You All The Time (TW) / Tell The World (TW)</td>
<td>12-5/55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12273 You Made Me Cry (TW) / Oochi Pachi (TW)</td>
<td>4-5/55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve

71
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

The R&B Pioneers Series – Volume Six of twelve
Four Super-Discs (public domain)

*The Definitive Falcons Collection (4CD-set) on History of Soul 2015*
*The Platters – The Ultimate Collection (3CD-set) on Not Now Music (2015)*
*The Moonglows – The Complete Singles As & Bs (2CD) Acrobat ADDCD3188 (2017).*
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

The Robins - Story & Discography

Compiled by Claus Röhnisch

THE STORY:

California’s first “bird” group was formed when “Ty” Terrell Leonard and the Richard brothers Billy and Roy met at Alameda High School in San Francisco in 1945, and formed the “A-Sharp Trio” (no recordings). The trio came to Hollywood a year later, and in 1949 they were joined by Bobby Nunn, who worked at Johnny Otis’ and Alu Bardi’s club “The Barrethouse” in Watts. The group became the third of the trend setting bird groups after the Ravens and the Orioles. Grady Chapman joined the group as lead singer and fifth member in 1953. From March, 1954 Carl Gardner substituted for Grady (who was sent to jail for a while) and Carl was later featured as sixth singer in the group (and foremost lead on Spark Records). Chapman made some solo records in 1954 or 1955, and in 1957 and 1958 and also for Imperial after 1960 and was used as a studio back-up. He often joined Nunn’s Coasters Mark II during several years from the mid-’60s, and worked with Billy Richards Jr.’s Nunn-offspring “Coasters” group and also toured with his own line-up of “Coasters”. Grady also substituted for Carl Gardner in the true Coasters a couple of times in the late ’90s after Richards and Gardner had settled their differences. Ty Terrell, as he prefers to call himself, did some solo recordings after 1960. Several of the Robins’ members also recorded with Marvin Phillips in different versions of “Marvin & Johnny”.

Note: the Richard brothers (who are not twins) were born with the name Richard (although the early Savoy song credits are to Richards). Todd Baptista, who seldom is wrong, refers to them as Richard; and the Rhythm & Blues Foundation sent one of the invitations of their award ceremony to “William Richard” (1989 interview of Billy) - and Eric LeBlanc has confirmed the birth dates and surnames Richard, although Census has Richards registered.

Births of members:

Nunn: September 20, 1925 (born in Birmingham, Alabama, raised in Detroit; died November 5, 1986); William Gene “Billy” Richard (aka William Richard Jr.): January 31, 1928 in Crockett, Houston County, Texas – died in California December 10, 2007; Roy Benton Richard (aka Curtis Benton Richard): October 10, 1929 in Crockett, Houston County, Texas (not 1933 or 1930) - died May 1, 1983 in Los Angeles; “Ty” Terrell Leonard: born 1928 or pass December 5, 1929 in Read and Run, near Jackson, Miss and moving to California in 1939 (or 1944) - nowadays telling everyone he is an original Coaster; Grady Chapman born October 1, 1929 - Greenville, South Carolina - active with a new Robins group up to his death in Los Angeles, January 4, 2011; Robert Joseph Sheen: May 17, 1941 - died in Los Angeles November 12, 2000. Bill Richard aka Richards Jr: circa 1940.

Recording debut: Los Angeles, early 1949 as The Four Bluebirds (see below).


Original recording lineup:

Bobby Nunn (lead and bass 1949 - 1955); “Ty” Terrell Leonard, Billy and Roy Richard (up to 1960).

Later members:


THE DISCOGRAPHY:

Below are listed all Robins’ studio recordings. The group is also featured on live records and screen recordings. Only the most well-known LP compilations are noted. The CDs are referred to in notes. There are several different labels who have issued records as by “The Robins” which are not this group. Note: Each entry starts with master number (when known).

Johnny Otis And Orchestra featuring The Four Bluebirds

(Bobby Nunn, lead vcl; Ty Terrell Leonard, Billy Richard, and Roy Richard, vcl; with John Anderson, tp; George Washington, tb; Cecil “Big Jay” McNeely, tns; Lem Tally, bars; Darby Hicks (pseudonym for Devonia Williams) or poss. Lee Wesley Jones, pno; Mario de la Garde, bs; Johnny Otis, dms. Produced by Otis René. Label owned by Otis and Margaret René. Radio Recorders, Los Angeles, early 1949
OR 540 A My Baby Done Told Me Excelsior 540, Essex 707, Californian 301
Note: Flip “Sweet Midnight Blues” by Johnny Otis & His Orchestra (with Lem Tally and Darby Hicks, vcl). Record issued ca April, 1949.

The Robins

(as above) with pno, gtr, bs, dms. Prod. prod. by Sammy Lane, purchased by Aladdin. Possibly the Otis band. Prob. Radio Recorders, Los Angeles, May 27, 1949
RR-700 Don’t Like The Way You’re Doing (aka “Long About Midnite”) Score 4010, Imperial LP 94005
RR-702 Come Back Baby Aladdin 3031
RR-703 4010-B You Sure Look Good To Me Score 4010
Note: Not confirmed, but it may be the Otis band on this session with Otis himself still on drums. The singles were issued in 1949 (Aladdin) and 1951 (Score).
The Robins (726)
or The Robins with the Johnny Otis Quintette (738, 752)
or Johnny Otis Quintette – Vocals by The Robins and Little Esther (731-78) - also as: Johnny Otis Quintette – The Robins and Little Esther (731-78/45)
Esther Mae Jones, lead guest vcl on -1; Devonia "Lady Dee" Williams, pno; Johnny Otis, vbs; Pete "Guitar" Lewis, gtr; Mario de la Garde, bs; Leard "Kansas City" Bell, dms. Produced by Ralph Bass.
Radio Recorders, 7000 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, December 1, 1949
SLA 4452 If It´s So Baby Savoy 726, LP 2230
SLA 4453 Our Romance Is Gone Savoy 738, LP 2221
SLA 4454 If I Didn´t Love You So Savoy 726, LP 2221
SLA 4455 There´s Rain In My Eyes (aka Rain In My Eyes*) Savoy 752, Savoy LP 2230*
SLA 4456 Double Crossing Blues -1 Savoy 731, LP 2221, LP 2258

Note: Savoy 731 reissued several times with differing credits. It had two different flips, neither by the Robins. 4453-54 on LP credited "Johnny Otis, vocal by The Robbins". Poster of "Little Esther with The Robbins & Johnny Otis and his Orchestra" on Savoy LP 2221 (with a five-headed Robins-group incl. H.B. Barnum) is from an ad of 1956. All other LP titles credited "Johnny Otis, vocal by The Robbins", except 4456 credited "Johnny Otis, vocal by Little Esther & The Robbins". Savoy 726 and 736 advertised as by "The 4 Robins with Johnny Otis` Orchestra". SLA 4451 "I´m Not Falling In Love With You", vocals by Devonia Williams (issued on Regal 1016 and Savoy 749 as flip of Mel Walker's "Cry Baby" - which not has the Robins as backup). All Robins' Savoy tracks are included on the Atlantic/Savoy Jazz 3CD Johnny Otis compilation "Rhythm & Blues Caravan" 92859-2.

Johnny Otis Orchestra – Vocal by The Robins (as above) with Johnny Otis, dir; Little Esther Mae Jones, lead guest vcl-1; John Anderson, tpt; Floyd Turnham, alts, Big Jay McNeely, guest tens; Lorenzo Holden and James Von Streeter, tens; Walter Henry, bars or alts; poss. Bobby McNeely, bars; Devonia Williams, pno; Pete Lewis, gtr; Mario de la Garde, bs; Leard Bell, dms.
January 11, 1950
SLA 5101 The Turkey Hop Pt. I Savoy 732, LP 2230
SLA 5102 The Turkey Hop Pt. II Savoy 732, LP 2230
SLA 5105 Lover´s Lane Boogie -1 Savoy LP 2221, Savoy LP 2258
SLA 5106 I Found Out My Troubles (aka I Found Out) Savoy LP 2230
Note: SLA 5101 is an instrumental with 5102 the vocal. SLA 5103 "Blues Nocturne" by Johnny Otis & his Orchestra, SLA 5104 "Cry Baby" by Mel Walker and the Quintones (with vocal assistance from the band - not the Robins). SLA 5107 "Misery" by Little Esther. "Lover’s Lane Boogie" issued on a bootleg single as "By The Robins"; and on LP as by "Johnny Otis with Little Esther & The Blue Notes" (Bobby Nunn featured as on "Double Crossing..." plus the other Robins). SLA 5105, 5106 credited "Johnny Otis Septet" on Atlantic/Savoy 3 CD. Only rhythm and tpt & tens on 5105; rhythm and tens on 5106. Savoy 732 advertised as by Johnny Otis Orchestra and the "4" Robins.

The Robins with the Johnny Otis Quintette (as above) with Devonia Williams, pno; Johnny Otis, vbs; Pete Lewis, gtr; Mario de la Garde, bs; Leard Bell, dms. Billy Richard, lead vcl on-1.
February 13, 1950
SLA 5108 I´m Through Savoy 762, LP 2252
SLA 5109 I´m Living OK Savoy 752, LP 2230
SLA 5110 (There) Ain´t No Use Beggin´ (aka There’s No Use Begging) -1 Savoy 738, LP 2230
SLA 5111 You’re Fine But Not My Kind Savoy 762, LP 2230
Note: No reed featured on any of the above (although Lorenzo Holden was present on the session). SLA 5114 "Mistrustin’ Blues" and other Savoy recordings by Little Esther w. Johnny Otis often incorrectly listed as recordings.
by the Robins featuring Esther. Little Esther, born in Texas 1935, assumed the name Esther Phillips in 1962. All Robins’ Savoy recordings made at Hollywood’s Radio Recorders, 7000 Santa Monica Boulevard, L.A. with Ralph Bass (assisted by Johnny Otis) as producer, and Val Valentine as engineer. After this session the Johnny Otis Blues & Rhythm Caravan went on the road with Ralph Bass as road manager, but without the Robins, although the Atlantic/Savoy 3CD suggests they were included. The Robins’ manager/agent Ed Fishman pulled the group away from the review (leaving the door open for Mel Walker), LP 2230 also issued on Japanese Savoy CD CHD 1026. All Robins’ tracks for Savoy were reissued on Savoy Jazz CD 17357 as “Johnny Otis Presents The Robins” (12 tracks - not “Lover’s Lane” – and not to be confused with the Ace CD featuring Modern tracks).

The Robins and 2 Sharps & A Natural (112A) or Maggie Hathaway with The Robins and 2 Sharps & A Natural (121 and 112B) (Bobby Nunn and prob. as above; Billy Richard, second lead on -3 with Maggie Hathaway, lead vcl on -1); Ted Mossner,pno; Louis Speiginer,gtr; Red Callender,bs. Produced by “Big” John Dolphin. The bass on “Race Of Man” is most certainly Bobby Nunn. Dolphin’s Rec. Studio, Los Angeles, ca June 1950

112A Race Of Man RIH 112

112B Bayou Baby Blues -1 RIH 112

121A A Falling Star -1, -3 RIH 121

121B When Gabriel Blows His Horn -1 RIH 121

The Robins (Bobby Nunn and prob. as above); with Mickey Champion, lead vcl (on -2); with unkn. accomp. Prob, Eddie Beal,pno; Chuck Norris,gtr; Red Callender,bs; Lee Young,dms. Produced by “Big” John Dolphin. Dolphin’s Rec. Studio, Los Angeles, prob late 1950

40508 Early Morning Blues RIH 150, Earth Angel LP JD-906

4051A School Girl Blues -2 issues as above

Note: RIH is Dolphin’s Recorded In Hollywood label. RIH 112 and 121 are gospel-like recordings. The lead on 40508 sounds like a baritone. RIH 150 issued ca March, 1951.

The Nic Nacs

(as above) with Mickey Champion, lead guest vocal (except on -1); and tens, pno, gtr, bs, dms. Prob. the Johnny Otis band. (image above is a montage)

Los Angeles, November 2, 1950

1440-2 Given Have A Merry Xmas (313) or Given Have A Merry Christmas (342) RPM 313, 342, Ace LP 88

1441-3 Found Me A Sugar Daddy RPM 313, 316, 342, Ace(E) LP CH 88, Ace CD CHD 698

1442 I’m Telling You Baby Ace LP 88, Ace CD 1174

1443-3 You Didn’t ‘t Want My Love -1 RPM 316, Ace LP 88

Note: Several alternate takes of all four songs issued on Ace CD MOD50. Original single 313 issued for Christmas 1950; 316 in early 1951 and 342 issued for Christmas 1951. Mickey Champion was a familiar thrush on the San Francisco black music scene, often substituting for the under-aged Little Esther on stage.

Bobby Nunn with the “Robbins” (as above) with vbs, pno, bs, dms. Los Angeles, prob, March 2, 1951

1517 Rockin’ Modern 20-807, Ace(E) LP CH 88, Spark LP 1000 (reissue bootleg)

(tk 1) That’s What The Good Book Says Ace CDCHD 1010

(tk 2) That’s What The Good Book Says issues as 1517, plus Ace CHD 698

(tk 3) That’s What The Good Book Says (slow version) Ace CDCHD 1022

Well, Hello Pretty Baby, unissued All Day I’ve Been Cryin’ issued Note: “Rockin’ ” is an “answer” to the Mel Walker/Johnny Otis “Rockin’ Blues” hit and “That’s What The Good Book Says” was the first studio-recorded Jerry Leiber-Mike Stoller composition. The alternate is issued on the 2004 Ace CD “The Leiber & Stoller Story Vol 1 - Hard Times” and the slow version is issued on v.a. CD titled “Mellow Cats ‘N’ Kittens”. Johnny Otis probably not involved in these recordings. LP credits “Bobby Nunn & The Robins”. The unissued tracks are unconfirmed, but filed as recorded March 2, 1951.

The Robins (Bobby Nunn, Grady Chapman, Ty Terrell, Leonid, Billy and Roy Richard, vols) with Shorty Rogers, dir; tens, bbs, pno, gtr, bs, dms. Jack Lewis, prod; Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller, co-prods on -1. Second session arranged by Maxwell Davis; and third session produced by Danny Kessler.

Hollywood, January 21, 1953

E3VB-0018 All Night Baby RCA 5271, LP 6279, CLP 1000

E3VB-0019 My Heart’s The Biggest Fool RCA 5175, Crown LP 1000

E3VB-0020 (Now And Then There’s) A Fool Such As I RCA 5175, CLP 1000

E3VB-0021 Oh Why RCA 5271, CLP 1000

July 30, 1953

E3VB-0161 My Baby Done Told Me RCA 5486 (issued and withdrawn)

E3VB-0162 I’ll Do It RCA 5486 (issued and withdrawn)

E3VB-0163 Let’s Go To The Dance RCA 5434, CLP 1000

E3VB-0164 How Would You Know RCA 5434, CLP 1000

September 15, 1953

E3VB-0198 Don’t Stop Now RCA 5564, CLP 1000

E3VB-0199 Get It Off Your Mind RCA 5564, CLP 1000

E3VB-0200 Empty Bottles RCA 5489, CLP 1000

E3VB-0201 Ten Days In Jail -1 RCA 5489, CLP 1000

Note: Mario de la Garde (aka Delagarde) – Otis’s old bass guitarist - was co-writer on some RCA recordings, suggesting he was still a “Robins man”. He had co-written several of Robins’ Savoy recordings, “Ten Days In Jail” written by Leiber-Stoller. Crown LP (CLP) is a bootleg titled “The Best of .. Vol 2”. Vol 3 covers the Spark tracks and the first volume features Savoy tracks. All tracks on Et Toru (Spain) CD R&B 111 “I Must Be Dreamin’” (2002), also including the four Crown tracks below plus the 12 Spark recordings. The CD is compiled and has great liner notes by Dave Penny, who insists the Spark recordings were done in order of the LS master numbers.
THE Top Ten Vocal Groups of the Golden '50s

The Drifters
(pro as above) with unkn acc.
Los Angeles, late 1953
JB 327 Sacroillic Swing Crown 108
JB 328 The World Is Changing Crown 108
Note: According to Steve Propes this Crown issue of 1954 was actually a recording by the Robins (see matrix numbers on the following session - where Grady Chapman has a true McPhatter styled singing). There were more "Drifters" issues on other labels by different groups, which were recorded by vocal groups before the Clyde McPhatter 1953 Drifter group.

The Robins or The Robbins (120)
(as above) with reeds and rhythm.
Los Angeles, c. December, 1953
329 Double Crossin’ Baby Crown 106
329 Double Crossing Baby (alt. take)
Ace CD CHD 698
330 I Made A Vow Crown 106, Ace CD CHD 698
331 All I Do Is Rock Crowd 120
332 Key To My Heart Crowd 120

The Robins or The Coasters (LP 101, EP 4503, LP 371, RSACD 868)
Carl Gardner, lead/tenor; Bobby Nunn, bass/lead-1; Grady Chapman (first session and poss. the last), tenor/lead-2; "Ty" Terrell Leonard, tenor; Billy Richard and Roy Richard, baritones
with
Gil Bernal,ts; Willard McDaniel,pno/celeste-4; Charlie "Chuck" Norris,gr; Ralph "Waldo" Hamilton,bs; John "Jessie" Salles,dms. Unknown, eng; Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller,prod. Prob. Mike Stoller, pno on LS 29, 31, 32.
Prob. Radio Recorders, Santa Monica
Los Angeles, c. February-March, 1954
LS 13 The Hatchet Man -1 Spark 116, RCD, CD 9974
LS 29 I Love Paris -2 Spark 113, Harmony LP LS-13
LS 31 Whadayawant? -2 Spark 110, RCD, CD 9974
LS 32 If Teardrops Were Kisses -4 Spark 110, Spark LP 1000, CD 9974

with
prob. Richard Berry,lead bass vcl-3; Mike Stoller,arr/pno; Gil Bernal,ts; Barney ,gr; Ralph "Waldo" Hamilton,bs; John "Jessie" Salles,dms. Abe "Bunny" Robyn,eng; Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller,prod.
Master Recorders, Los Angeles (Hollywood), early 1954
LS 15 Wrap It Up -1 (Gardner,sec lead) (57C-245, 59C-4073) Spark 103, LP 101, RCD
LS 16 Riot In Cell Block #9 -3 (57C-246, 59C-4074) Spark 103, LP 101, EP 4503, LP 143, RCD, Rhino CD 70593, CD 9974
c.a.August, 1954
LS 22 Loop De Loop Mambo (57C-281, 59C-4093) Spark 107, LP 101, EP 4503, CD 9974
LS 14 One Kiss (57C-282, 59C-4094) Spark 113, LP 101, RCD, CD 9974
LS 23 I Must Be Dreamin (57C-283, 59C-4095) Spark 116, LP 101, RCD, CD 9974
LS 24 Framed -1 (57C-284, 59C-4096) Spark 107, LP 101, EP 4503, RCD, CD 9974
LS 30 Smokey Joe’s Cafe 55C-32, S-1669
Spark 122, 6059, LP 101, LP 315, RCD, CD 9974
LS 21 Just Like A Fool 55C-33, S-1670
Spark 122, 6059, RCD, CD 9974

Notes: Grady Chapman (who was out of the Robins from March, 1954 until the end of that year) possibly featured on more than the first session. Earlier discographies have listed above recordings in three sessions (each with four recordings) in order of LS master numbers with differing dates of recordings (March 1954, August 1954, c.a January 1955). Here they are listed according to Atco-given master numbers. Mike Stoller states in the liner notes of Rhino R2 71090 that “The Hatchet Man” was the first Robins date on Spark. (If LS 29-32 were recorded at one and same session, they must have been recorded in January 1955, since Spark single 110 was released in January 1955). All twelve Spark titles issued on Sequel RCA CD 688. Billy Guy and Leiber/Stoller have stated that Berry was guest lead on LS 16, although Gardner and Atco proclaim it is actually Nunn. Both Berry and Guy have recorded “answers” to “Riot...”. Atco purchased and reallocated Spark masters on September 28, 1955 and reissued one Robins single (Atco 6059 with S-master numbers used). Most of the Spark recordings issued as by the Coasters on several later LP issues. Spark was owned by A.L. Stoller, Mike Stoller, Jerry Leiber and Lester Sill. Quintet Music was owned by Leiber, the Stollers, Sill, and Jack Levy.

Some Ernie Freeman-fans state Freeman and René Hall were involved as arrangers and musicians on “Just Like A Fool” (well Freeman certainly backed the Robins - and the Coasters on tour several times in the mid ’50s). Master series 57C-allocated for LP 101 in 1957. All twelve recordings released on a bootleg Robins LP (Spark 1000 “The Best Of The Robins Volume 3”, 1974, reissued in 1991 with two extra tracks, “Rockin’” and “That’s What The Good Book Says” from Modem), LS 16 titled “Riot In Cell Block Number Nine” and “...Number 9” on some later issues. LS 23 titled “I Must Be Dreaming” on Warner/Pioneer LP 12013 (and wrongly credited as the 1964 recording on that LP). LS 31 titled “Whadayawant” on RSACD 868. Several of the above titles are on Dutch Harmony LP LS-13 (bootleg with very bad sound), which also features Robins recordings for Crown and RCA (1953). “Wobble Loo” on that album is neither by the Robins or the Coasters (actually by Ray Agee - Spark 119 - matrix LS 50) and the album is issued as by the Robins on label and the Coasters on sleeve. Rhino CD R2 71090 “50 Coasin’ Classics” noted as RCD (for general overview). LS 30 sometimes spelled “Smokey Joe’s Cafe”. Collectables CD 9974, titled “Smokey Joe’s Cafe” has ten of the 12 Spark recordings with “One Kiss” titled “One Kiss Led To Another”.

The Coasters were formed in October, 1955. In 1957 and 1958 several of the Robins’ Spark recordings were reissued on LP and EP as by the Coasters, leading to the common misconception that the Robins had transformed into the Coasters. In fact Gardner and Nunn were recruited by Leiber-Stoller-Sill and due to touring engagements...
there was not enough recorded material available when Atco needed recordings for the Coasters’ first LP. During his absence in 1954 (or possibly 1955) Chapman recorded with seven Sun titles issued as “Miss Money” (a.o. “Don’t Bludge”). In early 1954 Carl Gardner joined the group. Gardner made his first appearance with the Robins on March 13, 1954 for Gene Norman’s Embassy Ballroom. Six of the Robins’ 12 Spark-titles are on Ace CDCHD 801 “Leiber & Stoller present the Spark Records story”: “Riot In Cell Block #9”, “Loop De Loop Mambo”, “Smoky Joe’s Cafe”, “Whaddaya Want? I Must Be Dreamin’” – The Hatchet Man. During the summer of 1954 the Robins were fully engaged in Las Vegas for nightly stage shows.

Around June, 1955 Jake Porter of Combo records issued a single, Combo 91 as “Jake Porter and The Buzzards”, titled “Wine Women and Gold”. Porter says this was the 1955 Robins (the flip “The Bop” is an instrumental). It sure does not sound like the Robins!

The Robins


with

Jewell Grant, bars; Plas Johnson, tens; Ernie Freeman, pno; Rene Hall, gtr; Curtis Counce, bs; Ed Hall, dms. Freeman and Rene Hall, arrs. Produced by Gene Norman.

MGM Studio, Fairfax Avenue and Gene Norman Studio, Hollywood Boulevard

Los Angeles, ca January 1955

V-5489-175 “Cherry Lips”, Whippet 200, WLP 703
V-5489-176 Out Of The Picture W 200, WLP 703

From 1956 to early 1957 (during four sessions)

B-5000 Merry-Go-Rock W 201, WLP 703
B-5001 Hurt Me W 201, WLP 703
Since I First Met You W 203, WLP 703
That Old Black Magic W 203, WLP 703
A Fool In Love W 206, WLP 703
All Of A Sudden My Heart Sings W 206, WLP 703
Every Night W 208, WLP 703
Where’s The Fire W 208, WLP 703
In My Dreams Whippet 211
Keep Your Mind On Me W 211
You Wanted Fun W 212
Snowball W 212, WLP 703
Blues In The Night GNP Crescendo LP 9034
How Long -1 Whippet LP 703

Note: Carl Gardner has stated that Leiber-Stoller called him off the “Cherry Lips” recording session to do the first Coasters session. “Cherry Lips” was supposed to be led by Gardner, but by then he and Nunn had left to form the Coasters. H.B. Barnum, born in Texas July 15, 1936 (who was a childhood Hollywood stage piano concerts favorite and had made his first solo record on Imperial as Pee Wee Barnum in 1950 and sang with the Doortones in L.A. in 1955), acted as pianist and utility voice with the Robins during 1956-57. He sang and played piano for RCA in the early 1960s and later became a famous manager/arranger/producer for several acts. Whippet singles subsequently issued between March, 1956 and January, 1958 - Whippet was owned by GNP (Gene Norman). Rock & Roll Whippet LP 703 reissued on GNP-Crescendo 9034 (excluding “How Long”) and retitled “The Best Of The Robins”, and on CD GNP 9034 (with all 16 tracks). The GNP issue has a cover featuring a photo from 1957 of Leonard, Chapman, Barnum and the Richard brothers and presents the brothers as Richard (no s). All Whippet titles issued on “Cherry Lips” CD, Chapman recorded several solo songs for Whippet.

Johnnie Morisette said he sang with the Robins during this period. From Steve Propes in Blues & Rhythm: “I was in the Robins too, we came behind Grady Chapman. Gene Norman split up the lead singers who was getting a big head, they were nowhere alone. I sang lead on “You Wanted Fun”. We played the Crescendo with Herb Jeffries. At that point there were two competing Robins groups. They were taking away from each other – one lead by Grady Chapman, they left Crescendo on their own with H.B. Barnum.” Morisette was born in Brazil on July 1, 1935 (or Montu Osland in the South Pacific). He succeeded Vernon Green as lead with the Medallions before his stint with the Robins - later worked with Sam Cooke. Rick? Lamont seems to have been The Robins’ manager around this time.

The Robins

(Grady Chapman lead -1, and poss Ty Terrell Leonard, Billy and Roy Richard, vcs); with unknown accomp and girl chorus. Probably Chapman solo without the group. Produced by Imperial Records and H.B. Barnum.

Radio Recorders, Los Angeles, August 7, 1958

IM-1708 A Quarter To Twelve -1 Knight 2001
IM-1709 Pretty Little Dolly -

(Same but Chapman out and Bobby Sheen in, lead-2)

November 11, 1958

IM-1831 A Little Bird Told Me -2 Knight 2008
IM-1832 It’s Never Too Late -

Note: There are two unreleased tracks filed for Knight, “Talk, Talk, Talk” and “Sufferin’”. Grady Chapman was replaced by Bobby Sheen from late 1957. Sheen was born in 1941. Charles Sheen (Sheen’s son) has given the following information. Sheen joined the Robins in late 57/early 58 when Chapman was in and out of the group. From 1959 the Robins’ driver, Billy Richards Jr, also joined the group as Ty Terrell not always worked with them. By March 1961 Sheen had done most of the leads and he went with Lester Stil to Phil Specter of Philles Records as a back-up-singer and toured with Bobby Soso & The Blue Jeans. In 1962 Sheen started moonlighting and joined Nunn’s new Coasters, Mark II (originally including Nunn, Richards Jr, and Sheen – Chapman joined Nunn’s group in 1964). This group was the same until 1966.

The Robins


Just Like That -1 Arvee 5001
Whole Lotta Imagination -2 -
Live Wire Suzie -1 Arvee 5013
Oh No -2

Note: In the spring of 1960 Terrell and H.B. Barnum recorded with Jimmy Scott Norman (yes the later Coasters member) as the Dyna-Sores, who made a cover of “Alley Oop” for Rendezvous.

The Ding Dongs

(Bobby Sheen, lead vcl-1; Billy and Roy Richard, Billy Richards Jr, lead-2; vcs) with girl vcs and orchestra. Produced by Johnny Otis.

Los Angeles, ca 1960

Ding Dong (aka Saw Wood Mountain) -1 Eldo 109, Ace CD CHD 759
Sweet Thing -2 Eldo 109
Lassie Come Home Todd 1043
Late Last Night Todd 1043 Note: Thanks, Charles Sheen, for the information on above. See “Those Hoodlum Friends” volume of The R&B Pioneers Series for memory/bio of Grady Chapman.

The Robins

(Bobby Sheen, lead; Billy Richards Jr, lead vcl-1; Billy and Roy Richard,vcs) with orchestra directed by Jimmy Lee. Prob Los Angeles, ca March, 1961

6001 How Many More Times - Lavender 001
6002 White Cliffs Of Dover -
6003 Mary Lou Does The Hoochie Koo - 1 (aka Mary Lou Loves To Hootchy Kootchy Coo) Lavender 002
6004 Magic Of A Dream -

Note: In 1962 Roy, Billy Jr. and Bobby Sheen joined Marvin Phillips.
Note: All titles from 1956 - 1961 (except those as The Ding Dongs) on "Cherry Lips" Famous Grooves CD 31672 971026 of 1997. Hugh Gregory wrote the following on the Robins in his 1998 book "The Real Rhythm and blues":

"Although the Robins were not the most influential of all the vocal groups... they facilitated the possibility that R&B could comment on and reflect, in a humorous way, the concerns of the working man (also referring to the Coasters, ed.mark). It does have to be said... the Robins... being at the cutting edge of social change was of less consideration than turning a fast buck. And it was the lure of the fast buck that scuppered their chances of long-term success." The tracks featuring Bobby Sheen as lead with the Robins and The Ding Dongs are issued on Ace CDCHD 1257 "Bobby Sheen Anthology 1958-1975" (2010).

During the 1970s Chapman, Billy Richards Jr, Leonard and Barnum sporadically acted in a revival Robins group and in January, 2002 Grady Chapman (who had substituted for Carl Gardner in the Coasters a couple of times in the late '90s and in 2001) re-activated a new group - Grady Chapman & The Robins with Bobby Baker, Billy Foster, and Bobby Johnson. Randy Jones and J.D. Hall sang bass different times at the end in that group.

The Robins’ (selected) CDs

Johnny Otis Presents The Robins
- Savoy Jazz CD 17357 (all 12 Savoy tracks)

Rockin’ with The Robins
- Titanic (Germany) TRC CD 6007 (26 pre-RCA recordings 1947-1952 incl Savoy)

I Must Be Dreamin’ – El Toro (Spain) R&B CD 111 (all 12 RCA, all 12 Spark and the 4 Crown)

Smokey Joe’s Café - Collectables CD 9974 (10 of the 12 Spark recordings)

Rock & Roll - GNPD CD 9034 (featuring all 16 Whippet recordings)

Cherry Lips - Famous Grooves (Germany) CD 31672 971026 (all 28 post-Spark tracks including the Whippet recordings)

West Coast Doo Wop 1949 – 1961 (issued Feb 12, 2015)
Jasmine JASCD 795 (tracks list right)
A Handful of Great “Raw” and “Inter-Related” Vocal Groups

Here are some interesting groups from the 1950s and 1960s, who really deserve credit with their most known recordings (and original recording endurance).

**The Jayhawks** (Los Angeles 1956-57)  
*Stranded in the Jungle* – Flash 109 (R&B #9 July 1956)  
James Johnson, Carl Fisher, Dave Govan, Carver Bunkhum  
The Cadets (featuring Dub Jones) hit R&B #4 with a cover of this.

**The Olympics** (Compton, California 1958-70)  
*Western Movies* – Demon 1508 (R&B #7 May 1958)  
*Baby* *Hully Gully* – Arvee 562 (Issued in late 1959)  
Walter Ward, Eddie Lewis, Charles Fizer, Melvin King  
(Melvin King replaced Fizer in 1958 and stayed with the group when original member Walter Hammond quit and Fizer returned in 1959: Thomas Bush replaced King on Hully Gully, which also had girl background vocals)

**The Vibrations** (Los Angeles 1960-72)  
*The Watusi* – Checker 969 (R&B #13 March 1961)  
James Johnson, Carl Fisher, Ricky Owens, Dave Govan, Don Bradley  
Note: Owens later sang for a short while with the Contours

**The Marathons** (Los Angeles 1961)  
*Peanut Butter* – Arvee 5027 (R&B #25 June 1961)  
re-issued on Checker 1790  
Actually The Vibrations masquerading (the song is a “remake” of The Olympics’ *Hully Gully*).

**The Lamplighters** (Los Angeles 1953-56) and **The Sharps** (Los Angeles 1954-58)  
Willie Rockwell, Matt Nelson, Leon Hughes (subbed by Thurston Harris), Al Frazier (1953)  
Al Frazier, Carl White, Sonny Harris, Rocky Wilson  
(ca 1954-58) - they backed Thurston Harris on his hit cover of “Little Bitty Pretty One” in 1957)

**The Ravingtons** (Los Angeles 1962-69)  
*Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow* – Liberty 55427 (Issued March 1962)  
The Bird’s The Word – Liberty 55558 (R&B #27 June 1963)  
Al Frazier, Carl White (lead), Sonny Harris, Rocky Wilson

**The Contours** (Detroit, Michigan 1959-69)  
*Do You Love Me* – Gordy 7005 (R&B #1 October 1962)  
Billy Gordon, Billy Higgs, Joe Billingslea, Sylvester Potts, Hubert Johnson, and Heay Davis, gtr (later Dennis Edwards - who went to the Temptations, and Joe Stubbs sang with the group, which had several member changes)
A “Random” Vocal Group Harmony Gallery

The Checkers (1952-54), featuring Bill Brown and Charlie White – both originally from the Dominoes, plus later David Baughan replacing White. The Jacks (fifth singer originally Ted Taylor, and originally Lloyd McCraw – bottom left instead of Fox), also performing and recording as The Cadets (1955-57; below a Crown album: the very first vocal group LP), see "The True R&B Pioneers" on more of this great "covers" group. The Cues (1954-57). The Crystals and Darlene Love, (1961-65), originally featuring Barbara Alston, Pat Wright, Dee Dee Kennibrew, Mera Girard – replaced by La La Brooks, and Mary Thomas – with Darlene actually singing lead on several hits, which were backed by her group The Blossoms. The Flares (of “Foot Stompin’” fame; 1961-64), who were a “take-off extension” of The Flairs and The Cadets, originally featuring Aaron Collins and Willie Davis from the Cadets, plus Thomas Miller and George Hollis from the Flairs. The Marceils (of “Blue Moon” fame; 1961-75). The Shirelles (1958-73), with Shirley Owens Alston, Addie Harris, Doris Kenner, and Beverly Lee. The Ronettes (1961-79), originally with Veronica Bennett, Estelle Bennett, and Nedra Ross.
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from Drifters: Heartaches to Coasters: Charlie Brown

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