

## Before the Blues - -- The Early American Black (Vol 3) [1996]

Written by bluesever

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01. MEMPHIS MINNIE, *Frisco Town*
02. MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT, *Spike Drivers Blues*
03. CANONN'S JUG STOMPERS, *Feather Bed*
04. HENRY THOMAS, *Fox and the Hounds*
05. BUSTER CARTER & PRESTON YOUNG, *A Lazy Farmer Boy*
06. LUKE JORDAN, *Pick Poor Robin Clean*
07. BOBBY GRANT, *Nappy Head Blues*
08. TAYLOR'S KENTUCKY BOYS, *Sourwood Mountain*
09. TEXAS ALEXANDER, *Levee Camp Moan Blues* [play](#)
10. EVANS & MCCLAIN, *John Henry Blues*
11. BIDDLEVILLE QUINTETTE, *Coming to Christ*
12. CLARENCE ASHLEY, *House Carpenter*
13. LIL MCCLINTOCK, *Furniture Man*
14. COW COW DAVENPORT, *Alabama Strut*
15. FURRY LEWIS, *Kassie Jones (Part 1)* [play](#)
16. BLIND BOY FULLER, *Thousand Woman Blues*
17. BLIND BLAKE, *Champaign Charlie Is My Name*
18. MOSES MASON, *Molly Man*
19. FRANK STOKES, *Chicken You Can Roost Behind The Moon*
20. JOHN HAMMOND, *Little Birdie*
21. BARBECUE BOB, *Black Skunk Blues*
22. COLEY JONES, *Drunkard's Special*
23. BLUE BOYS, *Easy Winner*

Before the blues? If you take Webster's first definition—"Low spirits: melancholy"—well, then we're not talking pre-W.C. Handy. We're going back to Eve and the Apple. But, for Yazoo's three-disc Before the Blues series, it's safe to assume the anthologists worked off of the second definition: "A song of lamentation characterized by 12-bar phrases [and] 3-line stanzas in which

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the words of the second stanza repeat those of the first, and continual occurrence of blues hones in melody and harmony.” That works. The 23-song first set in the series offers up a vastly entertaining assortment of rags, breakdowns, and shuffles. Some names may ring a bell with noncollectors (Henry Thomas, Mississippi John Hurt), and a few tunes have become a part of America’s musical landscape (notably the eerie “Pretty Polly”). Most of what’s found here, however, is unfamiliar, and fascinating.

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