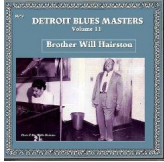


## Detroit Blues Masters Vol. 11 - Brother Will Hairston

Written by bluesever  
Monday, 23 April 2018 15:51 -

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01. *My God don't like it I & II* Brother Will Hairston - vocals + band Detroit, Mi. december 1955  
02. *The Alabama Bus I & II* 03. *Mighty wind* 04. *The Bible is right* 05. *Seems like a dream* 06. *He comes rushing like a mighty wind*  
Brother Will Hairston - vocals Louis Jackson - piano Washboard Willie - washboarddd Detroit, Mi. 1956  
07. *Shout school children* 08. *Jesus had a hard time*  
Brother Will Hairston - vocals The Dixie Aires - vocals + band Detroit, Mi. november 1957  
09. *The Story of President Kennedy* 10. *Holy Ghost don't leave me* 11. *Shout Brother Shout*  
Brother Will Hairston - vocals + band Detroit, Mi. 1964  
12. *Here comes the Lord*  
Brother Will Hairston - vocals Rev. Henry - vocals, guitar, drums Detroit, Mi. 1964  
13. *March on to Montgomery* 14. *Angels watching over me*  
Brother Will Hairston - vocals Louis Jackson - piano Washboard Willie - washboarddd Detroit, Mi. 1965  
15. *St John* 16. *Reverend King had a time* 17. *That's alright* 18. *The War in Wietnam* 19. *When I'm gone*  
Brother Will Hairston - vocals Louis Jackson or Magnolia Tillman - piano Washboard Willie - washboarddd Detroit, Mi. 1968  
20. *This may be the last time* 21. *Mিনny, your dress too short* 22. *Death knocked at my door, Jesus got the key*  
Brother Will Hairston - vocals The Greater Love of Tabernacle - vocals + band Detroit, Mi. 1972  
23. *God's going to ring those freedom bells*  
Reverend Reuben L. Henry - vocals The Dixie Aires - vocals Detroit, Mi. november 1957

This 11th Volume of our Detroit blues series is entirely dedicated to the great Gospel singer and composer Brother Will Hairston.

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Will Hairston was born 22 November 1919 at Brookfield (Ms) in a very poor faming family. At an early age, he sings in his parents' church, goes to Saint Louis for better job opportunity during the 1930's, is drafted and after the war, settles in Detroit, having a secure job at the big Chrysler's plant and marrying the young Willie with whom he'd have ten children.

A very religious man, Brother Will Hairston gains the nickname of "The Hurricane of the Motor City" for his capacity to spark enthusiasm among the faithful of his church with a strong voice and his sermons that very often reflect his own views about the situation of African-Americans.

To cope with strong requests, Mr Hairston records himself his first session with the striking My God don't like it about the slaughter of the young Black teenager Emmet Till in his hometown of Money (Ms) after he had shouted a "Bye baby" to a white girl. The photos of the mutilated corpse published in several magazines had raised a wave of indignation throughout the USA. Two other titles were recorded the same day (Let him come in; Ain't nobody there but Brother Will) that I unfortunately wasn't able to get a copy.

Brother Will Hairston sells his records from his own truck while a sound system he had hooked on the roof of his vehicle blasts the music when he is driving around!

Such is the success of Brother Will that the record producer and dealer Joe Von Battle (who of course played a major role in the Detroit blues scene) brings Hairston in his studios for an historical and magnificent 1956 session with the powerful hit Alabama Bus, the very first song about the Montgomery (Al) bus strike after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man, like she should have done according to the segregation laws. Alabama bus is also the very first song mentioning Martin Luther King Jr.

The following decade, Hairston will continue to record in this Gospel/ protest song vein, notably Shout, school children about Little Rock Central High events, forcing the integration of some black school children in a only white school; The Story of President Kennedy about the murder of JFK; Reverend King had a hard time just after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

Brother Will is himself the victim of a shooting and retires from Chrysler in 1970, focusing entirely to his family and his Greater Love Tabernacle Church with which he records a last session in 1972.

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Brother Will Hairston dies in Detroit 7 March 1988, leaving a vibrant, powerful and largely remarkable recording works that are unfortunately - and apart a couple of tracks - very hard to get. We have herein also included the sole 1957 record by Rev. Reuben Henry, a close friend to Hairston.

Our big thanks to Pierre Monnery and Justin Brummer for their invaluable help. And a great thank to Guido Van Rijn whose article in the very good British magazine Blues & Rhythm #167 has largely been used to write this article! ---Gérard Herzhaft, jukegh.blogspot.com

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