

Guitar Evangelists (1928-1951) [1992]

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01. Blind Benny Paris And Wife - Im Gonna Live So God Use Me 02. Blind Benny Paris And Wife - Hide Me In The Blood Of Jesus 03. Rev. I. B. Ware With Wife and Son - I Wouldnt Mind Dying (But I Gotta Go By Myself) 04. Rev. I. B. Ware With Wife and Son - You Better Quit Drinking Shine 05. Blind Willie Harris - Does Jesus Care? 06. Blind Willie Harris - Where He Leads Me I Will Follow 07. Eddie Head And His Family - Down On Me 08. Eddie Head And His Family - Lord, Im The True Vine 09. Eddie Head And His Family - Tryin To Get Home 10. Eddie Head And His Family - Within My Mind 11. Mother McCollum - I Want To See Him 12. Mother McCollum - When I Take My Vacation In Heaven 13. Mother McCollum - You Cant Hide 14. Mother McCollum - Jesus Is My Air-O-Plane 15. Mother McCollum - Oh Lord Im Your Child 16. Mother McCollum - Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! 17. Dennis Crumpton And Robert Summers - Go Ill Send Thee 18. Dennis Crumpton And Robert Summers - Everybody Ought To Pray Sometime 19. Sister Mathews - Stand By Me 20. Rev. Charles White - How Long 21. Willie Mae Williams - Dont Want To Go There 22. Willie Mae Williams - Where The Sun Never Goes Down 23. Brother Willie Eason - Therell Will Be No Grumblers There 24. Brother Willie Eason - I Want To Live (So God Can Use Me) 25. Sister Elisabeth Phillips - A Little Old Fashioned 26. Sister Elisabeth Phillips - Theres Nothing Like The Holy Spirit

Willie Mae Williams accompanies herself with adept and precise slide guitar on Don't Want To Go There and Where The Sun Never Goes Down, in the meantime cleaving to older principles. As does Brother Willie Eason, his gruff voice lending emotion to There'll Be No Grumblers There and I Want To Live (So God Can Use Me), his slide completing some of the vocal lines. Sister Elizabeth Phillips is impressively accompanied by Estis King's acoustic guitar, her music indeed 'A Little Old-Fashioned' but, a quarter century later, keeping faith with Benny Paris. Benny and Pauline Parrish were two blind religious singers originally from Woodcliff. It is likely that Blind Willie McTell was responsible for their session as he also recorded for Victor at that time and was somewhat of a pivotal figure in the area. The duet harmony on their songs is reminiscent of the Nugrape Twins, who also recorded in Atlanta in late 1926 and early 1927. Benny and his wife's I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me can be compared with a similarly titled track by Rev. D. C. Rice (see DOCD-5071) and has the same melody as "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah! When I Lay My Burden Down". Virtually nothing is known about Rev. I. B. Ware,

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With Wife And Son, although we may infer from their deep southern style and their recording in Birmingham with other Alabama religious groups that they are from that vicinity. The rudimentary bottleneck guitar style on both cuts can be contrasted with Blind Mamie Forehand's two takes of Wouldn't Mind Dying If Dying Was All on DOCD-5054. Their rendition of You Better Quit Drinking Shine is one of numerous variants on a theme also known as "God Don't Like It", or "Scandalous And A Shame". Both the New Orleans location and the unmistakable voice lend support to the hypothesis that Blind Willie Harris is songster Richard "Rabbit" Brown. Both of the titles here have a sentimental quality not unlike the popular songs of white evangelist Homer Rodeheaver. Although Brown's vocals are markedly more dramatic on his Victor sides it is safe to presume that a songster's religious material would be more sedate than that of a Street evangelist. The scrap of "Nearer My God To Thee" that Brown builds to a histrionic climax in "Sinking Of The Titanic" (DOCD-5003) is an exception that can be explained by its context. Eddie Head And His Family have the relaxed flow of family groups like the contemporary Staple Singers. A vocal trio driven by tambourine and insistent east-coast guitar, they have an almost hillbilly flavour to their songs like numerous other south-eastern black groups. Lord I'm The True Vine is the same song as that recorded by Blind Gary Davis (DOCD-5060), while Tryin' To Get Home is the same as Willie McTell's from his 1940 Library Of Congress session (BDCD-6001). Mother McCollum's Oh Lord I'm Your Child uses the same melody as "What Kind Of Man Jesus Is" (see McIntosh and Edwards, DOCD-5072), while When I Take My Vacation In Heaven is a waltz-time number also done by Rev. D. C. Rice (DOCD-5071). Crumpton and Summers' beautiful guitar/vocal duets were recorded in Augusta, Georgia, although they could be from anywhere in the South. Go I'll Send Thee may have derived from "a nineteenth century religious teaching device: a canto of 12 verses setting forth essential Biblical facts which children were made to memorize" (Mack McCormick, explaining the origin of "The Dirty Dozens"). Nothing is known of the post-war artists here, but they do demonstrate the persistence of a style that had marginal commercial success. Sister Mathews has a shouting vocal delivery similar to Rosetta Tharpe, who was the most famous exponent of the post-war style. Tharpe also recorded Stand By Me for Decca in 1941. Sister Mathews is accompanied by guitarist James Butler, who then becomes Rev Charles White to sing How Long, also known as 'Before This Time Another Year'. The variety and durability of the music on this collection make it a most rewarding listening experience. ---document-records.com

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