

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert Lockwood, Jr.

PERSON

Lockwood, Robert Jr., 1915-
2006

Alternative Names: Robert Lockwood, Jr.;

Life Dates: March 27, 1915-November 21, 2006

Place of Birth: Turkey Scratch, Arkansas, USA

Residence: Cleveland, Ohio

Occupations: Blues Guitarist

Biographical Note

Guitarist and blues legend Robert Lockwood, Jr., a native of Turkey Scratch, Arkansas, was born on March 27, 1915. Lockwood, who held honorary doctorates from Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University, received his early education in Arkansas.

Lockwood's first instrument was the pump organ,

which he began to play as a young child; he later learned to play guitar from his stepfather, legendary blues artist Robert Johnson. Lockwood left school and began his professional career at age fifteen, traveling throughout the Mississippi Delta playing in juke joints and parties with Johnson, harpist Sonny Boy Williamson (a.k.a. Rice Miller), Johnny Shines, and others.

Lockwood made his first recordings in 1941 with Doc Clayton on his famous Bluebird Sessions in Aurora, Illinois. Among the four singles made were Take a Little Walk With Me and Little Boy Blue. Later that year, Lockwood returned to Helena, Arkansas, where he hosted a popular live radio broadcast on station KFFA, sponsored by the King Biscuit Company. Lockwood performed in all of the major blues centers, including Memphis, Tennessee, and St. Louis, Missouri; by the early 1950s he was working as one of the top session artists for Chess Records in Chicago.

In the 1960s, Lockwood moved to Cleveland, Ohio, settling down in the Hough community, where he purchased a home and raised his family. Lockwood's solo recording career began in 1970 with the album Steady Rollin' Man. In the 1980s, Lockwood and longtime friend Johnny Shines recorded three albums.

Lockwood won a number of awards, including the W.C. Handy Award for Best Traditional Blues Album in 1980, and the National Heritage Fellowship Award in 1995. In 1989 Lockwood was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame, and in 1998, he was inducted into the Delta Blues Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Mississippi.

Lockwood and his wife Mary lived in Cleveland, Ohio; he passed away on November 21, 2006.

Related Entries

Miller Junior High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

North End Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Telarc [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Recording Artist

Rounders Records [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Recording Artist

Lockwood Records [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Founder and Recording Artist