



Willie Guy “Scoot” Rainey

Submitted: by: Sandra Huffmaster

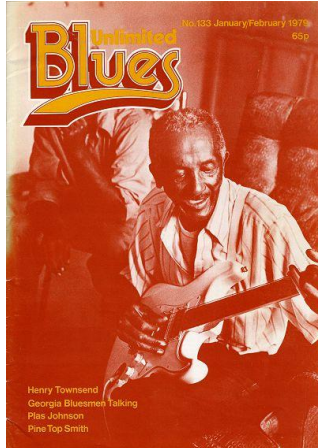
Willie Guy “Scoot” Rainey

Willie Guy Rainey was a blues musician from the Rico Community (in Chattahoochee Hills) who became a popular performing artist in the Atlanta area in the 1970’s. Through the promotion of Ross Kapstein and the recording of an album in 1978, Rainey (at 77 years old) went on tour which eventually led to his traveling to Europe to give performances.



To the people of Rico, Rainey was known as “Scoot” and one remembrance from the late 1920’s recounts him entertaining children by playing an organ with his toes. In the mid 1970’s it was a common sight to ride down Rico Road and see Scoot Rainey sitting on his front porch playing his guitar. His house was on Rico Road near the intersection of Barnes Road in the old Will Langley House.





Cover of Blues Unlimited

Article from Southland Records

Text By: George Mitchell
(1978)

Reprinted from the back cover of his album (below)

At the age of 77, Willie Guy Rainey has become something of an institution to many young white Atlantans. Many weekends, he performs everywhere from hippie bars to Ramada Inns. The rest of the week he whiles away the hours at his country shack in Rico, Georgia, feeding his chickens, keeping up his garden, doing odd jobs for local residents, and entertaining and educating visitors with non-stop humor and down-home philosophy. (“The secret to a good marriage is to marry an ugly woman””Some people say I’m just a country boy, that I’ve been plowing mules too long. But the mule didn’t hurt me none.”)

About five years ago, Ross Kapstein, a high school teacher and musician, met Willie Guy, a meeting which resulted in Rainey’s wide popularity today. Kapstein arranges the gigs and provides accompaniment on electric bass. “Willie Guy is a man of phenomenal energy,” says Kapstein. “We’ll do a gig and be up until around 3:30 or 4:00 and Willie Guy will be up at 5:00 again raring to go.”

Rainey was born in 1901 in Calhoun, Alabama, outside Anniston, and moved to the tiny community of Rico at the age of five. Most of his working life was spent in the fields and sawmills. He has been married three times, and lays claim to having had 40 children, including “a heap of outside kids.”

“I went to playing music when I was five years old,” recalls Rainey. “My mama was an organ player and I just sat there looking at her and I wished I could do it. So one day when she went to work, I tried it. I had to stand up and peddle it. I said, “Now I know I can make it say

something”. So I just slid into playing. “Nearer My God to Thee” is the first song I learned to play.

“So then I wanted me a guitar, so I got me one of those old guitars, you know, hard to play. So I learned pretty well on it. And then I said now I want a banjo. So my mama’s boyfriend made a banjo out of a pie pan, and I learned to play that thing good. And then when I was about nine, I wanted a fiddle, and I got that and I could play that pretty good, but now I can’t strike a tune on it.”

Rainey played his music for parties and on the streets of Newnan, Carrolton, Douglasville, and Austell, all of which are within 45 miles of Atlanta. He apparently rarely played in Atlanta and was not acquainted with the blues recording artists of that city. He does, however, claim to be Ma Rainey’s third cousin.

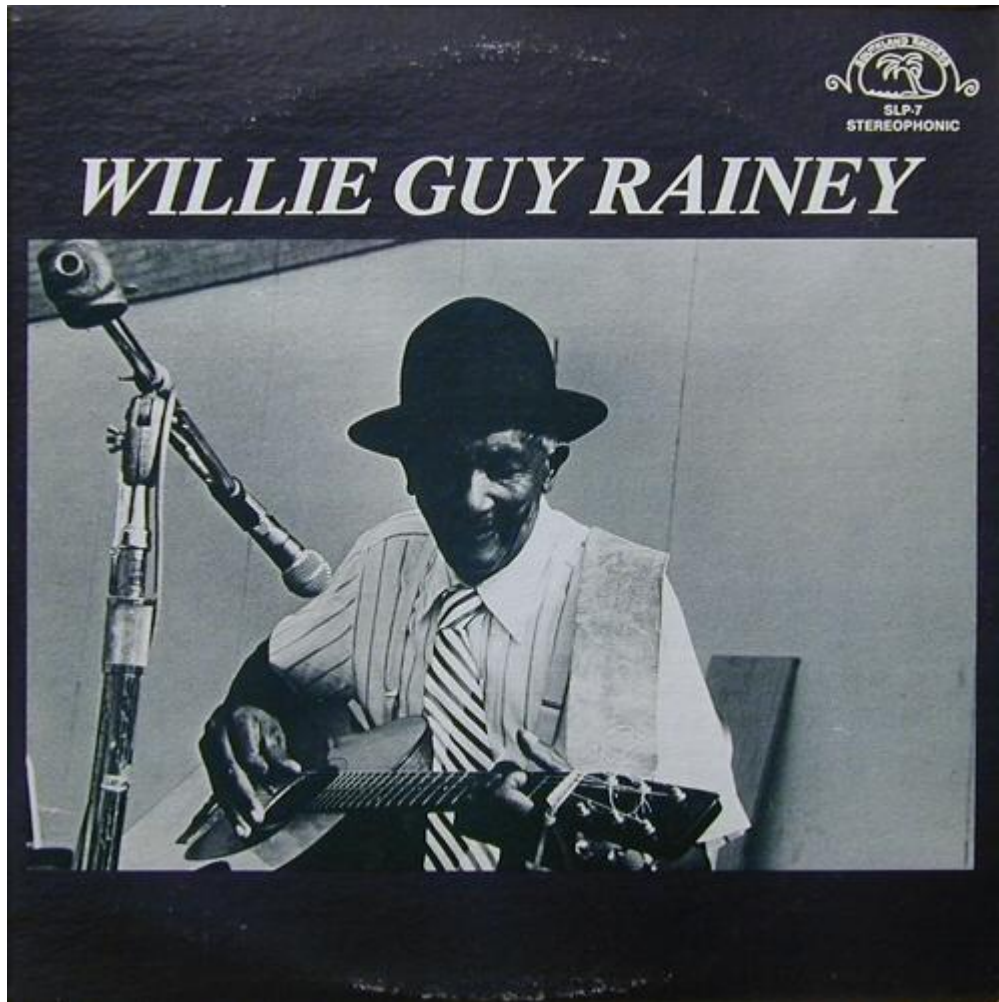
“Hard times?” recalls Rainey about his earlier years. “It was the devil on earth. A person with a human heart couldn’t do the things they did to us. They used to burn people, shoot ‘em down like rabbits.....what do you call that but the blues?”

“There’s two sides to everything. On the one hand it’s happy to sing the blues, but it’s not happy to live ‘em. Sometimes I get the blues so bad I can taste them, smell them, and feel them. If you work the blues out, every verse in it is true. But if you think about how you come through ‘em, it’s bad. It’s enjoyment to the blues when you get in the house at night and sing ‘em, but in the day time, it were bitter.”



Willie Guy “Scoot” Rainey was born on April 17, 1901 in Calhoun, Alabama and died on August 23, 1983 in College Park, GA

Front Cover of Album



Back Cover of Album

WILLIE GUY RAINEY



SLP-7
STEREOPHONIC

So Sweet
Keep on Trucking
Sitting on Top of the World
Old-Time Religion
Step It Up and Go



Don't You Lie to Me
Kansas City Blues
Somebody's Calling My Name
Bottle It Up and Go
New York Waltz
John Henry

Text By

GEORGE MITCHELL

At the age of 77, Willie Guy Rainey has become something of an institution to many young white Atlantans. Many weekends, he performs everywhere from hippie bars to Ramada Inns. The rest of the week he whiles away the hours at his country shack in Rico, Georgia, feeding his chickens, keeping up his garden, doing odd jobs for local residents, and entertaining and educating visitors with non-stop humor and down-home philosophy. ("The secret to a good marriage is to marry an ugly woman" . . . "Some people say I'm just a country boy, that I've been plowing mules too long. But the mule didn't hurt me none.")

**Keep On Trucking
Bottle It Up and Go**

**Albie Scholl-Harmonica
Tommy Dean-Bass
Don Shackleford-Drums**

Credits:
Produced and edited by George Mitchell
Recorded by Bruce Baxter, Stone Mountain Music, Inc.
Cover photo by Margo Rosenbaum, taken at Georgia Grassroots Music Festival, an annual free two-day event co-sponsored by the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs and the Georgia Folklore Society.

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We hope that you have enjoyed this very important blues album by Willie Guy Rainey, 77 years young when he recorded this for us, and the 3rd cousin of the legendary Ma Rainey. This is an important album in the recorded history of the blues.

If you have enjoyed this album we would also like to recommend our other definitive blues albums by Drink Small, Roosevelt Sykes, Furry Lewis, Robert Petz Williams, William Robertson and others on Southland, a label dedicated to the documentation of the pure rural blues. We are also proud of our Jazzology label of classic pure, authentic jazz . . . and especially that Jazzology is now the proud owner of all the historic Paramount masters including the complete recorded works of the great Ma Rainey. If you would like a free complete catalogue of all Southland and Jazzology albums just send us your name and address.

—George H. Back, Jr.



Southland Records — 3008 Wadsworth Mill Place — Decatur, Ga. 30032 — U.S.A.

Sources:

Southland Records, 1978

Blues Unlimited, No. 131/132/133, 1978-1979

Stefan Wirz, <http://www.wirz.de/music/rainefrm.htm>