

## Lightnin' Slim - King Of The Louisiana Swamp Blues (1997)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Bad Luck Blues* 2. *GI Blues* 3. *My Babe* 4. *The Things I Used To Do* 5. *Voodoo Blues* 6. *Crazy 'Bout You Baby* 7. *That's All Right* 8. *Good Morning Heartache* 9. *Rooster Blues* 10. *Oh Baby* Drums – Kenneth 'Sam' Sample (tracks: 17), Ray 'Diggy Bo' Meaders (tracks: 1 to 5), Sammy Drake (tracks: 6 to 11) Harmonica – Lazy Lester (tracks: 12 to 20) Harmonica, Vocals – Schoolboy Cleve (tracks: 9 to 11), Wild Bill Phillips (tracks: 4) Vocals, Guitar – Lightnin' Slim

Lightnin' Slim (Otis Hicks), born March 13, 1913, near St. Louis, Missouri, moved with his family as a small child to the banks of the Mississippi River region, and lived at St. Francisville, La., where he was raised. His father, a sharecropper, died at an early age, and Otis became a field hand to help his family get by. He got into trouble with the law, and spent ten years in the penitentiary, and it wasn't until 1948, at the age of 35, that he began to play the guitar in public.

He was first discovered by local DJ "Diggy Do", in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he had moved sometime in the 1940's, and at that time was said to play 'a great unspoiled slow country blues', that was a 'lowdown' style learnt from field laborers, and his time in the penitentiary. These work songs were his major influence and came to define his style sung with his memorable deep voice, over simple country blues guitar lines. He began recording in 1954, for J D Miller's Feature label, which previously had shown little interest in the blues, and his early releases were described by "Cashbox Magazine" as "straight from the swamps", as a way of describing his down-home primitive style. His first recording "Bad Luck Blues" was very important, as it captured the raw swamp blues sound that had been popular in Louisiana for some years, for the first time, and not only influenced, but opened the doors to the other Baton Rouge swamp bluesmen Lazy Lester (Slim's recording partner), Slim Harpo, Silas Hogan etc. His most successful recording was "Rooster Blues" (No 23 R&B charts 1959).

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Lightnin' Slim was known as the "King of the Blues" in Louisiana, having influenced everybody. Along with his originals such as "Bad Luck Blues", "Rooster Blues", "Voodoo Blues" & "GI Slim Blues" that appear on this recording, Slim who played widely throughout the south, was also known for his ability to take material from other bluesmen, such as Lightnin' Hopkins, Muddy Waters, Guitar Slim etc., and turn their songs into something completely his own. Lightnin' Slim's recording career went through the mid 60's, at which time he left the civil rights movement troubled south, and moved to Detroit. He began touring Europe, playing festivals and recording there. Lightnin' Slim died of cancer on July 27, 1974. ---dee2records.com

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