

Fred McDowell – Mississippi Blues - The Blues Collection 45 (1995)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Some Day Baby* 5:00 2 *Milk Cow Blues* 3:23 3 *The Train I Ride* 6:27 4 *Over The Hill* 2:24 5 *Goin' Down To The River* 8:17 6 *I Wished I Were In Heaven Sitting Down* 2:37 7 *Louise* 6:59 8 *Germany Blues* 3:59 9 *Some Sweet Day* 5:54 10 *The Sun Rose This Morning* 5:32 11 *When I Lay My Burden Down* 2:21 12 *Goin' Down To Louisiana* 8:22
Fred McDowell – guitar, vocals (1-3,5,7-12) Annie Mae McDowell – vocals (4,11)

Fred McDowell - 12 January 1904, Rossville, Tennessee, USA, d. 3 July 1972, Memphis, Tennessee, USA. A self-taught guitarist, McDowell garnered his early reputation in the Memphis area with appearances at private parties, picnics and dances. He later moved to Como, Mississippi, and was employed as a farmer until discovered by field researcher Alan Lomax in 1959. Sessions for Atlantic Records and Prestige confirmed the artist as one of the last great exponents of the traditional bottleneck style and McDowell became a leading light of the 60s blues renaissance. He undertook several recordings with his wife, Annie Mae and, in 1964, appeared at the Newport Folk Festival alongside other major 'rediscoveries' Mississippi John Hurt and Sleepy John Estes; part of his performance was captured on the attendant film.

The following year he completed the first of several releases for the California-based Arhoolie Records. These recordings introduced a consistency to his work which deftly combined blues and spiritual material. McDowell also became a frequent visitor to Europe, touring with the American Folk Blues Festival and later appearing in concert in London, where he was supported by Jo Ann Kelly. He appeared on several Dutch television programmes and in two documentary films, *The Blues Maker* (1968) and *Fred McDowell* (1969). The artist was then signed to Capitol Records, for whom he recorded *I Don't Play No Rock 'N' Roll*. Arguably one of the finest releases of its genre, its intimate charm belied the intensity the performer still brought to his work. Despite ailing health McDowell continued to follow a punishing schedule with performances at festivals throughout the USA, but by the end of 1971, such work had lessened dramatically. He died of cancer in July 1972. Although his compositions were not widely covered, the Rolling Stones recorded a haunting version of 'You've Got To Move' on *Sticky*

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Fingers (1971). McDowell's influence is also apparent in the approach of several artists, notably that of Bonnie Raitt. --- Colin Larkin, oldies.com

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