

### ABC Of The Blues CD 51 – Bukka White & Josh White (2010)



CD 51 – Bukka White & Josh White    51-01 Bukka White – *Good Gin Blues* 51-02 Bukka White – *Shake ‘em On Down* [play](#) 51-03 Bukka White – *When Can I Change My Clothes?* 51-04 Bukka White – *High Fever Blues* 51-05 Bukka White – *Bukka’s Jitterbug Swing* 51-06 Bukka White – *District Attorney Blues* 51-07 Bukka White – *Strange Place Blues* 51-08 Bukka White – *Sleepy My Blues* 51-09 Bukka White – *Pinebluff, Arkansas* 51-10 Bukka White – *Fixin’ to Die Blues* 51-11 Josh White – *Uncle Sam Says* 51-12 Josh White – *Jim Crow Train* 51-13 Josh White – *Bad Housing Blues* 51-14 Josh White – *Southern Exposure* 51-15 Josh White – *Defence Factory Blues* 51-16 Josh White – *Prison Bound* [p/](#)  
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Houston area native **Booker T. Washington White** (c. 1904–1977) was one of the most expressive vocalists and powerful slide guitarists in the blues. A remarkable lyricist as well, he recorded such classics as “Shake ‘Em On Down” and “Fixin’ to Die Blues” between 1930 and 1940 under the names Washington White or

#### **Bukka White.**

An important influence on his cousin B. B. King, White enjoyed a second career as a performer and recording artist beginning in 1963.

White recalled, in a 1976 interview with Robin Mathis of Houston radio station WCPC, that he was born about five miles south of Houston on the farm of Willie Harrington. Various documents list his birth date as November 12, between 1900 and 1909, but the earliest census data suggest 1904. His father John White, a multi-instrumentalist who performed at local gatherings, gave him his first guitar and other local musicians taught him his signature bottleneck slide technique. He further developed his skills on guitar and piano during stays in Tallahatchie

County (in the Delta) and St. Louis. At sixteen White married for the first of several times, but was soon back to rambling across the South and Midwest.

Recording agent Ralph Lembo of Itta Bena arranged for White to record his first blues and gospel songs in 1930 in Memphis. In 1937 White recorded a minor hit, "Shake 'Em On Down," in Chicago, but that year he was also sentenced for a shooting incident to Parchman Penitentiary, where John Lomax of the Library of Congress recorded him in 1939. After his release White recorded twelve of his best-known songs at a Chicago session in 1940. During the war he settled in Memphis and worked at a defense plant. In Memphis he also performed with blues legend Frank Stokes, among others, and helped his cousin B.B. King become established on the local music scene. After he began to tour and record again in the 1960s White, still a skilled and energetic performer, became a popular figure on the folk music circuit and traveled as far as Mexico and Europe. On May 27, 1976, White returned to Houston as the featured artist at the city's bicentennial celebration. He died in Memphis on February 26, 1977.

Other notable singers from the Houston area include brothers Cleave (born c. 1928) and Clay Graham (b. 1936) of the famed gospel group the Pilgrim Jubilees, who were raised in the Horse Nation community. Otho Lee Gaines (1914-1987) of Buena Vista was the founder and bass singer of the popular vocal group the Delta Rhythm Boys. Milan Williams (1948- 2006) of Okolona was a founding member and keyboardist of the R&B group the Commodores, and wrote or cowrote many of their songs. Other blues artists from the area include vocalist Willie Buck (b. 1937) of Houston and guitarist C. D. Dobbs (1917-1993) of Okolona. The music of famous Chickasaw County native Bobbie Gentry (born Roberta Lee Streeter in 1944 and best known as a pop or country singer) borrowed heavily from soul and blues. In turn, her classic 1967 recording, "Ode to Billie Joe," has been performed by countless African American soul, blues, and jazz performers. --- msbluestrail.org

**Josh White** (born Joshua Daniel White in Greenville, South Carolina, 11 February 1914 or 1915; died Manhasset, New York, 5 September 1969) was an American folk, blues, and gospel singer and guitarist.

White was amongst the first blues performers to attract a large white and middle-class African American following, transcending the typical barriers at the time associating blues with a rural and working-class African American audience, and performed in prestigious night clubs and

theatres during the 1930s and 1940s. His best known song at the time was probably “Jelly, Jelly”, He recorded in a wide variety of contexts, from recordings in which he was accompanied only by his own guitar playing to others in which he was backed by jazz groups and gospel vocal groups. He was prominently associated with the civil rights movement in the 1940s.

Some of his involvement in political causes in the 1940s resulted in him being blacklisted. Controversially, to escape the blacklist, he testified to the House Un-American Activities Committee regarding Communist influence in the entertainment industry and African-American community. He defended his testimony as a friendly witness to HUAC by claiming that the scope of his testimony was limited, that he did not state anything that was not already known, and that he was sincerely opposed to Communism. However, his testimony affected his posthumous reputation, which has only begun to recover in recent years.

From the mid-1950s until his death, he primarily performed at folk music venues and festivals. He was seen as an influence by Ray Charles, who similarly broke considerable barriers that had hampered blues musicians in the past.

On 26 June 1998, the United States Postal Service issued a 32-cent postage stamp honoring Josh White.

Josh White performed the version of “House of the Rising Sun” that influenced the famous version by The Animals. He also played a version of “In My Time of Dying” (also known as “Jesus Gunna Make Up My Dyin’ Bed”, which was covered by Led Zeppelin as In My Time of Dying.

Josh White’s son, Josh White Jr., is a singer-songwriter, guitarist, actor, educator, and social activist. ---last.fm

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