

Detroit Blues Masters Vol. 5 – Eddie Burns

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01. *Papa's boogie* 02. *Bad woman blues (Notoriety woman)* Eddie Burns – vocals, harmonica John T. Smith – guitar Detroit, Mi. 1948
03. *Making a fool out of me* 04. *Where did you stay last night?* 05. *Squeeze me baby* Eddie Burns – vocals, harmonica John Lee Hooker – guitar John T. Smith – guitar Tom Whitehead – drums Detroit, Mi. June 1951
06. *Gangster blues* 07. *Grieving blues* 08. *Decoration day* Eddie Burns – vocals, harmonica John T. Smith – guitar John Lee Hooker – guitar Tom Whitehead – drums Detroit, Mi. November 1952
09. *Hello Miss Jessie Lee* 10. *Dealing with the Devil* Eddie Burns – vocals, harmonica Chuck Smith – piano Percy Lee Brown – guitar Washboard Willie - washboard Detroit, Mi. December 1952
11. *She keeps me guessing* 12. *Sittin' here wondering* 13. *I love to jump the boogie* Eddie Burns – vocals, harmonica, guitar George Jackson – guitar Charlie Mills – piano Tom Whitehead – drums Detroit, Mi. March 1953
14. *I ain't cheatin'* 15. *Sunnyland blues* Eddie Burns – vocals, guitar + band Detroit, Mi. September 1953
16. *Superstition* 17. *Biscuit baking mama* Eddie Burns – vocals, harmonica Percy Lee Brown – guitar Bob Thurman – piano Tom Whitehead – drums Detroit, Mi. 1954
18. *Treat me like I treat you* 19. *Don't cha leave me baby* Eddie Burns – vocals, guitar Bob Thurman – piano George Deloach - bass Melvin Sims – drums Detroit, Mi. 1957
20. *Orange driver* 21. *Hard hearted woman* Eddie Burns – vocals, guitar Aaron Willis – guitar Robert White – guitar Shorty Long – trumpet Marvin Gaye – drums Detroit, Mi. January 1961
22. *The thing to do* 23. *Mean and evil baby* 24. *Messing with my bread* Eddie Burns – vocals, guitar, harmonica, horns Joe Hunter or Harvey Fuqua – piano Robert White – guitar, bass, drums Detroit, Mi. May 1961

Born in Belzoni (Ms) on February 8th, 1928, Eddie Burns has been raised by his sharecropping

grandparents. But he learned anyway from his father who was an itinerant singer and musician in several Southern medicine shows and who came to visit him regularly. Young Eddie fell under the spell of John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson's records - a lasting influence - and followed and learned also from several Mississippi bluesmen like Tommy Mc Clennan, Robert Petway and Tony Hollins.

At the end of the war, looking for a better life, Eddie moved North, first in Iowa and then in Detroit where he found a job as a mechanic. Very quickly, he became a favorite of the ebullient and burgeoning Detroit Blackbottom blues scene and his many clubs along Hastings Street. A very reliable musician and a fine gentleman, Eddie took a pivotal part in the local blues, befriended with most of the other Detroit bluesmen like John Lee Hooker, Baby Boy Warren, Bobo Jenkins, giving to all clubs and recordings opportunities. Eddie was also a wise adviser to promoters, clubs and labels owners like the famous Joe Von Battle.

Eddie recorded excellent tracks quite regularly in Detroit from 1948 to 1963 for several labels unfortunately without much commercial success. His music developed from a strict Williamson's carbon copy to much more modern blues sounds that featured more and more his lead guitar playing. There has even been a session for Harvey Fuqua's label that featured a young Marvin Gaye as a drummer!

He was hired to play lead guitar on John Lee Hooker's 1966 Chess album (The Real Folk Blues), recording two tracks under his name (one is still unissued!). But the late 1960's were very musical lean years for Eddie, the blues being then vastly ignored by young African Americans and the Detroit blues scene almost disappearing after the dramatic 1967 racial riots that literally burned down the Black Bottom. Anyway, after a significant appearance at the 1970 Detroit Blues festival where he even played a moving solo number a la Mc Clennan, Eddie Burns went to tour England in 1972, gaining more fame from appreciative audiences and recording in London his first album, Bottle up and go for the short-lived Action label. He would come back several times in Europe, waxing more albums for Big Bear or Black & Blue. At last, from 1989, he recorded albums in his home Country for Blue Suit and for Delmark (maybe his best with brother Jimmy Burns).

Eddie Burns, enjoying a strong local status, appeared regularly in Detroit until his death on December, 12th 2012. --- Gérard Herzhaft, jukegh.blogspot.com

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