

Additional Research Material Part Three

Table of Contents

Joe Carter

Gene Parker

Herb Pederson

Jack Clement

Frank Wakefield versus Bill Monroe

Jerry Gray

Bertha Mae Woodruff Garcia

World War II

Nudie Cohn

Randy Davis

**Joe Carter.** Died March 2, 2005

He was the son of Sara and A.P., brother of Janette Carter. He performed regularly at the Carter Family Fold for many years with sister Janette, assisting her in the Fold's day-to-day operation.

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**Gene Parker.**

He was a founding member of **Lost and Found** in 1973, and remained there until 1987 when he retired from music. He earlier played banjo for Jim Eanes for five years beginning in 1960 after Allen Shelton left to join **Jim and Jesse**. As of 2005, he was retired from music in Rocky Mount, Virginia, driving a truck for a local auto parts company.



**LOST & FOUND**

By Aaron

Above: L-R Allen Mills, Gene Parker, Roger Handy, Dempsey Young



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### **Herb Pederson**

From the article “Herb Pederson—California Grown” by Yvonne Tatar, *Bluegrass Unlimited*, April 2005.

Herb grew up in the San Francisco Bay area, attending high school in Berkeley with Butch Waller and Rich Connelly where they formed the **Westport Singers** folk trio. Herb: “We wanted to be like the **Kingston Trio** I guess, because that’s all we heard out here.” Then he and his friends heard the music of **Flatt and Scruggs** and Bill Monroe at the Cal Berkeley Folk Festival—and he was hooked. “I really fell in love with the banjo after hearing Pete Seeger, the **Weavers**, and the **Kingston Trio**. And then I heard Earl Scruggs and that was *it*. And I just knew my life was going to change drastically at that point.”

After high school, his earlier band became the **Pine Valley Boys** in San Francisco. They soon moved to L.A. where the music scene was more active in this new music the boys were playing.

The **PVB** played in L.A. at the Troubadour and were seen by Hal Zieger who invited them to play in a big folk festival in New York City at Carnegie Hall. He called it *Hollywood Hootenanny* and it included Odetta, and **Bill Harrell and the Virginians**.

In 1964 Herb joined **Vern and Ray** for about a year. He recalled, “Vern and Ray were both from Arkansas and they were the real deal. After I left the **Pine Valley Boys** I started working full-time with them. They were just monster singers and I learned a lot of bluegrass harmony ideas from them. They both taught me a lot.”

In 1967, “I worked for Lester Flatt doing some shows in the southeast. Earl brought me down there [to the *Opry*] and introduced me as the substitute that was going to go out on this tour. So Lester wanted to hear me play (Scruggs was having medical problems). So we played ‘Salty Dog Blues’ and a bunch of other tunes backstage. This was after their performance that day. And then we got on the bus and we left for West Virginia. I was twenty-three and had been playing the banjo for about four years or so.”

Also in 1967 he replaced Doug Dillard in Rodney’s **Dillards**, working with them until 1970. The job with this band led him back to California to work as a studio musician. Soon he worked with Johnny Rivers, Jackson Browne, John Denver, and on television shows *Rockford Files*, *Kojak*, *Dukes of Hazard* and *A-Team*.

In 1986 Herb helped form the **Desert Rose Band** with Chris Hillman. Then he was in the **Laurel Canyon Ramblers** beginning in 1994.

As of 2005, he had recorded 268 times on CDs, albums, singles, television, movie scores, etc.

Herb: “My harmony singing, banjo playing, and rhythm guitar playing are my strong points as an artist. I’m also very proud that I have a really good sense of time. That’s always been important to me in any group I’ve worked in because, I’m telling you, if it’s there, boy, there’s nothing better. But if it isn’t, there’s nothing worse. It’s a long night if you have somebody in the band that doesn’t have good time.”

Referring to his **Laurel Canyon Ramblers**, “We’re never going to sound like **Flatt and Scruggs** did on the Mercury Records, we all know that. That was the best it ever was, I think—that period from 1948 to about 1955. They wrote the book. They had the greatest musicians with them—a tight band sound. It had that *thing* we all strive for.

I think my banjo playing is better now than it was in my thirties just because I am paying more attention to tone and note value—that sort of thing. In the **Dillards**, I had to play a lot of fast stuff, when the audience goes nuts. With the **Ramblers** I have a chance to play even and slow tunes. One of my heroes for that type of playing is Sonny Osborne. Sonny has a great facility for not only picking great tunes to record but also he has a wonderful dynamic on the banjo that nobody else has. I’ve learned from listening to him.”

“There are those who think that if you don’t play it exactly like Bill Monroe played it, it’s not bluegrass. That really narrows the concept of the whole musical experience, as far as I’m concerned. That’s simply not correct because bluegrass music is more than what Bill Monroe originally started it as. It’s become bigger and more vast. It has more color to it, and more experimentation going on. It’s still bluegrass with those five instruments, the singing, how the vocals are stacked, and the chord progressions. It’s bluegrass music when you are dealing with the bands of today.

“I take issue with those who come along, and because they spent minutes with Bill Monroe, they think they have the answer to the ‘bluegrass mystery.’ Bluegrass is what you want it to be within the parameters of the band.”



David Grisman, Herb Pedersen and Vince Gill



Herb Pedersen at the Coffee Gallery





Laurel Canyon Ramblers



Chris Hillman and Herb Pedersen

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**Jack Clement.** Born in Memphis in 1931. Most of this biographical information (except as noted) comes from “Catching Up with Jack Clement—Something a Little Different Can Have a Chance” by Thomas Goldsmith, *Bluegrass Unlimited* May 2005.

He is well known for his record-producing for artists such as Johnny Cash, Mac Wiseman, and Charlie Pride. He is also a singer/songwriter/picker/producer/studio owner.

His early time in the D.C., area included music with Roy Clark and Jimmy Dean.

As a picker, he recalled, “I was stationed in the Marine Corps in D.C., for twenty-six months and, during that time, I met the **Stoneman Family** and I had planned to start a band. I started a band with Scott and Jimmy [Stoneman] and we were looking for a mandolin player. Scott had heard Buzz [Busby] somewhere. Buzz was only about nineteen at the time and he was working at the fingerprint division of the government.”

“We went over to hear [Buzz Busby]. He played and it was wonderful. Immediately we brought Buzz into our band and started playing around night clubs around D.C., and in North Beach in Maryland.

“Buzz and I split off one time and went over to the *Wheeling Jamboree*. They were looking for a comedy act and me and Buzz got up some routines and worked up sort of a **Homer and Jethro** act.” They billed themselves as **Buzz and Jack and the Bayou Boys** after a coin toss to see whose name would go first. They were soon working at the *Hayloft Jamboree* in Boston. “After a while, we enticed old Scott Stoneman to come up and join us. I really got cold in Boston.”

“There was a Dobro player who lived there named Ralph Jones, one of the early standup Dobro players.” He joined them; they had a foursome.

More about the *Hayloft Jamboree*. According to Jim Rooney (with Eric Von Schmidt) in his *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*, 1994 book, “My friend, Dick Curley, told me about this show on WCOP called the *Hayloft Jamboree*. It was the funniest thing he’d ever heard. They played crazy songs like ‘The Gal Who Invented Kissin’,’ and the people had funny names like Ferlin Husky and Webb Pierce. There was even a group called **Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys**. It sounded like ‘Lil Abner’ of the air, and that night I went home and tuned in. Everything Dick had told me was true.”

Author Jim Rooney cites how Bill Keith was influenced into bluegrass about this time. Famed banjoist told his story, “There came a significant turning point: I was idly looking over the bulletin board one morning when I saw an ad—“Banjo for Sale—\$15.00. I had just run across a record by the **Weavers** on the floor of somebody’s room in the dorm and was getting interested in the Seeger style of banjo, so I went over to check this banjo out. It was a 5-string in miserable repair. I’d played tenor banjo in a Dixieland band called **The Merry Morticians** at home in Brockton and in another group at Exeter [college] called **The Sow Seven**, so the five-string was new to me. I bought it, got a copy of Pete Seeger’s instruction manual, and set to work.

“In the section at the back, where he talked about the Scruggs style, Seeger recommended various records to exemplify the technique. I got hold of one or two and was devastated by the difference between Scruggs’ and Seeger’s own playing in **The Weavers**. Hearing Scruggs’ banjo rippling and ringing out sent me headlong into trying to play the same way. And just after I started getting into this I met Jim Rooney. He had learned a lot of **Flatt and Scruggs** tunes from the **Lilly Brothers** back in his *Hayloft Jamboree* days in Boston, so we just started getting together a lot.”

Now back to the story of Jack Clement. Jack remembered that “Scott Stoneman was one of the greatest showmen that ever lived. I found out early in my career it don’t matter who steals the show as long as someone does.”

Clement said of Mac Wiseman, “I’ve always liked Mac. He was one of the first people I [listened to] when I got out of the Marine Corps. I used to get accused of singing like him. He was different from those other bluegrassers. He was kind of like me; he would sing songs that they wouldn’t sing.”

“Buzz played mandolin just like him [Bill Monroe], and Buzz could sing high tenor real good. We used to do a lot of Bill Monroe songs. I used to sing high on songs like ‘Footprints in the Snow.’ Bill did that in E and I did it in F. We probably did more Bill Monroe than anyone else’s songs.

“Buzz was an amazing mandolin player. He didn’t want to play anything but bluegrass, and that kind of chapped me. I wanted him to play ‘Lady of Spain’ and ‘Liebestraum’ but he wouldn’t.” Thus, the bluegrass band in Boston broke up.

Jack left the area and returned south. His new career became record producer at the legendary Sun Records.

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**Frank Wakefield versus Bill Monroe.** Bob Black, in his *Come Hither to Go Yonder* book (page 113), told this amusing story about a 1976 event at the Berkshire Mountain Bluegrass Festival.

“Earlier that afternoon, Bill had been ‘playing up a storm’ with a uniquely innovative mandolinist named Frank Wakefield. Possessing an eccentric sense of humor, Frank had entered the bus carrying his instrument and fearlessly announced to Bill, ‘I’m the only man who can play your stuff just as good as you can.’ He said it with a big grin, knowing Bill would take the challenge. Uncasing his mandolin, Bill began playing one tune after another with Wakefield, blasting out his original melodies at furious tempos. Wakefield held his own pretty well, answering each devastating musical attack with brilliant flashes of his own, even matching some of the deep richness of tone and effortless drive generated by Bill. They brewed up a storm with their duel, and the heavens couldn’t resist getting in to brawl.”

“Suddenly, we were startled by a flash of lightning, accompanied by a heart-stopping crack of thunder. It had been very close, in fact, so close that a man standing next to the bus was struck. Incredibly, he suffered only minor burns on the soles of his feet. His metallic necklace had attracted the bold of lightning—or was it actually his proximity to the Father of Bluegrass?”

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**Gerald Ralph Poulson (Jerry Gray)** died February 2, 2012.

Jerry Gray was the host of *The Jerry Gray Show* which he founded in 1971 on American University’s WAMU-FM in the Washington, D.C., area. He played guitar and resonator guitar.

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**Bertha Mae Woodruff Garcia.** Died February 20, 2012.

She was one of the Ambergey Sisters—Bertha, Irene and Opal—who originally performed as the **Sunshine Sisters** in 1938. She joined Lily Mae Ledford’s **Coon Creek Girls** at the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* and then moved to the act to Atlanta’s *WSB Barn Dance* using the names **Minnie, Mattie and Martha—the Hoot Owl Hollow Girls.**

The fiddler was Minnie (Bertha), the banjoist was Mattie (Opal), and the guitarist was Martha (Irene). Martha later became Martha Carson. Mattie wrote songs under the name “Jean Chappel.”

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## **World War II**

In the book *Finding Her Voice* by Mary A. Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann (p. 154), we find an interesting discussion on how the War affected country music.

“An upbeat, supportive mood was maintained in country music despite the real hardships faced by women on the home front. The war brought enormous changes for working-class women with new jobs, higher pay, and more independence and public roles. But it didn’t bring an easy life. Wartime rationing was severe. Sugar, coffee, dairy products, meat, canned foods, and gasoline were doled out via ration coupons because of the shortages cause by disruptions in shipping and the concentrated effort to supply the troops abroad. Malnutrition among poor



women and children was common. There were also critical shortages in housing, heating oil, and appliances. Retail prices climbed 27% and taxes went up to finance the war machine.

“World War II touched and defined all aspects of American life. In the world of fashion, government limits on cloth and work requirements led to simpler and less ‘feminine’ garments, including pantsuits and low-heeled shoes. Skirt lengths shortened considerably. There was even a short ‘liberty’ haircut that was particularly safe for factory workers around machinery.”

On page 153 we read, “**The Poe Sisters** of the *Grand Ole Opry* were launched as a country act because of their “Rosie the Riveter” jobs. Nelle Poe (born 1922) and her sister Ruth (born 1924) were Mississippi natives who went north for war plant work at General Electric in Connecticut. During the weekends they began weaving their close-harmony spell on Bridgeport’s WICC, and touring with a USO troupe. They auditioned for the *Grand Ole Opry* in 1944 and were hired on the spot.”

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**Nudie Cohn** died in 1984. He founded Nudie’s Clothing Store on Lankershim Boulevard in Hollywood where distinctive outfits have been made—for Elvis Presley, Gene Autry, John Lennon, Hank Snow, Hank Williams and Ronald Reagan. It was here that Bill Monroe bought a leather Kentucky-style hat. According to Bob Black in his *Come Hither to Go Yonder* book (page 45), “He wore the hat for quite some time after that [this was the fall of 1974], becoming quite fond of it. Once he left it in a restaurant and sent a couple of us back almost a hundred miles to retrieve it. When we got to the café we couldn’t find the hat, so we asked a waitress if she’d seen it. Pointing to the top of the jukebox, she said, ‘Is that it?’ We saw Bill’s hat sitting there—someone had placed it in a fitting location! In May 1976, *Country Music Magazine* published a cover story on Bill entitled “Bill Monroe, the Bossman and His Blues.’ Bill was wearing this same hat in the cover photo.”

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**Randy Davis** was Bill Monroe’s bass player during the mid-1970s. According to Bob Black in his *Come Hither to Go Yonder* book (p. 53), Randy Davis’ bass playing was something the whole band could always count on too. Unfamiliar members never seemed to faze him. He had an inherent spontaneity that carried him over any rough spots the rest of us might encounter. He never lost his cool, and he possessed a great deal of rhythmic precision—important when playing Bill’s music. Wrong notes may sometimes go unnoticed as long as they’re played with the proper timing. Though Randy generally remained in the background, he played the crucial role of maintaining a smooth flow throughout every performance. During shows, he communicated verbally with Bill off-microphone, suggesting what songs to do next, letting him know how much time was left, and making private little jokes to ease the tension.”

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