Charles Walker – New York City Blues (Complete Recordings)

01. Driving home Part I & II Charles Walker – guitar Wild Jimmy Spruill – guitar Horace Cooper – pno Mauerice Simon – tenor saxophone, bass, drums New York City, october 1956
02. Charles Walker's slop 03. It ain't right 04. Your evil thoughts 05. I'm a good man
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar B. Brown - harmonica Lee Roy Little – piano, vocals Wild Jimmy Spruill – guitar, bass Danny Q. Jones – dms New York City, 1960
06. Nervous wreck 07. Downhearted blues
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar Bubba Smith - piano Henry Copeland – bass "Peanuts" – drums New York City, june 1963
08. Louise 09. Wrong kind of woman
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar + band NewYork City, november 1963
10. You know it ain't right 10A. Rock me mama
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar Larry Johnson – harmonica Lee Roy Little – piano Bob Malenky – guitar Sonny Harden – bass Bobby King – drums New York City, march 1971
11. 40 days and 40 nights 12. My babe
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar Bill Dicey – harmonica Bob Malenky – guitar Bobby King – drums New York City, december 1971
13. Decoration day
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar Larry Johnson - harmonica New York City, 25 april 1973
14. Meeting you 15. I'm a good man but a poor man
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar Lee Roy Little – piano, vocals Ann Yancey - guitar Davis Lee Reitman – bass Ola Mae Dixon – drums New York City, 1 may 1973
16. Gladly
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar Bill Dancey – harmonica Ann Yancey - guitar Sonny Harden – bass Ola Mae Dixon – drums New York City, 29 july 1973
17. Juice head woman 18. Fast fast women and a slow racehorse
Charles Walker – vocals, guitar Bill Dancey – harmonica Lee Roy Little – piano Tom Pomposello – bass Bobby King – drums New York City, may 1974

Among several Charles Walkers singing and playing blues and Soul, this particular Charles Walker was born july 26th 1922 in Macon, Georgia. His blues guitarist father Freeman was quite

known in the neighborood joints under the moniker of Boweavil and taught his son how to sing and play the real downhome blues.

Coming up north to find better opportunities in Newark (NJ) in the 1940's, Charles Walker started a full time musical career, playing in the local clubs and drawing the attention of talent scout May McKay who brought him into New York City studios to record for the Robinson brothers in 1956 his first 45, a driving instrumental a la Honky Tonk, Driving home. The record sold quite well, at least locally, and Charles formed a blues band with good musicians like harp player Danny B. Brown (not to be confused with Buster Brown who also recorded for Bobby Robinson), ace pianist Lee Roy Little and striking guitarist Wild Jimmy Spruill. In 1959, Charles recorded a new session with this band, waxing the classic instrumental Charles Walker's slop. Unfortunately, soon afterwards, all his musicians left him for trying personal careers. Nevertheless, Charles continued to play regularly in New York clubs, finding as sidemen young musicians like Larry Johnson. He had to wait three years to record again in 1963, a good session for the tiny Atlas label that unfortunately went nowhere.

In New York, like everywhere in the USA, the blues was then considered out of fashion among the young African-Americans and, after the Colonial Club where Charles played regularly was destroyed by a fire plus several personal tragedies that plagued his life, Walker left off music completely.

But in 1971, Bobby Robinson was aware that a new almost entirely young and white blues scene was emerging in New York City searching "real" bluesmen to learn from. He then persuaded Charles Walker to take his guitar again. Robinson then recorded a long session with Charles backed by Larry Johnson blowing the harmonica and Bob Malenky on guitar. Unfortunately, only two titles have been issued on a rare Fury 45 and the rest of the tracks still lay unissued somewhere in Robinson's vaults. The same year, and this time with Bill Dicey playing the harp, Charles recorded another 45 for the obscure P&P label with a good muddyesque version of 40 days and 40 nights.

With the help of Dicey, Charles was able to play at some college venues, was interviewed by blues fan and bassist Tom Pomposello who held his own radio programme and his small Oblivion label. Tom persuaded Charles to record several new sessions with young sidemen plus old friend Lee Roy Little. Blues fromThe Apple is the complete album (with and without Charles) and deserves to be heard; although nobody paid any attention to it when it was issued.

Tom tried very hard to promote Charles Walker on the international blues circuit. But on june 24, 1975, Charles died from a lung cancer.

I feel it might be time to listen a little more carefully to this good true bluesman who gave much more than he received. This mp3 collection gathers all his records even the ultra rare Rock me mama (Fury) that Paul de Burycker has sent lately from hi extensive blues collection. Thanks a lot also to our good friend Benoit Blue Boy for providing the two parts of Driving home and pointing that the same title has been recorded some months after by New Orleans bandleader Paul Gayten, this time with Edgar Blanchard playing the guitar. And there is also another Charles Walker - probably a Country musician who has recorded a two-part Driving home which is very different from the Charles Walker's bluesy original. --- Gérard Herzhaft, jukegh.blogspot.com

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