

Rollin' & Tumblin'

Written by bluesever

Monday, 12 December 2011 19:46 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 March 2015 14:46

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In January 1928, Memphis-based **Cannon's Jug Stompers** recorded "***Minglewood Blues***" for Victor Records. This creaky-sounding jug band arrangement featured Gus Cannon on banjo and jug, Ashley Thompson on guitar and vocal, and harmonica ace Noah Lewis, who was credited with writing the song. This is the first recording to feature the "***Rollin' and Tumblin'***" melody.

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Gus Cannon (September 12, 1883 – October 15, 1979) helped to popularize jug bands in the 1920s and 1930s. Cannon began recording, as "*Banjo Joe*", for Paramount Records in 1927. At that session he was backed up by Blind Blake. After the success of the Memphis Jug Band's first records, he quickly assembled a jug band.



Gus Cannon Plays Jug

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Cannon's Jug Stompers first recorded at the Memphis Auditorium for the Victor label in January 1928. Although their last recordings were made in 1930, Cannon's Jug Stompers were one of Beale Street's most popular jug bands through the 1930s. In the "blues revival" of the 1960s, Gus Cannon made some college and coffee house appearances with Furry Lewis and Bukka White.



Cannon's Jug Stompers

Considered as a traditional, **Rollin' and Tumblin'** has been recorded with different lyrics and titles. Authorship is most often attributed to Hambone Willie Newbern or Muddy Waters.

Hambone Willie Newbern (1899 – 1947) was a country blues musician. He was reported to have played with Yank Rachell and Sleepy John Estes (from whom most of our knowledge of Hambone was gained) in the 1920s and 1930s. Newbern made his recording in March 1929, when a field unit for OKeh Records set up shop in Atlanta, Georgia. Playing with fingers and slide on a guitar tuned to an open-G chord, Newbern framed his **“Rollin' and Tumble Blues”** as a dance tune.



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Hambone Willie Newbern

By the mid 1930s, "*Rollin' and Tumblin'*" was a staple at Southern house parties, fish fries, and juke joints, where its simple melody could be easily played on guitar, fiddle, harmonica, mandolin, piano, and other instruments. It was especially popular in the Mississippi.

Robert Johnson

certainly knew the song. At his 1936 session in San Antonio, he revitalized it as "**If I Had Possession Over Judgment Day,**" climaxing his jacked-up arrangement with stratospheric slide.



Robert Johnson

The best known version became **Muddy Waters' "Rolling and Tumbling,"** with Ernest "Big" Crawford on bass, for the Chess brothers' Aristocrat label in 1950. The Parkway label credits the **Baby Face**

Leroy Trio,

with vocals by Leroy, and Muddy Waters as the songwriter. Elmore James recorded the song as "*Rollin' and Tumblin'*" in 1960.

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