

Interview with the Taylor Brothers, home of Junior Taylor

9-12-99

Originally taped for the Okefenokee Music Survey, on Junior Taylor's front porch,
various brothers listening in

Clarence Taylor did a lot of the talking about music

CJ Taylor

Willie Taylor

Junior Taylor

00 set up, testing

2:00 Mother sang church songs. Grandma, real churchwoman. My mother used to get us all around on Sat. night, older sister used to beat the drum, mama would sing. We'd be gathered around. We would sing in the house. Roots in our family, some of them were singers.

3:01 B. Oct. 10, 1930, b. Nov. 10 1928, April 5, ? (who)?, Clarence born in 1936. (other brothers give birthdates) B. in Echols County, Mayday, three oldest. Mother Aretha Taylor, grandmother, Florence Sanders. Mother from Brooks County, and all around Bainbridge.

4: 53 Daddy he would not sing. We got pretty good. "He went to buy us records, guitar. We still got that old guitar he bought us. We didn't have no car to go in. He bought a pick up truck, put some rocking chairs back there, would carry us around to go singing. That's how we started off, in a pick up.

5:35 It was you (speaker) and your brother Junior who got started before anyone else?

(Four of us, two people who weren't kin to us). That was in the 40s.

5:57 Was that a quartet?

No instruments. You all just sang. Go around to Little country churches.

6:16 Anything you remember that got you started doing that?

That's all we had to do after we came out of the woods. ..Wasn't no clubs to go to.

So you sang to entertain yourselves?

Yeah, mostly. He used to sing all day long working. And My older brother used to sing on the truck, he had the mens crying on the truck. One got drowned, his name was Jack. Me and him was mates. He was the first leader and I was the second leader. James, we called him Jack. He wasn't ashamed to sing. The truck be going, and Jack be singing all the way out in the woods, he'd make them mens happy, they be crying

on the back of that truck. It was like a slavery thing after you see it. You'd be surprised to see a man just fall out and go to crying. They know that man was singing from his heart. All day long he would sing. Singing in the woods while we was working.

Clarence? Who is speaking? He was my mate. He died, he got drowned. Me and him got the new group, we got organized as the Taylor Brothers. Me and him did the lead.

LKS the group you had didn't have a name?

Different speaker: No, we was local, didn't have no name.

8:15 Clarence: We went to church, people would ask em to sing, we'd just sing. They weren't organized as a group.

8:37 How did the group that a became formally the Taylor Bros. get started?

Clarence: To me, after my older brothers, the guys that were singing with them, they never could depend on em, you know. Hard to keep the group together. Me and Jack we were always around them when they were singing. So we learned, buy gospel records and we would learn them. These guys (Older bros.) were role models. We decided, hey, we could form our own group. That's how it got started, me and him became the leaders. Six of the brothers joined together.

LKS When would that have been?

CT 55, 56. It was before then. I got married in 57. We were singing about 7, 8 years before I got married. So it had to have been.. I got married in 56. We were singing 8 or 9 years before I got married.

10:00 ? Who We all worked turpentine.

CT We were in the same neighborhood. Me and the younger boys, Richard, Herbert, and George, we were still at home. The older boys, they was out on their own.

? Jack set down a song that he made, you remember that thing? He had song he was going to put out on his own.(on Clarence and Jack), they could hear a record and they learned that song overnight. I couldn't do it.

Clarence: Its amazing to me. But you're right. We'd hear a song on the radio that would be beneficial for our group, on Wed. or Thursday, we'd learn it before Sunday. Sing it that Sunday.

11:30 But now I can't do that.... But we would do that kind of stuff.

LKS Is that how you learned most of your new songs, from the radio?

Clarence: I think, at that time, yes. We weren't into writing for ourselves at that time.

Other voice: We would copy—

LKS Did you have groups that were influential, that you liked?

Clarence, yes. I can name em, yeah. one of them was the Five Blind Boys (MS), Five Blind Boys (AL), and the Pilgrim? Travelers. I loved those guys.

Other voice: Jack liked the Sensational Nightingales.

12:35 Clarence: I think gospel music, I have had people ask me, not two weeks ago, how you stay in it this long? Its hard for me to give any other answer than this. Some people love to play basketball, I see kids now playing the basketball, they ain't getting no money. I always was a gospel music lover. When kids, at that time, was shooting marble game in the yards, hide and seek, I was playing records trying to learn a song... I guess its just what you like to do.

LkS Did you have a record player at home?

Clarence: At that time? Yes, Daddy had one of the best. He would buy us records.

Where would he get em?

Clarence: 14:11 Order. Something on radio he'd like, get the address and order them.

Must have ordered em.

Other voice: Wasn't no television back then.

Clarence: He was one of our best promoters, supporters, once we got started. One thing, too, I think, daddy saw that this helped kept us off the streets. Some kids be looking forward to going to a club that weekend, we be looking forward to going to church.

15:06 LKS You were living in the quarters at Mayday at this time?

Clarence: NO, we organized (the Taylor Bro.) at Hoboken.

Our mama died at Mayday....

Clarence: sometimes they would sing up at Valdosta, with the Silvertones of Valdosta. They were singing before we were.

CJ: The nephews, they got it now. They be begging us to get back together all the time.

LKS So you and Junior had the first group, more informally. So then, once you became the Taylor Bros, who were the original ones? Late 40s. {Clarence met his wife through singing). Clarence, Junior, CJ, George, Herbert, Richard, Jack. Started by Clarence and Jack. Singing in the church. Later toured.

19:30 Clarence as we progressed and when on in the singing. Traveling and made a little money. Brother Joe May {called him the Thunderbolt of the Middle West, he was from E. S. Louis) , he was one of the old singers} is the one who really put us out there as a professional group. Took us around. He knowed all the big booking agents. He'd book hisself and book us along with him. At that time we had out "Mother's Advice," which was all over.

CJ He wanted to make money off us.

Clarence: We was good for each other. After then, the Consolers, which was on the same label, they got in contact with us, we sung with the Consolers.

LKS the Nashboro Label? You got hooked up with them through Bro. Joe May?

Clarence, No, I never will forget it. The Angelic Gospel Singers, which was a very famous group came to Waycross. They had dinner where black folks hang out near the theater. At the Paradise.

20:50 After they performed that night, I went to the paradise to get me a sandwich, and they was in there eatin. I was scared, but I got enough guts to go up to em and I said, Would yall help us, I don't know exactly how I approached them. They knew us, but they didn't know us as a group that really wanted to expand. So I sat down and talked with them a while. I never will forget it, one of the lead singers, she told me Mr. Taylor, I can't be the one that can guarantee anything, but I'll tell you what I can do . I can give you the boss's phone number, of the company. And she did. And told me when the best time to catch him, when he was in the studio. And his radio station, WBSG (Blackshear) at the time, we would go there and have the disk jockey call up there call. And we'd call and call. He took up a lot of time with us, Troy Maddox, it's 105 CUB ?. To get in touch with the record company. He would call for us. Sometime we would leave word out in the woods, remember them days? to come home to make phone calls. I did it myself sometimes, at this particular hour to catch the bossman in the studio. Finally, we caught up with him, he told us to send a tape, we sent a tape, and they took us on. That's how we got on a Nashboro label.

23:47 CJ? We could never hear nothing from him. Got a message in the woods, went to Mr. Henry Washington's house and called him. When I called him he said, "Yall

boys have a hit. Said be here at ___ time. When I Carry the message back in the woods, boy everyone was happy.

LKS Was that Mother's Advice?

Clarence: What was happening, we sent him a list of songs on a tape. Mother's Advice was on there. I wonder to you love the Lord, and so on. I don't know which song he chose, but the songs was on the tape that impressed him.

LKS were these your originals?

24:30 Clarence; No, maybe three or four of them that I wrote, but they was other people's songs....He said he believed we could make it, we got a good sound. He liked our voice, our group. (sent it to Mr. Ernie Young: owner of Nashboro Label)

LKS clarifies Bro. Joe May on that label, but Angelic Gospel singers made contact to Ernie Young.

25:48 Was it at that point that you started touring?

Clarence, Right. After they took us on, they set us up for a recording session at this fellow's studio. He was nationally known with all the gospel groups. This was our big break right there. I think he played, I know I heard, I Wonder, If you love the Lord Like I Do, Slave No More. We wrote about slaves at that time. I never will forget it though. He said, Who wrote this song? I said, I did. He said, This can help you or it'll kill you. He played it a little while. Finally, he released Mother's Advice. And you know where I got that song from? That was an old-fashioned, I guess it had been around 100 years or 200 years before I was born. We lacked another song for finished out our album. I went to a funeral on my wife's side, and that was a miracle, a blessing of God.

27:42 We was in the studio, missing

Taylor Brothers Interview

I heard this old fellow, about 80 years old, he sung this song at a funeral at the church. He was with his son. The son never go down. Old fashioned song. I liked it. While I was in the studio, they didn't know it, but I just told them how, the background, how I wanted it did. I heard it like I heard this old fellow sing it. And that was the song that made us nationally known.

LKS At the point you went to the studio for Nashboro, had you been traveling much outside the region? Were you traveling at all?

CT We done a lot of local traveling. {but as far north TN?} No. That record, I have to say, carried us to AL, TN, OH, NJ, all over N. GA, FL. All for that one song.

LKS Did Ernie Young have then connections with radio stations as far as promoting?

CT Oh definitely.

CJ He sold all over the US.

CT He had his own distributor.

LKS You got 3% and he got the rest.

CT The way this was set up, he bought so much time over the airways. You follow me? WLAC had oh, 160 or 200,000 watts. Over the United States, in Germany, in Canada. That's the station that really made us. Based out of Nashville. Most powerful for gospel at that time. There wasn't many record recording places like there is now.

CJ John Lee Hooker, all the guys like that. He was on that label. They just got famous.

CT We on tour, we sold out, all we had to do was call the company and they mail them ahead of us. She asked a question, did they get our records out of the station.

LKS That's what they did for your 3%.

CT Right. They owned the distributor. Those records was out there.

LKS But you said you really made your money through personal appearances. Tell me about your touring at that time. Was there a chunk of time, In the 50s, then, when you were touring?

31:40 Well it took some time to get known, nationally known. Leading on up to the 60s when we really getting out there. But we started getting out there it was 58, 59, 60. They playing our records over that station. Black people at that time, that was the thing for gospel music. People all over America was listening to that station....People everywhere bought the records. It was a good thing for us. We didn't get no money out of the records. we made our money on the personal appearances.

Another voice: We went up to Raleigh, NC, to GA, to Al, and back home. We went to E. St. Louis.

LKS Did you have your own bus?

Clarence: We had cars. We needed a van at that time, but vans wasn't popular at that time. And we wasn't able to buy a big bus. We had cleaning bills, food bills, motel bills, gas bills. You have to make money to stay out there.

LKS Did you have instruments to back you up?

Clarence: Yes, the studio furnished that. Bass guitar player, and organ and piano player we had on that. We didn't have a whole lot of instruments at that time.

34:51 Another voice: When we started singing, we didn't even have no—

CT: That's how I found out in music, you ain't got nothing but a guitar, just your voice, which some people like, \$100,000 worth of equipment, if people don't like it it just don't matter. You can have just one vocal, some people like, they're going to buy it. It don't take a whole lot of instruments to impress people. ... We had one guy that played lead guitar and that was it. He was considered one of the Taylor Bros. He was faithful by sticking with the group. [He quit a job to follow the group]

LKS Was it sort of a circuit that you followed? NC, SC...

Voice: They booked that route, you know.

CT This, the time he talking about, our record was hot, that's when we hooked up with him to take us around. But we was green, we didn't know all the booking agents out there. When it first happened, he took us under his wing, introduced us to other booking agents, cities, and people. That's how we got started. After we got out there, and other people got to meet us, we got our own wings. We went on ourselves. We still worked with him. I have to give him credit. He was the first one that said, Hey, I want you all to tour with me. Many groups won't do that.

37:20 LKS You mentioned a # of well known groups that you toured with. Was there any one in particular that you did a lot of appearances with? Other gospel groups:

CT Brother Joe May, the Consolers, ... Suwannee Quintet, appearing in Atlanta at the Auditorium, Aud. In Macon GA, they booked all the famous groups. At that time, we sung with Rosetta Thorpe, we traveled around with her a while.

LKS Was there a venue here (Waycross) locally like Macon where big name groups would?

CT Well, used to have the old city auditorium, but they cut that out. Now have it at our school aud. Back then, we used the stadium out there a lot (Waycross). Normally, most of it would happen in Waycross. But we have had good turnouts right here (Blackshear) at the gym.

Voice: we would sing once a year.

CT They had that old wooden gym. Sister Rosetta Thorpe, Bro. Joe May, Consolers, all these people who were real famous in the gospel field. And we were the ones who brought them here. Late 40s to the first part of the 70s.

Voice: We'd have our anniversary in three places. Blackshear, Waycross, Nassau, FL.
...Last time we had it here, we just brought the group together, it was packed.

LKS Touring, how did that work with your work in the woods?

41:12 CT That's what I told you earlier. We was self employed in the woods. We'd pitch in and get our work done, caught up, at least for a week or two, and take two weeks tour, like that. Sometimes we'd go as long as three weeks. One time we as gone a month. WE was working wit the farmers, we had a timber lease from them , you know. That's why, I said earlier, we stayed in turpentine as long as we did. WE really enjoyed what we did, traveling and singing, and you couldn't do that on a regular _____ job. When we came back our work was there, cause we was the boss. So that's how that worked.

...Jack wasn't with us when all the recording and traveling took place. He and I were the ones that formed the Taylor Brothers group.

LKS So the six of you. Were you the only one that left? (to Clarence)

CT I was the first one. I went into the ministry. I was singing right on. (ca. 27 years ago). I stayed with the group though, 27 years. ...We was very young when we started. Jack wasn't but 14-15 years old when we stepped out and started singing lead for our older brothers. Other boys had other games, but me and him, music was our game. We got good enough, we was singing—

Voice: flat-foot singing. No music. People patting their feet.

CT A cappella. We just loved to sing. We didn't care too much about trying to compete with other groups, sound like other groups...People tried to sound like us. I don't know, Just because we was 5 or 6 brothers. Me and Jack, we was the ones doing 90% of the lead for the group. And after he died, I was carrying on as the lead singer. And my brother CJ, and my brother George, he did some. Richard used to sing bass, Herbert sung baritone, Junior tenor, George he did lead and tenor. CJ lead and baritone. We'd change it around.

45:50 LKS So you continued as Taylor Brothers for a period after Clarence went into the ministry.

CT Yall sung around the late 70s.

Voice: We was singing some of the songs you was singing. And these young boys singing some of the same songs we was singing.

LKS Alix started with you?

CT He never sang with me.

Voice (Junior?) He started with us. The guitar was taller than he was.

CT My boy was playing... He played for me. Organ, piano, guitar. His name is Douglas.

CJ Come up the same way.

CT When I look back now, sometimes when you do all this going and singing, you learn other things. It was a great education for all of us. But I was thinking about times, too, our daddy, at that time, as we be traveling, you couldn't go in a café for a sandwich. Our daddy his skin was about the color of yours. He could go in and get all the food and bring it back to us. We would laugh. You would never know he was a black man.

LKS He traveled with you?

CT Until he got so old. It was fun. lot of times, we went up to the café with daddy, and Y'all boys got to go around to the back. They let him in. So I asked sometime, who, why, who black? But it was fun to us to see that happen.

CJ Happened here in Blackshear. Some of the people didn't know.

49:06 CT All I'm saying, he could go in to these places and bring back food to us. You travel like that, do a couple shows a day or night, you be hungry, man. Places wasn't plentiful for black folks to get food at that time, like it is now. ...

LKS Was your signature piece Mother's Advice? Best known song?

CT That was our best known song.

LKS Something you'd open your programs with?

CT No, we would keep that song kind of stage back for a tight pull, so to speak. We know what people be wanting, kind of let them be hungry for it. We wouldn't ever sing that first. Cause some people when they hear what they want to hear, they'll leave.

CJ Our theme song is what she talking about.

CT We had a theme song, I would always, as a lead sing singer, keep 2 or 3 songs in the hand so to speak. I used to like to sing, I wonder do you love the Lord like I do for a theme song. It was soft, give you time to get your voice kind of set.

Voice: Another, standing on the banks of Jordan.

CT Still like that song. We would switch it around a little bit. Other groups, if it ain't your song, like you wrote, they have just as much right to sing it as you do. You appear on a gospel show with 4 or 5 groups, they'll sing that song. Competition, you know. We

didn't have just one song, theme song, that we'd open up with. Normally, "do you Love the Lord Like I Do"

52:33 LKS Did you have any other song that became a hit?

CT Yes, I told a fellow in Alma, just last week, a song I wrote. "You don't know how I feel?" My nephew's going to sing it now. It was well heard, I wouldn't say bought as much as Mother's Advice was. But people like that song. Time to Bring You In. What More Can a Man Do? I wrote all those songs. I go around now preaching, and people remember me from those songs.

LKS And that was 27 years ago?

CT Yes, well, my wife, she's on dialysis. And white fellow up there at the dialysis center, me and him would laugh and talk about this music. He knew me as one of the Taylor boys. Are you one of the ones who used to sing? I used to listen to yall on the radio a lot. I got one of your records at the house now. I was shocked, I really was. I couldn't believe it. He said, "What More Can a Man Do?" I've got the record at home. Named the label, company and everything. I was shocked when he told me that. That being 27/30 years ago. We had a great white audience here too. I'm not bragging, but you can ask this radio guy, Troy, they used to have us on the air 12:00 every day. Make a 15 minute tape, and he'd play it every day till people get tired of that, and then we'd go in and make another tape. At that time didn't cost anything. They was glad to have us on there because a lot of people would listen.

55:23 LKS Was that a fairly powerful station?

CT It wasn't, no, it was, 5000 watts.

No, I don't believe they was 5000 at that time. Cause WACL was 5000 at that time. This wasn't FM, this was AM. But now, it was powerful enough to take in Waycross, Hoboken, Jessup, Alma. About a 30 mile.

Junior The first station we ever sung on was WGOP in Valdosta.

CT No she talking about the Taylor Bros.

JT That's the first station we sung.

CT Taylor Brothers, the first station I sung on as Taylor Brothers was over there at WAYX.

Junior They gone out of business now. It was over here. We sung on a lot of stations. Everywhere we go.

LKS You'd do a lot of live spots.

CT That'd be when you're on tour. You go down to the radio station that morning early, they interview you, and talk to them about your singing, how you got started. To boost the program for that evening.

57.20 LKS I was curious about the royalties, or the 3% you got from your recording.

CT I'm curious right on. (laughs)

LKS Did you copyright it?

CT No, we was totally green. Had no ability whatsoever about copyrighting. We just loved to sing.

Voice They copyrighted for themselves, that's right

CT They own that for there label.

Voice They told me, get you a lawyer now. But we never did.

[Now} nothing would come to us. Our contract ran out a long time ago.

LKS Had that 5-year contract.

That's right.

LKS And you didn't want to renew it? You weren't offered a chance to renew it?

CT We could have renewed our contract, but I want to tell you exactly what happened. I called in and talked to MR. Young himself.... At the rate money wise, we weren't getting our money. We made our money, like I said, on tour. ...He was interested in our group, though.

CJ He wanted us to travel sure enough, because he knew we could sell.

LKS SO he wanted you to be full time.

That's right.

CT They know when you moving you could sell records. That's a true sign.

1.00.15 LKS What was the reason that you all stopped as a group. You continued after Clarence left.

The money, on the road out there, takes a lot of money. And the people wouldn't support it like they should. And they still don't support it out here.

LKS Was part of it that the style of music was changing, perhaps?

We could have stayed with the music. We was singing a long time after the style of music changed.

LKS People still like quartets.

That's right. And they do this now.

CT You know what I found out? ... You can, in some part of the United States, if you become famous, and "that's a singing town" a gospel town, they love gospel, and you can just bet you have a packed house. And then you go to another town. Myself, I prefer the old original standard gospel music. Now, I don't know what they're singing now. They call it Contemporary, soul, rap. To me, that's the way I look at it, I'm not trying to be more religious than anybody else, If we're singing about this holy God, I don't think we ought to mix any other kind of music with it... That's the way I see it...

1.02.51 LKS Do you think there was anything about your sound, coming from this part of GA that was different, was there a style here?

CT I think Georgians, Georgia talent, in the music field. I think all music in some way or another, GA has certain ingredients that, the way we say it, from the heart, there's something about it. I look at the Suwannee Quintet. They was on the same label, famous all over the world. But they're down to earth people. All of them about dead. When I was two and I watched the Suwannee Quintet, I watched people from Philadelphia, we was just country, you know what I'm saying? We was just flat country. I love country gospel music. I love black gospel music. From black gospel perspective, Ga, there's something different about it. I think if you listen to James Brown, he's just as flat. Ain't nothing fancy about his speech. It's the way he say it. Beat and his voice is flat, just country. We, just us, just flat country boys. I aint' never been no great speaker. I guess the fans we did have, I couldn't answer why they did like the group, but they did.

CT I do a lot of revivals, and I run into people all the time that remember us. Last week, I wind up in a revival Friday night, they was trying to get me to sing. You the lead singer in the Taylor Brothers. They was asking me about the music, telling me how much they enjoyed the revival and how I preached. I don't know nothing I'm doing that great that people would like. ...God knows I love my work. I don't like listening to myself. ...

LKS 109.10 How do you get the ideas for the songs that you write?

CT the way I feel, the way I live.

LKS Words first, music first?

CT Sounds, I call it sound waves of the music. Words would come. I might have a hard time in my life, and I see it in someone else. sometimes a key word comes and I have to sing a song about it. Then I'll start singing it, and create me, by ear, what kind of sound, musically, I want behind it.

LKS None of you have had any formal musical training [no]

CT like I do a lot of wood work, art work. I had no formal training about that. I can visualize what I want to draw and cut it out in wood.

LKS Did you all have anything to do with the New Taylor singers getting started?

CT Have to. It all begin with the original Taylor Brothers. Richard is one of the Taylor Bros. Two of his sons and a friend. They a group that come out of this group.



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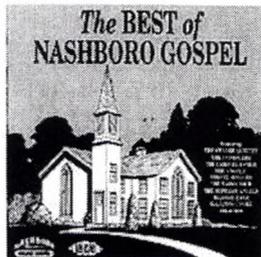


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Performer	Various Artists
Record Label	Ace
UPC	0029667137324

Songs, Disc 1

1. Touch Me Lord Jesus - Angelic Gospel Singers, The
2. I've Fixed It With Jesus - Professor Harold Boggs
3. Family Prayer - Bright Stars, The
4. Milky White Way - CBS Trumpeteers, The
5. Give Me My Flowers - Consolers, The
6. Stop Gambler - Madame Edna Gallmon Cook
7. Bible Is Right, The - Gospel Songbirds, The
8. Wake Me Shake Me - Brother Joe May
9. Roll Jordan Roll - Famous Skylarks, The
10. How I Got Over - Swanee Quintet, The
11. Mother's Advice - Taylor Brothers, The
12. Step By Step - Boyer Brothers, The
13. In My Saviour's Care - Sons Of The South, The
14. Jesus Be My Keeper - Silvertone Singers, The
15. I'm A Soldier - Jordan River Singers, The
16. If You Miss Me From Praying - Radio Four, The
17. Sell Out To The Master - Christland Singers, The
18. Since Jesus Came Into My Heart - Silvertone Singers, The
19. Didn't It Rain Children - Sons Of The South, The
20. My Life Is In His Hands - Jordan River Singers, The
21. Let The Church Roll On - Lucille Barbee
22. You Got To Be Born Again - Christland Singers, The
23. Earnest Prayer, An - Radio Four, The
24. Don't Drive Your Children Away - Fairfield Four, The
25. I Want To Be Just Like Him - Supreme Angels, The
26. No Cross No Crown - Brooklyn All Stars, The
27. Step By Step - Boyer Brothers, The

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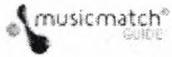
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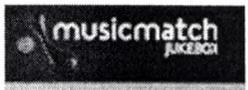
Discography

Also Appears On

2001	Birth of Soul, Vol. 3	- People in Love
1995	Creed Gospel Classics, Vol. 9	
1993	The Best of Nashboro Gospel	- Mothers Advice

Mothers Advice
Drinking of the Wine Cup / Supreme (Gospel)

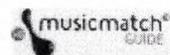
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Brother Joe May

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Discography

Album

1974 [Search Me, Lord](#)

Box Set/Compilation

1995 [The Best of Brother Joe May](#)
 1994 [Brother Joe May Live, 1952-1955](#)
 1974 [Thunderbolt of the Middle West](#)
 1974 [In Loving Memory...](#)
 1972 [Brother Joe May Story](#)
 1967 [Thank You Lord for One More Day](#)

Video

2000 [Search Me Lord \[Video\]](#)

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 1999 [A Very Gospel Christmas](#)
 1995 [Creed Gospel Classics, Vol. 1](#)
 1995 [Creed Gospel Classics, Vol. 3](#)
 1995 [Creed Gospel Classics, Vol. 5](#)
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 1995 [Greatest Gospel Hits: Peace of Mind](#)
 1995 [The Great Gospel Men](#)
 1993 [The Best of Nashboro Gospel](#)
 1992 [Dagnet for Jesus](#)
 1992 [Jubilation, Vol. 1 \(Black Gospel\)](#)
 1991 [Greatest Gospel Gems](#)
 1989 [Mother Smith & Her Children](#)

Related Artists

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[The Staple Singers](#)
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[The Spinners](#)
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[The Commodores](#)
[Mahalia Jackson](#)

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Dubbed "The Thunderbolt of the Middle West" by his mentor, the legendary [Willie Mae Ford Smith](#), Brother Joe May was arguably the greatest male soloist in the history of gospel music; a tenor whose dramatic sense of showmanship was surpassed only by his unparalleled command of vocal dynamics and projection, he possessed a voice of unimaginable range and power, moving from a whisper to a scream without the slightest suggestion of effort. May was born in Macon, Mississippi on November 9, 1912; raised in the Church of God denomination -- where all men are called "Brother," hence his stage name -- he began singing at the age of nine, later joining the Little Church Out on the Hills' senior choir...

[more](#)

Timeline

Born:

1912 in Macon, Mississippi

Died:

1972

Roots and Influences

[Willie "The Lion" Smith](#)

Performed Songs By

[Sister Wynona Carr](#), [Rev. Thomas A. Dorsey](#)

Related Styles

[Traditional Gospel](#), [Black Gospel](#)

823 Allen Ave
449-5538

bucket
drum - barrel 435lbs

When will Chipping end for season?
Schedule [7:am - 2:00]

crop 10,000 bees

Chipping
Sneaking

Scraping

tally charts? tackery
putting up cups

elevating the cups

acid/paste

bag or bottle method

Sharpmay / marking tools

poster - 1969

father's advice

another album - Champ record Co.

meet at house

Oct - follow to Luma Walker
middle call after 10M

Fire in back of wagon
to warm hands

logging truck
Dec. 3

then next Mon - evenings

6:30 - 7:00



~~Alix~~ + Sarah (wife) 449-2485 Blackshear
father Richard Dr. (Polkey) Blackshear Atlanta

Mabel (wife)

started 8 or 9

C.J. Taylor b. '30 - disability - stopped 6 yrs ago - worked 35-40 yrs
net. from Hercules

Willie B. 71 449-6126 Blackshear - oldest

Junior 72 - this home 36 only one working - state property Swamp Park

Richard - Patterson
George - Blackshear (George Washington) has done footage - trapping/fisherman lives in woods - 10-15 yrs roots - in medicine

Charles Hobbs - songwriter - preacher - M.B. Church Fitzgerald/Vella - come 84 - 3rd rd light do water tank on
Clarence " - shiloh in way cross - 5th Street

Herbert Jr. " 11-2 - Taylor's sig in their

Herbert Sr. - father - home in AL
his father was white - words rider - foreman - one of first blades
came here on Railroad - could pass

Aretha Taylor - Cambridge
Family passed thru - quarters - parents buried there - behind church

May day - between Stockton -> State

Jonah's = carpenter - shack - up on hill - mention Taylor's
was pass for pay - make test

[27 years] in group

Family b. Echols Co
Parents

worked for:

Melvin Crews

Alton Carter - (dont like)

Billy - Hanley Jr. Langdale

Janice leased trees from GA Forestry - 4 yr. lease - this is
last year.
740% / State 26%

Clarence - pulled out of quartet 27 yrs

- 2nd album on own -

* - doing new recording - out within the month

- Shiloh - ^{MBC} State Street - 1700 MLK -

of 2nd + 4th Sundays - 11 → 1

4 yr. contract
30% of every record
at that time

- Nashboro ^{boro} Label - in Nashville - "Mother's Advice" ca. 1959-60
turning

best selling groups all grouped together on album

traveling with all famous groups of period -

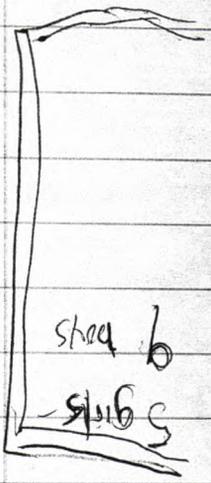
Gospel Keynotes - still together -

Bro Joe May

traveled w/ Staples Singers

Made money on public appearances - not on records

Company did



Sony 27 yrs

Clarence made a lot of records

WYX

WGOV Valdosta - first radio station song on (Alyson Taylor Grass)

Champ Record Co -

Radio WATC → Nashville, TN

Nashboro label:
 WBS Blackshaw - ~~Ernie Young~~ Haddock
 (new 105 cuts) ↑
 a.m. new cum

Ernie Young - boss of Nashboro label
 naturally known

Grandma Florence - Saunders (Bainbridge Co.)	Clarence - b. 1936 Cap 5 =	Clarence (Jack)] not with them during touring - drawn established Taylor Bros.	Dr. Joe May E St Louis, IL
CJ - b. 1930 Oct 10	Willie b. 1928 Nov. 10	Studio furnished bass guitar, organ, piano had guitar player had Washboard	Colnska Suzanne Quintal Loretta Tharpe
		George Herbert Richard	baritone lead inner lead baritone bass
		Juice CJ	lead inner

New

Elaine

H.

458-9300

7400 York St
St. Louis, Mo.



~~10/1~~



VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY®

SOUTH GEORGIA FOLKLIFE PROJECT

#1306 UNIVERSITY CENTER

1500 North Patterson Street • Valdosta, Georgia 31698-0105

912-293-6310 • FAX 912-245-3799 • e-mail: lsommers@valdosta.edu

October 1, 1999

Rev. Clarence Taylor
PO Box 181
Hoboken, GA 31542

Dear Rev. Taylor:

Thank you so much for taking time to meet with me several weeks ago concerning the turpentine documentation project and the musical traditions of your family. It was a pleasure to meet you! I especially appreciated your donating a copy of your cassette to the South Georgia Folklife Project. I look forward to the release of your latest recording. Please let me know when it will be out. I would also like to somehow arrange to copy the earlier Taylor Brothers recordings. I am interested in the music as part of the Okefenokee Traditional Music Survey, which focuses on recordings and interviews with musicians who live in counties and communities surrounding the Okefenokee. The recordings will become part of the South Georgia Folklife Project at VSU, which I am hoping to develop into a regional resource on the traditions and heritage of south Georgia.

What a treat for me that the Taylor Brothers are not only musical, but also have a family tradition of turpentine, another important tradition in the region. I am hoping to meet with Junior sometime later this month to get some footage in the woods. As we discussed, my idea at this point (still very much in the early stages) is to produce an educational video aimed at school age children that would document the final season or seasons of turpentine in south Georgia from the point of view of those who lived it. This would then serve as a springboard to talk about the history of turpentine here. This seems too important a topic to ignore; naval stores have been too important to this region, and the story needs to be told. I am so pleased to have met you and your brothers. I look forward to hearing more of your stories and experiences as we move forward with this project.

As we discussed the other week, I have no budget for the project at present. My plan is to spend this year doing background research, getting some key footage in the woods while folks are still working, and working out a plan for the project that will be the basis for future fundraising. Documentaries of this kind are never money makers, but I would plan to write in consulting fees for whoever becomes actively involved in the project once we get to the grant writing stage. As I mentioned, the South Georgia Folklife Project at Valdosta State is dedicated to documenting the heritage and traditions of south Georgia. The story of turpentine is surely one of the most important.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Laurie Sommers
Director, South Georgia Folklife Project

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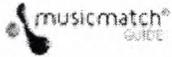
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Discography ✉

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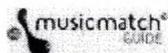
*Mothers Advice
Prayers of the Wine Cup / Supreme (Angels)*

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Brother Joe May

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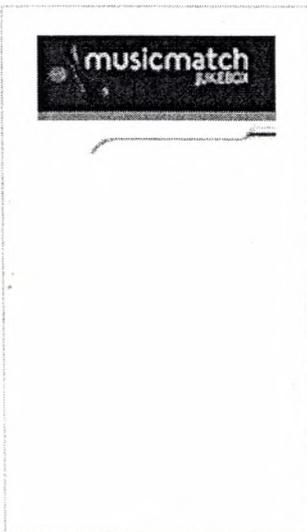
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[more](#)

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[Willie "The Lion" Smith](#)

Performed Songs By

[Sister Wynona Carr](#), [Rev. Thomas A. Dorsey](#)

Related Styles

[Traditional Gospel](#), [Black Gospel](#)

823 Allen Ave
449-5538

When will Chipping end for season?
Schedule [7:00 am - 2:00]

- bucket
- drum - barrel 435 lbs
- crop 10,000 bees
- Chipping
- Shreaking
- Scraping
- tally charts? ^{tacking} putting up cups
- elevating the cups
- acid/paste
- hagon kettle method
- Sharpening/making tools

poster - 1969
A mother's Advice
another album - Champ record Co.

meet at house
Oct - follow to Luma Walker
middle call after 10M

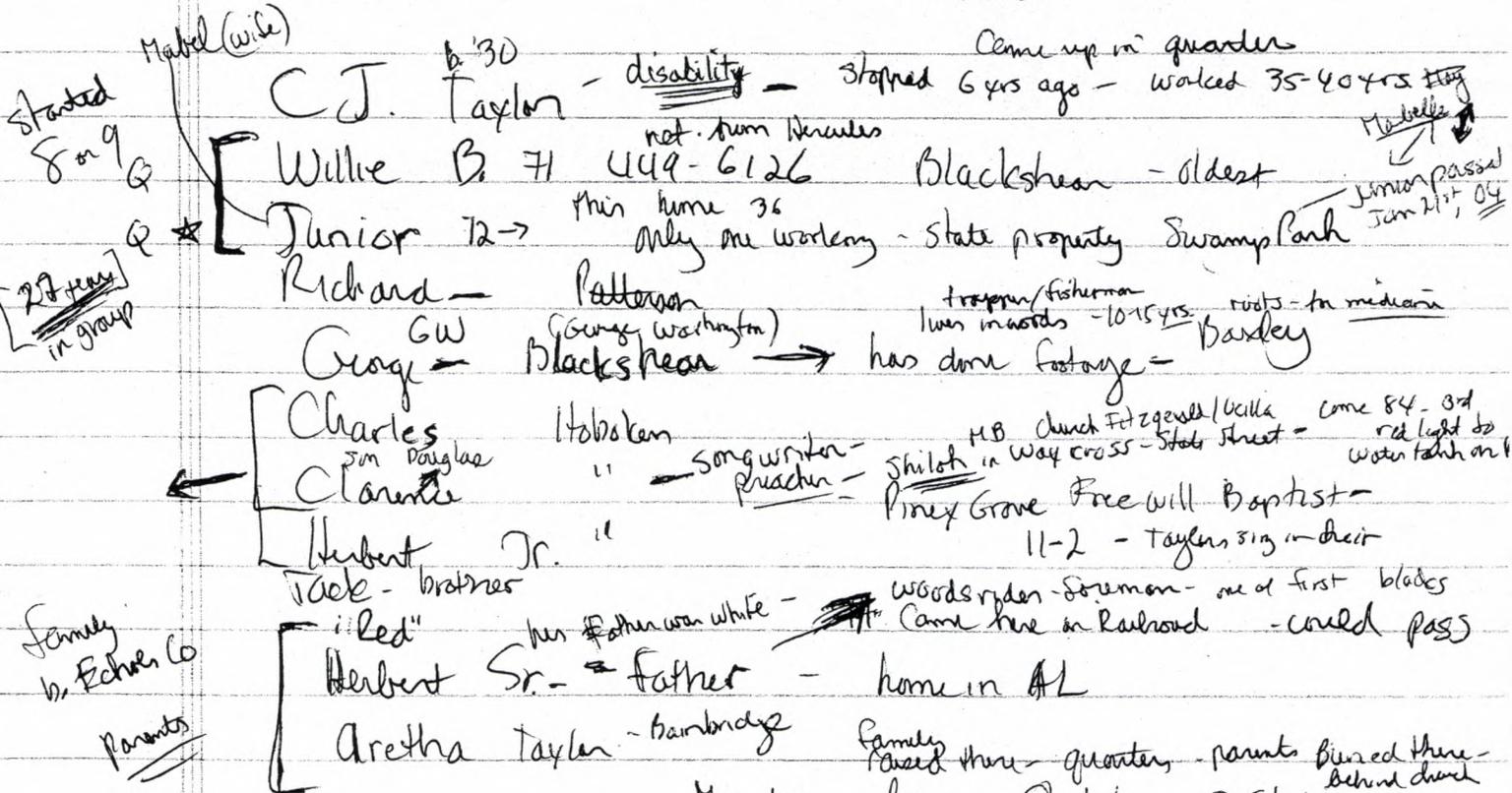
Fire in back of wagon
to warm hands

now out of logging
went full time music
stopped 96
Richard not working
Sarah (wife)

Thurs next Mon - evenings
6:30 - 7:00

~~Alix~~ Sarah (wife) 449-2485 Blackshear

father Richard Dr. (Poker) Blackshear Atlanta



May day - between Stockton → State
Dorab's = shack - up on hill -
carpenters - mention Taylor's
business too far

worked for:

Melvin Crews

Alton Carter - (don't like)

Billy - Hanley Jr. Langdale

Junior leased trees from GA Forestry - 4 yr. lease - this is
last year.
74% / State 26%

Clarence - pulled out of quartet 27 yrs

- 2nd album on own -

★ - doing new recording - out within the month

- Shiloh - ^{MBC} State Street - 1700 MILK -

of 2nd + 4th Sundays - 11 → 1

4 yr. contract
30% of every record at that
time

- Washboro ^{boro} label - in Nashville - "Mother's Advice" ca. 1959-60
forming

Best selling groups all grouped together on album

Traveling with all famous groups of period -

Gospel Keynotes - still together -

Bro. Joe May

traveled w/ Stephens Singers

Made money on public appearances - not on records

Company did

Grand ma Florence - Saunder (Bambridge) Brooks Co.

CJ- b. 1930 Oct 10 Echols Co

Willie b. 1928 Nov. 10 "

Clarena - b 1936 Sep 5 "

lead { - (Jack) } not with them during family - drowns
 tenor { - Clarena } established Taylor Bros.
 baritone lead - Junior
 tenor lead - CJ
 baritone - George
 bass - Herbert
 - Richard

had guitar player Washburn

Studio furnished guitar, organ, piano, bass, keyboard

Bro. Joe May
 E St. Louis, IL
 Col Sols
 Sonzational Nighting
 Swanee Quintet
 Corretta Tharpe

Nashboro Label:

WBS Blackshear - ^{2nd} ~~1st~~ Troy Maddox
 Bruce Yancy - boss at Nashboro Label
 nationally known

Radio WABC → Nashville, TN

Champ Record Co -

WGOU Valdosta - best radio station song on (before Taylor Bros)

WAYX

Clarena made a lot of records
 song 27 yrs

5 girls
 9 boys