

“Brownsville” SON BONDS

and

CHARLIE PICKETT

Complete Recorded Works
In Chronological Order (1934—1941)



WBCD-003



WBCD-003

“Brownsville” SON BONDS — CHARLIE PICKETT

Complete Recorded Works In Chronological Order

(1934—1941)

“BROWNSVILLE” SON BONDS

1. All Night Long
2. She Walks Like My Woman
3. Weary Worried Blues
4. Back And Side Blues
5. I Want To Live So God Can Use Me
6. Ain't That News?
7. Give Me That Old Time Religion
8. In My Father's House
9. Trouble Trouble Blues
10. Tennessee Worried Blues
11. I'll Work Up To You Someday
12. Old Bachelor Blues
13. Black Gal Swing
14. Get Up And Go
15. Every Time My Heart Beats
16. 80 Highway Blues
17. A Hard Pill To Swallow
18. Come Back Home, Little Girl

CHARLIE PICKETT

19. Crazy 'Bout My Black Gal
20. Trembling Blues
21. Let Me Squeeze Your Lemon
22. Down The Highway

Compiled and produced
by Johnny Parth

for Wolf Records

Remastering:

Studio Hans Klement,
Vienna

Discographical details
from “Blues & Gospel
Records 1902—1943”

by Godrich-Dixon

Booklet Notes:

Paul Oliver

Executive producer:



P.O. Box 375,
A-1120 Vienna, Austria

Brownsville, Tennessee, is a small town some fifty-five miles North-east of Memphis. Even today it has fewer than three thousand inhabitants, but it has always been the county seat of Haywood County lying north of the Big Hatchee, a tributary of the Mississippi. It has the typical courthouse square, and the miscellaneous collection of drugstores, feed and tackle stores' "greasy spoon" cafes and boarded-up warehouses that are to be found in any town of like size in the state. There are pleasant, shaded avenues with tumbling sidewalks in the middle-class white areas where houses with generous porches and barge-board decoration stand in spacious lots, and there are smaller, boarded frame houses with tar-paper wall coverings in the black sectors of town.

In many parts of Haywood County blacks were much in the majority. They lived in the country, mostly working on the farms of the larger landowners or, if they were lucky and successful at cultivating the red soil, on their own smallholdings. It was in such rural surroundings that "Brownsville" Son Bonds was born and raised and spent most of his thirty-eight years. He was one of a remarkable number of blues singers who came from this part of Tennessee west of the Tennessee River. They included Yank Rachel, Charlie Pickett, Lee Brown, John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, Noah Lewis, Allen Shaw, "Sleepy John" Adam Estes and Hammie Nixon among the artists who recorded. But the recollections of musicians and residents from the region are peppered with the names of dozens of others who played guitar, mandolin, fiddle, harmonica or sometimes, piano. These singers and musicians were mostly of the blues generation, born in the first decade of the century, though Lewis and Estes were older. They were preceded by the songsters and the string band musicians of whom there were a great many, who worked the streets, played the country suppers, entertained the whites at the big farms and travelled with the medicine shows. Of these unfortunately, few were recorded but "Hambone" Willie Newbern was one that was. Sleepy John Estes learned some of his guitar playing style from Newbern and possibly acquired his gritty vocal technique from him too. They worked together on the medicine shows, travelling down to Como, Mississippi. Newbern reportedly came from Brownsville — or the country round about — and it is more than likely that he was related to "Son" Bonds, whose mother was Hattie Newbern. Though the name "Son" was often given to a boy who was raised by a friend or relative whose surname he later assumed, in Bonds' case he may have been christened Son, for he kept the name of his father, Aaron Bonds. He was born on 18 March, 1909 and was entering his teens when World War I came to an end. At this time the most prominent blues singer in the Brownsville area was the twenty-year old John Estes. He must have heard Estes many times as he played the picnics and country

suppers in the area. But Estes was a rambler who liked to hobo his way around the country. He had a dislike of farm work and anyway, was largely precluded from many kinds of labour by the loss of the sight of one eye at the age of six, and failing sight in the other. His success as a street musician and entertainer might have made him a role model for aspiring musicians, but if Son Bonds was tempted to follow such a life it was never for long. Just when or how he learned to play guitar is not known. Very probably it was from Hambone Willie Newbern. When he was in his early twenties he struck up a friendship with Hammie Nixon, a harmonica and jug player who was a year his senior. They played in the streets for nickels and dimes and occasionally took Route 79 or the L & N railroad to Memphis. In 1930 they even hoboed as far as Chicago to try their luck, but they soon returned to Brownsville. When they were next in Chicago it was to make records.

The titles that Son Bonds and Hammie Nixon made over the span of a few days in September that year show them to be well integrated with Hammie's accomplished harp wailing in support of Son's rural singing. His voice was often indistinct and his verses sometimes unresolved; careful listening reveals many good lines, oblique references, wry observations and wishful statements. "I'm gonna put my box on my shoulder and down this highway road I'm goin'" he sang on Back and Side Blues which was unexpectedly to the Good Morning, Little Schoolgirl tune, destined to be a first hit for Sonny Boy Williamson three years later. A batch of gospel songs, simple in form with additive verses, gave Hammie a chance to harmonise on the vocals and to play his jug. Then they returned to the blues as Son speculated: "Now this time tomorrow I wonder where me and ole Hammie be / Lord we may be down in Memphis, walking down on Cherry Street."

Four more years of farming and he had the opportunity to record again, accompanying Sleepy John Estes on several titles, and having John second him on what was his best coupling to date. His voice was more musical and mature, and his phrasing showed Estes' influence. When they recorded together some time later they were in fine form, with Son playing jazz-phrased kazoo and sometimes taking the lead vocal. "We wrote this song, this is our own compose" they declared proudly. The last titles, under Son's own name, were blues. They sustained the mood of frustration and loneliness which coloured many of his recordings. At some stage he married and settled in Dyersberg, Dyer County, a few miles from Newbern. Sitting on his porch at midnight on 31 August 1947 he was fatally shot by a jealous lover, a man with poor sight who mistook him for a neighbour. Only thirty-eight when he died, he was buried in St Peter's Cemetary, sadly but appropriately, in Brownsville.

Paul Oliver

"BROWNSVILLE" SON BONDS

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----|------|----|
| 1. All Night Long | C-9396 -De 7022 | (A) | 2:53 | |
| 2. She Walks Like My Woman | C-9397 -De 7022 | (A) | 3:06 | 34 |
| 3. Weary Worried Blues | C-9403-A-Ch 50064 | (A) | 2:47 | |
| 4. Back And Side Blues | C-9404-A-Ch 50064 | (A) | 2:41 | |
| 5. I Want To Live So God Can Use Me | C-9412-B-De 7039 | (B) | 3:02 | |
| 6. Ain't That News? | C-9413-De 7039 | (B) | 2:50 | |
| 7. Give Me That Old Time Religion | C-9414-De 7024 | (B) | 2:54 | 34 |
| 8. In My Father's House | C-9415-De 7024 | (B) | 2:52 | |
| 9. Trouble Trouble Blues | C-9444-De 7040 | (C) | 3:00 | |
| 10. Tennessee Worried Blues | C-9445-De 7040 | (C) | 3:00 | |
| 11. I'll Work Up To You Someday | 63660-A-De 7558 | (D) | 2:25 | |
| 12. Old Bachelor Blues | 63661-A-De 7558 | (D) | 2:36 | 38 |
| 13. Black Gal Swing | 064918-1-BB B8852 | (E) | 2:54 | |
| 14. Get Up And Go | 064919-1-BB B8915 | (E) | 2:48 | |
| 15. Every Time My Heart Beats | 064920-1-BB B8891 | (E) | 3:08 | 41 |
| 16. 80 Highway Blues | 064921-1-BB B8927 | (F) | 2:50 | |
| 17. A Hard Pill To Swallow | 064922-1-BB B8927 | (F) | 2:54 | |
| 18. Come Back Home, Little Girl | 064923-1-BB B8950 | (F) | 2:53 | |

CHARLIE PICKETT

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----|------|----|
| 19. Crazy 'Bout My Black Gal | 62467-A-De 7762 | (G) | 3:10 | |
| 20. Trembling Blues | 62468-A-De 7762 | (G) | 2:50 | 37 |
| 21. Let Me Squeeze Your Lemon | 62487-A-De 7707 | (H) | 2:48 | |
| 22. Down The Highway | 62488-A-De 7707 | (H) | 3:13 | |

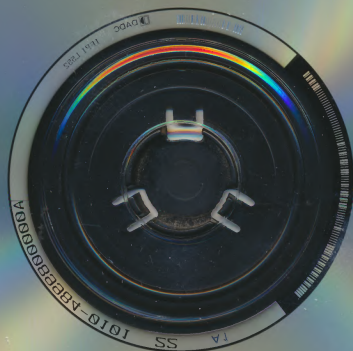
PERSONNEL:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| A: Brownsville Son Bonds, vcl/gtr; Hammie Nixon, hca. _____ | Chicago, 6 September 1934 |
| B: Brother Son Bonds, vcl/gtr; Hammie Nixon, vcl on 5, 6, 8/jug. _____ | Chicago, 8 September 1934 |
| C: Hammie And Son: Son Bonds, vcl/gtr; Hammie Nixon, hca. _____ | Chicago, 11 September 1934 |
| D: Son Bonds, vcl/gtr; Sleepy John Estes, gtr. _____ | New York City, 22 April 1938 |
| E: The Delta Boys: Son Bonds, lead vcl/kazoo; Sleepy John Estes, gtr/vcl; Raymond Thomas, imb/vcl. _____ | Chicago, 24 September 1941 |
| F: Son Bonds, vcl/gtr; Sleepy John Estes, gtr; Raymond Thomas, imb. _____ | Chicago, 24 September 1941 |
| G: Charlie Pickett, vcl/gtr; Lee Brown, pno; prob. Hammie Nixon, hca on 20. | New York City, 2 August 1937 |
| H: Charlie Pickett, vcl/gtr. _____ | New York City, 3 August 1937 |



**“Brownsville” SON BONDS — CHARLIE PICKETT
(1934—1941)**

Urheber- und Leistungs-
schutzrechte, besonders
Vervielfältigung (außer
zum persönlichen
Gebrauch) Vermietung,
Aufführung, Sendung
vorbehalten.



WBCD-003

**COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO**

AUSTRO
MECHANA

A A D

Made in Austria

- “BROWNSVILLE” SON BONDS** · 1. All Night Long · 2. She Walks Like My Woman · 3. Weary Worried Blues ·
4. Back And Side Blues · 5. I Want To Live So God Can Use Me · 6. Ain't That News? · 7. Give Me That
Old Time Religion · 8. In My Father's House · 9. Trouble Trouble Blues · 10. Tennessee Worried Blues ·
11. I'll Work Up To You Someday · 12. Old Bachelor Blues · 13. Black Gal Swing · 14. Get Up And Go ·
15. Every Time My Heart Beats · 16. 80 Highway Blues · 17. A Hard Pill To Swallow ·
18. Come Back Home, Little Girl · **CHARLIE PICKETT** · 19. Crazy 'Bout My Black Gal ·
20. Trembling Blues · 21. Let Me Squeeze Your Lemon ·
22. Down The Highway