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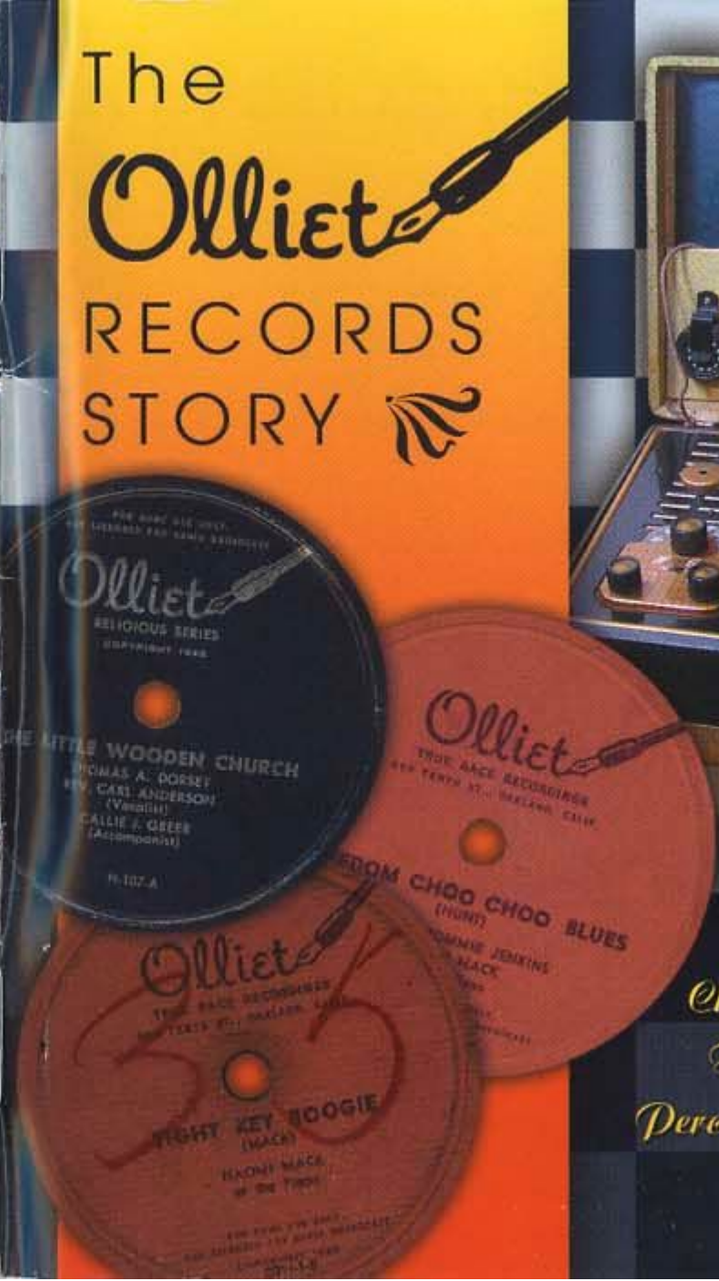
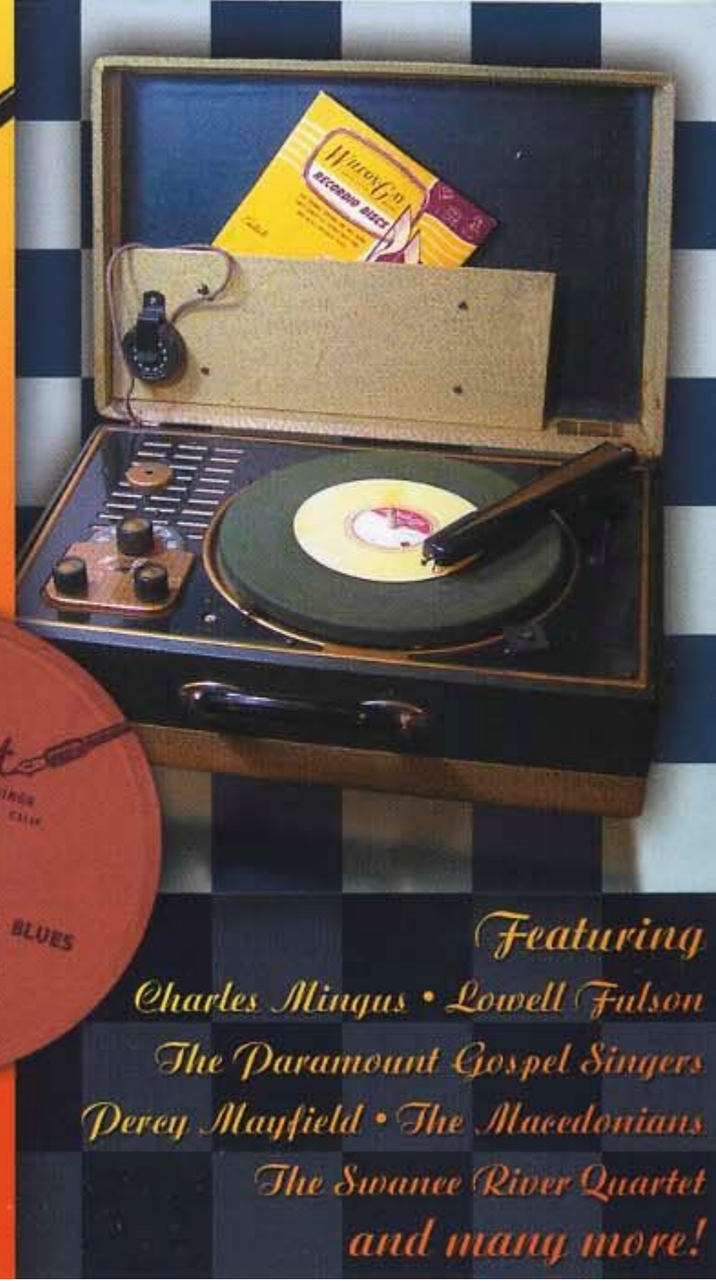
The Olliet RECORDS STORY





Featuring

Charles Mingus • Lowell Fulson

The Paramount Gospel Singers

Percy Mayfield • The Macedonians

The Swanee River Quartet

and many more!

The Olliet Records Story

Disc One

1 Lafayette Thomas - **The Thing**
Trilyte 1100, 1956
(L.J. Thomas) Copyright Control

2 Paramount Gospel Singers -
In That Awful Hour - Part 1
Olliet 1001, 1948
(Henry) Sony ATV Music Publishing (Gb)

3 Paramount Gospel Singers -
In That Awful Hour - Part 2
Olliet 1001, 1948
(Henry) Sony ATV Music Publishing (Gb)

4 Paramount Gospel Singers - **Jonah**
Olliet (Unreleased), 1949
(Trad) Public Domain

5 Jimmy Nelson -
The Cats Creep At Midnight
Olliet 100, 1948
(J. Nelson) Copyright Control

6 Jimmy Nelson - **Baby Chile**
Olliet 100, 1948
(Taub/Nelson) Universal Music

7 Paramount Gospel Singers -
He Means So Much To Me
Olliet (Unreleased), 1949
(V. Powell/Reynolds) Copyright Control

8 Paramount Gospel Singers -
Heaven In My View
Olliet (Unreleased), 1949
(Trad) Copyright Control

9 Rev. George W. Killens -
Father I Stretch My Hands To Thee
Olliet 622, 1946
(Trad) Public Domain

10 Rev. George W. Killens - **Fighting For Jesus**
Olliet 1305, 1947
(G.W. Killens) Copyright Control

11 Rev. George W. Killens - **Same Man**
Olliet 622, 1946
(G.W. Killens) Copyright Control

12 Rev. George W. Killens - **Testing Faith**
Olliet 1305, 1947
(G.W. Killens) Copyright Control

13 Tommy Jenkins - **Freedom Choo Choo**
Olliet 01, 1946
(J. Jenkins/Mack) Copyright Control

14 Naomi Mack (Piano) - **Tight Key Boogie**
Olliet 01, 1946
(Mack) Copyright Control

15 Rev. Louis H. Narcisse & The Celestial Tones -
He Will Know Me
Olliet (Unnumbered), 1947
(Josea/Narcisse) Modern Music Publishing Co

16 Rev. Louis H. Narcisse & The Celestial Tones -
Why Should I Worry
Olliet (Unnumbered), 1947
(Josea/Narcisse) Modern Music Publishing Co

17 Elder G. Guidry -
He Knows How Much We Can Bear
S.N.S. 19b, 1947
(Roberta Martin) Copyright Control

18 Father E. David & The Tones -
Since Jesus Came Into My Heart
Olliet 10a, 1948
(R.H. Medaniel/Gabriel) Copyright Control

19 Spartonaires - **Mother, Don't You Cry**
Olliet 13, 1946
(D. Hill/Slaughter) Copyright Control

20 Spartonaires - **Precious Lord, Take My Hand**
Olliet 13, 1946
(Thomas A. Dorsey) Carlin Music Corp

21 William "Thunderbird" Walker & Band -
Thunderbird
Trilyte 1001, 1956
(W. Walker) Copyright Control

22 William "Thunderbird" Walker & Band -
I'm Thinking Of You
Trilyte 1001, 1956
(W. Walker) Copyright Control

23 Swanee River Quartet -
The Sun Will Never Go Down
Olliet 01, 1946
(Jefferson/Green/Josea)
Modern Music Publishing Co

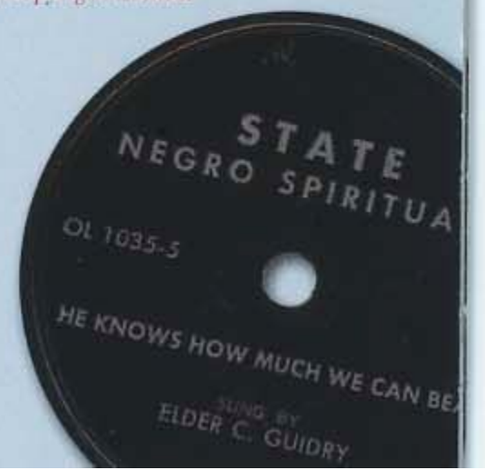
24 Swanee River Quartet - **Wings**
Olliet 01, 1946
(Trad) Public Domain

25 Swanee River Quartet - **Jesus Is My Friend**
Olliet 10, 1946
(W. Green) Copyright Control

26 Swanee River Quartet - **Lord, Have Mercy**
Olliet 10, 1946
(W. Johnson/Langford) Copyright Control

27 Allen Henry & His Band -
Little Red Riding Hood
Gru-V-Tone 105a, 1947
(A. Henry) Copyright Control

28 Allen Henry & His Band -
Big Fat Joe The Wino
Gru-V-Tone 105b, 1947
(A. Henry) Copyright Control



Disc Two

1 Lowell Fulson - **The Train Is Leaving**
Scotty's 101, 1947
(L. Fulson) Copyright Control

2 Lowell Fulson - **Scotty's Blues**
Scotty's 101, 1947
(Scotty/Hunt) Copyright Control

3 Lydia Johnson - **Canaan**
Olliet 40, 1946
(Trad) Public Domain

4 Percy Mayfield - **Jack You Ain't Nowhere Pt. 1**
Gru-V-Tone 101a, 1946
(P. Mayfield) Copyright Control

5 Percy Mayfield - **Jack You Ain't Nowhere Pt. 2**
Gru-V-Tone 101, 1946
(P. Mayfield) Copyright Control

6 Percy Mayfield - **Two Years Of Torture**
Gru-V-Tone 102a, 1946
(P. Mayfield/Norris) Street Tuff Tunes

7 Rev. Carl C. Anderson -
The Lord Will Make A Way
Olliet 107, 1948
(Thomas A. Dorsey) Copyright Control

8 The Trilyters - **The Beat** (Instr.)
Trilyte 101, 1956
(Unknown) Copyright Control

9 The Trilyters - **Two-O-Five Jump**
Trilyte 100, 1956
(Unknown) Copyright Control

10 King Perry - **It Takes A Good Man Like Me**
Trilyte 4001, 1956
(Perry) Copyright Control

11 King Perry - **Come Back Baby**
Trilyte 4001, 1956
(Perry) Copyright Control

12 Macedonians - **Anybody Waiting**
Octive 15, 1951
(Cook) Copyright Control

13 Macedonians - **I'll Never More Pass This Way**
Octive 14, 1951
(Cook) Copyright Control

14 Macedonians - **Old Blind Barnabus**
Octive 200-6, 1951
(Trad) Public Domain

15 Macedonians - **Stop The War**
Octive 200-5, 1951
(Cook) Copyright Control

16 Flowers Of Joy - **All My Appointed Time**
Octive 18, 1951
(Goldsmith) Copyright Control

17 Flowers Of Joy - **At The Cross**
Octive 19, 1951
(Ward) Copyright Control

18 Rev. J.J. Gaskins - **Come See A Man**
Octive 16, 1951
(Gaskins) Copyright Control

19 Jimmy Nelson - **Jailhouse Love**
Gru-V-Tone 100a, 1946
(Nelson) Copyright Control

20 John Hogg - **Black Snake Blues**
Octive 706, 1951
(Hogg) Copyright Control

21 Lafayette Thomas - **Weekly Blues**
Trilyte 1100, 1956
(Price/Cadena/Thomas)
EMI Screen Gems Music Ltd

22 Charles "Barron" Mingus & His Symphonic Airs - **The Story Of Love**
Fentone 2002b, 1949
(Mingus) Complete Music Ltd

23 Baron Mingus & His Rhythm - **Lyon's Roar**
Fentone 2003b, 1949
(Mingus) Complete Music Ltd

24 Shantones - **Come To Me**
Trilyte 5001, 1956
(Williams/Walker) Copyright Control

25 Shantones - **Little Girl**
Trilyte 5001, 1956
(Williams/Walker) Copyright Control

26 John Hogg - **Worrin' Blues**
Octive 706, 1951
(Hogg) Copyright Control

27 Ray Agee - **I Brought It All On Myself**
Octive 200, 1952
(Agee) Copyright Control

28 David Lee Johnson - **Hemlock Blues**
Gru-V-Tone 106a, 1947
(Johnson) Copyright Control

29 David Lee Johnson - **Who Can You Blame**
Gru-V-Tone 106b, 1947
(Johnson) Copyright Control

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Ollie T. Hunt's Olliet Records & Related Labels

Trying to find substantial biographical information on **Ollie T. Hunt** has proved to be an insurmountable task. Weeks of phone calls and e-mail requests to fellow researchers have turned up only tiny morsels of information that I shall endeavor to piece together as best I can. It should be realized that this is being done with a degree of likeliness and probability that someone no doubt will pop up who has read these notes and would like to put things in substantive perspective.

We know Ollie T. Hunt was born June 21st, 1917 in the L.A. Basin and that his surviving relatives might dwell in the Salton City area of California. He passed on July 5, 2001 somewhere in Los Angeles. **Ed Carter**, a.k.a. **Buddha Kahn** of the **Shantones** on Hunt's **Trilyte** imprint told **Steve Propes** that in 1956 when he first encountered Hunt he found an extremely pleasant, short-haired, heavy-set African American of dark complexion with impressive connections to artists like **Percy Mayfield** and **King Curtis** who spent time hanging out at his L.A. studio.

First evidence of Ollie Hunt's musical activity comes from **Bob Geddins** of **Big Town Records**. Geddins probably gave advice to Hunt and also might have conjured up mutual recording deals. It is likely that he pressed some of Hunt's early work. Geddins told **James Moore Sr.** and **Lee Hildebrand** in an interview at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in 1990 that before he (Geddins) built his first studio and opened for business in April 1944, Ollie T. Hunt was traveling around recording "people" and was out there doing this before Geddins himself. He added that it was he (Geddins) who opened the first small, independent pressing plant on Oakland's **Eighth Street**.

Back in 1943-1944, the music consumer was able to buy inexpensive, portable home recording equipment that cut acetate discs (this was aside from more expensive wire machines.) One such extremely popular model was **The Wilcox Gay Recordio**, a reasonably priced machine in the Duo-Corder line, described as a professional-type recorder-reproducer. It came with two speeds, 78 RPM and 45 RPM, utilizing standard recordable discs. The Recordio was supplied with two tone-arms, one to etch, the other to play discs, plus a microphone on a long cable with mike-stand. The Recordio could be taken in a van or automobile to a place where it could be easily set up to record prospective talent. The front and back covers of this booklet feature Recordio models of the period.

We know that Hunt had engineering skills (as he worked for the **Bihari Brothers** as a recording engineer in the 1950s) and could have adapted the equipment to suit his needs. It is my sense that Hunt first traversed the Bay Area recording persons who would contact him to make home or "family" recordings and in addition record those wanting something more, like a demo.

In **Bob McGrath's** ***"The R&B Indies 2"*** and **Galen Gart's** ***"The American Record Label Directory and Dating Guide, 1940-1959"***, Ollie T. Hunt is listed as proprietor of **Oliver Records** of Oakland, Calif. with labels such as Oliver, **Scotty's Radio**, **Trilyte** and Olliet. The Oliver label was emblazoned with the words "Records of infinite richness" and stated it was manufactured by the Oliver Record Company of Oakland, Calif. **Elder C. Guidry** recorded **"Shake My Mother's Hand"** for Oliver and **"Shake My Brother's Hand"** for **State Negro Spirituals**, both sporting the same matrix number (OL 1034-4.) Recordings on these labels were made by Elder G. Guidry at most likely an earlier date. We must assume that State Negro Spirituals was also affiliated with Oliver Records, Hunt's label, although the record label does not mention Oliver Records. However, the only other reference this writer could find to Oliver Records of Oakland, California was correspondence between a **Francis Oliver** and the composer **Eric Zeizl** in 1947. We have not been able to determine Ollie T. Hunt's exact connection with Oliver Records.

These recordings did go into commercial production for home use only. Whether Hunt had by this time built his own recording studio or had used the services of the popular **Lewis Recording Studios** at **1141 Market Street** in San Francisco is not known. In any event, the labels appear most unlike anything Geddins was able to press at his Big Town studio.

Soon after this, Hunt set up the Olliet (Ollie-t) and **GruV-Tone** imprint at **2405 San Pablo Avenue** in Oakland and continued recording mostly local blues and gospel talent "for home use only," according to the label. In order to survive in the music industry, Hunt opened up Scotty's Radio (Repair), label-copied as being at **5139 Third Street** (probably his studio address) in San Francisco's **Bayview** District sometime around 1947 (the maroon-colored record label gives this address and also states "mfg. by Oliver Record Co. Oakland, Calif.") According to **Jim Dawson's** liner notes to **Lowell Fulson's** Swedish double album on **Crown Prince Records**, Fulson cut a record for **Rene La Marre's Trilon** label at Bob Geddins' studio and a deal was made by La Marre and Geddins with Hunt whereby both Trilon and Scotty's would gain commercially from the sales of the record. Fulson would simply make up a blues on the spot, in this case **"Scotty's Blues"**, to fit the bill. The release became Scotty's Radio's one and only disc.

In 1949, Hunt set up **Fentone Records**, a division of Fentone Enterprises of San Francisco. Hunt recorded three records on **Charles "Barron" Mingus**, two of which were issued. It is difficult to tell whether he in fact took out his portable equipment to record these sides (and they certainly do not sound of good studio quality) or he simply manufactured the product in Oakland (again the label states it was manufactured by Oliver Records of Oakland, Calif.)

Galen Gart gives **Octive Records** (a label that ended up at **3919 Ocean View** in San Diego), an Ollie T. Hunt proprietorship in his ***American Record Label Directory*** (Big Nickel Pub.

1989). However, **Steve Propes** thinks that Hunt never owned Octive. This writer believes that the Octive label probably originated in Oakland and that Hunt and **King Perry** had some connection with the label when Los Angeles-based artists started to appear on it, i.e. the **Macedonians**, the **Flowers of Joy**, **John Hogg** and for a time **Jimmy Wilson**. It is not too long of a stretch to assume that Hunt could have recorded these artists for Octive at the same time he was selling some of his masters to the Bihari Brothers of **Modern Records** in Beverly Hills. Hunt had probably moved down permanently to L.A. by this time.

Ollie T. Hunt's last known label was **Trilyte**. **Mike Bauer** had some interesting remarks to make about Trilyte in his article for *American Music Magazine*, Issue 16/17 dated 2002. Bauer thinks that because the **Cholly** and **Trilyte** labels both looked the same in style and design, and due to the fact that Hunt and **Charles "Cholly" Williams** were friends, they probably went to a Japanese guy named **Minato** to have their pressings made. This was after being rejected by larger plants like **Monarch** and **Alco** who did not want to bother with small press runs.

Back to Ed Carter, a.k.a. Buddha Kahn, of the **Shantones** who says: "After Hunt recorded our record, which was in a ramshackle, makeshift studio in back of a storefront at Fifty-fourth and Western, he announced he was closing his studio for repairs. Shortly after this, Hunt pulled up stakes and was gone." Hunt left the Shantones high and dry. Interestingly, Hunt released five Trilyte singles during 1956. Each differed in musical style from the others. After Trilyte, Hunt faded into oblivion and probably devoted most of his time to selling masters and recording talent for the Bihari brothers.

The Artists:

Lafayette Thomas was the most influential guitarist in the Bay Area during the 1950s when he displayed his "space guitar" stylings behind Jimmy Wilson and others. He was himself inspired by his uncle, Jesse Thomas, who played with Lloyd Glenn. He waxed for Chess, Peacock, Modern, King and Jumping before going to Trilyte. The material probably came from Bob Geddins who had just recorded the atmospheric "Cockroach Run." "Weekly Blues" followed after "Cockroach Run," perfect both in mood and style. After "Weekly Blues," backed with the more widely popular "The Thing," Thomas recorded in Chicago for Chess Records.

The Paramount Gospel Singers were Hunt's first major Bay Area gospel quartet. Hunt even supervised a series of transcriptions for radio use. The Olliet recordings are the group's first and in all likelihood were made at the time baritone Paul Foster Snr. was in the group, although his name is not mentioned in discographies. The Paramounts, led by the awesome pipes of Tiny Powell, wrecked the church. The original group was formed in Austin, Texas and came to prominence there before World War II. They split up with some members moving out to the Bay Area in 1944.

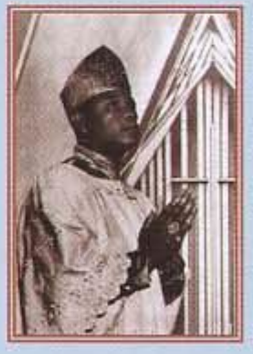
Jimmy Nelson was born in Philadelphia on April 7th, 1928 and moved out to Oakland around 1948 where he cut his first recordings for Olliet and GruV-Tone. Nelson made two records for Hunt. It is the second, "Jailhouse Love" on GruV-Tone that is impossible to find anywhere these days. After Hunt lost Nelson to the Bihari brothers at Modern in 1951, he continued to record him at The Clef Club in Richmond. Ollie T. Hunt's closest brush with fame was recording Nelson's big record "T99 Blues" for Modern Records in May 1951. "T99 Blues" reached the number six spot on the R&B charts in July 1951.

Rev. G.W. Killens was born in Louisiana in 1906. Killens held the singular distinction of being the first post-war gospel minister to be recorded in live service at the Oakland Auditorium where regular gospel programs were presented to the general public, but one hardly expected to find his regular congregation present. Hunt also leased

Killens' sides to his bosses at Modern Records. Later recordings, again recorded by Hunt, wound up on Imperial and Hollywood.

TOMMY JENKINS (or Jenkens) was the beautifully controlled lead singer with the Rising Stars of Berkeley, and Bob Geddins' first recorded artists at radio station K.R.E. Jenkins' one and only stab at secular music was "Freedom Choo Choo" or the civil rights song "Freedom Train Blues," beautifully accompanied by pianist **Naomi Mack** who demonstrated her talents playing "Tight Key Boogie" on the reverse. Jenkins was from Little Rock and died in obscurity not long after leaving the Rising Stars in the late 1940s.

THE REV. LOUIS H. NARCISSE was the self-appointed spiritualist and minister of The Mt. Zion Spiritual Temple on Fourteenth Street in Oakland (which only recently burned to the ground.) He was patronized by both common man and nobility and lived a life of regal splendor, showered by gifts of automobiles, finery and precious stones. A rift developed after his death between his family and senior members of his church over the division



of his spoils. Narcisse was one of the finest gospel singers ever to live in the Bay Area. His Olliet sides were probably first recorded by Hunt on Seventh Street in 1947, making them his earliest sides.

THE SPARTONAIRES hailed from Vallejo, the Bay Area city currently in bankruptcy, which is a good place to say that little is known of them except members included Danny Slaughter and Joe Willis, leads, Rev. Hightower, tenor, Walter Blair, baritone, and Victor Bass, bass. Dwayne Hill was their manager.

THE SWANEE RIVER QUARTET was one of the first quartets recorded by Hunt. The group was started by Archie Reynolds who quit to join the Paramounts after Paul Foster moved over to the Rising Stars. Many singers moved in and out of the group but Walter Green, long-time minister of St. Mark's Baptist Church on Valencia Street in San Francisco, was the group's central focus. Green grew up in New Orleans and sang in local quartets before relocating to the Bay Area during the War to work in the well-paying shipyards. He joined the Swanee Rivers as singer and manager in 1946 and for a short spell left and sang in the Gospel Voices of Shreveport.

Walter Green returned to the group around 1950. He continued to bring the group along and kept them in the acappella jubilee style up until it was impossible to find support for the idiom. The group on the 1945-1946 Olliet sides was composed of K. Scott, first tenor, R.B. Alexander, tenor, G. Latham, second tenor, Walter Green, tenor / preaching, J.C. Coney, baritone, and I. Wallace, basso. Hunt later sold Swanee River sides to Modern Records.

Lowell Fulson was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921. He learned to play rudimentary guitar from his uncle. Fulson started out playing one-key gospel songs in the holiness church in 1935. He joined singer Texas Alexander and traveled throughout Texas. After short spells back in Oklahoma and Gainsville, he joined the Navy and worked as a cook. In 1945, at War's end, he was stationed in Oakland and by chance bumped into Bob Geddins who ended up recording Fulson and his brother Martin for Big Town Records. He also made various deals hawking Fulson product to Gilt Edge and Swing Time.

Rev. Carl C. Anderson was first recorded by Hunt at his church, St. John's Missionary Baptist, in Oakland in 1948, a year after taking over the ministry. His previous services (which were always open to everyone of any color and walk of life) were held under canvas. Anderson broadcast for many years over KDIA on Sunday evenings. St. John's was referred to as "everybody's church" with a congregation of over two and a half thousand. As well as sermonizing, Anderson sang to Callie J. Greer's piano accompaniment. Later sides, paid for by the church, were supported by the Echoes of Zion Choir of Oakland.

The Flowers of Joy were founded in Los Angeles by Bedile Goldsmith and his son Bedile Jnr. Other members of the group included Arthur Buckholder, Johnny L. White and James Campbell. They cut only one record for Hunt in 1951. Joe Dean who became lead singer of the Paramount Singers also sang for a spell in the group. Goldsmith Snr. organized the original Mighty Clouds of Joy after the Flowers of Joy disbanded.

Little is known about Texas singer **John Hogg**, cousin of Smokey Hogg, except he cut only two records, one for Mercury in 1950 and the second (a more countrified effort) for Oetive a year later, where he accompanied himself on guitar. He formed a band with pianist Mac Willis which lasted throughout the 1960s.

RAY AGEE was born April 10th, 1930 in Dixon Mills, Alabama. Agee sang with his brothers in his family gospel quartet before moving out to California's Long Beach to find work with them. The quartet, attached to the Second Baptist Church there built a popular statewide reputation but never recorded. In 1940 the Agee brothers moved back to Alabama and Ray formed another short-lived quartet, then moved to Birmingham. He came out to L.A. by himself and started singing in small clubs. He commenced his recording career with the Richard Brown Orchestra and waxed for Queen and Modern before moving to Aladdin with the support of the Maxwell Davis Orchestra. Changing names to Ray Agie, he recorded one single for Hunt in 1952. He went on to wax for nearly two dozen labels but never gained the nationwide success his talents deserved.

CHARLES MINGUS JNR. was born in Nogales, Arizona in April, 1922 and died in Mexico in 1979. He was raised in L.A.'s Watts section. Taking up music, he switched from cello to bass under Red Callender. He started composing in the late 1930s and got into the music business when he joined Buddy Collett. After stints with Lee Young, Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, Alvino Rey and Lionel Hampton (with whom he first recorded), Mingus cut two records for Fentone waxed in February 1949, billed as "Barron" Mingus. The first, "The Story Of Love," was with the Symphonic Airs, a group made up of almost twenty musicians including Cal Tjader. The idea was to incorporate symphonic orchestral arrangements into jazz (rather like Third Stream later on.)

The second song, "Lyon's Roar," recorded in the same month and year utilizing four musicians including the great Herb "Owl" Caro on baritone sax, gave us a dose of straight ahead bop. Both were recorded by Hunt and his portable set-up. Hunt might well have engineered Mingus's March 1949 date for John Dolphin's Dolphins-of-Hollywood label.

THE SHANTONES were formed out of students at Manual Arts High and Berendo Junior High in L.A. The group consisted of first tenor Eddie Williams, his brother Tommy or "Buster" (who later went with the Gassers), second tenor, Earl Walker, baritone Vince Williams and basso Ed Carter (a.k.a. Buddha Kahn). Jazz violinist Stuff Smith had introduced Carter to Percy Mayfield who had cut some sides for Hunt at GruV-Tone on San Pablo Avenue in Oakland at the start of his recording career. Mayfield encouraged the Shantones to go see Hunt who was less than enthusiastic about getting into street corner music. The group waxed only one record, "Come To Me" / "Little Girl," which was pressed up in only one hundred copies, just three of which are known to have survived to this day. They command the princely sum of five thousand dollars or more in the collectors' market. Copies were

sent to local deejays and the group managed to find work for four or five years before breaking up. Carter went with the Medallions, Eddie Williams briefly joined the Jaguars and Hollywood Flames and others stayed in the music business into the 1960s. The Shantones were a first-rate harmony group which explains why their rare release commands such an extravagant price.

KING PERRY was born in Gary, Indiana in 1920. A child prodigy, he learnt how to play violin, bass violin, trumpet, drums and piano. He later added vocals, clarinet and alto sax, the latter being inspired by Johnny Hodges. He formed his own swing outfit, The King Perry Quintet, during the War, moved to L.A. and recorded for Melodisc in 1945. The Quintet evolved into the King Perry Pied Pipers. In 1947, billed as King Perry & His Orchestra, he waxed for Excelsior on North Fairfax and with vocalist Duke Henderson for United Artists. After L.A. sessions for De Luxe, Specialty (where he was thought to have enjoyed a 10" album), Dot, RPM, Lucky, Hollywood and Look, he found himself on Trilyte in 1955. His final release was on Unique. The Look, Trilyte and Unique releases might well have come from the same session. Hunt could well have recorded all three releases.

Perry retired from the music business and took to selling real estate. He returned to music after moving to Bakersfield in 1967. His last sides were cut for the rejuvenated Octive label during the 1970s, but we do not know whether Ollie Hunt was involved.

"PEE WEE" CRAYTON, born Connie Curtis Crayton on December 18th , 1914, hailed from Rockdale, Texas. His dad gave him his nickname, "Pee Wee". After various menial jobs he moved out to Los Angeles in 1935. Unable to find good-paying blue collar employment, he moved to Oakland in 1941 where he found a better paying job at the Naval Supply Depot. Inspired by a visit by guitar ace T-Bone Walker, Crayton took guitar lessons and joined the same band as Johnny Otis, Count Otis Matthews. In 1954, he played with Ivory Joe Hunter and appeared on some of his Pacific sides.

In 1947, Hunt recorded Crayton & His Band, the Four Kings, either at Slim Jenkins on West Seventh Street in Oakland or at his studio on San Pablo Avenue. Four charts were recorded. One release was issued by Bill McCall on Four Star Records and a second emerged on Gruv (or GruV-Tone). The Four Kings were Buddy Floyd, tenor sax, David Lee Johnson, piano, Bill Davis, bass, and "Candy" Charles Johnson on drums. Hunt's release featured the songs "Don't Ever Fall In Love" and "Pee Wee's Special," an instrumental (neither included here.) Pee Wee Crayton died on June 25th , 1985.

Around this period in time, Hunt recorded Crayton's Beaumont, Texas-born pianist, DAVID LEE JOHNSON in San Francisco with Alfred S. Levy on guitar support. Nothing more is known about Johnson.

Singer / legend **Percy Mayfield** was born in Minden, Louisiana on August 12th, 1920 and died in Los Angeles on August 11th, 1984. Ollie T. Hunt holds the singular distinction of having recorded some of Mayfield's very earliest recordings in 1946. It is not known whether or not songs from this date were also sold to Al Patrick of Supreme Records on East Jefferson in L.A. We do know that "Two Years Of Torture" first appeared on Hunt's GruV-Tone imprint. The song sounds as if it is backed by the Monroe Tucker Band, although "Jack You Ain't Nowhere" sounds as if it is supported by a smaller combo.

After the success of "Two Years Of Torture", Patrick who then held Mayfield's contract, kept him for two years before Art Rupe at Specialty was able to secure his contract. It was worth the wait. Mayfield hit pay-dirt with a song from his first session, "Please Send Me Someone To Love" which climbed all the way to the number one spot in October 1950 after twenty-seven weeks on Billboard's R&B chart. Mayfield must have been very pleased with Hunt who in the very least gave him his start.

No information is available on any of the other artists here, but we would welcome any input. Ollie T. Hunt may have proprietored other small labels. It might be that he had less to do with the Octive label than surmised. It is simply extraordinary that a man responsible for so much recording activity over a lengthy period in time can be so lost to us. His Trilyte label material was collectable and drew some attention, yet because of short press runs and no effective national visibility (he never paid for ads in the trades), he became an invisible man. My sense is that Ollie T. Hunt was more of a back-room, hands-on person who enjoyed the technical aspect of making a record over the success of effectively marketing it. His skills kept him from ever worrying about not making enough money to pay the bills. I sincerely hope that someone reading this will be able to correct the inaccuracies and fill in the blanks.

- Opal Louis Nations, May 2008

Special thanks to **Dan Kochakian, Victor Pearlin, Mark Carrodus, Buddha Kahn, Steve Propes, Eric Le Blanc, Chris Smith, Mike Bauer** and others for their help.