

A true tradition bearers of the blues in Mississippi When I was on my way to Mississippi in April 2007 to play at Clarksdale's Juke Joint Festival, I did a little research if there were any older acoustic blues musicians still around Clarksdale. I got the tip by Adam Gussow, harmonica player who plays with New York street blues musicians Satan; I would look up Bill Abel in the Clarksdale area. "Bill knows everyone and has played with everyone," said Adam. He also said that Bill was one of the younger generation bluesmen who played acoustic and electric guitar, and who had the real origin of the sound. He said that all the older guys played only electric guitar. Bill had played with Paul "Wine" Jones in Belzoni, where he grew up. I decided to ask for the bill during the Juke Joint Festival. I knew from the program that he would play there. I saw a picture of him on the Internet and decided to look out. One of the major items on the program that I did not want to miss the opening ceremony of the Muddy Waters cabin (cabin), as part of the Mississippi Blues Trail project. This project consists of an ongoing effort to create a natural route through the blues history. Erecting road signs that celebrates local blues artists, and historic sites does this. Honeyboy Edwards could play at the opening ceremony. I was there early and waited patiently for the main guest. When Honeyboy showed up a little late - quite acceptable with the idea of his 90+ age - so helped a bearded and long-haired man with him to tune the guitar and attend to the sound. That need was Bill Abel, I thought.

After everyone had gone, so I stayed on and began talking with Bill, and the frank Mississippi Musicians he is, he invited me to play with him at Club 2000 later in the evening. It was the beginning of a friendship and musical journey for me, and I decided to try to convey Bill's amazing talent to Jefferson's readers. Bill is a musician, singer, artist and ceramist. He sells paintings and ceramic, play music, and recordings to support his family. His big old house in Duncan, Mississippi is filled with art and pottery. There, he also has his Big Toe Studio. Bill goes out of his old Volvo 740 Combi filled with recording devices to record the Mississippi blues musician Jeff Konkels label Broke & Hungry, which is based in St. Louis, Missouri. The acclaimed film (and the Blues Music Award 2009 winner) M for Mississippi shows how hard Bill works. He's in the film along with Cadillac John and recorded all the sound for the film and its two CDs. He has also recorded the latest T-Model Ford ROM Mudpuppy Records in Athens, GeorgiOn the album art says that the Bill only recording and sometimes musician, but in fact he is also a producer, even though he is not mentioned. I was on the set of T-Model and saw how Bill worked with him. I understood then that Bill uses his own experience as a musician to bring out what he wants from the musicians he records. He has the ability to make them feel at home and relaxed, he works with and lures to get them to remember songs and games sessions. On this occasion, he also kompade T Model. It is usually Bill that fixes filming locations, he knows all the musicians, gathers them together and ensures that the recording at all takes place. And it is not always easy in Mississippi where the clock hardly exists! Bill Abel and I sat on an October after a few festival gigs and recordings with Sam Carr and puffed out in Bill's living in Duncan, Mississippi. There, Bill began telling about himself and his music. Bill played guitar as a youth in Belzoni but was not aware of the area's original blues until later in life. He played in several rock groups and was a "longhaired redneck" as he describes it. The phrase is difficult to translate, but means something like "a white-haired conservative type". He acted up a lot

and told some funny stories about car chases with the police at his heels in Belzoni. Later in life, he was a blues festival in Greenville in 1982 and discovered there was a whole generation of older black men in the area who had played and were still playing the blues origins, though nowadays most of guitars. At the festival, he saw the likes of Sam Chatmon, Son Thomas, Johnny Shines, and Eugene Powell (Sonny Boy Nelson). One of the local blues guys in Belzoni, Paul "Wine" Jones, Bill throughout his childhood seen tottering around, but he always regarded as an alcoholic elderly man. Bill learned that Paul was a popular musician in the juke joints. He sought out Paul in 1985 and wanted to learn to play like he did. Paul took Bill under his protection, and he had to start playing bass with Paul. Bill himself says: "In the beginning I did not know much about the music and not how I would play it. It was very simple bass lines. It took a long time for me to learn to play Paul's music." He continued: "There were two of Paul's friends who also played with us, Tommy Hollins and WH Lowe. We played together to and from the juke joints in people's gardens, and often in front of a place called West Side Grocery. All gigs was in or about Belzoni. Later, in 2000, I started a band with Tommy Hollins and WH Lowe. We played at many juke joints, including Paul's sister's juke joint, The White Eagle, in Yazoo City and another named Shaka's Lounge. " "Paul often played with us, and we took turns to who would sing or play. A guy named Jimmy Jones or Jimmy Johnson played with us at the time - he was a white-haired old man who then moved up to Chicago. His sister and nephew played drums with Buddy Guy. Jimmy hung in Buddy Guy's circuit in Chicago and sometimes played with him. But Jimmy said that he, when he was so old, had ended as a musician. But once he got started, it was really good and veered sharply! I also played with David Lee Durham during that time at Club Ebony in Indianola, Mississippi in three years and juke joints in Choctaw, Mississippi, and Johnson's Grocery in Shaw, Mississippi. When I had a gig at Johnson's, there was a police raid and the place was closed after it. ""It started when someone shot a gun off the site and the police came. All were forced to raise their hands in the air, including the entire band. The police chief looked at me and asked what I, a white guy, did there. The owners had illegally ma venue in a room behind the room and the owner had come to quarrel with the chief of police in the day of something completely different. He had been involved in illegal gambling there for 30 years and no one had bothered before, but on that particular day, it was out of place. " "I met with Cadillac John Nolden by Monroe Jones around 2000. Monroe said he had a friend who needed to have someone to play with, so I went over to John Cleveland and jammed. There was no one who understood his music and timing and therefore he rarely played with anyone. But I knew he was playing on an old-fashioned way, with a lot of air in the music and a fantastic feeling. " Bill and John are still playing as a duo, and has so far made a record together, Crazy About You. "I also played with Monroe part, but did not begin with solo performances himself until 2000. I played with Paul from 1985 to 2005 when he died. After that I started to play with others in jam or musicians in their band. T-Model Ford, Sam Carr, George Brock, Honeyboy Edwards, Hubert Sumlin, Robert Belfour and with Henry Townsend up in Chicago when Honeyboy invited me to his birthday party at a club there. "Bill says that he plays the older blues, but with the mean today's musicians in Mississippi the raw blues after World War II, not "pre-war" blues that we in Europe call the older blues. Bill says that Paul was like Charley Patton, both in his way of playing, be and talk. Raw and aggressive. He played all the strings and dug deep in the notes to the

depths of the blues. Bill thinks Cadillac John is special because there are so few older harmonica players left in the Delta area. Some, however, are in the range of Bentonia, as Bids Spires. "John has so much air in their music, it is evident in the way he phrases of alternations between harmonica and vocals.... he can let the notes fade out and then you can just stamp your feet and wait for him. John's voice is linked to the old blues and gospel that is filled with feeling. Therefore, he is so funny and enjoyable to play with. " Bill's own music is a tribute to the country and delta blues, but he also writes her own songs that feel like cast in the Delta. His guitar style is obviously influenced by Paul "Wine" Jones, but he can be many and is a whiz at Charley Patton Songs! Bill occurs every year on the streets at the King Biscuit Festival as a "one-man band" as well as working a lot with Cadillac John. Bill has performed at many festivals in the United States and some in Europe. He will play himself and along with Cadillac John, T-Model Ford, and Bert Deivert at the 2010's edition of Amal's Blues Fest and Göteborg Blues Party. Do not miss him! <http://www.birthplaceoftheblues.com/bluesmen.htm>