

ROBERT LEROY JOHNSON

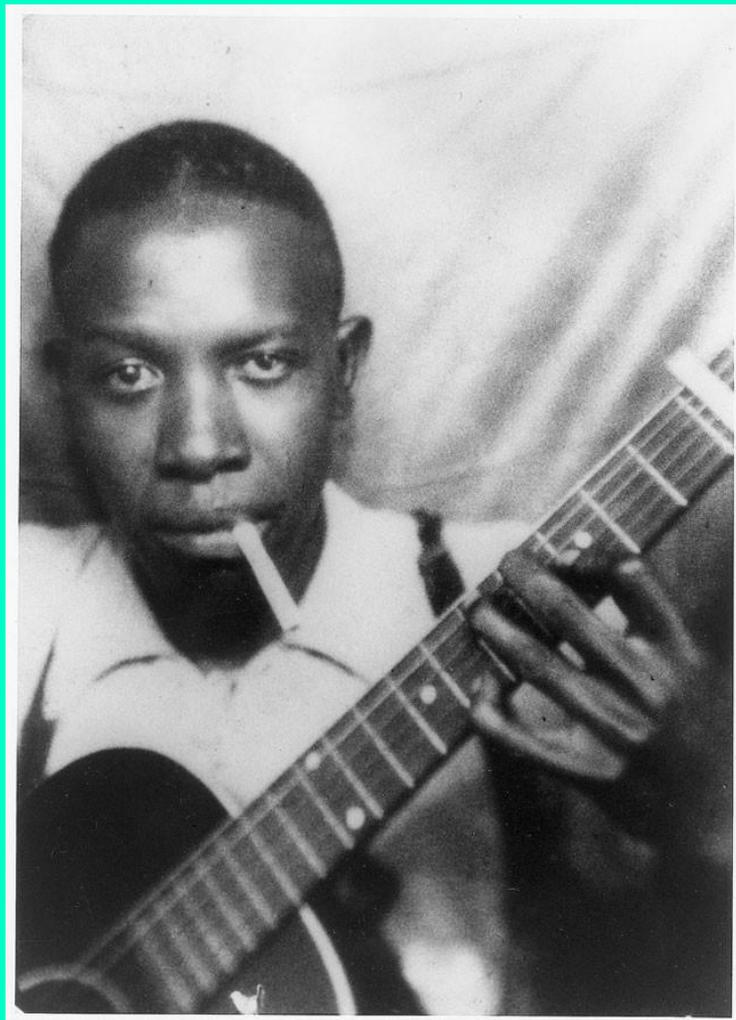
May 8, 1911-August 16, 1938

EARLY YEARS

- born on May 8th, 1911 in Hazlehurst, Mississippi
- mother was Julia Major Dodds and his father was Noah Johnson
- His mother was married to a man named Charles Dodds
- He was kicked out of the city by locals and moved to Memphis, which is where Robert and his mother would move in 1913
- 3 years after moving, Robert would attend St. Peter's elementary school

EARLY YEARS CONTINUED

- Older brother Leroy spent time in many music establishments and played guitar in these areas.
- Leroy had taught Robert the basics of Guitar
- 1920: living with his mother and her new husband. This is when he would begin to attend the Indian Creek school in Commerce, Mississippi.



CAREER

- Started in 1928 when he learned his first guitar song “I’m Gonna Sit Down And Tell My Mama”
- 1931: he went to look for his birth father, Noah, and ended up meeting Ike Zimmerman who took him home and taught him guitar.
- Between 1932 and 1938 he would move between big and small cities
- While doing so he met Johnny Shines
- He had actually ended up convincing him to return to the world of music. Him and Robert would travel North and South and would appear on several radio shows together.

CAREER CONTINUED

- Once Johnson Decided he wanted to record, he had approached H. C. Speirs, a white record store owner in Jackson, MS. Speirs had had Robert go to meet with Ernie Oertle who had been an ARC scout.
- His first recording session was in 1936, where he recorded 'Come On In My Kitchen', 'Kind Hearted Woman Blues' and 'Terraplane Blues'
- <https://youtu.be/iigXKpgrfYo>

MAJOR WORKS

- He had had many works throughout his life but there were 2 major ones:
 - “Terraplane Blues”
 - “Hellhound on my Trail”
- “Hellhound on my Trail” is considered to be his greatest hit to date and is inducted in the Blues Foundation Hall Of Fame
- <https://youtu.be/0HAIgpih86E>

AWARDS

- His song "Cross Road Blues" has been inducted in the Grammy Hall of Fame.
- 4 of his songs are included in the top 500 songs that shaped rock and roll in The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- The Complete Recordings had won The Blues Foundation Award in 1991.
- Overall, he had been inducted into the Blues Hall Of Fame, Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame, and the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame, and in 2006 presented the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

FAMILY

- Never had any children
- First wife had died during childbirth (Virginia Travis)
- Married Calleta Craft later in life but left her to pursue music and have relationships with the numerous women he would meet while creating music.
- A man named Robert Junior Lockwood who claimed he was Johnson's son with one of his girlfriends, but there is little evidence on all of this.

DEATH

- Robert Johnson died on August 16, 1938. There is little evidence to how this exactly happened as well, but the main thing people had found little evidence for was a poisoning. Many believed he had been poisoned in one of his drinks by one of his ex girlfriends jealous boyfriend because he claimed that Robert was getting too close to her. Along with this being unknown he place where he died and where he is buried is also unknown. He has 3 different grave sites.

LEGACY

- He was known as The King Of Delta Blues.
- His music expanded greatly to the point where some of the greatest rockstars in history, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, all sing his praise and have all recorded his songs.
- Keith Richards once asked “You want to know how good the blues can get?” and then answering his own question: “Well, this is it.”(referring to Robert Johnson). Eric Clapton, however, put it more plainly: “I have never found anything more deeply soulful than Robert Johnson.”

ACTIVITY

I'm going to show you some lyrics with a section missing and you have to listen and try to fill in what the section says

RAMBLIN ON MY MIND

“Runnin' down to the station, catch the first

”

<https://youtu.be/CRnzBm1wNFo?t=1m25s>

LAST FAIR DEAL GONE DOWN

“She wouldn't cry, but _____”

<https://youtu.be/fHv0wU8Rnyg?t=35s>

I'M A STEADY ROLLIN MAN

“But I haven't got no _____
Boys to be rollin this way”

<https://youtu.be/OxXczXbTbdQ?t=30s>

ME AND THE DEVIL BLUES

“You may bury my body, down by_____”

<https://youtu.be/3MCHI23FTP8?t=1m55s>