

1920. Cautiously, only two more titles were recorded at the session, the first being Crazy Blues coupled with It's Right Here For You (if You Don't Get it 'Taint No Fault O' Mine). The session was a milestone for African-American music with the recording of Crazy Blues being generally acknowledged as the first Blues record to have been made. Released two months after its recording, the record proved to be an instant hit and the release was significant enough for there to be additional issues, in effect re-issues both on the Odeon label in Germany and the Phonola label which was a short-lived Okeh subsidiary label based in Canada.

Apart from the record companies often issuing recordings more or less simultaneously, on two or more labels as they aimed at different levels of the market, they began, as time went on, to re-issue recordings which had already proved to be successful. For example, it was common practice for Columbia to re-issue recordings as long as ten years after their origin issue.

The end of the Second World War marked the end of African-American music. Blues, Jazz and Gospel music had moved on and it was Rhythm and Blues, Be-bop and Swing which were the driving forces of their development. So significant were the changes over just a few years that Blues recordings are historically split into two distinct time periods still referred to as 'Pre and Post War'. There has not been such a historical benchmark made in the history of Blues recordings, on such a great scale since. It is quite remarkable that both eras are given an equal amount of importance yet there were only twenty one years of recording activity prior to the U.S.A. entering into the Second World War, compared to the following fifty seven years to the time of writing.

By the late 1940s the halcyon days of 'Classic' and 'Country Blues' recordings of the Pre-war era were history. Even so recordings from the period were still being marketed by the record companies. These were sometimes presented as sets of four or six reissued 78s. The records, in their sleeves, would be bound together by a stiff card, book-like cover, back and spine often with very attractive, period artwork on the cover. This sort of presentation had been widely used for classical recordings and the book-like format gave rise to the term "Album" for a series of recordings of some length. The best of these records by such successful recording artists as Bertha "Chippie" Hill, Lonnie Johnson and Albert Ammons were forerunners to the popular box sets of today. Such sets, particularly those featuring vintage Blues music, were few and far between. One can only imagine that the argument for putting the back-catalogues of the old Blues, "race" music, into the cellars and turning the lights out, perhaps for good, was going heavily in the favour of the major record companies.

Yet, during the 1940's the collectors hung on and began to take things into their own hands. Several small, independent labels appeared on 78's resulting from the dedicated ambitions of record collectors, music interest groups and societies. Some of the most active of these labels were in Europe. Presumably this was because of the sheer rarity of the Europeans getting their hands on an original 78 or seeing a "live" performance of blues music.

The lobbying of the European Jazz Societies had been effective to an extent on the major record companies who, as a result began to delve into their archives. Proud statements were duly printed on some reissues such as "(Recorded In 1922) Selected by the British Hot Record Society" which underlined titles performed by King Oliver's Creole Band and reissued by Brunswick. Also on Brunswick for their 'Golden Era of Jazz Series' were Red Nichols sides which announced on the label "(Selected by Collector's Corner - 'Melody Maker)". Blues recordings were also being reissued in Britain not long after their original release in the U.S.A.. Drop Down Mama coupled with Married. Woman Blues appeared on the Brunswick label. Regal Zonophone released the Memphis Jug Band's Kansas City Blues coupled with K.C. Moan, an issue which has now become extremely rare. One of the most extraordinary choices for reissue was Black Diamond Express To Hell, a two part sermon led by the Rev. A. W. Nix followed by singing from his congregation. The record was released in the UK by Decca in the early 1950's nearly twenty-five years after its original recording. But the societies with many members who held very impressive collections, were also prepared to go it alone and in doing so, with such labels as Tempo and the Jazz Society they offered vintage blues music a lifeline. Nevertheless, despite the best intentions of the societies, whose main patronage came from the Jazz collectors of the 1940's, to hear a vintage blues recording was still a rare experience.