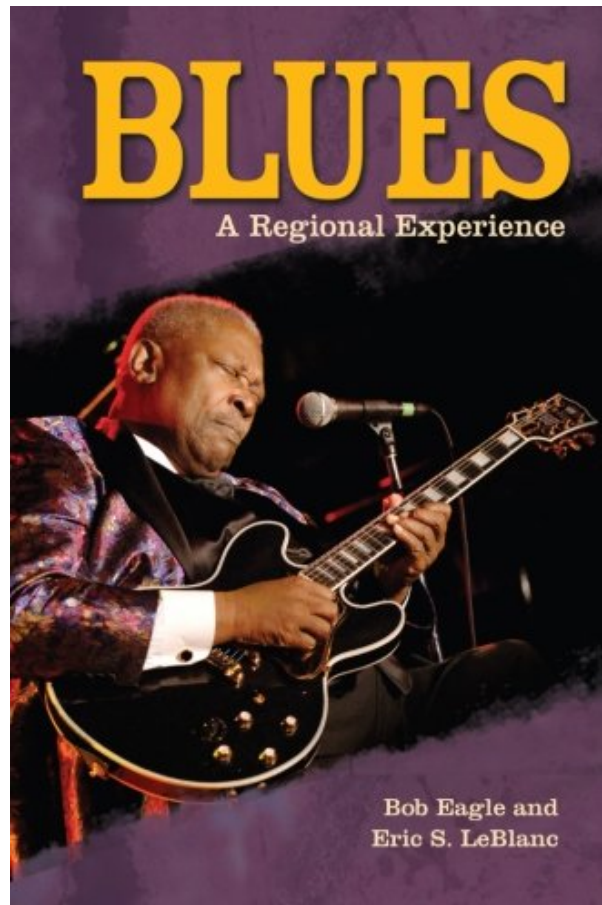
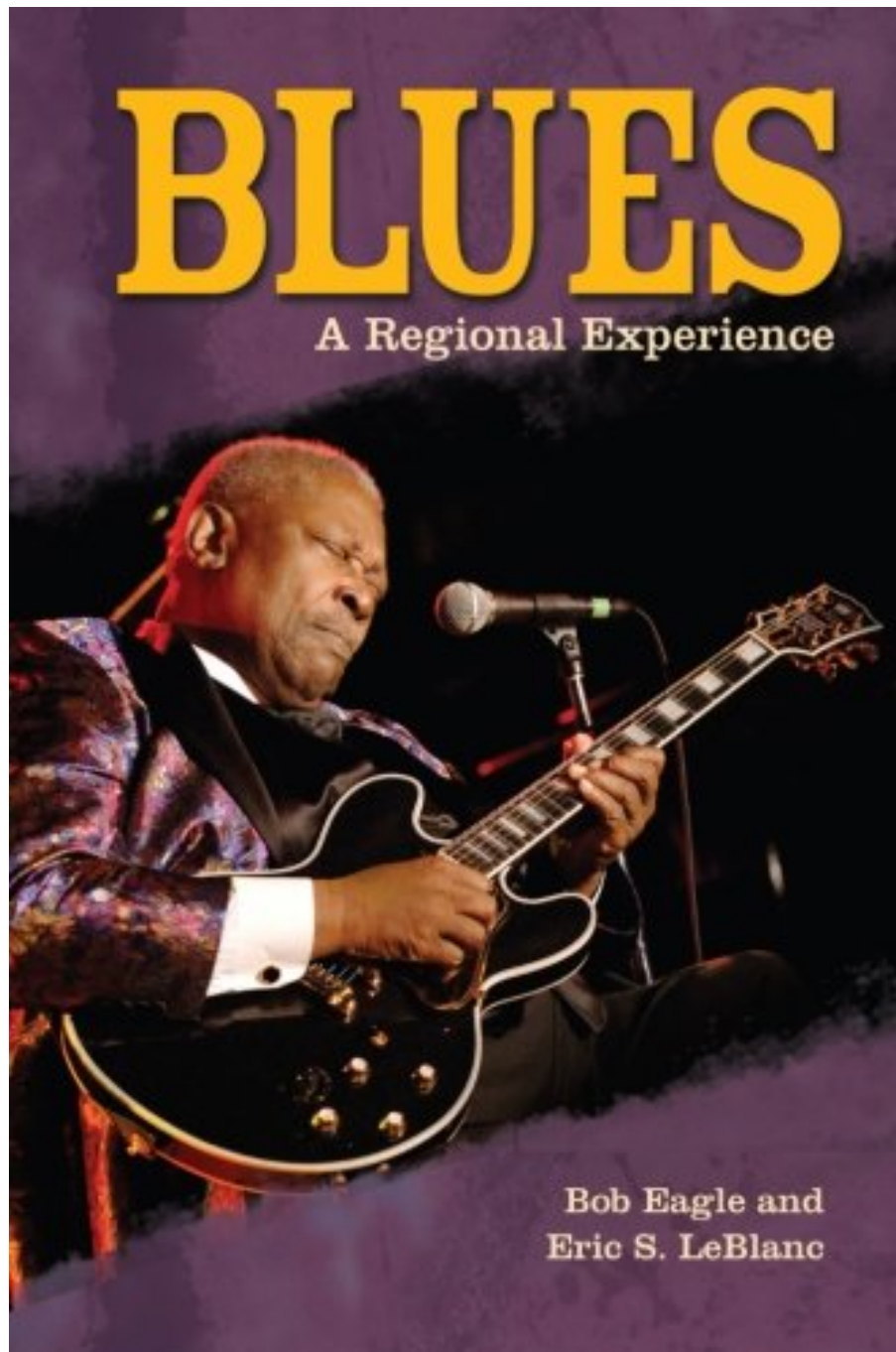


BLUES: A REGIONAL EXPERIENCE BY ERIC LEBLANC



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Review

"Blues: A Regional Experience should be purchased by every library and by every blues researcher." - Notes: Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association

"A valuable reference book for any blues researcher and an interesting approach to rethinking arbitrary categories." - Living Blues

"A Selected Artists CD discography and a bibliography complete the offer. It is difficult to imagine that anyone can possibly write seriously about blues in the future without this book at their elbow. It's an absolute classic and absolutely indispensable." - Names and Numbers

About the Author

Bob Eagle is an independent scholar in Australia. He is a contributor to the Encyclopedia of Blues and Gospel Music.

Eric S. LeBlanc is an instructor at the Victoria Conservatory of Music in Canada.

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BLUES: A REGIONAL EXPERIENCE BY ERIC LEBLANC PDF

Examining the blues genre by region, and describing the differences unique to each, make this a must-have for music scholars and lay readers alike.

- Demonstrates the extensive contributions of African Americans to American music and culture
- Supplies chapters on regions that include entries on the lives and contributions of individual blues musicians in particular areas of the United States, painting a colorful "map" of the development of blues music
- Draws upon extensive archival research, such as Social Security death records, to establish fundamental facts and correct myths concerning blues musicians
- Sales Rank: #2389384 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Praeger
- Published on: 2013-05-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.42" w x 6.12" l, 2.60 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 598 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Most helpful customer reviews

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL IF YOU'RE A SERIOUS BLUES FAN

By paul vernon

Bob Eagle & Eric LeBlanc's book has been in gestation since the 1960's, when they started doing this research, so the fruits presented to us here are exceedingly bountiful. Nearly 600 pages jam packed with heavy duty facts'n'info that allow you to browse by state, by eco-region (ie by local culture and ignoring state boundaries which makes a lot more sense and sets the tone for the whole project). OR you can browse by date of birth OR you can just look up someone (almost anyone, it seems..) in the very thorough index. What this means is that you now, for the first time, have a serious piece of Blues Genealogy at your fingertips, the like of which has never been attempted before. The authors have also included a separate section for the woefully overlooked Vaudeville artists, making this probably the single most useful resource for that era. In many cases ancillary and very handy information is also contained in an artists entry along with the bare bones of birth, marriage(s) death etc. The only issue I have with it (and this is NOT the authors fault) is in the publisher's somewhat odd marketing approach; It's a hardback, which is nice, but the cover is purple and features a recent photo of BB King on the front. It therefore looks at first glance like the latest edition of the All Muzic Guide to Da Blooze. It honestly deserved a far better presentation; it ought to have been packaged like BGR, next to which it should automatically sit on your shelves as soon as you get it- and it IS that important IMHO....I could witter on much further but I don't need to; here's the deal; BUY IT or I'll send the lads round to persuade you of the error of your ways

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Essential and flawed

By Joseph Scott

This book is the result of an immense amount of hard work. Dates and locations of birth and death of a huge number of blues artists are given. That's why it is an _essential_ purchase for any serious blues researcher.

It should be noted that the commentary (as opposed to the artist entries) is generally not particularly reliable, and often not reliable at all. I would recommend that any young, serious fan of the blues literally ignore this book's commentary.

As a random example: If according to Gayle Dean Wardlow's research, Sam Collins played and lived in southern Mississippi, and also ever visited Kentucky, why do the authors volunteer "Another example [of a mistake] is to identify Kentucky-based Sam Collins as a Mississippi performer...." in a brief section early on in the commentary purporting to illustrate that the authors are more careful in their approach to regionalism than others are? Eagle's friend Sheldon Harris identified Collins as born in 1887 and active in southern Mississippi in his similar, 700-page-plus reference work published in the 1970s. Collins isn't listed in the index to this book.

As another random example: the dedicated researcher of black folk music Newman White had it figured out in the 1920s that 16-bar AAAB songs had been popular and accepted as blues as of about the 1910s. The authors' one-sentence attempt to describe 16-bar blues songs conflates them with "blues ballads" (so-called "blues ballads" are also known as bad man ballads), and pointlessly brings up a supposed particular association of these 16-bar blues with white performers. How much does the fact that the black performers Blind Lemon Jefferson, Rev. Gary Davis, Furry Lewis, Skip James, Johnie Lewis, Big Bill Broonzy, Thomas Shaw, Leadbelly, Mississippi John Hurt, Bo Carter, L.V. Thomas, Peg Leg Howell, Pink Anderson, Bobby

Grant, Will Shade, Henry Thomas, John Bray, Will Chastain, William Harris, Tom Bell, Barbecue Bob, Butch Cage, Tom Johnson, James Lowry, Willie Hill, Marshall Owens, James Diggs, Jim Baxter, John Cephas, Johnny Watson, Blind Willie McTell, Henry Johnson, Edward Thompson, William Moore, Texas Alexander, Edna Johnson, Cecil Barfield, Tom Bradford, Bob Coleman, Elizabeth Johnson, Thomas Burt, John Jackson, Elizabeth Cotten, Blind Boy Fuller, Charley Jordan, Reese Crenshaw, Walter Vinson, Mance Lipscomb, Jesse Fuller, Lucille Bogan, Big Boy Cleveland, Sam Butler, Lightnin' Hopkins, Dorothy Baker, Lesley Riddle, Isaiah Ross, Sonny Terry, and Wiley Barner, among others, performed 16-bar blues with repetitive lines of lyrics within the stanza (most often AAAB) have to do with white artists? Those black songs evolved out of earlier black songs similar to the 16-bar AAAB variant of "Poor Boy Long Ways From Home" that Emmet Kennedy heard blacks sing in Gretna, Louisiana by about 1905.

As a third random example, in the "vaudeville era" section, there is an attempt at a discussion of supposed evidence of blues origins in Mississippi earlier than in Texas. By the way, once blues music existed, there was actually no era that was a "vaudeville era" and not an era when countless non-vaudeville blues artists were also performing: "vaudeville era" is literally meaningless in the context of this book. To what extent does e.g. Peg Leg Howell learning songs in the country and in jail and performing them on the streets and in parks, to what extent does Peg Leg Howell's music being "of special interest because they clearly represent the transition from old songs, work songs and [folk] ballads, into blues" (Paul Oliver has written), to what extent does that mean Howell belongs in a "vaudeville" section?? Anyway, that discussion comparing Mississippi to Texas reads like a blues article from four decades ago, does not take into account modern research into where blues music was before 1911 -- e.g., Antonio Maggio recalled that he heard a black guitarist play a 12-bar strain with "Blues" in its title in Louisiana in 1907, and Kid Love was performing "Easton Blues" in Texas in 1910.

Howard Odum and E.C. Perrow's collecting of black folk songs from before 1910 shows a correlation between the earliest known folk blues lyrics and mentioning being being arrested or in jail. W.C. Handy, who was born in 1873, wrote in 1919 (emphasis added): "[I]t is from the levee camps, the mines, the plantations and other places where the laborer works that these snatches of melody originate." On another occasion he recalled that the 12-bar harmonic form associated with the blues had been used before him by "Negro roustabouts, honky-tonk piano players, wanderers and others of the underprivileged but undaunted class." Mary Wheeler's collecting shows that songs similar to the "Got No More Home Than A Dog" that Handy recalled hearing well before 1900 (in Indiana) were sung by river roustabouts. Handy wrote: "Clarksdale was eighteen miles from the river, but that was no distance for roustabouts. They came in the evenings and on days when they were not loading boats. With them they brought the legendary songs of the river." The earliest published partly 12-bar "Blues" is from Louisiana. The earliest known reference to "blues" as a type of music, referring to a different tune, is also from Louisiana. The second-earliest known reference to "blues" as a type of music is from an Indiana newspaper describing a performer who was currently in Florida and had recently been in west Tennessee. Elbert Bowman heard a variant of "K.C. Moan" sung by black construction workers in Tennessee by 1905. Taking all that into consideration, note that the authors of this book illustrate a preoccupation with cotton fields in particular in this book. Why? Because one or both have been influenced by Alan Lomax, who actually wrote as early as the 1940s that he thought the fertility of the soil in the Delta had to do with musical fertility (!), was influential on other writers for decades, and admitted in the 1990s that his work had been affected by the fact that he was a "romantic"? (There is no actual evidence at all that blues music originated in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta. Lomax was extremely influential when he pretended otherwise anyway.)

If you personally care about doing your own research into blues history, by all means buy this book, and keep in mind the dates of birth listed for people like Andrew Baxter, Will Slayden, John Bray, Leadbelly,

Henry Sims, Hosea Woods, Cow Cow Davenport, Bo Carter, Jesse Fuller, and many, many others when analyzing the chronology of blues history. Definitely don't expect to learn that John Hurt or Hacksaw Harney played similarly to Elizabeth Cotten or Willie Walker, or that Andrew Baxter knew a similar song to one Will Shade knew, because of what region they lived in. Because that's not why. Songs and other tunes traveled across the South fast. Blacks worked on boats, trains, traveled looking for work (levee work, turpentine camps, etc.), learned songs in honky-tonks, and then there were Handy's (and Odum's) wanderers, too. Songs traveled fast across the South -- and up and down the Mississippi/Ohio Rivers -- well before about 1907 (when the black folk songs about having the quote "blues" arise into our view), and just before about 1907, and just after about 1907, and long after about 1907. (B.B. King says himself that the artists who influenced him most weren't from his region.) Regionalism has been overrated as important to understanding blues and pre-blues for many decades, and this book is very much more of the same in that regard. Chronology is very, very important to understanding what went on, and if you're interested in the likes of Andrew and Jim Baxter's "K.C. Railroad Blues" in its historical context, this book can help you on that by telling you when they were born. (It doesn't try to tell you much at all about most artists' careers.)

In addition to being traditional with regard to an overemphasis on regionalism, the book is also traditional in almost entirely ignoring white artists on principle, so if you'd like to do anything like notice that "Georgia Blues" by Samantha Bumgarner (who was about 24 years older than Son House) is similar to John Snipes' "Going Away From Home," or that "Goin' Where The Climate Suits My Clothes" by John Carson (who was about 29 years older than Son House) can give us similar context on black music, or ditto with a related tune that George Walburn (who was about 15 years older than Son House) knew, or learn about Wade Ward (who was about 10 years older than Son House) who recorded vocal and instrumental versions of the "Chilly Winds" family of songs that W.C. Handy and others have written about as very early, and so on, naturally you'll have to find a book that doesn't almost entirely ignore artists on principle for being white. (Elvis Presley is included.)

Use all the great nuggets, the result of a ton of hard work, in this book as starting points for your own research. And whatever you do, don't assume an artist is of little importance in understanding early "real" blues just because he or she is for some mysterious reason listed in the "vaudeville" section. (And don't for some reason imagine that an artist is not important if not even mentioned in the book. Freeman Stowers and Washington Phillips, e.g., were both more than 25 years older than Robert Johnson and both made historically important, commercially released blues recordings.)

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A tour de force

By Dik de Heer

I agree with the previous two reviewers that this is an excellent book. The classification by ecoregion is an innovative and fruitful idea. But the most important contribution lies perhaps in the authors' approach to obtaining biographical data like birth and death dates and locations. Experience has taught us that we cannot always rely on the information supplied by the artists themselves, especially when it comes to their birth dates. With the help of [...], Eagle and LeBlanc have based their research on the original sources of official records of the USA, like the US Census and birth and marriage certificates. As a result, a lot of "existing wisdom" about the birth date and birthplace of many artists will have to be corrected.

The result of more than fifty years of research, this is a tour de force. An essential reference work.

Dik de Heer

Leiden, the Netherlands

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