

# The Amazing Secret History Of Elmore James: Uncovering the Life and Legacy of a Blues Legend

Elmore James, often referred to as the "King of the Slide Guitar," was a pioneering figure in the world of blues music. Born on January 27, 1918, in Holmes County, Mississippi, James' career spanned over two decades and left an indelible mark on the genre.

## A Humble Beginning

Elmore James grew up in poverty, a common struggle faced by many African Americans in the early 20th century. His family worked on a local plantation, where he was exposed to music from an early age. He would listen to the sounds of workers singing the blues as they toiled away in the fields, which deeply resonated with him.

At the age of 12, James received his first guitar as a gift from his older brother. It was a moment that would alter the course of his life forever. Inspired by the likes of Robert Johnson, an influential blues musician, James started to teach himself to play the guitar.



## The Amazing Secret History of Elmore James

by Steve Franz (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 50957 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 560 pages



## The Chicago Blues Scene

At the age of 27, Elmore James made his way to Chicago, the epicenter of the blues movement. It was here that he found his voice, both literally and figuratively. He formed a band called the Broomdusters, and with his unique slide guitar playing style and powerful vocals, he quickly gained attention.

One of James' defining moments came in 1952 when he recorded his hit single "Dust My Broom." This song, originally written and recorded by Robert Johnson, became James' signature piece. The slide guitar riff in "Dust My Broom" is instantly recognizable and has been emulated by countless musicians over the years.

## The Secret Weapon: The Electric Resonator Guitar

Elmore James' sound was distinct and groundbreaking, thanks in large part to his use of the electric resonator guitar. This instrument, designed by the National String Instrument Corporation, allowed James to achieve a unique tone and sustain that became his trademark.

The electric resonator guitar amplified the sound of the metal cones within, producing a distinctive, metallic twang that perfectly complemented James' slide guitar playing. This innovation took his music to new heights and set him apart from his contemporaries.

## Forging a Lasting Legacy

Elmore James' influence on the blues cannot be overstated. His innovative guitar playing, soulful vocals, and charismatic stage presence solidified his status as a legend in the genre. Countless musicians, including the Rolling Stones, have cited James as a primary influence.

Tragically, James' career was cut short when he passed away at the age of 45 in 1963. But even in his short time on this earth, he left a lasting impact. His music continues to resonate with audiences today, and his songs have become timeless classics.

Elmore James epitomized the blues. His music was a reflection of the hardships he faced, yet it possessed an undeniable energy and optimism. Through his passionate performances and innovative sound, James changed the landscape of blues music forever.

## **The Enduring Appeal of Elmore James**

Elmore James' music continues to captivate audiences to this day. His songs, such as "Shake Your Money Maker" and "The Sky Is Crying," have become staples in the blues repertoire. The raw emotion and soulful delivery in his music resonate with listeners on a deep level.

While blues music has evolved and expanded over the years, Elmore James' contributions remain timeless. His influence can still be heard in the work of modern blues artists such as Joe Bonamassa and Gary Clark Jr., who carry on his legacy.

The amazing secret history of Elmore James sheds light on the life and legacy of a true blues icon. From his humble beginnings in Mississippi to his groundbreaking performances in Chicago, James' contributions to the genre are immeasurable.

Through his unique guitar playing style and powerful vocals, Elmore James created a sound that continues to inspire and influence generations of musicians. His music transcends time, touching the souls of listeners who are captivated by the depth and emotion of the blues.

Elmore James may have left this world too soon, but his music lives on. The amazing secret history of this blues legend serves as a reminder of the power of music to connect us and leave a lasting impact. So, next time you hear the twang of a slide guitar or the soulful cry of a blues singer, think of Elmore James and the incredible journey that led to the creation of some of the most iconic blues music of all time.



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An immeasurable number of people consider Elmore James to be one of the greatest blues musicians of all time. Others say that hearing his music — even if it was just one song — was a life-changing experience for them. Now, for the first time, there's finally a complete history of the man and his music, the beloved slide guitar legend who reputedly never made a bad record.

Born in 1918 in Mississippi, Elmore James grew up in the Delta, and cut his teeth playing in the 1930s and 1940s with Sonny Boy Williamson (a.k.a. Rice Miller) and Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup, and — prior to his death in 1938 — is rumored to have played with Robert Johnson. Making his recording debut in 1951 with his trademark song “Dust My Broom” on the Trumpet label, James was catapulted into the national spotlight when it became a coast-to-coast R&B hit, and subsequently moved north to join the burgeoning postwar scene in Chicago. With the formation of his supporting band, the Broomdusters, James led one of the tightest blues groups in the business, recording over 40 sides with this highly acclaimed ensemble. Plagued with ill-health and union troubles, James’ Chicago career ended abruptly in 1960, when he moved back to Mississippi. Bobby Robinson, the legendary Harlem record producer, continued to record James throughout the early 1960s, in what would become an artistic zenith of his career (“The Sky is Crying,” “Something Inside of Me”). Poised to make a comeback in the spring of 1963, James returned to Chicago, only to die a short while later of a heart attack at the age of 45.

More than just a biography, “The Amazing Secret History of Elmore James” features a fully illustrated discography (slightly updated for this edition), over 20 pages of photos (including several rarities), and a special chapter chronicling Elmore’s far-reaching influence upon the blues world, with a survey of “Dust My Broom”-styled recordings of the 1950s and profiles of important slide guitarists such as Hound Dog Taylor, John Littlejohn, J.B. Hutto, Homesick James, and more.

Long beloved by blues fans, “The Amazing Secret History of Elmore James” was critically acclaimed upon its original 2003 publication. Garnering praise from every corner of the globe, it has been called a “tour de force” of blues literature (Amy van Singel, co-founder of “Living Blues” magazine), and is considered

essential reading for any enthusiast of this uniquely American musical art form. It was translated into Japanese in 2006, and was named, by Edward Komara and Greg Johnson, as one of the “100 Books Every Blues Fan Should Own.”



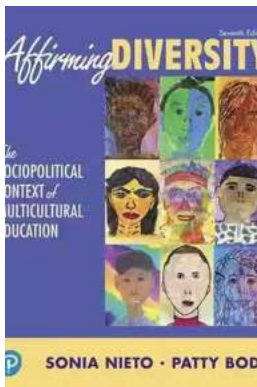
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