Patton, Charley,

Charley also spelled CHARLIE (b. c. 1887-91, Hinds county, Miss., U.S.—d. April 28, 1934, Indianola, Miss.), black American blues singer-guitarist, among the earliest and most influential Mississippi blues performers.

Patton spent most of his life in the Delta region of northwestern Mississippi, and from about 1900 he was often based at Dockery's plantation in Sunflower county. There he and other early blues performers, such as Tommy Johnson and Willie Brown, shared songs and ideas. Patton spent most of his career playing blues and ragtime-based popular songs for dancers at rural parties and barrelhouses, where his singing and clowning made him a popular entertainer.

In the nearly 70 recordings he made between 1929 and 1934, Patton sang in a coarse, strained, sometimes unintelligible voice while providing himself with a changing, heavily percussive guitar accompaniment. His lyrics range from personal to topical. He also recorded some gospel songs. His best-known recording is "Pony Blues," among the first of his to be issued, and others such as "Down the Dirt Road," "Shake It and Break It," "High Water Everywhere," and "Moon Going Down" helped secure his popularity.

The aggressive intensity of Patton's performances is particularly notable, a quality that influenced his successors such as Howlin' Wolf (Chester Arthur Burnett), Son House, and Bukka White.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.