

W.C. Handy: Father of the Blues By Maria Sonora



"Then I saw the beauty of primitive music."

W.C. Handy, Father of the Blues

W.C. Handy grew up in a small town in Alabama in the southern part of the US. His father was the (1) _____ of a church, and Handy was raised in the faith of his father. When he was young, he made soap and worked in the fields (2) _____ berries and nuts.

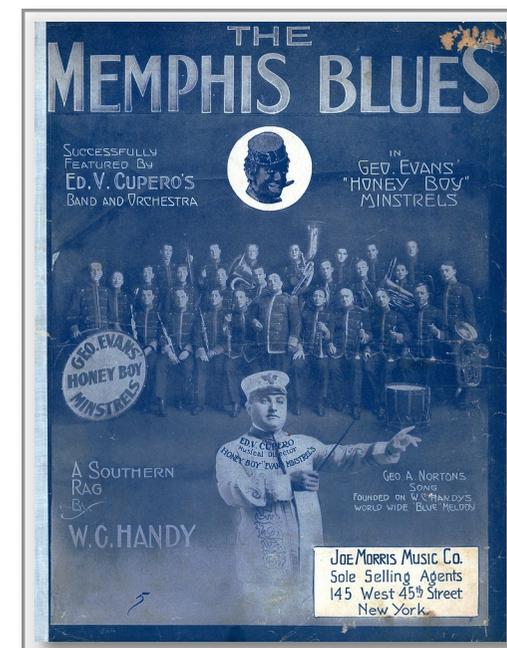
He loved music, so he (3) _____ saved his money and bought a guitar. When he brought the guitar home, his father was not pleased. He said, "Why did you bring a (4) _____ thing like that into our Christian home? Take it back to where it came from."

After that, his father (5) _____ Handy in organ lessons. The organ lessons did not last long, and soon, Handy was studying the cornet -- a kind of trumpet. In time, he became a professional musician, and today he is known as one of the most (6) _____ American songwriters of all time. Handy was an (7) _____ musician, but he was deeply (8) _____ by the folk music of African Americans. People called this music the blues.

Handy saw the (9) _____ beauty of blues music. He said, "Their music wanted (10) _____, but it contained the (11) _____. Folks would pay good money for it." The genius of

Handy was that he saw the commercial potential of the blues. And he polished it into a (12) _____ popular music.

He took this folk music, wrote it down, and he gave it a modern (13) _____. Before Handy, the blues was a (14) _____ music. But with his influence, the blues became a (15) _____ national force in American music. For this reason, W.C. Handy is known as the Father of the Blues.



THINK ABOUT IT

1. Another word for "sophisticated" is (A) humble, (B) complex, (C) educated.
2. According to this story, what was the genius of W.C. Handy?
3. Choose the answer that has the closest meaning to "primitive." (A) simple and rough; (B) creative and elegant; (C) historical and important.
4. There are many famous blues musicians. Why is Handy the Father of the Blues?

WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

verbal

He's a *** person. He talks a lot.

Beeoasis Step

SE

1

2

>> 3 <<

4

5