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Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Stamp Collection

Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Papers

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6-16-1993

## American Commemoratives Stamp Series: Rock 'n' Roll/Rhythm & Blues

United States Postal Service. Stamp Division

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# AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVES



# ROCK 'N' ROLL RHYTHM & BLUES

In the 50's pop music was infiltrated by Rhythm & Blues from New Orleans. Dinah Washington was the most popular black female singer of the 50's. Her sinuous, nasal penetrating vocals were tremendously effective on Rhythm & Blues music. Her recording of "Baby Get Lost" was the No. 1 hit in 1949. Clyde McPhatter, with his group "The Drifters", fast became one of the most acclaimed pioneers of Rhythm & Blues and later one of the pioneering combinations in Rock & Roll with his hit "Money Honey". His efforts went a long way in merging Rhythm & Blues and pop music in the 50's and 60's.

The roots of Rock & Roll come from Rhythm & Blues, timely lyrics and high-energy music you can move to freely. The term Rock & Roll was coined by a Cleveland disc-jockey named Alan Freed in the mid-50's to replace Rhythm & Blues. During the late 50's, the music grouped and regrouped into the Rock & Roll genre. It was approximately 38 years ago that artists Bill Haley and Elvis Presley first appeared at the top of the hit record chart list with what became known as Rock & Roll. Rhythm & Blues was an updated urbanized stylization of the blues. When the music was renamed Rock & Roll it underwent an elemental change, particularly when white performers saw how eagerly young audiences responded.

The appearance of Elvis Presley on television in 1956 was the start of a musical revolution. Bill Haley, after recording "Rock Around the Clock" in 1956, was convinced that high-energy music that you could sing-along with, clap to and dance to would prove popular. Buddy Holly, rock pioneer, recorded "That'll Be the Day" in 1957 and popularized the two guitar, bass and drum line-up of current bands. His playful falsetto to regular voice recording style was a major influence on Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney.

Ritchie Valens was the first of the Latino Rockers with his hit "La Bamba" in 1959. His emerging career ended, along with Buddy Holly's, in a tragic plane crash the same year.

Otis Redding's grainy voice and spectacular stage show made him one of the greatest male vocalists of the 60's. His No. 1 hit in 1968, "Dock of the Bay", was a classic combination of Rock & Roll and Rhythm & Blues. His appearance at the Monterey Pop Festival made him one of the most popular black crossover acts of that era.



The Rock & Roll/Rhythm & Blues commemorative stamps honor the innovators of two of the greatest musical contributions by Americans to the world's arts. The major contribution of Rock & Roll and Rhythm & Blues has been the crossover between white and black cultures in America. The durability of the two genres is testimony to their importance in American musical history. Mark Stutzman of Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, designed the Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Bill Haley and Ritchie Valens stamps. The Otis Redding, Dinah Washington and Clyde McPhatter stamps were designed by John Berkey of Excelsior, Maine. These stamps were issued on June 16, 1993, in Santa Monica, California and Cleveland, Ohio.





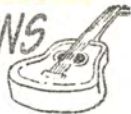
## Clyde McPhatter

From Gospel to Soul,  
giant of Rhythm & Blues.



CELEBRATIONS

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Sheet Issue

## CLYDE MCPHATTER

Though he lived only 40 years, Clyde McPhatter established a lasting musical legacy. His meteoric career began early. At 14, this son of a Baptist minister formed a Gospel group known as the Mount Lebanon Singers. McPhatter soon graduated to Rhythm & Blues. In 1950, at just 17, he became lead tenor in one of the most popular R&B groups of the time, the Dominoes. Popular songs like 1951's *Do Something for Me* were followed in 1952 by the Number One R&B hit *Have Mercy, Baby*. A year later, McPhatter left the Dominoes to form his own band, the Drifters. In two short years, the group became one of the hottest R&B draws in America, recording hits including *Money Honey* and *Honey Love*. Despite urging from Atlantic Records owner Ahmet

Ertegun that he change his name because it sounded too "country & western," McPhatter refused. The decision didn't seem to hurt his career and he gained wide acceptance with both black and white audiences with the Top 10 solo hits *Lucille* and *Such a Night* in 1954. Drafted that year, McPhatter returned to R&B in 1956. Despite the hiatus, he hadn't lost his rising stardom. The ballads *Seven Days* and *Treasure of Love* proved solid hits in 1956. The following year saw the release of *Just to Hold My Hand*, *Long Lonely Nights* and *Without Love*, all of which reached both the pop and R&B charts. His biggest success came in 1958 with the million-selling *A Lover's Question*, which reached Number One both in the U.S. and Britain.



Clyde McPhatter  
Legend of American Music



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

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Rodney Lawrence  
Thomas G Carpen  
Special Collections

## Clyde McPhatter - Rhythm & Blues Singer

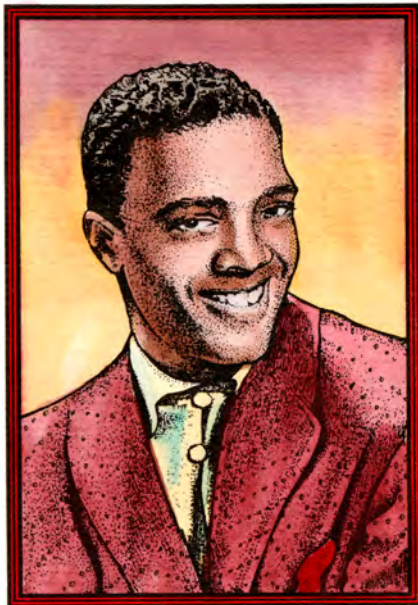
When Clyde McPhatter joined Billy Ward and the Dominoes in 1950, he began a music career that would eventually lead to him becoming one of the biggest names of the rhythm & blues era. In 1953, he left the band to form his own group, the "Drifters."

So called, because all of the members had drifted from one group to another before joining together, the Drifters became one of the most popular groups in the rhythm & blues field. Although he is best known as the leader of the Drifters, McPhatter actually recorded most of his best work as a solo artist.

He went into the Army in 1955, and the following

year was discharged. However, rather than returning to the Drifters, he chose instead to concentrate on working as a soloist. His recordings of "Seven Days" and "Treasure of Love" became national pop hits, and helped him gain acceptance among white audiences, as well as the traditional rhythm & blues audience.

In 1958, he achieved his greatest success with his recording of "A Lover's Question", which climbed to the number one spot on the U.S. singles chart, selling more than one million copies. He toured widely during 1958 and 1959, and in 1968 his albums were re-released in England as part of a rock "revival."



**CLYDE**

**McPHATTER**



KM  
*Collins*

JOINT RELEASE

CLEVELAND, OH

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