

MILLS BROTHERS



1931, possibly broadcasting for Columbia Radio Network

Except for Brian Rust's Complete Entertainment Discography 1989 (which is, however, incomplete and with unlisted personnels), the vocal group Mills Brothers has been omitted from all discographies, jazz as well as popular music.

This is quite illogical, not to say unfair, since other vocal groups - the Three Boswell Sisters for instance - are nearly always squeezed in; usually under the banner that rhythmic instrumental solos are often featured.

Since the Mills Brothers was backed by the most vital one-man rhythm section ever, namely John Mills Jr., singing bass and playing tenor (four string) guitar, the abovementioned neglect needs to be remedied as to the early fully jazz/swing influenced period.

Mills Brothers' later recordings are, however, also belonging among top professional artists' output and often being supported by jazz, or jazz inspired, bands. Mills Brothers as a quartet or trio were never less than magnificent, swinging, joyful, and supremely entertaining.

The highly outstanding and honourable British musician (alto sax/trombone/cornet), discographer, record collector, record producer (Ristic/Jazz Oracle), researcher, wizard sound specialist, and raconteur 'John R. T.' Davies (John Ross Twiston "Ristic" Davies, 1927-2004) had the following to say about Mills Brothers:

"THERE HAVE been, since the advent of Hot Discography, omissions from listings of Jazz Records – and conversely insertions of matter which must be considered alien by graduate students of Le Hot.

While the publication of ANY Discographical matter must necessarily be advantageous, frequently it may be seen (and heard) that entire sections are omitted from Discographical works simply because an artist or group does not appear, in the eyes of the compiler, to fulfil the basic requirements for inclusion.

Many Jazz enthusiasts have become aware at one time or another when listening to the Mills Brothers and Duke Ellington's Orchestra in their fortunately fairly readily available recording of "Diga Diga Doo" that as Mills take over from Duke and vice versa there is no let-down . . . unless perhaps on the Ellington side. There is ample confirmation of the driving power of Mills Brothers throughout their records of this period – and not just driving power, but also the inventiveness expected of any self-respecting jazz musicians.

Not only as soloists do they leave nothing to be desired, but without a great deal of searching, examples can be found of arrangement and ensembles which in spite of limited numbers still contrive to produce a sound which can be compared (if you must) DIRECTLY with McKinney's Cotton Pickers . . . or half a decade later, the Basie Orchestra. In "The Old Man of the Mountain" it all happens – hot lead, hot support to lead, light and rhythmic reed and brass sections (yes, sections!), all this and a bouncing bubbling rhythm section too. To say that here is an imitation of a ten-piece orchestra in full cry would be a poor comparison and an understatement only to be considered if instrumental jazz must be used as the yardstick.

The Mills Brothers, at least in their earlier days, could manifestly lay claim to inclusion in any reference work concerned with jazz. If the instrumentation was unusual, and even if later recordings display a tendency to be tailored to public demand and the quest of a living (they were not alone in this), there is every reason why the earlier recordings of the Mills Brothers should be accorded a place – indeed, a place of honour – in a jazz discography."

MILLS BROTHERS BIOGRAPHY

The four Mills Brothers (all born in Piqua, Ohio) started singing in 1922 and as a quartet turned professionals in 1925:

John Charles Jr., bass voice/tenor guitar	19 October 1910 - 23 January 1936, Bellefontaine, Ohio.
Herbert Bowles, tenor voice	2 April 1912 - 12 April 1989, Las Vegas, Nevada.
Harry Flood, baritone voice	19 August 1913 - 28 June 1982, Los Angeles, California.
Donald Friedlich, tenor voice	29 April 1915 - 13 November 1999, Los Angeles, California.
Parents Eathel M. Harrington (née Gaines) 1891-1962 and John Sr., bass voice, Bellefonte, Penn. 11 February 1882 - 8 December 1967, Bellefontaine, Ohio (married 1905; moved to Piqua 1907; divorced c. 1930 at which time the family moved from Piqua/Ohio, to Bellefontaine/Ohio; retreated gradually from active career around 1955-56 due to ill health).	

Eathel Mills gave birth to further three children (girls, Pauline Marie (1906-78), Margaret Fern (1908-35), and Dorothea Cecilia (1909-87)), all older than the boys, the whole family singing in the church choir. Date of death for Harry Mills also given as January 1982, which is incorrect. Some sources state mother's Christian name to be Ethel.

The following biography is a combination of information (almost all double checked) from Wikipedia, Geoff Milne's booklet notes to the JSP CD series, interview John R. T. Davies, Storyville Magazine/Laurie Wright, interview Donald Mills, John A. Drobnicki/City University of New York, and some minor documentation. Whenever possible, all sources are credited at the end for use of illustrative material.

BOYHOOD AND EARLY YEARS

The boys were taught to sing by their parents. Their mother played piano and sang light opera (sometimes also their father), occasionally even in the radio. Their father John Hutchinson Snr., who owned a barber shop, had, as was customary in those days, a so-called barber shop quartet named "The Four Kings of Harmony", so there was always plenty of good music around on which the four boys could model themselves, and singers from whom they could learn the intricacies of close harmony.



The Mills Brothers, in an early portrait.
From left: John, Herbert, Harry & Donald

As the boys grew older, they began singing in the choir of the Cyrene African Methodist Episcopal Church and in the Park Avenue Baptist Church in Piqua. After their lessons at the Spring Street Grammar School, they would gather in front of their father's barbershop on Public Square or at the corner of Greene and Main to sing and play the kazoo to passersby. One source (see below) has it that the brothers first publicly performed on October 28, 1924, at May's Opera House in Piqua, where they came to entertain during the intermissions of *Rin-Tin-Tin* for a fee of four dollars a night. The boys, aged nine to fourteen, suffered opening-night jitters, and that fateful night, Harry even discovered he had forgotten to bring his kazoo (they were billed 'Four Boys and a Kazoo'). The resourceful Harry cupped his hands over his mouth to imitate the missing instrument, "...and lo and behold, out came the sound of a trumpet." The Brothers were quick to realize what happened, so the other three joined in, John Charles Jr., imitating a tuba, Herbert a second trumpet, and Donald (lead voice) taking a trombone line.

According to the *Piqua Daily Call*, "They made a big hit... The lads have natural talent and appear like veterans of the stage." The appearance, a fresh new sound, altered their musical style and eventually catapulted them to unprecedented acclaim. First, John accompanied the four-part harmony with a ukulele - later on he used a four-string guitar. The brothers practiced imitating orchestras they heard on the radio.

They entertained on the Midwest theater circuit, at house parties, tent shows, music halls and supper clubs throughout the area and became well known for their close harmonies, mastery of scat singing, and their amazing ability to imitate musical instruments with their voices. Then in 1928, after playing May's Opera House in Piqua between *Rin-Tin-Tin* features (another source has it), they accompanied the Harold Greenameyer Band to Cincinnati for an audition with radio station WLW being paid USD 140 weekly. The Band was not hired, but the Mills Brothers were. With the help of Seger Ellis, WLW Cincinnati DJ and a music legend of the '20s, they quickly became local radio stars (regular broadcasts over a ten-month period) and got their major break when Duke Ellington and his Orchestra played a date in Cincinnati. When the youngsters sang for Duke, he was so impressed that he called Tommy Rockwell (of the famous Rockwell-O'Keefe Agency) at Okeh Records who signed them and brought the group to New York.



From left: Tommy Rockwell (with Eddie Lang, Frank Trumbauer, and Joe Venuti). Mills Brothers recorded together with Lang/Venuti already from 1931.



Mills Brothers established some 'firsts':

They became the founders of modern-day African American harmony singing

They were the first black group to enjoy popularity with white audiences

They became the first African Americans to have a commercially sponsored show on a national network (Columbia)

Further they produced a total output estimated at 2,246 records with 36 gold records and 71 chart singles, and they were featured in 20 movies and 7 'soundies'

Their debut single 'Tiger Rag/Nobody's Sweetheart', released by Brunswick Records in November 1931, was the first million-selling record by a vocal group

Their joint recording of 'Dinah' with Bing Crosby 1932 helped launch BC to final superstardom. This track reached No. 1 on US popular music charts, and defined early radio era

In 1932, the original quartet's version of "Rockin' Chair" was the first recording by a black vocal group with a talking bass bridge, which influenced a generation of doo-wop groups

Mills Brothers became the first African Americans to give a command performance for British Royalty, playing the 'London Palladium Theatre' before King George V and Queen Mary in 1934

In the 1940'ties', their hit "Paper Doll" (released on Decca) sold 6 million copies and stayed number one on 'Your Hit Parade' for twelve consecutive weeks. It was second only to Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas' as the best-selling record of the 1940s and was among the top five selling records of the pre-Rock and Roll era

Another notable hit "Till Then" became number one on the R&B chart in 1944

Their first recording with an orchestra, "Glow Worm", hit number two on the pop chart in 1952



All above pictures from the same photo studio session, apparently 1929 (other sources states January 1st 1931)
Guitar is most likely a Sears Roebuck catalogue post order model at USD 6,25



Original photo produced 1929, this copy apparently autographed in 1941. Being the oldest brother, John became their natural leader.
 "To our true heartfelt friend Pete Grasso. Success to you always. Sincerely Mills Amis" (?)



1931

DANCE
 And be ENTERTAINED by
MILLS BROTHERS
 STEAMBOAT QUARTET
 Famous WLW Stars
 (In Person)
 TONIGHT
 THURSDAY and SATURDAY
 Murray Horton's WLW Orchestra
HORSE SHOE
GARDENS
 WARD AVE., BELLEVUE, KY.
 15 Minutes from Dixie Terminal, Cincinnati

Cincinnati Enquirer June 14, 1931



1933, Harry and John, movie still photo from performance of "Old Man of the Mountain"

The Mills Brothers, Lionel Hampton and Les Hite, 1931 (*Courtesy Les Hite*)



Mills Brothers with Les Hite Orchestra in Los Angeles early April 1931.
Les Hite's band included Lionel Hampton (behind Harry Mills), Harvey Brooks, and Marshall Royal (far right).



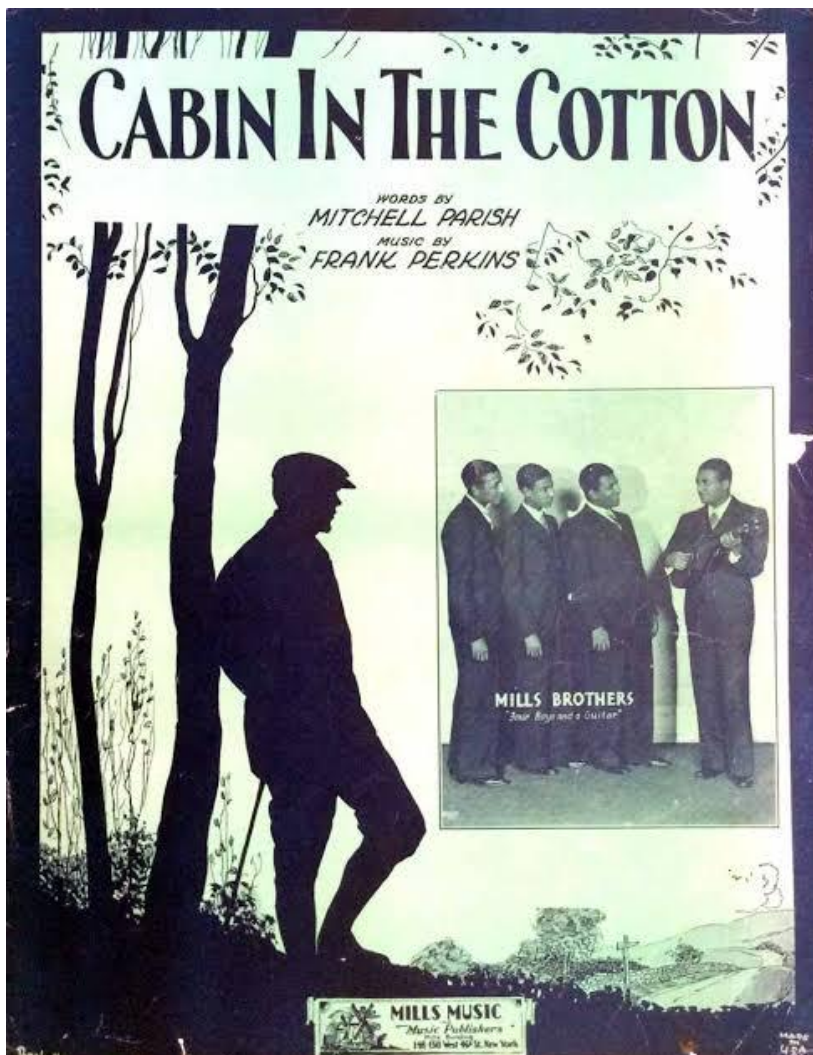
Duke Ellington 1931 when recommending Mills Brothers to NY agent Tommy Rockwell



Duke Ellington and his Orchestra December 1932 when recording 'Diga Diga Doo' together with Mills Brothers



Mills Brothers recorded 'How'm I Doin'?' in 1932



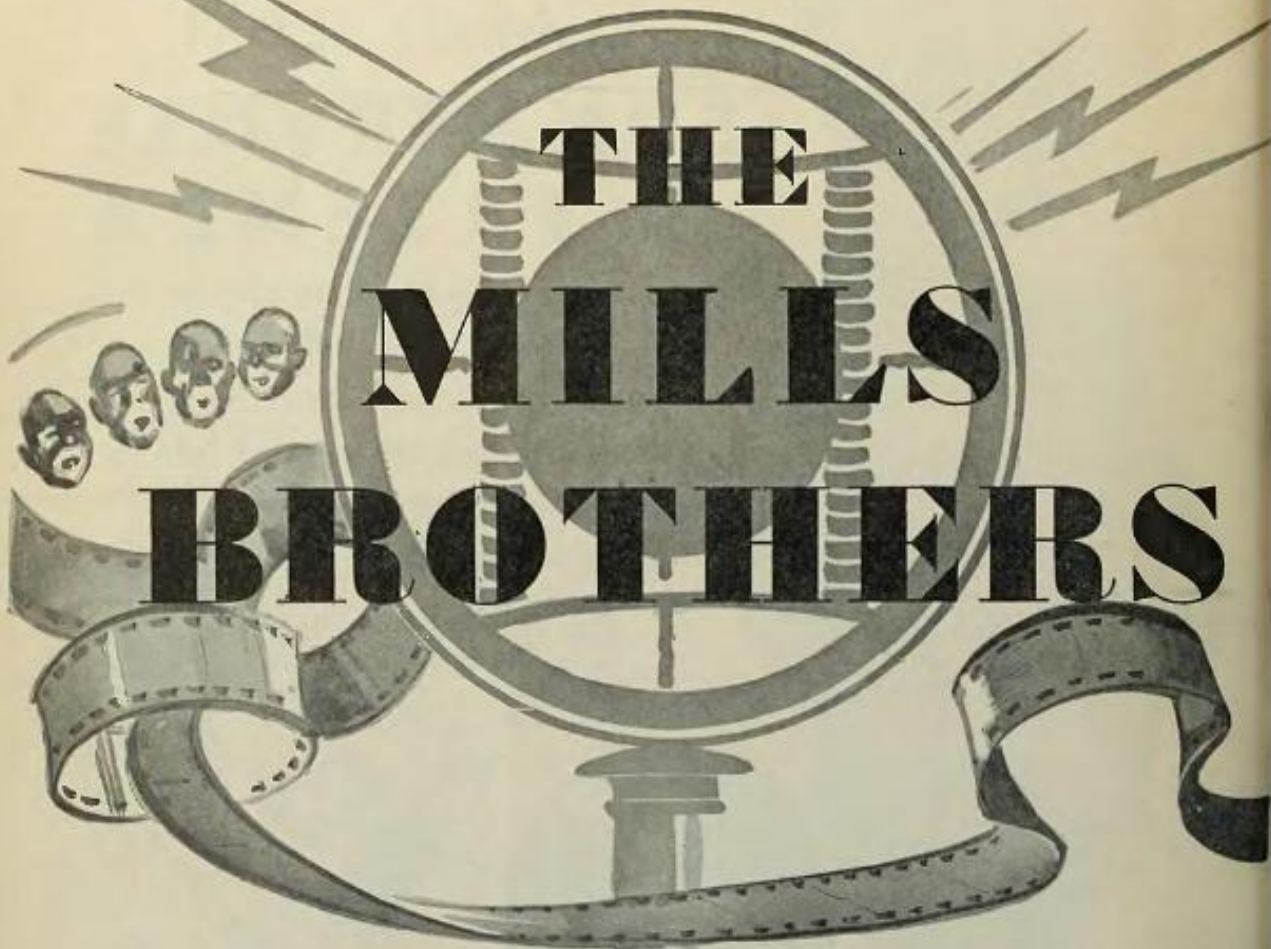
Mills Brothers never recorded 'Cabin in the Cotton' but Cab Calloway and Bing Crosby did in 1932



Photo autographed by Mills Brothers for "Dansk Privat Hot Club", Denmark



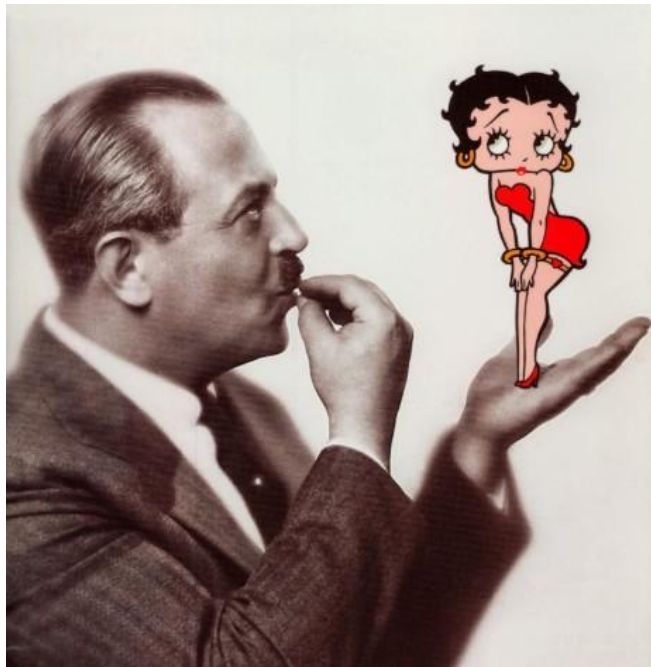
Radio's most popular now starring in



Everywhere they're asking "Have you heard THE MILLS BROTHERS"? Without a doubt the greatest broadcast on the air today! Signed to make three Screen Songs the first of which will be "I Ain't Got Nobody" ● The outstanding popularity of these boys, combined with the clever showmanship of Max Fleischer Cartoons give you a series of single reel attractions that can't be beaten for audience appeal. Short Features that command large space in your newspaper advertising!

"The Film Daily" 1932 re. The Fleischer cartoon soundies

They now played the big Vaudeville theaters, including New York's 'Paramount Theatre' with Bing Crosby. 'Radio Digest' named the Mills Brothers as the 'vocal find of 1931'. Because their instrument impressions/renditions were so good, some listeners insisted that they were backed by a jazz band. Thus, the Mills Brothers' early records bore the labelling "No musical instruments or mechanical devices used on this recording other than one guitar." Aside from recording with some of the biggest stars of the day including Bing Crosby, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Boswell Sisters, Dorsey Brothers, Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti, the brothers also appeared in a string of motion pictures, the first being 'The Big Broadcast of 1932'. By the end of that year, they were making USD 150,000 annually.



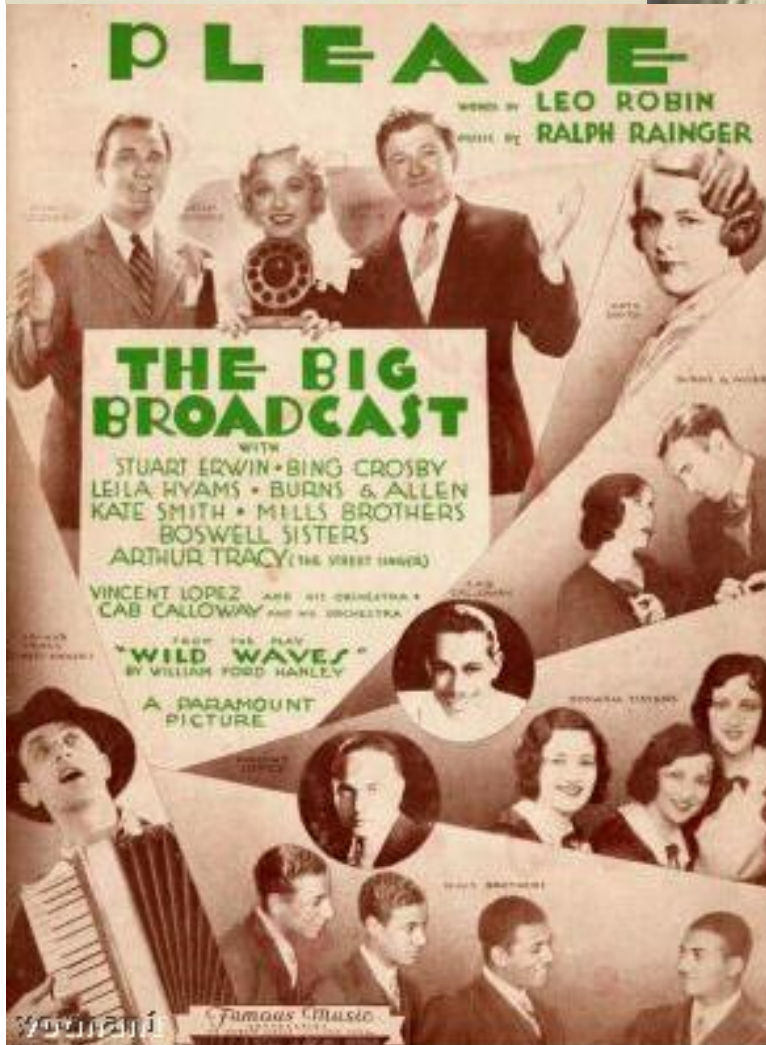
Brothers Max & Dave Fleischer were already in the cartoon studio business prior to Walt Disney





From Radio Stars Magazine, October 1932





The Paramount Pictures movie 'The Big Broadcast 1932'. Above Mills Brothers, Bing Crosby and Eddie Lang are seen



Here is a rather patronizing publicity commentary from Lansing State Journal, Michigan, September 1933. After all Lansing was the Michigan capital way up north:
 ‘FOUR DUSKY CHAPS, WHO BY MEANS OF A SERIES OF HARMONIOUS NOISES HAVE BECOME FAMOUS. Mills Brothers are experts in the manipulation of the new tricky yo-yo-top.’

In 1930, the Mills family moved from Piqua and a step further North-East to Bellefontaine. When they undertook a tour of the South in 1936, they were shocked, and Harry Mills later recalled, “We were jarred, utterly taken aback, by what we ran into. We just agreed not to go there again, and we didn’t – not until almost 30 years later, after the civil rights laws had been passed.”



Photo from one of three Max Fleischer “Screen Songs” cartoon series 1933: “I Ain’t Got Nobody”, “Dinah”, and “When Yuba Plays the Rhumba on the Tuba”

Where They Began

The Mills Brothers, four boys and a guitar, also presenting their own mimicked tuba, saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, bassoon, trombone and oboe, are back at the Buffalo. To meet numerous enquiries, these bits of data are set down:

Piqua, O., is the home town. John was a bank janitor. He's the one who was ill for so many weeks recently. Herbert was an apprentice barber.

Piqua, O., is the home town. John was a bank janitor. He's the one who was ill for so many weeks recently. Herbert was an apprentice barber. Harry donated to the family expense account by shining shoes, and later from earnings as ballyhoo boy for a parking lot—one of those "drive right in here" chaps. Donald,—well, he's the youngest, and he admits—that going to school wasn't exactly a pleasure.

Evenings brought vocal practice. The tuba, which is John's forte, was the first instrumental imitation. Others were added as time passed. That guitar came from a mail order house. It cost less than \$7. The boys wouldn't part with it for any money. They even had it insured.

WSAI, a former Cincinnati radio station, was first to put them on the air. John was only twelve then. And now look at the quartet!

Buffalo Courier October 15, 1933

IMITATING BANDS GAINED THEM FAME

Mills Brothers Started by Mimicking Instruments on Sunday Afternoons

Four colored boys in a small town in Ohio used to attend local band concerts on Sunday afternoons and, having nothing better to do, they started to imitate the various brass and wind instruments. It was a good idea for it opened the road to fame and fortune and the quartette of Ohio lads are now the celebrated Mills Brothers, radio and film stars.

This is the gist of the story as it was told to The Gazette representative by John Mills, the human euphonium of the quartette, while he was lounging in his dressing room between acts at the Capitol Theatre where the quartette is making a personal appearance this week.

John is a very simple, unspoiled chap. He is not dazzled by the above mentioned fame and fortune. To him it is all in a day's work. He was quite willing to tell his life story, his only regret being that there was nothing sensational about it. He and his brothers feel they owe everything to their father and mother who were singers themselves.

The parents being musical thought it would be an excellent idea to have a male quartette in their own house as well as hearing one in church or at the local theatre. Harry, Donald, Herbert and John were thereupon impressed into service. They sang "straight" at first, popular tunes, hymns and so forth. Then they took to going to the band concerts on Sunday afternoons.

After they had fooled about, imitating instruments for some time, a vaudeville man heard them. Soon they found themselves doing "small time stuff" in vaudeville houses in the neighborhood of Cincinnati. "We weren't on any circuit," explained John. "We just picked up what we could get."

Then WLW, the first enterprising radio station, opened. This was the long awaited chance of Harry, Donald, Herbert and John. They sang over WLW for a year or so. Then they went to New York with a contract in their common pocket from the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation. And there you are.

The Mills boys have no secrets to reveal concerning their technique. Its just practice, they said. A schoolboy can and often does imitate musical instruments. But a school boy does not spend hours and days and weeks and months trying to perfect his little stunt so that it really sounds like an instrument with the added beauty of the human voice.

**Montreal Gazette
November 20, 1933**

They remained on with Brunswick until late 1934, when they signed with Decca, where they stayed well into the 1950s. On all of their Brunswick records, as well as the early Decca's, the label always stated: "No musical instruments or mechanical devices used in this recording other than one guitar".

It was not a publicity stunt or ploy to induce record sales, but considered necessary to convince the purchaser that there were, in fact, no other musicians present. How necessary was amply illustrated by a report in the 'Melody Maker' (commenting upon the arrival of the first Mills Brothers records in England in 1932) that "everyone swears the tuba is played by Adrian Rollini". But no, all the sounds on each and every recording, except the guitar played by John, emanated from the throats of the quartet who must still rank as unique in the annals of show business. Of course, there have been many imitators, but the subtle harmonies and instrumental impressions put the Mills quartet into a class totally of their own making, head and shoulders (and larynxes) above all those who sought not only better them but even trying to reach the pinnacle of 'vocalese' produced so expertly by the four boys.

They were constantly in demand for radio and performed on this medium as frequently as possible, for that was really the passport to nationwide fame in the USA. Their schedule was so tight that they often had to rehearse in the taxis, much to the delight of the drivers taking them from one engagement to another.

They were a sensation on CBS in 1930-1931. They had their own popular radio series in 1932-1933, one of the earliest built around a black act, billed as the "Four Boys and a Guitar". Before their show announcers commonly explained to listeners that the only music instrument used was a guitar.

The Mills Brothers were sponsored by some of the largest advertisers in early radio: Standard Oil, Procter & Gamble, Crisco, and Crosley Radio. They began appearing in films. Their first, "The Big Broadcast" (Paramount Pictures 1932), was an all-star radio revue that included Bing Crosby, Cab Calloway, and the Boswell Sisters.

Between 1933 and 1935, the Brothers starred with Crosby for Woodbury Soap in 'Bing Crosby Entertains', making 27 appearances in all on the CBS radio show.

Geoff Milne: Busy touring and playing radio dates, disaster struck in Chicago in April 1933. John was taken very ill with pneumonia. Their intricate harmonies, so meticulously rehearsed, depended on four voices, so rather than try and make it as a trio, they cancelled all future engagements. John became so ill that there were moments when it looked doubtful if

he'd pull through, but great relief came in August when he was well enough to rejoin his three brothers. A big boost to their career came in November when they guested on the influential "Fleischmann Yeast Hour" Radio Show hosted by Rudy Vallee. This had become a major source of promotion for up-and-coming performers – not that the Mills Brothers were exactly up-and-coming – they already had!

In fact, by 1933 the Mills Brothers had already influenced groups like the Four Blackbirds, the Four Southern Singers, the Three peppers (disbanded 1935) and even the Spirits of Rhythm – though none of them were as adept in achieving this specialist style of interpretation as the originators who were left the clear leaders in their field. In 1933, also in the movie "Operator 13". Watch: "Jungle Fever" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=QH1e6G0K3Pk



Even though the boys had a very hectic schedule they still found time to come home and spend Christmas with their mother in 1933

In 1934, the brothers starred with Crosby for Woodbury Soap, and recorded their classics "Lazy Bones", "Sweet Sue", "Lulu's Back in Town", "Bye Bye Blackbird", "Sleepy Head", and "Shoe Shine Boy". Their west coast film appearances a.o. included "Twenty Million Sweethearts" (Warner Brothers, 1934) and "Broadway Gondolier" (Warner Brothers, 1935).

Geoff Milne: In March 1934, the brothers moved up the coast to San Francisco for more radio dates. Their fame had spread to Europe.



This photo c. 1930. See further pictures from this session under Mills Brothers' first recording date October 1931 in the discography

Be sure to watch: "Tiger Rag" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui_icfQoAeU



Be sure to watch: "The Old Man of the Mountain" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0ngRaUyXvE



Be sure to watch: "How'm I Doin', Hey Hey" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_Knzwe15PY
"I Heard" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtqpyMvI3D4



With Dick Powell

Be sure to watch: "Out for No Good" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVlyfF-80qk





Be sure to watch: "Goodbye Blues/Some of These Days/Tiger Rag/Ain't Got Nobody" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2hg0EWCu9s

By now the brothers were highly successful and recognized all over the world. In 1934, The Mills Brothers became the first African Americans to give a command performance before British royalty.



1934 at the London Palladium appearance (seemingly shot in a London Studio)



Even the 1934 Royal Command Performance (featured as part of Jack Hylton's programme) at the London Palladium could not prevent the highly disturbing fact that twenty London hotels had refused to rent rooms to the Mills Brothers. News reports about the hotel problems prompted the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to file formal protests with the British Government. It is said that their mother accompanied her four sons on their 1934 visit to England, and the legend even has it that she witnessed the Brothers' Royal Command Performance from a seat in the Royal Box. Other accounts state that she was seated in a special box in the London Palladium Theatre. Still other reports have it that the RCP took place in 1935 or at the London Regal Theatre ... As per 'Royal Variety Charity', it took place exactly on May 8th, 1934.



1934 with Dick Powell in '20 Million Sweethearts' by First National Pictures & Warner Brothers



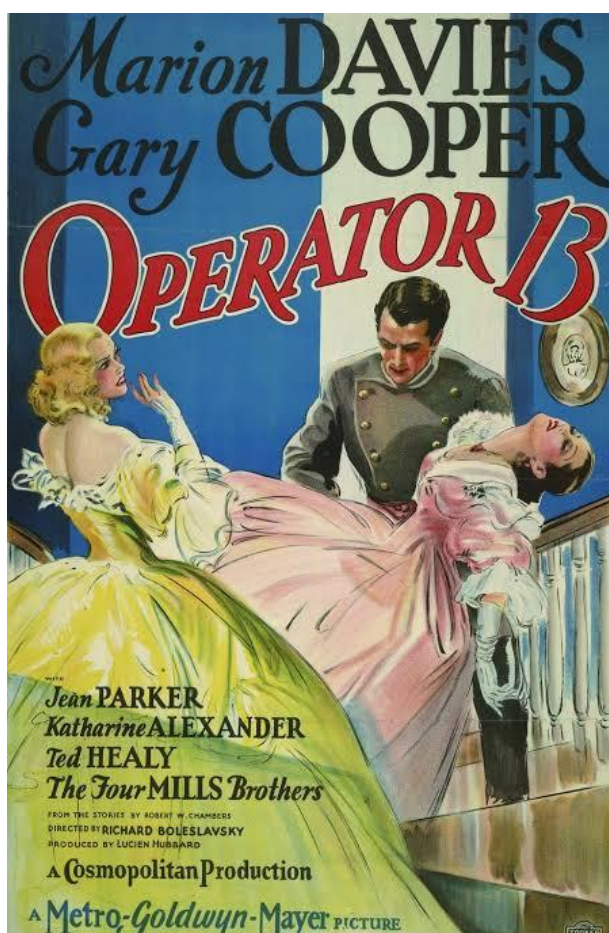
April 1934



From the movie 'Operator 13', singing "Jungle Fever", 1934 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omZ1Ay7Fwgs&list=RDomZ1Ay7Fwgs&start_radio=1
 Produced under the banners of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) and Cosmopolitan Productions.
 They also performed "Roll, Jordan, Roll" and "Sleepy Head"



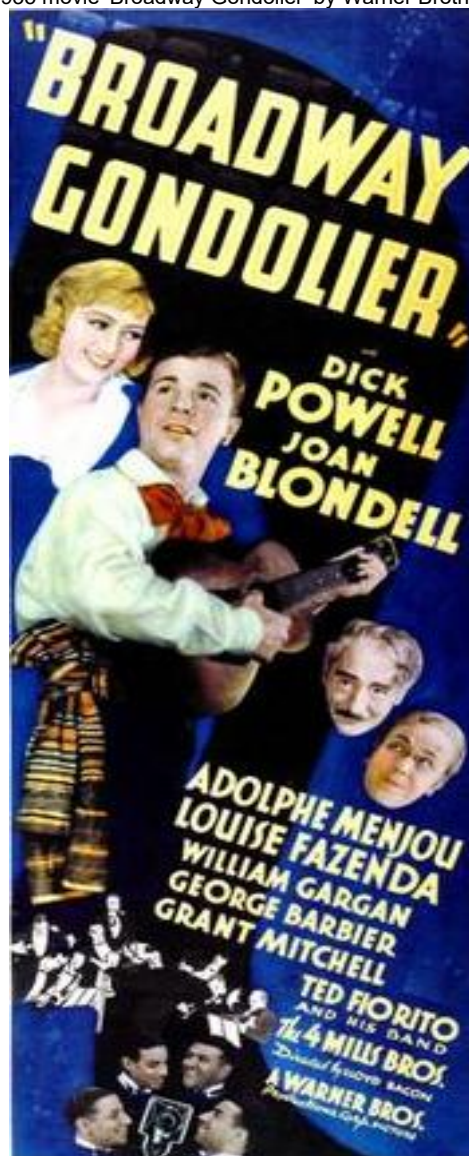
Geoff Milne: In the summer of 1934, they were invited to England to top the bill at the London Palladium. Also appeared at a Royal Command Performance. Their records had been selling in enormous quantities in Britain on the Brunswick label, so it was not surprising for the company (DECCA) to persuade them to visit their studios in London.



May 15, 1934



1935 movie 'Broadway Gondolier' by Warner Brothers



While in England, John Jr. became ill again. It took him months to recover from battling pneumonia. Before he was completely well, the brothers returned to England. John Jr. once again became sick. He travelled all the way back to Bellefontaine where he died January 23, 1936. Thereby the world lost the greatest single handed rhythm section – John Mills playing four string guitar and humming the corresponding bass part.



Unknown occasion. Seemingly appearing in some Parlophone premises (England).



From "Strictly Dynamite" 1934.



Jimmy Durante, Lupe Velez, and Mills Brothers in the movie "Strictly Dynamite" 1934
Be sure to watch: "Swing It, Sister" – www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li1dtJ6jC4w



Another (deleted scene from "The Broadway Gondolier") movie still 1935

The 1935 movie 'Strictly Dynamite' produced by RKO Pictures

APOLL

AMERICA'S SMARTEST COLORED SHOWS!!

THEATRE
125th STREET
NEAR 8th AV.
TELEPHONE
UNI 4-4409

BEGINNING FRIDAY, APRIL 26 — COLOSSAL STAGE SHOW!

4 MILLS

Mills Bros. will appear for
7 full days, beginning Sat., April 27

LAST AND ONLY N. Y. APPEARANCE
BEFORE EUROPEAN TOUR

BROS.

IN PERSON

RALPH COOPER and HIS GANG OF MELODY MAKERS

ALMA SMITH	TAPS MILLER	Pigmeat Markham	Jimmie Baskette
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MONDAY NIGHT
AUDITIONS
CASH PRIZES

Tues. Night — Swing
the Lindy (white teams)
CASH PRIZES

THURSDAY NIGHT
OL' RAGS LINDY HOP
CASH PRIZES

WEDNESDAY 11 P. M. to Midnight—Broadcast
direct from stage over WMCA

The one and only original **AMATEUR NIGHT IN HARLEM**
with RALPH COOPER (Now in its 27th Week)

Box Office Opens
Daily 9 A. M.

Last Stage Show
At 9:45 P. M.

NO INCREASE
IN PRICES

— ON SCREEN —
STRANGE WIVES
With
ROGER PRYOR

27. april 1935, appearing one week (New York Age)



Be sure to listen to: Duke Ellington & Mills Brothers "Diga Diga Doo" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=1orLPFS36DI



John Jnr., Donald, Harry and Herbert with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson

The father of the Mills Brothers, John H. Mills, stepped in for his oldest son John Charles Jr., after the latter died from pneumonia. Harry respected his brother John's leadership so very much that he did not feel qualified to take over the MC-task to lead on. It is often stated that John Mills Snr. also provided the guitar accompaniment, which is of course incorrect



This was a difficult time for the remaining brothers. They considered breaking up the quartet - then their mother told them that John Jr. would want them to continue. They followed her suggestion and their father, John Sr., replaced John Jr., as the bass and tuba singer. He was not up to the standard of John Jr., however, he did very well with the bass part and it was a perfect solution in regard to continuing under the family name. As a singer, John Sr. was (quite naturally) a bit more old-fashioned - yet the group managed to adjust to the general public standard picture, still on a second-to-none level.

In January 1937, Ella Jane Fitzgerald (1917-1996) recorded a couple of sides for Decca together with Mills Brothers. There has not been verified any photos of EF/MB together.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-u9RRhq35Y&list=PLvXBvjN5SrySYqWKpTdnONZgM2HD8Dcu>

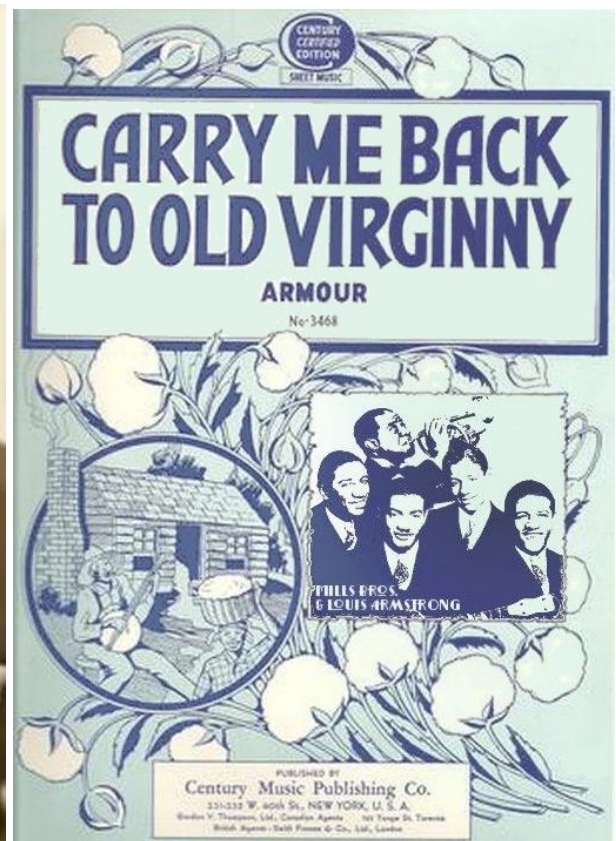
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Azquecolh8E&list=RDAzquecolh8E&start_radio=1



Ella Fitzgerald with the Chick Webb Orchestra about 1937-38



Ella Fitzgerald and The Mills Brothers recorded again for Decca in November, 1949



Mills Brothers recording with Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) 1937 and 1938 and 1940

Be sure to listen to: "The Old Folks at Home/Way Down upon the Swanee River" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=iybPQ5sB-L4
 "Marie" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKznpWGTnIM



There has not been verified an actual photo of Louis + Mills Brothers together, so this collage from the MCA Coral LP may suffice



Akron Beacon Journal May 4th, 1937

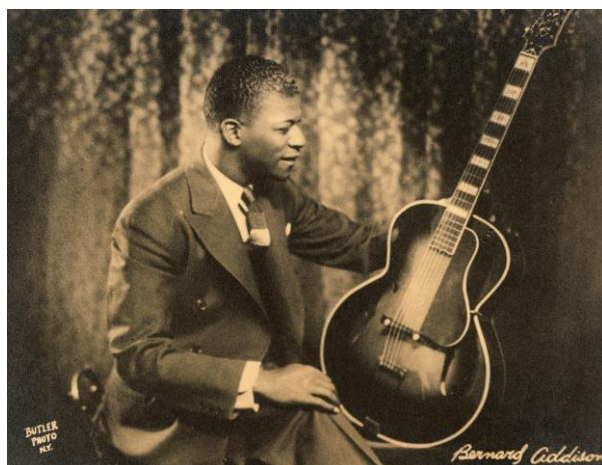


Mills Brothers plus Norman Brown arriving at Southampton on July 5, 1937, for a new engagement at the London Palladium in Argyll Street, near Oxford Circus, Soho, West End, London. Originally a fashionable district for the aristocracy.



Autographed for the Danish critic Svend Kragh-Jacobsen

At first, Bernard Addison stepped in as guitarist, but Addison felt ignored and in fact did not get along too well with the Mills family. From around July 1937 Allen Norman Brown, recommended by the great rhythm guitarist Freddie Green (of Count Basie fame), joined the Brothers as their guitar player and stayed on (war draft excepted) until he died in 1969.



Be sure to watch this (from 1937 with Bernard Addison on guitar): "Nagasaki" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPSyv8R3wzk



Mills Brothers singing "Nagasaki" accompanied by Bernard Addison on guitar 1937.



Mills Brothers with Bernard Addison sing and 'play' Ellington's 'In My Solitude' 1937

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZmrqAtA90&list=RD2ZmrqAtA90&start_radio=1

WIL-KERSTAL met het COTTONCHIEF gecombineerd van BOBBY MARTIN En WERELDPROGRAMMA met TAPDANCERS, NEGERDANSGRUPPEN, ATTRACTIES!!! Amusement in zijn geheel	NED. JAZZ LIGA 2de KERST-DAG CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN DEN DIERENTUIN van 8-4 UUR CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN HARLEM ENTREE 2,50 Lijstleden 2,00	HET WERELDBEKENDST LANGKWARTET FOUR BOYS AND A GUITAR MILLS BROTHERS HET GROTE ONDER LEIDING VAN H. STERNFELD Plaatbespreken: Wladimir Danilow NA AFLOOP H.T.M. BOESSEN NAAR ALLE THEATERS
--	--	---



A Christmas night in Harlem

Succesvol optreden van „The Mills Brothers” en Bobby Martin and his coloured Swing-band

De door de afd. Den Haag der N.J.L. op den Tweeden Kerstavond georganiseerde feest-avond, welke onder den naam „Christmas night in Harlem” gehouden werd, is een ongeken-d succes geworden. Een 2500-koppig publiek heeft aan den oproep der Ned. Jazz Liga, om naar den Dierentuin te komen, gehoor gegeven en de twee groote attracties van dezen avond uitbundig toegejuicht. Het bal duurde onafgebroken voort tot 4 uur in den nacht, onderbroken door het optreden van diverse dansgroepen, welke hier optraden onder auspiciën van het dansinstituut B. Sternfeld, in samenwerking waarmede de Haagsche Liga deze feestavonden georganiseerd heeft. Wij zagen een drietal vlotte tapdancers van het gekleurde ras en een aardig Russisch danspaar. Om ongeveer 11 uur popelde de zaal van verlangen naar het optreden van de meesterlijke negerzangers The Mills Brothers, welke in twee series hun ongeëvenaarde orkestimitaties brachten. De N.J.L., die dit kwartet in de Residentie lanceerde, deed hiermede een goede keuze. Het publiek toonde zich dankbaar en opgetogen over de vocale prestaties, die soms aan het wonderbaarlijke grenzen.

Wanneer men het niet voor zijn oogen zag gebeuren, zou men af en toe weigeren te gelooven, dat slechts een gitaar de zangers begeleidt en dat de trompet-, trombone- en saxofoon geluiden met den mond worden voortgebracht. En zulks met een timbre en een intonatie, waar menige instrumentalist jaloersch op zou kunnen zijn! Na enkele uren dansmuziek van het zeer goede dansorkest The Plaza Swingers, welke er toe medewerkten de „Harlem”-sfeer te handhaven, werd tegen twee uur de tweede clou van den avond aangekondigd: Bobby Martin met zijn Nieuw Yorksch orkest. Van dat moment af waande men zich volkomen in Nieuw Yorks negerswijk Harlem, daar zooiets maar zelden in ons land te hooren is en dus nog alle bekoring van het nieuwe en exotische bezit. Er werd door Martin en zijn vaardige instrumentalisten, waaronder speciaal de slagwerker Kaiser Marshall, de bassist Bass Hill en de altsaxofonist Glyn Pacque opvielen, met een uitbundigheid en een levensvreugde gemusiceerd, dat de dansers ophielden met hun eigen vermaak en rond het podium bleven staan, onbeweeglijk, tien rijen dik, met oogen en ooren in de ban van het orkest.

Men zegt weleens, dat de jazzmuziek de menigte tot danswoede en andere excessen opzweept, doch hier werd bewezen, dat authentieke jazzmuziek in al haar oprechtheid en spontane belevenis de menschen aan den grond nagelt en ademloos doet luisteren. Aan het gejuich tusschen de programmanummers kwam schier geen einde. Na zoo'n avond betreurt men het slechts, dat slechts zoo weinig authentieke jazzmuziek ons land bereikt en dat wij ons met zooveel ergerlijke, laag bij de grondsche nabootsing tevreden moeten stellen. In dit verband moge het optreden van de Savoy-Band als een teleurstelling genoemd worden.



This band (leader Svend Asmussen) made up the backing group for Mills Bros., while they toured Denmark in 1938. From left: Knut Knutssøn, clarinet and saxes. Niels Foss, bass. Svend Hauberg, guitar. Svend Asmussen, violin. Børge Roger Henrichsen, piano. Erik Parker, trumpet.



From left: Herbert Mills directing, Norman Brown kneeling, Asmussen, Hauberg, Roger Henrichsen, Harry playing Asmussen's violin, Foss, Donald playing Foss's bass, and John Mills Snr., overlooking the proceedings

MUSIK **AMINA** RADIO

FOTO

HØR DE PRÆGTFULDE
MELODIER FRA
FILMEN
**BROADWAY
MELODY
1938**

YOURS AND MINE
I'M FEELING LIKE A MILLION
SHARE HANDS WITH A MILLION
YOUR BROADWAY
AND
-vi har kom
I DE BEDSTE
INDSPILNINGE

**MILLS
BROTHERS**



Wagner
Sweet and Slow
Tiger Rag
Wagner's Sweetheart
Duckie's Song
Chatterbox, my Chatterbox
Sweet Home - 3rd Act
St. Louis Blues
The old man of the woods
Lonesome Blues
Go home
Little old lady

BRUNSWICK

K KØBENHAVNS
museum
museum of
COPENHAGEN

AMINA Radio-, Grammofon-, Foto- & Musikinstrumenthandel v/E. Wang Christensen, 7 Amagerbrogade, Copenhagen, advertises Mills Brothers in 1938



1936 – John Mills Snr., takes over after John Mills Jnr. – this photo used for advertising in Copenhagen 1938



At 'National Scala', Copenhagen, 1938 with Norman Brown, guitar. Concerts were actually held at the Odd-Fellow Palais, yet the background seen in this photo looks very much like 'National Scala'



At 'National Scala', Copenhagen, 1938 with Norman Brown, guitar





Mills Brothers and Norman Brown visiting the Royal Palace Amalienborg in Copenhagen sometime during late February/early March 1938. The two guiding gentlemen are unknown



Mills Brothers visited Denmark again in February 1939, this time accompanied by the Leo Mathisen Orchestra at their concerts. No photos have materialized from these occasions.



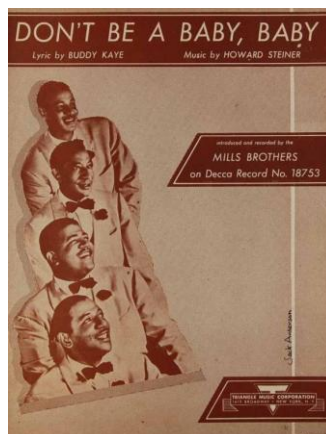
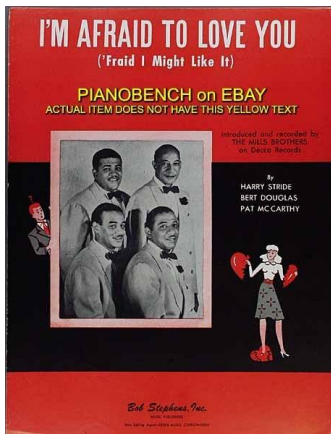
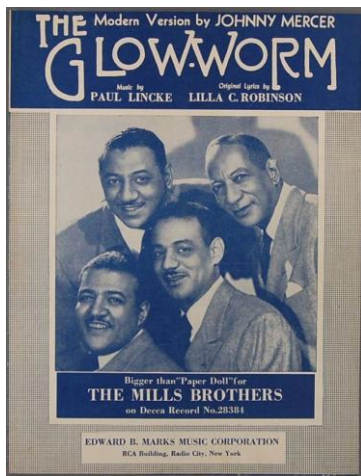
Here is quite a mystery. None of the two shown venues resemble the original Cotton Club. It is known that a New Cotton Club opened at 656 West 125th Street, NYC – but not until c. 1978. Car model styles indicate photos to be from the 1930'ties. So where and when are we??





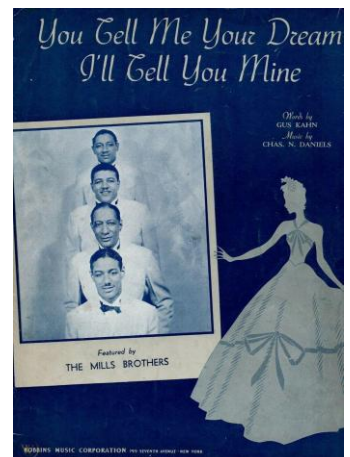
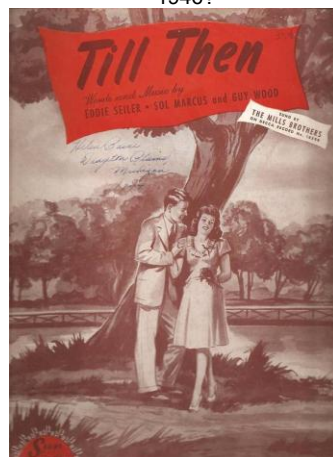
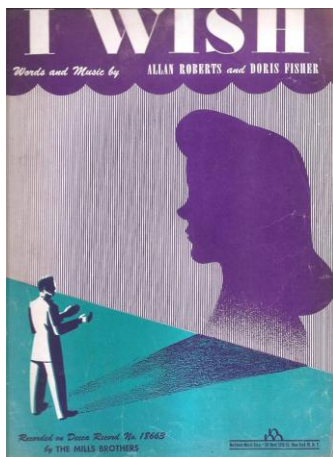
Prob. at World's Fair, New York, 1939-40, with Gabriel Heatter (1890-1972, radio journalist).

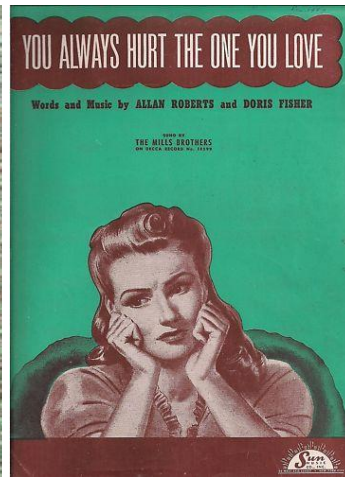
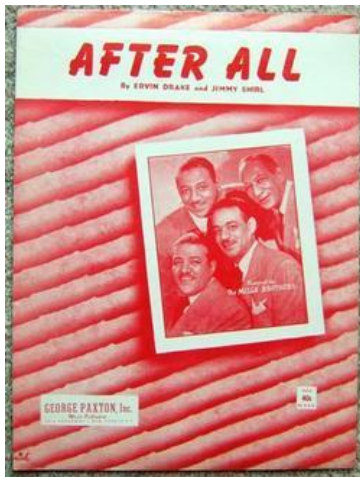
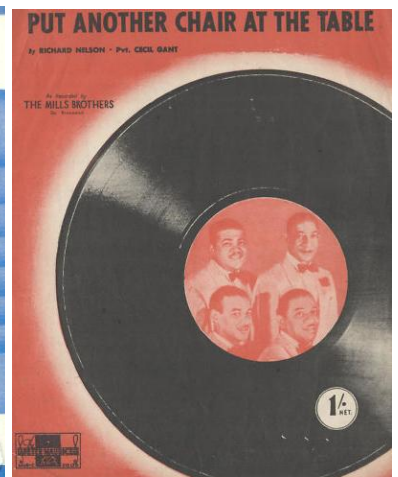
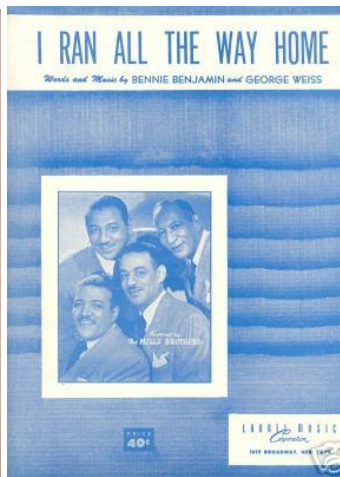
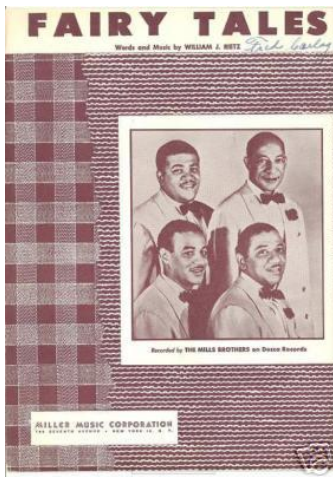
Buffalo Courier Express, January 14, 1942



1946?

1946





THE WAR YEARS

Soon they were back in Europe. Through 1939, they enjoyed remarkable success in Europe. Herbert recalls, "We left England for the last time just three days before war was declared on Germany and the only boat we could get was to Australia. We were overseas from then on except for two months in 1940 and then we went back to South America. We didn't get back until 1941. In the meantime, the Ink Spots were coming up and people had sort of forgotten us."

At the end of the 1930's, the group was well-known as high class entertainers, and consequently their style was also adapted to fit in with a much broader audience – in short, they became more 'mainstream'. Their fans were loyal, yet hardcore jazz fans complained that performances became less interesting.



'Honolulu Adviser', January 18, 1940: Home from the Wars. Famed rhythm singers passing through yesterday.



Mills Brothers at City Theatre, NYC, 1941

In the period between John Jr.'s death and their return to the States, they re-recorded "Lazy River". It was followed by "Someday You'll Want Me to Want You", "Swing Is the Thing", "Long About Midnight", "Organ Grinders Swing", and "The Song Is Ended". They honored Duke Ellington with a swing version of "Caravan", and then produced a series of classic recordings: "South of the Border", which they performed in a tour of South America, along with "Ain't Misbehavin'", "It Don't Mean a Thing", "Jeepers Creepers", "Three Little Fishes", and "Basin Street Blues".

During this era, there was also a brief time when the group performed with a non-family member. Gene Smith sang as a stand-in for one year when Harry was drafted into the Army. Although Smith's solo singing did not particularly resemble the group's usual sound, he was able to harmonize well in Harry's stead until the fourth brother's return. Smith is very noticeable in a number of the Mills Brothers' film appearances.

Harry Mills was, however, sometimes allowed time off from his service for recordings, movie shooting etc.



Gene Smith

Watch this one: "Up the Lazy River" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=QH1e6G0K3Pk

TODAY! First Time in Akron!
ON THE STAGE!
in Person!
 FRESH FROM EUROPEAN TRIUMPHS!
 The
MILLS BROTHERS
 FOUR BOYS & A GUITAR!
 RADIO'S GREATEST NOVEL ENTERTAINMENT!
 THEY SOUND LIKE AN ORCHESTRA!
 SEE HOW THEY DO IT!
And How They DO Do It!

Five Times Daily!
 8:30, 4:30, 6:30
 8:15, 10:10

AND ON THE SCREEN!
Star Studded Sensation!
Girls And Laughs Galore!
YOUNG and BEAUTIFUL
 with the
13 WAMPAS BABY STARS
 of 1934 . . . and
 WILLIAM HAINES—JUDITH ALLEN
 JOHN MILJAN—SHAW & LEE
 Vince Barnett—Joseph Cawthorn
TED FIO-RITO AND HIS
 ORCHESTRA

PALACE



PALACE
 CLEVELAND • OHIO
STARTS FRIDAY JAN. 31st

IN PERSON
CAB CALLOWAY
 AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA

Extra Added!
IN PERSON
MILLS BROS
 FOUR BOYS AND A GUITAR

SCREEN
PAT O'BRIEN
 Constance BENNETT
'Escape to Glory'



Around January 1941



Still photo from a 1942 movie short, a 'soundie', "Paper Doll", one of Mills Brothers' greatest hits.

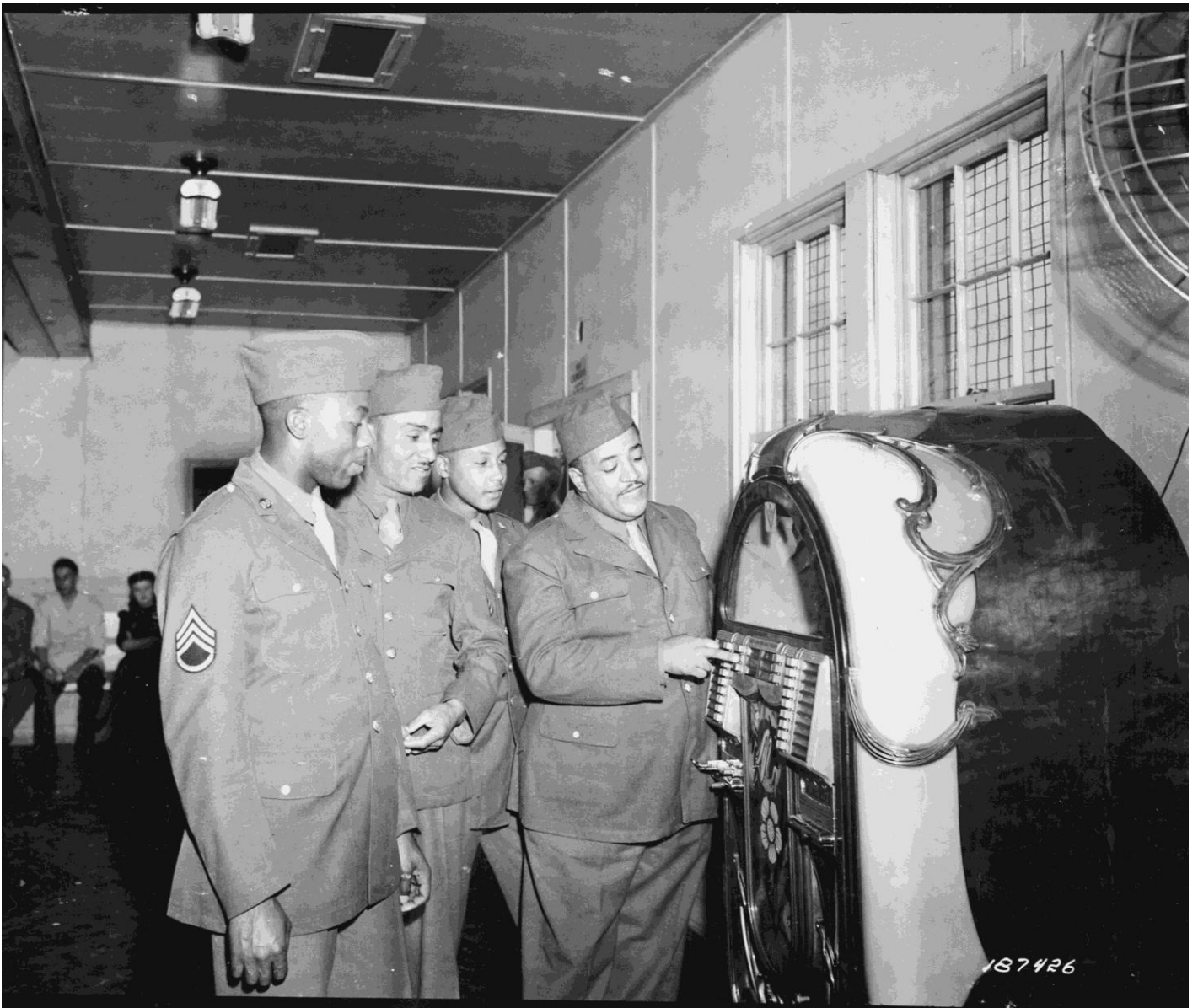


Dorothy Dandridge starred as the Paper Doll in the soundie.

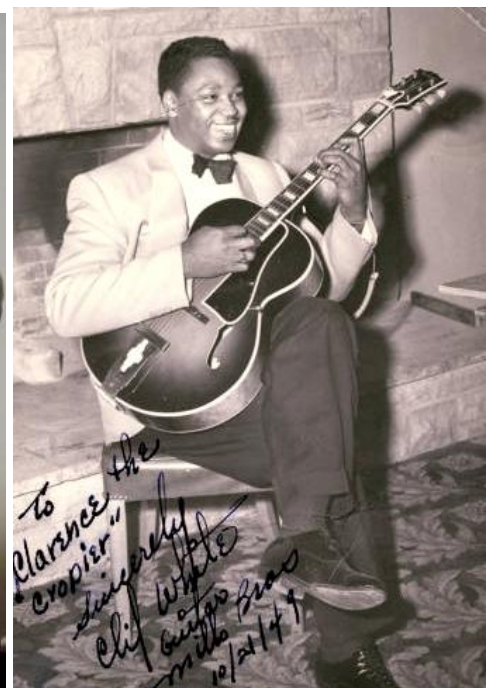


Between 1941-46 Mills Brothers were heavily featured in Bing Crosby's Kraft Music Hall programmes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3sq6gBmwPI&list=RDW3sq6gBmwPI&start_radio=1 Mills Brothers performing 'Tiger Rag' with Clifton White on guitar, sometime during the war



"First of the famous Mills Brothers quartet to enter Army service, Pvt. Harry Mills stops at the jukebox in the Reception Center PX to hear how he sounds on one of the latest Mills Brothers recordings. Left to right: S/Sgt. Arthur Whyte, Sgt. Robert Seymour, Pfc. George Blair, and Pvt. Harry Mills. Fort Custer, MI." Harry was drafted October 16, 1940.



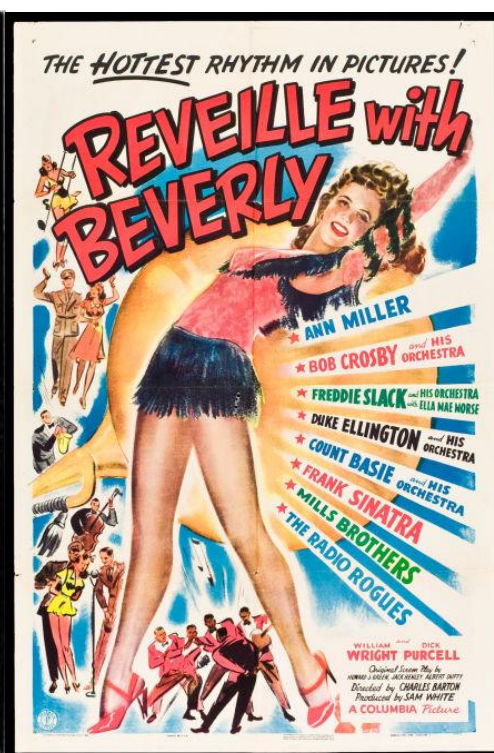
A publicity still for the 1943 film "He's My Guy". CLIFTON 'CLIF' WHITE (died 1998) is the guitar player (recommended by Louis Armstrong). The extremely excellent White was with MB while Norman Brown served with the US Navy most of WW2. Be sure to listen to the magnificent "Sweet Lucy Brown" from 1943: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqM968QQ66Q>



The Columbia movie "Reveille with Beverly" (based on radio show 1941-42) released February 4th, 1943



Be sure to watch: "Sweet Lucy Brown" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=toJR-vmlwdA or www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8jK978n4xI
 "Cielito Lindo" - www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS6AFUDwxCw





From 'Reveille with Beverly' 1943 with Clifton White, guitar



From the movie "Cowboy Canteen" 1944

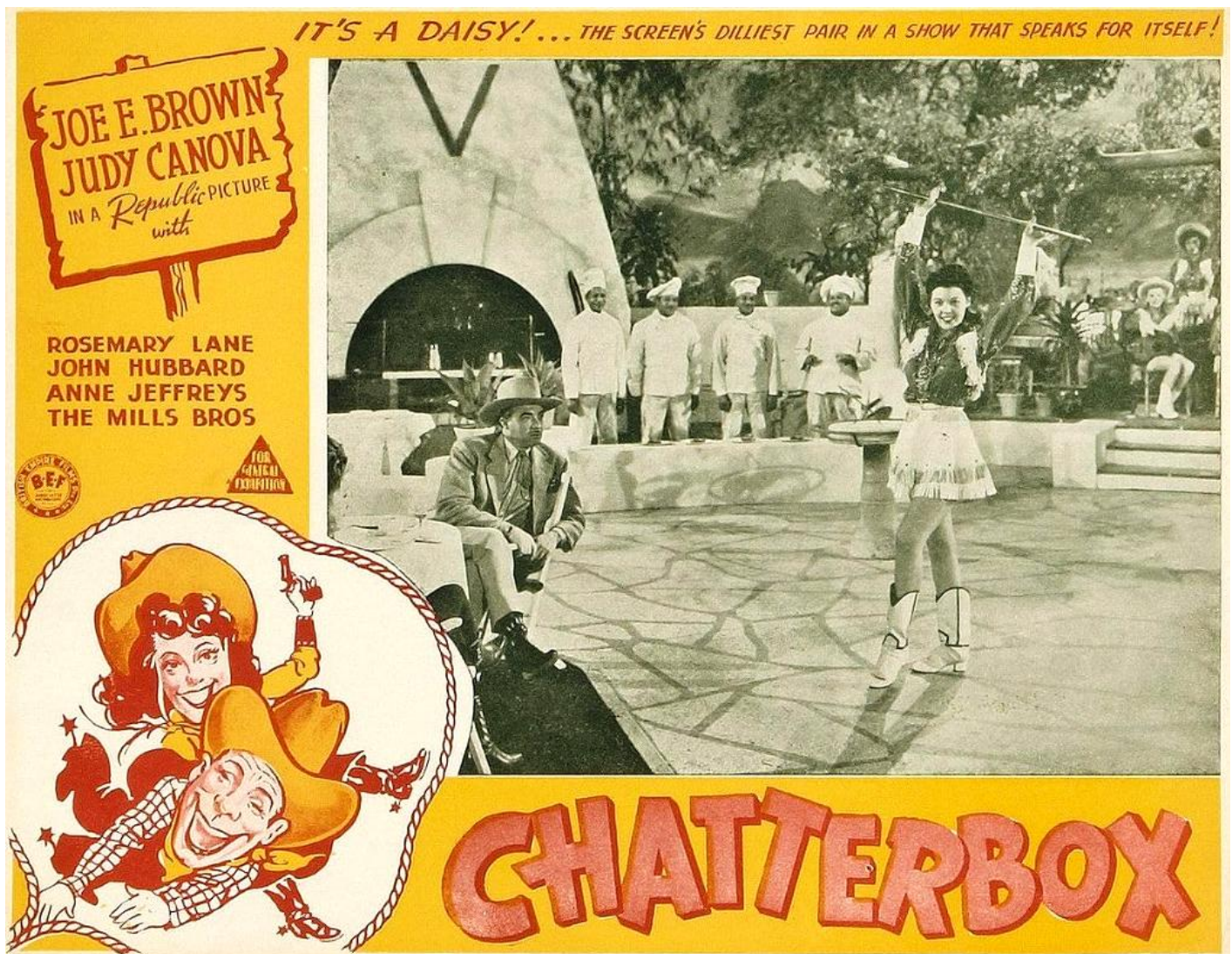




From the movie 'Cowboy Canteen' 1944



Columbia Broadcasting System Air Show during the war time. Unknown location (poss. Australia 1940?).



Mills Brothers appearing as chefs in the Republic Picture 'Chatterbox' in 1943



"How Am I To Know", Mills Brothers and Clifton White, 1943
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKB6ha93Ve4>



'Hit Tune Jamboree', Movie Short for Universal Pictures Company 1943





Clif White with Donald Mills, John Mills Snr., and Herbert Mills. Photo by Nat Singerman, occasion unknown. Clifton White (1922-98) joined Mills Brothers in 1940 when he was 18 years old, due to Norman Brown being drafted for service. White was a most excellent guitar player. Inscription reads "This was a great idea" – unfortunately, the nature of the idea is not revealed. This photo may be from the period when Harry Mills was drafted as well.



Columbia Broadcasting System Radio Program, the commercial "Roma Wines Show", June 24, 1943. Mills Brothers with Clifton White and actors Mary Astor, Chas. Ruggles and Mischa Auer.



c. 1945-46

THE POST WAR YEARS

Returning to the states, the Brothers were anxious for a hit. They recorded "I'll Be Around". Donald Mills chose "Paper Doll" as the B-side of the record. "I'll Be Around" became a popular hit, then a disk jockey turned the record over. "Paper Doll", recorded in just fifteen minutes, sold six million copies and became the group's biggest hit.



A Joe Louis full movie "The Fight Never Ends", published by Alexander Releasing Corp., 1948. Norman Brown, guitar

The rise of rock and roll in the early fifties did little to decrease the Mills Brothers popularity. "Glow Worm" jumped to number one on the pop charts in 1952. "Opus One", an updated version to the Tommy Dorsey hit, was soon on the charts as well, followed by "You're Nobody 'til Somebody Loves You", "Yellow Bird", "Standing on the Corner", and "If I Had My Way".



These photos probably from around 1954 - often stated to be from the 1970'ties which is incorrect.



This photo is often used as illustration in various contexts including only the three remaining brothers. Many producers seem to have great difficulties distinguishing between John Mills Snr. and Norman Brown.



1947 movie production "Ebony Serenade"



Night club flyer, late 40's / early 50's



August 1945



1948 performance at NBC Radio, unknown occasion. Note that it is Herbert wearing a leader-suit

You're Nobody 'Til Somebody Loves You

Words and Music by
RUSS MORGAN, LARRY STOCK & JAMES CAVANAUGH

PRICE
 50¢
 N.S.P.



As Recorded by
THE MILLS BROS.
 ON DECCA RECORDS

SOLE SELLING AGENT
 SOUTHERN MUSIC PUB. CO., INC.
 1619 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 19, N.Y.



1949



Dance and 2 Big Shows

The MILLS BROS.

WORLD FAMOUS QUARTET WITH DANCE BAND

Saturday Feb 2ND
 SACRAMENTO MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
 CAPITAL ENTERPRISE ATTRACTIONS

COMING EVENTS

- Feb. 15th
 WOODY HERMAN
- Feb. 22nd
 STAN KENTON

No Advance In Price
\$7.50
 Inc. Tax

January 31st, 1952, Sacramento, California



C. 1946



Taken c. January 31st, 1953 (looks rather like c. 1946). Right: Norman Brown, also 1953 (looks rather like Clifton White at unknown date).

NEW NORGE *JET* Self-D-Froster



This so-called THE NORGE SHOW was evidently a commercial advertising with background music (underneath the speaker's voice) alternating between previous well-known recordings by either Louis Armstrong or Mills Brothers. No new mutual recordings whatsoever involved.



The Mills Brothers

HITCH HIKERS OF THE WEEK. The touring Four Ink Spots quartet were driving through Indiana on their way to make a train connection so they could keep an important booking. At 1:30 a.m. their car came to a halt several miles outside Lebanon on the route to Indianapolis and refused to move. The singers spent an hour and a half trying to flag passing motorists for a lift. Just when the quartet was about to give up, a car came down the road, slowed to a stop. In it were the Four Mills Brothers. The Ink Spots made their train on time.

Jet Magazine, January 1st, 1953

Mills Brothers Tenor Faces Bigamy Charges

Bigamy charges loomed against lead tenor Don Mills of the famed Mills Brothers Quartet as a Santa Monica Superior Court ordered him to answer a claim that he married a white Hollywood secretary while already wed to another woman. The secretary, Mrs. Jean Phillips Mills, said she joined Mills as housekeeper, traveling companion, and social secretary in 1952, and the following year they entered into a "valid marriage relationship." Mills introduced her to friends and business associates as his wife, she said. The woman alleged in an affidavit that she expects to file for divorce if legally married, and if not, for payments for services rendered as Mills' employee. Mills, ordered to answer her charges by April 1, is legally married to England-born Sylvia Mills, they are parents of four children. At week's end, Mills said in Salt Lake City he knew nothing of the charges and, when asked if he had married the secretary, replied: "No comment."

Jet Magazine, March 31st, 1955

MR. & MRS.

English Wife Plans To Divorce Don Mills

Auburn-haired Wylvia Mills, wife of Donald Mills of the Mills Brothers quartet, has retained Attorneys Seyinour Lazar and Paul Caruso of Beverly Hills and plans to sue her singer husband for a divorce. The action by Mrs. Mills, who met her husband in England, put an end to long-circulated rumors in Los Angeles about the couple's split. They have four children ranging from 10 to 18 in age.



Mr. and Mrs. Don Mills
put an end to long-circulated rumors in Los Angeles about the couple's split. They have four children ranging from 10 to 18 in age.

Jet Magazine, February 17th, 1955

Nonetheless, they share mutual resting garden niche



Sometimes the above photos have been categorized as taken during the 1970'ties – which can not be correct since John Mills Sr. is still seen with the group. Also, it is Clifton White on guitar in the picture to the right, and consequently it is taken not later than 1945.



Paramount Theatre, New York 1945



With Peggy Lee in Radio Studio around 1953-54



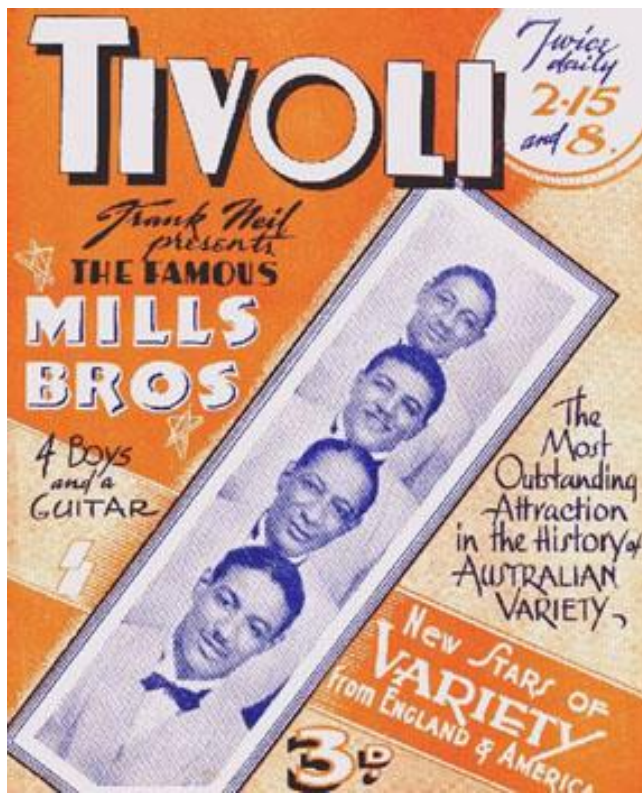
Photo possibly from early 1963

In 1956-57, John Sr. reluctantly stopped touring with the group. He was sixty-eight, but his retirement did not stop the Brothers. As a trio, the Mills Brothers recorded for Dot Records and were frequent guests on The Jack Benny Show, The Perry Como Show, The Tonight Show and The Hollywood Palace etc. They played theatres and clubs, touring up to forty weeks a year.

The move from Decca to Dot Records brought a moderate 1958 hit, a cover of the Silhouettes' "Get a Job" that made explicit the considerable influence on doo-wop that the early Mills Brothers records had exerted. The Mills Brothers charted "Yellow Bird" two years prior to Arthur Lyman's Top Ten hit remake. "Cab Driver", recorded in 1968, was their last great hit (#23 pop, #3 easy listening).



John Snr. at hospital 1956, one of his daughters visiting. This photo indicates that Mills Snr. stopped due to bad health setting in.



Touring Australia 1939



Dorothy Dandridge and Donald Mills.
DD was featured in the 1942 'Paper Doll' soundie



With Dean Martin around 1967. Dean Martin maintained that Harry Mills was his greatest inspiration ever!
Be sure to watch: "You're Nobody 'til somebody Loves You" – www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9FAGoDcrp0
"Paper Doll" – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWKKG6TQDzk>
"Up the Lazy River" – www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k6lrZ6ltvE



Donald Mills 1966



Herbert Mills 1966



Harry Mills 1966



Allen Norman Brown 1966

All photos permitted by Fraser MacPherson Estate for general distribution



Poster from the movie "The Big Beat" 1958. Photo at right not related to movie.
 Rotten tomatoes: "Don't bother to seek this one out!" – which referred to plot and actors, while there wasn't enough music.





This photo has been used as an illustration combined with the recording of 'Lora-Belle Lee' for Decca in 1949. The latter was by Mills Brothers including their father, while the above photo is clearly from a later performance, likely 1959-60.



A similar event also from 1960'ies.





Mills Brothers & Norman Brown in Copenhagen 1966
(in the background Ib Glindemann, dir., Niels Henning Orsted Pedersen, bass, and Allan Botschinsky, trumpet)



Ib Glindemann on fire directing "Glow Worm" – apparently to The Brothers' utmost satisfaction





At Bellevue Strand, on the coast North of Copenhagen



During 1960'ties. Harry Mills started losing his sight from 1967. Norman Brown died 1969



Bing Crosby hosting the New Year's Eve Show from Hollywood Palace, December 31st 1966 – aired directly on ABC.
From left Skitch Henderson, Herbert Mills, Donald Mills, Norman Brown, Harry Mills, Bing Crosby, Dorothy Collins, and Charles Aznavour.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wig4gjpgR4&list=RD8wig4gjpgR4&start_radio=1





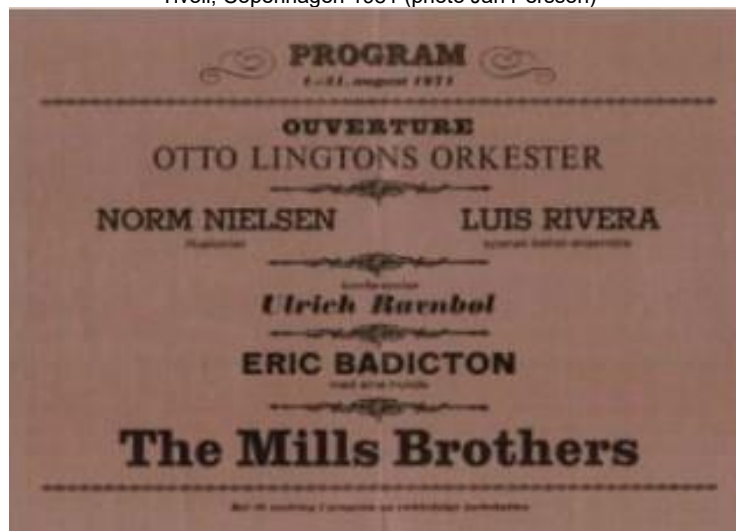
Recording 1967 (and again in 1968) with Count Basie and his Orchestra – “Board of Directors” for Dot Records
(Album title derived from the Basie 1958 Roulette Recording “Chairman of the Board”)



This photo reportedly from Mills Brothers 50-year anniversary career celebration



Tivoli, Copenhagen 1981 (photo Jan Persson)



Los Angeles, California, February 23rd, 1978, attending Grammy Awards (which wasn't bestowed on MB until 1998).

THE LATER YEARS

Their fiftieth anniversary in show business was celebrated in 1976 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. Bing Crosby hosted this nostalgic tribute. Few in the audience realized that Harry was now almost blind because of diabetes.

As a trio, Herbert, Harry, and Donald continued performing on the oldies circuit until September 1981.

Herbert and Donald continued until some years before Herbert's death in 1989. Then, Donald began performing with the third generation of the family – his son, John III.

So, it is reasonably fair to state that by the end of 1981, the highly personal sound (when reduced from trio to duo format) and the career (based on their initial style) of the original Mills Brothers ended after being a popular and continued success for about 55 years.

In 1993, the Mills Brothers were inducted into the United Group Harmony Association's Hall of Fame as "Pioneers of pioneer groups". In 1998, the Recording Academy recognized the Mills family's contributions to popular music when it presented Donald, as the surviving member, with a Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement. It was estimated that in 1999, the Mills Brothers had sold fifty million records. Since then, their recordings have been reissued again and again on CDs.

John Jnr. Died from pneumonia (poss. Also tuberculosis) in the Bellefontaine family home on January 23, 1936. He was buried at Bellefontaine City Cemetery, Mills Family Plot, Section 14, Lot 15, Logan County, Ohio.

Harry was returning from the Copenhagen engagement in 1981, when he realized that he had to give up singing with the trio. The three brothers fulfilled their last performance together in Atlantic City in September 1981. Two weeks later, Harry underwent surgery for the removal of a tumor. A diabetic, he was often bedridden during his last months.

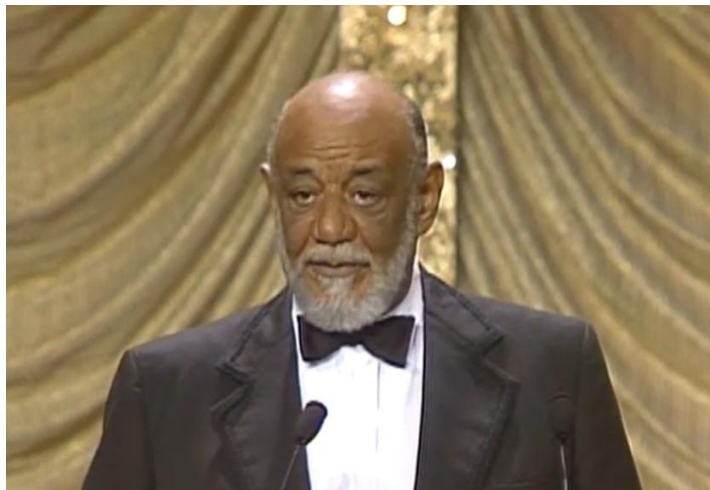
Harry died from complications of diabetes on June 28, 1982, in Los Angeles, California. He was interred at Forest Lawn Park Cemetery, Hollywood Hills, Los Angeles County, California. Court of Remembrance Section, Columbarium Section of Radiant Dawn, Single Wall Crypt #3446.

Herbert was often considered the shy brother – which was not really the true picture. He was highly capable of fronting and leading the group vocally when appropriate, could sing whichever part needed of each arrangement plus take over brother John's bass line voicings.

Herbert died from complications of viral meningitis on April 12, 1989, at the Valley Hospital, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada. He was cremated and his ashes given to friends and family. A bronze marker is seen at Mills Family Plot, Section 14, Lot 15, Bellefontaine City Cemetery, Logan County, Ohio.

Donald died from pneumonia on November 13, 1999, in Los Angeles, California. He was interred at Forrest Lawn Memorial Park, Hollywood Hills, Los Angeles County, California. Court of Remembrance Section, Columbarium Section of Radiant Dawn, Outdoor Garden Niche #62033.

It is said that they completed 37 world tours during their career. And they were awarded a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame (Vocal Group Section at 7000 Hollywood Boulevard) on February 8th, 1960.



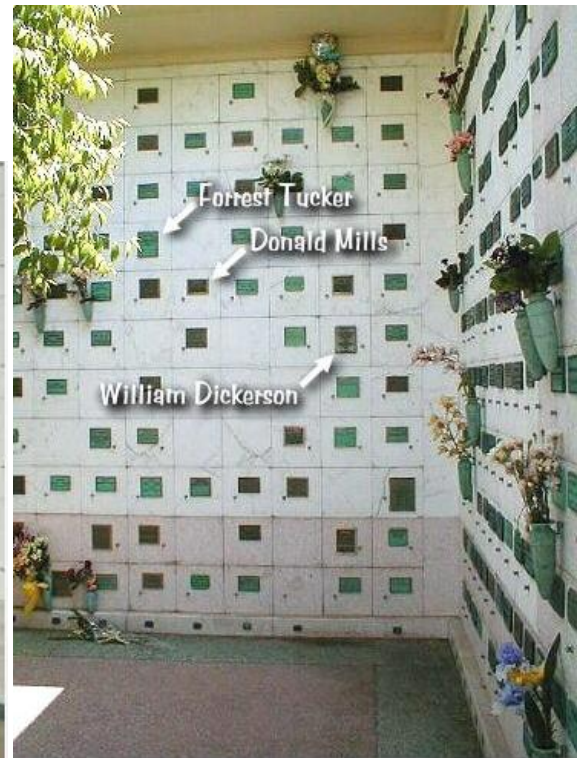
Donald Mills/Mills Brothers receive 'Pop Legend Black Gold Award' in 1987, Herbert already ailing and being unable to attend the Ceremony



Mills family plot in Bellefontaine City Cemetery



John Mills Jnr's marker in the family plot



Forrest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery, Hollywood Hills

Also, there were a Mills Brothers Circus Co., several other Mills Circuses, a Mills Brothers Furniture Co., a Mills Brothers Model Engineering Co., a Mills Brothers Juice Company (sweet cider producers of Middletown), a Mills Brothers Wrestling Team (University of Missouri), and other Mills Brothers vocal groups of various combinations, all of no relation to THE Mills Brothers – four boys and a guitar.

Some FB-posters maintain to have heard MB under the name “Will, Willie, Wilbur and William” – which is a mistake.

A number of photos has been displayed (together with correct music postings) on the internet as being THE Mills Brothers. Yet, in fact, they are not depicting our heroes, for instance:



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Please kindly bear in mind that websites/internet addresses may expire due to the fact that providers pass away, or for some reason discontinue their service, or that sites/references are moved to new addresses. It is known that the number of less meticulous Mills Brothers info-pages have dwindled during the later years.

It is recommended to study Daniel R. Clemson's very interesting Mills Brothers biography accessible at Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission website
www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/winter/20625/mills_brothers/1058707

A number of interesting photos may be viewed at this 'Getty Images'-address:
<https://www.gettyimages.dk/search/2/image?groupbyevent=false&family=editorial&phrase=the%20mills%20brothers&sort=mostpopular> some of which may also be found at other websites or Face Book & internet locations

Akron Beacon Journal, Alexander Releasing Corp., American Forces Network, Astor Pictures, Jerry Beck/Cartoon Research, Brunswick Records, CBS Vibrations Channel, Columbia Broadcasting System, Michael Brooks, Daniel R. Clemson, Ed Crommelin <http://www.crommelin.org/history/Biographies/1914Edward/Jazz/JazzInHolland.htm>, Calisphere University of California/LA Public Library, Columbia Pictures, Columbia Records, Coral MCA Records, John R. T. Davies, www.danmarkpaafilm.dk, Decca Records, Danmarks Radio DRDK, Dot Records, eBay various photo displays, Face Book various photo displays, Leonard Feather, General Amusement Corporation, General Artists Corporation, Ib Glindemann, Les Hite, www.IMDb.com, International Creative Management, Jet Magazine, JSP Records, Svend Kragh-Jacobsen, Københavns Museum (ex Bymuseum), Lansing State Journal/Michigan, Donald Mills, Fraser MacPherson Estate, Marks Music Corporation, Helge Mass Foto, Mauritius Images, Mills Brothers & Norman Brown, Geoff Millne, Morris Music Company, Paramount Pictures, Jan Persson, Radio Stars Magazine, RKO Pictures, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Robbins Music Corporation, Brian Rockhold, Rockwell O'Keefe Inc., Royal Variety Charity, Brian Rust, Nat Singerman, Berthel Skjoldborg, Theatres Trust Krieger Collection, Triangle Music Corp., Laurie Wright/Storyville Magazine, Karl Emil Knudsen/Storyville Records, Tivoli Revyen, Frank Trumbauer Family Photo Collection, Turner Classic Movies Fan Site/Facebook, Universal Pictures Company Inc., Vapex, Various internet photos of no specified origin/source, Vitaphone Pictures, Vocal Group Hall of Fame Foundation, <http://www.vocalgroupharmony.com>, Warner Brothers Pictures, Wikipedia, WikiTree

List of movies:

1932: "The Big Broadcast" (Paramount Pictures)
1932: "I Ain't Got Nobody" (Fleischer Studios)
1933: "Dinah" (Fleischer Studios)
1933: "When Youba Plays the Rhumba on the Tuba" (Fleischer Studios)
1934: "Operator 13"
1934: "Strictly Dynamite"
1934: "Twenty Million Sweethearts" (Warner Brothers Pictures)
1935: "Broadway Gondolier" (Warner Brothers Pictures)
1937: "Sing as You Swing"
1942: "Rhythm Parade"
1943: "Chatterbox"
1943: "He's My Guy"
1943: "Hit Tune Jamboree"
1943: "Reveille with Beverly"
1944: "Cowboy Canteen"
1944: "Lazy River"
1948: "The Fight Never Ends"
1950: "When You're Smiling"
1956: "The Mills Brothers on Parade"
1958: "The Big Beat"

