

# ChicagoHistoryMuseum

## Blues Biographies

### READ:

Do you have a nickname, or another name that close friends and family call you? Sometimes nicknames are related to how you look, where you are from, a shortened version of your name, or just made up completely! Many of the famous blues musicians in Chicago had memorable and colorful stage names (similar to nicknames) that fellow artists and fans used. Find out more about a few of Chicago's notable musicians by matching the clues to their nickname.

### DO:

- **Discover** more about some Chicago Blues musicians on the following pages. If you can, find music by these artists to listen to.
- **Match** the nickname to the Chicago Blues Musician.
- **Use** the Stage Name Generator to find your Blues Stage Name.
- **Create** your backstage pass and rock out at home! Use construction paper and your imagination to draw the pass. Don't forget to include your Blue Stage Name!

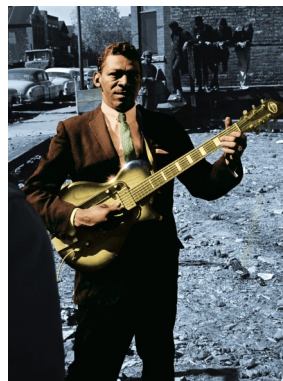
**Approx. Time:** 30—45 minutes

#### Materials:

- ⇒ Stage Name Mix Up
- ⇒ Chicago Blues Bios
- ⇒ Stage Name Generator
- ⇒ Construction paper
- ⇒ Drawing Supplies

### SHARE:

- **Wear** your backstage pass around the house!
- **Make** more for people in your family.
- **Post** pictures of your backstage passes on social media with the hashtag #CHMatHomeFamilies.

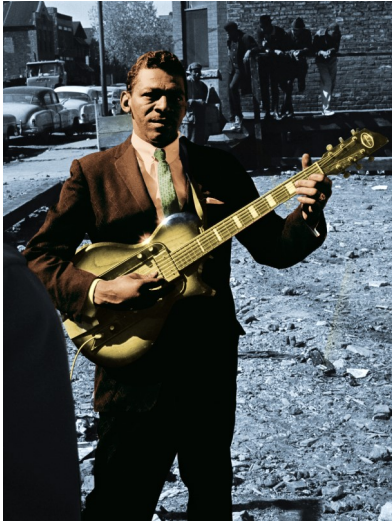


# Blues Biographies

Read the bios to find out more about each artist.

- Who is your favorite artist?
- What is something interesting about their life story?
- What questions would you ask if you could meet this person?

## Little Walter



<b>BORN</b> <b>MAY 1, 1930</b> Marksville, Louisiana	★	<b>MOVED TO CHICAGO</b> <b>1946</b>	★	<b>DIED</b> <b>FEBRUARY 15, 1968</b> Chicago, Illinois
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**LITTLE WALTER IS REGARDED AS THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL HARMONICA PLAYER.**

By amplifying his harmonica, Little Walter created a new sound and changed the role of the blues harp. He left home at a young age to play for tips throughout the South. Upon landing in Chicago, he teamed up with Muddy Waters, who helped the energetic teen hone his skills and learn to play with a band. Walter's harp was critical to defining the Chicago blues sound—innovative, bold, and amplified.

## Howlin' Wolf

<b>BORN</b> <b>JUNE 10, 1910</b> White Station, Mississippi	★	<b>MOVED TO CHICAGO</b> <b>1952</b>	★	<b>DIED</b> <b>JANUARY 10, 1976</b> Westmont, Illinois
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**WOLF'S CAPTIVATING STAGE PERSONA MADE HIM A REVERED PRACTITIONER OF CHICAGO BLUES.**

Howlin' Wolf arrived somewhat late to the city's blues scene. In 1952, he signed with Chess Records, the premier producer of Chicago blues hits. With Chess, Wolf released songs beloved by fans and highly influential with 1960s rock bands, including the Rolling Stones and The Doors. On stage, Wolf was showy, menacing, and tough, but those closest to him knew Burnett as sensitive, caring, and reliable.





# Blues Biographies

## Muddy Waters

**BORN**  
**APRIL 4, 1915** ★  
Rolling Fork, Mississippi

**MOVED TO CHICAGO**  
**1943** ★

**DIED**  
**APRIL 30, 1983**  
Westmont, Illinois

**MUDDY WATERS MADE MUSIC THAT EPITOMIZED THE CHICAGO BLUES SOUND.**

Muddy grew up sharecropping in the Mississippi Delta and learned to play music as a child. Dissatisfied with life at home, Waters caught the Illinois Central to Chicago. His country blues style was unpopular here, but he adapted and persevered. By the end of the 1940s, his band was the most renowned in the city. Waters' name remains synonymous with Chicago electric blues.

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## Koko Taylor



**BORN**  
**SEPTEMBER 28, 1928** ★  
Memphis, Tennessee

**MOVED TO CHICAGO**  
**c. 1952** ★

**DIED**  
**JUNE 3, 2009**  
Chicago, Illinois

**KOKO TAYLOR BROKE BARRIERS WITHIN THE MALE-DOMINATED CHICAGO SCENE, EARNING HER THE TITLE "THE QUEEN OF THE BLUES."**

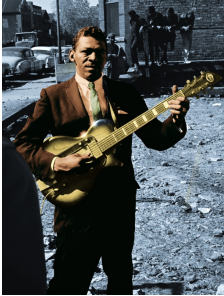
In the 1950s, Koko Taylor's throaty singing style made her a regular in Chicago clubs. She caught the attention of Willie Dixon, who signed her to Chess Records. There, she recorded her signature song "Wang Dang Doodle." Taylor later signed with Chicago's Alligator Records and released a number of albums. She kept up a demanding touring schedule until her death, playing some 200 shows annually.

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# Stage Name Mix Up

**Oh No!** The name plates on the dressing rooms backstage got mixed up. Help match the artist's name to their stage name! You can try to match the names

## 1. Marion Walter Jacobs



## A. Howlin' Wolf

I had a very showy stage style which helped me earn my name.

## 2. Chester Arthur Burnett



## B. Koko Taylor

My singing style made me a regular at Chicago Blues Clubs.

## 3. McKinley Morganfield



## C. Muddy Waters

My country blues style became a key part of Chicago Blues.

## 4. Cora Walton



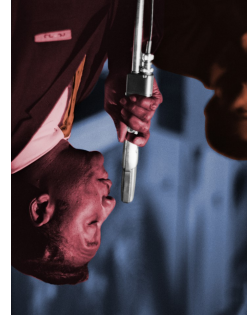
## D. Little Walter

My harmonica playing also helped shape Chicago Blues music.

# SPOILERS Stage Name Mix Up



4. Cora Walton



3. McKinley Morganfield



2. Chester Arthur Burnett



1. Marion Walter Jacobs

My harmonica playing also  
helped shape Chicago Blues  
music.

D. Little Walter

My country blues style became a  
key part of Chicago Blues.

C. Muddy Waters

My throaty singing style made  
me a regular at Chicago Blues

B. Koko Taylor

I had a very showy stage style  
which helped me earn my name.

A. Howlin' Wolf

# What's Your Blues Stage Name?

## 1. Use your first initial to find the first part of your Blues Stage Name!

A — Mighty	J — Duke/Duchess	S — Burnin'
B — Buddy	K — Champion	T — Modern
C — Big	L — Baby	U — Howlin'
D — Silly	M — Sleepy	V — Cryin'
E — Hollerin'	N — Screamin'	W — Crawlin'
F — Magic	O — Slick	X — Thrillin'
G — Happy	P — Little	Y — Smokey
H — Curly	Q — Steel-Eyed	Z — Doodlin'
I — Pretty	R — Sunny	

## 2. Use the month you were born to find your second name!

January — Toes	May — Dog	September — Lemon
February — Fingers	June — Eyes	October — Smoke
March — Child	July — Bad Boy/Girl	November — Sugar
April — Mama/Papa	August — Slick	December — Chicago

## 3. Add your last name and now you have your Blues Stage Name!

*For example, Abraham Lincoln becomes Mighty Fingers Lincoln!*

If you don't like the name you get, pick a new one!

My Blues Stage Name is: \_\_\_\_\_