

America's Harp Guitar Playing Evangelist Preacher Southern Gospel Singers

By Gregg Miner
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By now it should be abundantly clear that the good ol' U.S. of A. has given us the harp guitar's most diverse array of instruments, inventions, players, styles and musical genres.

One that I have yet to talk about on Harpguitars.net is the subject of today's in-depth study. In-depth or not and despite my mouthful of a title, I must regrettably inform you that the subjects *themselves* will prove extremely limited.

I am not kidding. A few months ago, there was exactly *one* of these musicians known – and even his harp guitar playing is in question. So, I was thrilled to recently discover a *second* harp guitar-playing gospel singer.

Needless to say, the Iconography pages and my other blogs illustrate that there were *many* other American harp guitarists who clearly dabbled in “Country Gospel” or “Old Time” music with their harp guitars. Beyond the hundreds of images of “classical music” and drawing room harp guitar players, there are multitudes of casual players in rural settings, from fields to porches, not to mention those in church settings.

So why feature just *two* here?

Because I speak of those whose *names are known to us, have biographical material available, and most importantly, have had their music recorded and preserved.*

I'll begin with the well-known and popular Alfred G. Karnes, whose “records are the only known use of the harp-guitar in Old Time Music.”¹ This statement is no longer precisely true, and because the relevant information has become now-legendary and ubiquitous it is incumbent upon me to fully examine the clues behind the legend and report my findings.²

As Karnes' fame comes specifically from his opportune inclusion in the celebrated "Bristol Sessions," let's begin there.

The Bristol Sessions

From Bear Family Records, who produced the 5-CD box set and book:

"The recording trip made by Victor Records to Bristol, Tennessee in July-August 1927 was a defining moment in country music. Producer Ralph Peer found two acts that acquired national and international fame: Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. But more than a hundred other recordings were made at the Bristol sessions of 1927 and '28. There were ballad singers, street evangelists, string bands, gospel quartets, harmonica virtuosos, Holiness preachers, blues guitarists and rural storytellers. A snapshot of rural American music was caught in an era of rapid change: pictures of a past almost beyond recall, but preserved for ever in these magnificent recordings."

Indeed, the reverence held for this seminal event by every writer on the subject clearly cements its crucial place in folk music history. It's a long and fascinating story, easily found online; I'll let Wikipedia's entry sum it up:

"The Bristol Sessions were a series of recording sessions held in 1927 in Bristol, Tennessee, considered by some as the 'Big Bang' of modern country music. The recordings were made by Victor Talking Machine Company producer Ralph Peer. Bristol was one of the stops on a two-month, \$60,000 trip that took Peer through several major southern cities and yielded important recordings of blues, ragtime, gospel, ballads, topical songs, and string bands. The Bristol Sessions marked the commercial debuts of Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. As a result of the influence of these recording sessions, Bristol has been called the 'birthplace of country music.' Since 2014, the town has been home to the Birthplace of Country Music Museum."

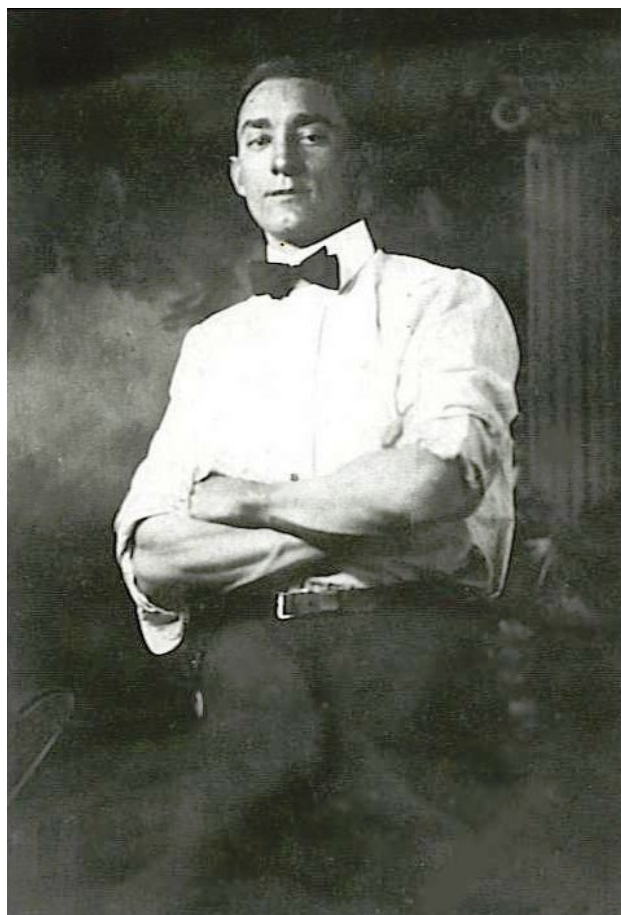
Besides Rodgers and the Carters, many fans of the event's recordings and producer Peer himself favored an unknown Baptist preacher from Kentucky. Stories differ on how Alfred G. Karnes – along with two other Corbin, Kentucky-area performers – heard about the event, but it was a convenient enough drive over the mountains that would land them there in July of 1927.

Ernest Phipps and His Holiness Quartet recorded their six selections on the 26th. Some say that they hear Alfred Karnes' guitar playing on these songs. Three days later, singer/banjoist B. F. Shelton recorded his tunes in the morning, after which Karnes recorded six selections, one of them – "Called to the Field" – an original composition.³ Ultimately, five of his six songs would be released on Victor. Peer subsequently invited Karnes back for the 1928 sessions, when seven new songs were recorded. For reasons unknown, just three of those would end up being released.

Thus, Karnes' official recorded and released repertoire reads as shown on the next page: 13 songs recorded, 8 released. All eight recordings can be easily found on YouTube, and you'll want to give them a listen when we later discuss those rumors of his harp guitar playing.

Recording Matrix #	Recording Date	Title	Release Matrix #	Release Date
39739-1	7/29/1927	<i>I Am Bound For The Promised Land</i>	20840-A	9/16/1927
39740-2	7/29/1927	<i>Where We'll Never Grow Old</i>	20840-B	9/16/1927
39742-2	7/29/1927	<i>When They Ring the Golden Bells</i>	20933-A	12/2/1927
39743-1	7/29/1927	<i>To The Work</i>	20933-B	12/2/1927
39738-1	7/29/1927	<i>Called To The Foreign Field</i>	V-40327-A	12/5/1930
39741-1,-2	7/29/1927	<i>When I See The Blood</i>	Unissued	
47232-1	10/28/1928	<i>Do Not Wait 'Till I'm Laid 'Neath The Clay</i>	V-40327-B	12/5/1930
47231-1,-2	10/28/1928	<i>The Sinner Sinks In Sad Despair</i>	Unissued	
47233-2	10/28/1928	<i>The Days Of My Childhood Plays</i>	V-40076-A	1929
47234-2	10/28/1928	<i>We Shall All Be Reunited</i>	V-40077-B	1929
47235-1,-2	10/29/1928	<i>That's Why The Boys Leave The Farm</i>	Unissued	
47236-1,-2	10/29/1928	<i>Clouds Of Glory</i>	Unissued	
47237-1,-2	10/29/1928	<i>The City Of Gold</i>	Unissued	

Alfred G. Karnes



During my investigation of Karnes' use of the harp guitar, I slowly pieced together the clues of his life, recordings and instrument from multiple sources on the web. It seems that most information can be traced back to an original 1972 article by Donald Lee Nelson, "The Life of Alfred G. Karnes" for the JEMF Quarterly, later reprinted in *Exploring Roots Music: Twenty Years of the JEMF Quarterly*. The basis of the article was a five-hour interview Nelson held in 1971 with Karnes' eldest son Alfred James Karnes, along with additional friends of Karnes in the Corbin, Kentucky area. From the time of that publication, others have taken the information at face value to paraphrase essentially all the same information. Rather than do the same, here is Karnes' 2005 *Encyclopedia of American Gospel Music* entry, which gives an excellent overview of Nelson's article:

KARNES, ALFRED GRANT

(b. February 2, 1891; d. May 18, 1958)

Gospel singer, songwriter, minister in both the Baptist and Methodist churches, and evangelist Alfred Grant Karnes was born in Bedford, Virginia, but he spent most of his adult life in Kentucky and always considered himself a Kentuckian. From the time he was a small boy, Karnes had two major desires: preaching and music. He would often go into a large field near his house with his cigar box fiddle, where he would play and then practice stump preaching.

After serving in the U.S. Navy during World War I, he moved to Jellico, Tennessee, where he became a barber. When a short time later he married Flora Etta Harris, he moved to her home state, Kentucky. It was in the Bluegrass state that Karnes's musical skills received their first public exposure. His rich vocals and his skills on the violin and banjo made him in demand at local gatherings. He was so fond of singing "Red Wing" that the song's title became his nickname. By 1925, Karnes had graduated as a Methodist minister from the Clear Creek Mountain Minister's Bible School. One of his teachers, a firm Baptist, converted him to that denomination.

Karnes was a hard-working minister, frequently pastoring as many as four rural churches at a time. He also kept busy with his music, and, in July 1927, he heard about the recording sessions in Bristol being held by the Victor Talking Machine Company; there, on July 29, he cut six sides backed by his own harp-guitar. Five of the six selections, including his own composition and most popular song, "Called to the Foreign Field," were released by Victor. In October

1928, Karnes returned to Bristol for another Victor recording session, waxing four sides on October 28 and three on October 29, but only three of the seven were released. With that, the recording career of Alfred Karnes ended.

Karnes continued his ministerial duties and established at least two churches, one in Kentucky and another in Ohio. He kept up his musical activities by forming a family band made up of himself, his four sons, and his daughter. They gave four "courthouse steps" concerts every Sunday, covering a rather extensive area from Mount Vernon to Stanford, Kentucky, always attracting a large crowd. One of their most requested numbers was "This Is My Day, My Happy Day." Although most of his music was religious in nature, Karnes did play such fiddle tunes as "Eighth of January" and "Wednesday Night Waltz" and, unlike many ministers, was not averse to dancing. In fact, he loved doing the Charleston.

Karnes engaged in a strenuous program of gymnastics to keep himself physically fit. Even so, after his second wife died in 1944, his health went gradually downhill. Early in 1957 he suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed, and a second stroke, on May 18, 1958, ended his life. Although only four records by Karnes were ever released, they were so powerful that they have kept his memory alive to the present day.

W. K. McNEIL

A few other interesting tidbits I learned from the original Nelson article were:

- Karnes didn't get further than third grade.
- He was married five times (his first to an older woman while only sixteen, the third a niece of the second, two short-lived and tragic, with the final ending in separation).
- His sudden conversion from Methodist preacher to Baptist minister happened just a few short months after graduating from Bible School upon being challenged to a debate by a Baptist minister (Karnes lost).
- He later created and sold his own "Relax Rub" through a local druggist (the mystery mixture was a popular seller).

And finally, there is this direct quote of Nelson's, presumably learned from his expert interviewee: "Rather than bring a violin or banjo (to the Bristol Sessions), Karnes took a \$375 Gibson harp-

guitar on which to accompany himself." Very specific information, that! Continuing, Nelson wrote "It was on this double-necked instrument that Karnes produced the distinctive sound of his bass runs."

And so, the legend began.

The late Ed Ward embellished things a tad further in his April 19, 2011 NPR interview when he said "...Alfred G. Karnes, who had just bought a Gibson harp-guitar for \$375 to accompany himself." For the record, here is the instrument in question:

The "Gibson" Harp-guitar, Style "U"

Description

Finest quality, scientifically graduated, select spruce top (sounding-board), of regular straight grain, finished in a shading of golden red to a beautiful dark mahogany; finest selected straight grain Mexican mahogany neck reinforced; finest selected thoroughly air-seasoned, thin, maple rim (reinforced at regular intervals by perpendicular bars), graduated back; dark mahogany finish, highly polished; ornamented head-piece, veneered top and back; tilted neck with upper portion of finger-board resting on sounding-board; laminated extended head-piece with nickeled bearing for sub-basses supported by octagonal arm extending beneath the sounding-board to the rim at side and again at end of body. Upright, narrow, hard maple bridge, either leg of which rests on the sounding-board over individual, graduated tone-bars, running longitudinally almost from rim to rim, one either side of the sound-hole, slightly convergent to the grain fiber of the sounding-board which is pulsed freely by vertical pressure of the strings at the bridge instead of a leverage pressure as on other Guitars on which the bridge is glued; elevated finger-rest with two German silver clamps (patented July 4, 1911. See page 97); stationary tortoise-celluloid elevated string attachment with ebony pegs inlaid with pearl; top and back ivoroid bound on outer edge of rim; convex ebony ivoroid bound, artist extension finger-board, with nineteen oval frets extended into the ivoroid binding, thus retaining full width of the finger-board; pearl position dots on finger-board and position dots on upper side of neck; oblong ivoroid bound sound-hole, inlaid with variegated woods of beautiful design; finest quality machine-head with string drums set perpendicularly through nickeled eyelets; bone nut; nickeled turn-buckle straining rod running from head of instrument to laminated head-block beneath sounding-board. Extreme length, 45 inches; extreme width, 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; extreme length of sub-basses from nut to bridge, 34 inches; extreme depth, 6 inches; length of scale from nut to bridge, 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; weight approximately, 12 pounds.

Pat. Mar. 30, 1909.
Pat. Jul. 19, 1910.
Pat. Jul. 4, 1911.

The Present Standard System of Tuning

The universal or Standard System of Tuning the 10 sub-basses, beginning with the first (next to the finger-board), is G sharp, G, F sharp, F, D sharp, D, C sharp, C, B and A sharp. The first four sub-basses are unisons with the fourth, third, second and first frets respectively of the sixth finger-board string.

NOTE.—Many of the above suggestions in tuning we owe to Walter A. Boehm, one of the most competent Harp-guitarists of America.

NOTE.—Special Harp-guitar treatise free for the asking. Always state whether gut or wire strings are wanted.

List price.....	\$248.21	Net price.....	\$140.00
With "Faultless" case No. 432.....		Net	154.75
With "Faultless" case No. 434.....		Net	157.00
With "Faultless" case No. 435.....		Net	161.30

Responsible parties may purchase from "Gibson" agents, or direct from us from territory in which we are not represented, at as low payments as \$10.00 down and \$5.00 per month. (Only sixteen and two-thirds cents a day.)

Agents must maintain prices marked "Net."

Prices not advanced when purchasing on payments

This catalog page is from 1918. The Style U would peak at \$337.50 list price with case in 1926 (if Karnes bought it "new," then it was at that price point) and remain at this price through the 1930s.

Perhaps Karnes' son remembered the exact price told to him by his father some decades later? (Hey, with shipping, it could be close!) And perhaps Ed Ward's wild guess was right in it having been just purchased? In equivalent 2023 dollars this would have cost Karnes over \$6500 – a pretty extravagant purchase for a Kentucky preacher. Perhaps the son told the biographer what his dad said a new instrument cost at the time, and he managed to find a heavily discounted instrument (secondhand harp guitars at giveaway prices were undoubtedly not uncommon in 1926). The details are hearsay at this point, but the fact remains that we do have a surviving photograph of

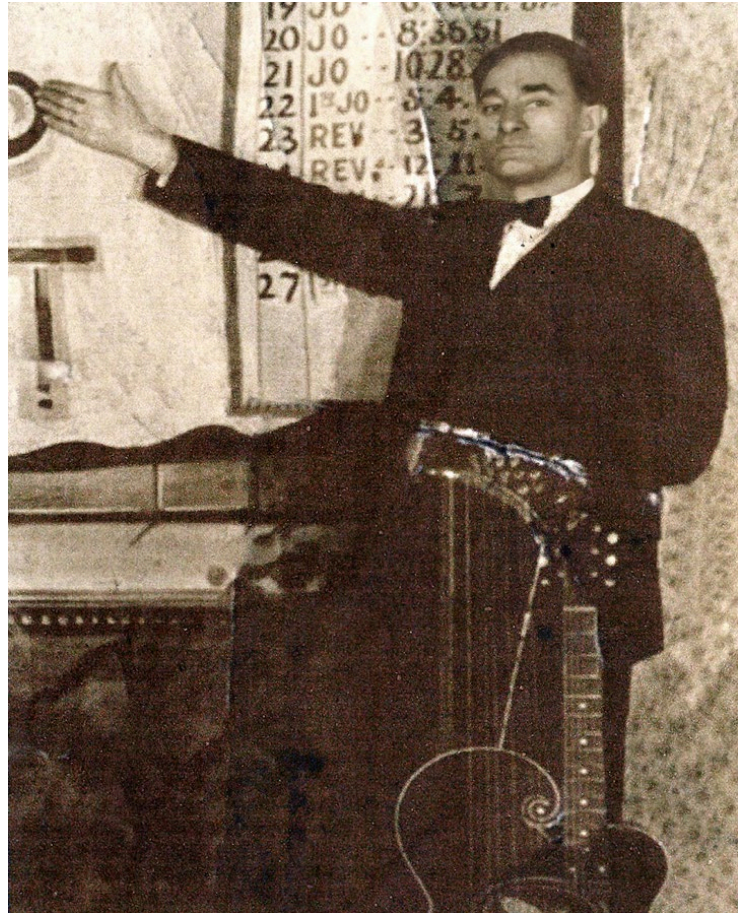
Alfred G. Karnes with a Gibson Style U guitar, and he looks around the age of his record period. I only recently discovered the image at right.

Here indeed is a circa 1910-1930s Gibson 10-bass Style U harp guitar in the hands of Alfred G. Karnes, date unknown.⁴

For the moment, I'm with *you* – I'll assume that this is indeed the instrument mentioned by Karnes' son and that – per his story (assuming his father as the source) – this was the instrument taken to the Bristol Sessions.

So far, so good?

The next question is why does every Victor label simply state “with guitar.” Don't you think if producer Ralph Peer was staring at his newest money-maker playing this incredible instrument, he wouldn't have included that distinctive



drawing card on his label?



Perhaps, but it's not quite hard evidence that Karnes only played a standard guitar. Based on these labels, I wondered why half of the online Discographies list “harp-guitar” in the credits. Where did they obtain such provenance? Answer: They didn't. They copied Nelson, et al, and “hear” what was described to them.

About all that remains then, are the recordings themselves.

As I began to revisit all of Karnes' recordings, I saw that I wasn't alone in asking these questions. Indeed, controversy still appears to remain at “ground zero” - the Birthplace of Country Music Museum (next page).⁵



Some of the instruments on the Bristol Sessions are iconic and remain popular today, such as the guitar and banjo. The harp guitar, however, was never commonly used in mainstream American music. It possibly appears on the Sessions in the distinctive gospel recordings by Alfred G. Karnes from Corbin, Kentucky.

Harp Guitar *ae*

The main body of the harp guitar resembles a normal guitar. However, what makes it distinctive is the second "neck" or sound chamber that curves out from the instrument's shoulder and carries additional unstopped strings. These strings, being unfretted, are harp-like and can be plucked individually.

After hearing about auditions for the Bristol Sessions, Alfred G. Karnes drove over the mountains from Corbin to Bristol. Karnes was skilled

on the harp guitar, and some scholars believe that he played this instrument on his Sessions tracks, including "I Am Bound For The Promised Land," "When They Ring The Golden Bells," and "To The Work." However, others question whether Karnes played harp guitar at all on these songs. The harp guitar is difficult, if not impossible, to hear when played in an ensemble, and Karnes might have used a traditional guitar instead, or perhaps only played the extra strings on the harp guitar now and then.

In the opening blue italics text, the Museum writer is correct – harp guitars are certainly uncommon in country music (though I've done plenty of blogs on some of the surprising appearances), and even less common in gospel music. The writer also did a decent job in appeasing the museum's audience – half of whom *don't hear* a harp guitar in Karnes' recordings, the other half of whom *do*. However, the writer also makes poor assumptions ("Karnes was skilled on the harp guitar..." [He was not]) and opinions ("The harp guitar is difficult, if not impossible, to hear when played in an ensemble" [Possibly, but we're talking here about *solo* recordings]). Note the photo of Stephen Bennett with his Dyer harp guitar in the rear of the display case.⁶

And so, we come now to the heart of the myth. Several others who have listened to and love Karnes' records seem to hear what Nelson described, and repeat the "distinctive sound of his bass runs" comment verbatim. Tennessee Walt (Gayden Wren) takes the comment further, writing in his [blog](#): "His instrument was the harp-guitar, a truly unusual instrument whose modern descendant may be Junior Brown's 'git-steel,' which mounts a guitar and a steel guitar on the same body.⁷ The harp-guitar is basically a big guitar with an extra set of strings, played unfretted like a harp. Listen to the instrumental break after his second "promised land" in each chorus, and that's the harp. The overall effect is that of two instrumentalists (or three, counting Karnes as singer) when, in fact, he was a solo act."

Note that while Nelson originally simply stated that the *instrument* was used to create the described sounds, Tennessee Walt tells us that it was the actual "harp" portion (the unfretted sub-bass strings) that created those sounds. A fine point, and one with very different connotations.

One thing I'm probably safe in saying about every writer who has written about Karnes and his music is that... *they've never actually seen or heard a Gibson harp guitar being played.* I'm going to assume the Karnes record fans are musicians themselves, with many probably being guitarists, or at least familiar with its sound. But I'll also assume that these writers and fans – despite their interest in and appreciation of Karnes' recordings – never availed themselves of any specific harp guitar research or demonstrations (for example, any number of modern Gibson harp guitar players would be able to explain and demonstrate the techniques necessary).⁸

Obviously, after all that's at stake, I'd better give these records a serious second listen!

Though a harp guitar expert, my ears are not what they once were, and I have difficulty discerning sounds in old 78 recordings. While I would swear I do not hear any Gibson sub-bass ("harp") strings in any of the eight Karnes recordings, I wanted to be *certain*. And so, I got an in-depth second opinion from [Matt Redman](#) – not by chance the world's only living expert on both the Gibson harp guitar specifically and also the inner workings of 78 record technology. Matt's musical specialty is the earliest two decades of these recordings (popular, early jazz, you-name-it). He makes his living at it and can pick out precisely what probably went on in the original recordings. I'll spare you his 2500-word report on Karnes' recordings, but the takeaway is this:⁹

"There are no sub-basses on any of the recordings. He's playing with the flesh of his fingers and no thumb pick on his solo records, possibly using silk & steel strings, according to pentatonic and other bass runs he plays on the E, A, D strings."

As for what type of guitar, Matt thought that "Called To The Foreign Field," which did not utilize a capo, sounded "like a large body archtop guitar" (like a large Gibson harp guitar, which has an archtop like the early Gibson 6-strings). He thought all the other recordings – with the guitar capoed – sounded like a different instrument; "something like a flat top instrument with a narrower and thinner neck like a Martin or Lyon & Healy six-string." Though, when pressed, he admitted the difficulties of the recording technology, and agreed with me that it made sense that Karnes would have taken just one instrument *whatever that was*.

As for Karnes appearing with Phipps, Matt agrees. He explained that every Phipps recording sounds in Bb with Karnes using a capo on the first fret while the band played in Bb.¹⁰ Further, "The instrumentation on the Ernest Phipps recordings consists of violin, mandolin, ukulele-banjo, guitar (Karnes), and piano on all recordings from the two days. The piano is the only bass instrument on these recordings. Karnes does not play any sub-basses.



Ernest Phipps & His Holiness Singers. Phipps (who played guitar) is standing at center top without an instrument with the group.

Finally, for each Karnes track, Matt provided the correct speed of the original recordings (via i78s.org), the tuning (standard 6-string guitar on the neck), and the chords utilized. Though the same few chords were used for every recording, Karnes achieved various different keys (presumably to fit his vocal range for each song) by affixing a capo to the neck, as shown here:



Above is the common C chord shape, but sounding in Eb since the capo is clamped at the third fret. All guitarists are familiar with the basic chords played in this first position (no barre). These few chords are *all that Karnes ever utilized*, as seen in Matt's chart below. The entirety of Karnes' distinctive sound comes from his *right hand* and the bass riffs he performs on the neck's lowest three strings. While the riffs (or "runs") are extremely simple, he milks them for all they're worth with a heavy (often "snapping") through-stroke with his thumb – while simultaneously strumming the chords on the high strings with his fingers.

Here are all eight of his recordings, with key and (capoed) chords. Note that his F chord is a half-bar with the 5th string open (this, the major 3rd is used as a bass note inversion).

Title	Key	Capo placement	Pitch (all tunings standard guitar at ~ concert pitch)	Chord shapes all fingered in first position (i.e.: with capo as "nut")
<i>I Am Bound For The Promised Land</i>	F	5th fret	@ 79.1 rpm	A, A7, D, G, G7, C
<i>Where We'll Never Grow Old</i>	F	5th fret	@ 79.1 rpm	C, F, G, G7
<i>When They Ring the Golden Bells</i>	E	4th fret	@ 79.1 rpm	C, C7, F, G7
<i>To The Work</i>	E	4th fret	@ 80 rpm	C, G7, F
<i>Called To The Foreign Field</i>	G	no capo	N/A	G, G7, C, D
<i>Do Not Wait 'Till I'm Laid 'Neath The Clay</i>	E	4th fret	N/A	C, C7, F, G7, D7
<i>The Days Of My Childhood Plays</i>	Eb	2nd fret	@ 75.8 rpm	A7, D, D7, G, G7, C, E, F
<i>We Shall All Be Reunited</i>	Eb	3rd fret	@ 76.6 rpm	C, F, G, G7

As for the theoretical sympathetic vibration of the sub-bass strings common to most harp guitars, Matt didn't hear the effect, but wasn't surprised, explaining that if the Gibson harp guitar *was* used, "the microphone may not have been capable of picking up, his chords would have masked the effect, and he could even have damped them with his arm."

In the end, neither Matt, Stephen Bennett, nor I hear any sub-basses on the recordings. But there's an even simpler reason why the harp guitar's sub-bass strings *cannot be what we hear* doing the infamous "bass runs" – a reason that not one Karnes fan has seemed to have picked up on: The *pitch* of Karnes' "bass runs" are *higher* than the ten sub-bass strings of the Gibson harp guitar, even with that instrument's novel re-entrant tuning. In fact, his runs – played on the lowest three strings on the neck – *are higher even than usual, as he is capoed up to a higher key!*

The Present Standard System of Tuning

The universal or Standard System of Tuning the 10 sub-basses, beginning with the first (next to the finger-board), is G sharp, G, F sharp, F, D sharp, D, C sharp, C, B and A sharp. The first four sub-basses are unisons with the fourth, third, second and first frets respectively of the sixth finger-board string.

I.E.: SIX of the Gibson harp guitar sub-bass strings descend below the neck's E string in pitch. The remaining FOUR ascend *above* the E string in pitch, ending at the G# equivalent to this fret.

Karnes' "bass runs" ranged from low F# on the neck (capoed at 2nd fret) up to middle G (capoed at 5th fret) This is about an octave higher than the harp guitar's sub-bass string range.

So, what are we to make of all this? Am I saying then that Alfred G. Karnes did *not* play a harp guitar? Well, as Matt and I largely agree, here is the answer to the question "***Did he play harp guitar on his recordings?***" in the very simplest of terms:

Yes, and no.

Huh?

I mean that, *yes*, he may have very well played his Gibson harp guitar on his recordings, *but* if so, he only played it like a *standard guitar* (playing first position chords on the neck). But we must clarify that *no*, he did not play his instrument *as* a harp guitar, as he never once touched a sub-bass string. What is the difference? Much, to musicologists.

This then, is the best and only logical conclusion any scholar can make: **Alfred G. Karnes appears to have owned and played a Gibson harp guitar. That instrument may very well appear on his recordings. But regrettably, Karnes cannot reliably be labelled a "harp-guitarist."**

But we now know of *another* gospel singer who *did* play a Gibson harp guitar in the proper manner. Let's meet:

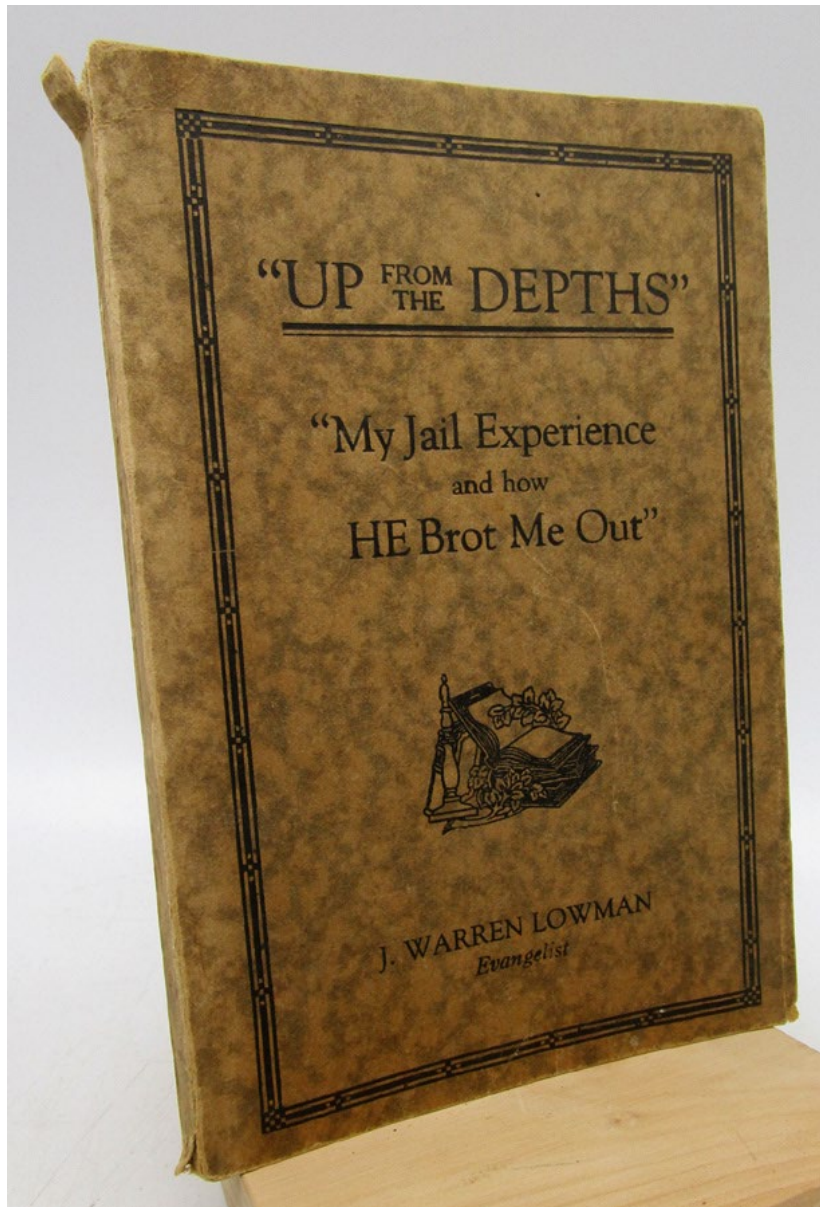
J. Warren Lowman

Evangelist James Warren Lowman was born somewhere along the border of Kansas and Missouri on March 15, 1895. He grew up in an area of West Joplin, MO named Chitwood, one of many lead mining towns that sprung in the area from the mid- to late-1800s.

Lowman's father made a living as one of these miners, and here he and his wife would raise J. Warren Lowman and his two sisters. Lowman described some of this early life in his three books: a 1926 83-page edition, a 1929 "revised edition," and a combined 1979 edition of 183 pages (which I obtained). All were self-published.¹¹



THE LOWMANS



Lowman's original edition of his story

Lowman would write of his life after his 1919 “conversion,” and we don’t get a lot of unbiased first-hand information, though – fire and brimstone judgment aside – he does paint a picture! In chapter after chapter, we hear how Chitwood was a “cesspool of humanity” with young James falling under its “evil ways,” with card playing and dancing among his biggest sins. Indeed, it was at age 8 that he discovered his biggest talent as a natural “eccentric dancer.” As soon as he heard the piano going, his feet would start moving and he’d find himself the center of attention at the rough and tumble mining saloons. The family would frequent the public dances where his dad was often the floor manager and his mother played violin in the orchestra. Yet this environment was as bad as the saloons, with gun and knife fights routinely breaking out. Lowman would eventually teach dancing and became a professional dancer. But first, a broken home. Pretty early on, his father left his mother, taking James’ two sisters; James chose to remain with his mother.

About 1907 or '08, young James decided to visit his uncle's cattle ranch encompassing land in Kansas and Oklahoma, where he was given a job as a cowhand. He apparently excelled at it, even though just 12-13 years old.



My Cowboy Picture

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At this point in his book's story, Lowman includes this full shot of himself, showing off his Style O against his buffalo chaps. This obviously was much later than his young stint as a cowhand. I wonder what the occasion was, as it doesn't seem to fit with his later evangelical life.

After his adventures as a young cowhand, Lowman drifted to Wichita, Kansas, where he decided to learn a true profession and enrolled in (and graduated from) barber college. He also fell in with some theater people and spent a "number of years" as a singer, comedian and trick dancer. A 1936 newspaper feature stated that he had then been an "evangelist for 16 years after 4 years as an actor on the legitimate stage and several seasons as vocalist with W. J. Bryan on the Chautauqua circuit."¹² The claim about appearing with William Jennings Bryan is curious and seems somewhat unlikely. Bryan's tours were in the early 1900s and ended about 1912; so, if true, Lowman would've had to have

been a young teenager, landing the gig immediately before or after barber school before or during the start of his "theater years," and traveling with Bryan for just one or two "seasons." But he doesn't mention Bryan in his book, which surely he would have done at the time of their writing(s), in light of the politician's fundamentalist religion views.

Truth be told, there is scant useful biographical detail in Lowman's 1979 "Revised Combined Edition" of his book; I found clues, dates and occasional corroboration in newspaper searches.

Where Lowman does write about his life, he provides virtually no dates, and leaves the bulk of his first 24 years of life out, though alluding to the “sinful years of my life” often in his repetitive lectures. Indeed, while there are slim to no details on his adventures and careers leading up to his 24th year, there is chapter after chapter about the depravity of those (fairly tame) activities he did pursue: cards, dancing, theater, going to the movies, etc.

And so, we haven’t much idea of what the perpetual Midwest wanderer was up to or where he was during the spring of 1919, when Lowman, then 24, met his wife Maybelle Scott. As she was a schoolteacher in a small town outside Wichita, Kansas, it’s likely that this was still Lowman’s home base, where he found entertainment work while barbering, both locally and on the road.

They were married on October 13th, 1919 in Chelsea, Oklahoma, quite a ways south of Wichita.¹³ Soon after, the newlyweds were drawn to a generic revival meeting somewhere in Oklahoma, where James, and then somewhat reluctantly, his wife, were that very night “saved,” and they suddenly found themselves looking for a new direction. Choosing Pasadena, California as their destination, their car happened to immediately break down outside Bethany, Oklahoma. (The town of Bethany was founded in 1909 by followers of the Church of the Nazarene from Oklahoma City, and was just outside the city to the west, now part of the larger metropolis.) Looking for a place to worship that night they found another “revival” presided over by an evangelist from what was then Bethany Theological College (now Southern Nazarene University). Then and there, he convinced the young couple to attend the college, and their new lives began.

With the ministry calling and school tuitions to be paid, they each sold their diamond wedding rings and there they remained, supporting themselves by James’ barbering. Now J. Warren Lowman’s singing would be directed at a new audience, as Bethany discovered. James generally sang solo with his new bride accompanying on piano.

At least, this idyllic if financially difficult scenario described above was the plan. Unfortunately, it was almost immediately interrupted, with Lowman gaining a new notoriety he couldn’t have imagined.

In mid-1920, Lowman found himself with a new car. He said it was in “lieu of money owed” by an unnamed individual. The papers would say he bought it from a stepfather by the name of Tex Newman, a used car salesman. Regardless, unbeknownst to Newman (we assume!), the car came from an alleged mob-related incident resulting in the murder of one Herschel Erwin (or Irwin), who happened to be driving this – his – car when he was mysteriously murdered on April 29th in a suburb of Fort Worth, Texas.

Can you tell where this is headed?

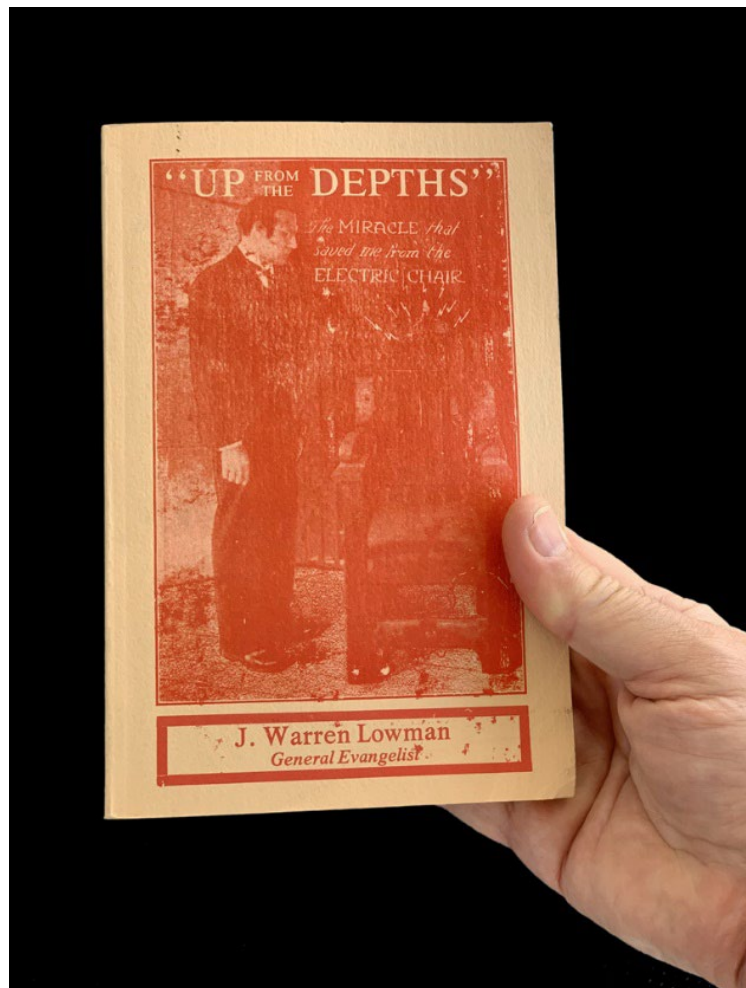
On August 17th, 1920, Lowman happened to be driving in Arkansas City, Kansas (just up and over the border from Bethany), when he was stopped and arrested...for murder. He spent three weeks in a “dungeon” in the Arkansas City jail, fighting extradition to Fort Worth all the while. He was finally taken to Texas on September 6th. Lowman’s book and newspaper clippings corroborate each other; all told, he was locked up for four months total, some in solitary.

Papers generally described Lowman as a "singing evangelist" and ministerial student." In Arkansas City jail, he asked for a guitar to play for himself and other prisoners. He describes singing and converting other prisoners during his stay, and was also put to work cutting hair. This date (August, 1920) is the earliest evidence of his guitar playing.

In his book, Lowman describes in some detail the police and investigators "giving him the third degree," punishments that today would be considered Guantanamo Bay-level tortures. It is clear that they were desperate to pin the murder on *someone* (the victim was found burned in his home), and Lowman was the only connection to the case they had. He claims that corrupt officers went so far as providing Lowman's identifying characteristics – specifically his "one badly crossed eye" (see image below) – to false witnesses in order for them to "identify" him in line-up.

Indeed, things looked dark for our singing evangelist – if convicted, he could have faced the death penalty, which then meant the electric chair. So it seems his graphic book title and image were not mere sensationalism.

The "miracle" he describes cannot be corroborated. He mentions one early witness who was privy to the car sale, and then tells how his lawyer finally arranged a hearing in front of a Texas judge with 14 witnesses from Bethany who had driven down to claim he was with them at a musical event on the date in question. The newspapers only state that on December 15th the "trial was postponed indefinitely due to inability to get witnesses" – presumably for the prosecution – and then dismissed on December 23rd. So, if not vindication, at least he was no longer a criminal suspect. He had already been released on bail to sing at the local mission, so now it was time to continue his "ministry interrupted."¹⁴



According to the papers, 1921 first saw him "selling barber supplies" – but not for long. With their home base in Oklahoma City for the next three-plus years, the Lowmans would begin their travels by late 1921, leading or co-leading Nazarene Revivals across Kansas and Nebraska.

You've just escaped the electric chair, you've finished your ministry schooling, you're ready to spread the word – what are you going to do next? Why, buy yourself a Gibson Style U harp guitar, that's what!



And that's just what he did. He may have bought his entire Gibson set at the same time – including the Style O Florentine, and F4 and A-model mandolins – it's difficult to say. It's somewhat odd that the harp guitar was never photographed, as it appears to have been the first instrument used. The first mention of it is in early 1922, when we learn that appearing at the Nazarene Church every night, "Prof. Lowman is a converted comedian who plays, sings and acts all at the same time. He has a number of southern or negro melodies he sings to the accompaniment of his great Gibson harp."¹⁵ Several fans were enamored not only of his singing, but his harp guitar playing: "Under his fingers the instrument talks, and the welkin rings."¹⁶

Over the next year, several Kansas and Nebraska newspapers mention the "large harp guitar," or "Gibson harp(-guitar)," but better yet, they start referring to its number of strings, so we learn that it was indeed a standard Style U with 10 sub-bass strings:¹⁷

REVIVAL SERVICES

April 20 to May 4

First Nazarene Church

Washington & Hayes Aves.

Rev. W. E. Ellis,
Evangelist

Prof. J. Warren Lowman
and Wife,
Musicians

Services: 2 and 7:45
P. M. Daily with three
services on Sunday.



PROF. J. WARREN LOWMAN
(Converted, Comedian)



MRS. J. WARREN LOWMAN

Hear Prof. Lowman sing his own songs to the accompaniment of a 16 string Gibson harp guitar. He has a range of voice from F to High G, and has been called the singinest gospel singer in the land.

REVIVAL MUSICIANS HEARD OVER RADIO

The Lowman Quartette from The Register studio last night broadcast an entertaining program of religious songs in modern musical settings for KFAW radio fans.

Prof. J. Warren Lowman's rendition of a religious version of "Mother Machree" proved to be one of the big numbers of the program. Lowman has a splendid tenor voice of power and quality and he sang the popular Irish melody in splendid style.

Negro spirituals rendered by the mixed quartette to the accompaniment of string music were given with a whole-hearted swing which put them over in a manner which evoked much enthusiasm.

Prof. J. Warren Lowman, Mrs. Ruth Moore, Mrs. Mabel Lowman and A. A. Moore were the artists who sang for KFAW. They are in Santa Ana this week with Rev. C. E. Roberts, who is conducting revival services at the Church of the Nazarene.

Lowman was not only starting to command serious fees for his (and his wife's) appearances, but was soon traveling to other states, as well as being featured on radio, such as this appearance (left) in Santa Ana California in February 1924.¹⁸

The same paper had earlier announced that "The quartette will offer a group of Southern melodies and instrumental numbers."¹⁹ I'd love to know what the instrumentation was for the group; had Maybel finally started playing mandolin?

I suggested earlier that Lowman could have easily acquired all four of his Gibson instruments at the same time, but clues suggest that – while he had undoubtedly been playing guitar since his younger days and likely owned one, he was only playing the harp guitar during this period.

And now I think it's finally time to take a short detour to introduce a new and even more important musician in the early gospel world:

Homer Rodeheaver

The handsome trombonist at right, Homer Rodeheaver, is by all accounts a charmer and entertainer no matter the company or situation. He holds perhaps the most important place of anyone in gospel music recording history, and his Wikipedia biography is well worth reading.²⁰ For our purposes, it is his connection to Lowman that interests us.

With his trombone and gospel chorus, Rodeheaver began recording for Victor and other labels beginning in 1913. He had previously created The Rodeheaver Company in 1910 for music publishing. Then, “around 1922, his company began issuing 78-rpm records on its own Rainbow label, the nation's first record company devoted solely to gospel music.” Interesting! An article on Rodeheaver published in the Historic Brass Society Journal states that his Rainbow Records was “active ca. 1920-1926.”²¹

However, the best source of information I stumbled on was David N. (“Uncle Dave”)

Lewis, who has done incredible research on this topic and beyond.²² From his blog: “After a failed bid to re-establish his company in New York City, Rodeheaver moved it to Chicago in early 1922, placing it in the charge of his brother Yumbert Rodeheaver.” (Now *there's* a great name!)

“The Rodeheaver Record Company then immediately offered a service to make ‘Special’ records’, an offer where anybody could make records as long as they paid for them; they need not talent, just the desire to be on wax. Some were produced in runs as low

as six copies, and no ledger or published catalog is known to exist for it. Some of these are the most obscure records of the 1920s. Making Special records was part of one's training if a person was studying singing with Homer Rodeheaver, and he continued this practice with semi-pro equipment in his lessons even in the 1940s and 50s. Specials commonly bear no issue numbers, but many show at least a matrix, and these appear in a dizzying variety. Though Chicago city directories list the Rodeheaver Record Company as active through 1929, the latest recording I can find dates to just 1927.”



Homer Rodeheaver, c.1908
(image from Winona History Center)



Prof. J. Warren Lowman, Phonographic Recorder & Producer

And now we return to Lowman, whom last we know was performing on radio in southern California during a brief trip there during his Revival travels. At the point, he owned a Gibson harp guitar, if not other Gibson instruments, and had also relocated. By early February 1924 – even before his Santa Ana trip, the Lowmans were listed as being “of Chicago.”²³ They were back in their new home town by April, and in early May, “J. Warren Lowman, Soloist” appeared at a “Welcome Home Reception to W. E. Biederwolf, who, with Homer Rodeheaver, has just ended an evangelistic tour around the world.”²⁴


We have no idea exactly when the Lowmans arrived in Chicago and established their new home base. Was it before Rodeheaver left for his “tour around the world”? What is obvious is that Lowman and Rodeheaver ultimately learned of each other through the gospel music grapevine. At the very latest, they would have been introduced at the May reception.

Regardless, things moved quickly, and by early June 1924 Lowman was being described as “a phonographic recorder and producer.”²⁵

Lowman “and Wife” recorded a total of ten gospel songs, released as double-sided 78s. Nine of them featured James singing, with his wife accompanying on piano and singing along on three. Only *one* selection differed from this format; it featured Lowman playing his Gibson harp guitar!

The image at right comes from Lowman’s 1979 book, and is most likely from a personal publication or flyer that the couple handed out at their frequent Revival meetings. “Uncle Dave” further explained:

LOWMAN'S GOSPEL RECORDS



**CARRY A
MESSAGE
WITH THEM**

==

**SELECTED,
SANG
and
PRODUCED
by**

J. WARREN LOWMAN and WIFE

These Records Are Different—Double Face Records, \$1.50
Add 25c For Postage on Less Than Three — Ask Your Dealer Anywhere

7042-44—**THE OLD FASHIONED MEETING**.....Mr. Lowman
Tenor Solo with Piano.
THERE'S NOTHING HERE TO DESTROY OUR JOY...Negro Spiritual
Mr. and Mrs. Lowman with Harp Guitar. Tenor and Alto.

6020-19—**I'LL NEVER LET THE DEVIL WIN**.....Mr. Lowman
Tenor Solo with Piano.
THE PREACHERS VACATION OR THE TURKEY BUZZARD..Mr.
Lowman. Tenor Solo with Piano.

2144-a—**WHEN THEY RING THOSE GOLDEN BELLS**.....Mr. Lowman
Tenor Solo with Piano.

2144-b—**THE BLOOD ON THE CROSS SAVED ME**....Mr. and Mrs. Lowman
Tenor and Alto with Piano.

2141-a—**THE NINETY AND NINE**.....Mr. Lowman
Tenor Solo with Piano.

2141-b—**GOD IS STILL ON THE THRONE**.....Mr. and Mrs. Lowman
Tenor and Alto with Piano.

2142-a—**AMAZING GRACE**.....Mr. Lowman
Tenor Solo with Piano.

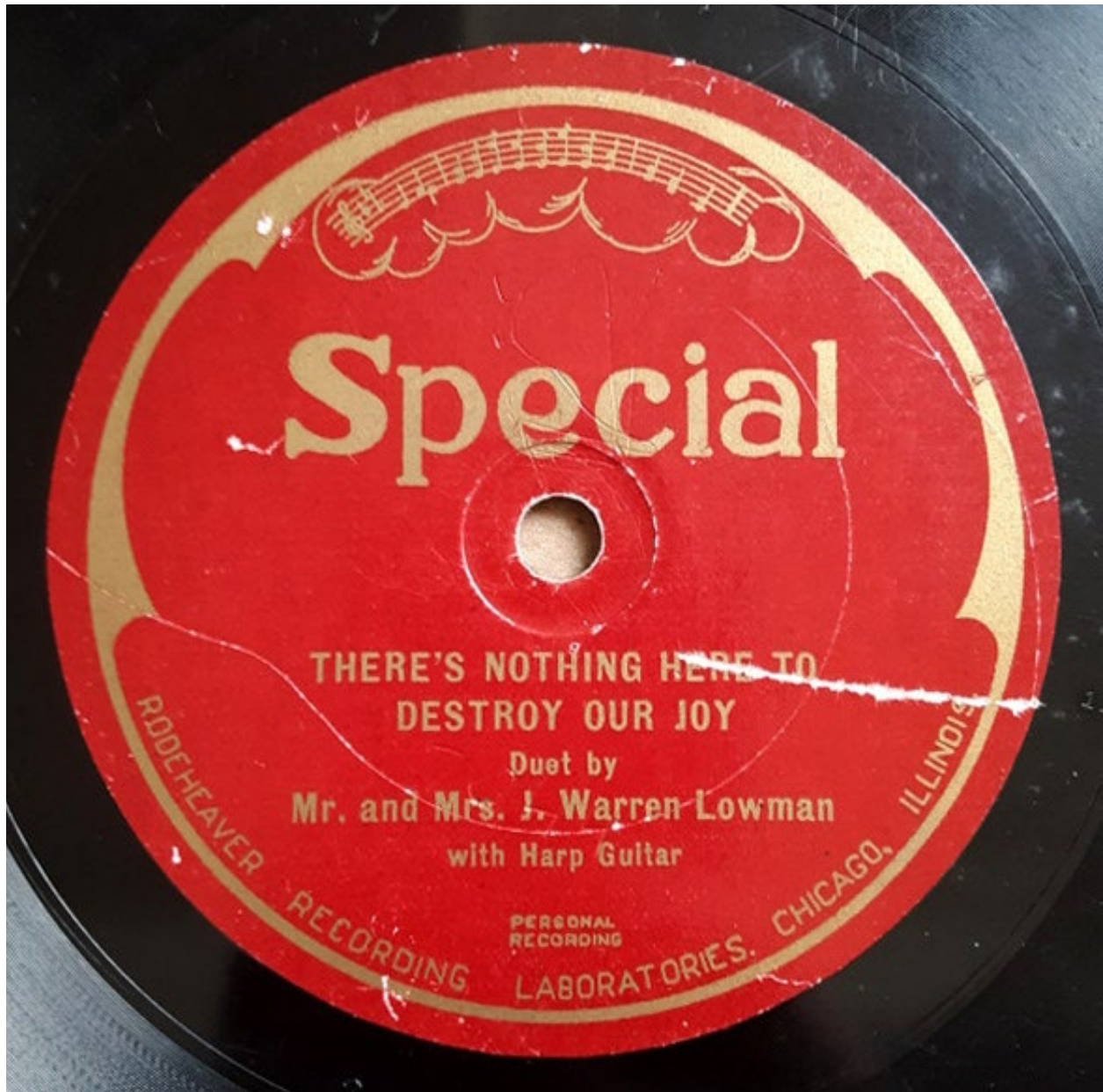
2142-b—**YOU NEED A LITTLE MORE RELIGION**.....Mr. Lowman
Tenor Solo with Piano.

Proceeds From These Records For Missions

THE RODEHEAVER CO.,
218 S. WABASH AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
— OR —
J. WARREN LOWMAN
7122 INDIANA AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

“The Rodeheaver Company never published catalogs listing client recordings such as Specials. They carried information on Rainbow label releases only.”²⁶

Ah, well that would explain it... and what I share now is “special,” indeed!



This is only second copy known to exist of Lowman’s recording he made with his harp guitar. The first was originally examined by David Lewis and is now at UCSB. The beautiful copy above was found by collector Joshua Puett, who kindly shared both images and MP3s with Harpguitars.net.

We see that it is a “Special,” and also a “Personal Recording” made at Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories. As identified in Lowman’s advertisement, this is matrix # 7044 – but I didn’t see it anywhere on the label. Joshua then took another photo at different angles; I hadn’t realized these were hand-scribed into the final record.



Uncle Dave then added that the copy at UCSB “bears an issue number, Special 20157.” Curious about this discrepancy, I queried Dave again, who told me that “several streams of recording activity flow in and out of RRC. The main sequence originating in Winona Lake and continuing in Chicago starts out as a continuous thread but evolves into a series of blocks which begin and end in a seemingly arbitrary way, but *by this time the RRC studios operated only a few months out of the year (GM: italics mine)*, so that may be the reason for block booking the matrices in these sessions and resulting huge gaps in the sequence. That the copy (of yours) does not bear this same number is typical of the kind of carelessness that is common with Rodeheaver Record Co. and makes this area of discography so challenging.”²⁷

My most important question for Uncle Dave was the recording date; could he better pin it down? *Indeed!* He already had researched the UCSB copy and puts this recording in June, 1924, right about where I had predicted.

We can thus state with certainty that Midwest Gospel Singer, Harp Guitarist and Evangelist Preacher J. Warren Lowman recorded in Chicago some three years earlier than his near-counterpart in Kentucky, Alfred G. Karnes. History, indeed! How fortunate that Joshua Puett had long frequented Harpguitars.net and had now found not *a* Lowman record, but *the* Lowman record!

And now, before we give it a listen: I had right away noticed a low B in the recording, and realized that this must actually be the Gibson's C. And so, some digital back-and-forth with England's harp guitar grad student Matt Redman were again necessary. Matt says:

"I have sped up this recording from 78 to 79.05 rpm. I have found very few discs indeed are at the precisely correct speed when played back at 78; I've found some as low as 65rpm and some Pathé are closer to 90 rpm. If nothing else, you can play along with it at concert pitch now. You can clearly hear what he's playing now with the basic open chords; I strongly doubt it was tuned down intentionally if indeed this speed IS wrong. Either way the string vibrations don't sound to me to be massively wrong, nor do their vocal vibratos, breaths and resonances at 79.05rpm to my ear. So the intro is: A, A7, D7, G7, C, F, Ab, and then he's in.

"I hear regular harp guitar, possibly with a silk and steel set or just gut on the trebles and he's hitting it pretty hard with the right hand, downstroke strumming with the index finger and picking out the bass movements with his thumb. The sub-basses are D and C"²⁸ I found it interesting that these were the only two open bass strings Lowman used.²⁹ But as Matt explained, "Listen how much less resonant the F major chord is than the C and G7 chords just fingering in first position; this suggests quite high action to me. He wants ring, resonance from the 6 strings on the neck and as much sympathetic from the basses. I'm guessing he was a C major and G major-favouring 3 or 4 chord per key player. But if he was good at the harp guitar basses and was playing a Style U then why didn't he put in the Ab bass string in the intro and why no high F bass string?"

Why indeed? I'm just happy that we can safely announce a true harp guitar-playing gospel singer.

OK, let's play ["There's Nothing Here To Destroy Our Joy"](#) by "J. Warren Lowman and Wife," at the corrected pitch provided by Matt Redman (click title).

The record's owner has digitized the flip side for us also: Here is ["The Old Fashioned Meeting,"](#) courtesy of Joshua Puett.

The other two Lowman sides known and archived online are ["The Preacher's Vacation"](#) and ["I'll Never Let the Devil Win."](#)

I can imagine Lowman selling hundreds if not thousands of these at their personal appearances during his long Revival career; how many might he have pressed, and why are there only two copies known to exist?!

I alluded earlier to the question of Lowman's other three Gibson instruments: his Style O guitar and two different mandolins. If he acquired them with the harp guitar, why didn't they appear on

any of the recordings, as they appear on his page of selections? Did he just not want to lug them to Rodeheaver's studio? I found it interesting that no guitar or mandolin was mentioned during their first two years of Revival appearances – only the harp guitar, and that, repeatedly. In fact, it wasn't until July 1925 that additional instruments were finally mentioned: "He and Mrs. Lowman contributed vocal duets and the professor played on the guitar and the mandolin."³⁰ A guitar was mentioned in October of that year,³¹ and in March 1926 he again "sings to the accompaniment of a 16-string Gibson harp guitar ... Mrs. Lowman accompanies the professor at the piano."³² However, a week later, mention is made of the couple "accompanied with their stringed instruments."³³ Was Mrs. Lowman perhaps now playing the mandolin? I believe so, as the next month they are further described: "Mr. and Mrs. Lowman will sing a duet with their stringed instruments as accompaniments."³⁴ Note that she indeed appears to be holding and fingering her mandolin in playing position below.

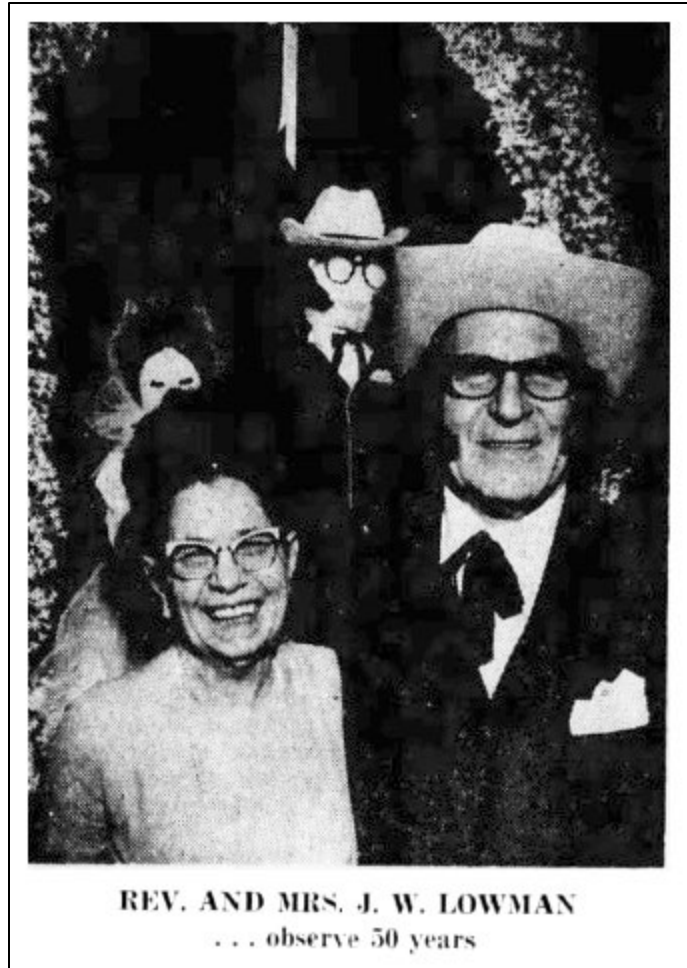


For the next two decades, the Lowmans continued their work within the Nazarene Church in spots around the country. While occasionally speaking and singing on radio, they were by now well paid for their evangelical appearances, with James preaching and often recounting tales from his book about his jail time and avoiding the electric chair. Having read the book, I'm sure he milked it for all it was worth and sold plenty of copies along with his records.

The couple's home base continued to change. Perhaps feeling homesick, they were back in Oklahoma City by the beginning of 1927, buying a new home in Bethany at the end of that year (where in 1928 Lowman opened a short-lived furniture store with his mother). In the early 1930s they lived in Carthage, Missouri – ironically just a bit northeast of Joplin where he had grown up. The late 1940s saw them in Sulphur, Oklahoma, then in Kansas City in the early 1950s.

About 1954 they moved for the final time to San Bernardino, California, by then a city of 75,000. Here, James and Maybelle celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in October 1969. (Note the cowboy hat, even on his likeness behind; this must have become a trademark of his ... a holdover from his cowboy days?) At this point, besides their five children, the couple had seventeen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.³⁵

Maybelle, aka Mabel Lucille Scott Lowman, passed away on July 31st, 1988.³⁶ Curiously, James would remarry. He passed away at the age of 96 on October 14th 1991, survived by his wife Virginia, three of his children, two siblings, 18 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.³⁷



End Notes:

¹ From the Wikipedia entry "Harp guitar," duplicated from "Alfred Karnes." Both accessed August 10 2023.

² Karnes has long had a mention in the "Harp Guitar" entry on Wikipedia, though I never remembered ever hearing the alleged harp guitar on the couple recordings I played at the time. And so, long on my back burner, I hadn't fully investigated him until now. This particular Wikipedia entry (last accessed August 10 2023) remains a complete embarrassment to the topic; I long ago gave up trying to reign it in. Some of those players listed (like Sor) are old errors; many others (like Karnes) are under-researched or at best arbitrary additions to the larger overview of the instrument, its players and history.

³ The Discography of American Historical Recordings at ucsb.edu gives "I Am Bound For The Promised Land" as Karnes' original, with a different composer for "Called To The Foreign Field." All other sources give the latter as his original. Additionally, uscb.edu lists five of the seven 1928 Karnes recordings as his original compositions.

⁴ Photograph is from the Birthplace of Country Music archives. Per pers comm, August 15 2023, they remain understaffed and unable to provide a scan from the original.

⁵ <https://birthplaceofcountrymusic.org/challenging-ideas-bear-name-museums-give-us-elevator-speech-history/>

⁶ In 2015 or 2016 the Bristol Museum asked Stephen Bennett to perform. During his set, he played his own version of “Where We’ll Never Grow Old,” with an introduction to the audience: “I remember explaining that it seemed he (Karnes) didn’t use the subs but that I, as a modern harp guitarist, would. I added that with the subs, maybe it would have sounded something like this --- and then I played.” Indeed, Stephen heard no sub-basses on the recordings, and as Matt Redman would observe, noted the first position chords played with a capo. He played it without a capo in the key of C to suit his vocal range. (pers. comm, 11/10/2023)

⁷ For the record, this is a terrible analogy; Brown’s guit-steel has nothing in common with a harp guitar beyond having two banks of strings.

⁸ This anomaly reminds me of a very similar and long-held “wrong instrument” fiasco with another recorded gospel musician: Washington Phillips, he of the infamous “Dolceola” (which he did not play). For that whole story, see <https://www.minermusic.com/dolceola/dolceola.htm>

⁹ Matt Redman, pers comm, August, 2023

¹⁰ Or the band all played in A, with the recording speed altered.

¹¹ My overall Lowman story and timeline came from the 1979 edition of his book “Up From the Depths,” corroborated or clarified by various newspaper accounts

¹² *Marion Star* (OH), Jan 20 1936

¹³ *San Bernardino County Sun*, October 28 1969

¹⁴ To understand Lowman’s extremely unfortunate ordeal fully and accurately, one needs to read his book carefully and compare it to the four months of constant newspaper headlines in both the Midwest and Fort Worth. I’ve tried to whittle it down to the salient points.

¹⁵ *Hastings Daily Tribune*, February 7 1922

¹⁶ *Hastings Daily Tribune*, January 2 1923

¹⁷ *The Journal Times* (Racine, WI), April 19 1924

¹⁸ *Santa Ana Register*, February 15 1924

¹⁹ *Santa Ana Register*, February 13 1924

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer_Rodeheaver

²¹ https://www.historicbrass.org/edocman/hbj-2015/HBSJ_2015_JL01_004_Yeo.pdf

²² <https://uncledavelewis.wordpress.com/>

²³ *Santa Ana Register*, February 9 1924

²⁴ *Chicago Tribune*, May 10 1924

²⁵ *St Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 7 1924

²⁶ Pers comm., August 2023

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Pers comm. August 2023

²⁹ But at least that’s two more than Karnes.

³⁰ *The Boston Globe*, July 8 1925

³¹ *Palladium-Item*, October 16 1925

³² *The Daily Item* (Lynn, MA), March 6 1926

³³ *The Daily Item* (Lynn, MA), March 13 1926

³⁴ *The Times* (Muncie, IN), June 10 1926

³⁵ *San Bernardino County Sun*, October 28 1969

³⁶ *San Bernardino County Sun*, August 10 1988

³⁷ *San Bernardino County Sun*, November 7 1991

Special Thanks: Joshua Puett, Matt Redman, Uncle Dave Lewis, Stephen Bennett, and Tony Russell (co-writer of the *The Bristol Sessions - The Big Bang Of Country Music*) for alerting me to the Don Nelson Karnes article.