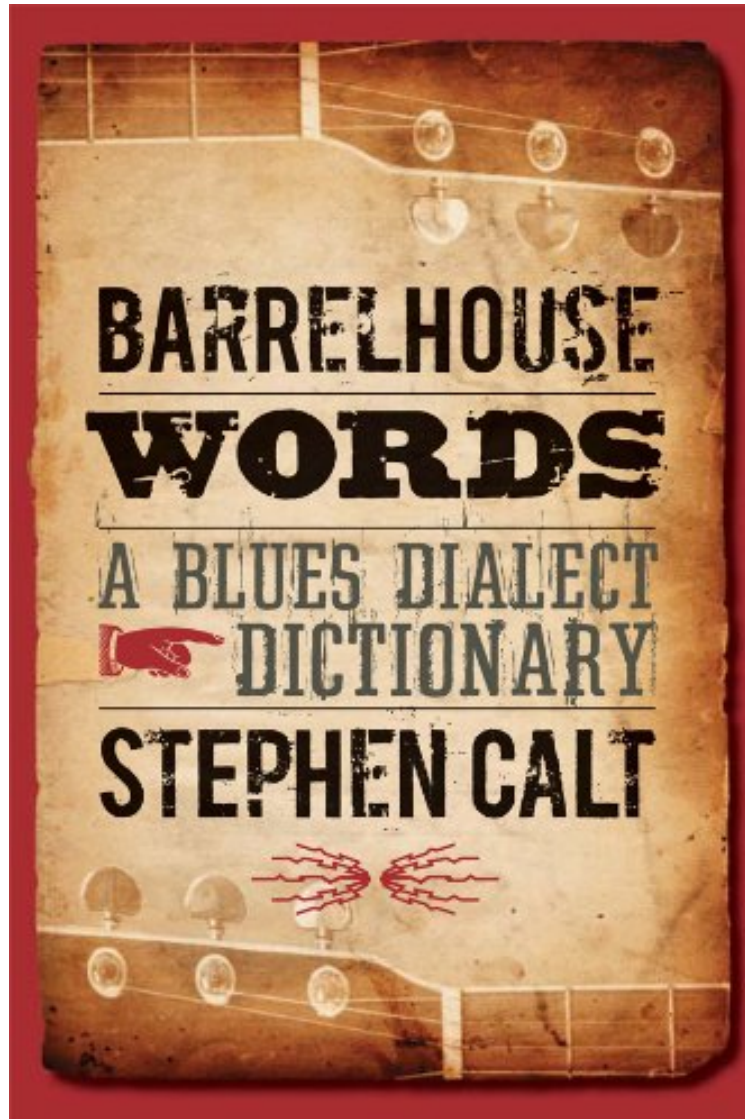


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Barrelhouse Words: A Blues Dialect Dictionary

Stephen Calt

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Stephen Calt : Barrelhouse Words: A Blues Dialect Dictionary before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Barrelhouse Words: A Blues Dialect Dictionary:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Joe Bonamassa, You Need This Book (:>D) !!By Fred FlickThis book is Exhibit A against the argument that blues is a popular art form like any other, a music of "the people," and that anyone of any race, gender or ethnic heritage can grab hisseff (or, bless mah soul, herseff) a gee-tar and perform with genuine understanding and "blues feeling." How many pale-skinned giants of 21st century blues would know the meaning of half the words they were mouthing without a reference tool like this one?? The very fact that Calt realized the need for a book like this illustrates his deep understanding of the blues and the environment which incubated it,

and also his wry recognition of its pretenders. RIP Mr Calt, you are missed

28 of 29 people found the following review helpful. **BLUES LISTENERS NEED THIS BOOK** By Stuart Jefferson Trade-size, 271 pages of definitions. There is an author's note and an introduction. Also included is an annotated bibliography of dictionary sources, and a general bibliography. There is a list of people who the author consulted or interviewed—several (Gary Davis, Skip James, Son House, for example) before their death, and a list of abbreviations and symbols used in the text, which is very useful. True to its title, the words and explanations are laid out like a dictionary, in alphabetical order. The acid-free paper is a very nice cream color, which makes reading (or looking up) the definitions easy on the eyes. This book was originally begun in the 1960's, then put aside because of lack of publisher interest in the 1970's. In 2005, thanks to another scholar, Calt forged ahead, up-dated his manuscript, and finally had it published. And for everyone who listens to blues music, especially earlier styles from various regions (country blues from Texas for example), this book is a valuable key in unlocking words and phrases (both local and more widely known) which have alluded listeners for years. Included are more than 1200 definitions from the era of "race records" (as blues was then called) that have long ago lost their meaning for listeners in the present. Included are slang terms and place names that have been neglected until now. The meanings, explained in modern terms, are also shown in context in snippets of song lyrics from the era, which adds valuable insight to the word usage. A number of these terms ("afterwhile", "creeper", or "pallet" for example) can be figured out in the context of the surrounding words in the song. But to have a definitive meaning leaves no room for speculation. Other terms ("backbite", "gauge", "shim-sham-shimmy", "dead cat on the line", as examples) need clarification. This is where this book comes into its own. There are so many definitions of words and phrases that, in the modern world, are no longer relevant, or have simply been forgotten, that this wonderful book could be read almost as a history lesson in itself. For anyone who listens to blues music and has wondered what a particular word/phrase means, this is something you need. As someone who has listened to blues music for over 40 years, I find this book opens up many doors, and gives much insight and understanding into songs I've listened to, and not been able to catch the full meaning of the lyrics. When Blind Willie McTell sings about putting his pistol "in so", now I know what he's really saying. What does "Blind" Lemon Jefferson mean by "jump a rattler"? Or when Robert Johnson sings about taking something out of someone's "nation sack", I now know what he's doing. Or when the MEMPHIS JUG BAND sings about a woman looking as good as a "Georgia ham", I now know what they're referring to. What does Lucille Bogan mean when she sings about someone being a "pot hound"? And just what does "graveyard love" really mean? This great book opens up the world of blues music/lyrics like no other. Either spot-reading or reading from cover to cover, this book is both entertaining and invaluable to blues lovers. If blues listeners want to know what they are really listening to—get this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **A blues dictionary** By Brett Bydairk This book is just what it says: a dictionary of words and terms found in early blues records. Invaluable for those interested in these songs.

This fascinating compendium explains the most unusual, obscure, and curious words and expressions from vintage blues music. Utilizing both documentary evidence and invaluable interviews with a number of now-deceased musicians from the 1920s and '30s, blues scholar Stephen Calt unravels the nuances of more than twelve hundred idioms and proper or place names found on oft-overlooked "race records" recorded between 1923 and 1949. From "aggravatin' papa" to "yas-yas-yas" and everything in between, this truly unique, racy, and compelling resource decodes a neglected speech for general readers and researchers alike, offering invaluable information about black language and American slang.

"An impeccably scholarly, irresistibly readable guide to the language heard on the recordings of the great blues singers who were active in the first half of the 20th century."--Wall Street Journal