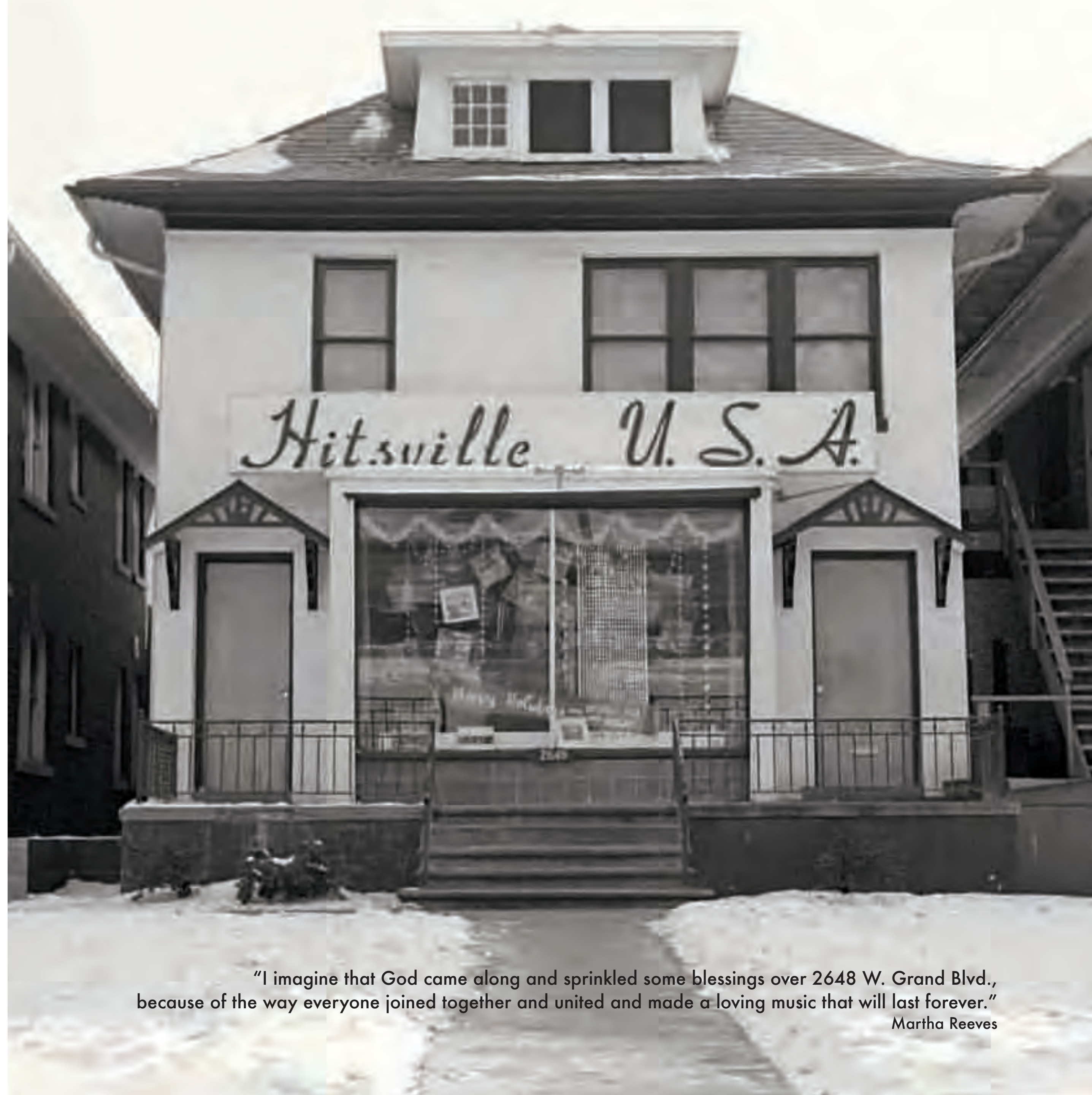






"I imagine that God came along and sprinkled some blessings over 2648 W. Grand Blvd.,
because of the way everyone joined together and united and made a loving music that will last forever."
Martha Reeves

The Nat King Cole Show.

TONIGHT AND EVERY TUESDAY AT **7:30**



CHANNEL

4

Rheingold

EXTRA DRY

Lager Beer



© 1955, Rheingold Brewery, Inc., New York, N. Y., Boston, N. A.
Brewery of Rheingold (Brewery), brewed for 100 years.

RHEINGOLD the largest selling beer in the East, presents

THE NAT KING COLE SHOW

with Nelson Riddle and his orchestra

and tonight's special guest

TONY MARTIN

“He was my first musical idol. In fact, I tried to imitate him so much, because my goal was to make music, make some money, and get some girls. Nat “King” Cole was my way of getting the girls.”

Berry Gordy

‘Madison Avenue’, said **Nat ‘King’ Cole**, ‘is afraid of the dark.’

For most of 1957, NBC-TV’s **The Nat King Cole Show** represented a sign of progress: this weekly, quarter-hour, Monday-evening program was the first national TV series hosted by a black artist. (Several years earlier, the development of an entertainment series for **Sammy Davis, Jr.** at ABC-TV was halted due to lack of ad sponsorship). Backed by the Nelson Riddle orchestra, Cole sang, played the piano, welcomed star guests – among them **Tony Bennett, Harry Belafonte, Peggy Lee** and **Ella Fitzgerald** – and projected his warm personality into America’s living rooms. It soon proved a hit. Viewing figures were strong, critics positive, and from mid-year the network expanded the broad- cast to a half-hour. But as the months wore on, and NBC failed to attract a national sponsor, the singer voiced his frustration publicly.

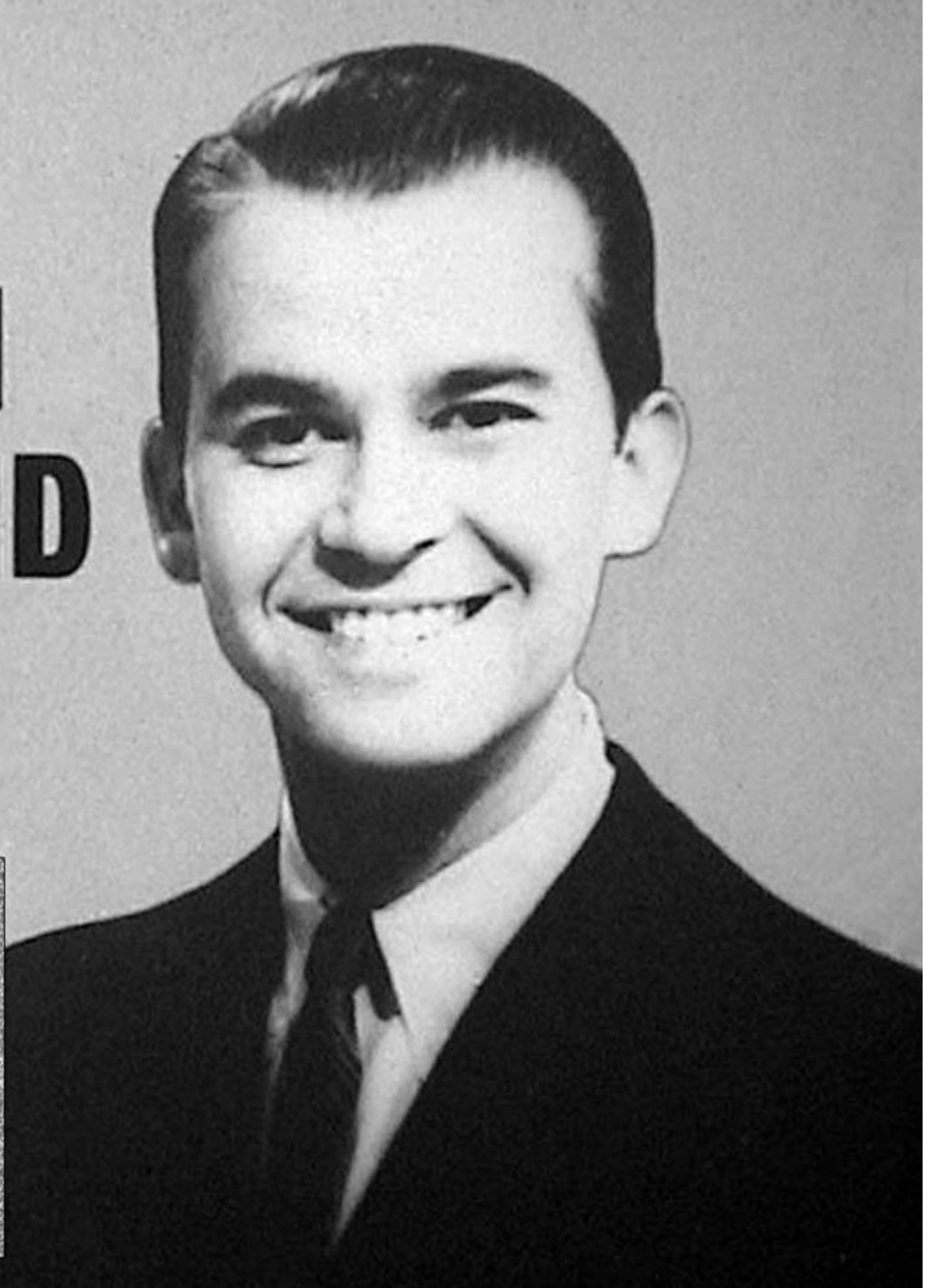
Cole had a talent for performance and composition, writing the first of his signature songs, ‘**Straighten Up And Fly Right**’, in his early twenties, and recording it soon after signing to **Capitol Records** in autumn 1943. Capitol was an upstart, but made Cole a star during the 1940s and 1950s. Cole had style, talent and class.

On December 17, 1957, NBC-TV broadcast the last edition of *The Nat ‘King’ Cole Show*. After sixty weeks on the air, **Berry Gordy**’s idol surrendered in the unwinnable quest for national advertising sponsorship. Cole told **The New York Times** that many ad agencies considered black per- sonalities a liability in selling a product through television. ‘I think the reaction will be that there won’t be any shows starring Negroes for a while,’ he said.

“In the North, they smile at you once and then knife you in the back,” Cole mused. “In the South, at least you know what to do.”

American Bandstand.

AMERICAN BANDSTAND



‘MUSIC WAS REALLY CATEGORIZED IN THOSE DAYS. IF YOU WERE A BLACK ARTIST, IT WAS CONSIDERED A BLACK RECORD. YOU COULD BE SINGING “TIDDLYWINKS” AND IT WAS STILL A BLACK RECORD, RHYTHM & BLUES. IF YOU WERE WHITE AND SANG THE SAME SONG, IT WAS POP.’

Smokey Robinson

On the ABC-TV network, meanwhile, **American Bandstand** was proving a runaway hit, reaching into millions of homes (no sponsor difficulties with this toothsome white host). One afternoon, **Smokey Robinson** saw Philadelphia’s Silhouettes performing ‘**Get A Job**’, their sha-na-na-na novelty about a mother’s complaint to her indolent son:

“After” breakfast every day / She throws the want ads right my way / And never fails to say / Get a job.

Robinson felt the thrill of inspiration, reaching for his Big Ten notebook to write an ‘answer’ song. **Berry Gordy** booked United Sound to turn the result into **The Miracles**’ debut recording: ‘Got A Job’. To get to market, Gordy turned to **George Goldner**, whose End records issued the single in early 1958. Robinson was ecstatic to hear his group on the radio, but it was one of three answer discs to The Silhouettes’ No.1 hit. None registered on the *Billboard* charts. Gordy leased a second Miracles single to Goldner, which performed no better than the first.

The moment of truth had arrived. “For both sides of those two records,” said Robinson, “for the writers’ royalty, the group’s royalty and the producer’s fee, the guy sent Berry a check for **\$3.19.**”

Instead of cashing it, Gordy had it framed, as a reminder and a signpost. In Robinson’s words,

“THIS was one of the reasons he wanted to start Motown.”



**BERRY
GORDY, JR.**

“He was the right person at the right time for a lot of people. He was a genius as far as songs were concerned. He had that gift, and it was very subtle, `cos that’s a very frustrating position to be in, to try to get the best out of everybody, and a lot of times they never knew themselves what that had. I think he’s a genius in that respect.”
Levi Stubbs

“People ask me many times, they say “Why were there so many talented people in Detroit?”...I guarantee you that all over the world, in every little township, every little village, every little city, every big city, there is an abundant amount of talent. But the difference in Detroit was that we did have Berry Gordy. We had a man there who had a vision, who had a dream, and he had whatever fortitude and whatever...it took to make a thing like that happen.”
Smokey Robinson

“Berry Gordy’s sister, founder and chairman of the Motown Historical Museum: \$800 was a lot of money. I kept asking him “How are you going to pay it back? You don’t have a job.” He had quit his good job, \$85 a week, at the Ford Motor factory, on the assembly line. He had three children. My sister Gwen told him she knew he could write songs, and that she was going to pay his child support for a year to give him a chance to get going.” Esther Edwards

“There are a lot of people who don’t know that he’s a very funny, humorous person. During the times when we were really seeing each other quite often, Berry would get into these bits of telling about his exploits of being prize fighter and situations and things that he had gone through during his life, and as he’s telling them, he’s acting them out, and his eyes are bugging out and the whole mannerisms. I would just stand there and say, ``Man, you are a funny, funny person.’’ Otis Williams

“When I met him, he was a young man, not much older than us. He always looked like he had a dream in the back of his eyes. But he always had a plan; all we had to do was what he told us, just cooperate. He had in his mind a show business that none of us even knew about.” Martha Reeves



Berry Gordy was the seventh child, born on Thanksgiving day, 28 November, 1929. As a youngster, he won the semi-final of a boogie-woogie piano contest. Later on, he was also drawn to boxing, and proved a successful contender in amateur fights. But music proved to be a more appealing match: after Army service in Korea from 1951 to 1953, with a \$700 loan from his family, Berry Gordy opened the 3D Record Mart with brother George, retailing the jazz they adored.

The 3D Record Mart went bust.

The customers wanted blues and R&B.



Smokey Robinson

The year he met Berry Gordy, **William Robinson** was a 17-year-old high school graduate, nicknamed “**Smokey Joe**” by an uncle so that the light-skinned, blue-eyed boy would never forget he was black.

Due to enroll at Detroit’s Highland Park Junior College in September for an electrical engineering course, Robinson decided to defer this until the following year. His soul belonged to music. At Northern High, he and several friends formed a group, the Matadors, and they performed at house parties, record hops, talent shows and school functions.

Robinson was influenced by Billy Ward’s Dominoes, national stars on the R&B concert circuit and record charts. Ward had recruited a former amateur boxer from Detroit, **Jackie Wilson**, a charismatic singer who spent several successful years with the group, then left for a solo career under the management of **Al Green**.



When news circulated that Wilson's management was auditioning for new groups, "Smokey Joe" and the Matadors seized the opportunity. By now, they comprised Robinson as lead singer, **Bobby Rogers** as tenor, **Ronnie White** as baritone, and **Pete Moore** as bass, with Rogers' winsome sister, **Claudette**, adding her strong, high tenor to the blend. For the audition, they rehearsed songs written by Robinson.

Came the day, and two men were leading the listening:

Nat Tarnopol, an assistant to Al Green, and Alonzo Tucker, a musician close to Wilson.

Neither was impressed with what they heard. Tarnopol rated the Matadors as too like the Platters, the hitmakers with a similar male/female make-up. But as the crestfallen five departed, a third man at the audition - Berry Gordy - caught up with them, curious about the group's material.



Robinson explained that it was his work, while Gordy dug deeper, and critically, into the songs' construction. "He was getting more enthusiastic because he loved what I was saying," explained Gordy. "He said, 'I can go back and fix that, and I can do this.' And I thought, 'This guy's either got to be an idiot...or the smartest person I'll ever meet. Or the nicest person I'll ever meet, or the strongest.' I said, 'Smokey, I really see a lot of potential in you, you're really great, but these songs, either they have a bad story and great lyrics, or great this and something else'."

Robinson had scores of handwritten songs in his notebook. But Gordy "showed me that, for all my slick rhymes, I had no form. He explained that a song should tell a story with a beginning, middle and end. He rejected almost everything I had - Berry will criticise you to death - but he set me straight."

That Big Ten notepad would command a prince's ransom if auctioned today, but no sum would match its value as the cornerstone of Motown. Equally, the personal bond between Gordy and Robinson was an article of faith as they built the company, overcoming adversity, prejudice and the disbelief of others. Renamed **the Miracles** after Gordy signed them for management, the Matadors were to become Motown's first star group.



Berry Gordy, Songwriter.

Gwen Gordy introduced her brother **Berry** to the songwriter **Billy Davis**, who was writing for **Jackie Wilson**. The promise was fulfilled when Al Green picked the pair's now-complete "**Reet Petite**" for **Jackie Wilson**.

Jackie Wilson was the biggest black entertainer Detroit had produced to date and **Berry** became the most visible and aggressive member of his team. It was learning the business with Wilson that got Gordy thinking about starting to lease the rights to records to nationally distributed labels.

"Billy and I were very different. He was a very passive person, but very good with writers, and he had good connections with the Chess brothers. Never really had any big hits, but he had been around. A nice, quiet guy who could talk to artists. Me, I was the aggressive writer; I was the guy coming with ideas."

The big-band sound of the record is no innovation, but perfectly exploits Wilson's energy, charged by the stand-up bass lines and ebullient call-and-response between singer and brass. The song's hook is the rolling "r" of its title, as the singer brilliantly conjures up an image of the girl who seized Billy Davis' imagination: "my tutti frutti...my bathing beauty."

As a curtain raiser for ex-boxer Gordy's ambitions, "Reet Petite" was a hot.

In March 1957, Coral had opened its own Detroit branch, recruiting **Gordon Prince** to handle local promotion. When "**Reet Petite**" was released in September, the record plugger set to work, taking Wilson to radio stations and record hops all over the city. In the process, Prince (who would subsequently work at Motown for **Barney Ales**) met Gordy and **Coral subsidiary Brunswick** got its hit: "Reet Petite" reached the Billboard pop charts.

Jackie Wilson.

At the Fox Theater in Detroit in 1953, **Jackie Wilson** passed the addition to replace **Clyde McPhatter** as lead singer of **Billy Ward and the Dominoes**. (McPhatter had moved to New York to join **the Drifters**.)

Like **Berry Gordy**, Wilson an ex-boxer from Detroit.

After “**Reet Petite**,” two more songs written by Gordy for Wilson, “**That I Why (I Love You So)**” and “**I’ll Be Satisfied**” were major hits.

Writing for Wilson was crucial to Barry Gordy’s career development. During this period he went from a hopeful boxer to the most respected songwriter in Detroit.



Anna Gordy.

Gwen Gordy.

Harvey Fuqua.



In 1958 **the Moonglows** split up. Harvey Fuqua returned to Washington DC where he discovered **the Marquees** and a teenaged singer named **Marvin Gaye. Fuqua** brought them to **Leonard Chess** and started to work as a producer/executive while also recording as **Harvey and the Moonglows**, who, in 1958. scored a hit with “**10 Commandments of Love.**” Looking for a change in his life, Fuqua, on Chess’ recommendation, went to Detroit to work for **Anna Records**. Fuqua brought **Marvin Gaye** with him to Detroit and sent the other three Marquees home (see more in episode 2!).

Gwen Gordy shared her brother Berry’s ambition to be in the music business: she and boyfriend **Billy Davis** formed Anna Records, named after her sister. They had hoped Berry would join them, but he was determined to advance on his own. Through Davis’ existing connections with **Chess Records, Anna Records** secured a distribution deal with the Chicago powerhouse, and began putting out 45s.

When Gwen and Davis separated, she teamed up romantically and in business with **Harvey Fuqua**, founder of **the Moonglows**. Gordy and Fuqua married in 1961. Together, they formed the **Tri-Phi** and **Harvey Record** labels, whose artists included **the Spinners, Johnny Bristol** and **Jr. Walker & the All Stars**.

The \$800 loan.

\$ 800.00
one year after date 12/12/59
I promise to pay to
the order of Ben - Brown Corp
Eight Hundred & no/100 Dollars
Payable at 4-Int. Michigan
Value received with interest at 4 per cent per annum
No Due
Sigs

BER-BERRY CO-OP
5139 St. Antoine
Detroit, Michigan

SAVINGS SHARE LOAN NOTE

SHARE LOAN NUMBER

DETROIT 2, MICHIGAN

\$ 800.00

FOR VALUE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE Jan. 12, 1959 I promise to pay
BER-BERRY Co-op
HOME FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION OF DETROIT, at its office in

the City of Detroit at 9100 Woodward Avenue, the sum of
Eight Hundred & no/100 (\$ 800.00)

with interest at the rate of 4 per cent ()
per annum, payable Monthly, Yearly.

I hereby transfer, assign and pledge my share account # 113
of said Association owned by me and the Certificate evidencing the
same as security for the payment of said amount when due, and upon the
failure of full payment thereof when due, do authorize said Associa-
tion to repurchase, in accordance with its charter and by-laws, suffi-
cient of said share account and to apply so much of the purchase price
therefor as may be necessary to pay and discharge the amount then due
including interest and I hereby appoint the Treasurer of said Associ-
ation or in his absence the President, my Attorney-in-fact to execute
for me any papers and to take any other action necessary to carry out
this agreement.

AMOUNT OF NOTE 800.00
AMOUNT OF INTEREST .00
TOTAL

DATE OF NOTE Jan. 12 1959

DUE DATE OF NOTE Jan. 12 1960

SIGNATURE OF BORROWER
Gladstone

SIGNATURE OF BORROWER
1719 Gladstone

ADDRESS
TR 1-3340

In addition, I
also hereby assign for
future savings, the
amount, at any
time, to repay any
loan at
the rate of 4%
per annum.

Esther Gordy ran the family's **Ber-Berry Co-operative**, the Gordy family savings club. From that came the storied **\$800 loan** with which **Berry Gordy** established Tamla Records, first working out of the apartment on Detroit's Gladstone Street that he shared with **Raynoma Liles**, soon to be his second wife.

Esther said, "Ours was a close-knit family that helped each other to do what they were trying to do. Everybody that joined the company kind of became like a part of the family."

"But back then, \$800 was a lot of money. I kept asking him 'How are you going to pay it back? You don't have a job.'" He had quit his good job, \$85 a week, at the **Ford Motor factory**, on the assembly line. He had three children. My sister **Gwen** told him she knew he could write songs, and that she was going to pay his child support for a year to give him a chance to get going."

Born into a middle-class Detroit family, Berry's strong bonds with his seven siblings paid off, as his sister Esther was willing to give an \$800 loan to start his business.

On January 12, 1959, 30-year-old Berry Gordy Jr. established **Motown**.

The family made Berry sign a promissory note that included a scribbled addendum requiring him to turn over future royalties if he couldn't make the payment within a year.



WEST GRAND
BOULEVARD

Berry Gordy launched Tamla Records in January 1959 with “**Come To Me**,” performed by **Marv Johnson**, who also co-wrote the song. Within weeks, the record stirred enough spirits in Detroit that United Artists Records of New York came calling, to cut a deal for its national release and for Johnson to become a UA artist.

By August, Gordy bought new premises at **2648 West Grand**, in the near northwest of the city. Across the building’s two-story front was painted a simple declaration, “Hitsville U.S.A.” By the following April, he could claim credit for two Top 10 hits on the **Billboard charts** by Johnson; one of them, “**You Got What It Takes**,” was even a success in Great Britain.

The modest, two-story building was once a photographer’s home, and Gordy and wife **Raynoma** lived in an apartment on the second floor. The garage photo studio was converted into a recording studio, an important step in the company’s self-sufficiency. This proved invaluable when, for instance, a sleepless Gordy was dissatisfied with the first rendering of “**Shop Around**” by the Miracles, and called the group and the musicians back into West Grand at three o’clock one morning to recut the tune. It is doubtful that he could have done the same elsewhere at such an anti-social hour; the new version – faster, sharper – became the first significant pop hit for the Miracles.

In addition to buying the West Grand Blvd. building, **Berry Gordy** formed **Jobete Music Publishing** (named after his daughters: Joy, Betty and Terry); **The Corporation Berry Gordy, Jr., Enterprises; Hitsville, U.S.A.; Motown Records**, which would issue records under a variety of labels including **Tamla** (originally named Tammy, after the Debbie Reynolds film of the same name) and **International Talent Management, Inc.** (ITM), to guide the career of all his signees.

Several miles downtown was the local office of Warner Bros. Records, a brand new offspring of Bugs Bunny – or, more accurately, of the Hollywood film and TV studio famous for the animated rabbit and other cartoon characters. In 1959, heading up the label's Detroit branch was 24-year-old **Barney Ales**, recently recruited from Capitol Records.

As Berry Gordy and UA Records toiled behind the raucous rhythm & blues of Marv Johnson, Ales was sweet-talking his way around Detroit with a vapid pop tune that was to become 1959's biggest-selling single for Warner Bros., "Kookie, Kookie (Lend Me Your Comb)" by Edd Byrnes and Connie Stevens.

Barney Ales



As a fast-rising **Capitol Records** salesman, **Barney Ales** was personally acquainted with **Nat King Cole**. Cole often visited Detroit, the fourth-largest music market in the country. Money flowed into entertainment, whether from the privileged in suburban Grosse Pointe or the disadvantaged on Hastings Street.

There were hundreds of venues, from grand theatres to basement dives, where showmen and -women lit up the night with rock & roll, r&B, classical, jazz and country & western. All the major recording companies had branch offices there; a number of local labels thrived. Ales became friendly with Cole and his wife, Maria.

For Capitol Records 1957 was a big year. In July, it laid claim to six of the country's ten best-selling albums. Singles were the currency of teenagers, but the bulk of record industry revenues came from LPs, bought by adults. Capitol had plenty of long-players (LPs!).

As a young salesman, **Barney Ales** was given “all the crap accounts” in Detroit, dime-store chains such as Kresge’s, Neisner’s and Woolworth’s. He came to realise that a good relationship with the store manager meant more than charming the girls who ran the record department, where staff turnover was high.

As he acquired more accounts, such as Detroit’s upscale J.L. Hudson department store, Ales saw that jukebox operators were among the city’s largest record buyers.

He persuaded Angotts to install LP browser bins stuffed “with 15 of my Capitol albums and 5 of someone else’s.” The result? “The albums went flying out the door.”



Ales stock at Capitol climbed. Ales' worked at at Capitol then Warner Brother then at Aurora Distributing, Ales' network of contacts grew, and so did the experience in distribution that he would soon put to work for Berry Gordy.

When **Gordy** and **Ales** met in 1960, they found common ground.

One day in early 1960, **Berry Gordy** and **Barney Ales** found themselves sharing the station's vestibule. They didn't know each other, but the center of attention was the record Ales was carrying – hoping to persuade a dj of its virtues – on **Tri-Phi Records**. This was the label co-owned by **Anna Gordy**, operating separately from her brother's company, and marketed in Detroit by **Aurora Distributing**, where Ales was sales manager.

“Berry was curious, and he questioned me, ‘Why do you have that record?’ I told him, and he asked whether I would mind waiting until he was done with the dj, Tom Clay. And so I did. On the way out to our cars, we talked about Tri-Phi, which records were hot, the business and all that.”

Two days later, Ales was asked to meet Gordy again.

The rendezvous was his first visit to the Motown office on **West Grand**.

Ahead of the second meeting with Ales, Gordy might have probed his industry credentials.

“No, I was not that sophisticated. I just went by what I heard him say and what I saw him do, how he felt. I didn't have that many connections with people in town.”

Barney Ales and Berry Gordy.

“**Way Over There**” was among the first **Tamla** releases to be handled by **Barney Ales** at Aurora, and it sold well around Detroit. The meeting with Gordy had been a success, the two men recognizing in each other similar personality traits and a voracious appetite for socializing.

“Both of us could charm the birds right out of the trees,” said Ales. “Berry also knew that I was friendly with the disc jockeys. We started going out together, started getting closer.”

On Friday and Saturday nights, the pair would hang out at the Flame Show Bar or the 20 Grand. On Sundays, they would take wives **Raynoma** and **Mitzi** to the Belle Isle park on the Detroit River.

On another occasion, Berry, Ray, Barney and Mitzi set out for dinner at the upscale London Chop House in downtown Detroit.

“We parked out front and went in. I was friendly with the owner, and asked for him. The lady at the desk told me he was off sick, then she said, ‘We don’t serve coloured people.’ I shot back, ‘That’s good, because I don’t eat ‘em.’ I had the woman call the owner, and he said, ‘No problem, Mr. Ales.’ Sure enough, when we went in, all the white people turned around, looking.”

Barney Ales and **Berry Gordy** had a strong personal relationship, and **Aurora** had done well with the **Tamla** and **Motown** labels in Detroit.

Ales, the white salesman, now 27, was offered a full-time post by Gordy, the black entrepreneur.

"My parents couldn't understand why I would leave Aurora to go with a black guy. I had been successful at Capitol and Warner Bros., and Aurora was taking off. We had just bought a new house, a new car, and we had three kids. It seemed like a gamble to everybody. Except me."

Gordy recognized Ales' dilemma. "I don't know what he thought when I actually offered him the job. I was not a big record company. It was kind of audacious of me to ask him to work for me, for, you know, a black man. Even though he wanted to, I knew he had to check with his wife and family and stuff like that."



Ales also had to weigh the reaction of his manager at Aurora, Harvey Kahn, and the concern that his own friendship with Gordy would be compromised by this new, formal relationship. Briefly, he considered opening a distributorship which he and Kahn would own outright, or leveraging a larger Aurora stakeholding from its owners. In the event, Ales called Gordy to say “yes.”

The decision brought him into closer contact with **Loucy Wakefield**, Gordy’s sister, who was overseeing Motown’s distribution and manufacturing functions, and its receivables. Loucy was a capable, organized woman who had worked at the Michigan and Indiana Army Reserves, stationed at Fort Wayne. Wakefield served in procurement there, an experience she had in common with **Mitzi Ales**. Other members of the small Hitsville back-office team at the time were **Fay Hale**, who dealt directly with the pressing plants, and **Bill Mitchell**, who handled promotion.

Esther Gordy.



"Mother Motown," was a title that rested with **Esther Gordy**, the second child of Pop and Bertha Gordy, born in Georgia in 1920, educated in Detroit and Washington, D.C. In 1947, she and brothers Fuller and George opened the Gordy Printing Co. Most famously, Esther was reluctant to approve an **\$800 loan** from the family savings fund for Berry to start Motown Records, even though she was his secretary while Berry was writing songs for Jackie Wilson.

When Berry Gordy started the record company, Edwards held a part-time post as "gal Friday" for **International Talent Management Inc.**, and was also a notary public for Wayne County, Michigan. Soon afterwards, she joined her brother's full-time employ.

Barney Ales remembered Esther managing the accounts and other administrative functions and Esther's husband George was Motown's part-time comptroller. At first, Ales' expenses were authorized by Esther. "You could never get one over on her, she was tough. Nice lady, but tough." Her local government job hardened that shell, in his opinion.

In these early days, Edwards also oversaw the art department.

Esther Gordy on her brother **Berry**, "It was not his goal to hit up a major entertainment complex with recordings, films, and all these other sorts of things. He just wanted to be a successful songwriter.

All Motown is the result of one thing leading to another and Barry Gordy saying 'I'll do it myself' when he could not get something done to his liking we had parents who always said 'Your gift will make room for you. You make a better product and they will buy it.'"

Berry said at the time, "If I ever get this house and get it paid for, I'll have it made. I'll live upstairs, I'll have my office is down in the front part, and I'll have a studio outback where I can make demonstration Records or Masters to sell to record companies." It is noted that Esther is responsible for the **Motown Museum**.



The Music Business.

TRINITY 1-3340

PURCHASE ORDER LABEL INFORMATION

MAIL INVOICE TO:

MOTOWN RECORD CORPORATION2648 WEST GRAND BOULEVARDDETROIT 8, MICHIGAN

ORDERED FROM

COLUMBIA TRANSCRIPTIONS630 N. McCLURG COURTCHICAGO, ILLINOIS

PLEASE ENTER OUR ORDER FOR GOODS NAMED BELOW

AND SHIP TO:

NO. _____

THIS ORDER NUMBER MUST
APPEAR ON YOUR INVOICE
AND PACKAGE.

DATE OF ORDER

JULY 9, 1962

SHIPPING DATE

SHIP VIA

TERMS

Quantity

Description

Price \$

Per

SPECIFICATIONS:~~CDMA~~ LABEL COPY

Side - 1

TITLE STUBBORN KIND OF FELLOWArtists MARVIN GAYEPublisher JOBETE BMITime 2:43 T 2 DMB-007110Number TAMLA 54068Writers M. GAYE, W. STEVENSONVocal Accompaniment THE DOMINETTESSpeed 45 RPMProduced by WM STEVENSON

Other Accompaniment

1 up Chicago
 3 up Bridgeport
 3 up New Haven
 3 up Los Angeles } 7/9/62

Side - 2

TITLE IT HURT ME TOOArtists MARVIN GAYEPublisher JOBETE BMITime 2:44 DM V-007204Number TAMLA 54068Writers M. GAYE, W. STEVENSONVocal Accompaniment THE DOMINETTESSpeed 45 RPMProduced by WM STEVENSON

Other Accompaniment

BUYER MOTOWN RECORD CORPORATION

Pay Janet Hale

Barney Ales got Motown paid.

As the company grew and its releases began selling in increasing quantities, Gordy assigned receivables to Ales, in addition to sales and promotion. “Selling is a lot easier than collecting,” said the Motown founder. “The distributors weren’t paying us. We had a returns policy, and a lot of stuff would come back: thirty percent or whatever. My sister wasn’t strong enough to go in there after Barney had done this massive job of selling. So I put him in charge of collections.” This was prudent, although it bothered Wakefield. Her brother responded with a raise and a promotion, naming her one of the firm’s vice presidents in August 1961.

“Distributors never paid you on your first hit, anyway,” Gordy continued. “You had to have your second hit to get paid. If you were a new company, that money was out there.” Ales knew of distributors who specifically looked for start-up labels as clients, so that they wouldn’t have to pay the newcomers unless follow-up hits were forthcoming. “You had to know who you could and couldn’t rely on. At Motown, naturally I had a bad attitude if people didn’t pay me.”

For Motown’s first major pop success, “**Shop Around**,” Gordy acknowledged that it was very hard to get distributors to pay – a cause of anxiety on his part, which may also have played into his decision to bring Ales into the company. “But then we came back with ‘Please Mr. Postman,’ which was not only a million-seller, but No. 1 on the [pop] charts. We called it the ‘**clean-up**’ **record**: that cleaned up all outstanding bills.”

But it took a minute for “**Please Mr. Postman**” to achieve that status. Motown’s relationships with R&B stations were fine in its hometown and surrounding states, shaped by Berry Gordy’s slow and steady advance as a songwriter and producer, before the company was established.

Top 40 radio was equally as challenging.

Major pop stations were not inclined to add a record by a new act without seeing airplay elsewhere, so independent labels would have to start their canvassing close to home.

With “**Shop Around**,” for example, WTRX in Flint, Michigan, was an early believer. Ales promptly drove the Miracles to Flint for radio and retail ballyhoo. “They used to go around in a Volkswagen van, and they were interested in promoting themselves. That was one way of getting the disc jockeys to play them.”

Outside its home turf, Motown depended on promotion men at distributors around the country, as did so many small labels. They could not afford their own national promotion staff and, besides, the most effective pitch men were those in local markets, who knew radio programmers and disc jockeys first-hand. This process meant that it took time to spread a hit, in a world less immediately connected than today.

The Marvelettes’ “Please Mr. Postman” was one such slow-burner. Despite the enthusiasm of stations in various parts of the country, it took longer to reach No. 1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 – fifteen weeks – than any record before it. To help promote it, during the first week of November 1961, **Barney Ales** drove **the Marvelettes** from Inkster, Michigan, to Philadelphia for **Dick Clark’s American Bandstand**.

Later, when the group travelled to San Francisco for a major rock & roll concert, Ales paid four Bay Area girls to sing behind lead singer **Gladys Horton**. “We didn’t have the money to fly the whole group from Detroit.” His secretary forgot to give him the lead sheets for the musicians playing behind “**the Marvelettes**.” The messenger who brought them the next day was at first not certain that Ales was the right recipient, because of his color.

Ales' woodshedding at Capitol and Warner Bros. was paying off for Motown. Company meetings held by those larger labels in California and New York had netted him a wide range of industry contacts, while disc jockeys and programmers whom he knew in Detroit had advanced to posts in other markets.

"I could call up people across the country for favours." He also realized how vital it was to have stock in retailers' racks before airplay.

"That way, if a record was played, you could tell right away whether you had a hit. Then you could double it with your distributors across the country. And that's when I learned that you had to take care of your distributor's promotion man. In certain areas, those guys were more important to me than disc jockeys, because they had to go to *all* the radio stations."

The other reality was that almost all Motown's distributors and their promotion staff were white. In the first half of the decade, experienced or qualified black-owned and black-staffed distribution firms were as scarce as black-owned record labels of scale.

In Chicago, VeeJay Records employed Martin (Red) Schwartz, who was white, to promote its product to R&B radio. In Detroit, black-owned distributor B&H recruited **Gordon Prince** to handle promotion because of his experience. Prince, also white, took Berry Gordy and singer Marv Johnson around area radio stations when Johnson's "**Come To Me**" was the very first release on **Tamla**.

Once installed as Berry Gordy's business right-hand, Ales cast an eye over all the Motown distribution deals, and reshuffled some.

Ales eschewed formal contracts, because they limited his flexibility.

"If someone wasn't paying promptly, I would tell another distributor who I knew was a trans-shipper to go into that market and contact the one-stops because I wouldn't sell to that [delinquent] distributor until he paid up."

Trans-shipping was the custom of a label's distributor in one territory selling records to retail or one-stop accounts in another. It could be the cause of friction between distributors and record companies, but was useful leverage for the latter to extract payment and to ensure adequate stock levels when a record was breaking.

Ales thrived on the entertaining that is a salesman's duty. "You form relationships with people. Take care of them. No bullshit. Our philosophy was, 'We're going to be in business for a long time.' So if one record didn't happen – on to the next."

To reinforce that, Ales and Gordy sometimes hit the road, pressing the flesh in New York and other northeastern cities.

Barney Ales got Motown paid.

Holland/Dozier/Holland.



One of the early hits for which Ales collected the receivables was **Eddie Holland's "Jamie."** It was in late 1957 that the teenage singer accompanied a friend auditioning for Homer Jones, a local music entrepreneur. Jones was more impressed with Holland, and suggested he contact Berry Gordy for material.

Asked by Gordy to sing, the 18-year-old Holland chose **"Christmas In Heaven"** as recorded by **Jackie Wilson with the Dominoes.** "Berry asked, 'You can sing Jackie Wilson songs?' So when I did, he said, 'I'd like to manage you.'" Holland also took the opportunity to tell him about sibling Brian, and so it was that both brothers joined Gordy's growing circle of music makers.



United Artist Recording Star

EDDIE HOLLAND

Personal Management
BERRY GORDY JR.

P47 57%

One day in 1958, Gordy went to one of **Jackie Wilson's** recording sessions in New York. "Jackie was right there in the studio. They'd rehearsed the track, got all that balanced. I wasn't really looking, but when I heard that crystal-clear voice booming out [over the studio speakers], I knew I had something. And hearing my song being played, it was just an incredible, incredible thrill." To cut demos of those songs, the writers turned to another of Gordy's motor city hopefuls: **Eddie Holland.**





Five years later, Eddie and Brian were joined by another youngster, Lamont Dozier, and their synchronicity as the hit-making team known as **Holland/Dozier/Holland** drove Motown to new heights.

Like Smokey Robinson, Eddie and his brother, **Brian**, were beneficiaries of Detroit's school music programs. Eddie said, "Everybody was part of a vocal group, and we would duel with each other, showing off to the girls." Moreover, the Hollands' uncle was married to a cousin of **Jackie Wilson**, and he would bring over **the Dominoes** records to play. Eddie was a fan of opera singer **Mario Lanza**, anticipating his films, imitating his vocal technique. When he first heard Wilson, "I thought, 'Wow, that's like Mario Lanza.'"



Raynoma Liles Gordy.



In the preceding photo, next to Berry Gordy, is a slender, light-skinned African American woman in a short platinum-blond wig, evening gown and elbow-length white gloves. **Raynoma Gordy**. Raynoma was Berry's second wife and one of Motown's key figures.

"Miss Ray" helped nurture the company's early artists. **Smokey Robinson**, recalled how "she taught us new chords and simple ways to structure songs." Raynoma found the company its headquarters on West Grand Boulevard that became known as Hitsville USA, and she and Berry and their son **Kerry** lived upstairs in the second floor of the duplex (the offices and the studio were on the first floor and the basement).

After winning a talent contest at the Twenty Grand club in Detroit, Raynoma was and her sister Alice, performing as a singing duo called Alice and Ray, were introduced to Gordy. He granted them an audition at his house. By the time she tucked her son into bed that night, she remembered: "I already knew that Berry Gordy was going to be the great love of my life."

Berry was impressed by Raynoma's perfect pitch and her suggestions for improving musical arrangements, devising introductions and fleshing out harmonies. Raynoma and Alice became the nucleus of a group called the Teen Queens, later the Cute-Teens, for whom Gordy produced a single, **From This Day Forward**, leased to the Aladdin label in 1958. When Gordy released the first record on his Tamla label, **Marv Johnson's Come to Me**, in the early weeks of 1959, there was a credit for the Rayber Voices, a backing choir that Raynoma had assembled and which would be heard on several early Motown records.

The **Rayber Voices (Raynoma/Berry)** accompanied Marv Johnson during a week at the Apollo theatre in Harlem and, for one night, at Carnegie Hall. Miss Ray was a vital member of Gordy's inner circle. They were married in 1960, a year after the birth of their son, Kerry. In 1961 she produced **Jimmy Ruffin's** debut single, **Don't Feel Sorry For Me**, as the first release on Gordy's new label, Miracle, whose slogan was perhaps not perfectly conceived: "If it's a hit, it's a Miracle!" That same year she released her only single for the label, the cute ballad **When I Needed You**, using the pseudonym **Little Iva** (a year before Eva Boyd recorded The Locomotion as Little Eva).



The Motortown

Revue of 1959