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Epic: extending beyond the usual or ordinary, especially in size or scope. That's what Greg has written, an epic of 1960's Southern rock and roll party music. It is big in size with 552 pages, has 800 photos, when open it covers almost 36 inches, and it weighs 10 pounds. It also contains two CDs of 60's music and a CD-ROM of the bands covered and their members. Tuscaloosa is represented well indeed. Right now, it has to be ordered on line at www.heybabydays.com. I interviewed Greg by phone on a Sunday afternoon. I was his third interview of the day. The book is hot. Greg is a very busy man.

Greg, I'm going to tell my readers that this is more than a book, it's an epic.

(laughter) It didn't start off that way. I never dreamed it would be that large. It just got out of control because so many people wanted to contribute. This is a subject that is very special to a lot of folks. It got started and went on and on.

Johnny Wyker told me about you writing this book two or three years ago. I kept wondering why it was taking so long. Once I received my copy I instantly knew why it took so long.

You have to realize I am not a professional writer. That's what made it a whole lot more difficult than it should have been. Not having any back ground in this, I had to rely on a lot of other people. I had to get a lot of help.

Greg, virtually everyone I have interviewed for this page was mentioned in your book. It amazed me.

One of the things about Alabama that intrigued me was the amount of talent. Beach music is usually associated with the Carolinas. Beach music in the south is soul and R&B. Those genres come from Alabama, from Muscle Shoals.

I have been in touch with Paul Hornsby and have asked him to do a follow up interview to this one. He has roots in Alabama music also.

Right, all the way back before Hour Glass with the Allman Brothers. That Hour Glass album was great. It had "I've Been Tryin'" and "Out of the Night." Paul said "Out of the Night" was more or less a throw away song. But in the Carolinas it was considered a classic. Those guys were southern soul genius. Paul was at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame when we did the book debut in October. Wilbur Walton (The James Gang) was also there. Paul idolized Wilbur. They used to do a lot of the music that Wilbur had done. He was a legend to Paul. He really had a lot of admiration for him.

You tell a great deal about a junior high school band from Tuscaloosa called The Misfitz.

Tiger Jack had them on TV there. That got them a lot of notoriety. When we would ask about bands in Alabama, The Misfitz would always be named. They must have played a whole lot around there.

They played the national guard armory and the YMCA because back then that was about the only place to play around here.

It was the same everywhere. Bands had to play in national guard armories all over the south. Man, if those armories could talk. I remember seeing The Romans and The Bushmen in high school auditoriums and national guard armories.

Your book devotes a lot of space to The Swingin' Medallions.

The Tams and The Swingin' Medallions were always the money makers. They could always bring the people in. They made for a party atmosphere. It was a good feeling just to be in the same building with those guys. I was with The Tams last Friday night and when you hear those songs you still get that same feeling. They still create that party atmosphere in 2006. They are part of the never-going-to-give-it-up club. Music is in their blood.

Did you play a musical instrument?

No I never played. If you notice the photo of me holding the guitar in the book, I'm holding the guitar upside down. (laughter)

Did you have a full time job the whole time you were putting this book together?

Yeah, I'm in the real estate business. I'm a industrial real estate broker with C.B. Richard Alice in Atlanta. I've been with them for 27 years. I've had a very successful real estate career and that's the only way I was able to do this book. There wasn't a publisher out there that would have touched this book. I basically had to finance it. I don't look at it as an investment. I got caught up in it. I started off wanting to tell about those days when I was a promoter. I was still in high school. But I was more of a fan than a promoter. I had to do this as I could. I kept telling everybody it was almost through. Then I would have to eat my words because there was always another story, always another band to cover. I felt obligated to get involved as much as I could. I still feel that I have missed some bands that should be included. But all you can do is do the best that you can do.

Everyone that I have talked to that has seen the book thinks it's great. Just like me, they want to tell everybody.

That's what I am counting on, word of mouth. It's very hard for a guy without a publisher or a public relations firm to get any publicity at all much less any distribution. Barnes and Noble has contacted me. Those three

pages of acknowledgments should show the scope of this project. They have all been so very supportive. Like Chuck Leavell, as successful as he is, he has been so accessible. I had gotten a photo from Tiger Jack

of The Misfitz but it was lo-res and I needed a better photo. I emailed Chuck and he sent me a great photo and a story to go along with it. Randall Bramblett was a little harder but once he found out about what we were doing he loved talking about his days as lead singer for King David and the Slaves. People remember these bands. They remember those parties at the fraternity house.

If you had to tell somebody about your book and they had never heard of it, what would say?

I would tell them that this is a book about a musical happening in the 60's. There were a lot of great black R&B artists that young white college bands were emulating. These young white college bands tried to sound like them. There was a very collaborative effort between blacks and whites during this time and it was called soul music, or in the Carolinas, beach music. It was party music. It didn't matter if it was in a place that sold alcohol or a place that didn't. The music was very intoxicating whether with alcohol or a Coke. People were Shagging, Bopping, Jitterbugging, or the Monkey. It was a time when live music was king. This was music made in the south, most of it in Muscle Shoals, Stax in Memphis, Master Sound in Atlanta, or Arthur Smith in Charlotte. That time was very special to me. I never really made much money promoting bands and shows. It was just a wonderful personal experience. Getting to know some of these musicians. The chemistry between the band and the audience. Johnny Wyker said it best. He said "it was a time when real musicians played real instruments to live audiences." Johnny was just like us: we were there, we lived it.