



Hank Fulmer 1991

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I did not learn to dance at Ocean Drive, or for that matter, at any other beach. My training grounds were Ben Campbell's "Bloody Bucket" and the "Chick Inn" in Blackville, S.C. Even here, dancing was not the main form of entertainment. Drinking, pool playing, and cutting took priority. I still don't feel fully dressed without my pocket knife. I became fairly adept at "Honky-Tonk" dancing. I did what I called the "Ben Campbell Drag". The ladies seemed to appreciate it.

During this period of time, my taste in music changed. From Kitty Wells, Hank Snow, Webb Pierce, etc., I became more appreciative of jazz and big band sounds.

"Jitterbugging", to me, was the way to dance. Unfortunately, I could not learn how to do it. Fortunately, I didn't have to . . . this silly step called "the shag" was the thing to do. I discovered that I could do this well enough to be sociably accepted. Oh Yeah, being cool, I learned to put the palm of my right hand against my stomach just above my belt buckle and even learned to "rubber leg" a little.

It was at U.S.C. that I was introduced to fast dancing of my liking. Becoming an active member of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity, I developed a completely new life style. I entered school as "Henderson the Rainmaker", and graduated as "Hank the Panty Raid King". (an improvement?) Pi Kaps bought the biggest, the best record player that I had ever seen for the chapter room. I remember having only one record . . . "Perdido". Craig Blackmon and I wore the floor out sugar-footing. I copied Craig. Through the fraternity, I was introduced to the finest people I ever want to know. Through them, I was introduced to the beach, tailored drapes, "tell-it", and all kinds of good stuff.

Since the purpose of this epistle is to tell you something about me, my listing of some of my mentors and/or preferences might be enlightening.

Dancers:	Craig Blackmon - Buddy Barker
Dressers:	Jimmy Kondouras - Lanny Shay
Speech:	Joe Pittman - Slick McDade
Lifestyle:	Wormy Wall - Sugar Childs - Frank Epps
Philosophy:	Hegel - Voltair - Emmerson
Poetry:	Burns - Tenneyson - Browning - Kipling
Economics:	John Maynard Keynes
Music:	Ellington - Basie - Getz

This autobiography would be incomplete without mentioning my wife, Johnny Lou. When we first returned to the beach as shaggers, I knew and remembered a few people, but felt so insecure that I would introduce myself to everyone as Hank, Johnny Lou's husband. She is not, however; an avid fan of my dancing. I am probably the best "dipper" to a slow number ever to have worn a pair of tassels. She has complained, since our first date, that I put her to sleep slow dancing. It is obvious that this is not her field of expertise.

I am thankful, I am proud, to have been so honored by this special group of people. I am most grateful for having the opportunity to know and be a part of such a great group of people. Thank you all, especially the ladies who turned me down the first time I asked them to dance but later did me the honor.