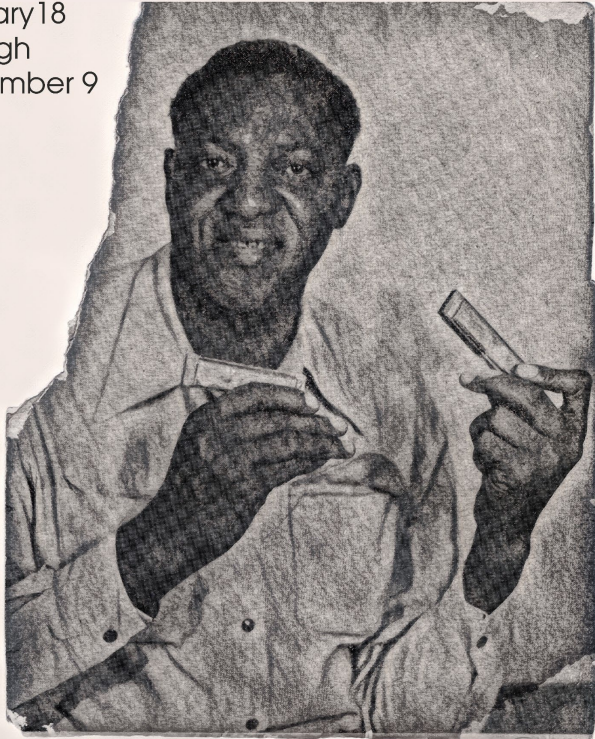


# Bring It On Home

An Exhibition of Sonny Boy Williamson II Materials  
from the William E. Donoghue Collection

Archives & Special Collections, University of Mississippi Libraries  
For more information please contact  
[archivesdept@olemiss.edu](mailto:archivesdept@olemiss.edu)

January 18  
through  
December 9  
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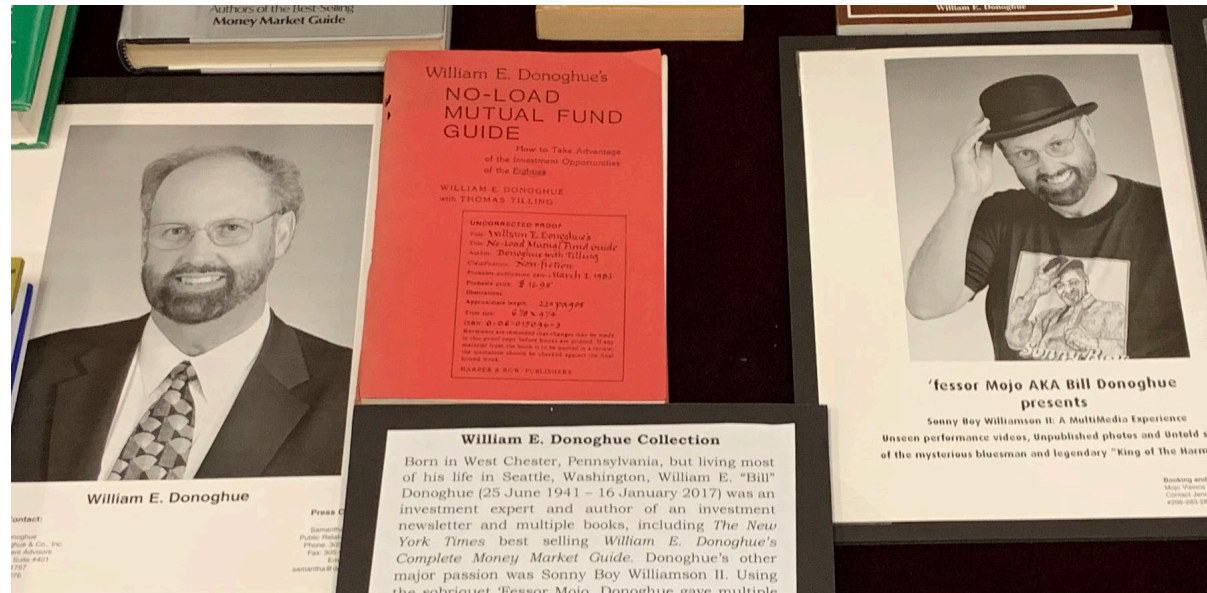
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# Exhibit Space: Faulkner Room, J. D. Williams Library

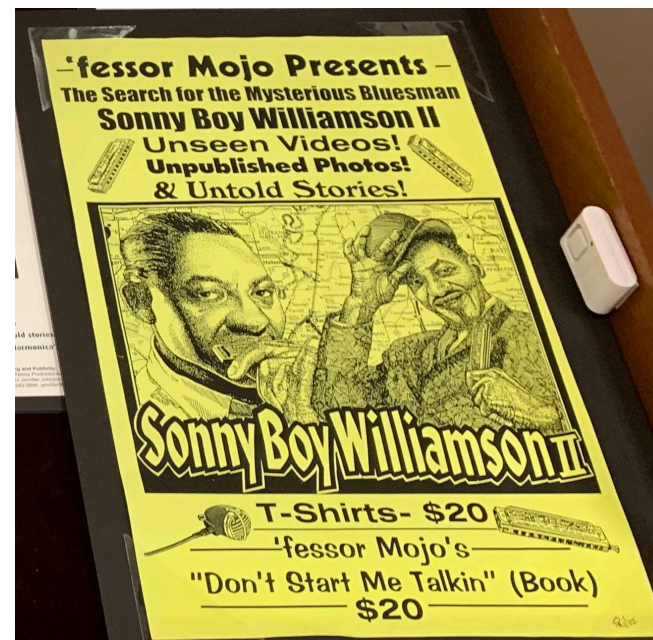


# 1. William E. Donoghue Collection

Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, but living most of his life in Seattle, Washington, William E. “Bill” Donoghue (25 June 1941 – 16 January 2017) was an investment expert and author of an investment newsletter and multiple books, including *The New York Times* best selling *William E. Donoghue’s Complete Money Market Guide*. Donoghue’s other major passion was Sonny Boy Williamson II. Using the sobriquet ‘Fessor Mojo, Donoghue gave multiple lectures on his blues hero, authored the book “*Don’t Start Me To Talkin’*” (1997). He was working on a manuscript and documentary intended to be the authoritative sources on Sonny Boy Williamson II. Bill’s family donated his extensive collection to the Blues Archive earlier this year. The items displayed here represent only a small fraction of this collection.



William E. Donoghue, aka ‘fessor Mojo



*Featured in display case, clockwise from upper left corner:*

- William E. Donoghue's lifetime financial planner: straight talk about your money decisions / William E. Donoghue with Dana Shilling. Harper & Row, ©1987.
- William E. Donoghue's No-load mutual fund guide: how to take advantage of the investment opportunities of the eighties / William E. Donoghue with Thomas Tilling. Harper & Row, ©1983.
- The Donoghue strategies: ten minutes a week to investment success / by William E. Donoghue with Robert Chapman Wood. Bantam Books, 1989.
- 'Fessor Mojo's "Don't start me to talkin'" / William E. Donoghue. Mojo Visions Productions, ©1997.
- SBW in Copenhagen, November 5, 1963 / by Erik Host, edited by Bill Donoghue
- Poster, "Fessor Mojo Presents The Search for the Mysterious Bluesman Sonny Boy Williamson II"
- Promotional photo, 'Fessor Mojo
- Uncorrected publisher's proof, No-load mutual fund guide
- Promotional photo, William E. Donoghue
- Mutual fund superstars: invest in the best, forget about the rest / William E. Donoghue. Elliott & James, ©1994.

## 2. A Tale of Two Sonny Boy Williamsons

Anyone learning about the blues can easily be forgiven for mistaking the identities of two famous blues harmonica players, both named Sonny Boy Williamson.



John Lee Curtis Williamson (1914-1948)  
“Sonny Boy Williamson I”

John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson (1914-1948) was born outside Jackson, Tennessee and made his career in Chicago, recording hundreds of sides spanning a decade as a solo artist and as a sideman starting in 1937. His most famous song, “Good Morning, School Girl” became a blues standard, and his harmonica playing influenced countless blues players.

Williamson was murdered in a robbery as he was heading home from a gig at Chicago’s Plantation Club.



Alex Miller (1912-1965)  
“Sonny Boy Williamson II”

The other “Sonny Boy Williamson” (1912-1965) was born Alex Miller in Glendora, Mississippi. Known variously as Aleck Miller, Rice Miller, Willie Williamson, and other names (possibly because of evading the law and obfuscating his story to interviewers he didn’t want prying into his personal life), he took the name Sonny Boy Williamson to capitalize on the name recognition of John Lee’s successful recording career. Though from Mississippi, he is most associated with Helena, Arkansas, where he regularly performed on the King Biscuit Time radio program.

His recordings for the Trumpet and Checker labels have become some of the most iconic blues harmonica recordings. He made a huge impact on 1960s British rock bands The Yardbirds, The Animals, and more.



Enoch Williams  
"Sonny Boy Williams"

To further complicate things, Enoch Williams made several recordings in the 1940s as "Sonny Boy Williams."

Scholars now differentiate the two as Sonny Boy Williamson I (John Lee) and Sonny Boy Williamson II (Alex Miller).

To diminish any confusion, the majority of this exhibit focuses on **Sonny Boy Williamson II.**



Sonny Boy Williamson II



**78s (clockwise from bottom left corner):**

1. *Good Morning, School Girl* / Sonny Boy Williamson (I). Bluebird [1937]
2. *Sugar Gal* / Sonny Boy Williamson (I). RCA Victor
3. *Shake It But Don't Break It* / Sonny Boy Williams. Decca
4. *Born Blind* / Sonny Boy Williamson (II). Checker [1955-1958?]
5. *Too Close Together* / Sonny Boy Williamson (II). Trumpet Records [1953]

**CD Inserts:**

6. Sonny Boy Williamson [II], *Bring It On Home*. Charly R&B Masters Vol. 7 (1994)
7. The Original Sonny Boy Williamson [I]: *The Later Years, 1947* (2008)



- Promotional photo of Sonny Boy Williamson with Houston Stackhouse and Peck Curtis
- Recording of the King Biscuit Radio Hour
- Painting of Sonny Boy Williamson performing on the King Biscuit Time radio program, signed by “Jimmy Stewart ’90”
- Poster, 1987 King Biscuit Blues Festival

*Text under poster:*

Since 1986, Helena, Arkansas has hosted the annual King Biscuit Blues Festival.

*Text under LP record:*

The only known fully recorded episode of the King Biscuit show was preserved by Chris Strachwitz on this recording he made at KFFA in 1965. (Arhoolie 530 A)



### 3. King Biscuit Time

Beginning not long after Helena, Arkansas's KFFA first went on the air in November 1941, The King Biscuit Time radio program was born. Wanting to promote his performances over the radio, Sonny Boy Williamson convinced Interstate Grocer Company owner Max Moore to sponsor a radio program during the lunch hour on this new radio station. Seeing this as mutually beneficial, the 15-minute daily weekday program advertised the company's King Biscuit Flour as well as upcoming blues gigs.

Originally featuring Williamson and Robert Jr. Lockwood, the program's popularity led to the formation of the "King Biscuit Entertainers," featuring Williamson with Houston Stackhouse, Peck Curtis, Willie Love, Pinetop Perkins, and others. In 1947, the Interstate Grocer Company began using Sonny Boy Williamson's likeness on their bags of corn meal.



**Top row:** flour sacks from King Biscuit featuring the likeness of Sonny Boy Williamson. One has been signed by numerous Blues musicians.

**Bottom row:** promotional photos of the King Biscuit Entertainers

## 4. The Trumpet Years

Though Lillian McMurry had earlier recorded blues singer Casey Jones, the first successful blues artist she recruited for her fledgling Trumpet Records label was Sonny Boy Williamson. Having made a name for himself for over a decade earlier, playing on the King Biscuit Time radio program and performing all over the south, Williamson had not made a record until he was approached by McMurry. In addition to the many sides he cut for Trumpet, he brought in Elmore James, Willie Love, and others who would also record for the label. Some of his best recordings were done on the Trumpet label, including “Eyesight to the Blind” and “Nine Below Zero.”



78s:

- *Eyesight to the Blind* / Sonny Boy Williamson. Trumpet [1951]
  - *She Brought Life Back to the Dead* / Sonny Boy Williamson and his House Rockers. Trumpet [1951].
  - *Nine Below Zero* / Sonny Boy Williamson. Trumpet [1951]
- Promotional Material for “Cat Hop b/w Too Close Together”

## 5. Lillian McMurry Locates Sonny Boy Williamson

Word of mouth alerted McMurry to the popularity of a harmonica player in the Mississippi Delta. Without even knowing his name, McMurry, along with her brother Milton and her friend Curtis, drove to the Delta in search of “a black man who played harmonica and sang.”

According to McMurry, they:

*got to Belzoni, to a kind of shack of a house with a jukebox playing like it may have been a juke joint. Milton got out, went to the door, came back and said, “No, they don’t know him.” I said, “Milton, you don’t even know how to talk to people. They are scared of you. You and Curtis just sit right here in this car. They think you’re the sheriff looking for him”...I got out, knocked on the door, and a black lady answered. I told her that I was Mrs. McMurry from the Record Mart in Jackson and I was looking for a singer and harmonica player to make some records that I’d heard his name was Sonny Boy Williamson but I wasn’t sure. She smiled and said she listened to the Record Mart shows on the radio all the time and knew who I was. In a few minutes, out came [his wife] Mattie Williamson, who told me Sonny Boy wasn’t there right then. So I asked if he wanted to make some records and she said, “Yes.”...I got back in the car, told Milton and Curtis what happened, and they did not believe me until much later when Sonny showed up.*



#### Poster:

- Event poster from Trumpet Records for the [Mississippi Blues Trail Marker](#) Unveiling Ceremony on November 17, 2007 (309 N. Farish St., Jackson, MS)

#### 78s:

- *Mr. Down Child* / Sonny Boy Williamson, his harmonica and House Rockers [1952]
- *Red Hot Kisses* / "Sonny Boy" Williamson and his orchestra [1953]
- *From the Bottom* / Sonny Boy Williamson and his Houserockers [1955]

#### LP:

- *Goin' in your direction* / Sonny Boy Williamson with B. B. King, with Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup and Willie Love. Trumpet (1991)



- Poster by "Signifyin", ©2015 Kennie Jones
- 6 harmonicas, including models by Marine Band and Hohner
- *The Blues of Sonny Boy Williamsson [sic] / Storyville, 1965.*
- Photo of Sonny Boy Williamson with a harmonica

**Top quote:**

*"Seeing him perched on the back of a chair or hovering over a microphone Sonny Boy Williamson reminded you of a buzzard. He had the same mocking grimace and the same cool eyes with their heavy lids that had seen so much and told so little. Sonny Boy was something of an enigma; one of his own making perhaps but just as puzzling nonetheless." (Paul Oliver, blues scholar)*

**Bottom quote:**

*"They didn't call him the king of the harmonica for nothing. . . He was a big dude who blew the blues out of that sucker until there was nothing left to blow. He played sitting down, using his feet like a drum--stomping loud and hard--shouting and inhaling like his life was on the line." (B. B. King on Sonny Boy Williamson)*

## 6. American Folk Blues Festival

Organized by concert promoters Horst Lippmann and Fritz Rau, the American Folk Blues Festival (1962-1970, 1972, 1980-1983, and 1985) introduced European audiences to a large number of blues performers like Sonny Boy Williamson II, Koko Taylor, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Sippie Wallace, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, and many more.



Materials from the American Folk Blues Festival in 1963, 1964, 1965.

## 7. Cure-Alls, Tonics, and Hoodoo

Visitors to stores like Beale Street's A. Schwab Trading Company can find all manner of hoodoo and other spiritual powders, potions, and candles to ward off evil, find true love, or bring good luck. Despite the name, the Sonny Boy Products company has been providing such products since 1926, long before the commercial success of either of the two Sonny Boy Williamsons.

**Top shelf:** jar of incense, bottles of "bath and wash", photo of Sonny Boy Williamson

**Bottom shelf:** Sonny Boy Blue Book Guide to Success, bars of soap, framed photo of Sonny Boy Williamson, bottle of wine with label "Sonny Boy's Bottle (not to be shared with anyone!)", June 25, 1996"



In addition to lending his likeness to King Biscuit Flour, Sonny Boy Williamson also helped advertise the Tallaho (Tallyho) tonic for Turner's Drug Store in Belzoni, Mississippi, by singing over the radio:

*Tallyho, it sure is good, you can buy it  
anywhere in the neighborhood.*

*Go on the corner of Hayden Street,  
Mr. Turner Drug Store.*

*You ask to buy one, buy two. It's good for you,  
it's good for the children too.*

*Tallyho, it sure is good.*

*Take it in the morning, take it at night,  
Tallyho'll make you feel just right.*

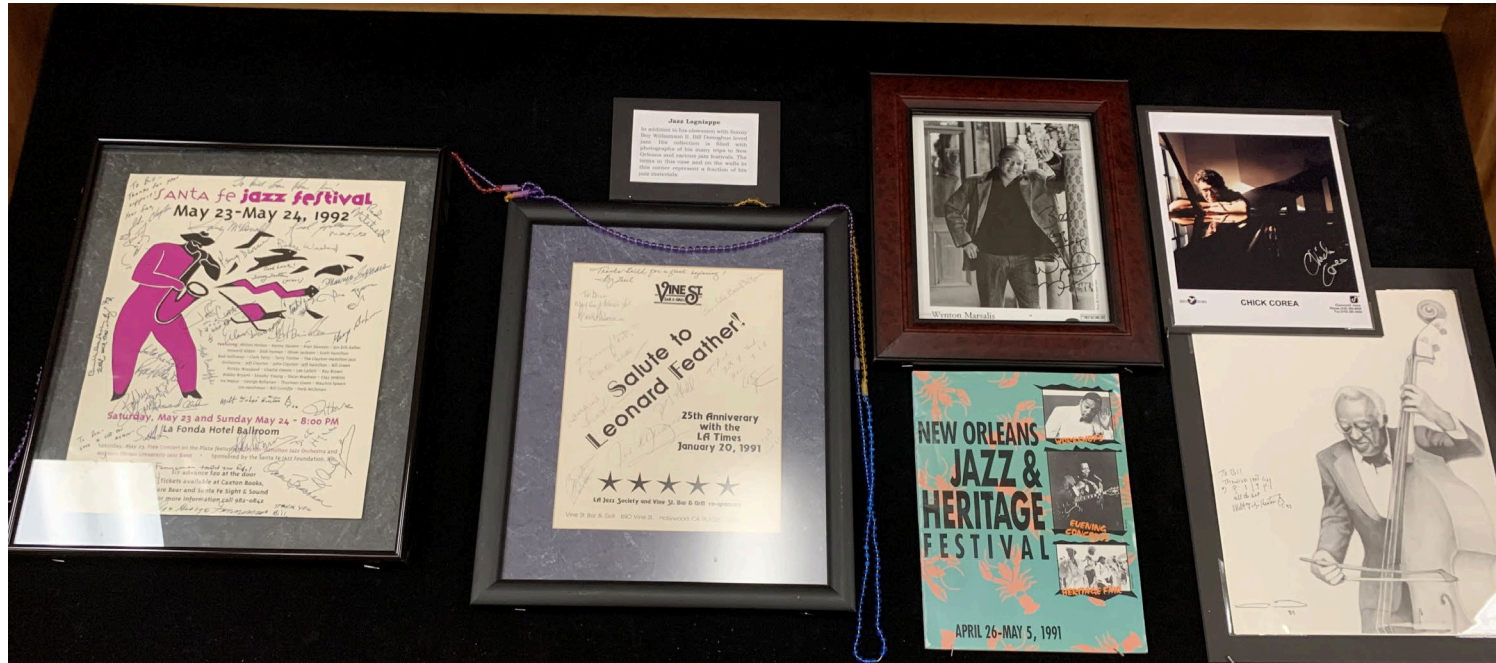


Tribute to Alex "Rice" Miller, pka Sonny Boy Williamson



## 8. Jazz Lagniappe

In addition to his obsession with Sonny Boy Williamson II, Bill Donoghue loved jazz. His collection is filled with photographs of his many trips to New Orleans and various jazz festivals. The items in this case and on the walls in this corner represent a fraction of his jazz materials.



- Framed poster for Santa Fe Jazz Festival, May 23-24, 1992
- Framed poster for Salute to Leonard Feather: 25th Anniversary with the LA Times, January 20, 1991
- Framed poster for New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, April 26-May 5, 1991
- Framed headshot of Wynton Marsalis, inscribed to Bill Donoghue
- Signed headshot of Chick Corea
- Pencil drawing of bassist Milt Hinton, inscribed to Bill Donoghue

## 9. Sonny Boy Williamson and the British Blues Explosion

Since the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been British fascination with the blues, originally by jazz record collectors, later through encounters with American servicemen in WWII, then through the American and British folk revivals of the 1940s-1960s, the skiffle craze of the late 1950s, and more. Keith Richards, Mick Jagger, Jimmy Page, Steve Winwood, Eric Clapton, and Eric Burdon attended the English concerts of the first American Folk Blues Festival of 1962. These concerts had a massive influence on the explosion of British blues-based rock bands. Sonny Boy Williamson's appearance on the festival tour resulted in a yearlong European tour and recordings with The Animals and The Yardbirds.



### 45s:

- Bye Bye Bird / The Moody Blues. London [1966]
- Sonny Boy Blow / John Mayall. London [1969]

### Book:

*On the Scene at the Cavern* / written and compiled by Allstair Griffin

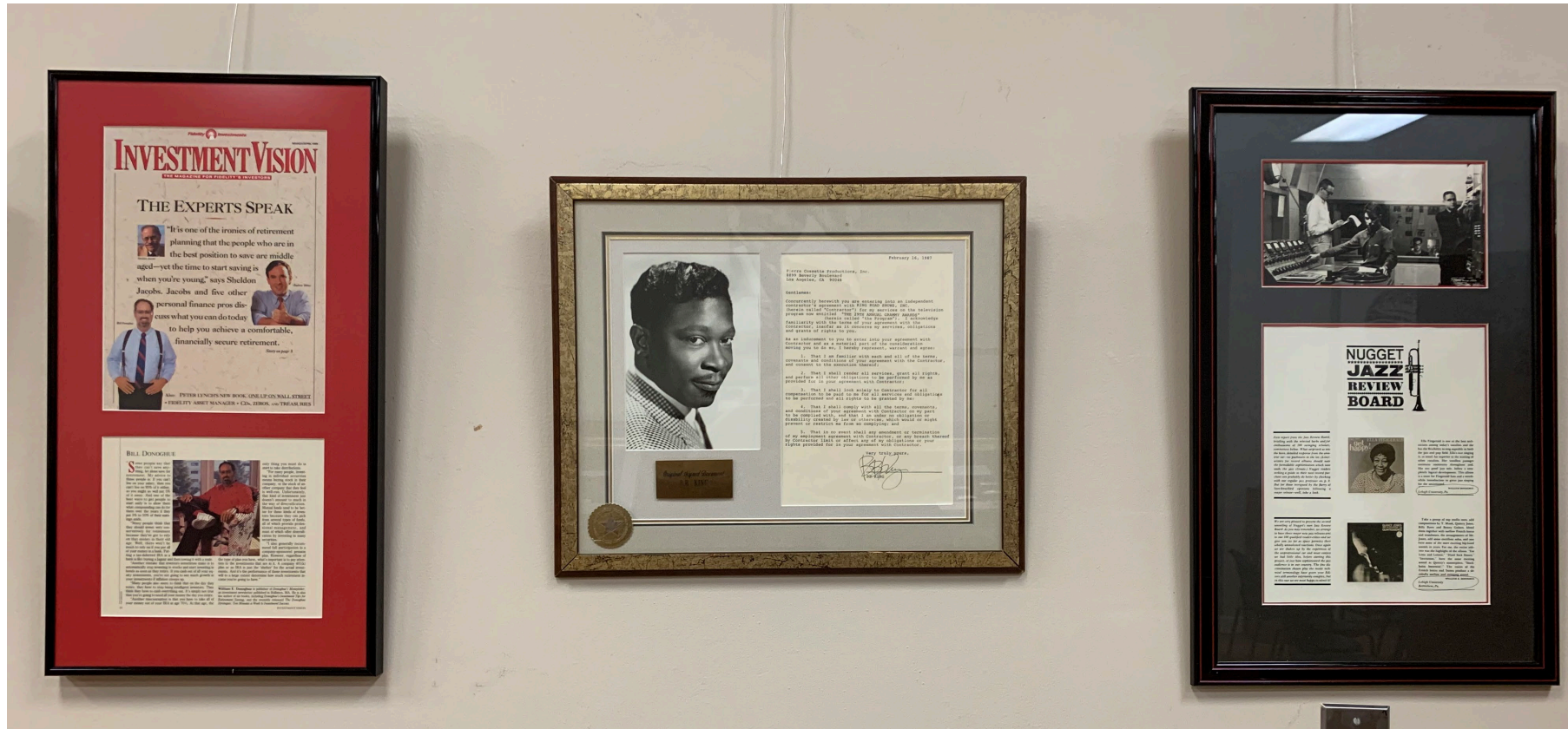
### 8-Track Tapes:

- *Jimmy Page Special Early Works featuring Sonny Boy Williamson*. Springboard [1975]
- *First Rhythm and Blues Festival*. Gambit [no date]
- *The Night Time is the Right Time* / Sonny Boy Williamson and the Animals. Springboard [1976]
- *Winwood and Friends* / Steve Winwood. Springboard [1972]

### LPs:

- *Eric Clapton and the Yardbirds Live with Sonny Boy Williamson*. Fontana.
- *Jam Session* / Jimmy Page, Sonny Boy Williamson, Brian Auger
- *Sonny Boy Williamson and the Yardbirds*. Phillips [1971]
- *The Animals with Sonnyboy Williamson*. Charly [1975]

## 10. Additional Items from the William E. Donoghue Collection



- Profile of Bill Donoghue in Investment Vision, March/April 1989
- Letter from B. B. King to Pierre Cossette Productions, Inc. 16 February 1987.
- Reviews by William Donoghue for the Nugget Jazz Review Board



- Standard AFTRA Engagement Contract for Jackie Wilson
- Framed autographed photo of John Lee Hooker
- Letter from Sam Cooke, using William Morris Agency letterhead, to the American Broadcasting Company. 9 December 1963.
- Brochure for the Beale St. Memphis Festival signed by Roy Orbison, Jerry Lee Lewis, Mark James, Carl Perkins, Stevie Ray Vaughn



- The Ultimate Caribbean Jazz Spectacular: A Tribute to Oscar Peterson (1995)
- Collected autographs of Buddy Holly and the Crickets
- Framed photo of Sonny Boy Williamson with Frank Frost



- Guitar embellished by artist Lamar Sorrento
- Sonny Boy Williamson at the Rhythm & Blues Bristol Corn Exchange, Sat. 29 February [1964]
- American Folk Blues Festival 1963



- Framed Photo of Pool Hall by Birney Imes
- Poster for R&B at the Ricky-Tick Club, Plaza Ballroom, Guildford [1964]
- Poster from Charleston Blues Festival, February 14-22, 1992
- Guitar embellished by artist Lamar Sorrento



- Replica of the Jazz Corner sign at Birdland in New York City
- Three photos from the 1970 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival by Michael P. Smith
  - Woody Allen plays with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band
  - Professor Longhair and Band
  - James Carroll Booker III
- Poster for Professor Longhair at Tipitina's Piano and Juice Bar, signed by Michael P. Smith
- Framed poster, "Witchcraft". Mardi Gras 1995, New Orleans. Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club.
- Framed poster, "The Mayor". Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club.
- Framed poster, 20th anniversary New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, 1989. Signed by Fats Domino.



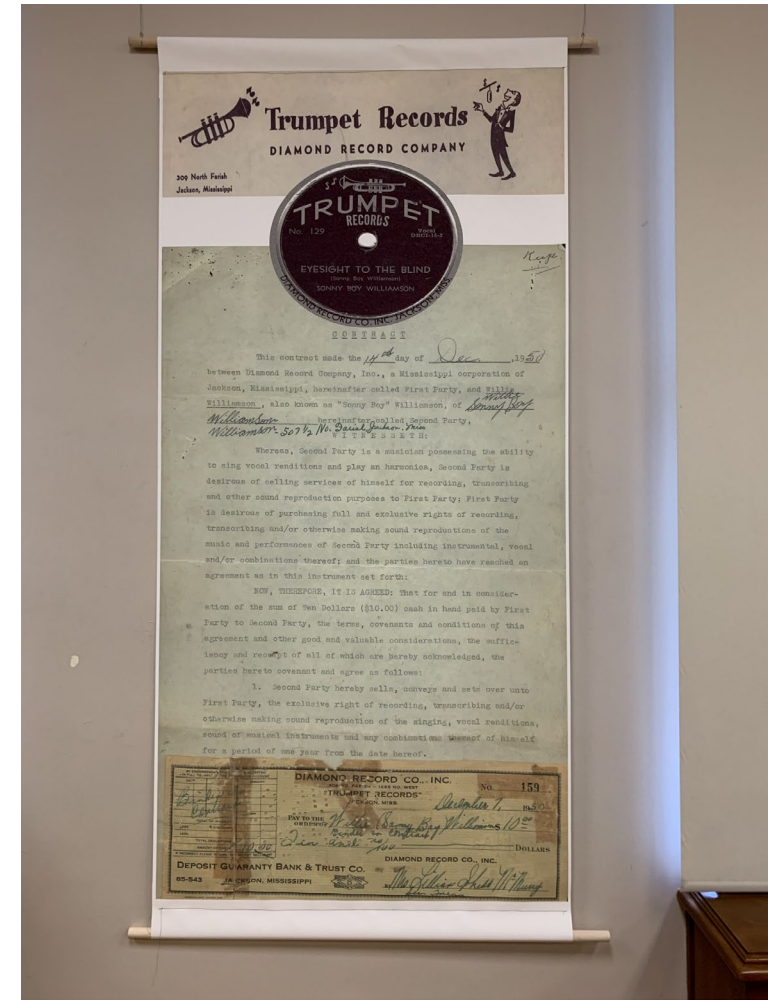
# 11. Posters made for the exhibit



Photos of Sonny Boy Williamson



Assorted record labels for Sonny Boy Williamson



First page of contract with Trumpet Records, 12/14/1950, with receipt for cash payment of \$10.00 binder.

