

Memphis Minded

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Hosted by the
Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas and the
Sparks Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Memphis.



September 2006

Memphis History

Sun Studio was opened by rock pioneer Sam Phillips at 706 Union Avenue in Memphis, Tennessee on January 3, 1950. It was originally called Memphis Recording Service, sharing the same building with the Sun Records label business.

The Sun Sound began when Sam Phillips launched his record company in February of 1952. He named it Sun Records as a sign of his perpetual optimism: a new day and a new beginning. Sam rented a small space at 706 Union Avenue for his own all-purpose studio. The label was launched amid a growing number of independent

labels. In a short while Sun gained the reputation throughout Memphis as a label that treated local artists with respect and honesty. Sam provided a non-critical, spontaneous environment that invited creativity and vision.

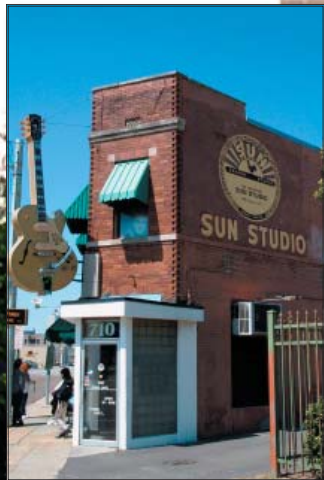
As a businessman, Phillips was patient and willing to listen to almost anyone who came in off the street to record. Memphis was a happy home to a diverse musical scene: gospel, blues, hillbilly, country, boogie, and western swing. Taking advantage of this range of talent, there were no

style limitations at the label. In one form or another Sun recorded them all.

Blues and R&B artists like Muddy Waters, Junior Parker, Little Milton, B.B. King, James Cotton, Rufus Thomas, and Rosco Gordon recorded there in the early 1950s. Rock-and-roll, country music, and rockabilly artists, including unknowns recording demos and others like Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, Charlie Feathers, Ray Harris, Warren Smith and Jerry Lee Lewis, signed to the Sun Records label recorded there throughout the latter 1950s.

In 1987 the original building housing the Sun Records label and Memphis Recording Service was reopened as "Sun Studio"; a recording business and tourism attraction that has attracted many notable artists including U2, who recorded most of the tracks for Rattle and Hum there. The Sun Record Company, Memphis Recording Service was designated a National Historic Landmark on July 31, 2003.

Sources: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_Studio, and Sun Record Company, <http://www.sunrecords.com/history.php>



Memphis Links

Sun Studio, <http://www.sunstudio.com/>
Sun Record Company, <http://www.sunrecords.com/>

Memphis Song of the Month

"The Thrill Is Gone," by B.B. King, <http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/martinscorsesebestoftheblues/thethrillisgone.htm>

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