



Harry Driver 1983

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My days on the beach actually began at White Lake, NC, during World War II. My family went there because of the black-outs at the beaches. It was there that my sister Kathryn, taught me how to dance the Big Apple, Little Apple, Shag, Susie Q and the Jitterbug. The Shag was a dance in which you held the girl close with her arm held straight up. After doing a few kick steps and a couple of slide steps to the side, it was all then repeated while moving about on the dance floor. It looked great, but nothing like the jitterbug or BEACH SHAG of today. Everyone enjoyed dancing the jitterbug more than these other dances, for like the Charleston, they were becoming outdated. Some of the best dancers that I met here were "Jinx" Barfield, "Tookie" Lee, Louis "Jew-Baby" Hardy, Frank Horner, "Shake" Paul, Dick Webb and the incomparable Clarice Reaves, who made everyone look good, either dancing or just standing next to her.

In 1946, I met "Shorty" Michaels, "Chicken" and Bobby Hicks, Harry Oliver, Jackie Armstrong, "Chick" Hedrick, Louie Madeen, Betty Kirkpatrick, Lois "Big Red" Byron at a dance in Raleigh, NC and I knew then that the time had come to spend the next summer at Carolina Beach "polishing up my act". They were all exceptional dancers and yet, they all had an individual style. Don't ever let anyone tell you that you have to do a step exactly as they say or it is not being done correctly, for you will simply end up becoming a clone of your teacher. A good instructor will teach you the basics and encourage the development of your own individual style.

The summers of 1947 & 1948 were spent calling bingo and dancing at Bop City or one of the other "jump joints" every minute I was not working. This was when I met Leon Williams, "Big George" Lineberry, Burt and B.R. Bennett, "Bubba" Snow, Jimmy Calcutt and all of the other beach people from O.D. and Myrtle. They would come up to Bop City to hear Jimmy Cavallo's band play and we would go to Pope's at O.D. to hear them play there. We had a mutual respect for each other and it was very much a case of "you look after me and I will look after you".

By the summer of 1950, I was working at various jobs until I started working for E.O. Baker's Beach Service. This was home until 1958 when I finally decided to get serious about the family business and about my life.

To reflect back on all of my fond memories of events at Tuck & Bill's, the 8th Avenue Grille, both pavilions and the beaches in general would take a book that could have only been written by John Steinbeck, for these years were definitely "Cannery Row East." They were the beginning of the end of the big band era and finally, the overall acceptance of the small black groups that the beach people had been enjoying and dancing to for years. The beginning of Beach Music as we know it today and a tremendous growth in popularity for Paul Williams Group, the Clovers, Platters, and on and on and on. It was fun then, it is fun now, and I hope it will always remain so.