

LÉXICO DEL BLUES

1) ALCORUB

1 - Tom "Bassman" Bartenbach, Puebla, Mexico wrote: "Alcorub refers to rubbing alcohol for sore muscles and bones. However, this was also used to sniff, much as other, more destructive substances are used today. A way to get a high. This stuff tasted lousy when ingested, so they sniffed it instead. Thanks to Tom "Bassman" Bartenbach for this contribution;

2 - Willie Lomax wrote to me: "Alcorub refers to "rubbing alcohol" i.e. isopropyl alcohol. It is inexpensive, easily obtainable, and although it is a cumulative poison, some desperate alcoholics have been known to drink it - with adverse effects. Thanks to Willie Lomax for this contribution;

3 - Greg Gurtizen says: "I believe that alcorub was a "Patent Medicine" of the time that alcoholics would use when they couldn't get their sterno (canned heat) aka "squeeze". Thanks to Greg Gurtizen for this contribution.

This phrase can be found in: Tommy Johnson: Canned Heat Blues

2) BACK DOOR MAN / FRIEND

1 - the lover of a married woman who sneaks out the back door before the man of the house gets home

This phrase can be found in: Blind Boy Fuller, I Crave My Pigmeat, Howlin' Wolf, Back Door Man, Lightnin' Hopkins, Back Door Friend

3) BALL(ING) THE JACK

1 - origin: balling the jack is a phrase from the jargon of railroadmen in the beginning of this century in America and simply means going at top speed (highballing). The "jack" is the locomotive and "ballin'" means to work fast or get rollin'. Balling the jack (and variants like balling or having a ball) later acquired other, non-railroad related meanings like having a wild good time (drinking), to move quickly, going flat out, dancing, having sex and in gambling circles of risking everything on a single throw of the dice or turn of a card and in general use risking everything on one attempt or effort.

Following visitor contributed information confirms these meanings:

2 - metaphor for having sex, see also balling the jack and grinding. Dave Vanderslice says: "Means literally:

use a jack hammer, but also to have sex." Thanks to Dave Vanderslice for his contribution to the list;

3 - name of a once popular dance, dancestep. Gray "Grayotis" Martin writes: "Ball the Jack--- also likely a juke

joint dance, with a reference to the act of sexual intercourse. "Ball" in verb form, is a slang word for sex, in

white and black lingo. Thanks to Gray Martin for this contribution;

Southern Louisiana's John "JohnnyB" Bradford says: "The "eagle rock" and "ball and the jack" are 1940's

dance moves. Thanks to John "JohnnyB" Bradford for this contribution to the list;

Found this description of the Ballin' The Jack (Eagle Rock?) dance:

"First you put your two knees close up tight, then you sway 'em to the left. Then you sway 'em to the right, step around the floor kind of nice and light. Then you twist around and twist around with all your might, Stretch your lovin' arms straight out into space, Then you do the Eagle Rock with style and grace. Swing your foot way 'round then bring it back. Now that's what I call Ballin' the Jack."

4 - going fast, doing the best. Jesse Fowler adds: "I know that it meant going fast (especially on a freight train).

Thanks to Jesse Fowler for this contribution to the list.

Paul Simmons wrote: " Balling the jack can also be an early reference to having your hands (ball of your hands) on a Jackhammer and pushing down with a great effort. I've often heard

the term used to mean that you're "working it hard" in whatever your doing...For example I've heard people working on road crews say, "you best be ballin' it and not just doggin' it"... or translated, "you should be working and not just doing the motions". Think of it more as an adjective rather than a verb." Thanks to Paul Simmons for this contribution to the list.

5 - Den Joy Cope says: "I believe this is ballin' the jack, not sure but it could have that very BLUE meaning of sex with a jack (nowadays a john), perhaps from the bawdy houses and juke joints that Bessie surely was familiar with. It was also a dance(dancestep) during the jitterbug period I think, but this was probably AFTER the original usage.". Thanks to Den Joy Cope for this contribution to the list;

Many visitors sent in suggestions on this phrase, too many to post here. I'd like to thank ALL people who sent in some info on this phrase!

This phrase can be found in: Bessie Smith, Baby Doll & St. Louis Blues, Big Bill Broonzy, I Feel So Good

4) BARRELHOUSE

1 - a cheap drinking and usually dancing establishment. The term "barrel house" originates, logically, from a place where barrels of alcoholic beverages can be found. The meaning of the term later changed to refer to the type, and rough style of music which emulated from these establishments;

2 - strident, uninhibited, and forcefully rhythmic style of jazz or blues. Take the Barrel House Piano Greats Historical Tour from the Memphis Guide

This word can be found in: Big Bill Broonzy, I Feel So Good, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Change My Luck Blues, Ma Rainey, Barrel House, Blues, Muddy Waters, Rollin' And Tumblin', Robert Johnson, Traveling Riverside Blues

5) BISCUIT / BISCUIT ROLLER

1 - Among metaphors themes used in blues music, culinary themes are especially comon. A desirable young girl was called a biscuit and a good lover was called a biscuit roller.

This word/phrase can be found in: Robert Johnson, If I Had Possession Over Judgment Day, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Big Mama's Door

6) BLACK CAT BONE

1 - hoodoo magic, good luck charm, especially to bring back the wayward lover. Costly and valued, its scarcity was largely due to the elaborate ceremony which was required for its preparation - the fainthearted and/or animal lovers are advised to skip the next part, ;-). Every black cat has within its body one bone that will either grant the owner invisibility or can be used to bring back a lost lover. To secure this bone, a black cat must be thrown alive into a kettle of boiling water at midnight. The animal dies in agony, and the practitioner boils the carcass until the meat falls off the bones. Some say that the special bone will be the top one left when the water boils away, others say it can only be found by placing each bone in turn beneath the tongue while an assistant stands by to notify the practitioner that he has become invisible, and still others swear that if all the bones are thrown into a stream that runs north (uncommon in most of North America), the desired bone will be one that floats on the water and heads south. Once found, the black cat bone is carried in a mojo bag and anointed with Van Van Oil to bring back a lost lover. The oil or fat of the cat is bottled for use as a candle dressing and for anointing gambler's charms.

This phrase can be found in: Muddy Waters, Got My Mojo Working (see note!), Buddy Guy, When My Left Eye Jumps, The Jeff Healey and, Hoochie Coochie Man Muddy Waters, (I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man

7) THE BLUES

1 - The Blues... It's 12-bar, bent-note melody is the anthem of a race bonding itself together with cries of shared self victimization. Bad luck and trouble are always present, and always the result of others, pressing upon unfortunate and down trodden poor souls, yearning to be free from lifes' responsibilities. Never ending beats repeat the chants of sorrow, and the pity of a lost soul many times over. These are the Blues;

2 - Found under the blazing sun of the Northern Mississippi cotton fields, it's father, the old African tribal call and response, and it's mother, the Gospel sounds which bellowed from the

church choirs;

3 - A lead worker would chant the opening lines, and the chorus of workers would answer, falling into a regular pattern to match the task at hand. This ancient African call and response chant is the core of the Blues, found both in African American church pulpits (an elevated platform or high reading desk used in preaching or conducting a worship service), and antebellum (existing before the Civil War) plantations;

4 - W.C. Handy was the first trained musician to capture the sounds of Blues on paper. In 1909, Handy penned the first written Blues song "Mr. Crump Blues" in the Pee Wee's Saloon on Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee. read more about W.C. Handy in this essay;

5 - "If you wants to know about the Blues, you got's to go back to the church" -- Muddy Waters

6 - "We were always singing in the fields. Not real singing, you know, just hollerin', but we made up our songs about things that was happenin' to us at the time, and I think that's where the Blues started" -- Son House --;

7 - see also A Brief History of the Blues (by Robert M. Baker): The Blue Tonalities And What Defines The Blues; Blues Lyrics; - Construction Of The Blues.

8) BOOGIE CHILLUN

1 - thanks to one of the site's visitors we now know that chillun, like in boogie chillun or mambo chillun as used by John Lee Hooker in several of his songs, is simply a southern pronunciation of the word "children", thanks Alan Wexler for your contribution. The word boogie has several meanings: to move quickly, to get going, to dance to (rock) music and to party.

This phrase can be found in: John Lee Hooker, Boogie Chillun

9) BOOGIE WOOGIE

1 - a percussive style of playing blues on the piano characterized by a steady rhythmic ground bass of eighth notes in quadruple time and a series of improvised melodic variations. Read more about the history of boogie-woogie and Boogie Woogie Piano: From Barrelhouse to Carnegie Hall.

This phrase can be found in: Big Bill Broonzy, Joe_Turner_Blues &

Joe_Turner_No_2_(Blues_Of_1892), Little Walter, Tell Me Mama, Omar & The Howlers, Booger Boy

10) CANNED HEAT

1 - a particularly lethal drink which was obtained by extracting the alcohol from solidified methylated spirits which was sold as a fuel for outdoor cooking. Canned heat could be bought from street dealers who had made a business out of this process. A similar drink was obtained by drawing off contaminated alcohol from proprietary brands of boot polish;

2 - Steven Soms wrote: "This was a cooking fuel based on denatured alcohol, like Sterno. I think "Canned Heat" was a brand name that has become a generic term. Tommy Johnson was addicted to this stuff, and it probably didn't do him much good. I believe there may be a US expression "sterno drinker" relating to this. Here in Australia the equivalent term would be "metho drinker" from methylated spirits, our local name for denatured alcohol." Thanks to Steven Sims for this contribution to the list;

3 - Jim Burger confirms Steven's version: "I'm pretty sure that canned heat is basically sterno, alcohol-based, liquid, in a can (obviously). When one is down on his luck, this stuff comes a lot cheaper than a bottle of Jack, but it doesn't leave such a good taste in the mouth and can probly drive ya blind. Hence Tommy's lament..." thanks to Jim Burger for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Memphis Jug Band, Better Leave That Stuff Alone, Sloppy Henry, Canned Heat Blues Tommy Johnson.

11) CAPTAIN

1 - captain was one of the forms of address the Southern white man demanded from black employees;

2 - the captain of a prison.

This word can be found in:

Big Bill Broonzy, John Henry, Leadbelly, Jumpin' Judy&Midnight Special&Take This Hammer, Robert Johnson, Last Fair Deal Gone Down, Son House, Country Farm Blues, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Prison Cell Blues

12) CASEY JONES

1 - A locomotive engineer that became a hero and a folk figure at the end of the 19th century.

This name can be found in: Mississippi John Hurt, Casey Jones

13) C C RIDER ver Easy Rider

14) COFFEE GRINDER / GRINDING

1 - metaphor for lover or love making. Many metaphors used in the blues were derived from the process of cooking and other closely related culinary terms. The shade of color of a black person also played a role: "honey " was used for a light-skinned person and "coffee" for a deeper shade thus resulting in terms like "honey dripper" and "coffee grinder" as metaphors for a lover. Grinding (coffee in a grinder or wheat in a mill) therefore means having sex, see also balling the jack.

This phrase can be found in: Lucille Bogan, Coffee Grindin' Blues, Bessie Smith, Empty Bed Blues, Memphis Slim, Grinder Man Blues, Memphis Minnie, What's The Matter With The Mill, Muddy Waters, Can't Get No Grindin'

15) COLD IN HAND

1 - having no money. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Lucille Bogan, Drinking Blues, Bukka White, District Attorney Blues, Bumble Bee Slim, No Woman No Nickle

16) CREPE(R)

1 - crepe or creper, a hackneyed (stresses being worn out by overuse so as to become dull and meaningless) symbol of mourning. The woman in question would post it (on the door) to declare the death of her feelings for a man.

This phrase can be found in: Son House, Jinx Blues & I Ain't Goin' Cry No More & Special Rider Blues

17) DONEY / DOE

1 - a "no good doney" is, according to Steven LaVere, a woman of low character (it's a slang term which is no longer

in usage today). Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.

This word can be found in: Charley Patton, Revenue Man Blues (Version 1) & (Version 2), Elmore James, Dust My Broom, Robert Johnson, I Believe I'll Dust My Broom

18) DRY LONG SO

1 - the phrase "dry long so" is a dialectic description of being poor. In the context of the Robert Johnson song it relates to not having enough food and clothing and other essential things to last through the winter;

2 - possibly: "dry long so", meaning pointlessly, without a cause.

This phrase can be found in: Robert Johnson, Come On In My Kitchen (Take 1), Skip James, Hard Time Killing Floor

19) DUST MY BROOM

1 - probably: (getting ready to) leave. "T-man" Tilman Michalke concurs and says: I guess Mr. Johnson is cleaning

his room because he is about to move out. There might also be a sexual connotation. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman

Michalke for this contribution to the list;

Melissa Fazzina wrote: I was listening to Elmore James the other day and Dust My Broom never seemed to make any sense to me, but I had one of those sudden epiphanies....: it hit me that what he's talking about is probably (IMHO), breaking up with his current girlfriend. So that "Dust my broom." maybe synonymous with "Shaking her off" or "shaking loose from her. If you listen to the other words, "I'm quittin' the best gal I'm lovin'. Now my friends can get in my room". Or "I'm gonna write her a letter" (a "dear Jane letter"). Then in the next verse, he's listing her short comings (why he'd want to cut her loose), and in the final verse, coming right out and saying he's going to leave. Thanks to Melissa Fazinni for this contribution to the list

This phrase can be found in: Elmore James, Dust My Broom, Robert Johnson, I Believe I'll Dust My Broom

20) EAGLE ROCK

1 - a popular black dance from the 1920's, performed with the arms outstretched with wings and the body rocking from side to side. Found this description of the Eagle Rock (Ballin' The Jack ?)dance:

"First you put your two knees close up tight, then you sway 'em to the left Then you sway 'em to the right, step around the floor kind of nice and light Then you twist around and twist around with all your might, Stretch your lovin' arms straight out into space, then you do the Eagle Rock with style and grace. Swing your foot way 'round then bring it back.

Southern Louisiana's John "JohnnyB" Bradford says: "The "eagle rock" and "ball the jack" are 1940's (actually 1920's, BH) dance moves. Thanks to John "JohnnyB" Bradford for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Bessie Smith, Baby Doll, Blind Willie McTell, Kind Mama

21) EASY RIDER

1 - The easy rider, also known as see see rider or c c rider (see also rider), is a blues metaphor for the sexual partner. Originally it referred to the guitar hung on the back of the traveling bluesman. The word easy has different meanings for the female and male lover: applied to a woman it is an expression of admiration but applied to a male it usually carries the meaning of reckless and unfaithful;

2 - According to Alex Washburn "In one Alan Lomax' folk song collections it says that the abbreviation "C.C." means "Cavalry Corporal" and that they had no female soldiers at that time (19th century). Now the conclusion from this fact was that the singer or the original songwriter must have been a gay... Well, in my opinion the songwriter even could be a woman singing this song to her soldier lover. Anyway, the author then said that "C.C.Rider" became "See See Rider" and "Easy Rider" because of prudery...". Thanks to Alex Washburn;

3 - Southern Louisiana's John "JohnnyB" Bradford says: "An easy rider is the husband or significant other of a whore - thus the name. He doesn't work or pay for sex. It's his easily. Thanks to John "JohnnyB" Bradford for this contribution to the list

This phrase can be found in: Big Bill Broonzy, C C Rider (1) & C C Rider (2), Ma Rainey, Jelly Bean Blues & See See Rider, Mississippi John Hurt, See See Rider, Bessie Smith, Rocking Chair Blues

22) FAROR

1 - a Mississippi blues synonym for girl friend. The spelling of faror is problematic. It's pronounced like "pharaoh". The late Johnnie Temple provided blues researcher Gayle Wardlow with this spelling of the word;

2 - Southern Louisiana's John "JohnnyB" Bradford says: "FAROR (pronounced fair-oh) is Southern slang for "Fair one". Thanks to John "JohnnyB" Bradford for this contribution to the list.

This word can be found in: Mississippi John Hurt, Big Leg Blues, Mississippi Sheiks, Stop Look And Listen No. 2, Tommy Johnson, Cool Drink Of Water Blues (Version 1)

23) FAT MOUTH

1 - is a flatterer, kind of a buffoonish loudmouth who tries to woo a woman with praise.

This phrase can be found in: Tommy Johnson, Big Fat Mama Blues

24) FLAGGING (A TRAIN, A RIDE)

1 - to signal with or as if with a flag to stop "I flagged the train", often used with "down";

2 - to hitch a (train) ride

This phrase can be found in:

Memphis Minnie, In My Girlish Days, Bessie Smith, St. Louis Blues, Charley Patton, '34 Blues, Charlie Musselwhite, She May Be Your Woman, Lil' Son Jackson, Homeless Blues, Robert Johnson, Cross Road Blues (Take 1) & (Take 2)

25) GEORGIA CRAWL

1 - Steven Sims wrote: "This would be a Georgia dance, probably a rather sexy one like a lot of blues dances were.

Apart from the references by McTell like "she can really do the Georgia Crawl", there is a song "Georgia Crawl" by

Henry Williams and Eddie Anthony (pals of Peg Leg Howell in Atlanta). I really recommend this song - a wild and

enthusiastic violin/guitar duet, with immortal lines like: I can shake it east, shake it west, Way down south I can shake it the best, Doin' the Georgia Crawl, aw, Georgia Crawl...".

Thanks to Steven Sims for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Blind Willie McTell, Kind Mama & Broke Down Engine

26) GOIN' UP THE LINE / GOIN' DOWN THE LINE

1 - probably: a "line" is a railroad route, therefore "goin' up the line" probably means traveling north on a train and "goin' down the line" traveling south. Thanks to Dan Clark for this contribution. "T-man" Tilman Michalke says: Dan Clark is right. But I do not think that "up" necessarily refers to a northern direction though. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list;

2 - Butch Mercer has another suggestion: It is my understanding, this expression was used by men (during the era of the war between the states). When the opportunity arose for a chance to relax in the cities, a trip to the prostitution houses or areas was favorably called "Going up the line or down the line". Thanks to Butch Mercer for this contribution to the list.

3 - Steven Drahozal wrote: "'Goin' down the line" does indeed refer to railroad lines, but its a derivative of being sold down the river. This expression came about from slaves who were sold into the Deep South, or "sold down the river". This is bad because it usually meant going to the Carolinas, or Florida or Georgia and working in the rice fields or clearing swamps. Many slaves died of malaria doing this." Thanks to Steven Drahozal for this contribution to the list. This phrase can be found in: B.B. King, Everyday I Have The Blues (Version 3), Little Walter, Up The Line, Memphis Minnie, Chickasaw Train Blues & Ma Rainey

27) GOOFER / GOFY DUST

1 - powdered earth gathered from a grave, preferably that of a child, which is sprinkled on a victims pillow, around its home or in its clothes in order to cast a spell on the victim or bring death (voodoo). See also hot foot powder. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.

This word/phrase can be found in: B.B. King, You Put It On Me, Bessie Smith, Lady Luck Blues, Willie Mabon, I Don't Know

28) HIGH YELLER (YELLOW)

1 - black person with a light(er) skin complexion. Brown skin is another skin color related term often used in blues songs. See also skin color.

This phrase can be found in: Bessie Smith, I've Got What It Takes & Young Woman's Blues, Blind Willie McTell, Lord, Send Me An Angel & Talkin' To Myself, Ida Cox, Cherry Picking Blues, Ma Rainey, Big Feeling Blues, Mississippi John Hurt, Big Leg Blues

29) HOBO

1 - fare dodger on a freight train. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.

2 - Hobo derived from hoe-boy. When there wasn't enough food on the farm to feed everybody, the younger men hit the tracks hoping to find day work along the way (1930's). Each took with him his own hoe (hoe: an implement with a thin flat blade on a long handle used especially for cultivating, weeding, or loosening the earth around plants), so as to be more employable, and also as a cheap (therefore only available) protective weapon during those desparate times. Often showing up in droves at planting time, they were called hoe-boys. Thanks to Bo for this contribution to

The list

3 - a homeless and usually penniless vagabond, tramp;

4 - a migratory worker

This word can be found in: Memphis Minnie, Outdoor Blues, Howlin' Wolf, Evil, John Lee Hooker, Hobo Blues, Bessie Smith, Young Woman's Blues, King Solomon Hill, The Gone Dead Train, Hans Theessink, Sidewalk Hobo

30) HOKUM

origin: probably blend of hocus-pocus and bunkum (derived from Buncombe county, N.C., from a remark made by its congressman, who defended an irrelevant speech by claiming that he was speaking to Buncombe, meaning insincere or foolish talk).

1 - a sub genre in urban blues which was popular in the late 20's/early 30's. It is characterized by danceable rhythms and clever lyrics which heavily relied on double entendres. Hokum's most important artist was Tampa Red (It's Tight Like That, 1928). The term can be found in the name of his band: The Hokum Boys. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.

2 - a device used (as by showmen) to evoke a desired audience response;

3 - pretentious nonsense.

31) HONEY DRIPPER

1 - metaphor for a lover, for more information see coffee grinder.

This phrase can be found in: Big Joe Turner, Little Bittie Gal's Blues

32) HOOCHIE COOCHIE MAN

1 - the word hooch is slang for alcoholic liquor especially when inferior or illicitly made or obtained. Haven't found a (slang) meaning for the word cooch(ie) but it most likely refers to the female genitals. The term hoochie coochie man would then refer to a man (who prides himself) getting his share of booze and women;

2 - one who preaches voodoo;

3 - conjure 'doctors', male or female

4 - but then again Jack King says: "The definition (2 and 3, BH) you have is wrong. A "hootchie cootchie" is a woman's sex, and a "hootchie cootchie man" is her lover. You can check this out with any true blues people (male or female). The term "hootchie cootchie" is sometimes shortened to "cootchie" in everyday conversation. Thanks to Jack King for this contribution to the list;

5 - John Garst recalls: "From my youth, I recall "she danced the hoochie coochie." See this link for some of the words to "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis". Thanks to John Garst for this contribution to the list;

6 - Pop's the Bluesman from Green Bay, WI, writes: "The term cootchie is slang for a woman's vagina. Doin' the the hootchie cootchie means to do the deed!. Thanks to Pop's the Bluesman for this contribution to the list.

7 -We will dance the hoochie-coochie, You will be my tootsie-wootsie, If you will meet me in St. Louis, Louis Meet me at the fair!--"Meet Me in St. Louis" This refers to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition: the World's Fair of 1904.

This phrase can be found in: The Jeff Healey Band, Hoochie Coochie Man, Willie Dixon, (I'm your) Hoochie Coochie Man, Muddy Waters, (I'm your) Hoochie Coochie Man & Mannish Boy

33) HOODOO

1 - hoodoo or voodoo, a body of practices of sympathetic magic traditional especially among blacks in the southern U.S. Hoodoo is the preferred word by black people for voodoo. For more information about hoodoo/voodoo see also voodoo.;

2 - something that brings bad luck;

3 - Hoodoo is an American term, originating in the 19th century or earlier, for African-American folk magic. Hoodoo is not a religion nor a denomination of a religion, although it incorporates elements from African and European religions in terms of its core beliefs. Hoodoo consists of a large body of African folkloric magic with a considerable admixture of American Indian botanical knowledge and European folklore. Other names for hoodoo include "conjuration," "witchcraft," and "rootwork." The first two are simply English words for the practice of magic; the last is a recognition of the preeminence that dried roots play in the making of charms and the casting of spells.

Hoodoo is used as a noun to name both the system of magic ("He used hoodoo on her") and its practitioners ("Doctor Buzzard was a great hoodoo in his day"). It is also an adjective ("he needed help from a hoodoo woman") and a verb ("she hoodoo'ed that man until he couldn't love no one but her").

This word can be found in: Blind Willie McTell, The Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues, Junior Wells, Hoodoo Man

Memphis Minnie, Hoodoo Lady, Muddy Waters, Got My Mojo Working, Omar & The Howlers, Hoo Doo Ball & Leave Here Runnin'

34) HOT FOOD POWDER

1 - Hot Foot Powder and Hot Foot Oil are old Southern hoodoo formulas that are used to rid oneself or one's home of unwanted people, to send enemies packing and to keep peace in the home by eliminating troublemakers. Similar formulas, known as Drive Away Oil or Get Away Oil contain virtually the same ingredients, namely a proprietary blend of Guinea Red Pepper, sulfur, and essential oils that include Black Pepper and other herbal extracts. The scent is hot and spicy, but it is not at all unpleasant.

This phrase can be found in: Robert Johnson, Hellhound On My Trail

35) JELLY / JELLY ROLL

1 - jelly roll, literally, a jam (jelly) rolled and lightly baked confection, in blues songs a metaphor for the female genitals. Jelly is used as a term for female. Among metaphors used in blues music, culinary themes are especially common. The term jelly roll simply arose from the motions of sexual intercourse. A male lover admired his "jelly bean" and prided himself on being a "good jelly-roll baker" and the female lover the way she could "jello";

2 - John Nova Lomax wrote: "Enjoyed your list, but couldn't help but note the omission of "jelly roll" and "jelly". I think they are two of the nicest and dare I say most descriptive euphemisms ever for a vagina.". Thanks to John Nova Lomax for this contribution to the list. These words can be found in: Bessie Smith, Nobody In Town Can Bake A Sweet Jelly Roll Like Mine, Bessie Smith, Aggravatin' Papa & Preachin' The Blues & St. Louis Blues, Blind Boy Fuller, Hungry Calf Blues, Ida Cox, Fogysm, Johnny Winter, Good Morning Little School Girl, Lil Johnson, If You Can Dish It (I Can Take It) & Sam, The Hot Dog Man, Lil Johnson, You'll Never Miss Your Jelly Till Your Jelly Roller's Gone, Lonnie Johnson, Go Back To Your No Good Man, Memphis Minnie, Frisco Town, R.L. Burnside, Georgia Women, Charley Patton, Shake It And Break It, Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee, That Good Old Jelly

36) JINX

1 - one that brings bad luck

2 - the state or spell of bad luck brought on by a jinx

This word can be found in: Bessie Smith, Mama's Got The Blues & Yodling Blues, Blind Willie McTell, Scarey Day Blues, Memphis Minnie, Call The Fire Wagon & Wants Cake When I'm Hungry, Charley Patton, Revenue Man Blues (1) & (Version 2) & Screamin' And Hollerin' The Blues

37) JITTERBUG (GIN')

1 - the jitterbug was a popular dance in the 1940's (music: boogie woogie). Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.;

2 - a sense of panic or extreme nervousness, to be nervous or act in a nervous way "had a bad case of the jitters before his performance";

3 - irregular random movement;

4 - vibratory motion;

5 - to make continuous fast repetitive movements

This word can be found in: Bukka White, Bukka's Jitterbug Swing, John Lee Hooker, Groundhog Blues, Sonny Boy Williamson I (John Lee), Groundhog Blues

38) JIVIN'

1 - None other than Dr. Hoodoo himself shares following with us: "I understand that the context in english is a bit troubling to try to figure out certain words but the term "Jive" is actually southern slang for speaking a lie or untruth... in B.B. Kings "Nobody Loves Me But My Mother" the line "She could be jivin' too" means, effectively "she could be lying too". The term found its way into swing somehow, and was later bastardized into meaning "smooth talking" in the Beegees' "Jive Talkin'". Thanks to Dr. Hoodoo for this contribution to the list;

2 - jive, a style of jazz played by big bands popular in the 1930's with flowing rhythms but less complex than later styles of jazz [synonyms: swing, swing music], jivin', dance to jive music, dance the jive.

3 - talking, smooth talking;

4 - the slang talk of jazz musicians and enthusiasts;

5 - a marijuana cigarette; 6 - sexual intercourse.

This word can be found in: Lucille Bogan, B.D. Woman's Blues, Albert Collins, Broke & Trash Talkin', Bo Diddley, Ooh Baby, Albert King, I Get Evil, B. B. King, Nobody Loves Me But My Mother, Big Maceo Merriweather, Poor Kelly Blues, Hans Theessink, Johnny & The Devil, The Jeff Healey Band, Don't Let Your Chance Go By, Keb' Mo', You Can Love Yourself, Lightnin' Hopkins, My Grandpa Is Too Old & The Foot Race Is On, Little Walter, It's Too Late Brother & Just Your Fool, T-Bone Walker, T-Bone Blues, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Ridin' On The L&N, John Mooney, 3 Sides 2 Every Story, Junior Parker, Jivin' Woman

39) JOHN (NY) (THE) CONCHEROE / CONQUERO / CONQUEROR

1 - When Willie Dixon/Muddy Waters sings in "Hoochie Coochie Man" that he has "a John(ny) the Choncheroe/Conqueroo," he means a (High) John the Conqueror root - the hard, woody tuber of Ipomoea jalapa, a relative of the common sweet potato. In magical practice, the root is not ingested, probably because it is an extremely powerful laxative. Instead it is used whole, carried on the person as a pocket piece or as an ingredient in a mojo bag, especially one designed to draw money, bring luck at games of chance, or enhance personal sexual power

This phrase can be found in: The Jeff Healey Band, Hoochie Coochie Man, Muddy Waters, (I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man, Mannish Boy, Omar & The Howlers, Pushin' Fire, Willie Dixon, (I'm your) Hoochie Coochie Man

40) JUJU

1 - a fetish, charm, or amulet of West African people. Juju as well as gris-gris are the African terms for the more commonly used mojo or mojo hand, see also mojo;

2 - the magic attributed to or associated with jujus

This word can be found in: B.B. King, You Put It On Me, Omar & The Howlers, Hoo Doo Ball

41) JUKE JOINT / JUKE BOX

1 - a small inexpensive establishment for eating, drinking, or dancing to the music of a jukebox. For more info on juke joint and jukeboxes take The Jukebox Historical Tour from the Memphis Guide.

This phrase can be found in: Hans Theessink, Mississippi

42) KILLING FLOOR

1 - the slaughtering room of an abattoir, a slaughter house, where animals were brought to be killed and cut up. Particularly in the Chicago Stockyards area (more info, picture) many black newcomers from the South found jobs during the 20's, 30's and 40's working on the killing floors. Click here to read about a modern day killing floor. Metaphorically being on the "killing floor" means being in trouble with little way out or being so depressed (primarily by the loss of a lover) that he (generally) feels like he is going to die, having hit rock bottom and with nothing left to lose;

2 - Jack King suggests: "When a woman gets over on you and you just can't seem to do anything about it, and you can't stay away from her even though you do your best, and your mind is all a mess from it. You promise yourself to never see her again and wind up at her door a minute later. She has you on the Killing Floor." Thanks to Jack King for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Chris Duarte, .32 Blues, Howlin' Wolf, Killing Floor, Skip James, Hard Time Killing Floor

43) MOJO

1 - a magic spell, hex, or charm used against someone else, either as a love spell, hex or charm or a bad luck spell, hex or charm. It's blues function as a sexual euphemism seems to have arisen with Blind Lemon Jefferson's 1928 song "Low-down Mojo". For the record, "Mr. Mojo Risin'" in the song L.A. Woman from The Doors album "L.A. Woman" is nothing more than an anagram for "Jim Morrison"!

2 - charm; amulet; conjuring object; a good-luck charm used by gamblers and lovers;

3 - magical power;

4 - the staple amulet of African-American hoodoo practice, a flannel bag containing one or more magical items. They were made with great care and contained personal fragments and

natural objects: hair from the armpits or pubic region, fingernail pairings, pieces of skin were considered especially effective in love charms, as were fragments of underclothing, of a menstrual cloth and other closely personal effects. Combined with parts of night creatures, bats or toads, and with ashes and feathers from sources selected for a symbolic significance relative to the purpose for which they had been prepared. They were all tied up into small conjure bags or put into an innocuous-looking receptacle and either carried to exert their power upon the victim when contact was made with him or buried beneath his doorstep, hidden in his bed or hearth. The word is thought to be a corruption of the English word "magic". Other names for it include conjure bag, hand, lucky hand, mojo bag, mojo hand, root bag, toby, juju and gris-gris bag. In the Memphis region, a special kind of mojo, worn only by women, is called a nation sack. The word "conjure", as in "conjure work" (casting spells) and "conjure woman" (a female herbalist-magician), is an old alternative to "hoodoo". The word "hand" in this context may derive from the use of a rare orchid root called Lucky Hand root as an ingredient in mojo bags for gamblers, or from the use of finger and hand bones of the dead in mojo bags made for various purposes;

5 - Steven Drahozal wrote: "To make a gris-gris bag, one uses different colors of bags for different affects. I know red is for love. One also uses different roots for different affects. To really make the mojo work, you need a personal item from the person and no one else can touch your bag. I got my mojo for love in New Orleans (way way way behind the sun)." Thanks to Steven Drahozal for this contribution to the list;

This word can be found in: Blind Boy Fuller, Stingy Mama, Jimmy Reed, I Ain't Got You (1) & version 2, Blind Willie McTell, Scarey Day Blues & Talkin' To Myself, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Don't Throw That Mojo On Me, Muddy Waters, Got My Mojo Working & Hoochie Coochie Man & Louisiana Blues, Omar & The Howlers, Mail Order Mojo, The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, I Got My Mojo Working, Robert Johnson, Little Queen Of Spades (Take 1), Hans Theessink, Hunted Man & Set Me Free, Willie Dixon, (I'm your) Hoochie Coochie Man, John Campbell, Written In Stone

44) MONKEY

1 - a desperate desire for or addiction to drugs, often used in the phrase "monkey on one's back". Also, a monkey on one's back: a persistent or annoying encumbrance or problem;

2 - John Graham says: "Tampa Red, in a song that predates Robert Johnson's recordings, I think, had a tune called "She Wants to Sell My Monkey" as in female genitalia. "It used to be hers but she gave it to me, Why she wants to sell it, I just can't see, She wants to sell...".

Thanks to John Graham for his contribution to the list;

3 - monkey paw: good luck charm.

This word can be found in: Omar & The Howlers, Dangerous Man & Hoo Doo Ball, Robert Johnson, I am A Steady, Rollin' Man & Sweet Home Chicago, Junior Wells, She Wants to Sell My Monkey

45) MONKEY MAN

1 - Afro-American slang for a West Indian (a man who is easy to deceive) or used for very black Afro-Americans or an "outside" lover. Thanks to prof. Christopher Cook for this contribution;

2 - "T-man" Tilman Michalke says: "I am pretty sure it is a derogatory term for an Afro-American male with very dark complexion. There were times when these people were looked down upon even by Afro-Americans. Light skin color was considered more beautiful and a sign for higher intelligence. You will come across the term every once in a while when you listen to prewar blues recordings. Here is an example in a song: Teasing Brown, by Alfonce Harris / Bethenea Harris recorded November 26 1929, Atlanta, Ga, originally released as Vi V38594 Now, a teasing brown is the best brown after all They will stick by you in the winter, spring, summer and fall Now lots of folks claim a MONKEY MAN of dark color, is really goin' crazy 'bout a real high yellow, Now, high yellow will throw you, boys, that ain't all At night when you come home, another mule is in your stall"

Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list;

3 - its someone your woman fools around with. An "outside interest" if you will, a back door man for instance, or whatever you wanna call it. Thanks to John Cole for this contribution to the list;

This phrase can be found in: Ida Cox, Chicago Monkey Man & Wild Women Don't Have The Blues, Ma Rainey, Big Feeling Blues, Robert Johnson, I am A Steady Rollin' Man

46) MOONSHINE

1 - illegally distilled (corn) whiskey. Basic process of making moonshine: a mixture - called the mash - of sugar fruit, potatoes, grains etc. is allowed to ferment. When ready it is strained and the liquid is pumped into a broiler which is then heated. When the mash liquid is boiling the vapor rises and is forced through condensing cell turning it into a liquid or moonshine. This is collected into jugs or bottled and (sometimes) allowed to age.

A little history:

Moonshine began to be a prominent part of American life with the onset of the Civil War: the Federal Government imposed excise taxes on whiskey and tobacco in an effort to finance the Union army. After the war ended, the taxes were simply kept in place.

After the Civil War the Revenue Bureau of the Treasury Department was formed. Under Commissioner Green B. Raum (1876-1883) the bureau became a police force, hunting down moonshiners in their home environments and exercising national authority with no regard of state lines. The whiskey tax was raised to \$1.10 per gallon in 1894 - a tax considered stiffer than most shine. The impact was a lively market in untaxed liquor as more and more distillers decided the only way they could make a profit was to sell their drink illegally. The government estimated at the time that between 5 and 10 million gallons of illegal liquor were produced and sold annually in the years just before the twentieth century started.

Moonshining stayed popular in many parts in the southern US through the mid-20th century. It was concentrated in Virginia's Blue Ridge mountains, eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina, northern Georgia, and western South Carolina.

Today, Whiskey is generally cheap enough that moonshine doesn't pay. But the history lives on in places like St. Paul, Va. - named for the still that was there, a still which was reputed to produce whiskey strong enough to bust any man's ead... Read more about it on these sites: A Survey of Moonshine Culture, White Lightnin' - Caroline Style and How to Make Moonshine

This word can be found in: Big Bill Broonzy, Conversation With The Blues & Good Time Tonight, Rory Gallagher, Pistol Slapper Blues, B.B. King, (I'm Gonna) Quit My Baby, Memphis Minnie, Reachin' Pete, Son House, Dry Spell Blues (version 2), Ma Rainey, Barrel House Blues & Counting The Blues & Moonshine Blues, Jimmy Rogers, Sloppy Drunk, Bessie Smith, Young Woman's Blues, Sonny Boy Williamson I (John Lee), Moonshine, T-Bone Walker, T-Bone Blues, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Hillbilly Willie's Blues

47) Mr. CHARLIE

1 - a white man or white people in general. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list. Variations are: Charlie, Boss Charlie, white men regarded as oppressors of blacks, used contemptuously. Also, Mr. Charlie is probably prison slang for a guard.

This phrase can be found in: Eddie Boyd, Black Brown And White

48) NATION SACK

1 - a nation sack or nation bag is a mojo hand, conjure bag, toby, root bag or in plain English a lucky charm, one that is only carried by women. During the 1930s its use, by that name at least, seems to have been restricted to the region immediately around Memphis, Tennessee; 2 - "Dr. Oakroot" on the other hand says: "I have to disagree with you about "nations sack." Johnson says, "I've taken the last nickel out of her nations sack." What's a nickel doing in a lucky charm (OK, it could happen, money does have magical power). However, "nation" is short for "donation". Originally, nation sacks were worn on the belts of traveling preachers to hold the donations they collected. This fashion accessory was picked up by prostitutes along the Mississippi R. who wore it under their skirts and between the legs where the jingle of coins would attract the attention of prospective customers." Thanks to "Dr. Oakroot" for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Robert Johnson, Come On In My Kitchen (Take 1)

49) POLICY GAME

1 - a daily lottery in which participants bet that certain combination numbers will be drawn from a lottery wheel, also referred to as numbers game and playing the numbers.

This phrase can be found in: Jimmy Reed, I Ain't Got You (1) & version 2

50) RAMBLING

1 - to move aimlessly from place to place, to wander or roam;

2 - to talk or write in a desultory or long-winded wandering fashion.

This word can be found in: Jimmy Rogers, Blues (Follow Me All Day Long), Blind Boy Fuller, Weepin' Willow Blues, Blind Willie McTell, B & O Blues #2, George Thorogood, What A Price, Leadbelly, Good Night Irene, Louis Jordan, I Know What You're Puttin' Down, Memphis Minnie, Nothing In Rambling, Omar & The Howlers, Midnight Ramblin' Man, Robert Johnson, From Four Till Late & Hellhound On My Trail & I am A Steady Rollin' Man, Robert Johnson, Milkcow's Calf Blues(1)&(2)&Rambling On My Mind (Take 1) & (Take 2), Skip James, Devil Got My Woman, Sonny Boy Williamson II (Rice Miller), Santa Claus

51) RIDER / RIDING

1 - a girl friend, the sexual partner (see also easy rider). Riding is probably the most common metaphor for the sexual act in blues, see also balling the jack and grinding.

This word can be found in: Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, Mean Old Frisco, Big Bill Broonzy, C C Rider (1) & (Version 2), Blind Lemon Jefferson, Prison Cell Blues, Rory Gallagher, Pistol Slapper Blues, Blind Willie McTell, Come On Around To My House Mama & Kind Mama, Charley Patton, Banty Rooster Blues & Down The Dirt Road Blues(1) & Moon Goin' Down, Charley Patton, Pea Vine Blues & Pony Blues & Stoney Pony Blues, Hot Tuna, I Know You Rider, Little Walter, Mean Old Frisco, Mance Lipscomb, See See Rider, Mississippi John Hurt, See See Rider & Spike Driver Blues, Robert Johnson, Hellhound On My Trail & Traveling Riverside Blues, Robert Johnson, Stones In My Passway, Tommy Johnson, Big Fat Mama Blues

52) RIDING THE BLINDS

1 - a walk way between two passenger cars covered with either canvas or leather in an accordion shape. From the outside of the blinds to the outer edge of the cars there was a space about 24 inches wide. There was a ladder running up to the top of the car in this space and the bums would grasp hold of the ladder and hold on to it. That was riding the blinds.

2 - Prof. Christopher Cook corroborates this information: "To ride the train in the spaces between the baggage or mail cars near the coal tender which have no side doors - they can ride without being seen." Thanks to Prof.

Christopher Cook for this contribution;

3 - illegally travelling by freight train. Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Memphis Minnie, Chickasaw Train Blues, Robert Johnson, Walkin' Blues, Tampa Red, Seminole Blues, Tommy Johnson, Cool Drink Of Water Blues (1) & (Version 2)

53) ROADHOUSE

1 - a drinking establishment usually outside city limits providing liquor and usually meals, dancing, and often gambling and...

This word can be found in: The Jeff Healey Band, When The Night Comes Falling Down, A.C. Reed, Roadhouse Blues

54) ROLL

1 - originally it meant work, to work, as in "rolling cotton". Like other expressions from the vocabulary of labor (like "hauling ashes"), it took on a sexual connotation in blues songs: having sex;

2 - blues gal Anita Cantor confirms this meaning: "Roll means...ya know, doin' it! (I think most people know this). An example of this would be - Sonny Williamson's song, Skinny Woman. "Now we can roll all night long, an' this woman won't have to stop an' eat". Thanks to blues gal Anita Cantor for this contribution

3 - Adam Stoltz says: "The term "roll" meant to get robbed by a pimp or whore, hence the term "roller" meant usually a pimp. A "high roller" meant an upper class pimp, and later a wealthy businessman.". Thanks to Adam Stoltz for this contribution to the list.

This word can be found in: Son House, Preachin' Blues, Sonny Boy Williamson I (John Lee), Skinny Woman, A.C. Reed, Roadhouse Blues

55) ROUNDER

1 - blues gal Anita Cantor wrote: "A rounder is a guy that gets around! It was a very popular word used also by cowboys. An Example - a line from the song, heard it in a love song, by The Marshall Tucker Band, "I was born a wrangler and a rounder...". Thanks to blues gal Anita Cantor for this contribution;

2 - probably: a scoundrel, especially one that might steal your woman. Thanks to Phillip Doe for this contribution to the list;

3 - in the gambling underworld a rounder is slang for a big-money poker player, who risks big, wins big - and often loses big. In contrast to a rounder, a grinder is a pro who squeezes a few hundred here, a few hundred there by honestly outplaying the other 99 percent of American males (who only think they can play cards...).

This word can be found in: Blind Willie McTell, Delia, Bukka White, Bukka's Jitterbug Swing, Omar & The Howlers, Sugar Ditch

56) SALTY DOG

1 - Bruce Sublett wrote: "The traditional bluegrass tune "Let me be your salty dog, or I won't be your man at all" infers the meaning of sex partner, which seems to jibe with T-Bone Walker's tune "Papa Ain't Salty No More" which equates "salty" with current use of "horny" "Salty" in general Western slang means "agressive," or "tough." A "salty hombre" would be a tough guy." Thanks to Bruce Sublett for this contribution;

2 - when asked for the meaning of "salty dog", Mississippi John Hurt sheepishly replied, "To tell you the truth, I never thought about it".

This phrase can be found in: rev. Gary Davis, Candy Man, Hot Tuna, Candyman, Mississippi John Hurt, Salty Dog, T-Bone Walker, Papa Ain't Salty No More

57) SHAKIN' THAT THING

1 - a blues euphemism for engaging in sex, popularized by Papa Charlie Jackson's 1925 hit "Shake That Thing".

This phrase can be found in: Blind Boy Fuller, I Crave My Pigmeat, Mississippi John Hurt, Got The Blues, Can't Be Satisfied

58) SHARECROP PING

1 - sharecropping is the system on Southern plantations that came into being after the American Civil War when slavery formally ended in the U.S.A.

59) SHIMMY

1 - African American dance of the late 1880's. It is a shaking of the shoulders and a whole body

This word can be found in: Bessie Smith, Gimme A Pigfoot And A Bottle Of Beer & 'T Ain't Nobody's Bizness If I Do, Blind Willie McTell, Kind Mama & Talkin' To Myself, John Lee Hooker, Want Ad Blues, Omar & The Howlers, Booger Boy, Stevie Ray Vaughan, The House Is Rockin', Willie Dixon, Flamin' Mamie

60) SIGNIFYING

1 - a good-natured needling or teasing especially among urban blacks by means of indirect teasing with taunting words and clever, often preposterous "put-downs" (humiliating remarks);

2 - In signifying, speakers spontaneously compose rhythmic and rhyming phrases in improvised counterpoint to the signified phrases of other speakers. Within this word play structure, signifying is an indirect speech act form that allows the speaker to express bold ideas, opinions, beliefs, or feelings without repercussions as the stated convictions become diffused through the playful nature of the act. This improvisational verbal device arose as a component of the call and response form and became incorporated into blues lyrics.

This word can be found in: Buddy Guy, Mustang Sally, B.B. King, Walking Dr. Bill, Sonny Boy Williamson, Don Start Me To Talkin'

61) SKIN COLOR

Within the segregated society of the United States dominated by a white majority a sort of caste system based on racial features and skin color developed that was also passed down to the black minority. Lighter skin color and less pronounced Negro features often meant that a person had a little less to suffer from the daily discrimination and this was often aspired by black people. A couple of shades of color are more or less often used in blues songs: black, brownskin, fair brown, teasin' brown, the lighter skinned high yellow or yellor. Certain characteristics were often attributed to specific shades of color. Black was often associated with bad and evil and a lighter skin was often associated with more intelligence. Black people of a certain complexion often kept to their own shade of skin color. See also high yellor

62) SPOONFUL

1 - Andy James wrote: "I'm fairly positive it usually refers to cocaine (BH: or heroine) in the earliest songs. That is, in "Before the Blues" (Yazoo 2016) Don Kent notes of Charley Jordan's "Just a Spoonful" that it is "a raggy tune, probably from around the turn of the century, celebrating cocaine."

The secondary meaning of spoonful - that is, the rough amount of male ejaculate - gave The Lovin' Spoonful their name. (BH: they took their name from the Mississippi John Hurt song "Coffee Blues" that contains a line that strongly supports this secondary meaning "I wanna see my baby 'bout a lovin' spoonful, my lovin' spoonful") By the time Muddy Waters (BH: probably meant Willie Dixon who wrote the song Spoonful in the late fifties, performed by himself and Howlin' Wolf) had got a hold of the word, I think it began to have that meaning. But when Charley Patton says he'll kill or go to jail for a spoonful, I think it's cocaine (BH: or heroine) he's talking about." Thanks to Andy James for this contribution;

2 - a spoon was/is used by addicts to liquefy heroine so it can be injected into a vein;

3 - a vague blues euphemism for sex. Possibly derived from "to spoon" meaning: to make love by caressing, kissing, and talking amorously.

This word can be found in: Charley Patton, Spoonful Blues, Howlin' Wolf, Spoonful, Mance Lipscomb, 'Bout A Spoonful, Mississippi John Hurt, Coffee Blues

63) SQUEEZE MY LEMON

1 - the lemon is a reference to the genitalia. Squeezing the lemon refers to having sex.

This phrase can be found in: Memphis Minnie, Dirty Mother For You, Robert Johnson, Traveling Riverside Blues, Sonny Boy Williamson I (John Lee), Until My Love Come Down

64) STAG O'LEE / STAGER LEE

A real life murderer that became a folk figure. Julius Lester, in his Black Folktales, said, "Stagolee as, undoubtedly and without question, the baddest nigger that ever lived. Stagolee was so bad that the flies wouldn't even fly around his head in the summertime, and snow wouldn't fall on his house in the winter.

This name can be found in: Mississippi John Hurt, Stack O'Lee Blues

65) STAVIN' CHAIN

1 - Lil Johnson's song with this title strongly suggests that stavin' chain is the the name of a man. Thanks to Charlie Hardin for contributing the lyrics to this site;

2 - Adam Stoltz has this to say: "A stavin' chain was a tool used to make barrels (I won't go in depth about it's use) it was often used by supervisors in barrel factories to beat slaves. Also a stavin' chain was the chain used to hold together chain gangs, and was pulled around the prisoner's ankles much like the sexual version. It worked much like a choke-dog collar in all it's forms, and could be used to describe any chain noose that worked on this principal.

however, the origin of the word was staveing chain from the barrel factories used to hold together the barrell staves until an iron band could be fitted around the end of the barrell. Thanks to Adam Stoltz for this contribution to the list.

The vague and imaginative contributions:

3 - Charlie Hardin from Fort Worth, Texas, also says: "I have heard the expression "stavin' chain" in some blues recordings from the '30's or so. I suspect this means "gettin' some (having sex, BH)" ". Thanks to Charlie Hardin for his contribution to the list.

4 - Brian Ellis a.k.a. BBQ Bo has a more intriguing meaning: " I believe a stavin' chain is an appliance used to keep a man from premature ejaculation; presumably the woman pulls on this noose-like device to keep her man from cumming before she does..." Yes, my first

reaction was "Auch!" as well so when asked for some "hard" evidence, Brian wrote this to back his version to me. Thanks to Brian Ellis a.k.a. BBQ Bo for this contribution to the list
This phrase can be found in: Lil Johnson, Stavin' Chain, Jelly Roll Morton, Whinin' Boy

66) STINGAREE

1 - literally: alteration of the word stingray which is a fish with one or more large sharp barbed dorsal spines near the base of the whip like tail capable of inflicting severe wounds. In blues music it is a euphemism for the sexual organs, usually applied to women.

This word can be found in: Bessie Smith, It Makes My Love Come Down, Blind Boy Fuller, Stingy Mama, Blind Joe (or Willie) Reynolds, Third Street Woman Blues, Charlie Musselwhite, Stingaree

67) STRUT / STRUT YOUR STUFF

1 - originally "dancing well" but it became synonymous with the rhythmic movements of sexual intercourse. Also, showing off, to parade (as clothes) with a show of pride, to walk with a proud gait, to walk with a pompous and affected air;

2 - Nancy Hoffman wrote: "strut" to me always meant walking proud "strutting his stuff". Thanks to Nancy Hoffman for this contribution.

This word/phrase can be found in: Blind Willie McTell, Kind Mama, Lucille Bogan, B.D. Woman's Blues, John Lee Hooker, Boom Boom, Gary Moore, Texas Strut, Bessie Smith, Aggravatin' Papa & At The Christmas Ball, Bessie Smith, Cake Walking Babies From Home & Gimme A Pig Foot And A Bottle Of Beer, Bessie Smith, I'm Going Back To My Used To Be & Sam Jones Blues, Taj Mahal, Queen Bee

68) VOODOO

1 - a body of practices of folk magic that is derived from African polytheism and ancestor worship and is practiced chiefly in Haiti. The black population of the South preferred to call voodoo hoodoo. Find out more about voodoo at this site: [Voodoo Information: The Voodoo FAQ](#);

2 - a person who deals in spells and necromancy;

3 - a magic spell, hex, or charm used against someone else, either as a love spell, hex or charm or a bad luck spell, ex or charm.

This word can be found in: Clara Smith, Prescription For The Blues, Robben Ford, I'm A Real Man, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Deja Voodoo, Omar&The Howlers, Exactly What I Thought She'd Do, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Voodoo Chile (Slight Return), Hans Theessink, Louisiana Man & Set Me Free, Tampa Red, Annie Lou Blues & The Duck Yas-Yas-Yas, ZZ Top, My Head's In Mississippi

69) WHOOPIE MAKING

1 - whoopie or whoopee, "It usually means having a ball, in blues it often carries the meaning of having sex". Thanks to "T-man" Tilman Michalke for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: King Solomon Hill, Whoopee Blues (Take 1) & (Take 2), Lonnie Johnson: She's Making Whoopee In Hell Tonight

70) YAS YAS (YAS)

1 - Jim Burger wrote: "Both "yas yas" and "yas yas yas" are used as a rhyming substitute for the word "ass" and appear quite frequently in songs from the earlier part of the century, when "ass" was apparently still unacceptable slang.

Examples:

Blind Boy Fuller "Get Yer Yas Yas Out" (the actual lyric in the song is "get yer yas yas out the door"). Note that the

Rolling Stones later bastardized this one in their live album which was mistitled "Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out".

Tampa Red (I don't know the names of the songs, but below are a couple of good verses):
Mama killed a chicken, thought it was a duck, put it on the table with its legs straight up, In come the children with a cup and a glass, to catch the liquid from its YAS YAS YAS, You shake your shoulders, you shake them fast, If you can't shake your shoulders, shake your YAS YAS YAS, Me and my baby walking down the street, she caught the rheumatism in her feet, She stooped over to pick some grass and the same thing caught her in the YAS YAS YAS. Thanks to Jim Burger for this contribution to the list.

This phrase can be found in: Blind Boy Fuller, Get Yer Yas Yas Out, Hot Tuna, Keep On Truckin', Lil Johnson, Rug Cutter's Function & Sam, The Hot Dog Man, Memphis Minnie, New Dirty Dozen, Tampa red, The Duck Yas-Yas-Yas

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