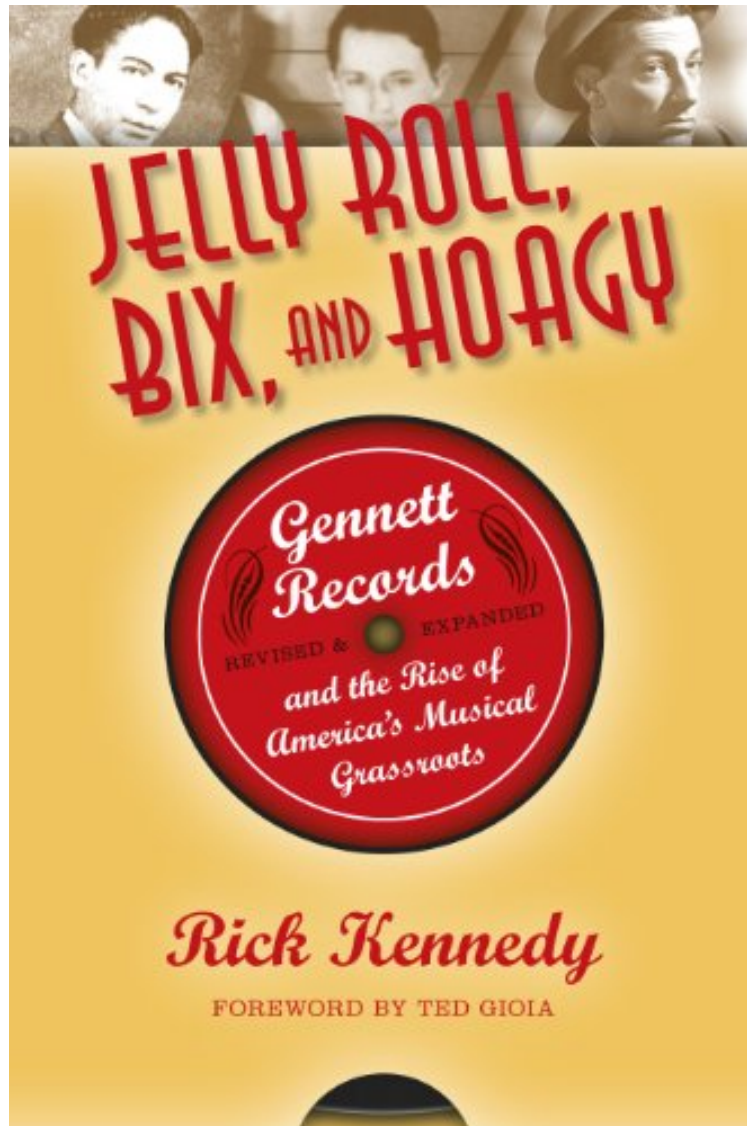


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Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy, Revised and Expanded Edition: Gennett Records and the Rise of America's Musical Grassroots

Rick Kennedy

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Rick Kennedy : Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy, Revised and Expanded Edition: Gennett Records and the Rise of America's Musical Grassroots before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy, Revised and Expanded Edition: Gennett Records and the Rise of America's Musical Grassroots:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Splendid history of an important company in the 78 rpm records

eraBy Richard M. RolloRick Kennedy has written an excellent social history of the Gennett Record Company. The Gennett family acquired the Starr Piano Company of Richmond, Indiana, and began recording and selling phonograph records as an offshoot of their piano business. Although sound recordings had been available since 1900, it was slow to develop by today's standards on technological change. By the 1920's, it was still fairly primitive and all involved were still experimenting. Today, music lovers look back on the Gennett Company and marvel at their cultural achievements. Jazz fans marvel at the range of artists they recorded: King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Bix Beiderbecke,; Delta Blues fans collect their records by Roosevelt Sykes, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Charley Patton, Lonnie Johnson, and many others; Doc Roberts and Gene Autry (future cowboy movie actor) were among the Country music artists. They also recorded numerous gospel music artists, white and black. All this began in a small Indiana town near the Ohio border. But, don't get too sentimental about it. Like the Hollywood cliché: it's not SHOW business, it's show BUSINESS. Gennett was a business and it reflected the times. They were willing to record whatever and whomever they thought would sell. The KKK had a huge resurgence in the 1920's throughout the country, and Gennett recorded their records too during that time. Gennett was not fussy at all about their acts. Also, like the music business today, many artists soured on Gennett due to late payments and being shortchanged on royalty payments. Many of the early records had fair to poor sound fidelity due to the acoustic horn process used. On some records, the piano sounds like it's out in the hallway. Photos in the book show the recordings were made with a big acoustic horn and the recording engineer positioned the performers through experimentation. It wasn't until 1927-28 that recording companies began using electric microphones to record the performers. You can hear the difference on the 78 rpm records afterwards. But many of the best performances were recorded using the older method. One of the best anecdotes in this book involves King Oliver's Dippermouth Blues. Dippermouth Blues has been a staple of traditional jazz bands since the 1920's. The best recent version was done at Jeff and Joel's 2013 House Party as seen on YouTube. Traditional Jazz is structured with what Jelly Roll Morton called riffs and breaks (see his Library of Congress recordings.) Breaks were short solo interludes between band riffs. Near the end of any version of the Dippermouth Blues you will hear the band break and shout "Oh, Play that thing." You also hear it on the original Gennett 78 record because, according to Kennedy's sources, the clarinet player missed his "break." He forgot to play his solo. One of the band members shouted at him and it became part of the song. If you are interested in popular music of the early 20th Century, I think you will enjoy this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hail Bix! By Gospel Jon Once again Hoosiers come through! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The complete story of Gennett and the tipping point in the record business and American vernacular music By Charlie Kennedy's passion for and years of in depth research of the Starr Piano / Gennett Record label story shines brightly in the new edition of Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy. Not only is it the definitive account of the company's history, but of the tipping point in both the birth of the modern record business and the introduction of American culture and music to the world.

In a piano factory tucked away in Richmond, Indiana, Gennett Records produced thousands of records featuring obscure musicians from hotel orchestras and backwoods fiddlers to the future icons of jazz, blues, country music, and rock 'n' roll. From 1916 to 1934, the company debuted such future stars as Louis Armstrong, King Oliver, Bix Beiderbecke, and Hoagy Carmichael, while also capturing classic performances by Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Charley Patton, Uncle Dave Macon, and Gene Autry. While Gennett Records was overshadowed by competitors such as Victor and Columbia, few record companies documented the birth of America's grassroots music as thoroughly as this small-town label. In this newly revised and expanded edition of Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy, Rick Kennedy shares anecdotes from musicians, employees, and family members to trace the colorful history of one of America's most innovative record companies.