

Blue Days – Black Nights An Article by Frank Daniels

Decca Singles Label Styles

Label 50 – August, 1950, through December, 1954*

This label is found on 45 RPM singles only.

“DECCA” appears in an arc across the top of the label.

To each side of “DECCA” appear concentric circular arcs.

*West coast pressings printed by Bert-Co in Los Angeles continued to have this label style until at least the middle of 1958, since they had so many blank labels in their possession.



Label 55 – December, 1954, through February, 1960

“DECCA” appears in a wider arc across the label.

There is a star under DECCA. On the 78 RPM label, there is a single horizontal line to either side of the star; on the 45 RPM label there are three concentric arcs to either side of the star.

In about December, 1957, east coast copies switched to Gloversville.



Pressing Plant Symbols:

Decca's **Richmond, IN**, plant (opened 1939 and closed December 1957) used a diamond symbol (◈) to indicate their singles and LP's.

The **Gloversville, NY** plant opened in summer, 1953. They used a quatrefoil (✻) or plus-like symbol for singles; they used a target (◎) for LP's.

The **Pinckneyville, IL**, plant opened in 1957. They usually used a filled-in diamond (◆) for singles and for LP's.

These marks appear on the side-B label.

As Our Story Begins...

Buddy Holley was still in high school in January 1955 when he met Elvis Presley. Upon Presley's return to Lubbock on February 13th, Buddy Holley and Bob Montgomery were one of the Sun Records artist's opening acts – as immortalized in an ad in the Lubbock *Avalanche Journal*. Holley graduated from Lubbock High School on May 27th that year, already a rising star.

After playing with Elvis through June, Buddy opened for Bill Haley on October 14th at the Fair Park Coliseum. By that time, Larry Welborn and Jerry Allison had joined Holley's group, and they were being billed as "Buddy, Bob, and Larry." Eddie Crandall, an agent and talent scout from Nashville, saw Buddy's band perform and watched them open for Elvis at Presley's triumphant return to Lubbock on the 15th. Crandall, who was Marty Robbins' manager at the time, told KDAV radio personality Dave Stone that he was interested in signing Buddy Holley to Decca Records. By December 2nd, Crandall had arranged for Stone to have Buddy (without Bob or Larry, but with Allison and two other friends) cut demonstration records for Decca.

Together, in KDAV studio on December 7th, they cut four songs for Allison as he requested. These were pressed as acetates and were sent to Decca Records. They had spelled his last name as "Holly," and that misspelled name wound up in his formal contracts – so Buddy used it. By January, he had a publishing contract, and a recording contract with Decca for one year soon followed. Bob Montgomery told Buddy to take the deal, even though it meant splitting up their team.

He recorded four songs on January 26th, 1956, shortly *before* signing his Decca contract on February 8th. Two of these, "Love Me" and "Blue Days – Black Nights," were paired as Buddy's first single. Although Decca recorded Buddy Holley at least six more times in 1956, these sessions at first produced only one more single (recorded in November and released in December).



BY POPULAR DEMAND

ELVIS PRESLEY

The Be-Bop Western Star of the L.A. Hayride Returns to Lubbock.

**4:00 P.M. MATINEE
TODAY ONLY
FAIR PARK COLISEUM**

ALSO ON THE BIG WESTERN SHOW:

DUKE OF PADUCAH—of the Grand Ole Opry
"Get On The Wagon, Boys, These Shoes Are Killing Me."

CHARLENE ARTHUR—Miss Dynamite of the Big D Jamboree and Victor Records.

JIMMIE RODGERS SNOW—Son of Hank Snow and Victor Recording Artist

ACE BALL—Okah Recording Artist

BILL MYRICK and the **RAINBOW RIDERS**

BUDDY AND BOB

BOXOFFICE OPENS AT 2:30

THE RHYTHM AND BLUES SONGSTERS OF "SHAKE, RATTLE, AND ROLL" FAME

BILL HALEY AND HIS COMETS

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 14th
8:00 P.M.
FAIR PARK COLISEUM**

EIGHT STRAIGHT RECORDING HITS INCLUDING

"Shake, Rattle and Roll"
"Rock Around the Clock"
"Dim, Dim The Lights"

**PLUS
JIMMY RODGERS SNOW**
RCA VICTOR ARTIST
AND
SON OF THE FAMOUS HANK SNOW

**PLUS
LUBBOCK'S OWN
BUDDY, BOB AND LARRY**

**DON'T MISS THIS
BIG
ROCK AND ROLL SHOW**



BUDDY HOLLY
(Decca 29854; 9-29854)

B+ "LOVE ME" (2:05) [Cedarwood BMI—B. Holly, S. Parrish] New-comer Buddy Holly shows that he's a talent that bears close attention as he decks out an inviting, romantic novelty tailor-made for the current country-rock and roll market. Strong contender.

B "BLUE DAYS—BLACK NIGHTS" (2:03) [Copar BMI—B. Hall] Under side is a quick beat tearful tune that Holly waxes in top notch style. Slick instrumental support on both ends.

Decca 9-29854 "Love Me"/ "Blue Days, Black Nights" (45 RPM)

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: April 21, 1956

Promotional copies exist from the Richmond pressing plant, and (apparently) from Pinckneyville (below). Since it is generally agreed that the Pinckneyville plant did not open until 1957, it is quite possible that these copies constitute a rerelease of the single.



Pinckneyville Pressing Plant

BUDDY HOLLY

Love Me80
DECCA 29854—Cedarwood succumbs to rock and roll, too. If the public will take more than one Presley or Perkins, as it well may, Holly stands a strong chance. (Cedarwood, BMI)

Blue Days-Black Nights... 77
DECCA 29854—Warbler, tune, guitar, etc., are patterned very closely after Elvis Presley. Good material and production on both sides. Should do fine. (Copar, BMI)

Although later historians occasionally make "Blue Days – Black Nights" out to be the A-side, Decca clearly marked all copies of the single with the factory symbol on the B-side, indicating "Love Me" to be the top side. The reviews in the trade magazines likewise placed "Love Me" as the top side and gave it higher marks as a recording. Decca did little to promote the record, though, and reportedly it sold approximately 18,000 copies.

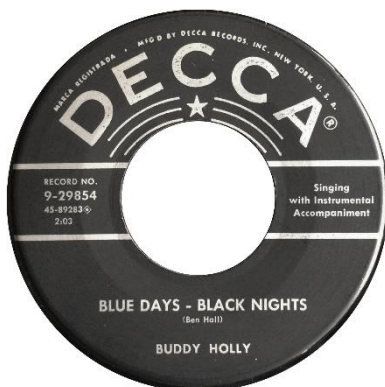
Despite the "2" in the matrix, copies identified here as being from Pinckneyville might be Richmond copies that came out after August 1956. Either way, they would be later pressings.



Richmond Pressing Plant



Gloversville Pressing Plant



Pinckneyville Pressing Plant

Commercial copies of the 45-RPM single are also known to exist from all three pressing plants. Again, it may be the case that Pinckneyville copies (with "2" in the matrix) came out as the Richmond plant was being phased out in 1957.

The pressing distinctions also exist on the 78-RPM release of the single, with copies from Pinckneyville being the scarcest – again an indication that Decca may have released them later.

Decca 29854 "Love Me"/ "Blue Days, Black Nights" (78 RPM)

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: April 21, 1956



Richmond



Gloversville



Pinckneyville