

## Big Mamma Sunshine from Walden County, Florida

*How we doing good people? Big Mamma Sunshine! Your antique musician. Hooo! Look at 'em a strutting here. Well woeeee, we got Miss Sugar. Hello, Sugar Booger. Shake it, mamma!*

I'm a country woman. Grew up in one of them itty-bitty towns where you blink when you go by on the highway. When I was a little girl, my mamma said I could either learn to crochet or play the piano. I tried to learn a chain stitch, but I didn't have the patience. I'm not no homemaker. Ha Ha Ha! Oh no! I'm an old maid. That's what I am. But you better watch out cause we wild women don't get the blues!

My mamma couldn't afford piano lessons, so she put me in front of that radio and I learned to play the blues. Well word got 'round, and people come and start setting on my porch to listen. We was in a dry county and nobody had any place to go. When somebody'd get a new piano and they'd come get Big Mamma to play it. I played for lots of people, but it was always just ladies having cake and coffee. If you messed with the menfolk then you were fixing for trouble.



When the good old boys got to drinking there was liable to be a commotion. I remember one night my daddy was standing in a big circle of people holding his knife and my mamma sent me in to stop the fight. I coulda got cut. I saw a lotta women that did. I never did get along too good with my daddy. It hurt me real bad, the way he'd do me.

I never thought of getting paid to play the piano, because women weren't considered musicians, we just played at home. I made my grocery money washing dishes, then when my mamma got sick I took over for her at her beauty parlor. Did that for a many years.

In 1988, I got real sick and wound up in the hospital. Doctor ended up taking away my driver's license away 'cause my health. I was thinking what I outta do for myself cause they ain't got no busses in Walden County, so I say, I'm gonna go down to New Orleans and be a troubadour of the trails. I been playing out here ever since.

Now I'm three years working on seventy. I got both feet on the breaks and going just as hard as I can. Ha ha. Everybody's going along with me. So, well I guess that's all that counts. It puts the biscuits on the table. Big Momma's gonna keep socking it to the rocket.

*Now grab that tambourine and do the wham bam doodle!*