

# WDON Recordings from Frank Wakefield and Red Allen

[John Lawless](#) | January 6, 2015 | [3 Comments](#)



Patuxent Music has released an absolutely classic set of recordings from Red Allen and Frank Wakefield. [The WDON Recordings](#) contain 22 tracks cut in 1963 when Red and Frank had a recurring radio program at WDON AM in Wheaton, MD.

This was at a time when the bluegrass scene in the greater DC area was fertile and fresh, and Red and Frank had Pete Kuykendall on banjo and Tom Morgan on bass. Of course, Pete went on to launch and manage *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine which he continues to operate, but in the early '60s Kuykendall was an eager beaver banjo picker and novice recording engineer. He tracked these songs live at his home studio, and then took the tapes to the radio station for broadcast.

Aficionados of traditional bluegrass often describe this period as the end of the era of the first generation grassers. While their influence was still strong, more modern sounds were starting to be represented, especially in the DC scene where The Country Gentlemen were already active. But *The WDON Recordings* show a group firmly in the original bluegrass tradition.

Patuxent shared this video of an interview conducted with Frank Wakefield, Tom Morgan and Pete Kuykendall about this period.

On these tracks, Red Allen is in fine voice, and Frank Wakefield's mandolin is inspired as are his tenor vocals. It's a pure sound such as you only rarely hear these days. And it is a treat to have such a fine recording of Kuykendall on banjo.

The selected songs come from the top favorites in bluegrass, 1963-style:

- *Deep Elem Blues*
- *Somebody Loves You Darling*
- *You'll Always Be My Blue Eyed Darling*
- *Pistol Packin' Mama*
- *Will You Be Satisfied That Way*
- *Old Joe Clark*

- *Give Me the Flowers While I'm Living*
- *I Guess I'll Go On Dreaming*
- *I'm Blue and Lonesome Too*
- *All I Want Is You*
- *Poor Ellen Smith*
- *Alone and Forgotten*
- *I Wonder Why You Said Goodbye*
- *I Thought I'd Never Fall in Love Again*
- *Sweet Sunny South*
- *I Wonder If You Feel the Way I Do*
- *Wayfaring Stranger*
- *Little Rosewood Casket*
- *Don't Laugh*
- *Red Apple Rag*
- *I Wouldn't Change You If I Could*
- *Sing, Sing, Sing*

Anyone who remembers bluegrass during this time will surely want to have this CD in their collection, and younger fans seeking an understanding of the era should have it as well. Hat's off to Tom Mindte and Patuxent Records for making it available.

CDs can be purchased [from the label](#), and digital downloads are offered from popular resellers