

Hello Lyn,

I came across your research piece on the Town & Country Brothers. As you suggest, there has been a profusion of gaps, misinformation and mystery about the "Brothers," so I thought I would take the opportunity to attempt to disperse some of the fog. As your correspondent Kees noted, I provided Canetoad Records with background on the group when they reissued "Sandy Sandy" in 2004 but somehow that too got garbled on its way to the printed page.

Here's how events unfolded: Chip Taylor and I first met in a music class during our senior year of high school. During the four years that we both attended the school, this was the one and only class that we actually shared. At some point, we got talking and Chip mentioned that he was a big country music fan...and sang and played guitar. My immediate reaction was – "Hey, you gotta come down to Mount Vernon and meet my friend Greg (Richards)."

Musically, Greg was into almost anything that was coming out of Nashville and Memphis. So Chip and Greg hit it off immediately.

Greg was studying guitar with a guy named Ray Doherty who played Chet Atkins-style. In January of 1958, Ray (vocals & guitar), Greg (rhythm guitar) and I (snare drum & wire brushes) had begun playing weekends in a small bar on West 1st Street in Mount Vernon, NY, just a few blocks from the Bronx/NYC line. Several weeks in, we asked Ray if he wouldn't mind if Chip joined us. And so we became a country music quartet and were soon wearing embroidered cowboy shirts and silky blue kerchiefs tied around our necks – kinda like Roy Rogers.

In the early spring of '58, Ray left New York to return to his hometown in Pennsylvania.

Our band never really had a designated name and we were determined to change that. When Chip joined, our repertoire broadened from Hank Williams and Eddy Arnold songs to Johnny Cash and George Hamilton IV hits. Eventually it included Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, The Everlys, Jack Scott, Dale Hawkins and so on.

Greg came up with the phrase, "Town & Country," which seemed to resonate perfectly with the musical direction the band was following. However – and here's where the confusion starts to set in – this original trio became known as the Town & Country Boys. The Town & Country Brothers didn't enter the picture until late-1962. But more on this to follow.

Around this time, Chip began bringing in some original songs that we liked, then learned and slipped into our sets. The response was good and we soon elected to make a demonstration record. Greg booked a studio in NYC and we recorded a double-sided disc of "Faded Blue" b/w "I Found Out About Love."