

Diddie Wa Diddie

By Blind Blake (Arthur Phelps)

*There's a great big mystery, and it sure is worryin' me.
This diddie wa diddie, this diddie wa diddie.
I wish somebody would tell me what
diddie wa diddie means.*

*Had a little girl about four foot four.
She said, "C'mon papa won't ya give me some more
of your diddie wa diddie, of your diddie wa diddie."
I wish somebody would tell me what
diddie wa diddie means.*

*I went out and walked around.
Somebody yelled, "Look who's in town.
Mister diddie wa diddie, Mister diddie wa diddie."
I wish somebody would tell me what
diddie wa diddie means.*

*I went to church, put my hat on the seat,
Lady sat on it, said "Daddy you sure is sweet,
Mister diddie wa diddie, Mister diddie wa diddie."
I wish somebody would tell me what
diddie wa diddie means.*

*I said, "Sister, I'll soon be gone,
Just gimme that thing you're sittin' on.
My diddie wa diddie, my diddie wa diddie."
I wish somebody would tell me what
diddie wa diddie means.*

*Then I got put out of church,
'Cause I talk about diddie wa diddie too much.
Mister diddie wa diddie, Mister diddie wa diddie.
I wish somebody would tell me what
diddie wa diddie means.*

The music recorded by Blind Blake has fascinated me for many years. His lyrical and catchy guitar lines are the work of a master. His light-hearted vocal style, and the humor which is reflected in his songs, add to the sophistication of his sound. If you haven't heard his music, check it out sometime.

One of my favorite Blake songs is Diddie Wa Diddie. The message contained in it is a "mystery" whose answer might seem obvious to some, some could care less, and to those like myself, a timeless question whose answer can never be totally understood or revealed, only pondered.



The obvious answer lies in a theme that seems to capture most everyone's interest. Sex. Diddie wa diddie is either the act of making love, or the male or female sexual organs.

I have performed the song for school children and changed the words so that diddie wa diddie can mean any word which slips your mind at the moment. Sort of like the "words", thing-a-ma-jig or what-cha-ma-call-it. Children readily accept this "new" word, and enjoy saying it.

Another explanation comes from folklorist B. A. Botkin, in *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*. Under the heading, Mythical Places of the Florida Negro, the following definition is presented for the phrase Diddie Wa Diddie (Diddy-Wah-Diddy).

This is the largest and best known of the Negro mythical places. Its geography is that it is "way off somewhere." It is reached by a road that curves so much that a mule pulling a wagon-load of fodder can eat off the back of the wagon as he goes. It is a place of no work and no worry for man and beast. A very restful place where even the curbstones are good sitting-chairs. The food is even already cooked. If a traveler is hungry all he needs do is to sit down on the curbstone and wait and soon he will hear something hollering "Eat me! Eat me! Eat me!" and a big baked chicken will come along with a knife and a fork stuck in its sides. He can eat all he wants and let the chicken go on to the next on that needs something to eat. By that time a big deep sweet potato pie is pushing and shoving to get in front of the traveler with a knife all stuck up in the middle of it so he just cuts a piece off of that and so on until he finishes his snack. Nobody can ever eat it all up. No matter how much you eat it grows that much faster. It is said "Everybody would live in Diddy-Wah-Diddy if it wasn't so hard to find and so hard to get to after you even know the way." Everything is on a large scale there. Even the dogs can stand flat-footed and lick the crumbs off heaven's table. The biggest man there is known as the Moon-Regulator because he reaches up and starts and stops it at his convenience. That is why there are some dark nights when the moon does not shine at all. He did not feel like putting it out that night.

They search for Atlantis. They search for "the crossroads." It seems to me that a field trip to Florida in search of the elusive area known as Diddie-Wa-Diddie would be an exciting and worthwhile experience. Maybe I could get some kind of arts grant to help pay for a team of "researchers" to document a geographic search of the area in question, starting with coastal/beach locations. Our evenings would be spent seeking out local musicians for relative information. February would be the ideal time to set about such a venture.

In the meantime, "I wish somebody would tell me what diddie wa diddie means."

Michael "Hawkeye" Herman