



Mike Osbourne 2001

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Maybe I was hatched or dropped by the stork-I don't remember a mom or dad-the MUSIC became my mom and dad. The welfare department picked Tony, my brother and I up, playing in a washtub in our diapers in January- they took us to the Orphanage at Lexington, NC. I was the youngest baby to enter there and stayed there the longest of any kid- till I was 18. My father had started out to be a professional ball player, but the war came-he took off and married another woman while he was still married to my mother, this is how I got my half sister, Joan. He met her mother while dancing the jitterbug-so it must have been in our blood. My mother was killed in a car accident when I was 8. Also about the time I got run over by a huge farm truck - I was in the hospital and a body cast for a year, then for another year I was in a wheel chair. It amazes me that I can walk-considering later on about 1974 I was on a scaffold at Canon Mills that fell.

My Grandmother used to come and take me to the beach in the summer, when I was 13 I had my first experience (on the edge) at Carolina Beach. We stayed at the Graystone Hotel- next door to the famous Bame Hotel, which was the biggest there... even the elevators. The Graystone had a ballroom and a 78 rpm jukebox. Grandmother gave me money to play it- 3 for a nickel and 5 for a dime and 7 for a quarter. That's where I heard Jack Dupree, Wyonie Hartis, and Piano Red's "She's Dynamite" which set my feet to movin'. That Piano Red tune is the first I ever bought and still sets my feet to moving today. I could see the kids dancing to the music and knew I had to try it. I watched people and learned how to do it- the first person to show me some steps was AV Franklin, from there I realized I needed to know more- especially if I was going to get the girls with the big tits. I know so many guys-Eddie Page, Tommy Fisher & Glen Doub from Winston Salem, Rufflis Wackter from Sumter, Denny Wheeler, Doug Perry from Charlotte and "Spider" Kirkman and Bunk Leach, from Greensboro we all watched and picked up steps. I went to Florida for a while in 1961 and worked for Fred Astair Dance Studio-I took what I knew here and used what I got there and smoothed the dance out-body position has a lot to do with shagging. Most everyone I learned from are either dead or in a nursing home. Tommy White showed me the drop spin- he invented the step- but I pushed the degree of difficulty further. We had lots of fun I was truly a beach bum I stayed where ever I could find a bed- sleep all day and dance all night. A girl that taught me how to do a pivot was Phyllis Thompson, from Charlotte, NC, she taught me this at the pad. In order to dance with a girl- you pick a girl who can dance-I really learned more from them and got my own style. My first experience on SC Beaches began in 1955, when a group of high school boys and I rode down to Myrtle Beach-at that time I didn't know about Ocean Drive Beach. In 1956 I went back to MB - met some guys from Charleston, SC, who were going to another beach called OD- I jumped in the car with them and went to OD -we went to a place called "The Pad", I fell in love with the place because the music on the juke box was what I grew up with and I liked the dance they were doing to this music. We stayed about 3 days-split up I went back to Kannapolis, NC and knew that next summer I would be at OD learning how to shag. I spent the summer of 56,57,58,59,60, learning to dance. After I came back from Miami in 61. I got married. The last full summer I spent at the beach was 1965-I spent most of the summer running around with Buz Sawyer, teaching him how to dance. I'm glad people are still shagging but I don't think there's as much individuality as there was once, people don't develop their own style and steps like they once did, but the SHAG is still the greatest dance.