



**Johnnie Allan**  
**Louisiana Swamp Pop Musician**

Legendary swamp-rocker Johnnie Allan was born as John Allan Guillot in 1938, in Rayne, Louisiana. Of Cajun and Spanish ancestry, he grew up speaking Cajun French and knew little English before beginning school. His father was a sharecropper who grew sweet potatoes, cotton, corn, and hay. As boys, Johnnie and his brother worked in the fields before heading to school each day. "We'd work one year to pay last year's debts," he says.

Despite the family's hard life, Johnnie grew up surrounded by traditional Cajun music. His mother's family, the Falcons, were very musical and most of them played instruments. His great uncle was Joe Falcon, the famed accordion player who first recorded "Allons a Lafayette." Johnnie's grandfather, Ulysse Falcon, played both the fiddle and accordion. His mother, Helen Falcon Guillot, played the guitar and her sister, Marie Falcon, played the triangle (ti fer).

Johnnie Allan was about six years old when he got his first guitar. He bought it with money he earned from selling garden seeds to the neighbors. Later he joined a Cajun band, The Scott Playboys, as a rhythm guitarist. At the age of fifteen, he switched to steel guitar and joined Lawrence Walker, one of Cajun music's great accordionists.

At eighteen, he became interested in rock and roll after hearing Fats Domino and seeing Elvis Presley perform on the Louisiana Hayride.

In 1957, Allen formed a band called the Krazy Kats with several other young musicians from Lawrence Walker's band and returned to playing rhythm guitar. The Krazy Kats began playing the rock-influenced music known by various names, the most common of which is "swamp pop." Allan went on to record a stream of singles and at least ten albums, some of which are: "South to Louisiana," "Johnnie Allan Sings," "Dedicated to You," "Portrait of Johnnie Allan," "Another Man's Woman," and "Greatest Hits." He is perhaps best known for his cover of Chuck Berry's song, "The Promised Land," in 1973.

He has performed throughout the United States and Europe, and his music is prominently featured in John Broven's book on Louisiana music, "South to Louisiana.

Johnnie Allan says of swamp pop and the many musical influences it grew out of, "We call it South Louisiana music and I guess the only way to describe it is to say that it's the musicians who make the sound different." Most speak French and many played in Cajun bands. "Consequently," he suggests, "I think we all kept part of this French-Cajun music ingrained in us, you can almost detect it, something of a Cajun flavor in the song." Johnnie Allan is the author of three books: *Memories: A Pictorial History of South Louisiana Music*, Vol. I, 1988; *Born to be a Loser: The Jimmy Donley Story*, 1992; and *Memories: A Pictorial History of South Louisiana Music*, Vols. I and II, 1995.

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