Brothers in blues

Johnny Winter
Quotes from the book "Raisin' Cain: The Wild and Raucous Story of Johnny Winter", used with the friendly permission of Mary Lou Sullivan. She was so nice to contribute many quotes she had collected but didn't use in her book. When the author met Johnny in April 2013 in Germany, Johnny told him, "Keith was my best friend."

Quote from Jim Franklin, Austin artist who is Johnny's friend, talking about the Vulcan Gas Company in Austin. (There is more about the club and the cistern in "Raisin' Cain"). "I had some conga drums, a sitar, and then there was some flutes. It was a marvelous chamber, because you could be sitting right next to someone. And if you hit the note, it would resound off the wall. You don't hear it coming from the person; you just hear it coming from the wall. After his first national tour, Johnny came back and did a gig at the Vulcan. He came down from Houston, and Billy Gibbons came along with him. He wanted to see the cistern. He'd heard about it; word had really gotten around. So they go down the ladder -- it was Johnny, Keith Ferguson, Uncle John (Turner) and Tommy (Shannon), Billy and I were waiting for them to get down the ladder; 12-foot or 14-foot. So we went down there, and it was just enough people to line the wall and soak up all the echo. No magic effects -- there were too many of us down there. There'd never been that many people in the cistern."

Quotes from Uncle John Turner, Johnny's first drummer: "Keith Ferguson was one of the most unique people that any of us knew. He was wicked unique. He had a little twist to him. He was different than normal -- a beatnik, a trendsetter. He came back from England with the first shag haircut we'd ever seen, the first pair of bellbottoms we'd ever seen. Keith had a cross and a rose tattooed on his chest. Me, Johnny and Stevie (Ray Vaughan) got tattoos, too -- all mimicking Keith.

"When I got with Johnny, there weren't a lot of blues collectors. I didn't know Johnny was a blues collector until I started hanging out with him. Keith and one other guy were blues collectors -- the only ones I ever met. Keith and Johnny had blues in common when no one did. They were islands in the stream with their blues collections. They could talk about Mississippi John Hurt or Fred McDowell, people like that. There wasn't anybody else to talk to, to share information with. I never heard of any of those people until I met Johnny and Keith."

"Me and Keith Ferguson went to Johnny's house in Beaumont (Texas) one Christmas. I didn't have any family there, so we all stayed at Johnny's house, upstairs. Me and Keith Ferguson spent the whole three days there tape recording off of Johnny's 45 collection. Brought that back to Austin and that was the backbone of The Fabulous Thunderbirds' repertoire - Johnny Winter's record collection."

From "Raisin' Cain: The Wild and Raucous Story of Johnny Winter", Johnny also met Keith Ferguson, a musician who shared his love of the blues and later