



The Famous Flames

Bobby Byrd met James Brown when they were young men. Brown came to live with Byrd's family who offered him a room in their home and a promise of a job. Brown joined Byrd's group, which sang both gospel (as the Gospel Starlighters) and rhythm & blues (as the Avons). They performed around Georgia and South Carolina as the Flames (amended to the Famous Flames) in 1954 and 1955. Byrd played keyboard, Brown played drums, and they shared lead vocals. The other original members of the group were guitarist Nafloyd Scott, bassist Roy Nebraska "Baby Roy" Scott and singers Sylvester Keels, Fred Pulliam, and Doyle Oglesby Jr. The latter two were replaced by Nashpendle "Nash" Knox and Johnny Terry in 1955.

In late 1955, the Famous Flames cut a demo of "Please Please Please" at Macon, Georgia, radio station WIBB. "Please Please Please" was a sizable hit, reaching number 5 on *Billboard's* R&B chart. The group had many other hits including "Try Me." The Famous Flames broke with Brown in 1968. They were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2012.

From commercials to modern rock and hip-hop music, the sound of the Flames and James Brown are still among the most "sampled" records in pop. And it all started here.



Snapshots of Toccoa's history