

ROAD TO NAMI NOUE

HISTORY OF THE LATE 1960'S HIT SONG ON OKINAWA
WRITTEN AND RECORDED BY RONNIE FRAY



ROAD TO NAMANUI
PIRATED 45 RPM RECORD ON OKINAWA
FROM RONNIE FRAY'S "WHY NOT" ALBUM



RONNIE FRAY AND THE VFW
ORCHESTRA AT THE VFW OKINAWA

ROAD TO NOMINEWEE (WHY NOT - ALBUM SPELLING)

The song was written and recorded by Ronnie Fray, who is Canadian and currently lives in Ontario, Canada. Below is an excerpt from an email I received from him in July 2008. Ronnie's responses are in **RED**.

Hi Ronnie **HEY DONN**

Couple of things you mentioned below that I wanted to ask you about. **SHOOT!!!**

You said you recorded the CD (copy from the album) in Detroit, would that mean that "Road" on the CD would be a rerecording of the original song?

YES, THAT IS CORRECT...THERE NEVER WAS A SINGLE 45 RPM. IT'S JUST ONE SONG ON AN OLD ALBUM OF MINE CALLED "WHY NOT" AND IT'S NOT VERY GOOD.

Did you record the original song in the Far East,

NO, BUT SOME ONE GOT HOLD OF MY ALBUM AND PRESSED A FEW THOUSAND COPIES OF 'ROAD'...WITH 'HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN' BY THE ANIMALS ON THE FLIP SIDE (ON THE LOVE OR HEART RECORD LABEL) AND MADE A FEW BUCKS (I WOULD IMAGINE) ...

where was the record made?

MINE (ALBUM)...IN DETROIT...THE COPY (45 rpm)....IN OKINAWA (I GUESS)

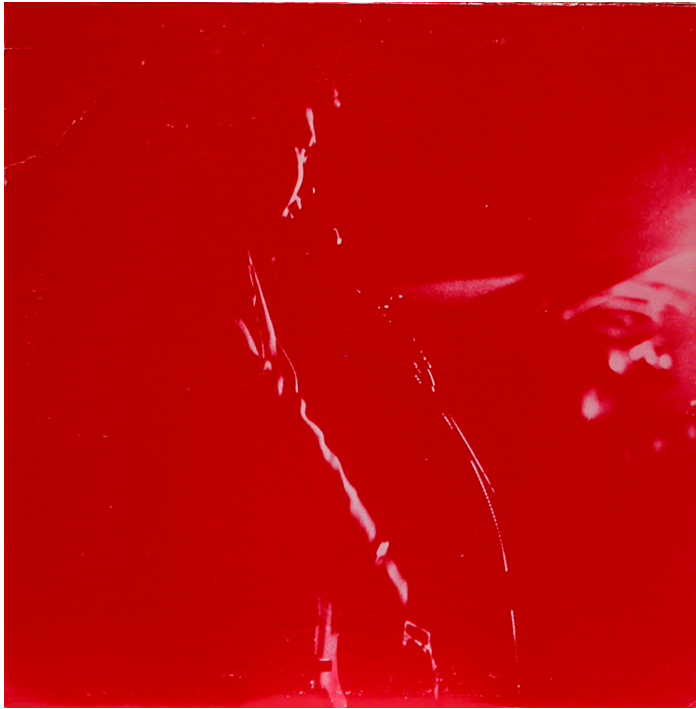
Do you have a copy of the original record?

**I DO HAVE THE ALBUM (ONE ONLY).
I USUALLY BURN A C.D. OF IT IF SOMEONE WANTS/ORDERS IT.. BECAUSE I HAVE IT LOADED INTO MY COMPUTER...ALONG WITH FOUR OTHER C.D.'S OF MINE.
(ONE IS LIVE AT THE BAVARIAN INN ...IN G.R.)**

What inspired you to write the song?

**HA HA...WHA'DYA TINK?
MY FIRST TRIP TO NAHA IN '67/8..WE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME....
I CAME BACK TO GRAND RAPIDS ...WROTE AND RECORDED THE SONG.. IN 1968/9
WENT BACK TO OKI THE THIRD TIME AND HEARD IT ON THE RADIO...
I ALMOST SH#@... I WAS BOTH P#@%\$ OFF AND HAPPY AT THE SAME TIME...
I HAD A HIT RECORD IN OKINAWA AND I DIDN'T MAKE A DAMN DIME!!!**

“WHY NOT” ALBUM RELEASED 1968 FROM WHICH THE “ROAD TO NAMINUI” SONG WAS PIRATED.



THE ALBUM COVER IS FROM A PHOTO OF RONNIE TAKEN IN WELLAND, ONTARIO ON THE STAGE OF THE ATLAS HOTEL IN 1965-66



“WHY NOT” album information

Description

Speed: 33 RPM Record Size: 12" Duration: LP

**Ronnie Fray Capers - “Why Not” album recorded at
SOUND RECORDS STUDIO
NEW HAVEN, MICHIGAN 48048**

Members..... Ronnie Fray(from London Ontario Canada), Clay Higley (from London Ontario Canada) and Alan Clark (from New Castle Pennsylvania U.S.A)

Song titles: Love of the common people/ It's such a pretty world/ Strange faces/ Six white horses/ Road to Nominewee/ Goin' away/ Morning on the farm/ Ode to Billy Joe/ Until it's time for you to go/ I never cared for you/ Travelin' man



RONNIE FRAY AND THE SEOUL KITTENS (A GREAT GROUP FROM KOREA) AT THE VFW OKINAWA



AUG • 67 •

ALAN CLARK, RONNIE FRAY WITH HARVY FINE AT THE VFW OKINAWA



RONNIE FRAY TRIO IN TOKYO



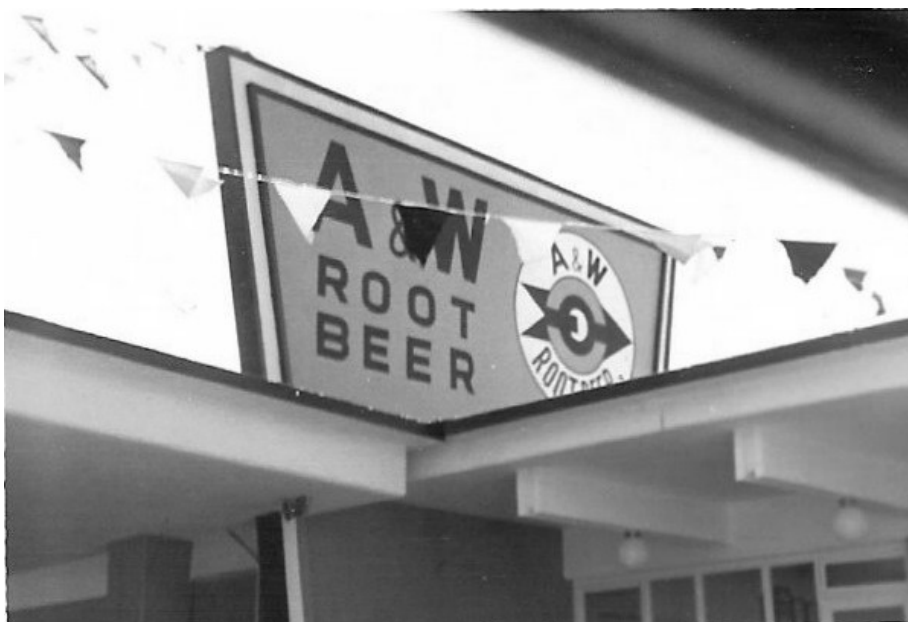
**RONNIE FRAY TRIO PROMOTIONAL PHOTO FOR 1968 FAR EAST TOUR
INCLUDING OKINAWA
L-R ALAN CLARK, RON CHICK, RONNIE FRAY**



**VFW POST 9723
OKINAWA, RYUKYU ISLANDS
1967**



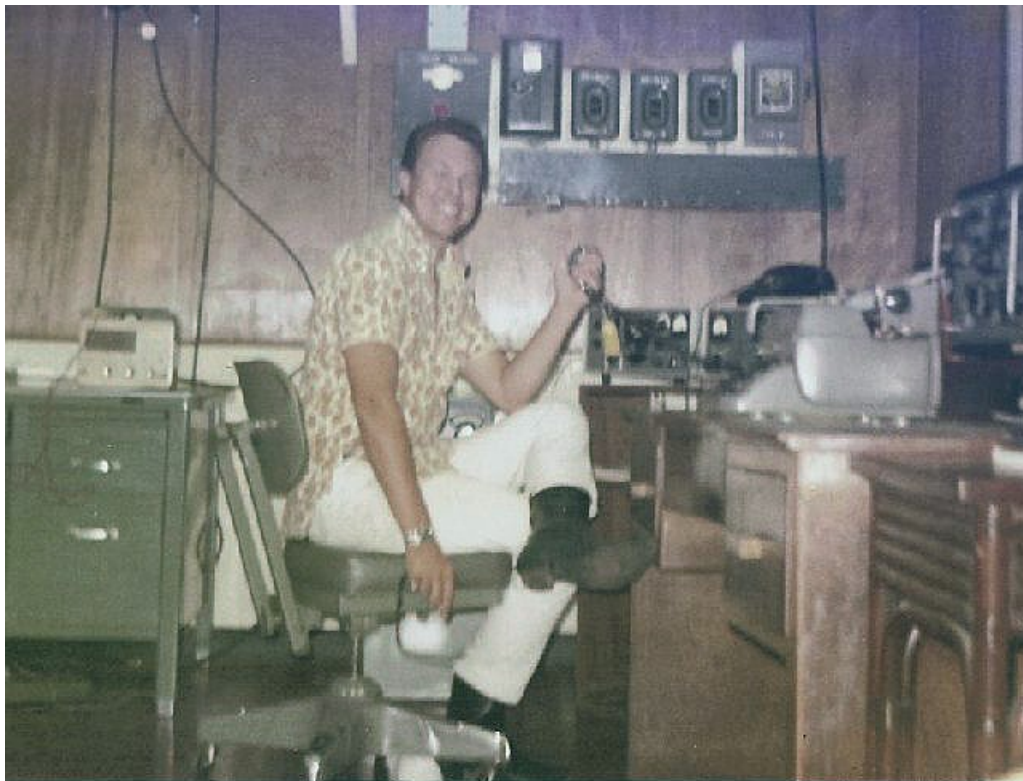
**PIZZA HOUSE - HIGHWAY 1 - OKINAWA
ONE OF THE BANDS FAVORITE PLACES TO HANG OUT**



**FIRST PLACE WE ATE AT ON OKINAWA
JUST LIKE HOME**



**AFRTS - ARMED FORCES RADIO AND TV SERVICE -
OKINAWA**



RONNIE HANGING OUT AT AFRTS



**WHAT DAY IS IT, AND WHERE THE HECK AM I?
ROAD SIGN ON OKINAWA**



**ENTRANCE TO KADENA AIR BASE - OKINAWA
3 SHOWS A NIGHT, 3 DIFFERENT CLUBS, 6 DAYS A WEEK**



**RONNIE AND ALAN WITH A PILIPINO DRUMMER
AT THE VFW OKINAWA - 1967 TOUR**



**RONNIE FRAY TRIO WITH THEIR
OKINAWAN DRIVER/ASSISTANT**

This Is Bobby Monahan?



BOBBY MONAHAN - COMEDIAN - AGENT FOR RONNIE FRAY TRIO ON OKINAWA



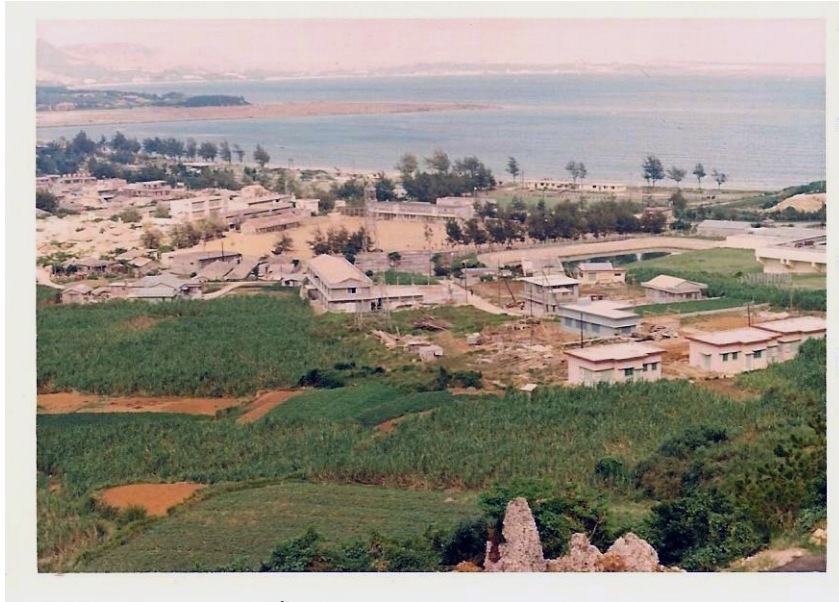
VISIT TO BOBBY MONAHAN'S HOME ON OKINAWA



**ON THE WAY TO THE FAR EAST
TOURING A NAVY SHIP IN SAN DIEGO
1968**



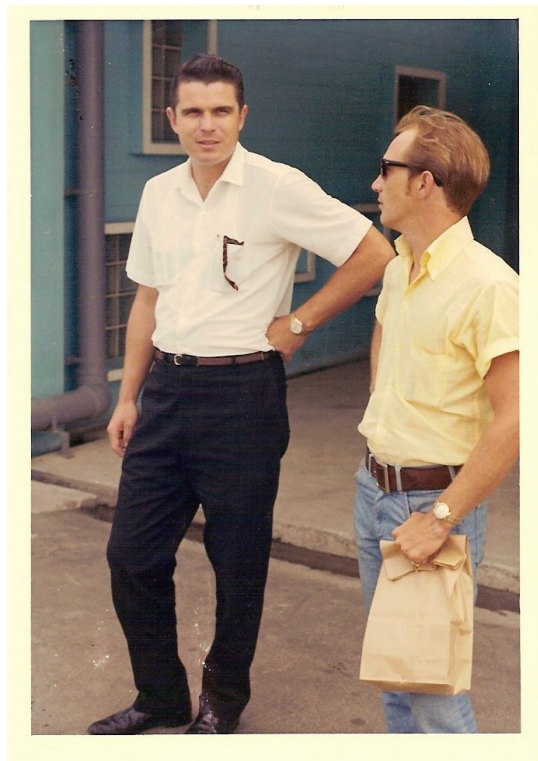
**NCO CLUB
CLARK AIR FORCE BASE, PHILIPPINES
ANOTHER STOP ON OUR FAR EAST TOUR**



HOUSING AREA ON THE COAST OF OKINAWA



CLAY HIGHLEY WITH OKINAWAN MUSICIANS



**ALAN CLARK WITH THE MANAGER OF THE WHITE
BEACH NCO CLUB ON OKINAWA**



**ARRIVING AT THE SAIGON AIRPORT IN VIETNAM
PART OF OUR FAR EAST TOUR**

Japan Times

'All the News Without Fear or Favor'

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1971

Ronnie Fray, Jack Jones, Oscar Peterson

By MAX E. LASH

Country rocker Ronnie Fray has moved back and forth between Kyushu and Tokyo he must feel like a yo-yo. Shows in Sasebo, Itazuke, Iwakuni, Hakata, Yokota, the Sanno and back to Sasebo. And maybe another show in Tokyo before he leaves for club dates on Guam and in Honolulu.

A few nights back, with a night off, he dropped in at the SandS Club in Roppongi, found Eddie Murata and the Home-towners, just the best available, on the bandstand, and before anyone could say Grand Rapids, Michigan, there he was, wailing away to the delight of everyone present.

A native of London, Ontario, Ronnie has taken up residence in Michigan, but not to beat a draft. With his friend and partner in Cineman Records in Grand Rapids, Jim Geeting, who came along for the ride this trip, Ronnie has some fiery things heating up back in the furniture capital of the world.

In Grand Rapids, Ronnie was winding up a full year as a

single at a place called The Bavarian. The club bursts at the seams every night, we're told, and anyone who inquires about action in the city is immediately referred to The Bavarian and Ronnie Fray.

In the Far East his following is sizable, too. A few years ago he recorded a song that he wrote called "Road to Namnani," honoring a famous section of Naha, Okinawa, that has become a perennial hit on The Rock. And in Tokyo he has laid a beautiful tune on a local music publishing house called "It's Been That Way" . . .

Jack Jones opened his first singing tour of Japan (he was here on location some years ago) at the Copa Friday night, and, backed by Nobuo Hara and the Sharps & Flats, plus his own rhythm section "These are the guys I travel all over the world with!" Joe Close, piano, and Steve Swallow, bass, the latter no newcomer to this part of the world, and a Cuban conga drummer with hair out of this world. And another drummer, who, we're ashamed to say, shall go unnamed because we were still

day night, the 16th . . . And Oscar Peterson and his Trio are booked into the Sanno at 10:30 the same night.

MCA Records of the Victor group have high hopes for the album "Jesus Christ Superstar," which was recorded in England and has sold a million or so already in the U.S. Words and music by two youngsters, Tim Rice and Murray Webber, who worked on the "Rock Opera," which is what JC Superstar is, for two years. We took the album home and listened to it, were delighted to hear no offensive lyrics, found the whole thing very hip and heavyweight, as anything about the object of the album should be . . . We made a couple of telephone calls. One chaplain for the Air Force said he hadn't heard the whole album but thought that some of the references might be anti-Christ. Another, a Chaplain Jeffreys, had a number from the album sung at a religious "seminar" last Friday night, Good Friday. We've learned that the album has been played at several chapels at U.S. bases around Japan, and young and

ARTICLE ABOUT RONNIE FROM THE JAPAN TIMES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER - 1971

The Youtube video link below in Japanese will actually show you a picture of the 45 rpm pirated record that made the song popular on Okinawa.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZxTbGnK-uA>

Japanese video rough translation

(Picture of Shigeki Nasu, a musician from Japan)

He went to Naminoue when he was young.

He remembered one song that hit his heart when he heard it at a restaurant.

He heard the restaurant will close shortly so he made a call to the restaurant.

He knew the juke box had been broken for a long time but he wanted to hear the song once more so he took his portable record player.

He went to a photographer's store to see if they had any photos of his old memories of Okinawa. He went to the same hotel that he stayed at when he was young.

(Background music playing was Nasu's song "Road to Naminoue" which was in memory of his first visit to Okinawa and the first time he heard the American song "Road to Naminoue".)

I am at Naminoue, Naha.

Someone told me the State Side restaurant will close in June.

This restaurant has been in business a long time.

Before this restaurant closes, I wanted to listen to one particular song badly.

So I made a phone call to the owner of the restaurant to see if he would let me hear the song...

(Sign on the wall of the restaurant)

To all our customers:

I am sorry to announcement that I have decided to close this business in June.

Thank you so much for giving us your business for many years.

By owner

(Phone call)

I understand your juke box is out of order but about 20 years ago, I heard a song named "Road to Naminoue" which influenced me very much. I wrote my own song using the same title. My bands name is "Yamuchin" and my name is Nasu.

I am very sorry to bother you, but I would like to hear that song once more. Is it possible?

Also I will bring a portable record player with me.

Do you mind when I get there, may I listen to it?

(1982 He went to Naminoue, Okinawa which was the first trip to Okinawa for him.)

(1996 "Yamuchin" first publication of his song "Road to Naminoue")

(A song about Nasu's memories of Naminoue)

(Song playing)

That was long time ago before you born (picture showing State Side restaurant)
I just found out the other day probably, the State Side restaurant was on the ocean.
There was a juke box, but it is out of order now...Effected by ocean breezes.

(Picture five story brown building)
(White letters on blue sign board says Hotel Castle NOZAKI)

This hotel is where Nasu stayed when he came to Naminoue the first time.
(picture at the Hotel, clerk, and guitar on his back)
He starts telling stories talking about when he came to Naminoue the first time.
More than ten High school students were also at the Hotel for exams and the students were from Nasu's home, Miyazaki prefecture. That was the night before examinations.

I was playing a game machine and the students were talking about the examinations.

Sometime later on, Nasu met a girl who was a student.
She was attending the same class and taking the same subject of study with him.
He talked about memories of Okinawa.
She said Wow, was that you? I remembered someone playing a game machine.
He said, yes! That was me.

(Picture changed to Photo shop)

He visited the photographer Minoru Yamada
I understand some businesses existed on the ocean.
(Picture photographer holding in his hand)
Yamada says this one is the oldest one; it used to be Naminoue beach
Ocean salt water swimming pool 1960. Photo by Minoru Yamada
There were a few buildings along with the swimming pool.
Some businesses were an amusement arcade.

Do you know this gentle man? (Photographer asked)
His name is Tosyo Teruaki.
This one was taken in 1969, when he came to Okinawa the first time.
At that time no one was allowed to come to Okinawa without a guarantor.
So I signed for him. (Says Photographer)
Teruaki was then able to get his passport

(Picture changed back to the restaurant)

He is talking to the owner of the restaurant and asking if he could possibly listen to the record.
Kouji Nagata is the owner of the State Side restaurant.

(Restaurant owner talking)

He said a young GI band wrote this song. They might have worked in the cabarets.
The band went back to US and they remembered Okinawa, drinking sake and having a good time so they wrote the song.

(Picture opening up old juke box)



For Americans, it is hard to say "Naminoue" so they said "Naminui"
such as ZUIKEIRAN ---> they said "Scran"
and FUTENMA they said "FUTEEMA "

(Removing record from jukebox and playing it on the portable record player)

(Narration over music)

I listened again to the song "Road to Naminoue "

I wonder who wrote this one.

I don't even know the name of the band.

But I feel like I want to see them.