



JIMMY GILMER & THE FIREBALLS



All of the original members of The Fireballs were born in Raton, NM. Since Jimmy Gilmer was born across the border in Texas the group meets the residential requirements for The West Texas Music Hall Of Fame "Honor Roll". In 1958 George Tomsco (lead guitar) and Chuck Tharp (vocal/rhythm guitar) organized a band while attending Raton High School. Other members included Stan Lark (bass), Eric Budd (drums) and Danny Trammell (rhythm guitar). After winning a local

talent contest performing a Jerry Lee Lewis number "Great Balls Of Fire" the group decided on "The Fireballs" as their band name. George Tomsco had become an accomplished lead guitar after having taking lessons at age 9 and performing in country bands from age 12. Because of Tomsco's innovative guitar work the group moved in the direction of recording instrumentals. Their first charted single "Torquay", recorded at Norman Petty Studios in Clovis, eased into the top 40 at #39 in 1959. Their follow-up "Bulldog" reached #24 nationally and received a lot of air-play across West Texas in 1960. With a couple of charted records under their belt the group began touring and in 1960 performed on Dick Clark's American Bandstand. In 1960 Jimmy Gilmer (vocalist) joined the group and in 1962 Eric Budd (drums) left for the service being replaced by Doug Roberts. This same year they were involved, at Norman Petty Studios, with instrumental dubb-in backing on Buddy Holly's "Reminiscing" LP that reached #40 on the album charts.. In 1963 they were given a song co-written by Keith McCormack of Plainview entitled "Sugar Shack". Keith was a member of the instrumental group The String-A-Longs ("Wheels") who also recorded at Norman Petty Studios. Released on Dot 16487 the song worked it's way to the top of the pop charts staying there for 5 weeks. 1963 was a year of many great songs and the year Frankie Avolon and Annette Funicello made the first Beach Party movie, Patsy Cline was killed in a plane crash in Tennessee and the very first time four female singers were in the top 10 for the year. #2 "Dominique" The Singing Nun, #3 "He's So Fine" The Chiffons, #5 "Hey Paula" Paul & Paula (from West Texas) and #1 was "Sugar Shack" a song, featuring a flute-sounding instrument, nifty guitar work and vocals by Jimmy Gilmer. Overall, The Fireballs/Jimmy Gilmer & The Fireballs would chart a total of 6 times in the top 40 with their last "Bottle Of Wine" reaching #9 in 1968. Original founding members George Tomsco and Stan Lark continue to perform in 2002.