

The Check-Mates

The Check-Mates were formed in the Spring of 1960 in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Check-Mates name came about by a suggestion from Buddy Emmerke, one of the original Catalinas. The group forming the Catalinas had narrowed their name choice down to the Catalinas or Check-Mates. The Catalinas went on to greater notoriety. The Check-Mates from the start were a Doo Wop group; not your typical rock-n-roll music of that day. They were liken to the Kingston Trio with their clean-cut appearance with light blue seer sucker shirts, dark blue cotton pants with madras or rope belts, and weejuns shoes, which fit right in with the college preps at that time.

The practice sessions occurred in many a parents home, but the most sessions were at Caroline Daniels Dance Studio which was located on Sharon Amity Road, under which is now the Charlotte Hotel Restaurant. The first gig as it was known was in the gym under the basketball goal at South Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte. They traveled the Carolinas being booked mostly by Ted Hall Enterprises, playing at many frat parties at all the major colleges in the Southeast. Once in a talent show in Mooresville, N.C. they won the Battle of the Bands title. They also appeared a number of times at the famous Park Center in Charlotte along with well-known groups as The Zodiacs, Catalinas, Riviera's, and Bo Didley. For 3 days in the first week of June 1961, the group performed one of their most memorable events right here at the Myrtle Beach Pavilion. Interesting enough "Alabama" were playing across the street at The Bowery. Little did we know at that time what was ahead for this talented group?

The band disbanded somewhat in the summer of 1961 due to college for some, but the singers continued to perform with instrumental back up from the "Plaids".

The original members of the group were made up of students at Myers Park High School and East Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte, N. C.

SINGERS

Charles (Shorty) Short
Johnny Short
Greg Howren
Vann Simpson

GUITAR

Vann Simpson

DRUMMER

Jerry Adams

PIANO

Hecky Stellings