

BANDS OF BROTHERS

By Alan N Webber

I've always wished I had a brother. Bet my dad and son did too. Both my paternal and maternal grandfathers had four brothers each. I know my maternal grandmother had brothers, one they called Heck, but for the life of me, I can't remember the others. Dad had four sisters, me, I had two sisters and my son had three sisters. Not in the cards for us.

When I hear stories about brothers playing in sports, in the same band, or other adventures, I get a little envious. Some brothers never understand how lucky they were.

Here are some successful brothers, some of which you may have not heard of.

Paul and Lloyd Waner are the only two brothers in the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame, long before most of us were alive. Evidently the brothers were a package deal, having played together on three different teams, the Pirates, Braves, and Dodgers.

Playing for the Pirates the Waner brothers hit back to back homers in a game in 1938. While they had both hit homes in the same game twice before, it was the first time done back to back.

It would be 71 years before that happened again when Andy and Adam LaRoche both belted homers back to back in 2009, as did Justin and BJ Upton in 2023.

Hank Aaron and his brother, Tommie were the most prolific home run hitting duo in MLB history with a total of 768 homers combined from the two. It should be noted though that Hank had 755 of those homers. They played together for the Milwaukee/Atlanta Braves.

Twins Taylor, and Tyler Rogers are both pitching for the San Francisco Giants this year. Too bad they aren't pitching for the Minnesota Twins.

In the 60's the three Alou brothers, Matty, Felipe, and Jesus all played in the same outfield on September 15th, 1963, for the San Francisco Giants. The three brothers played in 5,129 combined games, most by brothers in MLB history. Felipe would have a son, Moises, that played for my favorite team, the Chicago Cubs too.

Brothers Marcel Lachemann and Rene Lachemann both played in the majors, and then both managed for major league teams.

Surprisingly, there were lots of brothers who played on the same team, nearly one hundred, in major league history, including three sets of brothers for the Chicago Cubs. Danny and Hal Breeden in 1971, Paul and Rick Reuschel in 1975-78 and Andrew and Austin Romine (who!?) in 2021, all played for the Cubs.

Over in the National Football League football, everyone has heard of the Manning brothers, Payton, and Eli, (or had to suffer through all their commercials) who will both surely be in the Hall of Football. As will the Kelce brothers who actually played against each other in a Super Bowl.

There were also the Mathew's brothers, Clay and Kasey and their brother dads, Clay and Bruce, who played in the NFL.

Did you know the great Walter Payton had a brother, Eddie, that played in the NFL, as did Jim Thorpe's brother, Jack.

There were three Gronkowski brothers who played in the NFL, as did the three Watt brothers. They must have had some proud parents.

Then there is the set of brothers who coached against each other in the Super Bowl, Jim, and John Harbaugh. Jim coached the San Francisco 49'ers against John's Baltimore Ravens in February of 2013, the only time two brothers faced off against each other as coaches. Somebody had to win, and on that day it was John's Ravens. Given that Jim is back coaching the San Diego Chargers, they could wind up in an AFC championship game, but not another super bowl.

Over in the National Hockey League, currently there are a whopping 25 sets of brothers playing in the NHL.

Bobby and Dennis Hull both played for the Chicago Blackhawks, as did brothers Phil and Tony Esposito. The Sedin brothers, whom Hawks fans called the Sedin Sisters, both played for the Vancouver Canucks their entire career. There are the three Staal brothers, Mark, Eric, and Jordan currently toiling for the NHL. Even more incredibly are the six Sutter brothers playing in the NHL. (Jeez, all I wanted was one brother!)

So, with all those brothers in mind, what do the Doobie Brothers, Blues Brothers, Chemical Brothers, Righteous Brothers, and the Flying Burrito Brothers all have in common besides being rock and roll musicians?

The answer is that there were no brothers performing together in any of those acts. No relations at all as a matter of fact.

But there were plenty of bands that did have brothers and even a few that had sisters in their band. Karen Carpenter had brother Richard in their band. Some had multiple brothers and others had the whole darn family.

Family acts included the Jackson 5, or the Osmond Brothers who were immensely popular. But there were other family affairs such as the Cowsills, Sly and the Family Stone, and the DeFranco Family that were popular too. Interestingly though, the Partridge Family were not related at all.

My personal favorite brother musician act was the late Gregg and Duanne Allman from the Allman Brothers Band. Sadly, the brotherhood of that particular band only lasted two years, as

Duane died in a motorcycle accident in 1971 at the age of 24. Gregg would continue on with the band until his death in 2017.

The Vaughn brothers, Stevie and Jimmy made quite a formidable team in the blues genre. My personal tastes though was for Stevie Ray when he performed solo.

The Beach Boys, another Band of Brothers, combined surf music with a California sound to become one of the most successful bands in history. Brian Wilson would form the band with his younger brothers Carl and Dennis.

Another brother's act that became one of the most successful bands in the history of rock music is England's Bee Gees. How old were you when you learned the name Bee Gees is an acronym for the Brothers Gibb? Barry, and his twin brothers Maurice and Robin sold between 120 to 200 million records. Only Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Michael Jackson, Garth Brooks, and Paul McCartney have outsold them. A fourth brother, Andy Gibb, also had success in pop music, singing mostly songs written by his brothers.

Randy Bachman had three musical brothers. So, when he left the Guess Who, he recruited brother Gary to manage the new band, brother Robbie to beat on the drums, and then Tim on guitar to form Brave Belt. When they added Fred Turner to the group, they became Bachman-Turner Overdrive

A band of brothers that I am not particularly fond of but has had enormous success is Australia's Malcolm and Angus Young, founders of AC/DC. The band is credited with selling over 200 million records, including the album with the second most in sales, Back in Black.

Other bands of brothers are:

The Van Halen brothers, Alex, and the late Eddie Van Halen. This group holds the Guinness Book of Records for the highest-paid single performance in 1983, when paid \$1.5 million for a 90-minute concert at the US Festival.

Edgar and the late Johnny Winter, the albino twins performed and recorded together, but also kept solo careers.

The Dire Straits were comprised of Mark and David Knopfler, selling over 120 million records. Proving timing is everything, their *Brothers in Arms* album was the first to sell a million copies in CD format in history.

The Marshall Tucker band were made famous by the Toy and Tommy Caldwell brothers, both who have passed away. Toy was the lead guitarist, vocalist, and song writer. Interestingly, there was never a band member named Marshall Tucker.

Some rock aficionados may like the band Wishbone Ash and may incorrectly believe musicians Martin and Ted Turner are brothers in the group. They are not even related. Oddly though, at one

time during his recording career Martin Turner's real brother, Glenn, played in the same band together.

One of my favorite bands you probably never heard of is called Mason Proffit. Considered a country rock band, half of their lineup included the founders Terry and John Talbot. Check out the song "*Everybody Was Wrong*."

Speaking of country rock, the Bellamy Brothers, Howard, and Dave Bellamy of *Let Your Love Flow* are real life brothers. I saw the duo in concert once at a high school in Gilbert Arizona and came away a huge fan.

The Kinks from England boasted the Davie's brothers, Ray, and Dave. They are considered rock pioneers for hard rock with songs like "*Lola*" and "*You Really Got Me*." As a kid, I played a 45-rpm record of the song *Lola* so much I darn near wore it out. Sadly, the brothers never get along, which split up the group.

The Fogerty brothers from the band Credence Clearwater Revival is somewhat of a heart breaker, even though they had enormous success. They would sell over 45 million records.

Began in El Cerrito California in 1959, brothers John and Tom Fogerty, they first appeared as the Blue Velvet's, then the Golliwogs, and finally Credence Clearwater Revival. Between 1969 and 1971 they produced fourteen consecutive Top Ten singles and five consecutive Top Ten albums in the US. They also played at Woodstock in 1969.

Unfortunately, Tom and John could not get along, leading to Tom's departure in 1971. John would also have issues with the other two founding members, Stu Cook and Doug Clifford, so much so, he wouldn't play live with them in 1993 for their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Guess we know who the prima donna of that group was.

Tom Fogerty, who would record with members of the Jerry Garcia Band, died in 1990. At his funeral, John delivered the eulogy, saying, "We wanted to grow up and be musicians. I guess we achieved half of that..."

Family issues aside, I so wished I had had a brother that we might have played together in sport or to have been in a rock band, even if we never got out of the garage.

Then, there were bands of brothers who were not athletes or musicians. But some of them would go on to be great Americans, and in the end, isn't that most important. The Wright brothers of flight, the Kennedy brothers of politics or the Mayo brothers of medicine all come to mind.

Not all brother duos were great, but some certainly infamous. Frank and Jesse James scorched the Midwest with acts of robbery and murder after the Civil War. They teamed up with another set of brothers, the Younger's Cole, Jim, John, and Bob, with their brother-in-law, John Jarrett, to go from robbery to robbery before returning to their homes in Missouri. They also employed a couple more sets of brothers, William, and Tom McDaniel. Later, Jesse would team up with

more brothers, Clell, and Ed Miller, as well as Robert and Charles Ford. Their crime spree ended when Robert Ford cowardly shot Jesse in the back to collect the reward.

Then there was sad story of the brothers Booth, Edwin, and John Wilkes. At the time John shot perhaps the greatest president this country has ever known; Edwin was considered one of the best actors in America. He was particularly renowned for his portrayal of Hamlet in Shakespearean theater. Sadly, after his idiot brother assassinated Lincoln, altering the course of history in this country, Edwin's acting career ended abruptly.

And speaking of actors, which I rarely do, there was the Marx brothers, all five of them. Groucho, Chico, Harpo, and Zeppo successfully appeared in the start of talking motion pictures. A fifth brother, Gummo had acted with them earlier in vaudeville.

For this article, I looked to see if I could find a list of brothers who were in the trucking industry, an industry close to my heart. In my novels, the company the main character drives for is owned by two brothers, although one is deceased. But I was mildly shocked to see there is no such list of brothers in trucking. Only one in the top 250 carriers has the word "Brothers" in their name – the Williams Brothers, a flatbed carrier out of Pennsylvania. As I thought about it, the only transportation firm founded by brothers I could ever recall was Knight Transportation out of Phoenix AZ. I believe there were three Knight brothers that founded the company.

But perhaps there never was a greater band of brothers than the Niland brothers from Tonawanda New York or the Sullivan brothers from Waterloo Iowa.

The four Niland brothers, Edward, Preston, Robert, and Frederick served in the military during World War II. Three of the four brothers supposedly died in battle, with only Frederick surviving. When the war department learned his three brothers had perished, they sent him back to the states to complete his service. Later, it was learned that Edward had not been killed, but was a prisoner of war in a Japanese POW camp. He was liberated on May 4th, 1945. It was the Niland brothers experience that was the basis for the movie, "Saving Private Ryan."

But possibly the greatest brothers of them all were George, Francis, Joseph, Madison, and Albert, the sons of Thomas and Aleta Sullivan. When news came that their sister's boyfriend, Bill Ball, was killed at Pearl Harbor while serving on the USS Arizona, they all enlisted in the Navy. All five were serving on the USS Juneau when it was sunk, the brothers all going down with the ship. It was because of this the US War Department established the Sole Survivor Policy.

From my perspective on the outside looking in, a brother relationship looks like it would be great. I've known a lot of brothers in my lifetime, although none seemed to be overly impressed with the situation, probably because the bigger brother always beat on the little brother. Or the older brother always had his little brother tagging along – much like Ralphie and Randy of *A Christmas Story*. "Oh Fudge..."

I'm sure all the brothers loved each other, (well, except poor Edwin Booth) but it always appeared to me most were content to blaze their own trail.

So, here's a shout out to all you brothers. You lucky devils.