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World Radio History

Letters

I have enjoyed seeing the advent of a top notch magazine on country music such as yours this past year. I would, however, like to take issue with the article on country music in Illinois in your October issue.

The authors of the article list ten radio stations in Illinois as programming country music exclusively. I feel it only fair to let your readers know that there are 19, not ten, full-time country stations in Illinois, including WGIL-FM, a 50,000 watt stereo outlet for country music in Galesburg, Illinois, where I work as program director. The nine exclusively country stations to add to your list (according to CMA-May '73) are: WGIL-FM, Galesburg, Ill., 94.9 FM; WFVR, Aurora, Ill., 1580 AM; WKZI, Casey, Ill., 800 AM; WNOI-FM, Flora, Ill., 103.9 FM; WKAK-FM, Kankakee, Ill., 99.9 FM; WDDD-FM, Marion, Ill., 107.1 FM; WAKC, Normal, Ill., 1440 AM; WROK, Rockford, Ill., 1440 AM; WIZZ AM & FM, Streator, Ill., 1250 AM, 97.7 FM.

I would appreciate it if you would print this to be fair to these country radio stations in Illinois.

JOHN BIERMANN
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, WGIL
GALESBURG, ILLINOIS

Radio station W104 in Waterbury, Connecticut recently sponsored an essay contest on "The Growth of Country Music" and asked Country Music *magazine to select a winner. The following entry came in number-one:*

My Country Music Experience

The growth of country music parallels and symbolizes the growth of my life. My home as a boy was Carthage, Texas, home of Jim Reeves, who is now buried and memorialized there. Those were the years immediately following World War II, 1945-1951, when my dad worked in the just developing gas fields of Panola County. Communication media then consisted of cowboy movies on Saturday afternoon and one radio station—KWKH, Shreveport, Louisiana.

Anyone familiar with KWKH of those years will recall its close association with what at one time was one of the most popular Saturday night stage shows outside of Nashville—The Louisiana Hayride . . . KWKH was a country music station, beaming out to youngsters like me all over Western Louisiana and Eastern Texas the incomparable sounds of Hank Williams and the blues of the hardships that characterized the lives of our daddies during those years. Because we were young and receptive, the sounds and words of country music became a mystical part of our makeup, a part of our soul we couldn't escape. I remember lying awake by the radio on Saturday nights and feeling the excitement of Horace Logan calling the next act on stage at the Hayride . . . I remember writing in for song books of the stars of the Hayride and reading along as they sang and looking for hours at the pictures of their personal appearances. I remember seeing my first country show in the Carthage High School auditorium, featuring Johnny and Jack and Little Miss Kitty Wells . . .

The growth of country music is really the growth of a generation of people like me who grew up in times of immeasurable transition in America—from rural to urban, from poor to rich, from tired to vibrant. Throughout that period of transition, country music invested itself in the lives of its people when life was difficult for performers and spectators alike. But those times made us feel at home with the emotions of sadness and hurt and disappointment, legitimate emotions people feel today in response to life but sometimes fear to express.

When Merle Haggard sings "Working Man's Blues," I remember the difficulty of my daddy's work to buy me a pair of shoes; I remember his making my toys at Christmas; I remember my mother making my school shirts for the first grade. I remember also the family with nine kids who lived in a shack across the pasture from us. The daddy didn't have work in the winter and the kids were always sick and the neighbors, all of us, shared what we had for the kids' Christmas . . . Oh, you say that's not America today. But it was the rural America of 1945 and several years after . . .

Well, my generation grew up but we never outgrew the sound in our hearts, the musical attachment to country life childhood, the remembrance of our roots. In growing up we became part of the immense movement of people who left the country and moved to the city. But we brought the remembrance of our roots with us—we brought our music. And being fortunate to experience the economic affluence of America, we built halls in which to celebrate that part of our culture we still cling to.

Country music expressed the way we felt yesterday, and country music expresses the way we feel today, voicing our emotions and experiences in words and rhythms we understand and respond to. We keep it because it reminds us of where we've been and what we've learned and what we still value in a world where values change overnight and are seldom stable. Rather than turn our backs on the experiences of our youth, we celebrate them because they were meaningful to us despite their hardships. And we celebrate them with the music that sustained us then . . .

Many say country music grew because of the growth of technology, promotion, advertising, and economic affluence. These may be partial explanations, but they are secondary to the central truth that country music lives in the hearts and lives of people who can respond to it because it memorializes a part of our lives that we cherish.

GRAVES ENCK
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Sonny James, The Southern Gentleman, is truly that. I've been a fan of his for a long time. Sometimes articles delving into a star's life somehow tarnish their image. Sure, people want to know how they live, etc., but Sonny's life is his own and I respect that. For me, his great talent is enough and I thank him for sharing it with me. His albums have brought me many hours of enjoyment. A gentleman—yes, indeed, and he should be shown the same in return. Thank you, *Country Music*, for your wonderful article. If I don't see another one for a long time, as the writer suggests, I will feel bad but I understand Sonny's right to privacy.

JULIE ANNE HALL
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

It was with pleasure that I learned from your November issue of *Country Music* that the Gene Autry radio program "Melody Ranch" is returning to the air via syndication. This program will doubtlessly be welcomed by millions of Western music fans the world over.

I also enjoyed, with some reservation, your feature on the Western Film Festival in Memphis this summer. Your writer has a severe misconception of the appeal of Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. (We kids *did* and *do* claim them as favorite cowboy idols.)

It would be totally appropriate to note here, also, that Gene Autry is a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, and that it was Western music that survived the fads of modernism and remains pure American music of the land.

WAYNE FORSYTHE
DECATUR, ALABAMA

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IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:
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I Knew Glen Campbell Before He Was A Superstar . . .

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including:
Sweet Becky Walker
To Make Me Wanna Stay Home
It Must Have Rained In Heaven
Bitter They Are, Harder They Fall
Penny Annie

*JODY MILLER
House Of The Rising Sun
including:
Reflections/Long, Long Time/Lucky Chicago
Smile, Somebody Loves You/Natural Woman

*BOB LUMAN'S GREATEST HITS
including:
Just Enough To Make Me Stay
Neither One Of Us
Lonely Women Make Good Lovers
Still Loving You
Come On Home (And Sing The Blues To Daddy)

JOHNNY PAYCHECK
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Down Home and Around

by Dixie Hall

Tom T. Fiddles While Home Burns

A few days before Christmas, a fire, caused by some timbers left in the fireplace, burned one entire wing of our new house to the ground. It all started while **Tom T.** and **Harlan Howard** were fiddling around with a couple of guitars and some new tunes, as they always do after any gathering.

Tom T. had just finished a benefit concert to raise funds for the Franklin High School band. WSM announcer, **Grant Turner**, and **Ralph Emery**, who emceed the show, regretted they were unable to attend the reception following the show because they had to be up early. Tom told them we would not be up late. We were up for two days and they missed the hottest act in town.

The mayor of Franklin and the sheriff of Williamson county had just finished saying "if we can ever help you, just let us know." They had not even got to bed when the balloon went up.

"Can't make a sound for a week," Dolly scribbled.

Harlan Howard has just donated his belt to Tom's souvenir cabinet, but it was Tom who lost his pants. One firefighter, wiping his brow, commented to **Jimmy C. Newman**, "It's a good thing we had the lake or the house would have been lost." Newman replied, "Sure is, but the Halls are the only people in the county with catfish swinging on their chandeliers."

Carl Smith, a neighbor who had turned down an invitation to the party, arrived at the scene saying, "You'd do anything to get me to come to a party." Tom said, "You should have been here earlier." Smith replied, "I would have been, but I didn't know you were having a weenie roast."

Jerry Kennedy had a call the next morning from a disc jockey, asking how Tom's record was selling.

"Just going like a house on fire," said Kennedy.

A wire that arrived read: "Hear your house burned up, glad it didn't burn down." Still haven't figured that one out.

TV Mirror columnist **Bonnie Bucy's** first reaction on hearing of the blaze, was, "Good grief, I hope it wasn't my hot butt."

Enough of the fire. **Loretta Lynn** also had a warm time recently. She and her family were soaking up the sun in Mexico at the vacation home they own there. She said, "I love it there. I can go anywhere I want in old clothes and nobody will recognize me."

Another of country music's leading ladies, **Dolly Parton**, has been walking around with a pencil and pad, taking notes. She was ordered to rest her voice, following a throat ailment. "Can't make a sound for a week," she scribbled.

Never mind, at least that new Cadillac Porter bought her for Christmas will brighten her day. ■

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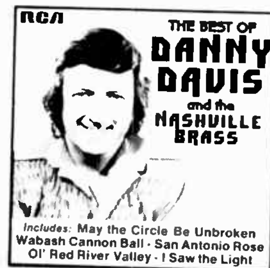
January Country.



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People on the Scene

by Audrey Winters

Faron Young entertains Hall of Fame members . . .
Billy "Crash" Craddock plans to film a shampoo commercial . . .
Roy Acuff is back in the recording studios.

Faron Young was a hit with fellow musicians and leaders in the music industry when he performed for the Country Music Association honoring the Hall Of Fame members and their families. He and his six-piece band, the Deputies, gave an outstanding show at the Richland Country Club before such greats as **Chet Atkins, Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe, Tex Ritter, Maybelle** and **Sarah Carter** and former Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis. He sang several of his best tunes, and kidded with **Wesley Rose** saying, "This is one you don't have the publishing on, Wesley" (a reference to the giant Acuff-Rose publishing company). Then Faron grew serious and said he wanted to pay tribute to the greatest fiddle player who ever lived—**Red Hayes.** Red worked with Faron several years and died from a heart attack after finishing a performance with Faron and **Connie Smith** in England.

Jerry Lee Lewis, Jr., 19-year-old son of the famed country-rock entertainer, was killed in an automobile accident near Hernando, Mississippi November 13. Jerry, Jr. worked as a drummer for his father's band, the Memphis Beats. He played tambourine on his father's latest rock & R&B album.

He was buried in the family plot at Ferriday, Louisiana. Jerry Lee, Jr. is survived by his parents and two sisters.

Plans are in the making for recording the last live performance of the world famous Grand Ole Opry show at the Ryman Auditorium before

PHOTO BILL GOODMAN

Faron Young and the Deputies played to a star-studded audience at a CMA Show hosted by Ralph Emery, honoring Hall of Famers.

World Radio History

PHOTO JOSEPH DE MARIA

Tammy and George in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade: "Spose it could have been worse. They might have wanted to use us for stuffing."

the move to the new Opry House at Opryland. **Jim Bowen,** A&R man for Opryland Records, will produce the album. The first Grand Ole Opry show at the new Opry House will also be recorded.

Billy "Crash" Craddock is scheduled to film a national television commercial for a leading shampoo company. He worked two sold-out houses at the Hollow Inn in McCutchenville, Ohio recently. Shortly after his second show, the place burned to the ground. Hotter than a match? . . . **Bonnie Owens Haggard,** Merle's wife, is recovering from surgery for non-malignant tumors. Bonnie went into the hospital two days after learning she had the tumors. She said she feels better than she has in months . . . RCA artist **Dickey Lee** and wife are parents of a new baby girl . . . **Patsy Sledd** won a divorce from her husband . . . **Melba Montgomery** is forming her own band of musicians . . . **Billy Edd Wheeler** and songwriter **Jerry Chesnut** formed a new song publishing company called Impressions, Inc. . . . **Waylon Jennings** made a rare appearance at the Exit/In in Nashville doing two shows. His electric guitarist, **Curtis Buck,** and **Jan Yarnell** were married on stage at midnight shortly after his performance. Waylon worked an Indian Reservation in Gallup, New Mexico on New Year's Eve . . . **Roy Acuff,** who recently celebrated his 70th birthday, is back in the recording studios at Hickory Records to record some new material. He will be backed by his Smokey Mountain Boys along with a group of backup singers who consist of his own son, **Roy Neal Acuff, Hugh King** and **Mac Allen** . . . **Johnny Rodriguez** has moved into a new modern townhouse in Nashville. He has opened offices in Brentwood (outside Nashville) in the same building as **Tom T. Hall's** offices. Johnny was recently given a couple of pieces of expensive Indian jewelry by an Indian Chief in Arizona . . . **Tammy Wynette** was hospitalized for a slipped disc when she reached for a sack of groceries in the back of her car. She has now shed her back brace and is back on the road working like the trouper she is . . . **Willie Nelson** has turned producer and produced an album for Waylon Jennings . . . **Fred Carter, Jr.** is **Sammi Smith's** new producer . . . **Jim and Jesse McReynolds,** the Virginia Boys, have been in the recording studios after a long absence. They record for Opryland Records.

Tammy Wynette and **George Jones** graced the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. The couple rode atop a giant turkey float singing their hit single, "We're Gonna Hold On."

Buck Trent, banjo-picking Wagonmaster with the **Porter Wagoner** show for 11 years, is leaving Porter to join **Roy Clark** on all of his road shows. Buck and Porter still remain close friends. Buck said, "It was a decision I had to think about carefully. Porter wants to slow down on his road work more and I feel my career will grow with Roy working so much."

Jean Shepard, who has enjoyed success with "Slippin' Away" and "Come On Phone" after changing record labels and booking agents, is changing her style of dress for stage also. Instead of the expensive chiffons, sequins and rhinestone short full frocks she's been wearing, she is now wearing casual floor-length dresses.

Jean, known for her frankness and plain-spoken English, was discussing her clothes. "I paid $900 for a dress to wear to the awards show in Los Angeles three years ago when I was nominated for a Grammy. I called the Capitol Records people up and said, 'I'm not going to embarrass you all. I'll bet you all thought I would show up in something tacky.' We got to Los Angeles all dressed up and went to the entrance where we were supposed to go. A guard told us he didn't care who we were; no one got in without a certain ticket. I said, 'I didn't drive 2,000 miles for nothing. I'll bet you I get in this #!¢& place . . . ' and I did."

Singer **Ivory Joe Hunter** of "Since I Met You Baby" and "I Almost Lost My Mind" fame sent Roy Clark some of his own special brand of barbecue sauce after they became buddies at a recent party jamming and ad libbing. Ivory Joe on piano and Roy on banjo held a captive audience with their picking and clowning. Roy picked one and told Ivory Joe, "Now sweat, man." Ivory Joe quipped, "Son, when I was a Soul Brother I used to sweat. Now that I am country, I pre-spire." Ivory Joe is with Dot Records and has his first country album on the market.

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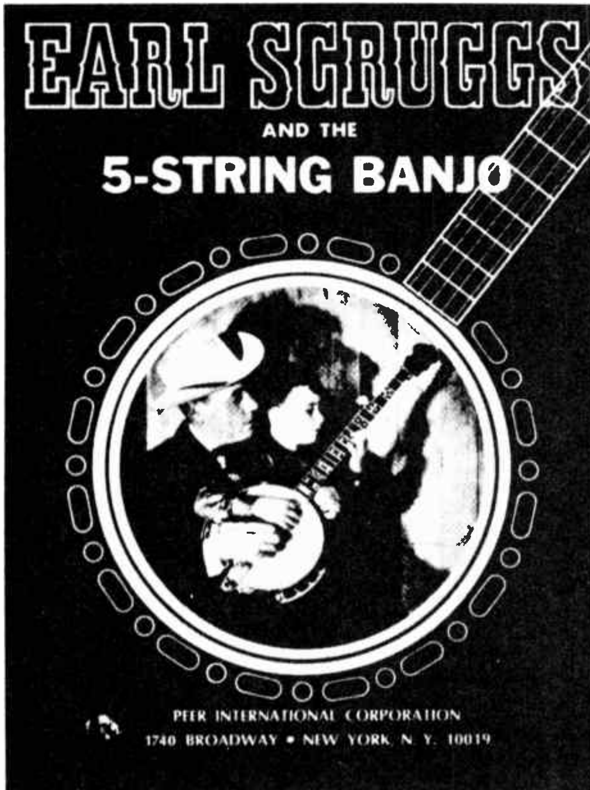

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blue ridge cabin home
earl's breakdown
flint hill special
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old folks
the martha white theme song
randy lynn rag
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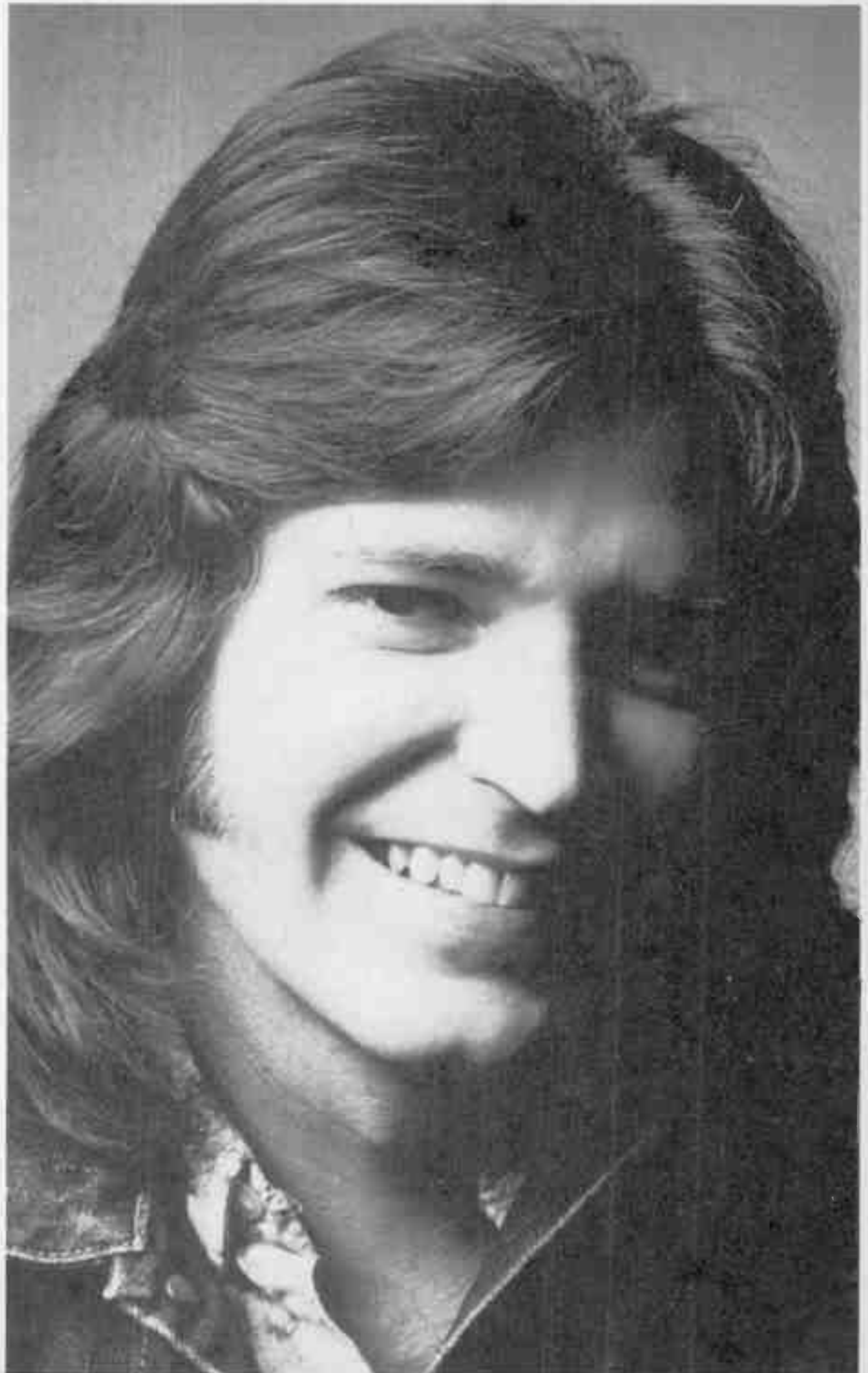
Country News

Freddy Weller writes love songs
that'll curl your hair, and the fans love it.
So much for tradition.

Freddy Weller: Storyteller With a Sexy Story

by Don Rhodes



Atlanta's entertainment boom began in the early 1960s when there existed an amazing collection of talent about to burst on various music scenes. Trying to make a name for themselves in those early sixties were people like Billy Joe Royal, Tommy Roe, Joe South, Jerry Reed, Ray Stevens, Roger Miller, David Rogers, Jack Greene and Freddy Weller. Of that impressive list, only Freddy Weller still makes Atlanta his home.

It's probably coincidence, but when I rehashed the Atlanta of the early 1960s with Weller recently, he was in Room 314 of a motel in Augusta, Georgia . . . with a bottle of Smirnoff Vodka by his bed. I almost glanced twice to see if he "had someone to share it" with him. "This is the first time I've been in a room numbered 314 since I wrote 'A Perfect Stranger,' and I got into this room by accident," Freddy said, lying on the motel bed next to his rounded Ovation guitar.

"Everybody figured you had to go to Nashville or Memphis to have a big hit record in the early sixties," he recalled, "but Bill Lowery really did a lot to change that. He had the foresight to see a lot of this untapped talent in Atlanta." Lowery's a rich man today because of that foresight, for he ended up making stars of Tommy Roe, Joe South, Billy Joe Royal, Weller and others.

With Roe, Weller composed "Jam Up and Jelly Tight" and "Dizzy."

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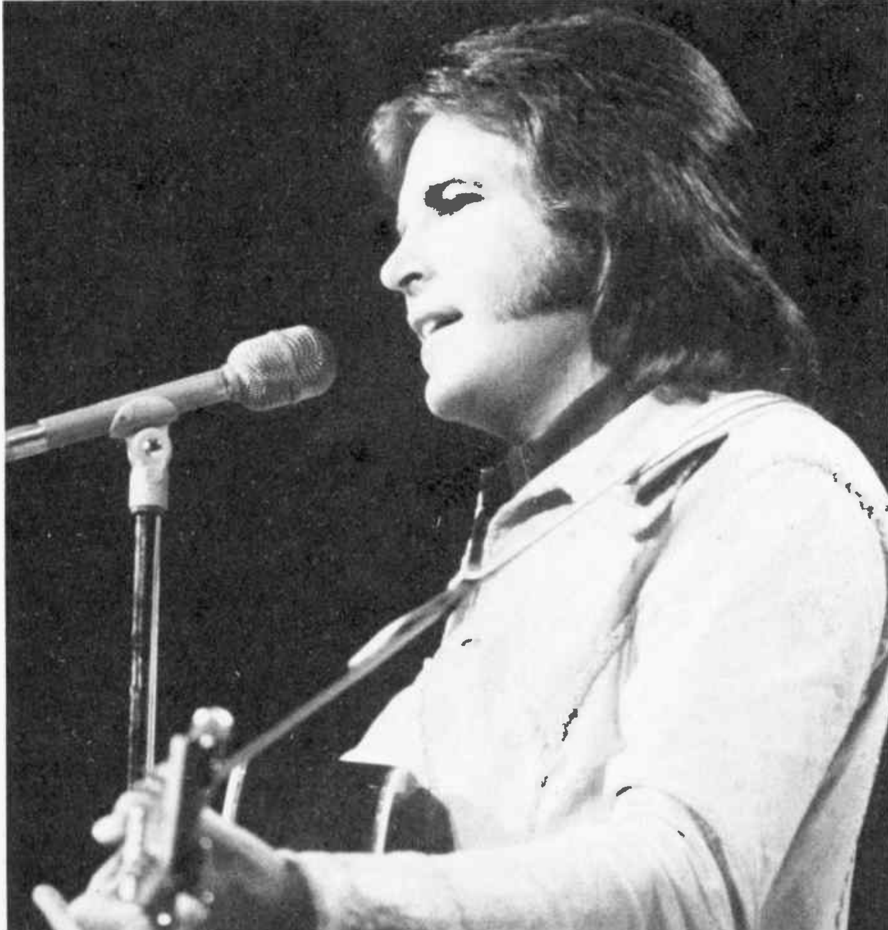
Either individually or with other writers (generally Spooner Oldham), Weller has composed "Train, Train (Carry Me Away)," "The Roadmaster," "She Loves Me (Right Out Of My Mind)," "Lonely Women Make Good Lovers" and "A Perfect Stranger."



Freddy Weller doesn't look too much like a country star, but then he isn't exactly old-fashioned about other things, either.

His lyrics rank among the sexiest being penned by any writer today. Besides the usual angle of man-meets-woman, man-loves-woman, man-loses-woman he's becoming more aware of story songs. ("I think Tom T. Hall is one of the greatest writers of all time," he says.) And Weller sees a dollar sign in writing about lovable women and virile men: "Women, between 18 and 35, account for the majority of country music record sales," he says with a certain amount of awe. "I'm of the opinion that women, under all that prim and properness, are more concerned—not necessarily promiscuously—with sex than men. Sex is being touched, being kissed, being loved. You can write about it tastefully. The whole society has opened up tremendously. You can discuss things on television that you couldn't talk about at a *party* years ago. I think I fell into a trend, following people like Kristofferson and Mac Davis. I don't just sit down with a pen and some paper and write about sex. I just set out to write a good song. If it heads in the direction of sex, I make the most of it. But you know what Billy Sherrill says? He told me, 'The first songwriter to use a four-letter word in a country song will sell 10 million copies.'"

Weller may not have used a four-letter word, but he's come pretty close. One particular song from his *Too Much Monkey Business* album really caused a buzz in the industry. The Weller-composed song is called "Betty Ann and Shirley Cole" and has the distinction of being the first country song about lesbians.

For six years, women pounded on Freddy Weller's motel room doors around the nation when he played guitar for the rock band "Paul Revere and The Raiders." His association with that group was at the time when their record sales and popularity were skyrocketing. That association officially ended a few months ago. "I was singing country music long before the Raiders, though. As a kid I used to listen to country stations, and I loved people like Hank Snow, Porter Wagoner and Hank Williams. But my all-time favorite country singer is George Jones. I was really proud when he cut 'She Loves Me (Right Out Of My Mind)' on his album."

Readjusting himself on the motel room bed, Weller talked about his life as a rock star. "I think everything I learned from that era has helped me. Some of it I didn't agree with, but it was food for thought. Paul Revere's philosophy was that we were not the greatest group in the world musically; he was more interested in the overall show. I remember how hard it was for me to learn those dance steps the Raiders did. I must have looked like a robot. It was unnatural to me. I had trouble walking and chewing gum at the same time.

"In 1968 we began going out on road tours which lasted 10 to 20 days at a time. We'd fly to the first date on the tour and take a bus to the rest of the dates. It was always mass hysteria from the first moment we rolled into town. Chicago, Birmingham, Chattanooga, Montgomery and Atlanta were always sold-out or near sold-out dates. When we came into a town, there would always be a bunch of screaming kids outside the bus. A guy who worked for us would go into the motel lobby and get the room keys. Once we checked in, the kids would hang around our motel room all afternoon. Some would be interesting to talk to individually, but you can't talk to a crowd."

What was it like for the folks back home to see their son being a rock star beseiged by groupies? "My parents were thrilled about the whole thing. Before this their friends would ask, 'What does your son do?' and they'd have to answer that I played a guitar for a living. Some of their friends turned up their noses at that. But when I was with the Raiders, the tables changed. Their kids would want

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tickets to our show. My folks had always encouraged me in the music business. They knew I was happy and that made them happy. When I'd go back to Atlanta at the peak of this thing, I couldn't go out and be myself. When I went to buy some underwear, some kid would spot me and would get his or her friends. Then a crowd would follow me like the Pied Piper. It made me self-conscious to go buy some Fruit-of-the-Loom.

"I couldn't get out and do the things people do every day. I've always been a reserved type of person, but I don't know how to cope with a crowd. A lot of time that's been mistaken for conceit ... I think deep down every one of us was relieved when it was over, and we found peace of mind. I think everybody knew being rock stars was a temporary type of thing. We knew that one day the magic would wear off. That's why we had strived to be both showmen and businessmen."

Three years ago when Weller broke into country music with his version of the Joe South hit, "Games People Play," people in the country audiences would refer to his association with the Raiders and say, "When are you going to leave them longhairs?" Weller says of this, "I can't blame people for it, but what they didn't know was that Paul Revere set up my country music contract with Columbia Records. Mark Lindsay produced my first country album. The thing most people can't understand is they think there must have been jealousy in the group with me becoming a success in the country field. But Revere was proud to see what he had created grow. He'd listen to country stations just to listen to what I had released."

During those last few years when Weller played alternate dates as both a rock guitarist and country music singer, he found the transition would not be that easy in some places. "You'd be surprised at the heat I got about my long hair in Texas. Times have changed since then. Today, you won't find many country artists *without* long hair. But in 1969, when I hit with "Games People Play," long hair was not accepted at all in the country music field. When the record became a big hit, a country music promoter in Texas was among the first to book me. I was used to the teasing on the street about my hair at that time, but I never thought of it in terms of my music. I wasn't a hippie. I just had long hair with the Raiders. I even had long hair in high school.

"Anyway, I was backstage for this concert in Austin, Texas and it was a packed house. Not long before I went on, one of Waylon Jennings' band members told me, 'You sure have a lot of nerve coming down here with that long hair.' Since 'Games' was high on the charts, I was placed near the end of the show. The only other band member that travelled with me was my drummer who also had long hair. There came a break in the show before I was to go on, and my drummer went on stage to set everything up. The crowd started yelling insults at him. They called things like, 'Get that faggot off the stage!' and 'Yoo, hoo, sweetie!'

"Now, get this picture. Here I am standing in the wings listening to this. It really scared me, and sweat started popping out on me. I thought to myself, 'I'm just not going to give them a chance to yell things at me.' So, when my name was announced, I dashed out on stage and went quickly into 'Freeborn Man.' As soon as that ended, I played some song that everyone recognized. I kept that up until my last song. By then, the country fans realized I was sincere. Before the last song, I stopped and said to the crowd, 'Here's my brand new record, and I want to thank you people for making it a hit,' and then I went into 'Games People Play.' When I finished, I had a huge response ... really loud applause. I guess that show set a precedent for me in the country music field, because even today in my concerts I try to talk with my music.

"What was really funny about that Austin concert was afterwards when a six-foot-four man came up to me and asked, 'You do like country music, don't you?' I answered, 'You ain't kidding!' He put his huge hand on my shoulder and told me, 'If anybody gives you any trouble about your long hair, you just let me know!'" ■

PHOTO: DAVE McNEELY

Willie at Abbott: a mini-Dripping Springs for the hometown folks.

Willie Nelson Comes Home to Abbott

by Al Reinert

The fat, orange-purple sun sank behind the grassy Central Texas hills, clouds blushing pink at the edges, while the cavernous sky rolled through the color spectrum

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PHOTO CHUCK GIST

as only a Texas sky can do. Ralph Mooney's pedal steel guitar whined across the hills, trapped between the endless sky and the limitless earth, as the Waylors drove into the hard second verse of "Honky Tonk Heroes."

The crowd came alive with foot-stomping and hand-clapping and Waylon Jennings drew on the energy to generate one of his strongest performances ever. The crowd was smallish—probably under 10,000—but it was a good Texas country crowd, rowdy and boisterous, drawn to the little farming town of Abbott by the prospect of some good country music.

The festival had been organized by the Abbott PTA in honor of hometown-boy-made-good Willie Nelson, and it had the easy-going ambience of a county fair. Vendors hawked arrowheads and leather-goods, bottles and antiques, a hot-air balloon lofted cloudward at sundown (a UFO had been advertised), and two couples were married. The townsfolk of Abbott set folding chairs in their front yards to wave at the long vehicle columns that spewed dust down the narrow dirt section roads leading out to the creekside pasture that hosted Willie's Homecoming.

By many standards it was an ordinary music festival—good music, good vibes, good times—but it was unmistakably Texas. The audience, reflecting the broad Texan allegiance to modern country music, was varied to the edge of bizarre: rural and urban, young and old, hippies and goatropers and goatroping hippies, grandmothers and teenie-boppers, rednecks and rockers. They mixed casually and easily, traded jokes and suntan oil, imbibed local brews (Pearl, Lone Star) and local herbs.

The music and musicians, in keeping with the audience, were equally eclectic:

- Billy Joe Shaver, emerging from long exile in Music Row's back alleys to become one of country's finest songwriters, a kind of boondocks John Prine fashioning gutsy downhome emotions into perceptive country lyrics;
- Ken Threadgill, exuberant grandfather of the Texas music scene, a disciple of Jimmie Rodgers whose own broad vision of country music had been sufficiently open to accept and encourage Janis Joplin;
- Jerry Jeff Walker, refugee from the East Coast coffee-house circuit and adopted native son, a gifted and original musician whose Texas settlement was both congenial and apt;
- Michael Murphy, one-time novelist and assembly line West Coast songwriter, possessed of a creative imagination that has stretched country music from Jerry Lee Lewis to string quartets;
- Kinky Friedman, who has wedded hard country melodies to subtle sophisticated lyrics and three-part harmonies, brought to the music both witty cynicism and audacious *chutzpah*, whose outrageous Jewboy band could hail from nowhere else but Texas;
- Waylon Jennings, present at the creation of rock 'n' roll as the bass player with Buddy Holly's Crickets, who crooned his way through almost a decade as a countrified Perry Como before returning to his roots as a powerful, soulful, hard-driving Western rocker.

And Willie Nelson, son of Hill

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County, the Abbott PTA and the undulating monotony of Central Texas, flattened beneath that awesome sky, King of Them All. Content for years to be one of Nashville's most respected songwriters, successful and sought-after, he was reinvigorated by change or growth or curiosity or whatever wellspring of searching insufficiency it is that defines great creative talents. Moving back to Texas, he sprouted long hair and a beard and a gold earring, formed friendships with people like Bob Dylan and Leon Russell, became the catalyst of a musical chemistry that distilled a uniquely Texan blend of white soul, rural ethic and high energy.

The music has been called everything from "redneck hip" to "progressive country" and its genesis ascribed to a multitude of sources—from Mexican influence to cultural interplay—but the bass line always, always, is a freeminded openness and hankering for excitement.

Texas, of course, has historically provided the electric spark for country music and sat at the intersection of country and western. Honky-tonk, Western swing and rockabilly were all spawned within the state, and it is no accident that the first great cowboy singer (Gene Autry) was a transplanted Texan, the premier black country artist (Charley Pride) an adopted one, the first bilingual country star (Johnny Rodriguez) a native.

Willie Nelson's homecoming lacked the big-name superstars and six-digit attendance figures that transform music festivals into "events." Its one-day existence produced no live albums or feature films, sent no greedy tremors through the music industry. All it was, really, was fun, a rowdy affirmation of the vitality of both the music and its audience. Waylon Jennings summed it up, in what would be badly mixed metaphor in any context but Texas:

I'm just a laid-back country picker,
And I'm laid back a country mile. ■

Waking Up To A Sleeper
by Len Lyons

The British term, *sleeper,* applies to any inconspicuous star rising swiftly on the horizon of achievement and popular acclaim. You couldn't find a better word to describe a country music band from Berkeley, California, called "Asleep at the Wheel." They may make it big before you can tap your toe.

Asleep at the Wheel: a country music band that's closing the country-rock gap.

But a country music band from Berkeley, California! Since when?

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ripening for a year under the open sky of guitarist Ray Benson's farm.

"Sure, we're young an' we got a weird name," says Ray, who stands over 6 feet 10 inches in his cowboy hat, "but we're a country band. What's changed is this: there's a big, young country audience. They listen to rock, they listen to country—and they like both. We're trying to reach what used to be two distinct audiences."

And they're succeeding. Not long after the Wheel's arrival in Berkeley, they were packing the Longbranch Saloon weekly. There, they discovered pianist Floyd Domino on leave from a boogie-woogie gig in Stevensville, Montana. But the folks who crowded into the Longbranch weren't from Stevensville, or from Nashville. Of course, you wouldn't have known that by the way they stomped their sandalled feet to down home picking and nodded their longhaired heads to the pedal steel of Reuben "Lucky Oceans" Gosfield.

Just why Asleep at the Wheel was able to bridge the seemingly infinite gap between rock and country audiences is anybody's guess or maybe a puzzle for some patient musicologist to piece together. Perhaps, though, it has something to do with Ray, who fronts the band. His stage presence is a refreshing calm in a tiring storm of temperamental, image-conscious prima donnas who flood the entertainment world. Ray mixes the Wheel's repertoire with balance and discretion, and he introduces just about every tune with a dance-hall rap that's as simple and as unadorned as a major chord: "an' here's another tune we're gonna do for you raaht now and we hope you like it—we sure do—so have another beer, the more you drink the better we sound."

That's it. The rest is music. Ray doesn't call long-distance from performer to audience. It's strictly person-to-person.

But there's something besides their appeal to the young rock audiences that's going to escort them to the top of the country charts. As Ray explains it, "We've always been a country band, but we fell in love with Western Swing."

Western Swing, which put the "W" into C & W, was the hottest music around Texas and California in the thirties and forties. The style exudes the characteristics of pre-bebop, big band jazz (hence, the word "Swing") and sometimes makes generous use of horns, reeds, pedal steel, and fiddles. It was dominated by such erstwhile favorites as Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys, Moon Mullican, and early Tennessee Ernie Ford.

"Some people think it's nostalgic," Ray reports, "and if that's how they feel... well, I'm happy. But it's not nostalgia to us. I'm 22, y'know. No one in our band is old enough to have heard Western Swing. To us, the sound is contemporary."

When you listen to the Wheel's first album, *Comin' Right At Ya'* (on the United Artists label), you know they're not just recreating the past. Western Swing is their music, not an heirloom. True, the band can take you back with "Take Me Back to Tulsa" by Bob Wills or the Hank Snow tongue-twisting show-stopper "I've Been Everywhere," sung by bassist Gene Dobkin. But the album is full of originals, most of them penned by drummer Leroy Preston. Preston's "Hillbilly Nut" tells the story of a country boy whose every step in the city is a *faux pas*. Another tune, sung by Chris O'Connell, registers the complaint of a down home girl whose country-singer husband has lost sight of her in the glare of the city lights. It's called "Your Down Home Is Uptown." Leroy's songs are so seasoned and genuine that his originals start sounding like standards after the first listening.

Chris O'Connell plays guitar and does most of the vocals. She is from Arlington, Virginia and joined the band right out of high school. She talks about her own style with humility.

"Back in Virginia, we had a record collection with only about three albums of girls singing. There were maybe two Loretta Lynn albums and a Kitty Wells—which is basically the same thing, since Loretta learned from Kitty all the way down the line. I guess I'm sort of a third generation."

But that's too modest. Chris sings with uncommon control, especially on ballads—where it's needed, and her voice is as clear as an undiscovered mountain stream.

The band toured the Southwest and Northwest during late summer, made the DJ Convention in October, then to Europe, back by Thanksgiving, not to mention a recording session for United Artists somewhere in there. Gene Dobkin may be adding another verse or two to "I've Been Everywhere." ■

Scruggs Revue Spans The Generation Gap

by Pat Morris

Several thousand students are packed into the Wilkes College Gymnasium in Wilkes-Barre, Penn-

PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL

Earl Scruggs Revue: basically a family affair.

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sylvania. Balloons, the post-inflation replacement for frisbees, are flying all over the place, and everyone is delightedly screeching at the top of their collective lungs. A typical Eastern college scene. Only the object of the adoration is not Dick Gregory, Ralph Ginsberg, or even Alice Cooper. The crowd is screaming for more of the Earl Scruggs Revue.

Scruggs, on first thought, seems an unlikely college idol. Although always recognized as king of the banjo players, for years he was associated in the public mind with bluegrass, bluegrass and more bluegrass. Except for the brief heyday of "Bonnie and Clyde," not the stuff of which pop heroes are made. After all, how many college students are going to admit they actually *listened* to the "Beverly Hillbillies"?

From playing the best of bluegrass for rural audiences, Scruggs has moved into an eclectic mixture he describes as "country-flavored jazz-rock-pop with a little bit of blues." The music is often experimental; Scruggs considers it a successful experiment.

"A lot of people watched us very closely in the beginning, to see what would happen. Now a lot of groups are trying to do the same thing."

Scruggs now plays mainly for students. "I'd say 90 per cent of our bookings are on campuses. I love the spontaneity and exuberance of college audiences. Young people are where it's happening. I have no intention of going back to rural music."

He admits that the move may have cost him some fans.

"When you get a little older," he told me, "you may find there are some things you loved so much and had such good feelings for that you never want them to change. But you can't stop time."

Nevertheless, it's natural to wonder why a man would leave a secure top niche in a well-defined world to hitch his star to an unproven group of rock 'n' roll musicians.

"I just got so sick and tired of playing the same thing again and again and again," he explains. "I got so bored. And whenever you do something you're bored with, it shows. You get stale.

"And I had another gripe," he adds. "I didn't like to see the banjo pigeonholed into one type of music. There are lots of things you can do with a banjo."

On stage he now does them all, and then some. This Revue really gets the crowd moving. Earl Scruggs shares the spotlight equally with his sons Randy (guitar), Steve (guitar), and Gary (bass and lead vocals), Josh Graves (dobro) and drummer Jody Maphis. Contrary to what many expect, Earl Scruggs does not emerge as the star of the show. The Revue is not merely his backup band; it comes off as very much a collective. Everyone takes his solo, and takes his instrument and voice through country, folk, bluegrass, blues, rock, and combinations that Scruggs says "nobody's put a label to yet." (So I won't try.) At one point in the show Jody Maphis and Randy Scruggs even share the same guitar.

The tightness would seem natural for what is predominantly a family band, but Earl Scruggs, surprisingly, didn't teach his kids to play. "I think a lot of children are turned off to music by being forced to play," he says. "Pop Stoneman had the best answer when someone asked him how he taught his kids. He said he just tuned the instruments and left them lying on the beds and asked them to please not touch them. I didn't do that, but I left instruments around and picked with them (the kids) once in a while. But they learned on their own. I wasn't around when they were little; I was always on the road."

But just being named Scruggs, in Tennessee, meant you were supposed to know music. Randy remembers that "in school they always wanted you to play for the choruses and things. I had to play the autoharp in the fourth and fifth grade play." Apparently the limelight was comfortable; he has turned into an incredible showman.

The Scruggs Revue spans generation and culture gaps. But the break from tradition most likely to win the approval of college students was the Revue's appearance at a Vietnam Moratorium.

"I went because I believed in it," Earl Scruggs states flatly. "They asked me to come. I asked them if it was going to be a peace-

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ful thing, and they said yes. I don't approve of violence; violence is not the way to solve anything. That's why I didn't approve of that war. It was a political situation and it should have been solved politically."

Despite rumors to the contrary, he didn't find any overt criticism of his anti-war stand, or a decrease in the amount of fans.

"You have to remember a lot of people aren't inclined to come up to you and say 'Hey, I don't like what you're doing,' even if that's what they feel," he says. "But even if there were bad consequences for my career, I would do it again if I had to. I'm very sincere about that. There are some people who will jump on any bandwagon, or use any gimmick to get ahead. But I won't do that.

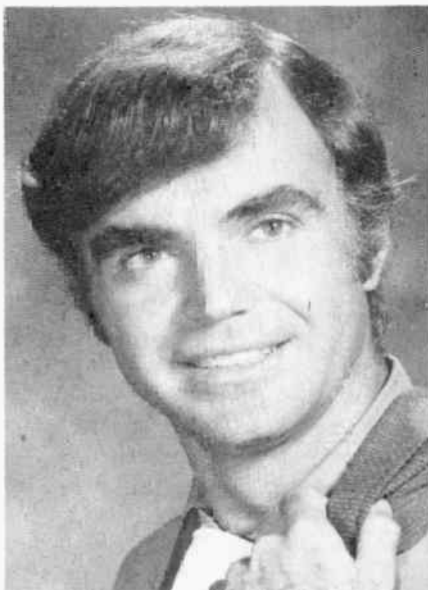
"We have some people come up and tell us they've come as much as seven or eight hundred miles," Scruggs says. "I wouldn't say they come that far *just* to see us, but a lot of them tie it in with visits to family or friends. They time the visits so they can come to the concert."

Devotion is really the least you can expect from years of living in a bus, eating bad food and being constantly shuttled to and from one-night stands. But Earl Scruggs doesn't consider that a hardship. "I've been doing it so long I feel like I'm goofing off if I'm not on the road. I love music," he says. Period. "I still get excited when I play the banjo." ■

Country Radio

An Opinion by George Means

George Means is a disc jockey on country music station WWOK in Miami, Florida. For a few weeks last summer he became something of a local celebrity when he was fired on the air for "going on a Haggard kick," playing a straight hour of Merle Haggard songs. The station management said this was contrary to its programming policy, but within hours WWOK was being deluged by calls and telegrams from Means' supporters. He sorted out his differences with the station management and was reinstated, largely on his own terms. On his first day back he played a solid 40 minutes of Haggard. Country Music *asked him for his views on modern country radio.*



George Means—WWOK disc jockey.

The growing acceptance of country music is not attributable to a change in the music, but to the fact that country is saying something meaningful to the lives of its listeners. People can identify with the stories in songs like "Workin' Man's Blues" or "The Homecoming." They listen to the lyrics and then it hits: "Damn, ya mean there's others feelin' the same way." It is getting more difficult to identify in this way with other music. It is no longer a matter of "keep 'em country," but "turn 'em country."

There is an old story about how a guy would listen to country music on his car radio as he drove along, then would switch the station at red lights so the guy next to him wouldn't know he was one of "them." Well, things have changed. People no longer feel they have to apologize for liking country . . . and we have just begun.

The tremendous success of country in Miami and South Florida, despite large minority groups, supports the contention that Greater Miami is not unlike her southern metropolitan counterparts. It is a work-a-day world to hundreds of thousands. You find truck drivers, secretaries, airline personnel, shop keepers . . . the list is endless. The point is, each person has his own life story and country music helps him tell it. When "that" song is on, it's just the artist and the listener.

The two million people of Greater Miami have no effective mass transit system, so morning and afternoon drive slots are important. In addition we have the highest per capita motor vehicle registration in the world. Now they tell me that most people driving to work who are listening to my morning show, listen to an average of about eighteen minutes. These folks certainly need to know what's going on in the world, they want to know the ball scores, and if they are lucky they will hear two or three records in that time. The question I ask myself every single morning is: how can I make our eighteen minutes together as meaningful and interesting as possible? There is the challenge.

Research at WWOK Radio reveals that the radio listeners who prefer country are growing younger. Information like this enables broadcasters to target their approach immediately. I have to admit, sometimes I feel I am a programmed juke-box operator. Programmers are afraid to innovate. Imagination is lacking. I believe listeners want and enjoy an occasional change in manner of presentation. Programming as much as a solid half hour of say Haggard or Twitty or any number of country super stars will NOT turn listeners away.

The tendency of programmers to broaden the play list in country music has the duel effect of easing out "country core" and diluting the total sound. The strictly country listener feels alienated and looks to someone to champion his cause. In their overly zealous attempt to please the widest possible audience, programmers forsake real country and assume they will always have their "core" listeners because there is no place else for them to go. Modern country has become a subjective catch-all. Research in Miami bares out the belief that people want to hear country hits by name artists over and above anything else. Why not give 'em what they want?

This month we begin devoting a section of the magazine to what's happening in country radio. From time to time we will publish disc jockeys' opinions and upcoming radio events. If you're a station manager or programmer with something to offer us, let us know.—Ed

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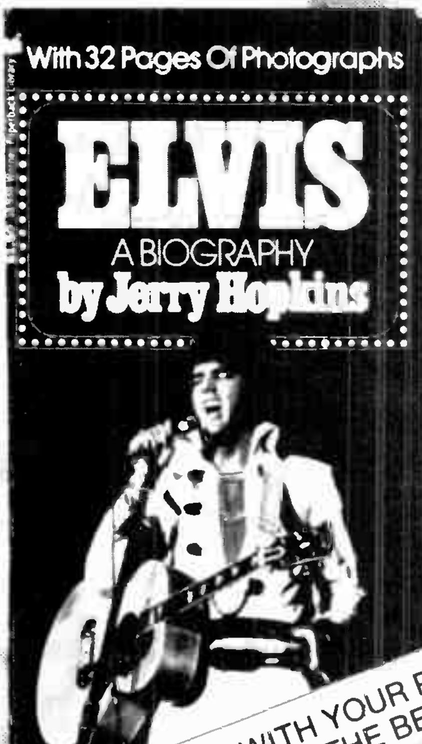

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Freddie Hart: Mr. American Dream Thanks You For That Dream

by J.R. Young

Sandwiched two blocks north of the Ventura Freeway and a block south of the giant behemoth of the "beautiful downtown Burbank" studios of NBC is a quiet neighborhood much like any other in the vast arena of eversprawling Los Angeles suburbs. This neighborhood is *any* neighborhood in *any* suburb where the people still mow their own lawns on Saturday morning, wash their almost new cars on Sunday afternoons after the football games, and where the kids in T-shirts and jeans ride their stingray bikes in packs up and down the street after school. It's a neighborhood that is the embodiment of the American Dream, the proverbial Anyblock USA, and here in a basic stucco flattop with a short driveway lives a man who is himself the personification of the American Dream.

Freddie Hart, "Mr. Easy Loving," is a man who has risen from extreme poverty to almost unparalleled heights in country music in the past three years. He is the biggest "new" act to come along since Merle Haggard. "New," however, isn't the right word for Freddie. His overwhelming success is new, but Freddie . . . well, Freddie has, as they say in the business, paid his dues.

He's more than paid his dues, in fact, because it has been 20 years since he originally signed with Capitol Records, 20 years of plugging away, looking for his place at the top of the charts, and all following a childhood and young adulthood of trials and tribulations that would have sapped the will of lesser men. Not Freddie, however. Like the people that Freddie comes from, and still identifies with, he sees his unflagging spirit as nothing more than the will that made this country the great country that he finds around him. He is a man of the people, and to turn his back on his friends in the face

PHOTOS MARSHALL FALLWELL

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of success and fortune "as I have seen so many artists do" would for Freddie be the same as turning his back not only on *his* dream, but the dreams of the people who put him where he is today. And he's not about to do that.

"My life has been a blessing, and this is the reward," Freddie smiled. His reward? He was sitting in it. The modest panelled den that Freddie was still in the process of remodeling. ("I'm gonna put in beamed ceilings, and put a big mirror on that wall. I'm doing it all myself. I've just about built my whole house.") He was surrounded by gold and silver trophies

...More than once before he was 12 he ran away from home to join the Grand Ole Opry...

privilege of his success. The only outward signs of his wealth are the dusty Continental in the drive ("After driving for so many years in old cars, I decided to get myself a nice car") and the half-built swimming pool in the backyard. Decisions concerning such luxuries are new to Freddie, and a far cry from the way it was in Lochapok, Alabama when he was born.

Freddie's actual birthdate re-

five. He never had anything new as a child, didn't even know what the word meant, and lived in a graduated series of hand-me-downs. By the time he got to the tennis shoes, they were thread-bare, and his socks were nothing more than old newspapers that were constantly "riding up as I walked, and I'd just rip off whatever was exposed." He wore pants that his schoolmate's folks had given away. For lunch, he ate hard biscuits spread with butter and topped with sugar, or salt and pepper if he was lucky.

"It was enough, because I didn't know any better. Not until the other kids made fun of me. Laugh-

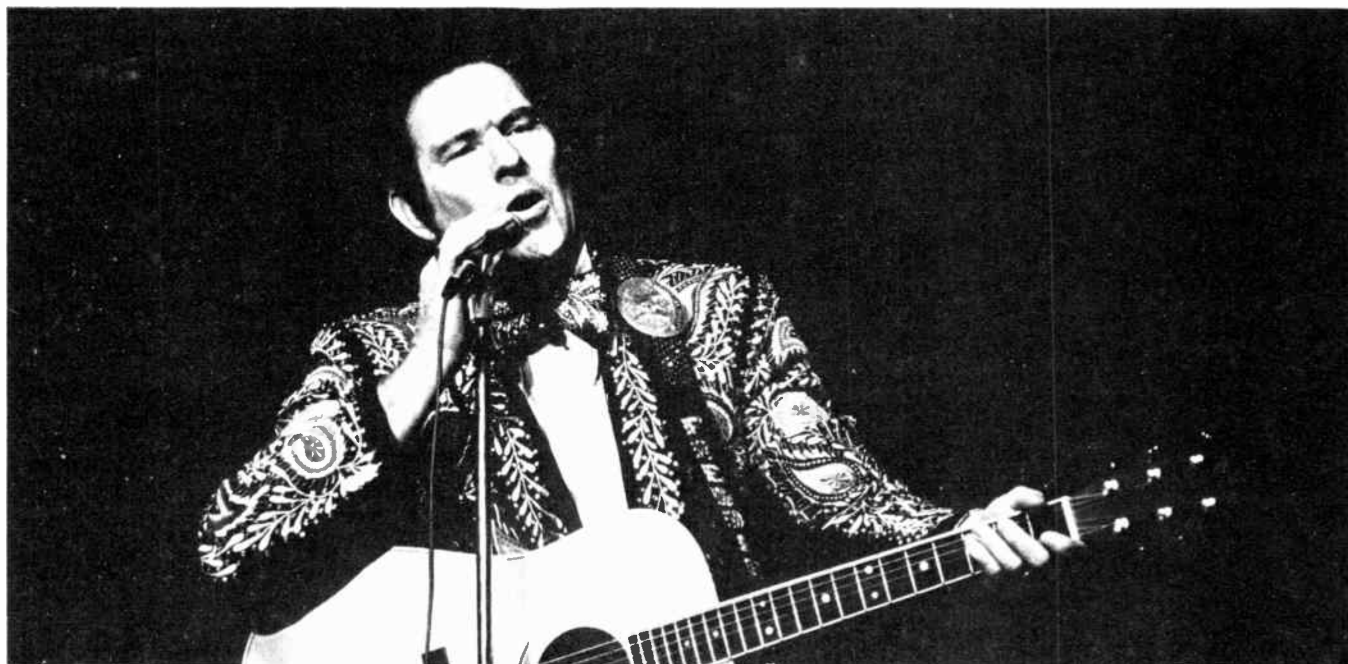

PHOTO ALAN WHITMAN

Freddie's first guitar was made out of a long wooden cigar box, with copper coil wire from a Model T Ford. That was when he was five.

in a glassed-in showcase, and a wall of plaques, and of course, the gold records, framed and displayed prominently. It's more than just the den, however. It's the whole house. It's his two boys, Joe, 14, and Andy, 6, "who is the future musician," Freddie says proudly, "and he sings with feeling because he loves to sing. He reminds me a lot of myself." And of course, Freddie's slim and lovely redheaded wife, Ginger, whom Freddie calls his best critic, and "is a fine songwriter herself."

The fact that Freddie Hart is now a millionaire has made things more comfortable and given the Harts a lot more security. "I don't expect my success to make a difference to me as a human being," he says. To Freddie's way of thinking, that would be to abuse the

mains a neatly kept secret. ("People always want to know how old I am, but I tell them I'll be as young as you want me to be.") But the fact remains that he was born to a dirt poor sharecropping family constantly on the move through Alabama, and he was one of 15 children. In those days, the family wasn't looking so much for their dream, as they were for their next meal.

"About the only thing we had was hope," Freddie says quietly, "and we didn't have too much of that."

The family lived in tiny cramped sharecropper houses and worked the fields of corn, cotton and peanuts for the landowner, and a vegetable garden for their own sparse table. Freddie went to work in the fields as a picker before he was

ed at my newspaper socks. My clothes. My food. And it hurt."

School became such an ordeal for young Freddie that he quit altogether following the second grade. By that time he had already begun running away from home. He was only five when he first took off down the road, spurred by the notion that he didn't like being poor and that he wanted more out of life. Even at that tender age, Freddie was often gone for months at a time walking the dusty Southern roads and doing odd jobs. On several occasions he was picked up by some suspicious sheriff and taken to jail on the official charge of loitering and vagrancy. But in jail, he would get a good meal, and a bunk to sleep in, and, the next day, be sent on his way. Sometimes he

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went to the local jail on his own and asked for a place to sleep. He was never refused.

"And if I wasn't in jail, I'd be sleeping in ditches, and covered by dirt," Freddie says in his certain singing type of talking, "and my legs and feet would fall asleep. I'd get up and run a little, and then cover them up again." Freddie pauses a moment in solid reflection, and then laughs. "I used to press my pants between two rocks so when I'd go to town, I'd look nice. Wash 'em in a creek somewhere. Hang 'em up. Sleep naked as a jaybird. Covered with dirt. I only had one pair of jeans, and I wore 'em until they were white."

"... It was with 'Easy Loving' that I finally learned what the people wanted ..."

When Freddie was five his Uncle Fletcher built him his first guitar, a very crude one made of a long wooden cigar box and the copper coil wire from a Model T Ford. When it wasn't being used as a guitar, it was being used as a toy truck filled with sand. It was as a truck that he finally broke the guitar, but not before he had the sound of self-made music in his head. More than once before he was 12, he ran away to Nashville to join the Grand Ole Opry, and more than once he came back home and told his folks and friends that he had been on the show, but at a time when "you weren't listening."

The running away ended when he was 12, when his folks signed him up with the Civilian Conservation Corp. Freddie first went off to camp at Roanoke, Alabama, and next to the high altitude fir forest of Canyon City, Oregon, where he planted trees, sawed wood, and dug ditches. He may have been only 12, but he was already a strong hardworking lad of 5-foot-10.

By the time he was 14, the second World War was already raging, and Freddie returned home again in order for his folks to sign some more official forms. This time, however, the stakes were higher, and the outfit he joined was called the Marines. Still 14, Freddie was shipped overseas to the Pacific campaign. He was *there* when the 3rd Division raised the red, white, and blue at Iwo Jima. He was there when the 3rd secured the island of Guam. And he was there when the 6th Marine Division secured Okinawa.

"And thanks to God, I never got hurt," Freddie nods. "A few shrapnel burns here and there, but nothing too serious."

During his stint in the service, Freddie had continued with his music by playing in NCO Clubs, Officers' Clubs, and Enlisted Men's Clubs, and he received more than enough of the necessary encouragement to know that music, not fighting, was his destiny. As Freddie says, "They were always sweetening my ego."

So Freddie came home after the war and immediately hit the road again, this time carrying a beat-up guitar. The first place he went to was Phoenix City, Alabama. In the immediate post-war years, Phoenix City was one of the most corrupt and vice-ridden cities in the United States. In fact, a quasi-thriller movie was made in 1955 about the Phoenix City that Freddie became involved with. It was in such surroundings that he secured his first job. Music took a back seat as Freddie became a bouncer in a rough and tumble nightclub.

"It was a tough town," Freddie recalls without any fascination. "A tough job. A couple of times a night I'd walk out on the dance floor and holler, 'Anybody want to fight? If not, have a ball!' But I had lots of callers, and I fought a whole lot. Throwing drunks out. Beating up rowdy people. It was rough."

It was so rough that Freddie's life was in constant danger. The drunks he sent home and the rowdies he beat up didn't take to such treatment too kindly, and many

PHOTO: ALAN WHITMAN

times they would return in the dark of late night armed with guns and knives, and would lay in wait for Freddie. He ended up on most nights sneaking across fields and cutting through the woods on his way home in order to get by the folks out for his blood. More than once bullets whistled by his head as he escaped in the darkness.

"It got to where I was like an animal. Nervous. Edgy. If anybody touched me on the shoulder, I'd turn and hit 'em. My mother even asked me, 'Freddie, what's the matter with you?' But that's what Phoenix City was like." Freddie paused a moment before continuing, his voice husky and low. "Why, on Sunday morning, they'd always drag the Chattahooche River and out of the river would come five, ten, as high as 20 people. Dead. Decapitated. Arms cut off. To keep them from being recognized. Fingerprints completely gone because ... no arms. Mutilations of all kinds. Until they decided to blow

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the place up. But I was gone by that time."

The experience in Phoenix City, however, has left an indelible mark on Freddie. It is the foundation for one of his strongest beliefs. Freddie is what you would call a real "law and order" man. "I've seen low law before. I've seen what it can do. After seeing what happened in Phoenix City, I now know that law is a blessing. The more law the better. The more training, the better. Why, the police need to be doctors, lawyers, psychologists, and perfect fighting machines. *Some* call them *pigs*, but can you imagine what would happen without law and order? *Chaos!*"

When Freddie left Phoenix City, he began traveling again. He washed dishes in Hempstead, New York, and then worked in a small band with Bud Wilson, playing school houses and eating out of tin cans, but still feeling that music was his calling. On his periodic visits back home, he was still telling his kin that he was playing on the Grand Ole Opry, but they still "weren't listening." The closest he got, however, was watching Cowboy Copas through the front door of Ryman Auditorium. Freddie's only playing in Nashville was for quarters in the Greyhound Bus Depot. But he kept on plugging.

In 1950, Freddie ended up in Phoenix, Arizona, working in a cotton seed mill, and then, following a strike at the mill, selling crankshafts that he pulled out of old cars.

"...It was a heartbreaking Christmas because I suddenly didn't have a label. I didn't have any contracts, and I wasn't sure what I was going to do..."

The summer of the following year, however, Lefty Frizzell, then at the height of his career, came to Phoenix to play the Riverside Ballroom, and when Freddie heard that, he gave Lefty a call at his hotel to tell him about some songs he had written. Lefty was taking a shower, but when Freddie mentioned that Wayne Rainey was considering using one of Freddie's songs, Lefty told him "Any friend of Wayne's is a friend of mine. Come on up."

Freddie was knocking on the door so quickly that Lefty was still wearing only a towel.

The next day, Lefty bought Freddie his first stage "outfit," and out on the road Freddie went. And soon after when Freddie landed his first recording contract with Capitol, he was sure he was on his way.

"I was sure my first record was gonna be a million-seller," Freddie laughs in an amazement of 20 years distance. "But I guess everybody thinks the same thing about their first record. Mine was called 'Butterfly Love!' A 78."

When Freddie signed with Capitol, he also moved to Bellflower, California, a sprawling lower middle-income industrial suburb south of Los Angeles, and waited for stardom. As he waited, he moved next to Artesia, then West Hollywood, and nine years ago, Burbank. He also moved from Capitol Records to Columbia to Monument to Kapp and back to Capitol. It was a long wait.

"I had good songs," Freddie says.

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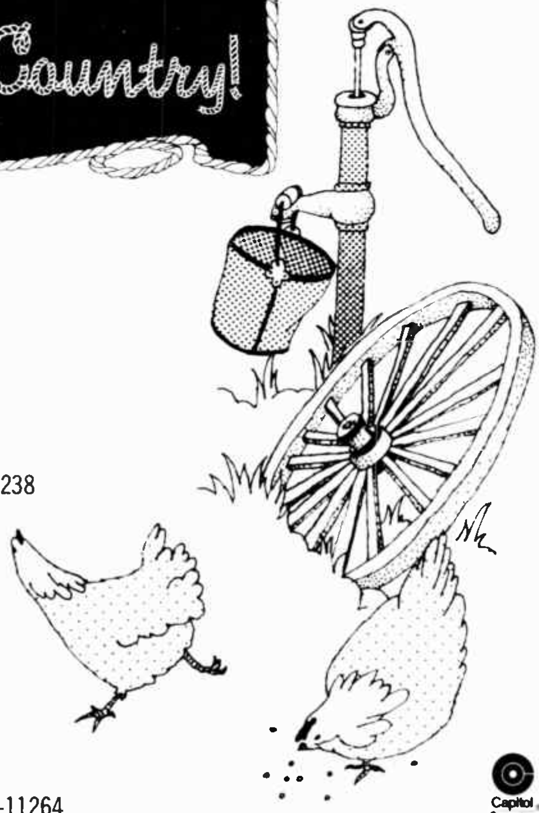

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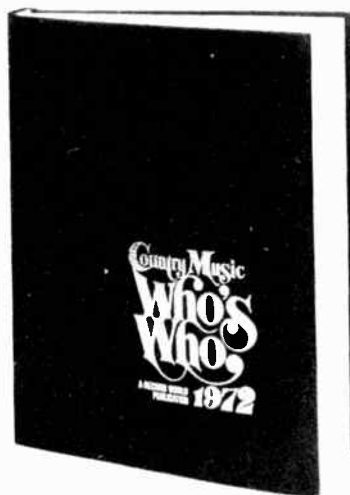

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"I was on the charts. All the time. But I could never make it to the top. I never had the big hit that you so desperately need. The Big Success. I wasn't known. I had 'Keys in the Mailbox' in '57, and 'Loose Talk' back in '52. I was writing some songs for other people. Porter Wagoner, Carl Smith. Lots of people. I wrote the other side of Patsy Cline's 'I Fall To Pieces.' But I knew I hadn't made it. I was making a living, but I wasn't known real big. Freddie who?" Freddie grinned.

"...Some people say 'how can you make a dirty song sound so pretty?' That's why people call me the sex symbol of country music..."

It wasn't an easy life. He was gone three days out of four to the backroad joints of the country. He either drove a fading car, or, if the date was too far to drive, he flew. Alone. Once at the joint, he'd get some pick-up band to back him, "and you know how that is." At the end of a long night, Freddie would pick up $25, $35, $75, and then back to a motel. Most of the time he was so dog weary that he couldn't sleep. But he learned patience.

One picture that remains in Freddie's mind is that of a young Elvis Presley sitting on a bed at the Knickerbocker Hotel in Hollywood back in 1956 when "Heartbreak Hotel" was hitting its peak. He was nervous and moody, a young kid who had just recently been a truck driver in Memphis.

"Freddie," Elvis said, "I wish I was dead. I can't do anything anymore. I can't go anywhere anymore. My life isn't my own. I can't even go to the bathroom by myself without being followed."

"Elvis was lucky he had Colonel Parker who knew the business," Freddie said. "The pressure was too much for him. He'd never played in joints or done anything. From school to trucks and then BOOM. From $30 to $40 a week to everything dropping in his lap. He didn't know how to cope with it."

Freddie's career was much different, and the low point of his 18 years of learning patience and preparing to withstand the pressures, strangely enough occurred just before his career broke wide open. In an executive decision and general clean-up at Capitol Records, Freddie's case came under review, and the decision was to drop him. Quite frankly, as both Capitol and Freddie admit, he wasn't selling. Freddie became a minus on Capitol's tote chart. Out he went.

"It was a heartbreaking Christmas, because I suddenly didn't have a label. I didn't have any contracts, and I wasn't sure what I was going to do."

Just before his contractual release, however, Capitol released what was apparently the final Freddie Hart album, *California Grapevine*, and tucked neatly away on side one, band four, was a hummable little tune called "Easy Loving," a self-penned, little noted, and seldom mentioned number.

An enterprising disc jockey at WPOL in Atlanta, Georgia decided that "Easy Loving" was *hot*, and he began playing the album cut. Not once, but many times, and slowly, in and around Georgia, the song picked up steam, and made enough noise that back in Los Angeles the men at the Capitol Tower took another look and listen. Only

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then did they release "Easy Loving" as a single, and ship it out to stations across the country.

In September of 1971, it was an across the charts #1 country single and even went as high as 15 on the Top 100 charts. To date, "Easy Loving" has sold two million plus copies, and the album *Easy Loving*, which was really the *California Grapevine* retitled and rereleased, has sold more than a million dollars worth. Needless to say, Capitol re-signed Freddie like he was made of pure gold.

"It was with 'Easy Loving' that I finally learned what the people wanted. You know, when I was younger, I spent some time on the road with Hank Williams. Just hanging around, helping out, getting in the way, but Hank gave me some pointers one night on writing and singing songs. 'Don't just put down a line 'cause it rhymes. There's always a right line, and none better. And when you write and sing a song, write and sing like it was the last one you were ever going to do. Because a song is real.' That's helped me so much in my writing. I try and write little episodes in my life, something people have done or want to do. And I try and write something simple. That's a hit song to me. Something simple. Something everyday. Something everybody can see themselves in. *Something every man would like to say, and something every woman would like to hear.* That's the success of 'Easy Loving.' It brought sex into songs that people accepted. Some people say, 'Freddie, how can you make a dirty song sound so pretty?' That's why people call me the *sex symbol* of country music. That's what they call me."

PHOTO ALAN WHITMAN

Mr. American Dream: "An artist who puts himself above the people who put him there is my pet peeve. And I've seen them come and go . . . That artist should be back in the fields."

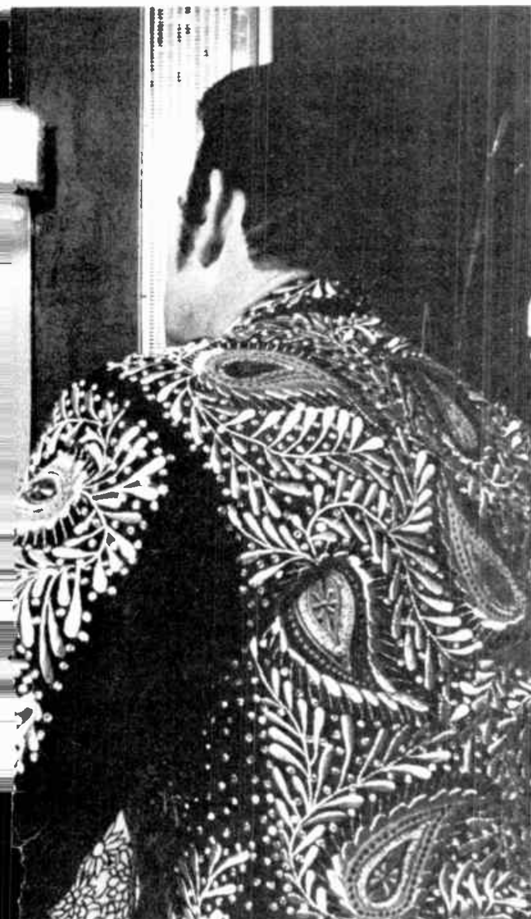


PHOTO MARSHALL FALLWELL

With the monumental success of "Easy Loving," more hits have followed in rapid succession. Six number-one singles in a row, and no sign of letting up. Freddie is out of the joints and into the auditoriums and big fairs. And the back-up band is now a solid and permanent band, The Heartbeats, a band that Freddie put together.("They're good boys. No drunks. No dopes. No bad mouths. And they all love to play and sing, just like me.") The beat-up car has been replaced by a new Silver Eagle bus that sleeps nine.

The money that Freddie has made has also gone into some sound investments. He owns 250 registered breeding bulls, plum orchards, and his own Atlanta-based truckline, the Hartline, which includes ten Kenmore refrigerated transports "running full blast."

"My investments *are* good," Freddie nods, "but I don't expect my success to make a difference to me as a human being. Sure, I want to be successful. I like being a star in the spotlight. Yes, I could show off, but . . ." and Freddie shakes his head in disbelief, "*show off?* With the money the people gave me? No, I'm just thankful. An artist who puts himself above the people who put him there is my pet peeve. And I've seen them come and go. Yes, I have. You know, you can lie to the people some of the time, but when they discover that you're a phoney, you'll go right down the drain. And that's just where you should go. That artist should be back in the cotton fields. He doesn't deserve that dream, that wonderful dream." ■

World Radio History

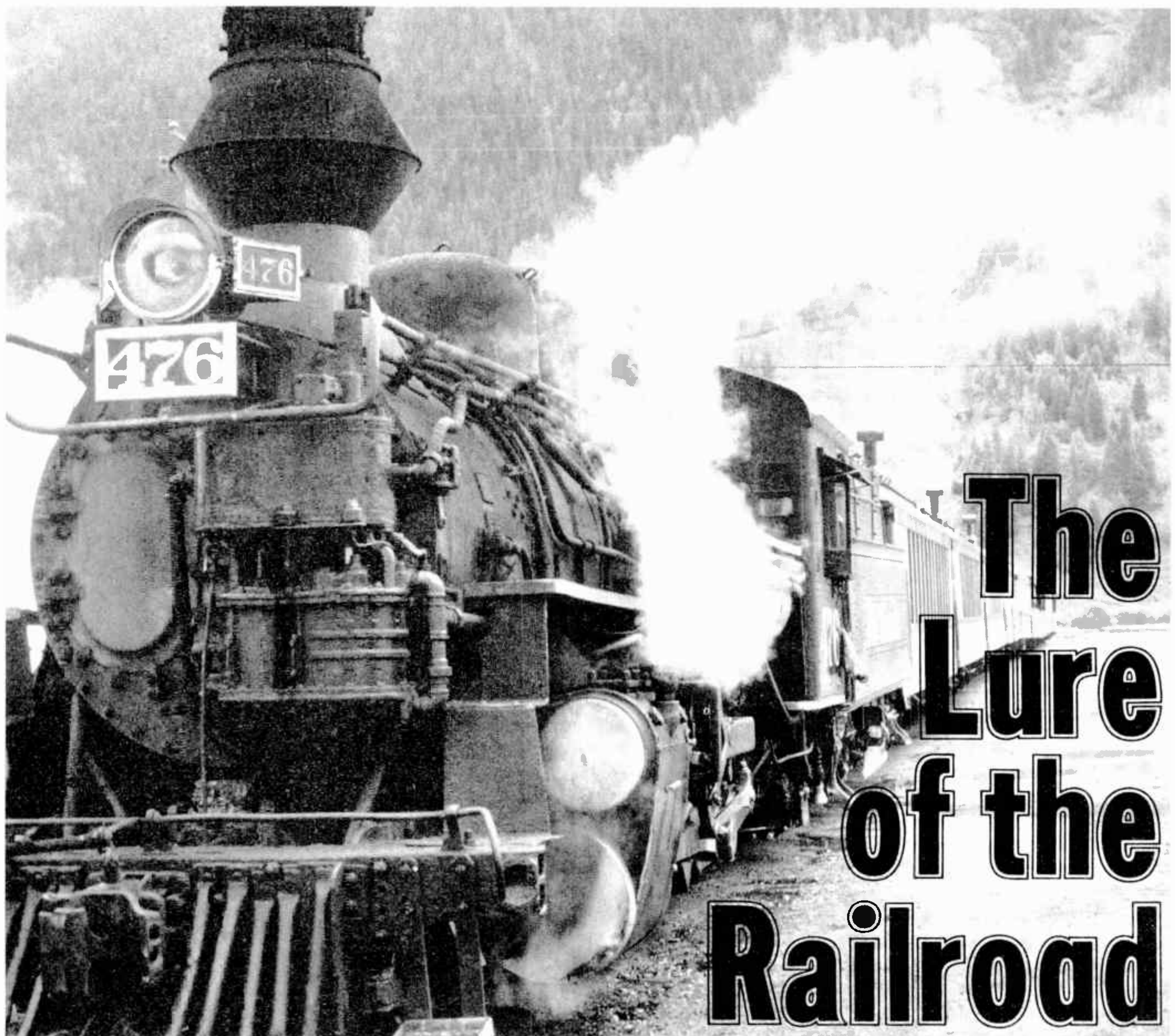


PHOTO JACK PARKS

The Lure of the Railroad

By Jack Parks

"The sound of a jet in the sky will never—not for our generation—have quite the mournful promise of a train sounding." Merle Miller, a writer from a small Iowa farm town and closer in years to Jimmie Rodgers' generation than to Arlo Guthrie's, speaks for everyone who still feels a foreignness in the word "Amtrak." It's a poor substitute for the images called up by such names as the Orange Blossom Special, the Dixie Flyer, the Super Chief, the Peach Tree, or the jingling, rumbling, roaring, legendary Wabash Cannon Ball.

And yet if the whining hiss of a Boeing jet engine, or the electronic horn blast of an anonymous Amtrak diesel doesn't have the power to stir dreams like the steady pull of a steam whistle hanging in the dark night air, how can trains and train songs still hold the popularity of not only country-western fans but of countless numbers of Americans?

Nostalgia would be the easy answer, but it wouldn't explain why each new generation has either discovered anew their father's and grandfather's and great-grandfather's favorite railroad songs, or has written and sang their own songs of trains and train travel. A simple answer might be the line from the very popular song of the mid-sixties, "In the Early Mornin' Rain," explaining that "You can't hop a jet plane/Like you can a freight train." But it's too simple because such practical considerations never have anything to do with the stuff that real dreams are made of—escape from poverty or trouble, high and wide adventure across the face of the land, or the longing of the long way back home to wife or sweetheart—all to the sway of a railroad car, or the sight of hissing steam, or the smell of coal and grease, or the sound of a long whistle stretched low on the horizon.

It's been suggested that train songs have given way to truck driving and highway songs such as "Six Days on the Road," "The Automobile of Life," or "Wreck on the Highway," but the railroad continues to inspire—in the writing of new and the singing of old—a body of songs that make up one of the single largest categories of country-western music. The real reason for such a perennial popularity is found in the two basic elements that make up the railroad song—the American imagination and the steam locomotive itself. From the time when European explorers first set out to discover new land, through the

World Radio History

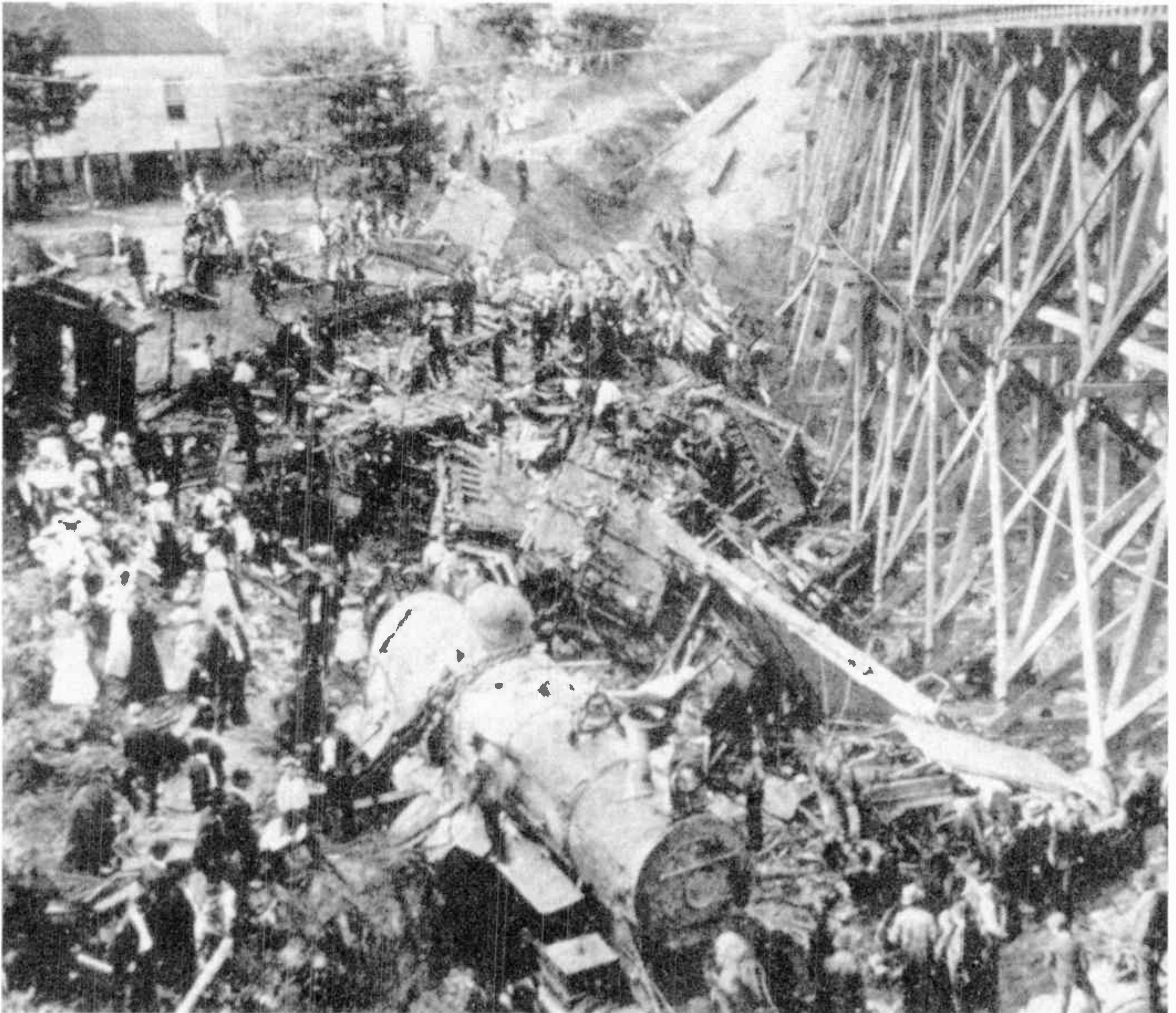
time of the colonists and their founding a new nation, into the pioneers and settlers' ever-westward trek, the American imagination has always been fired by the restless dream of movement and adventure—or the search for a better life—while almost simultaneously feeling the pain of loss of home and family that the search for this dream naturally brings.

Americans have always been fascinated by technology and what better—or more dramatic—example of technology than a steam locomotive in motion—from the massive power of its turning drivers, through the intricate workings of its crank rods, piston rods, actuating rods, and drive rods, to the puffing, belching, breathing of its smoke stack.

But there's one thing that represents the locomotive, the train and everything about railroading more than anything else, and that is the calliope whistle of the steam engine. It is the whistle that cries the blues of hard times, moans over a lost love, sings the song of adventure, and calls the homeless back home. In the American mind truly "You can hear her whistle blow a hundred miles." That call goes back to the first time a whistle signalled John Henry to his legendary race with the steam drill when the railroads were being built, and it still goes out to anyone lucky enough to be going home like Jimmie Rodgers in "Somewhere Down Below the Dixon Line."

The songs of *building* the railroads probably came first, following the tradition of the work song. There was the legendary "John Henry" and his hammer who represented the many blacks upon whose sweat and muscle the short-line railroads of the South were built. And there were the countless variations of "Patrick on the Railroad" for the immigrant Irish who built the great stretches of railroad in the West.

No sooner had the railroads been built, and the science of locomotive building put power and speed into the engines, than the inevitable train wrecks occurred. Quite naturally then came the train wreck songs. There was "Ben Dewberry's Final Run." Ben Dewberry was the engineer who—on the fateful morning, in the rain, and "with the throttle wide open and without any fear"—met a passenger train coming around the bend. With typical stoicism, bravery, and a certain loyalty to the railroad company's standards of dependability that were so often celebrated in railroad songs,



The "Old 97": One of the famous train wrecks memorialized in song. The wreck occurred in 1903 in Danville, Virginia.

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PHOTO JACK PARKS

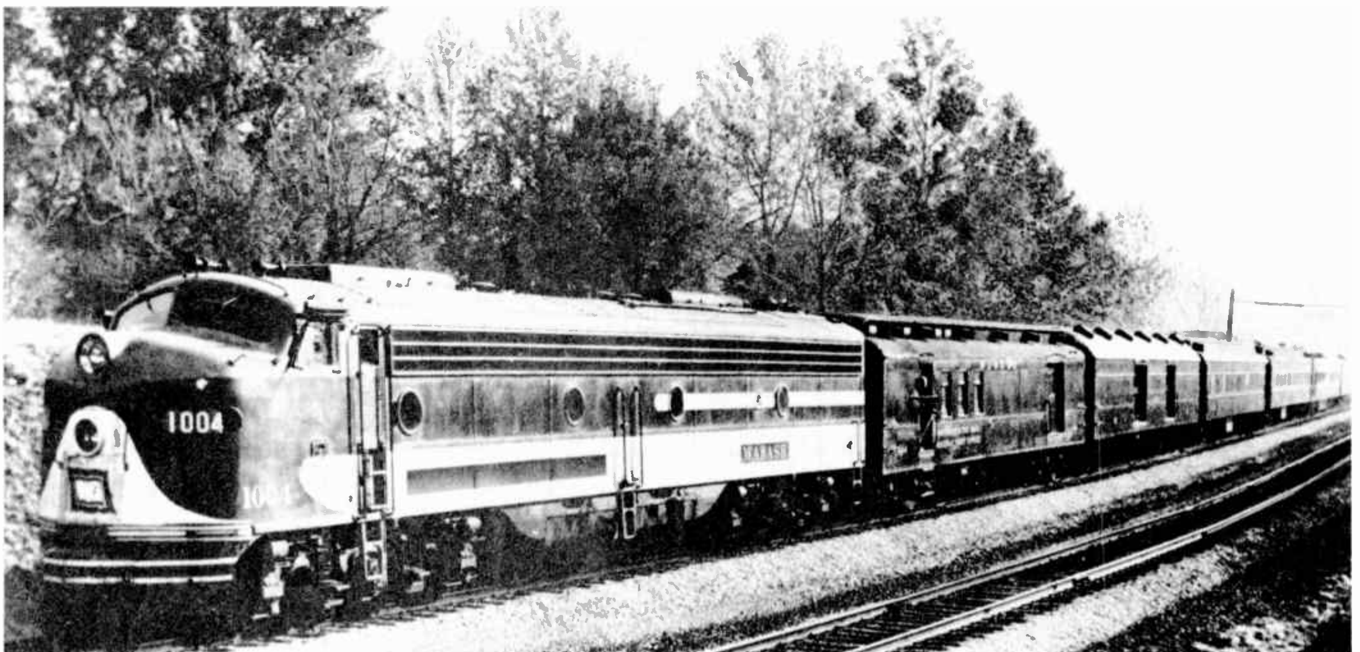
Railroad home, as in "That Little Red Caboose Behind The Train."

"Ben looked at his watch, shook his head and said/We may make Atlanta but we'll all be dead." And so the engine, going through the switch, "Without any warning she took the ditch," and "The big locomotive leaped from the rail/and Ben never lived to tell that awful tale." But Jimmie Rodgers did, recorded it for Victor in Camden, New Jersey, and Ben Dewberry's legend was made.

That same year and in the same place, the Carter Family did the same thing for an engineer named George Alley when they recorded "Engine One-Forty-Three." The real life accident occurred in 1890 at Hinton, West Virginia on the Chesapeake and Ohio line. Almost 40 years later, this time at Ingleside, West Virginia, two Virginian Railway trains collided. One train's crew—the fireman and the engineer—were killed by flash scalding from the hot boiler, and Blind Alfred Reed recorded it as "The Wreck of the Virginian" only two months after it happened.

Another train wreck, this one at Danville, Virginia, on the Southern Railway in 1903 provided the inspiration for Marion Try Slaughter's (also known by the pseudonym of Vernon Dalhart) famous "Wreck of the Old 97." Probably the most famous of all songs about train wrecks and their heroes was "Casey Jones." And appropriately enough, according to Archie Green, by 1910, the year Bill Murray recorded this classic for them, RCA Victor's presentation of rail lore was well underway.

But there were less tragic—if not any easier—times to be had working on the railroad. And this aspect of railroad life was also celebrated in song—often times in humor to ease the hardship and danger of the work. (Before the formation of unions, bosses often picked brakemen with fingers missing because it showed they had experience coupling cars.) "Jerry, Go Ile That Car," a wry commentary on new work roles, circulated among the Irish work gangs throughout the railroads of the West. "Nine Pound Hammer Is Too Heavy," a



One of the last Wabash Cannon Balls: diesel engines took over at the end.

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In Meridian, Mississippi, a memorial to Singing Brakeman Jimmie Rodgers.

work chant in the black laborer tradition of "John Henry," took on an Irish air when the Monroe Brothers recorded it. And a standard of Hank Snow's is "The Engineer's Child" (also known as "The Red and Green Signal Lights" or "The Two Lanterns") which tells of an engineer torn between the bedside of his deathly ill child and his duty to his job. He solves his dilemma by telling his wife to use the standard railroad signal code of red or green lights as he brings his train past their home.

Despite the occasional tragedy of a spectacular collision, death often came to a railroad man from other or natural causes. The natural ease and comfort of this type of passing was often symbolized by the caboose in such songs as "The Little Red Caboose Behind the Train." Another, "If I Die a Railroad Man," was recorded in Atlanta in 1928 by a group that placed it in a World War I departure setting although the song itself actually dates back to a Civil War "Soldier's Farewell." When it recorded the song for Victor, the group was known as the Tenneva Ramblers. But just the year before, they went by the name of their leader whom they had since left. Then they were known as the Jimmie Rodgers Entertainers.

Another group of train songs describes the run of special trains with special names. This group might include anything from the always popular novelty-like instrumental that is nothing more than an imitation of the sounds of a train making a run like "McAbee's Railroad Piece" (done wondrously by—who else but—Palmer McAbee himself on his harmonica) to such "specials" as Byron Parker and His Mountaineers' "Peanut Special" which ran from Columbia to Chester, South Carolina on the Southern Railway line. There is also Lead Belly's "Midnight Special" and probably the most famous special of them all—Ervin Rouse's "Orange Blossom Special." Then there's Hank Snow's "Fireball Special," the run on the "Rock Island Line" done by Johnny Cash and so many other country-western performers. And of course, even though it doesn't have "special" in its title, the granddaddy of them all—especially to Roy Acuff—is the one and only "Wabash Cannon Ball."

It was the sight and sound and smell of these special trains—and others of lesser fame—which produced the dreams that gave voice to the songs that comprise the most numerous type of train songs. It is this last and largest kind—the escape, adventure, and return train song—that best captures the restless and mournful spirit that still holds and haunts the mind of America.

Many of these songs describe being left behind as the train carries one's loved one away. These would include the early "The Train's Done Left Me," and "The Longest Train," and Hank Snow singing "I'm Movin' On," and "The Train My Wom-

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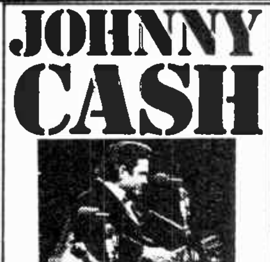

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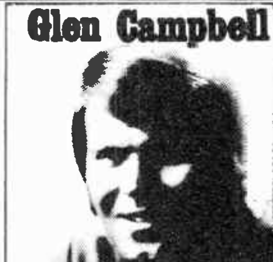

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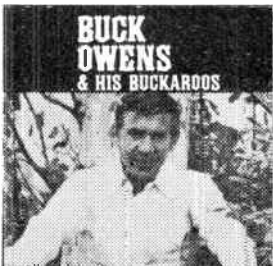

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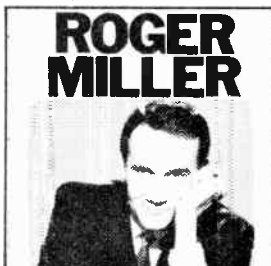

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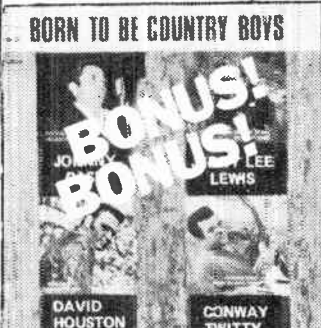

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an's On." But more often than not it was the man who left a loved one behind—either to escape being tied down or to find a better life. In one of Hank Snow's songs it's the humorous escape by train from a woman in "Duquesne, Pennsylvania"; while in another it's to escape the imprisonment of responsibility when he sings about "That Same Old Dotted Line." For Johnny Cash in "Folsom Prison Blues," it's a real prison that he longs to be freed from. Even though he can't see the train from behind the walls, just hearing it pass on its way to San Antone is enough to stir his soul.

But escape to freedom or adventure across the wide expanse of America is an equally important, and major, part of trains and train songs. And with the escape to adventure is—often in the very same song—the longing to return from adventure and to go back home. Charley Pride feels this call to unknown adventure in "Spell of the Freight Train" (RCA Victor LSP-3775). In a "Lonely Train" Hank Snow looks for comfort from hard times. And in one of Jimmie Rodgers' famous Blue Yodels—Blue Yodel No. 5—he sings how "I love to hear the bark of that old smoke stack," and later how "if I hadn't been a man I would have stayed at home."

A similar kind of railroad song that is close to the adventure type is the life and times—both free and hard—of the hobo who rides in the open box car if he's lucky enough to find one unlocked or—if he isn't—rides hanging onto the truss rods below. The classic of this kind is another Jimmie Rodgers ballad, the plaintive "Hobo Bill's Last Ride," telling how "There was no mother's longing to soothe his weary soul/He was just a railroad bum who died out in the cold." Other train riders—both hobos and paying wanderers—do have mothers to go home to. Or sweethearts or wives. Or just find themselves going home because it is home. The songs to celebrate this kind of return are especially numerous and varied—from Hank Snow's trip back clear across the northern expanse of Canada on the "Canadian Pacific," south to Jimmie Rodgers singing the praises of "My Li'l Old Home Town in New Orleans" and "Somewhere Down Below the Dixon Line." Jimmie Rodgers again. There's hardly any railroad song that you can name that doesn't have Rodgers associated with it.

And why not. He wasn't the first to sing a railroad song and he wasn't the first to record one, but because of him Arlo Guthrie won't be the last either. Jimmie Rodgers, while growing up in boardinghouses, switch shanties and freightyards, went to work for railroads from Florida to Arizona. By the time he began to record his songs in the late twenties, America was on the brink of its Great Depression. When it came, it brought with it Hoovervilles, and shanty-towns and men—all kinds of men, from all walks of life—riding the rails. And Jimmie Rodgers, the Singing Brakeman, was there to speak for them. It's all there—the trains, the homesickness and the hope of better times—when you hear him sing,

Been away too long
Up with that ice and snow
So now I crave to travel back
*Where wa-warm breezes blow.**

But times have changed. Men still take to the road—and for the same reasons of love or adventure or the search for better days. But they don't use the railroads much anymore. The railroads seem to have been pretty much used up. With rotting ties short-line rails are rusting all over the South, and the freight trains of the West pass right through all but the largest cities with barely a whistle of acknowledgement from the four, box-like diesel locomotives pulling them.

But typically, if the American tradition of the railroad is passing, the passing is treated in a very traditional way—by a railroad song. Arlo Guthrie sings of a run of "The City of New Orleans" ("Hobo's

COURTESY RAILROAD MAGAZINE

Casey Jones: the train engineer who inspired one of the most well-known railroad songs.

World Radio History

This is the only known photo ever made showing Casey Jones in an engine cab.

COURTESY RAILROAD MAGAZINE

Lullabye," Reprise MS 2060), as it leaves Kankakee, Illinois, headed south with the morning mail, and "Passin' trains that have no names." And instead of telling of the brave deeds of engineers or of brakemen, he sings about playing cards in the club car, and how "the *sons* of pullman porters/And the *sons* of engineers/Ride their fathers' magic carpet made of steel."

It's still a magic carpet; but it's not the present generation's, it's their fathers'. And there's something else.

But all the towns and people seem
To fade into a bad dream,
And the steel rail still ain't heard
the news.
The conductor sings his song
again,
"The passengers will please
refrain . . . "
This train got the disappearin'
*railroad blues.***

So the railroad might be disappearing. But it's doing it the only way it could. To the blues. ■

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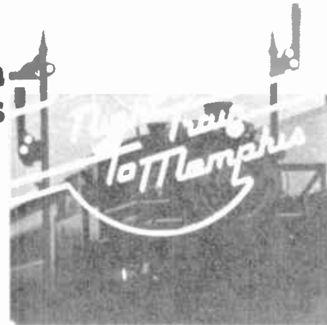

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Jeanne Pruett's Satin Stardom

At the CMA Awards show they called her "a new woman in town," but she's been around awhile. She's 37 years old and doesn't care who knows it. And as she says, after a few years in the business, you learn.

by Marshall Fallwell

"I'm one heck of a good cook," she said, and gave me that you-better-believe-it look that good homemakers have been giving the world since clay pots were luxuries and Teflon frying pans weren't even distant gleams in somebody's eye. The first time I talked to Jeanne Pruett she was halfway to her elbows in cornbread. It was a warm, clear, breezy morning on the outskirts of Nashville, two days before *most* people celebrate Thanksgiving, but, for the Pruetts—Jack, Jeanne and their two children, Jack, 17, and Jael, 15—today would have to do, because Jeanne would be on the road early tomorrow. But that, as they say, is show biz.

"Hidy," she said over her shoulder. "You want some coffee?" I did. She was at the counter making stuffing to go with the turkey basting in its own juices in the oven so she couldn't shake hands with me. At that point, I wished I'd eaten something before I came, because the smells of the turkey and dressing were driving me nuts.

The Pruetts' home is very nice, not fantastically expensive (though they do have a couple of fine cars); no showcases, no guitar-shaped swimming pool. The kitchen, even I could see, was something Julia Child would be proud of.

I had seen Jeanne Pruett several weeks before, backstage at the Opry the night she was made a regular member. She wore onstage as she always does now, a satin dress, her hair not teased and spray-netted, but tied back in a simple bun. As she stood in the wings that night, listening to her own introduction, she held a large bouquet of roses. Her eyes were shining as she moved out into the bright lights and yells of the crowd.

Satin sheets to lie on, satin pillows to cry on.
Still I'm not happy, don't you see?
Big, long Cadillac. Tailor-mades upon my back.
*Still, I need you to set me free.**

That night at the Opry, as she sang the song that had made her famous, she projected an image of a beautiful woman singing a sad song. And from the dark beyond the footlights, the people let her know that she was finally a star.

The Jeanne I now saw cooking Thanksgiving dinner was a different person. The real Jeanne Pruett is anything but sad I discovered as we talked in her office down the hall from the kitchen.

"Whew," she said, sitting down in a swivel chair. "Jack and the kids would rather have a turkey this time of year than at Christmas, so you'll forgive me if I got to check him every now and then."

However sad and lonely "Satin Sheets" may be, Jeanne is certainly no helpless waif alone and afraid in a world she never made. The song is so strong and Jeanne does such a beautiful job with it that you tend to get the wrong impression of her. When you see her offstage, dressed as she was the day I talked with her, her hair down, she emerges as a strong, witty, confident woman capable of doing just about anything she pleases. As she sat down, she looked around her office. "This is where it all happens. I handle all my own business, publishing, personal management and so forth. All this mail you see has to be answered. I answer it *all*. I have a fine booking agent but I'm the one that picks the checks up. Oh, I've gotten a few pieces of bad paper, but not many. You learn . . . you learn." Just that much told me that Jeanne Pruett had a lot of guts and experience. People in the music business who try to handle their own affairs generally don't make it. Jeanne did.

A few weeks before, at the Country Music Association awards show, Jeanne was introduced with three other women—Barbara Fairchild, Barbara Mandrell and Tanya Tucker—as "new women in town." I asked her if that bothered her, since she'd been around for a while. "Not at all," she said. "In a way, I *am* new. 'Satin Sheets' is my first big hit. Look, I'm 37 years old and I really don't care who knows it. I've got two nearly grown kids and I've worked hard and long for what I've got. But, now I'm here and proud of it."

Jeanne's been around music ever since she was a child in Pell City, Alabama. "There was always a guitar around. Oh, I only play well enough to write hit songs. But I

PHOTOS: MARSHALL FALLWELL

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had a good, ole poor childhood. By saying that, I don't have to explain. There were ten of us kids running around all over the place, and I guess all we had a lot of was company.

"Excuse me," she said, and jumped up to take care of the turkey. When she came back, she was smiling a little. "You know, when I was a little girl, I knew exactly how many fruit jars had to be washed for the canning. I was the one got stuck doing it because I had the smallest hands. Nobody else's would fit in the jars. Anyway, every year, I washed 1800 of them jars. And that's where I learned how to cook. *Love* it. One of my hobbies is cooking for friends." And Bill Anderson, one of her friends, told me a few days later: "We all call her 'Maud' because she's so country. If it hadn't been for her ham hocks and beans, I don't know what I'd have done."

"Well," she says, "people were always telling me I ought to try to sing professionally," but it was to be years before she tried it, years even before she was to show her husband some of the songs she'd been writing in private. "I just went off by myself and wrote until I thought I had something. Jack thought so, too, and took 'em to Marty Robbins." (Jack Pruett played lead guitar for Marty Robbins for years.) "Well, Marty heard 'em and liked 'em so much, that of the seven songs I gave him, he recorded three right away."

. . . People in the music business who try to handle their own affairs generally don't make it. Jeanne did . . .

For the next seven years, Jeanne was a writer for Marty Robbins Enterprises, and during that time wrote some very good songs: "Count Me Out," "Waiting In Reno," "Lily of the Valley" and "Christmas is for Kids." The list of people who have cut her songs sounds like a rollcall of country favorites: Marty Robbins, Conway Twitty, Tammy Wynette, Nat Stuckey.

It is when Jeanne starts talking about the art of writing songs that she truly reveals the knife-edge sharpness of her intellect. "You write the first verse for the audience, the second verse for the disc jockey, and the chorus for yourself —that's where the writer can put a little bit of his soul in his song . . . I wrote 'Hold To My Unchanging Love' because there just weren't any songs at the time that said something positive, everything was sadness and tears . . . My favorite writers? Haggard, Marty Robbins, of course. 'Begging To You,' 'Walking Piece of Heaven,' and 'El Paso' are what I'd call perfect songs; Tom T. Hall's 'Old Dogs and Children' is just about the best piece of material I've heard recently; Jean

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Chapel: Cindy Walker's older songs: Dolly Parton—they're all great. And Mickey Newbury's 'San Francisco Mabel Joy' is one of my favorite songs."

Almost a little reluctantly, in 1964, Jeanne decided to carve out a recording career of her own. After one year with no successes, she gave it up and went back to writing full time. Then, in 1969, she signed with Decca because the great Owen Bradley liked her voice and wanted to do something with her. "It's strange, you know, but two important moves in my life have happened because of other people's misfortune. When Marty had his heart attack, and nobody knew if he would live or not, he told me he didn't want me sticking with a company whose future was so shaky, so I went over to the Hubert Long Agency. Then, when Owen Bradley had eye trouble, he gave me to Walter Haynes, another producer with Decca."

Walter Haynes is a very bright man with more than one hit to his credit. "Jeanne," says Walter Haynes, "is an authentic, country, homespun gal. She never gets above people's heads. I knew, if the right material came along, we'd have us a smash."

The first hit they had was "Hold to My Unchanging Love." Soon thereafter, a young songwriter from Minneapolis, John Volinkaty, sent a promotion man at Decca a tape of the first song he'd ever written, "Satin Sheets."

"I wrote it in a supermarket," says John, "then hurried home to get it down on paper. I didn't know anything about music. I even got out the phone book and looked under 'M' for Music. I found an independent promoter who knew this guy at Decca (Gene Kennedy) so, at his suggestion, I sent it down. The song had already been rejected by a bunch of people. Anyway, you know the rest. I used to be an ac-

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countant, but now, I'm signed with Bill Anderson Enterprises and work as a full-time writer. It's funny, but the first country song I ever heard was 'Satin Sheets,' and I wrote it."

Gene Kennedy, who also has some pretty good sense of his own, took the song to Haynes. Meanwhile, Bill Anderson heard the song, liked it and cut it as a duet with Jan Howard on an album called *Jan and Bill.* About a year later, early 1973, Haynes gave the song to Jeanne Pruett, and now, folks, comes the good part.

Neither Jeanne nor Haynes thought the verses to the song worked as well as they could, so Jeanne decided to rewrite them. She kept the original melody and chorus intact, but dropped both original verses and wrote one of her own:

I found another man who can give
me more than you can,
Though you've given me
everything money can buy.
But your money can't hold me
tight, like he does on a long, long
night.
*No, you didn't keep me satisfied.**

The verse Jeanne wrote to the song is completely her own, and so much more successful than the original verses that Champion Music, the publishers, have kept her verse and discarded the others. Jeanne, however, owns no part of the song and has received nothing from it as a writer. "That's okay," she says, "I got enough out of the song, Lord knows. Anyway, I think it would hurt a young writer for somebody

". . . You write the first verse for the audience, the second verse for the disc jockey, and the chorus for yourself," Jeanne said . . .

to do that to him. Too much of that goes on these days. I've talked to John a few times, and he's a real nice boy. Genuine, you know. After the CMA Awards, he came up to me after we'd lost 'Song of the Year.' He hugged my neck and said, 'We've got a winner, anyway, Jeanne.'"

When I asked him about the changes Jeanne had made, John Volinkaty himself said that whatever she did to make his song a hit was all right by him. "It *had* to be the right thing, didn't it?"

Jeanne says that she and her producer and the musicians knew they'd cut a hit. So Jeanne went all out, and let me tell you, if she weren't a recording star, she would be one of the highest paid promotion people in the business after what she did with her own song. She went out and bought 15 yards of satin and cut it into little squares with pinking shears (she

The Pruetts celebrated Thanksgiving Day early since Jeanne was going on the road.

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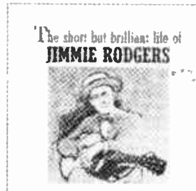

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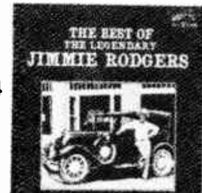

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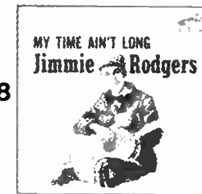

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did all this by hand, by the way). Next, she took two pieces, stapled them together and put them inside Thank You notes which she sent to hundreds of disc jockeys across the country. She staggered the mailings over a period of weeks so that for a long time, the disc jockeys were talking among themselves about Jeanne Pruett's gimmick to get "Satin Sheets" played. It worked. For seven months after its release date, February, 1973, the record was on the charts. Record sales are now approaching the million mark.

Not too long ago, Jeanne made the mistake of telling a journalist that she hoped her next record would make everybody forget "Satin Sheets." By that, she did *not* mean that she doesn't like the song or that she isn't grateful for the success it's brought her. "I *love* 'Satin Sheets,' and I'll continue to sing it every time I walk on the stage. What I meant when I said that was that I just hope I'll go on cutting records the people like. I wouldn't want anybody to get the wrong idea, that I'm not grateful, you know, because I am."

It was about two hours later and we were still in her office talking when Jack stuck his head in the door. "Oops," Jeanne said. "I'd better see about that bird."

As I moved around her, snapping pictures, she spooned grease over the turkey and talked about the Opry. "I'm glad to be there. It's a great thing, the Opry, like a family."

Outside, as we took more pictures, the wind was blowing. Jeanne walked around a woodpile, talking of her life and how much fun she has with her family. "I guess I'd like to get a bus and a band some time, but I don't know, things are pretty good as they are. I'm a patient sort of person."

About that time, a big fat tomcat waddled out from under a fir tree in the Pruetts' yard. "Oh," Jeanne said, as the cat stretched luxuriously at her feet, "hello to you. This is Uncle Hank." She picked him up. "He's a pretty good old cat. Hangs around a lot. And I bet I know why —because he knows he'll get something good to eat. Isn't that right, Uncle Hank?" ■

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Reviews

Donna Fargo . . . Carl Perkins . . . Ronnie Milsap . . .

Donna Fargo
All About A Feeling
Dot DOS 26019 (record)
GRT 8150-26019 (8-track tape)

I had been used to thinking of Donna Fargo as the "Happiest Girl In The Whole USA," and then I heard "Little Girl Gone." I guess everyone goes through the realization that childhood has departed forever—though it seems like just yesterday. Donna has taken this experience, and others of an equally universal nature, and created beautiful personal expressions of her feelings in eleven excellent songs.

She starts out with "It Do Feel Good," which immediately lets you in on the secret that here's a woman with real spirit. She races through her confusion and emerges knowing that "love's alive again within me" and "it do feel good." And it's not just a dumb happiness, more a well-thought-out realization of life.

"I'll Try a Little Harder" and "Puffy Eyes" both deal with the problems of one person caring more than the other. They're slower and more contemplative, springing from rejection, yet not bitter. Each song ends with unanswered questions: "Don't you think we're worth trying to save?" and "Can't you tell these puffy eyes love you?" They're the kind of questions you arrive at only at dawn, after a hard and painful night. Lonely, lonely questions.

"Nothing Can Stay" is just as sad, trying to come to grips with love slipping away. An exquisite song.

"All About A Feeling" and "Hot Diggitty Dog" are both breezy celebrations of life. "Rotten Little Song," however, is just that, the other side of the coin entirely—"All in all it's been a rotten day." But it's a charming, happy, nutty, crummy little number that's as much fun as anything I've heard recently.

"Little Girl Gone" and the last song on the record, "Just A Friend Of Mine," are to my mind the most interesting. Both have an incredible sadness to them, a depth and intensity of thought that are quite rare. Unfortunately, "Just A Friend" is marred by a poor arrangement and bad production.

This album is one of the best in recent memory. Donna Fargo has written songs that are true, thoughtful and very musical. Plus, she has the distinct advantage of having Donna Fargo to sing them. A great album.

JERRY LEICHTLING

Carl Perkins
My Kind of Country
Mercury SRM-1-691 (record)
MC8-1-691 (8-track tape)

Carl Perkins was one of the first, if not the first good old boy, to begin to rave back in the days when pegged pants and blue suede shoes were "in." He remained a good old boy, too, through years of touring and playing

solid country rhythms. This album is evidence not only of Perkins' particular brand of country, but of the sensitive, low-key, straight-ahead musicianship that set the style for much of the world's pop music over the past ten to 15 years. Call it pop, rock or rockabilly, it started in the country and Perkins is one of the fathers of the form.

This album is a fine collection of tunes that roam all over country. From the classic opening, "(Let's Get) Dixiefried" to one of the best versions of "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town" I've ever heard, it jogs along at a nice pace, covering the best elements of country music.

There's a hint of gospel all about, a little swing, some easy rockin', and all of it delivered with good feeling. Perkins wrote most of these songs himself, and he moves from each one with all the ease and skill of a mellowed virtuoso, which of course he is.

"You Tore My Heaven All To Hell" has already proven itself as a single. The rest of the album is as good. Just put this album on your turntable and let it roll. If you like country, you'll love this. It doesn't have a single flaw.

RICHARD NUSSER

Ronnie Milsap
Where My Heart Is
RCA APL1-0338 (record)
APS1-0338 (8-track tape)

A couple of years ago when Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett were leading a pop trend in something called swamp rock, there appeared out of nowhere an album by a blind piano player named Ronnie Milsap. I'd never heard of him, but something induced me to give that album a try anyhow, and it turned out to be one of my smartest moves in a long time. For swamp rock was really nothing but a combination of various elements of Southern music, and this guy Milsap had them all beat. The album, much to my dismay, went absolutely nowhere.

Ronnie had already shown a mastery of other forms of Southern music, so why not straight country? Now his country music debut album is out to provide an answer: there's no reason why not. This is one sharp LP.

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Milsap has a full, mature voice and a feel for phrasing that brings out the best in a song. He can take a slightly odd lyric like "Brothers, Strangers and Friends" and make it his own as easily as he can "Branded Man," a tune it's hard not to identify with Haggard. "I Hate You," the other side of "All Together Now (Let's Fall Apart)," is included here and so is a fine version of "Pass Me By," a song I was beginning to think I never wanted to hear again, it's been done so often.

The arrangements never stray from the Nashville mold, but they too have enough little surprises that you never forget you're listening to a man who likes to put a personal stamp on his music. And finally, a word about his piano-playing, which reinforces that feeling so strongly. It's about as bluesy as Nashville gets, and if there's anything wrong here, it's only that that aspect of him is not featured enough.

All in all, it marks an auspicious Nashville debut even in a year that's seen plenty of auspicious debuts. Ronnie, and those of us who've taken such pleasure in his past work, should take great pride in the fact that his time has finally come. It proves we were right all along.

JOHN MORTHLAND

George and Tammy
We're Gonna Hold On
Epic KE 32757 (record)
EA 32757 (8-track tape)

George and Tammy are not only "holding on" together, they're making out with some good music. They start out with the title song, a slow ballad of the type they do so well, and proceed to "When True Love Steps In," another in the same vein. Then on to "Never Ending Song of Love," a big rock 'n' roll hit of a couple of years ago which is perfect for duets.

"Wouldn't I?" is the fourth cut on the record, and finally something other than true love is referred to—infidelity (gasp!). "I know you could outlove her, if you and I were free" is one of the lines about the frustrations of relationships grown cold, with warm love waiting eagerly outside. They do the old bluegrass

number, "Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms," complete with an updated lyric. What used to be "My papa's a ginger cake baker" is changed by Tammy to "My mama's a beauty operator." Tammy sings this one especially well, her voice really ringing in nice tight harmony.

Side two starts with Italian style mandolin, talks about Rome, Athens, and Paris and reveals that it's Rome, Georgia; Athens, Texas; and Paris, Tennessee because ("We're Not) The Jet Set." Then into that old classic, "The Crawdad Song." This song *has* to be done fast or else it just sort of lays there. Billy Sherrill has worked up a breakneck-speed, exciting arrangement for the song, and it really "cooks."

George and Tammy each do a solo number, "The Woman Loves Me Right" and "That Man of Mine," respectively. And they finally rejoin each other for "As Long As We Can," which pretty much sums it all up.

They're both in fine voice and Sherrill has done his typical superb production job. So let's wish them the best.

JERRY LEICHTLING

Roy Clark
Roy Clark's Family Album
DOT DOS-26018 (record)
GRT-8150-26018 (8-track tape)

There seems to be a number of people who have the mistaken idea that the Roy Clark they see on "Hee Haw" is the *real* Roy Clark. It's not. The real Roy Clark, free of mooning glances and plastic rose trellis, is alive and well and living on the *Roy Clark Family Album.* It's a good album in many ways; it's solid country, there's no question of that.

Daddy Hester Clark plays guitar (as does Roy); two uncles (Dudley and Paul) are on mandolin and fiddle; cousin Kenneth plays bass and Bob Schodt picks banjo.

The album kicks off with a string-busting rendition of "Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms." The arrangement is pretty much like every other arrangement you've ever heard, but it's played extremely well, with a gutsy vocal.

The album's first instrumental is "Sweet Bunch of Daisies," which gives us the earliest hint of what kind of blood the reigning CMA entertainer of the year has in his veins. Clark blood is music blood, there's no doubt of that.

The flip side gives us 80 per cent instrumental, broken only by "Jimmy Brown The Newsboy." With all respect to A.P. Carter, I was sure that I couldn't stand another telling of this particular tale, but Roy sings it sure and straight, and it's probably the best version of an overworked song around these days.

Each of the musicians gets a chance to showcase his talent in the instrumentals on this side. Each piece—fiddle, bass, dobro, guitar and banjo—blends perfectly, yet can stand on its own merit.

In some ways, especially in intensity and respect for material, the "Family Album" reminds the listener of the milestone "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" triple set with the Dirt Band and just about every real heavyweight country artist we've got.

While it may not be especially inspired, the *Roy Clark Family Album* is certainly very good music. You don't really expect any surprises on a record like this, and you don't get any. You just get crisp arrangements, competent vocals, and textbook picking.

TERRY GURLEY

John Prine
Sweet Revenge
Atlantic SD 7274 (record)
TP 7274 (8-track tape)

The inside word is that Atlantic Records is finally going to go all out for John Prine by giving a big promotional push to *Sweet Revenge,* his third album. The news is welcomed, for Prine—who might just be the best damn songwriter in America today—has not yet been discovered by the mass audience, although he's been the darling of music critics and fellow songwriters for two years now.

But for those being introduced to Prine through this album, a word of caution. While *Sweet Revenge* deserves to be a best-seller, an element of what I thought to be the essential Prine is missing, or at least on sabbatical. That element consists of Prine as powerful interpreter of the fleeting joys and nagging disillusionment in Middle America. Oh, *Sweet Revenge* contains "Dear Abby," an hysterical take-off on that Middle America institution, and "The Ac-

World Radio History

cident," a funny account of the dramatics people resort to when involved in a minor car accident. But, otherwise, there is little bite in this collection of songs, little to ponder. Prine's brand of touching heroes—the lonely old couple, the bitter war veteran, the crippled bum—is missing.

But there is plenty left in this assortment of mainly personal statements to make the album top-notch. The songs range from the light to morbid, but each is characterized by Prine's stunning images. There appears to be no overall focus, although Prine remains fascinated by loneliness and rejection. The "Blue Umbrella," for example, tells of the speaker's rejection by his lover and his poignant inability to explain why it happened. "Sweet Revenge" tells of another kind of rejection, that caused by being branded an outcast and kook.

Prine made a wise choice in recording most of the songs in Nashville, as the musicianship and production are excellent. Despite the addition of horns on two of the cuts and a trio of female background singers on another, the sound remains uncluttered, giving Prine's words the maximum airing.

So, if after picking up *Sweet Revenge*, you decide you like John Prine, good for you. But don't forget to pick up *John Prine* and *Diamonds in the Rough*, his earlier offerings. You'll like him all the more.

RICH WISEMAN

Jerry Reed
The Uptown Poker Club
RCA APL1-0356 (record)
APS1-0356 (8-track tape)

Listening to Jerry Reed sing, pick or cut up, brings to mind the old Johnny Cash song, "Everybody Loves A Nut." While some of Reed's songs are perhaps loaded with more punch than others it's difficult to recall a Jerry Reed song I just don't like, and it's just about impossible to listen through one of his albums without several good laughs. Whether he's being intentionally funny, semi-serious or melancholy, Reed is having fun with his material, and he invites his listeners to do the same.

The current Jerry Reed production, the title tune of which has been released as a single, is a showcase of this entertainer's versatility. There's some top-notch picking and good singing and he even does a love song or two.

Three of the songs are comic. In addition to "Uptown Poker Club," there's a uniquely Jerry Reed-styled rendition of the pop standard "Nobody," with some new verses and an upbeat, syncopated chorus. And deserving special attention is a Shel Silverstein winner entitled "Travelin' Music," a ragtime tune set in a barroom and

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done "megaphone" style. It takes a while to get to (it's the second song on Side Two), but it's the outstanding number in this collection.

In the semi-serious, philosophical vein of his earlier hit, "Better Things In Life," Reed offers his own composition, "It's Tough All Over," another outstanding song with that hard-driving background guitar he often features. "Honkin'," also a Reed original, is straight instrumental. Two other songs, consisting of a few simple, repetitive lyrics, are primarily picking as well. Two ballad-type love songs, one slow, one upbeat, round out the collection.

All in all the package is well put-together. It is a happy, refreshing sampling of the music that is Jerry Reed.

ALAN WHITMAN

Joe Simon
Simon Country
Spring SPR-5705

There's surely enough solid country stuff around so that you needn't be concerned with an "outsider's" attempt to win you over. Although Joe Simon has made his musical mark through pop and soul forms, he's really no foreigner to the Nashville sound.

The Bergen White arrangements, the ambience of Jack Clement's studio and the production of John Richbourg certainly helped set the proper tone. But Joe Simon, who in the past has succeeded with soul versions of country hits like "The Chokin' Kind," has learned his lessons well. To him, country conviction now comes naturally.

Simon Country features vocals which are considerably more "black" than Charley Pride's or Stoney Edwards'. But Charlie Rich has already explored this territory, so it should not seem strange to the country fan. In fact, the whole original Sun roster was all about just this kind of approach to a country tune.

Only occasionally (like on "You Don't Know Me") do purely pop considerations win out at the expense of the original Nashville concept. Like the material (from Ben Peters, Bobby Bare, Jerry Chesnut and others), the flow of most of the grooves is out to make its points on purely country entertainment values.

Not since Ray Charles has a black performer from "without" made such a good impression "within." And as Joe Simon is not likely to make this kind of special album for some time to come, there are acres of reasons why you shouldn't let this one pass you by.

ROBERT ADELS

Freddie Hart
If You Can't Feel It (It Ain't There)
Capitol ST-11252 (record)
8XT-11252 (8-track tape)

Freddie Hart struck paydirt with "Easy Lovin'" at a time when he needed it most, with his career just about washed-up. And he's had an impressively long string of hits since then, all based on the same, some might say anachronistic, combination of elements: an unmistakably

sincere vocal style, a simple melody, a catchy phrase, and words celebrating the more worthy aspects of the love relationship.

He has become a paragon of sorts, of the virtues of goodness, in the midst of all that R- and X-rated music blaring from all directions. With a good thing going for himself, it's probably not fair to criticize his efforts to make the most of this success. The problem, though, is that the songs eventually become interchangeable.

This latest collection of "love messages" contains ten smooth, easy-paced ballads. It's a good, solid studio production, with everything as it should be—and has been. Catch phrases furnish the song ideas and titles: "If You Can't Feel It (It Ain't There)," "I've Got My Hands Full," "Come and Get Her ("If you want her/But first you go through me"). Six of the ten are Freddie Hart compositions, at least in part. The songs are short (they average about two minutes each), uncomplicated, and to the point—nothing extraneous, no padding.

"Too Many Teardrops," about a lover's triangle and the fate of the loser, is the only departure from the standard Hart style. It is done with less affectation than the others, perhaps because of its nature; and it offers a suggestion of what might be forthcoming if Freddie Hart diversifies.

ALAN WHITMAN

Barbara Mandrell
The Midnight Oil
Columbia KC 32743 (record)
CA 32743 (8-track tape)

Barbara Mandrell's new LP is a bit uneven, but at its best, it's enough to convince you that—energy crisis or not—her "Midnight Oil" will be burnin' hot for a long, long time.

The title cut has become Barbara Mandrell's biggest single yet, and it's no small wonder why. It would be hard to imagine too many other females who would be convincing enough to put this two-timin' woman song across as resolutely as she does. Barbara's "workin' late" alibi is a long-overdue switch on the tall stories some husbands have been telling their wives for ages. Through her guilt, you still sense her womanly strength.

Barbara Mandrell is at her best when her material puts her in the category of a firm, soulful woman with a mind of her own. Unfortunately, some of the song choices here are not only lyrically inappropriate, but are musically mismatched as well.

"In The Name Of Love," for example, begins in a quite meaningful Charlie Rich piano ballad style, suitable for the entire "I'm takin' him back regardless" feeling of the song. But that's all too quickly tossed aside: a party feeling takes over in the production, pulling out the top hat and cane and placing Barbara on a stage to spill her heart out in front of a vaudeville backdrop. "Smile, Somebody Loves You" suffers from a similar kind of atmospheric schizophrenia.

But when producer Billy Sherrill connects with those powers that set Barbara Mandrell apart from a Jody Miller or a Barbara Fairchild (whose talents quite appropriately lead in another direction), he gives her the room she needs to really show her stuff.

As a trucker's wife in "Tonight My Baby's Comin' Home," you can actually feel the driving energy, the rapid and regular pulse of highway speeds. The imperative rush that's developed in "Show Me" finally climaxes as you feel compelled to give the lady anything she wants.

Barbara Mandrell is one of country's greatest developing natural resources. When she strikes oil, Barbara gushes forth with a force that just can't be ignored.

ROBERT ADELS

World Radio History

Eric Weissberg & Deliverance
Rural Free Delivery
Warner Brothers BS-2720 (record)
M8-2720 (8-track tape)

Although virtually ignored by last year's CMA awards, Eric Weissberg is the guy who singlehandedly gave new life to instrumental country in general, and bluegrass in specific, with his big hit of "Duelin' Banjos." Now Eric has put together a new group, Deliverance, which features highly structured instrumental quintet work and smooth, easy vocal harmonies. Steve Mandell, Weissberg's "sparring partner" on "Duelin' Banjos," is a member of the band.

Deliverance carefully wins you over with its inventive competence on the first two tracks, Bill Monroe's "Uncle Pen" and Jim and Jesse's "Hard Hearted." From there on out, the songs are mostly originals, but they retain a neo-bluegrass form, heavily laden with the persistent percussion of Richard Crooks. Eric and the boys seem to have all the necessary qualifications to buck this kind of tradition by incorporating old-timey musical heritage with the verve and vim of youth. What their vocals lack in forcefulness, they make up for in comfort; even an occasional rockabilly "bop-bop-shoo-wop" seems to fit like a glove. Instrumentally, Deliverance proves that the best-known country studio men have little edge, if any, on their sharp display of prowess.

Just remember that Jerry Reed called one of his early albums "Nashville Underground" before you dismiss these youthful upstarts. Having already surfaced with one country hit, Eric Weissberg and his band are seeking public acceptance—and they sure sound like they're going to get it, rurally and freely.

ROBERT ADELS

Various Artists
Bean Blossom
MCA 2-8002 (record)
MCAT 2-8002 (8-track tape)

It may be hard for some to imagine an artist hosting an annual musical festival for performers who make their living doing the very same music he helped originate. But bluegrass is really a sound of a different color and Bill Monroe's ego hasn't been seen in years—in spite of the "Father of Bluegrass" title he has no choice but to live with.

Bill Monroe's Seventh Annual Bluegrass Festival was captured live at its nine-day stand last June in Bean Blossom, Indiana in this newly-released MCA two-record set. It's the real traditional blue-

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Side 1
1. In The Jailhouse Now
2. Wondering
3. I'm Walking the Dog
4. Slowly
5. More and More
6. There Stands the Glass

Side 2
1. Honky Tonk Song
2. Back Street Affair
3. Love Love Love
4. Missing You
5. If You Were Me (And I Were You)
6. Falling Back To You

Side 3
1. I Ain't Never
2. Is It Wrong
3. I'm Tired
4. Walking the Streets
5. No Love Have I
6. Don't Do It, Darlin'

Side 4
1. Tupelo County Jail
2. You're Not Mine Anymore
3. Alla My Love
4. That's Me Without You
5. I Don't Care
6. It's My Way

PITNEY, GENE M2S-3148T
The Gene Pitney Story

Side 1
1. Town Without Pity
2. I Wanna Love My Life Away
3. Tower Tall
4. Angelique
5. Just One Smile

Side 2
1. Blue Gene
2. The Bosses' Daughter
3. Liberty Valance
4. E Se Domani
5. Backstage

Side 3
1. 24 Sycamore Street
2. Country Dancing
3. Flower Girl
4. My Sweet Kentucky Rose
5. Something's Gotten Hold of My Heart

Side 4
1. Never Had No Toys
2. Playing Games of Love
3. Where Did the Magic Go?
4. That's What Sends Men to the Bowery
5. I Can't Make It Without You

SMITH, CARL GP 31T
The Carl Smith Anniversary Album

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1. I Overlooked An Orchid
2. Mister Moon
3. I Feel Like Cryin'
4. There She Goes
5. Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way

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1. Loose Talk
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3. Don't Just Stand There
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5. I Betcha My Heart I Love You

Side 3
1. Hey Joe!
2. Back Up Buddy
3. She Called Me Baby
4. Deep Water
5. Foggy River

Side 4
1. Pull My String And Wind Me Up
2. Heartbreak Avenue
3. Good Deal, Lucille
4. It's All Right
5. I Love You Because

WELLS, KITTY DXB 174T
The Kitty Wells Story

1. It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels
2. I Heard The Juke Box Playing
3. A Wedding Ring Ago
4. Paying For That Back Street Affair
5. I Don't Claim To Be An Angel
6. Whose Shoulder Will You Cry On

Side 2
1. I Gave My Wedding Dress Away
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4. Lonely Side of Town
5. Making Believe
6. Searching (For Someone Like You)

Side 3
1. Repenting
2. Your Wild Life's Gonna Get You Down
3. Three Ways (To Love You)
4. She's No Angel
5. Touch and Go Heart
6. Jealousy

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World Radio History

The talent line-up is heavy, but as nimble-fingered and honey-toned as can be: Bill Monroe, of course leads his Blue Grass Boys; Jim and Jesse front their Virginia Boys; The Midnight Ramblers are present and accounted for by James Monroe; Jimmy Martin helms his Sunny Mountain Boys and Lester Flatt's brought his Nashville Grass too.

No bluegrass festival would be complete without a definitive master leading the inevitable "Orange Blossom Special," so Carl Jackson has stopped by to do the honors. And no less than 12 fiddlers with homegrown reputations as high as Tex Logan and "Tater" Tate are happy to be part of the scene.

Lester Flatt quite properly introduces the biggest bluegrass hit in recent memory by its original name, "Feudin' Banjos." But this is no bunch of academicians with a purity fixation. When the musicians on this record play pure bluegrass, it's only because they have the most fun playing just that way. The harmonies would not be as smooth, the pickin' not half so impressive if these men were out to make improvements on the original. This is the way bluegrass has remained an institution for all the right reasons.

If you were one of the 75,000 who came to Bean Blossom, here's your souvenir of the festivities. If you didn't make it on over there last June, here's every reason to catch Bill Monroe's party for 1974, and to experience his last bash any old time you choose.

ROBERT ADELS

Charlie McCoy
The Fastest Harp In The South
Monument KZ 32749 (record)
ZA 32749 (8-track tape)

You can relate to a Charlie McCoy album on two levels. First, you can quickly become a singing sensation by putting it on your phonograph and vocalizing so that your phrasing matches Charlie's adaptable harmonica. Or, you can sit back and marvel at the intricacies of the sidemen. Charlie believes in sidemen so much that almost half of the back cover of his new LP, *The Fastest Harp In The South,* is there to give credit to their contributions, which are wide, warm and welcome.

Charlie McCoy simultaneously becomes the sideman's sideman and the spotlight's spotlight every time he records. That's why his records are so extraordinarily listenable and always so well received by the public.

The recent hits are here on his new album: Kris Kristofferson's "Why Me"; Marie Osmond's "Paper Roses"; Charlie Rich's "Behind Closed Doors." So too are standards from Bob Wills and Cousin Emmy. But the program is more than a mere songbag. Each side builds to a flourish of a dizzying sort after having stopped along the way to make sure that all the mellow moods that Charlie's capable of have been created.

Side One winds up with the title tune, country harmonica's answer to "Flight Of The Bumblebee." In a flash of high speed facility, Charlie McCoy takes a musical structure loosely built on the "Dixie" theme and twirls it around itself until he becomes the tightest as well as "The Fastest Harp In The South."

After a reverential next-to-last cut tribute to Bob Wills on Side Two, the guys pull out all the stops for him on a rockin' rhythmic grand finale version of "Ruby (Are You Mad At Your Man?)." The bass concept here is right out of hard rock, but the production is handled so that it can't offend anyone's country sensibilities.

ROBERT ADELS

If any of these albums or 8-track tapes are not available from your local record store, you can get them from COUNTRY MUSIC. Just send us a list of the titles you want, their catalogue number (listed under the titles in the review section), and $5.98 per album or $6.98 per tape cartridge (when available). Also include 25 cents postage per album or tape, and send your check or money order to:

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Other Recent Album Releases

Artist	Album	Label
Johnny Russell	Rednecks, White Socks and Blue Ribbon Beer	*RCA APL1-0345*
Susan Raye	Hymns By Susan Raye	*Capitol ST-11255*
Conway Twitty	Clinging To A Saving Hand	*MCA 376*
Dottie West	Country Sunshine	*RCA APL1-0344*
Maybelle Carter	Mother Maybelle Carter	*Columbia KC-32436*
Lloyd Green	Shades Of Steel	*Monument KZ 32532*
Diana Trask	It's A Man's World	*Dot DOS 26016*
Glen Campbell	I Remember Hank Williams	*Capitol SW-11253*
Hank Thompson	Kindly Keep It Country	*Dot DOS 26015*
Al Martino	Country Style	*Capitol ST-11184*
Jeannie Seely	Can I Sleep In Your Arms/Lucky Ladies	*MCA 385*
Red, White & Blue (Grass)	Very Popular	*General Recording Corp. GA-5002*

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A Candid Conversation With Merle Haggard

by Peter McCabe

What made you do a Dixieland album?

I'm kind of a history bug I guess you might say. I'm interested in the origin of country music and the connection between Dixieland blues and country music. The Dixieland album is something I wanted to do because a lot of our music originated in that area and from that type of music. People got a lot of their inspiration from the blues of the South, which is certainly Dixieland blues.

You cut that album twice, didn't you?

Well, I have a live cut of it and then we have a studio cut. The studio cut was ready for release two days prior to an engagement in New Orleans when I came up with the idea of doing it live. It almost didn't happen—it was almost too late, but what we came out of there with was really fortunate because we just had two days to fly equipment in from different parts of the country, and I remarked it would be a miracle if we did it.

Did you have to study anything special for this album?

Yes, I've been studying this type of music for about a year, just investigating like where did the music of Hank Williams come from, and where did Jimmie Rodgers come from and where did Wills come from and I traced it back to one person, a fellow by the name of Emmett Miller, who had a great influence on Jimmie Rodgers; in fact he was a good friend of Jimmie Rodgers. He was a blackface comedian who traveled and entertained during the late twenties up until about 1936. Also he had the first recording of "Lovesick Blues" which was Hank Williams' debut song. Bob Wills was also inspired by Emmett Miller. So you find that the three—you might say originators of country music—Wills, Jimmie Rodgers and Hank Williams, the people who really brought it recognition, were all inspired by Emmett Miller. I don't mean to say Hank was inspired by him, although Hank had songs that were originally Emmett Miller songs. But Rodgers and Wills were directly inspired by Emmett Miller.

Where was he from?

He was originally from Georgia and he recorded in New Orleans from 1924 to 1936. During that period he had a little combo (chuckles). It consisted of Gene Krupa, Jack Teagarden, Jimmy Dorsey, Tommy Dorsey and Eddie Lang. Yeah, that's right. Another interesting thing was that Emmett seems to have disappeared around 1936 and I can't find out what happened to him. Nobody seems to know. But he recorded a lot of great songs like "Anytime," "Lovesick Blues," "Right Or Wrong," just to name a few, and there's more like "Big Bad Bill From Louisville," things that became big hits later by different people and were semi-hits by Emmett during his period.

How did you find out about Emmett Miller?

Well, I went to visit Bob Wills one day and he had this tape playing down by his bed. And during the course of our conversation I had my head down low and was listening. I wanted to know just what it was. He finally told me that was Emmett Miller and I said, "well who's Emmett Miller?" He said, "well, that was a guy I listened to when I was a kid." So that made me interested and I traced it down and found out he was friends with Jimmie Rodgers and that he and Jimmie used to have yodeling contests, and it was a toss-up among fans as to who the best yodeler was, whether it was Emmett Miller or Jimmie Rodgers. He actually recorded before Jimmie Rodgers. Jimmie didn't record until '27.

Those were the reasons for the album, the things that I discovered. And I do like Dixieland music. It's a free-wheeling type music, the same as country music is. There are some horns in there, but the horns aren't playing like horns. They're playing what they want to play, like guitar players play in country music.

It seems to me that of all the major artists today what you're doing is the most carefully researched. You put a lot of effort into your albums and when you go after something you work at it and it comes out very polished, and yet it's very pure. It's hard to

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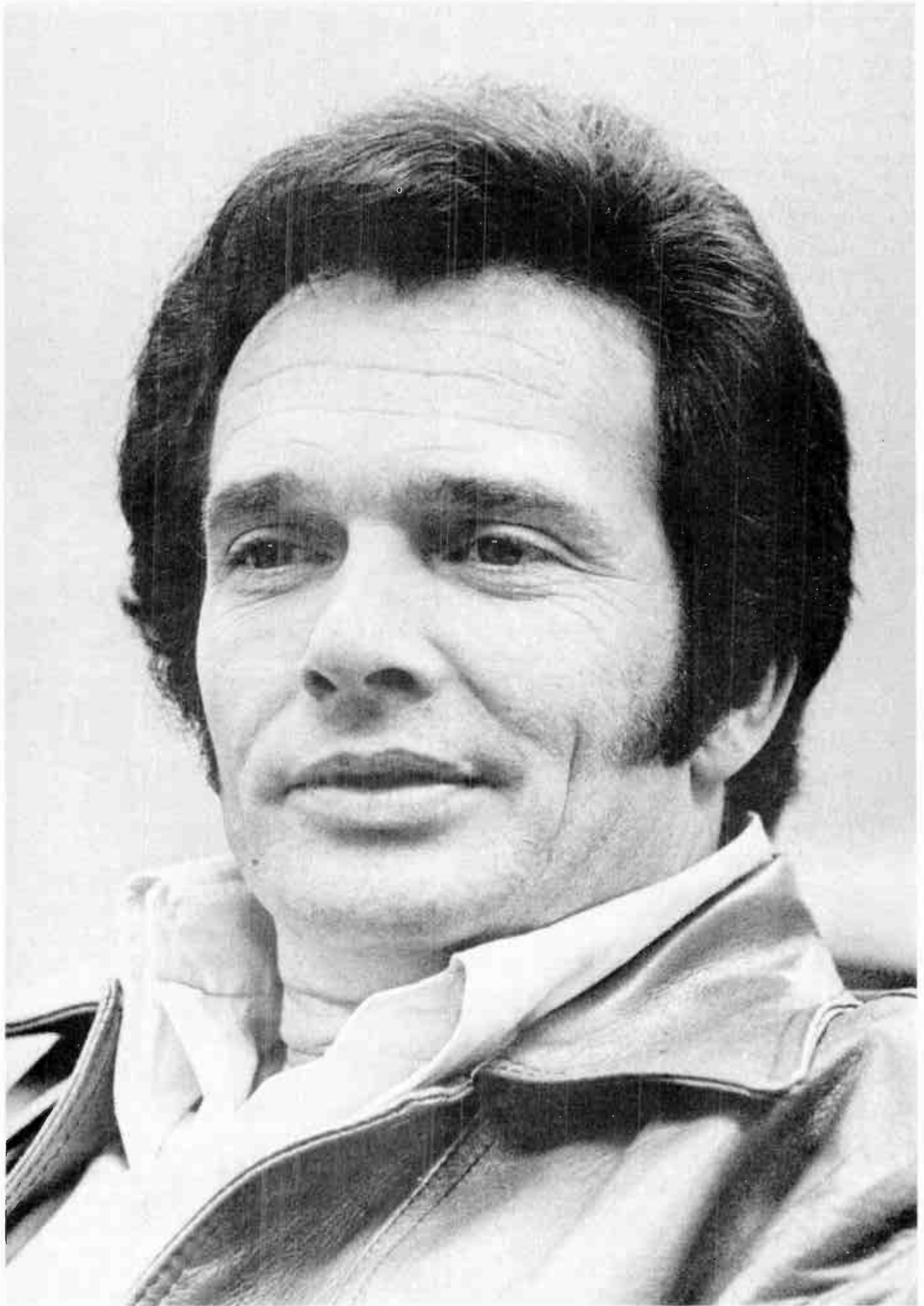
PHOTO: ARTHUR POLLOCK

World Radio History

from Oklahoma to California, when they came out West. Somewhere in New Mexico, they tied him on behind. They took a rope and pulled him with their car from New Mexico to California. Of course, the law wouldn't even allow that now.

I think when you get off the beaten path you still see things like that. We took a little trip off the beaten path for about three hours in Montana, to a place about 200 miles off the main road. They don't even have law enforcement there. They had one kid run into the chain link fence around the school and that was the biggest thing that happened there all year. All the townsfolk got together and they made him build it back. But you don't find that type of thing anymore.

Were you up there fishing?

No, we were enroute from the West Coast to the East Coast and we had a few extra hours.

When you go fishing, what do you fish for?

I like fresh water fish, mainly bass.

Are you any good at it?

Well, I'm learning. Bass fishing is really more intricate than it appears to be. I've been fishing for bass for about 12 to 15 years, but I took some lessons last summer from a professional bass fisherman, from an old man. He's partly paralyzed, but he's been fishing for bass since he was 15 and he's the best I've ever seen. He gets bass when nobody else does, when the lake is dead and the fishing is bad, he goes and gets 4- to 6-pound bass. We'd been up there three or four days and didn't have any luck. I went out with him and just from his instructions I got 11 bass in about two hours.

Bass fishing, if you really do it right, is hard work. It's not a relaxing thing physically because you gotta really work at it. One thing the old man told me: everybody wants to use swivels so they can change lures quickly. He said never use a swivel. It cuts down the action. He's got little things that I never thought of before. He has four poles exactly alike, four reels exactly alike, and he has his popper, his worm, his plug he calls his "Big O" and a spinner possibly. In other words four main lures of his choice. And he just changes poles. He fishes around the old dead limbs of trees, and he'll lay that popper right underneath that tree. He said a lot of people make the mistake of thinking they've got to cast a long way's away from wherever they are. But he says you can't cast accurately over 30 feet. And I never saw him cast more than 30 feet. And one of the best strikes I saw him get wasn't further away than the width of my bus, a 6- or 7-pounder. Darn thing nearly scared me to death.

PHOTOS MARSHALL FALLWELL

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What are you planning to do this year?

Well, we have about 80 working days planned already, mostly traveling days and one-nighters and we'll do a couple of two week stands at the Harrah's Club at Lake Tahoe, and recording. We've had offers to go into Vegas, but those are hard jobs. I've set my price awfully high at Vegas because I don't really care whether or not I play there. It's 30 straight days, two shows a night and you're more or less confined to the building. You can't leave for 30 days and it's just a hard job.

Is there anything that you would really like to do, or any part of your career that you've missed out on in any way? Would you do some movies or write a book?

Well, I plan to do both of those. I want to write a couple of books. We're going to do some movies. We have an offer now to do a movie with Burt Reynolds. I'm not sure we're going to do it because nothing has been confirmed on our side yet. But I'm sure we'll have a chance to do a couple of good movies. We've had a lot of offers to do some movies over the past three or four years, but a lot of them haven't been good. I don't want to do one unless it's first-rate.

Would you ever do a movie on Jimmie Rodgers?

Yes, but I'm kinda interested in doing a movie on Wills. I'm a little more interested in that than a Rodgers movie.

PHOTO: BILL GOODMAN

"I've run out of interesting stories. I guess I have to go back and do some more time."

The song material you do that I really like is the stuff you do about your own experiences. For a while you were doing a lot of those songs, and then you seemed to stop.

Well, I've run out of interesting stories. I guess I have to go back and do some more time. ■

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Hi-Fi Corner

Recording in your own basement: How to get a demo tape you can be proud of without paying $100 an hour.

The usual procedure for making a demo tape is to load the guys and gals and several tons of instruments and amplifiers into a caravan of stationwagons and U-Hauls and head for a studio in Nashville, New York or Los Angeles, where you'll pay $35 to $100 for each hour of studio time—plus extra charges. If your group is experienced, well-rehearsed, and not too fatigued or nervous, you might just get by for a hundred or two but if you're like most "new professionals," a lot of that expensive recording time will be spent just getting ready, and the bill could easily top $1,000.

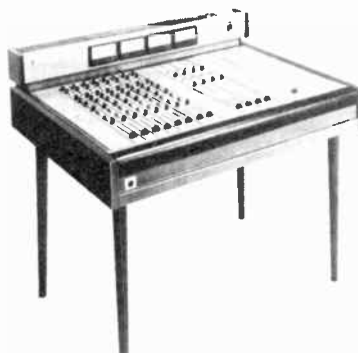
But if you're going to have to skip lunches and postpone car payments to pay the bill, maybe you'd better stay home. Because at home, with relatively inexpensive home hi-fi equipment, you can make a damn good demo. Here are some tips:

● Living rooms are nice for listening to music, but probably too noisy for recording it. The basement or garage will probably be better.

● If the basement or garage has unfinished cement walls and floor, and not much furniture, there will be too much reverberation (sounds bouncing around). A good test: clap your hands sharply. If there is an equally sharp echo, the place is probably okay. If the echo "rings" and lasts a long time, the room is too reverberant. Try hanging up some thick blankets or propping some mattresses against the walls. If there is no echo at all, the room is "dead" and while not great for recording it will probably be okay if you boost the treble controls on your amplifiers while performing.

● Most bands can be recorded with two microphones, placed about 10 feet apart and each one about eight feet in front of the group. Experiment with various arrangements until you get the best balance of the various sounds. Don't let the mike be in the direct path of any of the instrument amps; it's usually okay for the mike to be in the path of your vocal PA speaker.

● If you want to highlight one or two performers, isolate them from the rest of the group with baffles made of blankets and mattresses, and give them separate microphones.



TASCAM Mixing Panel—for a basement studio.

● If the rest of the band is still too loud even with the baffles, consider putting the star and his or her mike in another room, and supply headphones for listening to the rest of the group.

● The Teac models 2340 and 3340 permit switching the record heads to be used for playback ("Sel-Synch"), so certain performers can do their stuff hours or even days after the rest of the band did the main recording, and everything will come out together. With luck you can get similar results with most simple two-head recorders; even the most expensive three-head machines, without switchable heads, will give you a time delay between the sounds on the two tracks.

● Open-reel decks are the most versatile for live recording and produce tapes that are easiest to edit, but cassette machines selling for $250 or more, particularly those with Dolby noise reduction, can make excellent tapes.

● It is very important that you set your recording levels properly so that the loudest sounds are not distorted and the weakest ones are not lost. Make several experimental "takes" until you find the right settings. The new "high output" tapes give you extra "headroom" to absorb loud sounds without distorting and are well worth the extra dollar or so.

● Don't use an 8-track deck for live recording; the timing is too tricky.

● If you have decent microphones and a good PA system for your vocals, try feeding the PA amp's "line" output directly into your recorder. If you lack a PA, you will have to buy or borrow mikes and a mixer. In mikes, you'll get the best sound for your dollar with an electret condensor model, going for $30 to $100, from Sony or Electro-Voice.

● A microphone mixer lets you feed the sound from two, four, or a dozen or more microphone or external sources into the two input channels of a standard tape deck. Sony and Shure make good ones for less than $100. Better ones go up to $2,000 from these companies plus Yamaha, Altec, and Tascam. The Concord Mark IX Dolbyized cassette deck has a center channel input as well as left and right and is very nice for highlighting a vocalist against a band.

● You can get a very full, rich sounding recording of a solo performer—a woman and her guitar, for example—by using one mike slightly above the performer to pick up the vocals, and another one close to the guitar. Feed each mike to one channel of the recorder.

● If you are taping from the amp used for your vocal PA system, you probably will not need separate mikes for the amplified instruments; the vocal mikes will pick them up.

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The Country Hearth

Mexican Cooking à la Johnny Rodriguez

by Ellis Nassour

Johnny Rodriguez still refers to himself as "just a country boy who got darn lucky!" The Mercury recording artist, who got his start with Tom T. Hall's Storytellers, says he's changed little since his youth in Sabinal, Texas, a small town near San Antonio.

"I'm still as driftless as when I was 16," he says, adding with a smile: "Only now I drift from one-nighter to one-nighter."

But at 22, country music's most eligible bachelor still knows how to enjoy some of the comforts his popularity has afforded him. Johnny lives with his mother and family in a spanking new home in Sabinal (this replaced the three-room "shanty" in which he grew up with eight brothers and sisters), but when he's working in Nashville sessions, he goes home to a beautiful townhouse complex in southeast Nashville. It has four rooms, a patio, access to a swimming pool—and a huge, well-equipped kitchen.

But even on his own, Johnny still enjoys some of the culinary pleasures of his Mexican heritage, thanks to his mother ("a great cook, even if I am too skinny to prove it").

We convinced Johnny to divulge some family secrets and share a few of his recipes with *Country Music*'s readers.

PAELLA VALENCIANA

2 chickens (excluding livers and necks)
2 pork chops
1/2 lb. scallops (or small package frozen)
1/2 lb. shrimp or lobster, peeled (fresh)
2 leafs coriamder (fresh)
2 bay leafs
1 8-oz can tomato sauce (optional)
1 lb. dried peas (if canned, drain)
2 carrots, diced
1 small onion, chopped
1 green pepper, diced
Dash oregano
Small jar stuffed olives
2 tbls. dry, white wine (cooking)
3 cups instant rice (or yellow)
1/2 cup olive oil
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. black pepper
4 cups cold water

Put cut pieces of chicken, pork chop, and spices (including coriamder and bay leaves) into large oven casserole over oil. Cook slowly, do not brown—about an hour, till meat is tender. Add water, and onions, tomato sauce, peas, carrots, green pepper, olives, and wine. Then scallops, and seafood meat. Make sure chicken is almost covered by liquids. Boil, stirring frequently. Add rice and let it continue to boil uncovered till water evaporates. Stir and cover casserole. Heat over low flame until rice is tender—about 30 to 45 minutes. Serves approximately eight.

CHILLED GAZPACHO SOUP

1 large Spanish onion, finely chopped
3 cucumbers, peeled
3 medium to small tomatoes, peeled
1 large green pepper, seeded
1/2 tsp. ground cumin seed
1/2 tsp. dried dill leaves, crushed
1 tbl. lemon juice
1 tbl. olive oil
1 tbl. wine vinegar (red)
1 cup chicken broth
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup tomato juice
1/2 cup plain yogurt
3 dashes Tabasco sauce
Dash garlic powder
1 tsp. basil (dried or fresh)
1 tsp. grated lemon rind
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
1 tbl. parsley (dried)

Chop two cucumbers. In electric blender add all dry ingredients. Pour over with broth, Tabasco, oil, vinegar, lemon and tomato juices. Blend (covered) till smooth—about a minute. Mix in yogurt and sour cream; blend another 20 seconds. Now stir in the two chopped cucumbers, onions, peeled tomatoes, and green pepper. Use mix speed for 15 seconds. Refrigerate one to two hours. Serve from a large tureen with a good, coarse bread. Float parsley, lemon and one sliced cucumber on top. Serves eight. Leftovers will keep several days.

Where Do You Listen to Country?

The editors of Country Music magazine are compiling a listing of the best country music locations—clubs, bars, parks and radio stations—throughout the United States. If you have a favorite place where you hear good country music, we'd like to know about it. It doesn't matter if it's in Montana or midtown Manhattan. Just send us the name of the place or station with its address and, if possible, a brief description. Who knows, we might see you there.

World Radio History

THEIR EARLY DAYS

JOHNNY CASH ★ DAVID HOUSTON ★ CONWAY TWITTY
CHARLIE RICH ★ JEANNIE C. RILEY ★ JERRY LEE LEWIS

Here's an outstanding collection of albums from the early days of each of these star's career. These albums are reproductions of the original Sun Records and early Mercury Records.

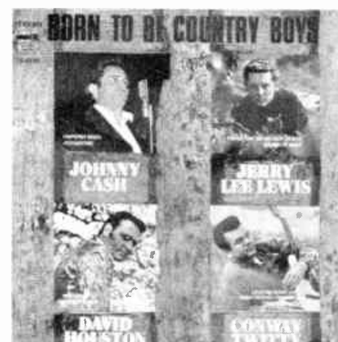
For the true Country Music fan, young or old, these albums are musts!

❶ Johnny Cash / Rock Island Line

Rock Island Line; Get Rhythm; Hey Porter; Come In Stranger; The Wreck Of The Old 97; I Heard That; Lonesome Whistle; Home Of The Blues; Wide Open Road.

❷ Johnny Cash / Big River

Big River; There You Go; Belshazah; Home Of The Blues; Thanks A Lot; Next In Line; Give My Love To Rose; Down The Street To 301.



❸ Born To Be Country Boys

Greats such as Country Boys and Sugartime by Johnny Cash; I Love You So Much It Hurts and Ramblin' Rose by Jerry Lee Lewis; Miss Brown and Sherry Lips by David Houston; And Give Me Some Love, Born To Sing The Blues and Crazy Dreams by Conrad Twitty.

❹ Lonely Weekends / Charlie Rich

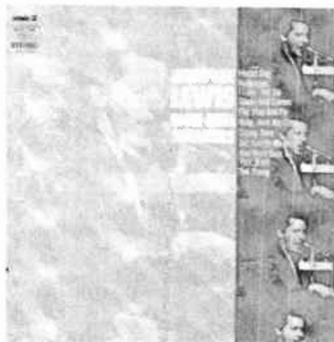
Mohair Sam; Lonely Weekends; Everything I Do Is Wrong; Down And Out; It Ain't Gonna Be That Way; I Can't Go On; I Washed My Hands In Muddy Water; Just A Little Bit Of You; A Field of Yellow Daisies.

❺ Sunday After Church

Featuring Yearbooks and Yesterdays, Sunday After Church and Yesterday All Day Long Today by Jeannie C.; Goodnight Irene, Old Black Joe and When The Saints Go Marchin' In by Jerry Lee Lewis; and I Was There When It Happened, If The Good Lord's Willing and Remember Me by Johnny Cash.

❻ Rural Route #1 / Jerry Lee Lewis

Frankie & Johnny; Hillbilly Music; Lewis Boogie; C. C. Rider; Move On Down The Line; Will The Circle Be Unbroken; It'll Be Me; Billy Boy; End Of The Road.



❼ High Heel Sneakers/ Jerry Lee Lewis

Hound Dog; Hallelujah, I Love Her So; Sticks And Stones; Flip, Flop And Fly; Baby, Hold Me Close; Crying Time; Got You On My Mind; You Went Back On Your Word; Too Young.

For the true Country Music fan, young or old, these albums are musts!

EACH ALBUM IS ONLY $3.95.

YOU CAN BUY 3 ALBUMS FOR $7.90 *(in other words you get one record free).*

OR BUY THE ENTIRE COLLECTION OF 7 RECORDS FOR AN INCREDIBLY LOW $14.95 AND SAVE $8.75!

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#1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6 #7

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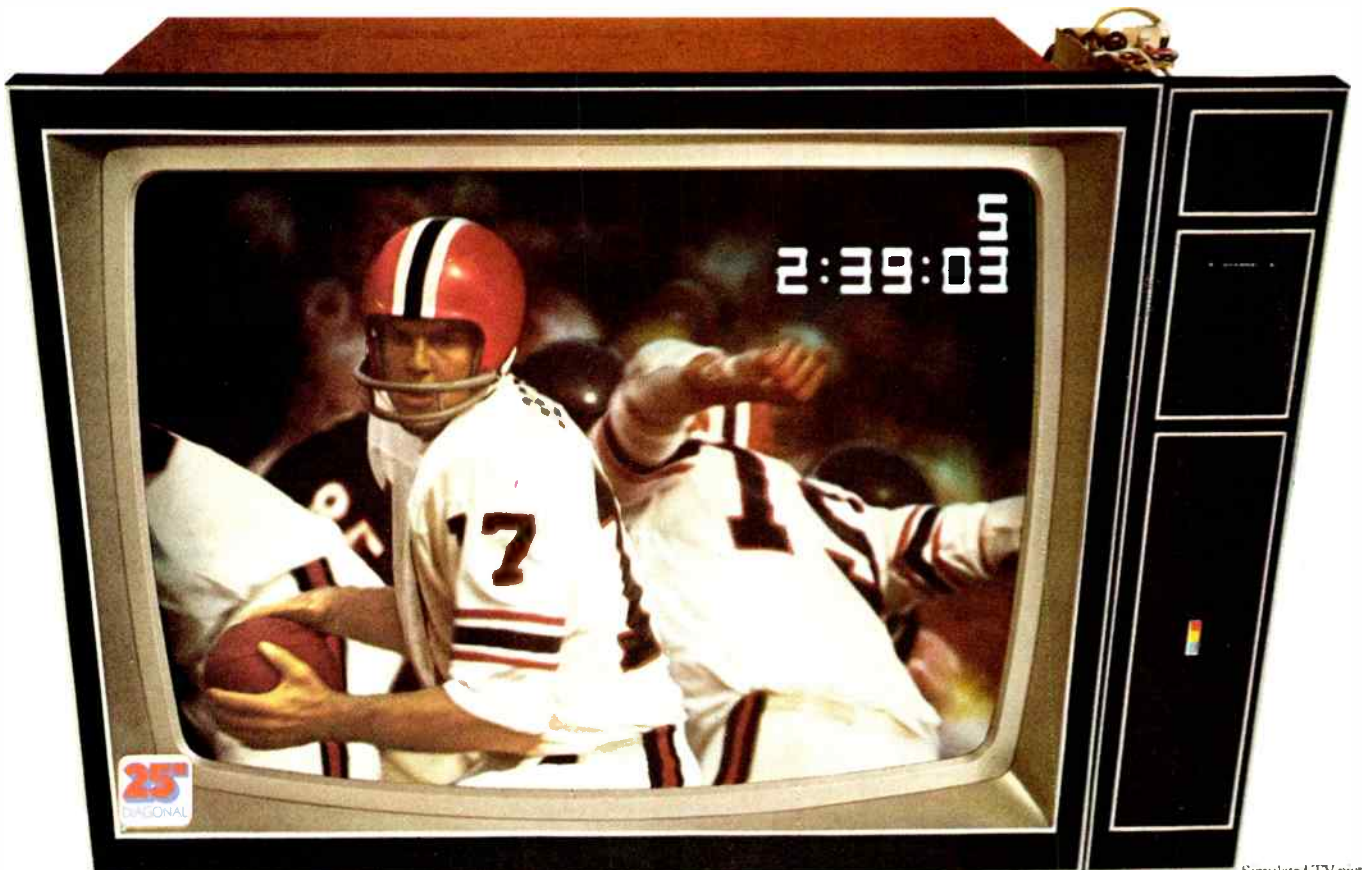
NEW FROM BELL & HOWELL SCHOOLS...

THE REVOLUTIONARY 25-INCH DIAGONAL DIGITAL COLOR TV YOU ACTUALLY BUILD YOURSELF!



Simulated TV picture

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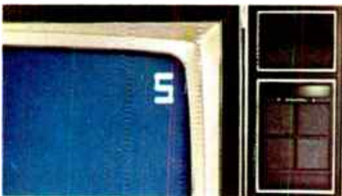
Build and keep one of today's most advanced color TV's!
It's the perfect spare time project . . .
an enjoyable way to learn about the exciting new field of digital electronics!

Digital electronics is a fascinating world to explore! It's a new technology that's changing not only our clocks, wristwatches and pocket calculators, but now, color TV!

By building Bell & Howell's new big-screen digital color TV you not only learn all about this new field, first-hand, but you'll have a remarkable color TV to keep and enjoy for years! And, you'll take special pride in it because you built it yourself!

You get a color TV ahead of its time . . . with revolutionary features like:

Channel numbers that flash on the screen



Wait until the neighbors see that *your* TV has channel numbers that actually flash on the screen! You can even pre-set how long you want them to stay on before fading.

Automatic pre-set channel selector

With just the push of a button, your favorite channels come on in the sequence you pre-set. All "dead" channels are skipped over.

Digital clock flashes on the screen

Imagine pushing a button and seeing the correct time on your TV screen! The hours, minutes and seconds appear in clear, easy-to-read digital numbers.

What's more, Bell & Howell's digital color TV has all-electronic tuning, reliable integrated circuitry and a 100% solid-state chassis for a bright, sharp picture with long life and dependability.

"Electro-Lab" is a registered trademark of the Bell & Howell Company

You don't have to be an electronics expert to build it!

That's one of the beauties of this TV! All you need is a few simple household tools and our step-by-step instructions. You can also take advantage of our toll-free phone-in assistance service throughout the program and in-person "help sessions" held in major cities throughout the year where you can "talk shop" with your instructors and fellow students.

You also build and keep Bell & Howell's exclusive new Electro-Lab electronics training system

Includes building the three professional instruments you'll need to test your TV and other digital equipment. You'll use the digital multimeter (pictured here), solid state "triggered sweep" oscilloscope and design console throughout the course and later, perhaps, in a full or part-time business of your own.

PLUS . . . for immediate "hands on" experience right from the start, you'll get a Lab Starter Kit which will help you understand many of the fundamentals of electronics.

The skills you learn can lead to part-time income or a business of your own

This new digital technology opens up a world of opportunity for people with the right know-how. Let us show you how Bell & Howell Schools' new at-home program can lead to extra income part time. Or, if you're thinking bigger, we even include a complete volume on how to start a TV servicing business of your own!

Mail the postage-free card today for full details, free!

If card has been removed, write:

An Electronics Home Study School
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ONE OF THE
BELL & HOWELL SCHOOLS
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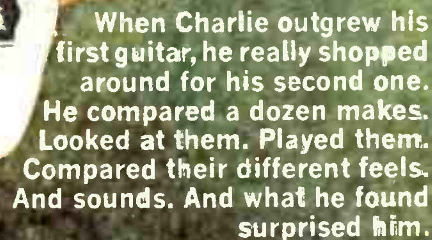
600

Charlie couldn't afford an expensive guitar.

So he got a great one.



When Charlie outgrew his first guitar, he really shopped around for his second one. He compared a dozen makes. Looked at them. Played them. Compared their different feels. And sounds. And what he found surprised him.

He found Epiphone. Rosewood, maple, spruce, carefully selected and carved, with a craftsman finish. A guitar that looked far more expensive than it is. And sounded and played every bit as good as it looked.

Before you buy a guitar, shop around. Compare. We think you'll agree—Epiphone looks, plays and sounds like $300 or more. Instead of as little as one hundred dollars.

You get more out of it because we put more into it. Epiphone. From the people who make Gibson Guitars.

Epiphone

Makers of fine guitars since 1873

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