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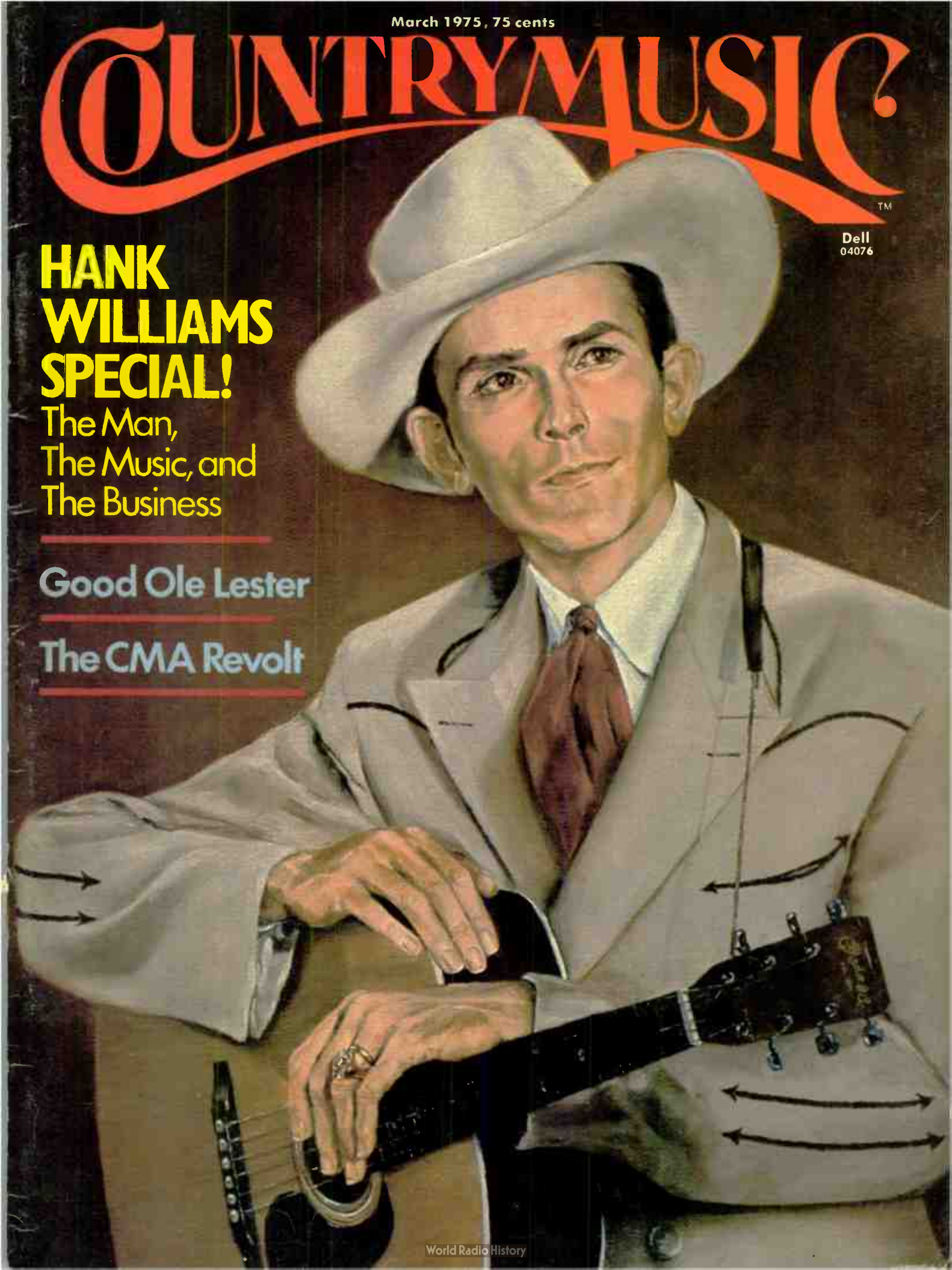

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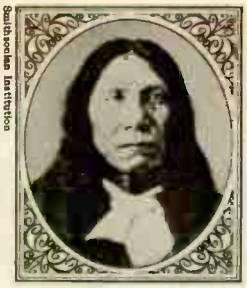

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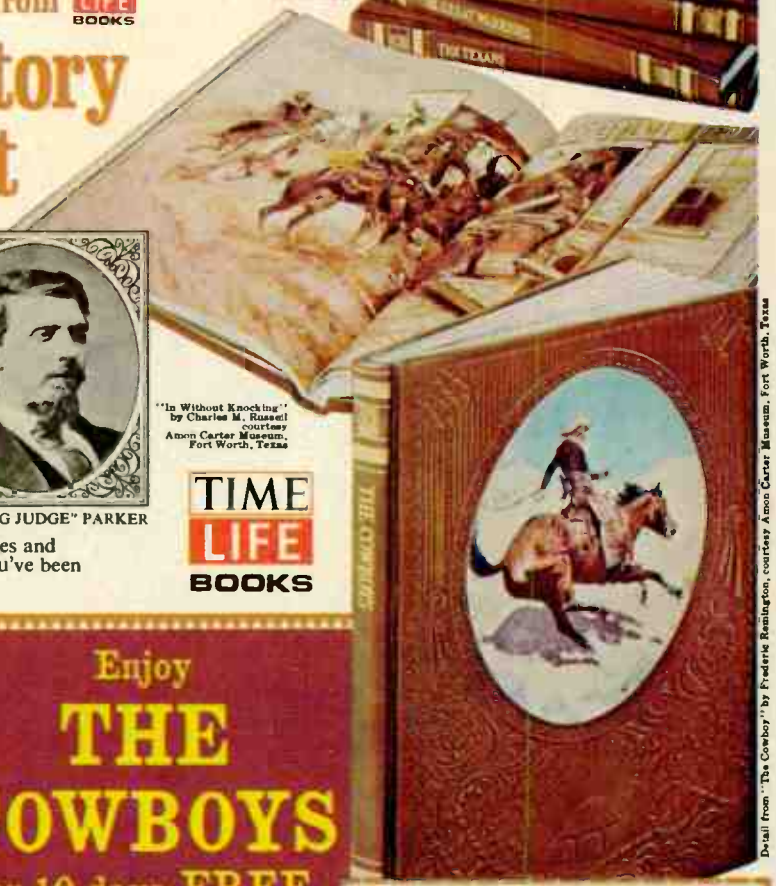

"In Without Knocking" by Charles M. Russell courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

Detail from "The Cowboy" by Frederic Remington, courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

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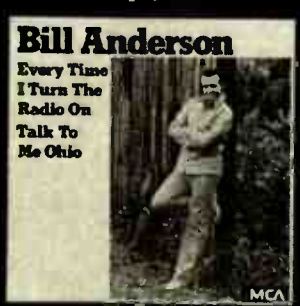

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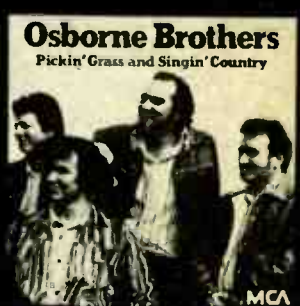

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Patrick Carr

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Designer
Gail Pressman

Associate Editors
Richard Nusser
Arlo Fischer

Contributors
Marshall Fallwell (Nashville)
Audrey Winters (Nashville)
J R Young (West Coast)

Photographers:
Marshall Fallwell (Nashville)
The Grease Bros
Emerson-Loew (West Coast)

Advertising Sales Director
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Administrative Manager
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Administrative Assistants
A L Hall Mimi Fox

Executive, Editorial and Advertising Offices 475 Park Avenue South, 16th Floor, New York, New York 10016
(212) 685-8200
John H Killion, President
Spencer Oettinger, Treasurer
Russell D Barnard Secretary

Texas (Advertising)
Media Representatives
8383 Stemmons St #335
Dallas, Texas 75247
214-631-4480

West Coast (Advertising)
The Leonard Company
6355 Topanga Canyon Blvd #307
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COUNTRY MUSIC

Volume Three, Number Six, March 1975

COVER PHOTO: THE GREASE BROS (from an original oil painting by JOY GARNER)

Letters

I am a promoter of Gospel Music, along with my husband, and the singers we have at our sings are good, clean Christian men and women. I'd like to suggest to the singers who are on the "make" that they get out of Gospel Music and sing in honky-tonks. There are more "loose" women in bars than in an auditorium listening to Gospel Music. Maybe with all them out of Gospel Music, the honest Gospel singers would have a much better name. Thank you for letting me sound off.

MRS. BILLY REYNOLDS
SILVER CREEK, MISSISSIPPI

I anxiously awaited my Gospel issue of CM magazine for a whole month, and was rather let down when I read Mr. Pugh's article. Maybe it was too frank. Sure, all of what he mentioned goes on behind the scenes; but lest all Gospel groups get this reputation, there are many, many, part-time or professional groups that have made it to the top ("by Gospel standards") financially and otherwise while never burying or compromising Christian principles—two of them being The Happy Goodman Family and The Couriers.

I sympathized with Ms. Skeeter Davis because I too, as a young man, was very disillusioned by some of the same groups you pictured. But there are dozens of others who have more than restored my faith. And as this fantastic lady said, Gospel music is the music to be reckoned with in the near future. The reason is because of the One we love and sing about—our Lord Jesus Christ.

ALAN PARKS
LANCASTER, PA.

Mr. Parks is a Gospel singer who records on the Hope label. He is also a studio musician and record producer. He is 21.

Although I've been a subscriber to your very fine magazine for several years now, this is the first letter I've ever written to let you know how very much I've been enjoying reading all the informative articles on many of our great country music stars. I'd like to give my opinion too. I think that although a lot of the newer artists have talent and will go on to be superstars, I feel that some of the older, well-known stars are being pushed into the background by some of these so-called young overnight successes and lately there has been quite a few of these.

I've loved country music all my life and I always will and I think anyone who has real talent should get to the top, regardless of age, but it seems to be that this is not always the case these days. Some of our most talented stars hardly are ever heard anymore on the big stations and this sure burns me up. I am wondering if any other readers feel as I do, if so I would love to hear from them. I love many, many artists, and my Number One favorites are Bonnie Guitar and Freddie Hart.

MRS. JOHN PASMIK
BAYSIDE, N.Y.

I wish to make it known that I disagree vehemently with your recent editorial jab and publication of letters protesting Paul Hemphill's article about Johnny Cash. I'm certain that had the mail regarding Mr. Hemphill's comments gone the other way, your comment would have been totally different. Such comments as made by the editors, to put it in baseball parlance, are bush. I notice you did not bother to publish any letters in support of Mr. Hemphill. It strains my credulity to think you did not receive any letters supporting Mr. Hemphill.

JAMES T. RODGERS
MODESTO, CA.

You should know, Mr. Rodgers, that yours was only the second letter supporting Paul Hemphill's point of view received by this magazine. They both came in too late for us to print in our January issue.

I have the December 1974 Issue of *Country Music* magazine, and on page six it said that "Dolly (Parton) has a full-length make-up mirror and plenty of closet space for her wigs and stage clothes." Will you please send me a picture of her *without* her wig. Please! I would like to see what she looks like.

DON ADDY
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Well Don, it's like this. Not only do we not have any pictures of Dolly without her wig, but no one knows if any even exist. Anyway, we're all in agreement with you. Anyone as pretty as Dolly should let their hair down once in a while.

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People on the Scene

Roy Rogers rides again . . .
Johnny Paycheck replaces George Jones . . .
Jerry Lee breaks a lease . . .

by AUDREY WINTERS

The King of the Cowboys **Roy Rogers** was back in the recording studio after a long absence and the result is a single entitled "Hoppy, Gene And Me," backed with "Cowboy Heaven," on the 20th Century Records' label. Roy's in good voice and with the market for nostalgia at an all-time high, the disk should be a smash. Roy took his six-shooters right into the executive suite at the record company and made it clear to the promotion men that they better *promote* that record. "Sure 'nuff, Roy," they said, tipping their black ten gallon hats. Roy, of course, wore a white hat.

The Queen of Country Music **Kitty Wells**, is pictured on the cover of her new album dressed in a satin brocade dress from the Civil War period. She looks simply gorgeous, and as the album title indicates, she looks "Forever Young." Members of the Allman Brothers Band back her up and she sings songs by **Johnny and Jack, Ginger Boatwright** and **Otis Redding.** Otis Redding? Yup.

The Queen of the Rodeo, **Judy Lynn**, has signed with Warner Brothers Records' new country division, joining **Grandpa Jones, Merle Kilgore, Lynda K. Lance** and **Tom T. Hall's** brother **Hillman Hall** . . . Motown Records has added a country division, too. The label that put soul music into supper clubs signed **Pat Boone** and **Jerry Naylor** so far. Pat's first release is called "Candy Lips."

Slim Whitman returned from another record-breaking tour of the British Isles, where he has a devout following . . . **Hank Locklin's** another favorite over there, particularly in Ireland . . . The International Country Music Festival at Wembley, England, gets underway

Roy Rogers: The King is back.

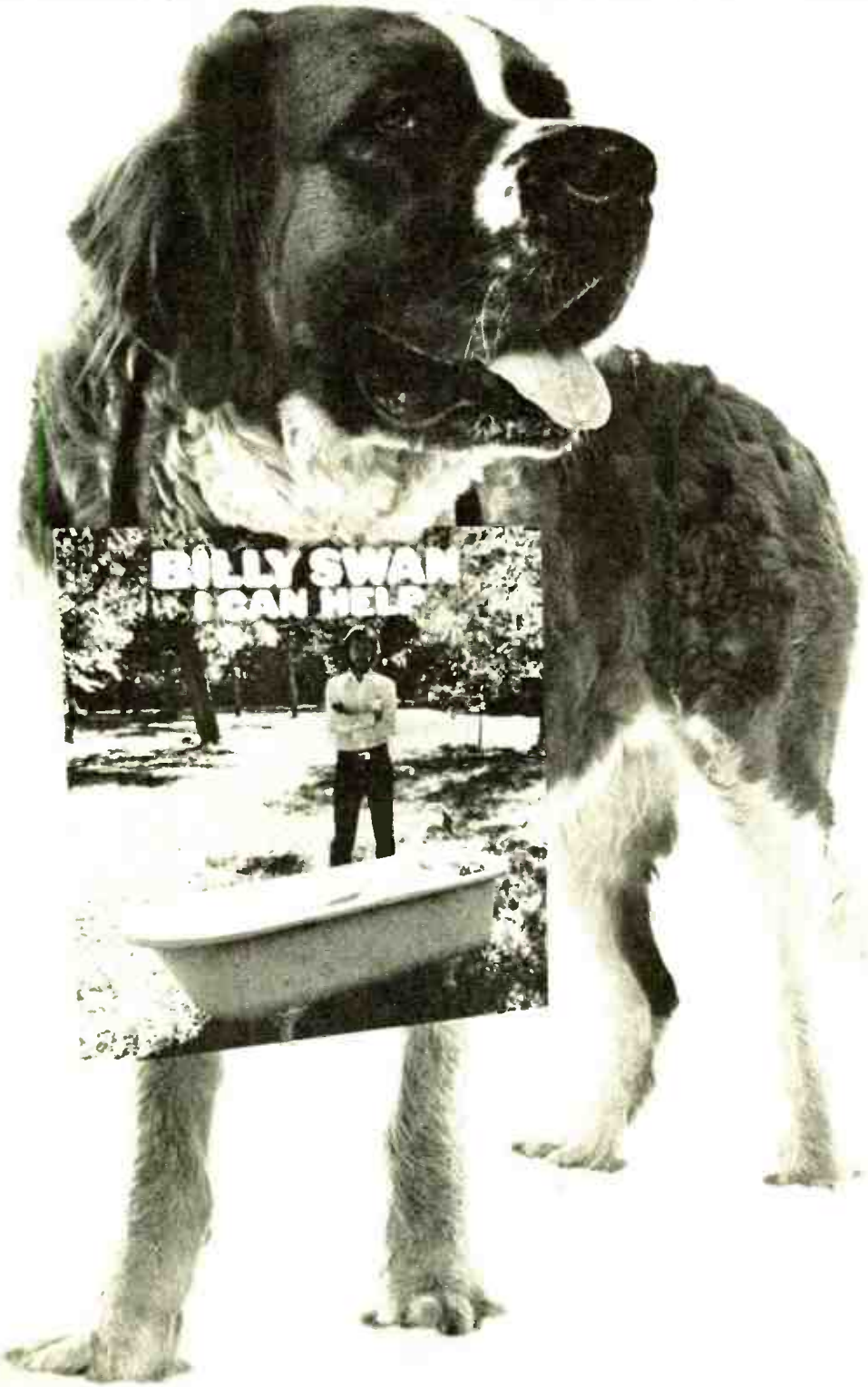
next month (March 29-30), featuring **George Jones** and **Tammy Wynette, John D. Loudermilk, Dolly Parton, Barbara Mandrell, Red Sovine, Marty Robbins, Mac Wiseman** and many more. The affair gets bigger every year . . .

Eddy Arnold, with a 20-piece orchestra, knocked audiences out during a week's engagement at New York's famed Palace Theater. Eddy was smooth as silk, drawing sighs, sighs, sighs, and Standing Room Only crowds . . . **Bonnie Guitar** is back recording . . . **Donna Fargo** took time out from a busy schedule of one-nighters to drop into the federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas, for a concert . . . **Larry Trider** and his band escaped with nary a scratch after his bus blew a tire and turned over on a Texas highway . . . **Johnny Paycheck** came to the rescue when **George Jones** was stricken with a virus. He replaced George during an appearance in Louisville, Ky., singing George's part in several duets with Tammy. The crowd loved it! Paycheck's phrasing is much like George's, as you may have noticed, but this is the first time he put it to such practical use . . . **Tom T. Hall's** new album, *Songs Of Fox Hollow, For Children Of All Ages,* was recorded at his home studio. The album features a libretto, so kids can sing along, with notes by Tom explaining the songs.

Crystal Gayle and husband **Bill Gatizmos** recently returned from the Caribbean after a busy year of personal appearance tours. Crystal's big sister, **Loretta Lynn**, hauled *her* family off to their Mexican hideaway after the holidays, for a much-needed rest. . . . **Johnny Rodriguez** is searching for the diamond ring his mother gave him. It was pulled off his hand during a handshaking session after a concert at Albuquerque, N.M. by a souvenir-hunting fan, or plain *thief.* Johnny's mother gave him the inexpensive but sentimentally valuable ring when he left his Texas home to journey to Nashville. She pressed it into his hand as he was leaving home to pursue his music career . . . **Ivory Joe Hunter**, 63, died in a Memphis hospital after losing his bout with cancer. He was buried in Kirbyville, Texas.

Jerry Lee Lewis was evicted from his office in Memphis by popular demand. It seems the Killer didn't keep regular hours, preferring to start his business *day* around midnight. The other tenants figured

"HELP" HAS ARRIVED!



After fifteen years of making great music, Billy Swan has *arrived*. "I Can Help" is the biggest thing to happen in country music this year. And the album picks up where the hit single left off, with lots more of the unmistakable Murfreesboro Tennessee sound of Billy Swan. Overnight? No. Sensation? Yes. On Monument Records and Tapes

Produced by Billy Swan and Chip Young. Distributed by Columbia/Epic Records

the last straw came about after Jerry Lee got to playing with his .45 automatic pistol one night. He drilled 25 not-so-little holes in his office door. Good thing it wasn't a 10-gauge . . .

Dolly Parton headlined a country music show in Huntsville, Alabama, at the request of her brother-in-law, a member of the Huntsville police force. The affair was a lawmen's convention. When Dolly ran out on stage, the spotlight was in her eyes and she bumped her mouth on the microphone, cutting her lip. She'd sing a song and wipe the blood away. Dolly's a real trouper . . . **Jack Greene's** a grandpa! His daughter, **Barbara Lynn**, gave birth to 6 pound, 5 ounce baby girl . . . **Bobby Goldsboro** and his family purchased a 500-acre farm near Nashville. They'll raise cattle and have horses for riding . . . **Johnny Cash** plays the part of a police lieutenant in the new TV series, *Nashville 99*. Scenes are being shot in and around Nashville.

Lester Flatt bought the 90-acre Jameokee Campground near Pinnacle, N.C., for a reported $250,000. The campground is where Lester's annual Mount Pilot Bluegrass Festival is held each June . . . **David Huston** was appointed a special deputy by the Shreveport (La.) Police Department . . . **O.B. McClinton** was awarded the key to the city of Senatobia, Mississippi, his home town. Obie was so excited he locked his keys in the car. A flustered policeman assisting him then locked his keys in his own car . . .

Judy Lynn joins Bugs Bunny.

PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL

Eddy Arnold conquers The Palace.

Leon Ashley and **Margie Singleton** judged the World Championship Beef Bar-B-Que in Pecos, Texas, then performed for the capacity crowd.

Another Chicano singer is fixin' to hit the country charts soon. **Freddy Fender** has a fast moving tune out on ABC-Dot Records. He recorded "Before The Next Teardrop Falls" and it was so successful locally that the big guys purchased the master. It's still possible to make it that way . . . **Ray Griff** and **Tommy Cash** swapped cars. Cash got Griff's Mark IV in return for an El Dorado . . . The recent American Music Tour, featuring country, blues and bluegrass is encouraging other promoters to mix their bills. The tour starred **Richard Betts** and **Leon** and **Walt Poindexter. The Rambos, Vassar Clements** and **Waylon Jennings** also joined the tour at various times.

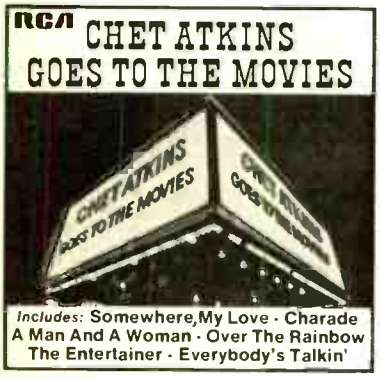
Last month I made a mistake announcing that **Billy Joe Shaver** had signed a publishing contract with Baron Music, owned by **Tompall Glaser** and **Waylon Jennings.** It turns out he'd signed with Return Music, part of the ATV Music Group that publishes **Bobby Bare's** songs. ■

WANT TO HEAR WHY CHET MADE THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME?

AND WHY RONNIE WON THE '74 COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S "BEST MALE VOCALIST?"

AND WHY WE'RE PROUD OF CHARLEY AND DOLLY?

LISTEN:



Includes: Somewhere, My Love · Charade
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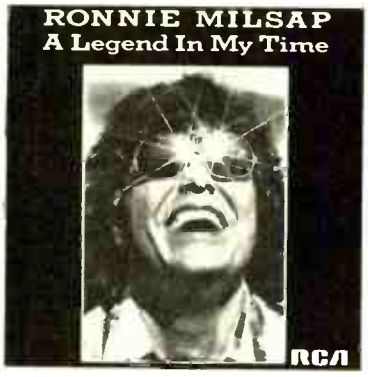

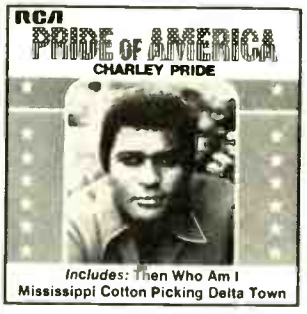

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Country View

The old controversy about what determines a country song or a country singer was revived again in the wake of October's annual Country Music award show. As soon as Charlie Rich, Ronnie Milsap, Olivia Newton-John and the other pop-oriented artists accepted their prizes, the quibbling began. *What's country? The singer? The song? Or does it depend on the organization the performer belongs to?*

Usually, these questions dry up and go away. Not so this year. George Jones and Tammy Wynette held a little gathering at their house shortly after the CMA show that attracted about fifty prominent and established country stars. Within a week they were calling themselves the Association of Country Entertainers and handing out press releases. Their message was simple and to the point. "Country music as we have known it is losing its identity as a separate style of music." Furthermore, they indirectly challenged the wisdom of the CMA's policy of fostering country music's growth *at all costs.* Knowing the artists involved to be wise to the ways of the music industry, it slowly dawned on me that the continued existence of ACE, as the performers call themselves, could eventually force a showdown that could very well shake the foundations of the music business. In order to understand why, and how, this could happen, it's going to be necessary to briefly explain how the music business works. And where the Nashville Sound came from.

First of all, consider the origins of the Nashville Sound, which for purposes of discussion I'll define as any song that sounds vaguely country and gets on the pop charts. It was started, or at least helped along, by Steve Sholes, Chet Atkins, and a handful of other record producers, arrangers and musicians who had broad musical taste and a lot of experience producing non-country artists, from classical to jazz and blues. By letting these various musical influences wash over the regional *country* music they knew best, they created a style that flowed very smoothly into America's musical mainstream. But in order to appeal to a great number of people (which is how you get on the pop charts), it's usually necessary to stick to themes and emotions most commonly shared by people from Barstow to Boston. This pretty much restricts you to romantic ballads that deal with love in general terms, although there are some exceptions. Frankly, we need less of that, and more of the homespun values and virtues of traditional country music.

The pop market went along like that until the late 1960s. About that time some people decided they liked the simple, direct, traditional country sound that was behind the more popularized Nashville Sound. But unless they lived in the South, or somewhere else where country records are regularly distributed, they found it hard to get the sort of music they liked. The reason for this is important.

In the music business (where I toiled for several years) the name of the game is *numbers,* just as it is in any big business. In order to operate as a conglomerate (which is what most record companies have become), you have to please a national audience. You have to sell something that appeals to the broadest level of intelligence and the most commonly held emotions. You need songs that deal simply with simple things and avoids anything that takes into account that people's emotions are often affected by where they live, how much they earn, and where they went to school. The music itself mustn't lean in any particular direction or favor a particular ethnic or cultural style. It must try to achieve the American ideal of a melting pot, where differing tastes merge in a democratic dream, reflecting the homogenized culture of the cities where the decisions are made.

Chet Atkins told me that Steve Sholes used to say, "It'll all be one music someday." When I mentioned this to Mike Martucci, the man in charge of research at Cash Box magazine, he laughed. "That won't happen," Martucci said, "because people are different." I agree. Life doesn't work like that. We can all be brothers, but I doubt if one style of music is going to be able to please *all* of the people, *all* of the time.

Now I *don't* want you to think that record company executives are sitting around somewhere like a bunch of commissars, deciding what tune the masses are going to march to this year. But in order for them to satisfy their stockholders they really can't fool around with an artist who isn't going to draw top dollar by breaking into the pop market. You can't support a nationwide record distribution and marketing operation (some of them are global, for pete's sake!) on the proceeds of a few hundred thousand copies of George Jones' latest single—unless everyone from Tulsa to Timbuktu suddenly identifies with George Jones. And I think it's going to be a long time before there's enough oil and gas to turn the whole world into "the Chevrolet set."

Several possibilities exist which could help resolve the problems faced by ACE. Having an organization like the CMA in your corner is an asset, of course, and ACE would be foolish not to continue to work within the CMA to encourage the growth of the more traditional country sound. This could involve some compromises on the part of both groups. The CMA could see to it that its promotional activities featured more traditional music instead of country pop and ACE could serve as a sort of performers' union (like Actor's Equity), concentrating on artist's benefits and preserving the integrity of country music as they see it.

In any event, the two groups stand to gain more by working together than drifting apart. Even if some artists from ACE decided to produce and market their own music, it would be more profitable to draw on the CMA's resources for help than go it alone. But if the music is continuously diluted in order to grab a larger audience, then Chet Atkins' recent warning should be heeded: "A music dies when it becomes a parody of itself," he said. "Of course I had a lot to do with changing country," he added, "and I apologize."

RICHARD NUSSER

Great Moments In Country Music

This is not a pidgeon trap, or even the Washington Monument on a bad day. This is Roy Clark in London's Trafalgar Square

Is this the heartbreak of psoriasis, or has this man just found gold in the valley? Neither. It's just Eddy Arnold out fishin'.

This is not a vulture with a fiddle or even a man about to kill a cockroach. This is just good ol' fiddlin' Doug Kershaw.

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Country News

An "identity crisis" has caused some of country music's biggest names to form a new organization

PHOTO JERRY BAILEY

ACE members George Morgan, Bill Anderson and Billy Walker meet the press in Nashville.

ACE Attempts To Resolve An Old Problem

by Jerry Bailey

The question of what is and is not country music has caused a stir in Nashville during recent months—and the answer still is out of pocket.

More than 50 of country music's more prominent entertainers met at the home of George Jones and Tammy Wynette last November to form an organization called the Association of Country Entertainers (ACE). The stated purpose of ACE is to preserve "the identity of country music as a separate and distinct form of entertainment."

The group appointed a screening committee of Dolly Parton, Hank Snow, Johnny Paycheck, George Morgan, Tammy Wynette and Jimmy C. Newman to approve future applications for membership in the organization.

After several weeks of discussion—which sparked lively controversy both in the local press and, to a lesser extent, the national news media, the artists have switched their emphasis from excluding who is *not* country to proclaiming who *is* country. In recent weeks the group has extended its positive efforts to now discussing standards of conduct for members—specifically frowning on entertainers who might over-imbibe during concerts or deal in rubber checks—and suggesting other positive moves such as benefits for artists or organizations that have fallen upon hard times.

There were some critics of the organization who felt that the entertainers were acting initially from a "sour grapes" attitude, although the artists themselves have tried to show that their problems are not so simple as that. However, the official statements of ACE have shown quite clearly that one of its chief objectives is to persuade the Country Music Association to vote for more "pure"—or at least more firmly established—country artists to win the nationally televised CMA awards this coming October. The award winners are determined by balloting among the CMA's 4,500 members, all of whom are involved in the business as country music disc jockeys, music publishers, concert promoters, record company employees or journalists.

The entertainers' group has succeeded in gaining two additional voices within the governing body of the CMA. Porter Wagoner has been elected one of eight vice-presidents, and Tammy Wynette was voted assistant treasurer. Wagoner and Miss Wynette will not have voting power in the CMA, but they *will* be permitted to voice

opinions during the meetings. At present, only the 30-person board of directors can vote, and there are four entertainers on the board: Charley Pride, Bill Anderson, Johnny Bond and Gary Buck.

In the words of Johnny Paycheck, "We want to be in a position where when we put forth all of our energies, all of our heart and our soul and our blood and guts and work—to be able to look up at the end of the year and know at least we have a chance at something.

"At the rate it's going now," Paycheck continued, "if somebody gets a crossover record into the other (pop) field, it's a lead pipe cinch he'll win. Country artists don't have a chance. How can you compete with that?"

It's a point that few persons argue with, as long as those persons agree on what country music is. Roy Acuff said he agrees with the dictionary in defining "country." Music publisher Wesley Rose said chord structure is a sure clue to a country song. Johnny Paycheck said if an entertainer claims to be country and works the country concerts, "then by golly, he's country." But singer Billy Walker said the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band plays country music, and still he doesn't consider them a country band.

Chet Apologizes

As we went to press, ACE was drawing support from, oddly enough, the man who helped create the Nashville Sound. In the December 16 issue of *People* magazine, under the headline *Chet Atkins Helped Country Music Move Uptown—And Now He Regrets It*, Atkins was quoted: "I hate to see country music going uptown because it's the wrong uptown. We're about to lose our identity and get all mixed up with other music. We were always a little half-assed anyway, but a music dies when it becomes a parody of itself, which has happened to some extent with rock. Of course I had a lot to do with changing country, and I apologize. We did it to broaden the appeal and to keep making records different, to surprise the public."

Members of the news media have had difficulty determining what is an official statement of the ACE organization, and what is simply an opinion of a member. The result has been considerable bad publicity for the organization, based in several cases on an opinion of an individual in the organization or a comment made in anger. Throughout the early months of the new group, Bill Anderson (the chairman of ACE) has sought to cool heated remarks of his peers and unite its polarized factions.

"We're not a bunch of rabble-rousers trying to burn down the Country Music Association and the Hall of Fame," Anderson jested at a press conference.

Perhaps the most outspoken opponent of the Association of Country Entertainers is Bill Williams, a CMA board member and Southern editor of Billboard, the largest music industry trade magazine. Williams said that many of the entertainers misunderstood the Country Music Association when they formed their own organization.

The strength of the country music industry, he said, has always been its ability to accept unorthodox sounds, like those of Jimmie Rodgers ("he was a blues singer and had a brass background on all of his songs") and Bob Wills. "It has all these sounds, which only make it richer," he continued. "Now, the fact that John Denver or the Eagles or Poco or some of these so-called country rock groups are singing country only expands its general audience and makes it more powerful than it was before. And to resist this kind of thing can only hurt country music. I think this is where the misunderstanding is so strong."

With the number of radio stations in the United States which play country music increasing from less than 100 to more than 1000 in little more than a decade, some people dismiss the entertainers' problems as simply growing pains for the industry. "So many people these days are carry-overs from pop stations, that almost all stations are playing country music and mixing it with other forms," said Grant Turner, dean of Grand Ole Opry announcers. Turner said that the radio personnel are crucial because they make the ultimate decisions over what records the listeners will hear.

"Sometimes the jocks are not country-oriented people, and unless you change the system and put country people in country jobs, there will always be problems," he said.

Changing the entire system may be more of a chore than even 50 entertainers with names like Roy Acuff, Porter Wagoner and Conway Twitty want to tackle. Is it hopeless? Maybe to some people. But for others, like Tom T. Hall, there wasn't much to worry about in the first place. As he says in his latest hit, "Country Is," "Country is what you make it, country is all in your mind."

For more comment on the issue of what is and isn't country—and why the question arises in the first place—see Country View, page 12.

Swing Revival: "Dancing Helps You Forget Your Troubles"

by Tom Carter

"Everything is here," said Johnny Lee Wills, slowly drawing his bow across his fiddle as he introduced "Faded Love" as a tribute to his brother, Bob Wills, the King of Western Swing. The crowd fell silent, clustering around the band stand, keeping time with their feet, sloshing beer as the tempo picked up. Leon McAuliffe's steel guitar uttered a little cry about then, and so did a few people in the audience. The occasion was the First Annual Western Swing Festival at the Tul-

PHOTOS RICHARD FRICKER

Floyd Tillman works out . . .

sa (Oklahoma) Fair Grounds, but it could have been any Southwest Saturday night dance over the past 30 years, in any town from Waco to Joplin.

The revived interest in western swing has been attributed to many factors, but Johnny Lee Wills claims people like it today for much the same reason they always did. "You can dance to it," he said. "You just hear the music and want to

. . . and so does Speedy West.

dance. People were in hard times back then and dancing helped them forget their troubles. The country's economic system is in hard times now. Maybe that's why they've started dancing to it again."

Guy Logsdon, library director at the University of Tulsa, shares that opinion. He produced the festival and he also believes that the post-Depression, post-war era that fostered Bob Wills' blend of country, blues and swing is similar to today's mood. Be that as it may, western swing *is* once again popular among people of all ages.

The festival, held November 16th, featured workshops and instruction as well as entertainment. The lineup of artists read like a roll call of the original Texas Playboys, Wills' band that stomped the Southwest 40 years ago with a beat that still echoes today. Leon McAuliffe started things off with a steel guitar workshop, assisted by Speedy West. That's akin to Chet Atkins and Merle Travis getting together to teach guitar. McAuliffe

Swinging, left to right, are Johnny Gimble, Keith Coleman, Clyde Brewer, Troy Passmore, Tommy Allsup, and Jesse Ashlock. *Ahh-ha!*

recorded the granddaddy of steel tunes, "Steel Guitar Rag," played with Wills' band for years, and then led his own band, "The Cimarron Boys," for 19 years. Speedy West, another ex-Playboy, performed on virtually every steel session in Hollywood, before people knew who Pete Drake was.

Eldon Shamblin, another ex-Playboy and featured guitarist with Merle Haggard's band on many occasions, led the guitar workshop, assisted by Billy Dozier, Wills' lead guitar player for many years. Veteran country composer Floyd Tillman ("Slippin' Around," "Precious Memory" among many others) held a songwriting seminar. During each class, musicians explained their technique and answered questions. Frequently, while demonstrating style, instruction gave way to spontaneous jam sessions.

Smokey Dacus, Wills' first drummer (and the first man to use drums on the Grand Ole Opry stage) was there, and so were Kenny Brewer, one of Wills' fiddlers; Jesse Ashlock, Wills' first twin-fiddle player; Tommy Allsup, bass player and producer of Wills' last album; Johnny Gimble, another Wills alumnus and popular Nashville sessionman; Milton Brown and Herman Arnspiger, co-founders with Wills of "The Light Crust Dough Boys," Wills' first band, and last but certainly not least when it comes to telling the story of western swing—The Sons of the Pioneers.

Without exception, the artists' explanation for the swing revival was relatively simple. "Everything runs in circles," Speedy West said. "Maybe that's why the music is picking up again." He recalled playing a swing concert two years ago at Oklahoma State University at Stillwater. "We were afraid we'd get booed off the stage by the kids," he laughed. "Instead, we got a standing ovation."

"I never realized there was a revival until about a year and a half ago at the Wolf Trap Festival when we kept getting calls for Wills' music," Eldon Shamblin said. "They went wild when we played the music—it was just unbelievable to me. We get respect from a broader area of people now, and it seems these young kids are really listening to the music."

Promoter Guy Logsdon attributed some of the success of the festival to its strategic location. "We have the greatest musicians in the world in the Tulsa area. Western swing started here. Well, *it really started* in West Texas. But Tulsa is where Bob Wills came to do his first radio show with the Texas Playboys. That's why Tulsa was the natural place to have this festival."

"I think kids are getting tired of losing their hearing," he added. "They can understand this music and have a good time listening."

Two complete shows were performed in addition to workshops and seminars. The event was taped for broadcast over the National Public Radio system, which could mean it will be picked up by 165 stations across the country. Furthermore, the audience came from points far beyond Tulsa, despite the fact there was no big advertising campaign. Logsdon said people came from Chicago, Washington, D.C., California and North Carolina.

Swing fans didn't need a program to recognize the tunes that were played. The Wills' repertoire was virtually exhausted within the limits of the 14-hour festival. Nostalgia raged as the musicians ran through "San Antonio Rose," "Take Me Back To Tulsa," and all the rest.

When Johnny Lee Wills bowed up to play "Faded Rose," though, it broke a few hearts. Bob Wills, the man who started it all, was not there. He is still incapacitated at home in Fort Worth, Texas, after a series of strokes curtailed his career. Otherwise, it was just like old times. Almost.

Jailhouse Rock: Country . . . In The Can

by Nick Tosches

"Man, I'm as shaky as a four-leaf clover in a north wind," says Wayne Stufflebeen to no one in particular. He sits down on a crate, lifts his battered accordion to his lap, lights another Pall Mall, and announces, again to no one in particular, "I've never performed in front of an audience before." In a moment he is up and pacing again. "This is the first time I've ever done this."

Wayne is in his early twenties. The United States Army brought him from his home in Missouri to Fort Dix in New Jersey. A dope bust brought him to New Jersey's Rahway Prison. He is currently doing one to five. Wayne doesn't fit in too well at Rahway. In a maximum security prison where sentences of three lifetimes ("triple stacked," they call it at Rahway) are not uncommon, and men who have murdered other men contract a slow craziness from watching the days and years of their lives wear away like the soles on their prison-issue shoes, people like Wayne, confused and still soft, get dragged through a lot of cruelty.

It's odd to be sitting here in the backstage area of a prison auditorium on a nice Saturday afternoon in late autumn. Almost no sunlight makes its way to the auditorium deep inside the prison, and harsh overhead lamps give the disorienting impression that it must be dark outside; for a short while all noises seem like night noises. Covering the backstage wall is a mural painted not long ago by a few of the inmates (one of them, a guard says, has since been wheeled off to the fliphouse)—fiery, naked human forms erupting and flowing into one another with *sentience* glowing in their eyes.

Stan Campbell and the Silversmiths, one of the best bands on the local country scene, are plugged in and ready to play. The curtains part and Stan Martin, a former deejay at WHN in New York, steps to the microphone and welcomes the audience to the show. Most of the prisoners remember Stan. Several months ago, while still with WHN, he brought a country show featuring ex-con David Allan Coe to Rahway, and the inmates expressed their thanks by presenting him with a special Disk Jockey Of The Year award.

Stan Campbell and the Silversmiths are a solid group, and the inmates are enthusiastic. Campbell transforms "Green Green Grass Of Home" into a series of marijuana jokes, exactly as I had heard Roy Clark do more than a year before at a rodeo in Cheyenne. It seems stale and dumb now, but it manages to elicit a few scattered laughs. As they start up on "Jimmy Brown The Newsboy," Stan Martin comes over to Wayne Stufflebeen and tells him to get ready.

It's a single, eerie, seven-minute song that Wayne has to offer. His composition is sad and soulful, with an ancient, almost modal feel to it. The inmates don't care for it. As far as they're concerned, the kid is a creep, and for the entire song the catcalls and howls all but drown out his voice. The jeering has all the

brutality of a physical assault, but Wayne finishes his song. Finally it's over, and he turns away from the audience and walks offstage. "That's nothing," Wayne says after laying down his accordion. "Wait till tonight, that's when they'll really get on me."

Barbara Schmierer, who sings under the name Barbara Ella, joins the Silversmiths on stage. She's upset about the reception Wayne got, and fears there might be more of the same in store for her, but in an instant the audience is under her thumb. There is the matter of her legs, you see, the likes of which are rarely seen inside Rahway Prison. She is surprisingly good, a clear, full-voiced singer in the Connie Smith vein who, for one reason or another, hasn't yet received a contract from a major company. She runs through "Oh Lonesome Me," "Me And Bobby McGee," "Harper Valley P.T.A.," et cetera—and the audience loves it.

There are problems backstage, however. Asleep At The Wheel, scheduled to headline the show, haven't arrived yet. Their bus has conked out a few miles away, and a vehicle owned by the prison has been sent to pick them up. Barbara Ella steps offstage, sweating after an extended ovation. Stan Campbell and the Silversmiths will have to keep things going until Asleep At The Wheel arrive. The crowd starts to get restless, and after the Silversmiths' third song a black inmate shouts, "Hey, man, put some *womens* back on."

Barbara Ella returns to the microphone. She sings Donna Fargo's "Funny Face."

At last Asleep At The Wheel are here and set up. They are a large group, and they look crowded on the small prison stage. The audience is till restless. Soon it will be 4:30—curfew time—and the show will have to pack up and leave. Singer Chris O'Connell steps out in her gold lame pants and the crowd applauds. Lead guitarist Ray Benson, who stands 6'6" without his Stetson, hits a chord and the group slams into their theme song. By the time they're finished the inmates are ecstatic. Chris breaks into "Space Buggy," her voice even better this afternoon than it had been the night before when the band opened to a packed house at the Bottom Line in Manhattan. There can be no doubt about it now: Rahway, right on down to the guards in their dark blue jackets, is crazy about this group.

PHOTO STAN MARTIN

Asleep At The Wheel wakes 'em up at Rahway, against a mural painted by the inmates.

Ray Benson mentions the heavy door that leads from the outside waiting room to the security area of the prison. "It looks like one of those automatic doors, don't it? It don't work like the ones they got down at the supermarket, though," he drawls. "Y'all mighta noticed that, I guess." For the first time today, the audience explodes in one great loose laugh. "We got a bunch of stuff we wanna do for you," Ray continues. "We hope you like it. If you don't, keep quiet and you won't get hurt."

When the laughter ebbs, Ray pans the crowd and declares, "It don't matter what you are or where you go, you just gotta let the good times roll." The band promptly bursts into Louis Jordan's classic "Let The Good Times Roll."

Next comes "Beaumont Rag," featuring Richard Casanova on fiddle. This Texas breakdown, already an old tune when Bob Wills did it, seems to communicate in a universal tongue. Prisoners whose musical tastes lean more toward Curtis Mayfield or the Grateful Dead are swaying along with old-line Lefty Frizzell fans. After "Beaumont Rag," the band eases into Wynonie Harris' "Bloodshot Eyes," and then "The Cold Hard Facts Of Life," which triggers off more than a few howls of empathy in the audience. In a matter of minutes curfew will be called.

"We had a hell of time getting here," Ray concludes, "but we hope you enjoyed it. We'll come on back next time we're playing on the East Coast. If you're ever down to Texas, look us up. We'll do you right."

The group swings into Count Basie's "Jumpin' At The Woodside," and the audience rises, approaches the stage. Some inmates gather by Ray to shake his hand. Others are dancing—stone sober and without any signs of self-consciousness—milking the last moments of this respite from slow craziness for all they're worth.

Leaving the stage area, I catch one of the guys in Asleep At The Wheel speaking to Wayne Stufflebeen. He points to Wayne's accordion and asks if he had been on earlier in the show.

"Yeah," answers Wayne. "It was the first time I ever performed in front of an audience."

CMA Elects New Slate Of Officers

Jerry Bradley, 34-year-old vice president of RCA Records' Nashville operation, was elected president of the Country Music Associa-

tion for 1975 by the group's board of directors. Irving Waugh, president of WSM Radio, host of the Grand Ole Opry, was named executive vice president.

Other vice presidents for the new year include Joe Talbot, president of Precision Pressing, record manufacturers; Stanley Adams, president of ASCAP, the music licensing organization; Frank Jones, vice president of Capitol Records; Chic Doherty, director of sales and marketing of country product for MCA Records; Bill Lowery, president of Lowery Enterprises, music publishers; Jimmy Bowen, president of MGM Records; Dan McKinnon of KSON Radio, San Diego; A. Torio, of Victor Records, Japan; and Porter Wagoner.

Janet Gavin was named secretary of the CMA. She and her husband operate a "tip sheet" which provides radio stations and record companies with information on where new records are being introduced for airplay. Her assistant is Paul Tannen of Screen-Gems Columbia, music publishers. Mary Reeves Davis, widow of Jim Reeves and president of Jim Reeves Enterprises, is treasurer, assisted by Tammy Wynette.

Kerrville Festival To Feature Songwriting Contest

The first annual Kerrville (Texas) Country and Western Jamboree will be held July 3, 4 and 5 at Quiet Valley Ranch, nine miles south of Kerrville. The dates coincide with the popular Texas State Arts and Crafts Fair, held at the nearby Hill Country retirement community.

Festival producer Rod Kennedy says Bobby Bare, Moe Bandy, Connie Cato, Stoney Edwards, Barbara Fairchild, Johnny Gimble, Crystal Gayle, Darrell McCall, Red Steagall and Hank Thompson have all been signed to appear so far. There are to be three six-hour evening concerts.

A C & W Songwriters Contest will be held on the grounds July 4th, with three finalists selected out of thirty pre-screened entries. Each finalist will get $250 and appear that night. Then a winner will be chosen the next night and awarded another $250 prize. The winning song will be auditioned by leading country music publishers.

Kennedy also produces the annual Kerrville Folk Festival on Memorial Day and an annual Bluegrass and Country Music Festival on Labor Day. He recently built an outdoor theater at his ranch.

Information about any Kerrville festival and the songwriting contest can be obtained by writing Kerrville Festivals, Box 1466, Kerrville, Texas, 78028, accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Walker Wins A Piece Of 'Happiest Girl'

Nashville producer Bill Walker won a law suit claiming some part of the royalties from Donna Fargo's hit, "Happiest Girl In The Whole USA," according to a decision handed down in Nashville's Circuit Court. The royalties will be based on two percent of 90 percent of the retail sales of the record, which sold more than two million copies as a single and one million as an album. Walker claimed he was hired as co-producer by Stan Silver, Donna's husband and manager. Silver denied this, claiming Walker was hired to arrange and conduct. Furthermore, Walker claimed he had an oral agreement to split royalties. The suit was brought against Silver and Prima Donna Entertainment Inc., which acts as Miss Fargo's agents.

Send Us Your News

If you or a community group are planning a country concert or festival, and you know about it two months in advance, or if you know of some newsworthy event related to country—write and tell us about it. Write to COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE, c/o NEWS DESK, 475 Park Ave. South, New York, New York 10016.

Watch This Face: Connie Eaton

In 1964, Connie Eaton's performance at an outdoor concert earned her an award as "Park Concert Discovery Of The Year" from the Nashville Tennessean. Following that she became active in local theater groups, winning another award in 1968. Around the same time an A&R man at Chart Records named Cliff Williamson discovered her talents. Connie is now married to Cliff, who also produces her records.

Her recording career got off to a smooth start. She won a trophy and $1,000 on the All-American College Show. ("I even won out over that little known group, The Carpenters," Connie says). Later she went on the Arthur Godfrey Show for a week, and made appearances on the Lawrence Welk and Hee Haw Shows.

A pro from the salty age of fourteen, Connie's fortunes have dipped and soared, in that merry-go-round style that can drive even the most dedicated performers off the carousel of success. This was more or less the fate of her father, Bob Eaton, an Opry performer turned aluminum siding contractor. ("He's a great salesman," Connie points out.)

Connie talks about her career and herself like a veteran of life—rather than a 23 year old girl.

"Lord, I had . . . I don't know how many singles when I was on Chart Records. Three albums, too. How do you like that? Cliff, my husband, and I pretty much ran the place after Cliff's daddy lost interest—that was when Lynn Anderson left the label. Then, let's see, I went to GRC, which was a royal waste of time. Then, I had a record on Stax, never released, and *then*," she looks adoringly at the stucco ceiling, "I signed with ABC, hallelujah, where I am now," and her eyes descend to the horizontal with finality and relief.

Connie says she wants to work as much as she can.

Certain of Connie's releases on Chart Records did well—"Too Many Dollars, Not Enough Sense," "Angel of the Morning," "Hit the Road, Jack" and "It Takes Two" (both with Dave Peel)—but Chart, like so many small labels, lacked the tremendous promotional capabilities of the larger companies, so many of her records floundered before they even got started, revealing an uncomfortable truth about the music business. Then she ran into Tandy Rice, whose agency, Top Billing, manages and books her.

"Have you ever met somebody that you trusted right away, that you just knew was a good person? Tandy's like that. He got me on ABC, a big label, with a producer I respect, Ron Chancey (also Crash Craddock's producer). Tandy banks all the money I make playing dates, funnels it back into my career in pictures and so forth. It's all an investment, he says, and he's right."

Even giving birth to and properly caring for a baby daughter didn't stop Connie. "Oh, I had to give up the road for a while, but I hung in there with the recording just the same. I'm glad I've got Courtney. Before she was born, I used to sit alone at the kitchen table and play Solitaire a lot. The night I went into labor, I threw the cards down and swore I'd never play Solitaire again . . . Look, some newspaper writer said I'd quit the business after Courtney was born. I hope you don't give that impression. I want to work just as much as I can."

Her love of her work is apparent when she talks about the future. For someone who describes herself as "a traditional conservative Lipscomb girl," (Lipscomb is the Nashville church school from which Connie was once suspended for leaving her dormitory after hours to get fresh air), Connie almost bounces out of her chair talking about the future. "You've got to come over to Sugar Mountain and see me Christmas. It's a ski resort I'm playing. When you fall and break your leg, you can come listen to me sing."

Connie's current release on ABC, produced by Ron Chancey, is called "Lonely Men, Lonely Women." The flip side is "Midnight Train to Georgia." I think you'll like the record. And I know you'll be hearing more from this young/old pro in the very near future.

MARSHALL FALLWELL

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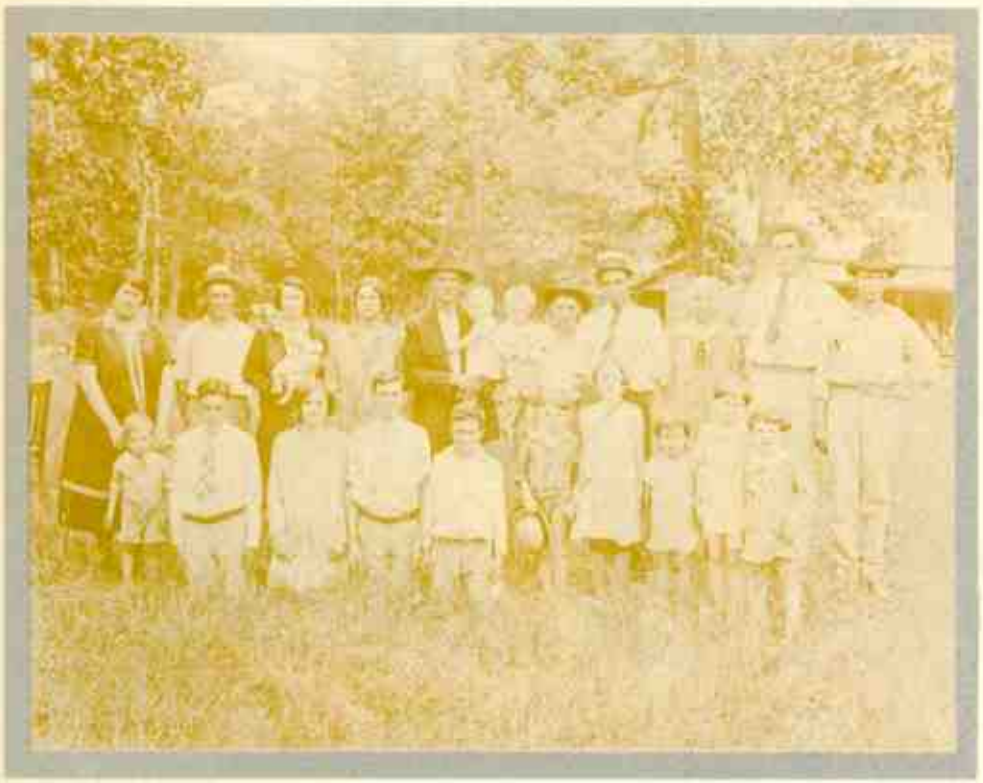

PHOTOS: COURTESY AUDREY WILLIAMS

Hank Williams Jr.

Remembering HANK

From Audrey Williams' private album, pictures of Hank Williams, Sr.: Top photo: Hank with his mother, Lilly Williams, and Audrey, clowning in a Montgomery, Alabama park close to Mrs. Williams' boarding house, where Hank and Audrey lived for a while. The woman and child on the right of the photo were guests in the boarding house. Center, left: The Williams family. Hank, about three years old, is standing in front of his mother on the extreme left of the photo. Bottom, left: Hank performs for the medicine show on which he met Audrey—who can be seen looking into the camera from the car in the foreground. This photo was taken in Georgianna, Alabama, when Hank was almost 20. Top right: Hank, aged about 18, on a boozy fishing expedition with an unidentified friend. Bottom, right: Hank (with spectacles, later abandoned in the cause of good looks), as half of Hank and Hessy, his first semi-professional move into music. Hessy was Smith Adair. Hank's next outfit was the first version of the Drifting Cowboys.

In the late November of 1974—almost 22 years since the death of his father—Hank Williams, Jr. went into MGM's Nashville recording studio and talked to some of the people who knew Hank Williams, Sr. On one level, it was just another round in the endless business of re-promoting the legend of Hank Williams on record (the taped interviews were to be used by MGM to promote the latest "Hank and Hank" album), but on another level it was a sad, funny, confused and moving leap into the collective pasts of Hank's friends and associates.

Hank, Jr. was searching for clues about his father, whom he remembers only in vague flashbacks and through the thousands of stories and impressions he has been told all his life. He was trying to find new insights about what kind of man his father was, and also to probe into the significance of that short but legendary career which turned country music upside down and inside out—for remember, Hank Williams, Sr. was the biggest star country music has ever had, and the story is not over yet by any means. To date, Hank Williams' songs and records have earned five or six times the amount of money they made during his life; royalties on his 150 or so songs have been increasing by 10% annually over the past ten years; over 200 artists have recorded "Your Cheatin' Heart" alone, and there are more than 100 foreign-language versions of the song. Hank Williams is "bigger" now than he ever was.

Hank, Jr. talked with his father's friends for a total of fifteen hours—fifteen hours of Roy Acuff, Faron Young, Minnie Pearl, Lefty Frizzell, Bill Monroe, Ernest Tubb, George Morgan, Rusty Adams, Grant Turner, Little Jimmy Dickens, Wesley Rose (President of Acuff-Rose, the massive Nashville music publishing house and Hank's music publisher), Bill Williams (Southern Editor of *Billboard*), and Audrey Williams herself—and the talk went all over the map. There were constants, however; praise of Hank as an electrifying performer and prolific songwriter; stress on how he loved to hunt and fish, but was pushed further and further away from those simple pursuits; frequent references to his considerable temper and, on the other side, his quick wit; and, in every interview, the painful memories of Hank's slow path towards death during the height of his career.

We have selected particularly striking passages from Hank, Jr.'s series of interviews, and laid them out on the next two pages of this article. Taken together, they go some way towards showing what kind of man Hank Williams was, and what kind of feelings he left behind him.

HANK THE MUSIC

by NICK TOSCHES

It's been nearly a quarter of a century now since the brief career of Hank Williams came to an end. In December of 1946, at the age of twenty-three, he had cut his first records. Six years later he was gone. He was already a legend at the time of his death, and had been one since early 1949, since his version of "Lovesick Blues." Today, in an industry built around stars, Hank still shines brightest. In a mere six years, he created the most important, influential body of work in the history of country music, and neither the full brunt of that importance nor the final product of that influence has yet been felt.

The Hank Williams legacy is everywhere. A few months ago, while interviewing Waylon Jennings, I asked about the artists he enjoys listening to these days. "Hell, I still like to listen to Hank Williams," he answered. This from the man often singled out as the ringleader of the Nashville underground. Later that day, someone at Atlantic Records played a tape for me of a solo album by Rolling Stones bass player Bill Wyman. One of the tunes was lifted directly from Hank's "I'll Never Get Out Of This World Alive." And although his catalog consists of only slightly over a hundred songs, Hank is one of the most recorded songwriters of the twentieth century.

While Vernon Dalhart, Jimmie Rodgers, Jimmie Davis, Al Dexter, and a few other country performers before Hank were able to achieve a degree of popularity outside the straight country market, Hank was the first to possess a totally universal appeal. This is due in great part to certain elusive factors in Hank's music — factors at the same time revolutionary and as old as the hills. To try to understand those factors, their chemistry and their effects, it's necessary to take a close look at the nature of Hank's songs.

First off, it would probably be a wise move to attempt to shed some light on the controversy that surrounds Hank's writing abilities. There are more than a few people around today who hold that Fred Rose was responsible for most, if not all, of Hank's finest songs. They say that Hank would present Rose with coarse, raw ditties, and Rose would then transform them into polished gems. Fred Rose himself never said anything to that effect, but nonetheless the idea persists.

Fred Rose was a very different type of songwriter than Hank was. Before going into the publishing business, Rose had written a batch of songs that had been recorded by pop artists. These songs, which include standards like "Red Hot Mama," "Honest And Truly" and "'Deed I Do," are all straight Tin Pan Alley fare. The tunes which Hank recorded that bear Rose's name as their author also have a Tin Pan Alley flavor:

Hank Williams in action — pushing Mother's Best flour (above) and serenading chorus girls on the Hadacol Road show, August 24th, 1951 in Macon, Georgia (right).

"Rootie Tootie," "The Funeral," "I Dreamed About Mama Last Night," etc. Furthermore, those songs which openly list Hank and Rose as co-authors—"Kaw-liga," "Minni-Ha-Cha," "Mansion On The Hill," etc.—are also predominantly pop-sounding. No Fred Rose composition I have heard or heard of has any traces of the style associated with Hank's most famous songs.

Fred Rose doubtlessly did have something to do with the refining of Hank's tunes. Hank's formal education had been quite minimal, and his spelling and grammar showed it; obviously, Rose helped out here. Hank must have also gotten a few useful ideas from Rose, as the two men were too close for there not to have been some interaction of this sort.

One especially decisive piece of evidence concerning Hank's abilities as a songwriter is given by Nashville tunesmith Jimmy Rule. While doing research for his biography of Hank, *Sing A Sad Song*, author Roger M. Williams spoke with Rule about his experiences with Hank. Rule clearly remembered a day when he had watched Hank scrawling some lines onto a scrap of paper. Hank showed the piece of paper to Rule, asking if the lines made sense. Rule read them:

Did you ever see a robin weep
When leaves begin to die?
That means he's lost the will to live;
I'm so lonesome I could cry.

There *is* one area where the presence of Fred Rose can be felt quite strongly, and that is the production end of Hank's music. Through Fred's guidance, there was a freshness to Hank's sound that started new trends in Nashville. For one thing, there is the matter of that piano which you can hear on most of Hank's records—a very rare thing for country music at the time. Fred Rose played the piano himself on those sessions. But much more important than the piano is what came to be known as the "dead string" effect.

Drums were taboo in country music then. Only the western swing outfits of people like Bob Wills, Al Dexter, Tex Williams and Ted Daffan used drums in their music, and that set them apart from the old-line country set. Of course, Jimmie Rodgers had used drums to record as far back as 1929, but it was best not to recall such things. Both Rose and Williams (along with an assortment of less daring souls) realized that drums could be a definite asset to country music, could add more backbone to its direction. They couldn't afford to be so reckless as to actually use the damned things, so Rose came up with an alternative. By adjusting the guitar amplifier so that it transmitted at its lowest level, the guitar could be made to produce a flat, thumping sound not unlike that of a drum. It wasn't the real thing, but it sure turned a lot of heads around in those more staid days. With this new bit of raunch came a general intensification of the electric country sound. Folks like Ernest Tubb had long been using electric instruments, but the sound Hank and his boys served up was a much more brash affair. As important as these musical innovations were, it was the lyrics—the words that added tone and color to the music's muscle—that most defined Hank's genius.

Hank was a beauty of a songwriter. Much has been said of the simplicity of Hank's songs in a manner that infers it was simplicity which gave the songs their pleasant power. In a way that's true, and in a way it isn't. There are a great many awful songwriters around who are masters of simplicity. Simplicity in songwriting is no virtue by itself: the trick is to convey profound moods or thoughts in a simple manner. Hank did that.

Take "Cold, Cold Heart," for instance. It sounds like a very simple song, the damning of a cold, unfeeling lover, yet there are all sorts of ambivalences that lie beneath its apparent simplicity. It isn't only the cold, unfeeling lover he's moaning about, but also his crazy dependence upon her. The lyrics capture that complex mood, not only the sadness but the craziness of it as well, and make it easy to grasp and associate with—even though it isn't clear why that's so, why such a seemingly simple ditty can reach so far back into our brains. It was an innate gift Hank had; it wasn't the kind of simplicity you could learn by practicing.

When he sang, it rang true. In "I'm A Long Gone Daddy," he describes his woman as one who'd "rather fight than eat," and you're on his side of the fight from the very start. In "You're Gonna Change (Or I'm Gonna Leave)," he taunts his wife by referring to her personal possessions as "junk," and you can sense her eyes glaring and her nostrils flaring before he hits the next note on his old steel-string Martin. "Mind Your Own Business" was a series of angry, drunken putdowns that sounded so funny only because they were so right on target.

One of Hank's greatest achievements began with those four scrawled lines he showed to Jimmy Rule that day in 1949. "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" is a milestone in country songs. Its imagery is perfect—romantic enough to effect an emotional response, but lean and tough enough to keep the whole thing from collapsing into bathos or corn. One special touch (which I wasn't even aware of until this year) is Hank's description of silence as a source of light: "The silence of a fallin' star lights up a purple sky." With this song more than any other, Hank began the modern era of country songwriting, an era that would eventually give us people like Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson. It started when Hank mixed the visceral with the poetic and sang the results.

Hank's sacred tunes are an interesting enough matter. He was alternately joyous and morbid in these tunes. On the one hand, there's the rapture of deliverance found in such songs as "I Saw The Light," and on the other hand, there's the bleak, grave-cold gloom of stuff like "The Angel Of Death." In his unsure, schizoid moodiness concerning things beyond, Hank once again rings true.

When he died on New Year's Day in 1953 (his record "I'll Never Get Out Of This World Alive" was on the country charts at the time), he left behind the makings of country music's modern era, the beginnings of new, less strict musical styles and a fresher, stronger breed of lyrics.

The years following Hank's death have witnessed an exhilarating rate of growth for country music. Elvis Presley, George Jones, Johnny Cash—they came upon the scene within three years of Hank's death, and we've all been pretty well aware of what they've done since. They're just a few of those who carry traces of Hank's music in their own. There are many others. They're all around, elusive little reminders of what Hank did. ■

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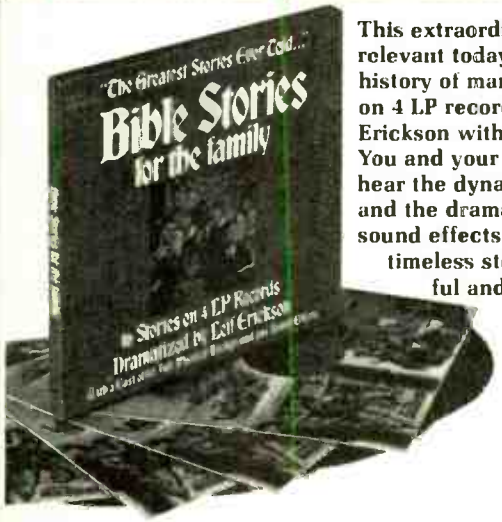

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HANK: THE MUSIC

'Hank Asked The Questions And Now We Have To Live With Them'

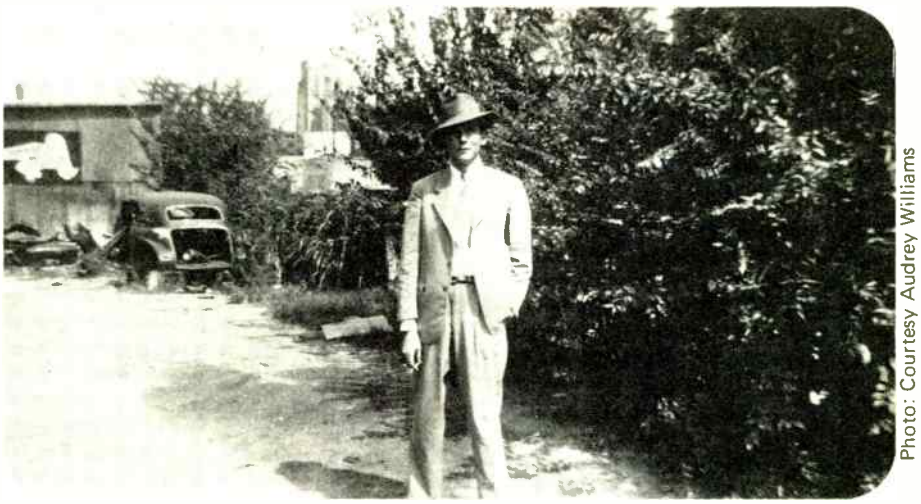


Photo: Courtesy Audrey Williams

by DAVE HICKEY

I could believe Hank Williams died of disappointment, that he grew up so far to the poor, in so many places where there was nothing as good as gone, that he really imagined that when he made it he would be let in—admitted to some charmed world of the successful and secure where life don't hurt anymore.

I could believe he died of guilt and self-contempt, because success came so easily that he distrusted his understanding and felt undeserving of the praise.

I could even believe that he died of drugs, whiskey and hard living in the pursuit of pleasure and fame. Better men have died for less, and it certainly doesn't degrade his memory—at least it leaves him a man, not a myth. It does degrade his achievement, though, to believe he was a poet damned by his gift—the hillbilly version of Janis Joplin, Jackson Pollack, Isadora Duncan, Scott Fitzgerald, and all the other artists lost in the myth that says every act of creation is somehow an act of self-destruction.

We are a puritanical and conservative people. It makes us happy to think that the joy of art is balanced by some kind of special pain; that every act of creation *is* somehow an act of self-destruction. It is untrue of course, but people can die of lies as easily as truth. And we *really* believe it—so much so that we often underestimate the artists whose achievements bring to them joy and profit. It somehow makes us uncomfortable that they didn't die of it. It is a perfect way to ignore the achievement of art—just attribute it to magic and associate it with damnation.

Poor Hank. He was a man who made songs of great complexity, and everybody attributes his work to sincerity, simplicity, and magic.

* * *

Hank Williams was a great songwriter, but a *simple* songwriter he wasn't; neither was he a primitive one, nor a particularly realistic one. His realism was emotional rather than documentary. Williams' songs have much the same effect as Ernest Hemingway's prose: It looks simple and feels realistic, but it's actually very general and formal. Both Hank Williams and Ernest Hemingway give you the structure of a situation. *You* provide the details.

Hank Williams' best songs are, in fact, *very* formal and quite uniform—at least my favorites, "Cold Cold Heart," "I Can't Help It," "You Win Again," "Your Cheating Heart,"

"There'll Be No Teardrops." Nearly all of these songs are composed of two 28- or 32-bar choruses and *no verse.* Structurally, they are very similar to the extended choruses in musical comedy songs and certain hymns. The songs move directly to the dramatic statement of the chorus, dispensing with the business of establishing time and place. ("Busted flat in Baton Rouge . . . etc.")

Hank always got to the point: *Who is saying what to whom and why?* He *immediately* clarified the relationship between singer and song, between listener and the fictional "you" to whom the song is addressed. If you can make all this clear *immediately*, then the hell with the verse. And that's exactly what Hank did.

Nearly all of Hank's songs seem simple, but look closely: He opens with an eight bar statement, follows with another eight bar couplet which contains the hook, or catch phrase; offers another eight bar release that gets more specific, and returns to the hook. Then there is a turnaround, and the structure is repeated. Couldn't look simpler; couldn't be harder to do. Because the songs don't *go* anywhere (don't have to, they're *there),* because there's no suspense (writing suspense is easy, just hold the truth 'til the last), because there's no real conclusion (like life), the drama *must* be there from the start. Also, it must be phrased simply enough for instant recognition and dramatic enough to hold the listener's interest. To repeat: The language must be *completely* clear; you only have room for artsy lyrics when you have some kind of suspense situation. Hank Williams wasn't a storyteller; he was a dramatist.

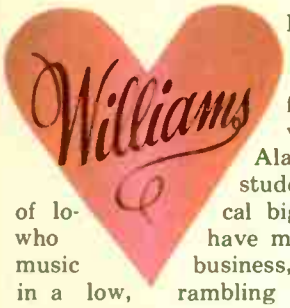
Outside of Williams, there are very few good country songs of this variety. I think, offhand, of Merle Haggard's "I'd Rather Be Gone," or Bobby Goldsboro's "With Pen In Hand" and very few others outside of a whole batch of Harlan Howard tunes. In fact, I sometimes think that Howard was the only writer who really went to school, really got down to what Williams was about, learned how to do it and had the talent to bring it off.

Looking simple is the hard part, especially in the lyric. The words have to hang together with absolute authority—and with no "art" showing. And here, at least for me, is where Hank Williams is the master—no country writer ever figured out how to put together the American language *as sung* with more hidden craft.

Just look at the opening chorus of "Cold, Cold Heart." The language really looks plain, but it hangs together for a number of reasons. First: the song is in cut-time (or two-beat) without rests, so the words march one evenly after another, making the final consonants as important as the beginning consonants in each word: So there is alliteration you do not notice; as in . . . *free your Doubtful minD-anD-melt your colD-colD-heart.*

I could go on, but my point isn't to explain technique, only to point out that technique becomes art when it disappears—and Hank Williams made it disappear. But it doesn't do justice to the songs to deny that the art is there.

The best art disappears, and Williams was one of the best artists—he had the absolute lack of vanity which allowed him to devote all his skill to the feeling in the song. And of all the writers and singers around, his songs are the ones that thrust you back to the basic questions. When you are talking about charts and hits and studio techniques and guitar licks, you can play a Hank Williams song and he will put you back to square one with the first questions: Why does a man sit down and try to make his feelings into something called a song? Why does he stand up in front of his fellow citizens and sing it for them? I don't know, and neither did Hank Williams, but he asked the questions and now we have to live with them. ■



Franklin Road is a long, wide, straight boulevard stretching out from downtown Nashville, south towards Alabama. It is a rich road studded with the mansions of local bigwigs and performers who have made it in the country music business, and it is there—in a low, rambling building set down off the road in plain view of any passing motorist—that Hank Williams made a home with his first wife, Audrey. Hank Williams, Jr. grew up in that house after his father's death, but now even he is gone, leaving his mother among the memories, alone but for her housekeeper and yard man. Audrey has added to the house recently. She has built a chapel-like room there, hung the oil painting of Hank that you see on our cover, and moved many of Hank's most treasured possessions up from Alabama. When we visited the house one gloomy weekend in late November, 1974, Audrey was preparing to open one wing to the hoards of tourists who have always worshipped from afar, up on Franklin Road. Here are some of the things those tourists might now see in Audrey's house. **Right, this page:** The spectral figure of Hank—really a life-size photograph mounted on heavy cardboard—stands beside his saddle and some of the instruments he left behind. They are, left to right, a 1944 Martin D28 "Herringbone" guitar, serial number 87422; a badly cracked Stradavarius violin; and a beautifully inlaid, custom-made 1936 Martin 00018 whose worth is almost beyond estimation. It is in perfect condition. **Above, opposite page:** Hank's gunbelt frames his matched pair of nickel-plated Colt .45 Peacemakers, his New Service .45 Colt, his .38 Smith & Wesson snub-nose Special, and his Luger. **Below, opposite page:** Some of Hank's stage clothes. The fringed jacket on the extreme right of the photograph bore a faded inscription on a yellowed scrap of paper pinned to the pocket: "Hank wore this suit on his last personal appearance, December 19, 1952, Austin, Texas." **Bottom right, this page:** The 1952 Cadillac convertible in which Hank died sometime during the night of New Year's Eve, 1952/1953. This is the car whose journey from Montgomery to Canton, Ohio ended at a Pure Oil gas station in Oak Hill, West Virginia, when Charles Carr—Hank's driver—finally decided to try and wake the tall, gaunt figure slumped across the back seat. **Top left, this page.** Set into a bar in one corner of the new wing, this pink heart is the dominant symbol of Audrey's House For Hank. ■

COLOR PHOTOS THE GREASE BROTHERS

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B. Write the *title* of your song on the cassette on the side on which you recorded your song.

C. To enter more than one song, obtain another entry form or produce a reasonable copy for each entry.

D. *Song Categories*—You must designate at least one category in which the song is to be judged. The fee for entering each song in one category is $10.85 ($13.85 outside the U.S. and Canada). To enter your song in *additional categories*, indicate so on the entry form and enclose an additional $7.25 for each added category. You do not have to send in another cassette.

Enclose an additional $7.25 if you select the Judges' Decision Option. (Allowing the judges to place your song in another category that, in their opinion will give the song its best opportunity.)

3. Wrap your check or money order and entry form around each cassette. Secure the package firmly with rubber bands or string wrapped both directions.

Mail in a strong envelope or box to:
THE AMERICAN SONG FESTIVAL
P.O. Box 57, Hollywood, CA 90028

4. *Mail Your Songs Early!* We are accepting entries now. By mailing early it will be processed immediately. Your official receipt will be the official *Songwriter's Handbook* and a confirmation of your songwriter's identification number. If you want acknowledgement of additional entries, send your entry by registered mail, *return receipt requested*.

5. *Copyrighting your song.* It is not necessary to copyright your song when entering the competition.

*Promotional consideration for this recommendation has been provided.

Rules and Regulations

1. Competition is open to any person except employees of the American Song Festival, Inc. (ASF, Inc.), or their relatives, or agents appointed by the ASF, Inc.
2. Each entry shall be wholly original and shall not constitute an infringement of copyright or an invasion of the rights of any third party. Each entrant shall, by this entry, indemnify and hold the ASF, Inc., its agents, licensees and assigns harmless from and against any claims inconsistent with the foregoing.
3. No musical composition may be entered that has been recorded or printed and released or disseminated for commercial sale in any medium in the United States prior to October 1, 1975, or the public announcement of the quarter-finalists, whichever occurs first. All winners will be notified and all prizes awarded no later than 12/31/75. Prizes will be paid to songwriter named in item 1 of official entry form.
4. An entry fee of $10.85, an accurately completed entry form, and a cassette with only one song recorded on it shall be submitted for each entry. Entry fee is $13.85 outside of the United States and Canada. Any number of songs may be entered by an individual provided that each cassette is accompanied by a separate entry form and entry fee.
5. The entrant *must* designate at *least one* category in which he wants his song to compete. Any song may be entered in additional category competitions by so designating on the entry form and including an additional fee of $7.25 for each such additional category. Such additional category may be left to the judges' choice by selecting the "Judges' Decision Option" which permits the judges to place the song in the category in which in their opinion it is best suited.
6. The ASF, Inc., its licensees and assigns shall have the right to cause any song to be arranged, orchestrated and performed publicly in connection with activities of ASF, Inc., at no cost to the entrant. Entrant, if requested, will issue or cause to be issued to the ASF, Inc. and its licensees and assigns a license to mechanically reproduce the song on an original sound track album of the ASF in consideration of a payment to the copyright proprietor per record sold, calculated at the applicable rate set forth in the U.S. Copyright Act and will also issue or cause to be issued a license permitting the song to be recorded and synchronized and performed with a film or videotape account of the ASF for use in any medium for a fee of $1.00 paid by ASF.
7. All materials submitted in connection with entries shall become the sole property of ASF, Inc., and no materials shall be returned to the entrant. The ASF, Inc., shall exercise reasonable care in the handling of materials but assumes no responsibility of any kind for loss or damage to such entry materials prior to receipt by the ASF, Inc.
8. Each entry shall be judged on the basis of originality, quality of musical composition, and lyrical content if applicable. All decisions of the screening panels and judges shall be final and binding upon the ASF, Inc., and all entrants.
9. Cassettes with more than one song on them, cartridges, records, reel to reel tapes, or lead sheets are improper submissions and will invalidate the entry.
10. Entry forms will be made available by public distribution and the ASF, Inc. will mail entry forms until May 1, 1975. Recorded cassettes and accompanying material must be postmarked by June 3, 1975. ASF, Inc., reserves the right to extend these dates in the event of interruption of postal services, national emergency, or Act of God.
11. A professional is anyone who: (a) is or has been a member of a performing rights organization such as ASCAP, BMI, SESAC or their foreign counterparts; or (b) is or has been a member of the AF of M, AFTRA, or AGVA or any one of their foreign counterparts; or (c) has had a musical composition written in whole or in part by him recorded and released or disseminated commercially in any medium or printed and distributed for sale. All others are amateurs.
12. ASF, Inc. reserves the right to refer entries from areas outside of the U.S. and its territories and possessions to its sub-licensees in such areas and to refuse receipt of entries from such areas.

Official Entry Form

SEPARATE ENTRY FORM NEEDED FOR EACH SONG

CM

1. SONGWRITER_____
(Print name)
AGE_____ M_____ F_____

2. Social Security Number ☐☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐☐☐
(For identification only)

3. ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

PHONE: Home_____ Office_____

4. DIVISION: Amateur_____ Professional*_____
*For definition see Rules and Regulations #11.

5. TITLE OF SONG_____

6. CATEGORY. You *must* designate at least one category.
ENTRY FEE $10.85 (outside U.S. and Canada $13.85)

ROCK ☐ EASY LISTENING/MIDDLE OF THE ROAD ☐
COUNTRY ☐ SOUL OR RHYTHM & BLUES ☐
FOLK ☐ GOSPEL OR RELIGIOUS ☐

BICENTENNIAL COMPETITION ☐ (Note: This category is separate from the rest of the competition and has its own prizes.)

IMPORTANT: Songs often fit more than one category. You may have your song judged and compete in more than one category by indicating below the additional category or categories you want, and adding $7.25 for each additional category.

ROCK ☐ EASY LISTENING/MIDDLE OF THE ROAD ☐
COUNTRY ☐ SOUL OR RHYTHM & BLUES ☐
FOLK ☐ GOSPEL OR RELIGIOUS ☐

JUDGES' DECISION OPTION ☐ (The judges will place your song in the category which, in their opinion, is most appropriate.)

FIRST CATEGORY $10.85 (Outside U.S. and Canada $13.85) $_____

EXTRA CATEGORIES OR JUDGES' DECISION OPTION
@ $7.25 x _____ =$_____

Total Fee Enclosed $_____

7. Did you collaborate in the writing of this composition?
Yes_____ No_____

Collaborators' names_____

8. If the song is owned or entered by other than songwriter named in #1 above, identify the owner or entrant below (please print):

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

Relation to songwriter_____

I hereby certify that I have read and agree to be bound by the rules and regulations of the American Song Festival which are incorporated herein by reference and that the information contained in the entry form is true and accurate.

SIGNED_____ DATE_____

Send entry to: THE AMERICAN SONG FESTIVAL
P.O. Box 57
Hollywood, CA 90028

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An International Songwriting Competition

An Opry Star Shines On

by Frye Gaillard

DeFord Bailey is not one for brooding, but sometimes he will stare out the window of the high-rise housing project he's been assigned to spend his twilight years, and gaze across the street to the corner of 12th and Edgehill in Nashville, to the rubble-strewn vacant lot where he spent 31 years of his life shining shoes.

He remembers those days with a kind of peculiar, triumphant fondness, for popping a shine is dirty and sometimes unpleasant work. But the tips did roll in on occasion (he was, after all, a Nashville celebrity) and when business was slow he could always reach into his apron pocket for his harmonica, wipe the lint off the mouthpiece, and blow you away.

If you were lucky enough to be treated to one of these impromptu concerts, you would understand why people say that no one can play mouth harp like DeFord Bailey. Even today, in the sun-drenched, antiseptic game room of the senior citizen's high-rise, a few bars from DeFord Bailey runs like an electric current among the old black men who while away the hours playing dominoes.

Kirk McGee, who remembers DeFord Bailey from the early days of the Grand Ole Opry, sees him as a genius. "I never saw him fail," McGee recalled. "He would absolutely knock them out."

Bailey was a regular on the Opry between 1925 and 1941. He was the first black Opry star and one of the first men, black *or* white, to make a country record in Nashville. He was regarded by George D. Hay, the Opry's founder, as the institution's "mascot," but when he let go with "Pan American Blues" or "Fox Chase," simulating a fast-charging, chugging freight train or the sounds of a pack of hounds after a fox, he was acknowledged as an artist, even by Judge Hay, who later dropped Bailey from the Opry roster on the grounds that he wouldn't expand his repertoire.

What happened was that Bailey ran afoul of the economic realities of the music business, which haven't changed much since his departure from the Opry in 1941. As the 1930s drew to a close, a new song-licensing company, BMI, began to challenge the supremacy of the older and more established ASCAP. The policy-makers at WSM, the Nashville radio station that owns the Grand Ole Opry, had invested in BMI, and they were understandably anxious for Opry stars to produce new songs for BMI to license. Bailey didn't really understand all this, and in any case, he was more of an interpreter than a composer. When he failed to live up to the expectations of the executives, he was dropped. His career as an artist gave way to one as a bootblack.

It isn't easy to persuade Bailey to talk about such unpleasant subjects as his abrupt departure from the Opry and the fame it almost brought him. He will sit there in the game room, his feet dangling two inches from the floor, a twinkly-eyed little man, 4′ 11″ tall, dressed in a stiffly pressed blue suit, felt hat and neat tie, and he will parry every question with the skill of an experienced trial lawyer. He's always polite and smiling, but always non-committal—unless he has some concrete reason to trust you.

For our interview, Bailey came down from his immaculately clean third floor cubicle to the game room. He still walks with a limp, the result of a childhood bout with polio. He sat quietly in his chair, saying very little unless asked. With a studied blandness he conceded that he had seen some hard times, but he had managed to keep his head above water and "kept on paddling." He wasn't angry with anyone, he said, and felt he had lived a pretty good life, all-in-all.

But beneath that stoic surface, a fantasy still lives, and if you probe long enough with questions, Bailey acknowledges that it involves the proverbial "making a comeback." Several producers have also thought of this.

"I'd be interested, too," Bailey admits with a philosophical chuckle. "But only if they're talking right." He means money, and although there have been negotiations about cutting an album, nothing has been resolved.

Bailey passed up a chance to cut an album with folk singer Pete Seeger, although Bailey was offered a flat fee and a percentage considerably in excess of the going rate. He turned down an invitation to appear at the Newport Folk Festival. More recently, according to Bailey's friend and advisor, Vanderbilt University history student David Morton, he was offered $2,500 to play three songs in an upcoming movie but Bailey turned it down.

"I don't want to give the impression that Mr. Bailey has been terribly difficult to deal with," Morton said recently, but the impression sticks nonetheless. The reason could have something to do with the fact he was one of the Opry's biggest stars for 16 years, but like other Opry performers of the day, he wasn't paid very much. But he knows he is among the greatest harmonica players ever. ("I was a humdinger," he says with a smile.) The self-knowledge is liberating. He has nothing to prove.

If you want to hear him, you can pay his price as a matter of principle. If you don't want to pay his price, you won't hear him. There won't be any hard feelings on his part, but that's that. It sounds arrogant, and it is. But it's not the kind of arrogance one usually experiences. It's not feisty and defensive. DeFord Bailey is one of the most polite, gentlemanly, self-bemused, self-assured people I've ever met in the state of Tennessee.

But it seems unlikely that Bailey, now in his 70s, will make another record. It's also doubtful that any of his early records are still around, and as far as anybody knows, there aren't any tape recordings available of his performances either. So if you've never heard DeFord Bailey play his harmonica, chances are you never will. That's a shame. ■

DeFord Bailey was one of the Grand Old Opry's first stars.

NOTHIN' EXTRA FOR OLE LESTER

HE JUST PLAYS YOUR BASIC BLUEGRASS MUSIC

by TOM SZOLLOSI

People of every age were standing away from the huge bus, straining their eyes to see a recognizable shape through the heavily tinted glass. Out on the wide grassy area in front of the stage Bill Monroe himself was discussing the growth of his nationwide festivals with a reporter from the Riverside Press Telegram. He too was looking at the bus, maybe wondering which of the shapes moving about in there might be Lester Flatt. And why Lester was getting so much more attention than he was, here at his own "Golden West Bluegrass Festival."

The bus had rolled in a few minutes earlier, a huge silver beast with LESTER FLATT in simple white letters on a red background, peeking out of the slot where TULSA or CHATTANOOGA might once have peeked.

Three girls, about twelve years old, had approached the bus immediately. Thanks to the persuasive powers of their big-eyed, brunette ringleader—who carried her autograph album like a baseball bat over one shoulder, scanning the smoked windows the same as anybody else—they weren't leaving "'til ol' Lester Flatt comes out here."

"Ol' Lester Flatt" had no intentions of coming out for a while. This bus, from the terse name card above the huge windshield (terse compared to the banners on the other vans and buses at the festival, anyhow) down to the uneasy silence inside, is 100% pure Lester Flatt. There is a throne of black leather across from the driver's seat on the passenger side. Small wooden knoblets at the end of each of the chair's arms are the only embellishments. This is Lester's Chair. Across from it, where I sit down to talk with him, is a similarly styled (but, even to the naked and untrained eye, not as comfortable) couch in matching leather. There are no pictures anyplace. The bus is alive with the tangy barbershop aromas of Aqua Velva and a lanolin-based hair oil of the sort I remember wearing as a boy.

Preparing to ask my first questions, I observe that it is Lester himself using the hair oil. His surprisingly thick head of hair is shiny and in place down to the last follicle. The suit, rumored to be a conservative Nudie's model, is a brown-and-black tattersall of the springiest-looking polyester imaginable. Perfect road suit. Hang it up and the wrinkles disappear. The other members of Lester's band are dressed in matching blue-and-white suits of the same weave. The only flaws in Lester's grooming are his sideburns. There is hair oil . . . a bit too much . . . on *them*.

Fiddling with his hat and observing the festival around the bus with a total absence of excitement, Lester exudes a Godfatherly power. Occasional well-wishers of some importance to the bluegrass world are allowed to shake hands with him—after identifying themselves. Two small boys in Confederate army caps stand outside the bus with banjos and play a salutary version of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." Lester makes a point of not looking, inspecting his downright opulent cream-colored hat instead.

He speaks softly, in tones that fit the bus's studied quiet. It is a from-the-chest voice, familiar and deep, used as though its owner is conserving energy. Lester is way past the point where he needs to strain himself. Hand gestures and an infrequent smile are his significant movements during our conversation.

"Bluegrass, which is what we are, has picked up about the last five years, but the last two 'specially. We play a lot of college campuses now, a whole lot. Started doing that in the late 60's in a few places. To see how it went. But then in the last two years we've started doin' fifty, sixty colleges a year."

Though you couldn't consider colleges his ideological meat, Lester doesn't mind playing them one bit.

"You know, the kids really do *go* for bluegrass . . . they love it, and especially the old *standard* songs, the old stand-bys, you know. Songs we do like 'Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms,' 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown,' 'Orange Blossom

PHOTOS: DENNIS McDOUGAL

Classified

Special,' those *good* ol' songs. And you know, the funny thing, they seem to know how they *ought* to be played, you see? They say, if there's ten verses to a song, why then, they want to hear every one of those verses. The way it was written. Seems very important to them."

Lester's face breaks into one of its broader grins here, showing his obvious heartfelt agreement with those kids. "And you know, when they really appreciate it, why, you find you just have to work *harder*, you know? You got to do more for 'em, whether you really wanted to or not."

As to why the people are migrating to bluegrass in such great numbers, Lester shrugs.

"I don't know . . . they like the music, you know? And it's good music . . . We go play, and they appreciate it. It seems to be getting back to a more. . . . *basic* sound. Not all of this extra stuff, you know."

* * *

Lester has been known to object to "all that extra stuff" before. In this respect, among many others, his career has veered sharply away from that of Earl Scruggs since the Big Breakup. Scruggs, on the other hand, has been frequently heard to complain that the Flatt and Scruggs combination had gone stagnant, that nothing new was coming out of it, and that he was getting bored doing the same things over and over. Now playing with his sons, Scruggs is delving into electrified sounds. Lester, with deep conviction, couldn't do that.

"Well, you know, I would never use electric help in my music, cause that just wouldn't be bluegrass. And besides, I just don't like it. I mean, sure there's some electric that's good, in its place, but it certainly isn't meant to be in bluegrass. A-course, y'see, even if we *would* want to use electric instruments, all these people wouldn't let us. They simply won't stand for it, it wouldn't be *us* anymore. They won't stand for it."

Lester has a point here. His own popularity with the old F&S fans has remained high, placing him in an enviable "Grand Old Man" role to bluegrass devotees . . . perhaps even more than Bill Monroe himself. Scruggs, on the other hand, has picked up new fans from the more traditionally rock-oriented bluegrass fans. Earl hasn't done too well with the "old guard."

Lester's fans serenade him.

Knowing I was treading on touchy ground, I asked Lester about Earl Scruggs, considering that his music did toy with electricity and songs a long way from the old standards of bluegrass. Lester took on an eloquently uncomfortable expression. The temptation to speak his mind was clearly doing battle with his deep-rooted gentlemanly instincts.

"Ah, . . . I . . . I'd *really* rather not make any comment on that right now . . . I'm sorry, but I'd rather not say . . . " He looks, for the first time in the interview, as though he'd like to get up and walk around. He strokes his chin, clears his throat, and stares out the window. Those two kids are *still* playing "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" outside the bus, and the tone has taken on a somewhat mocking character for the moment. Lester starts talking electricity again.

"People at festivals like this don't want to hear electric music, like I say. They're lookin' for a more honest, simple sound. Now, there are a *few* groups in bluegrass that will use just a *slight* bit of amplifiers, but only one or two that I can think of."

A tall blonde man with a banjo has come to the door of the bus. Lester knows him, orders the door

Lester obliges an admirer with an autograph.

open, and the two men wish each other well. After some awkward comments about the weather for this festival . . . it's been raining . . . the door closes and the blonde young man is gone again. The subject changes to the festival itself, promoted like many other by Bill Monroe . . . no doubt still out mingling with the patrons, each of whom have shelled out $6 to get in.

"Well, you know, I don't really care for these festival arrangements like here, cause, like you can see, you're stuck in this place all day and half the night . . . just waitin' around to play a couple sets . . ." Lester gives a wave of dismissal to the spectacle spreading out behind him, smiling at the same time. "Bill puts these on all the time, goes all over the country with them, but *I* much prefer the colleges. You just show up, do your show, and get out. Everybody knows the right time, that's when they show up, and there's none of this waitin' round for hours. Yet, 'course, these festivals *are* very popular. I even have one that I put on myself up in North Carolina every year. But the college shows are much nicer to do. They're my favorite."

Less surprising than his boredom with festivals—to Flatt-watchers, anyway—were his remarks on the Opry. His voice took on a tone of obvious fondness, the smile becoming predominant.

"Well, y'see, the Opry used to be

like Hollywood, only for country music people. It was the one big way in. I think it might not be such a good situation that we're in now, with it bein' so easy to make it all those other ways. You know, goin' through the record companies and everything. Guys get to be country stars without the benefit of the Opry anymore." Lester shakes his head and taps lightly on the knoblets on the chair for a moment. "Yeah, . . . I don' know, I think that less Opry influence has let some groups in that might not have made it so easy back in the old days. They've got a lot of groups that just aren't as good as back then, see." Another shrug, perhaps the shrug of a star who's made it long ago anyhow, and can't really be hurt by the looser standards he sees in today's country scene. Just depressed. "Still," his gentlemanly, likeable side surfaces now, "they's room for all of them now." The smile is not without a hint of resignation.

"You know, I sure am glad to be out of that ol' Opry hall, though. The Ryman Auditorium. I'll tell you, that place! People had to use *two* fans on themselves at once. Same thing down on stage for us. It was like a great big oven in there. I was always ready to see that place go up in flames. Everybody sweated. And the parking . . . ha, you had to come early, otherwise you parked two whole blocks away, sometimes worse . . . that was for the singers, too, not just the audience. Yeah, this place where they got it now, why, you can just drive right on up to the back of it and park by the dressing room entrance, . . . we got something like twenty-*four* dressing rooms in all, with showers, full facilities, you know, completely modern. I tell ya, I *love* that new Opry House. It's really beautiful. You should get down there and have a look at it. I don't understand some people, like some of the old timers tellin' me it just ain't the Opry anymore. The hell it ain't. They got it wrong. It's what's done on stage that makes it the Opry. It's not the age of the building. Besides, it's time we found out we're livin' in the age of Air-Con*ditioning!*" At this, Lester has a good, but quiet [everything he does off stage is quiet] laugh.

A little while later, the two boys playing banjos having finally left, the big-eyed brunette and her cohorts having lost even *their* patience, Lester Flatt emerges from his bus in that characteristic style. He looks like just what he is, an aging country gentleman out for a short stroll. Standing up, his suit reveals only hints of country styling (Nudie's restraint here is awesome). His dark brick-red patent leather shoes immaculately shined, his hat perfectly placed (perhaps a slightly jaunty touch here) on his carefully groomed head, he steps slowly, with studied disinterest, toward the people. Posing for pictures, he says, "Tell me a good joke if you want me to smile," which is enough to amuse the photographer. Lester, having enjoyed his own comment, too, patiently grins at the lens.

Any way you stack it, Lester is doing fine on his own. He comes into a festival like a god. His career is as solid as ever since breaking up with Scruggs, a rift caused by the respective wives as much as anything else. According to long-time disk jockey Chuck Sullivan, Lester's wife was the duo's booking agent, and Earl's wife played a role in accusing her of arranging things so that Lester seemed to come away with more than half the take. The two men decided to call it quits before things wrecked their careers. This was Sullivan's explanation as he and many others stood around waiting for Lester to go on stage, and it represents a slant that I for one had never heard. It's a theory that goes a long way towards explaining the extremely hard feelings.

No matter how accurate the story is, Lester's own status is stable. He's got the tried-and-true bluegrass fans in his polyester hip pocket. Maybe he isn't overjoyed with a lot of the new country stars and the new trends, either. Maybe he's just a shade too conservative for many of the people begining to follow bluegrass on those college campuses he loves to play, and maybe he's very much aware that he wouldn't like them so much if *he* heard what *they* have to say.

But they do like what he has to *play*. And that's something, to be sure, that Lester Flatt has got to be happy about. ■

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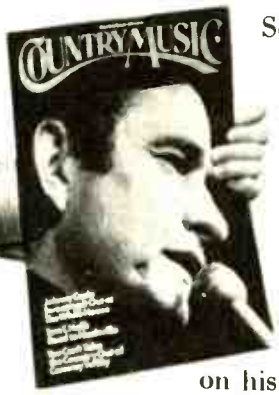

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Capricorn CP-0146 6.98
8CP-0146 (tape) 7.98

If anyone feared Kitty Wells would change her delightful style when she moved to a new label after 20 years, they can lay their fears at rest. The Queen of Country Music obviously knows when she's got a good thing going and sticks with it. A careful choice of material plus great backup music and vocals well-suited to her voice insure her place on the throne. The title song, written by Bob Dylan, aptly describes the singer who opened up the field to country female vocalists in the early 1950's with the million-selling "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-Tonk Angels." During the next 20 years she had 22 other top hits, and she's the only female artist to win all three trade awards in a single year as the number one female country artist.

In addition, Kitty was voted number one country music artist every year from 1953 through 1963, an achievement unmatched to this day.

Kitty's voice is country, and she plays it for all it's worth on such numbers as "Don't Stop The Honeymoon In My Heart," when the hurt reaches out and touches you. She is typically Kitty in "What About You," written by her country-star husband Johnny Wright and Jack Anglin.

She is ever so much the typical Kitty early fans remember when she sings "Too Stubborn" and her old honky-tonk style emerges. Written by Toy Caldwell of the Marshall Tucker Band, who shows his talents on acoustic and electric guitars in the backup, it's her kind of song.

There's an especially good blending of vocals and music in "My Love Never Changes" and the sprightly "Too Much Love Between Us" balances the sad or pleading numbers. Producers Johnny Sandlin and Paul Hornsby are also background instrumentalists —Sandlin on acoustic guitar and Hornsby on organ and piano. Toy Caldwell plays acoustic and electric guitars. Richard "Dicky" Betts, lead guitarist for the Allman Brothers Band who has branched out into country with an album of his own, plays Dobro, and other top-flight artists join them in enhancing the strong, clear voice of Kitty Wells that shows no sign of faltering.

MAXINE THOMPSON

Grondpo Jones
What's For Supper
Monument KZ 32939 6.98
ZA 32939 (tape) 7.98

People tend to enshrine older performers like Grandpa Jones and others, who've been familiar faces and voices on the Opry for years. Paradoxical as it may sound, our near-sanctification of them is the first step towards taking them for granted. Let's forget all the pious nonsense about Grandpa Jones for a moment and consider him as a contemporary stage and recording personality, no more nor less. Can he cut it?

If this record is any indication, he certainly can. Let me put it this way: I have stacks of records sent to me by the record companies. The difference with this one is that I have moved it to my personal collection—things I listen to simply because I like them. *What's* For *Supper* is just one of the best lp's I've heard in some time.

This selection of songs is genuine, real, plain, old country music—foot-stomping and high-kicking. Grandpa's strong, whiny voice will raise the hair on your head, and his drop-thumb style of banjo-picking will send would-be Scruggses running for cover.

My favorite cut on the album, if I have to pick one, would be Jimmie Driftwood's "Baby-O." This is the story of a guy who sleeps in someone's barn because he doesn't care to sleep with the baby-o. Later that night, because he's cold and has a frostbitten toe, he wishes he had slept in the house. The next morning he realizes the dimensions of his mistake. He sees a beautiful girl outside the shanty. "Who might you be?" he asks. "My name is Mary Jo, but the old man calls me the baby-o." When she asks who *he* is, he replies that he's the fool who slept in the barn last night.

There isn't a bad cut on the lp. There isn't a *dull* cut on the album, either. They're all good: "Nashville On My Mind," "Brown Girl And Fair Eleanor," "The Mountain Man," "These Hills," "Four Winds A-Blowin'," and the rest.

So let's not make too much of a *legend* out of Grandpa Jones yet, frozen in space and time like a bronze plaque in the Hall of Fame. Grandpa is still here, and as far as I'm concerned, he just gets better and better.

MARSHALL FALLWELL

Hank Thompson
Movin' On
Dot DOSD-2003 6.98
GRT 150-2003 (tape) 7.98

The restoration of Hank Thompson to superstar status was long overdue.

Younger fans probably don't remember, but Hank as much as anybody was responsible for country's first post-war period of popularity. As a performer and as a songwriter he was Western music's answer to—and every bit the equal of—Hank Williams. Many of his early songs are country classics and his is often the definitive rendition. In the late Forties and early Fifties, a Hank Thompson release was a guaranteed hit.

Hank fell on hard times in the late Fifties. He still worked 250 dates a year and still sold a lot of records, but his music, like that of a lot of older stars, especially those from the Southwest, was mostly being ignored by the growing number of country radio stations and the new army of country fans favoring the relatively treacly arrangements coming out of Nashville. A lot of lip service was paid to honoring the original country stars like Jimmie Rodgers, Bob Wills and the Carter Family, but it didn't pay to actually work those traditions.

Country has come full circle in the last few years. The audience has grown so enormous that there is room for a lot more different styles on record store shelves. And many new, younger fans, who grew up with Elvis Presley instead of Perry Como, are demanding livelier and earthier music than Nashville has been used to supplying for a while. The most salutory effect of all this activity—besides a flood of new talent from all over the country—is the revival of the music of the Southwest.

At the beginning of his career, Hank Thompson was known as a songwriter as much as a performer. Indeed he was among the cleverest writers ever to play the trade. But lately he has chosen to interpret other people's tunes. *Movin' On* features his recent smash, "Who Left The Door To Heaven Open," written by Betty Duke, amid some recent hits by other artists. What makes his cover versions a little better than most is that for Hank it's not enough to just record something that was a hit; it also has to be a pretty good song. He ranges far and wide, touching down at old favorites like "Mama Don't 'Low" and "When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again," as well as recent winners like "Country Bumkin" and "Red Necks, White Sox And Blue Ribbon Beer." He also includes "There's A Honky Tonk Angel (Who'll Take Me Back In)" that Troy Seals and Denny Rice might have written just for him.

I once asked Hank Thompson why he stopped writing songs. He thought a minute, then said, "Well, you know, when people don't seem to like your stuff anymore, it's discouraging." Be discouraged no more, Hank. There are still millions of us Hank Thompson fans out here. And we're waiting.

JOHN GABREE

Porter Wagoner
Highway Headed South
RCA APL1-0713 6.98
APS1-0713 (tape) 7.98

There must be a few people out there like myself, who grew up on break-my-heart-and-throw-the-bottle country music, who miss it, and who find the current Nashville interpretation of "traditional" country music to be repetitious, trite, poorly sung, two minute bursts of insincerity. Well, let me tell you: Traditional might mean old but it doesn't mean old-fashioned, and traditional music may be simple, but that doesn't mean stupid. Porter Wagoner is living proof of *that*. A lot of people make "stone country" in Nashville, but in my opinion, Porter is the only one *carrying it on*. If you don't believe me, buy his records, particularly *Highway Headed South*. It is bright, interesting, well-written and sung with real feeling about real feelings.

Except for a song by Dolly Parton and one by Bill Owens, Porter wrote all the songs. I'm partial to "Life Rides The Train," "Highway Headed South," "Not A Cloud In The Sky," and Dolly's "Friends." The rest are all good too. Porter produces himself under Bob Ferguson's executive auspices and he's gotten a really sweet sound here. Porter knows the difference between a fiddle and a violin, and opts for fiddles. He knows how to record acoustic guitars so you can hear every string in a strum; even the rhythm section is crisp on slow tunes. You can also hear everybody playing, and tell *what* they're playing.

But all of this aside, what really makes Porter the *Man*, is that he is really after the *feeling*, the true feeling in everyday life. So even when he blows one, it is always for trying for *too much* feeling and ending up maudlin or sentimental—which in a field more and more dominated by ultra-cool, is the right kind

of error. To tell the truth, this is probably not to Porter's financial advantage: Feelings are out of fashion and radio stations don't much like to play a real hurting song right before an automobile commercial—it might take you out of the buying mood. But Porter's right there, kinda lonesome in the mainstream, doing right by himself, by our feelings, and by country music.

DAVE HICKEY

Don Gibson
Bring Back Your Love To Me
Hickory HR-4516 6.98
H8G-4516 (tape) 7.98

The first album I ever bought was by Elvis Presley, it must be almost 20 years ago. A few days later I bought my second album. It was by Don Gibson.

Don Gibson was one of the names that was synonymous with country music in the Fifties. "Blue Blue Day," "Legend In My Time," "I Can't Stop Loving You," "Oh Lonesome Me," "Just One Time"—he was perhaps the most important singer-songwriter in the decade after the death of Hank Williams. In

the Sixties, like many of the older stars, he was eclipsed, but in the Seventies he has made a comeback under Wesley Rose's tutelage on Hickory, Rose's MGM subsidiary.

This is Don's fourth for Rose (not counting an excellent duet lp with Sue Thompson) and the best so far. It features not only his recent hit, "Bring Back Your Love To Me," but also four other Gibson songs including "Without Your Love," a beautiful lament. Like most good songwriters, Don also knows how to judge other people's tunes and he does lovely versions of Dallas Frazier's "All I Have To Offer You Is Me" and Hank Williams' "My Heart Would Know."

The contemporary star that Don Gibson most resembles is Bill Anderson. He has a cramped voice like Anderson's (only somewhat fuller) and he often not so much sings his songs as talks them. But where Anderson seems merely to have overcome the

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handicap of a limited vocal ability, Gibson has turned it into a unique asset. He has developed a style that is not only distinctive but wonderfully expressive. He can take a song like Mickey Newberry's "Sunshine," as he does here, and make it one-of-a-kind Don Gibson special.

This album is one well worth adding to your shelves, especially if you are a Don Gibson fan of old. (If somehow you've missed him, you might want to start with *The Very Best of Don Gibson*, MGM H3G-4502, which has *all* his old hits.) Don't let yourself be put off by the cover—someone did a typically awful job of packaging—inside the music is *great.* JEAN STARKS

Bobby Bare and the family
Singin' In The Kitchen
RCA APL1-0700 6.98
APS1-0700 (tape) 7.98

Bobby Bare has achieved the seemingly impossible with this album featuring singing by his young children, Cari, Shannon, and Bobby Jr. Kid's voices can be cute once or twice, but usually on something as permanent as a long playing record the cuteness quickly cloys. So it is a tribute to Bare's uncanny sense of showmanship, Shel Silverstein's cleverness as a songwriter, and the Bare family's compatibility that this album can be listened to over and over again without ever seeming to be cutesy-poo.

For one thing, Bare never lets the show get out of his control. For the most part the kids are relegated to the background and kitchen-type chatter between cuts. Three of the songs feature Bobby's wife, Jeannie, who has a lovely voice, somewhat like a full-throated Skeeter Davis. Jeannie does "Scarlet Ribbons" alone, "Where'd I Come From," which has been getting some airplay, with Bobby Jr., and "Lovin' You Anyway" with Bobby Sr. At least four songs, "The Monkey And The Elephant," "Ricky Ticky Song," "The Unicorn" and "See That Bluebird" are more or less thought of as children's songs, though Bobby's readings are so warm and appealing that even the most misanthropic listener will not fail to be touched. Both sides begin with singalong songs that have those marvelous Silverstein touches that could have *you* singing in your kitchen.

Bobby Bare Sr. is a rare kind of performer. He can communicate with almost any type of audience, yet he never compromises his artistry in the least. He never tries things that don't suit his voice, yet he manages to select material that is different and interesting. Even here, where he's limited to songs about children and family life, he programs the whole thing so the listener never tires. Even W.C. Fields would have liked this album. JOHN GABREE

Susan Raye
Singing Susan Raye
Capitol ST-11333 6.98
8XT-11333 (tape) 7.98

While most artists are known as much by some nickname or well-taken adjective as for their vocal abilities, Susan Raye has proven you don't necessarily need any equipment other than a natural gift. A no-frills lady who has never taken time out to acquire any other descriptive moniker, "singing" suits her just fine.

While Buck Owens still remains a guiding light for Susan's career, half of her new album was turned over to a new producer on the Bakersfield ranch, Jim Shaw. He also displays fresh talents as a songwriter, contributing a pair of selections, including Miss Raye's recent hit, "You Can Sure See It From Here." Combining the functions of pedal steel and strings into one all-pervasive Mellotron, Shaw's distinctive arrangements employ electronics to get a "country" sound. And this artificial sound doesn't

interfere with Susan's voice.

Under this fresh direction, Susan Raye can fuse what is universal to country (in hits like "Top Of The World" and "Let Me Be There") with what is most unique to her own romantic style. Whether it be on David Frizell's thoughtful and tender "I Give You Mine" or her own lovin' philosophy in the self-penned "Love's Ups And Downs," she gets the most out of every note and every word. Miss Raye can even take an old Johnnie and Jack duet like "Stop The World" and double-time it into a solid solo.

Truly, there's a whole lot going on here. But just the same, "singing" seems to describe it best. It's what she's been noted for ever since she joined Buck Owens' corral five years back; and it's what makes her one-woman show more enjoyable with every new album. ROBERT ADELS

The Carter Family
Three Generations
Columbia KC33084 6.98
KCA33084 (tape) 7.98

This latest incarnation of the Carter Family consists of Mother Maybelle, daughter Helen and her sons David and Danny Jones, and daughter Anita and *her* daughter, Lorrie Davis. Producer Johnny Cash made the wise decision to keep the arrangements simple, for the most part using the Carters themselves (other sidemen aren't listed).

The album opens with a pleasant guitar duel between Danny and David called "Pick A Messa Martin," followed by a thoroughly professional if uninspired version of "Sweet Memories" by Anita. Lorrie and her grandmother are next up with a lovely reading of the Carter Family's "You Are My Flower." Helen does "Let Me Be There" and it reminds me that it's too bad Helen never really pursued her career. In many ways, she's the most interesting performer of the three sisters.

Side two is more successful. "Picture On The Wall" is done with the straight-ahead energy that made The Original Carter Family sound so delightful. Lorrie is considerably more assured on

"Morning Sun" and David's romps on electric guitar ("Sugarfoot Rag") are better than his acoustic playing on side one.

Lorrie, David and Danny seem to be talented performers, but they all sound slightly uncomfortable with the back porch style of the Carters. These, after all, are more theatrical times. A song like Mickey Newberry's "Why You Been Gone So Long" doesn't lend itself to the Carter's traditional rolling style, for example. It seems that there was no guiding force shaping the album. Cash evidently chose not to

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We offered Part 1 of our collection last month and this month we are proud to present Part 2 of our COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME members!

HANK WILLIAMS

Born: September 15, 1923, Georgiana, Alabama
Died: January 1, 1953, West Virginia
Married: w. Audrey Shepard (divorced) s. Randall Hank; d. Cycrecia Ann , w. Billie Jean Jones
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1961

Lost Highway And Other Folk Ballads	4754	6 98	
Hank Williams Sings Kaw-Liga			
I Saw The Light	3331	6 98	3331M 7 98
The Unforgettable Hank Williams	3955	6 98	
The Spirit of Hank Williams	3733	6 98	
14 More of Hank Williams' Greatest Hits, Vol. 3	4140	6 98	4140M 7 98
On Stage	3999	6 98	3999M 7 95
14 More of Hank Williams' Great Hits, Vol. 2	4040	6 98	4040M 7 98
And Other Humorous Songs	4300	6 98	
The Legend Lives Anew	4377	6 98	
Again	4378	6 98	
Luke The Drifter	4380	6 98	
I Won't Be Home No More	4481	6 98	4481M 7 95
Hank Williams & Strings, Vol. III	4529	6 98	
In The Beginning	4576	6 98	4576M 7 95
The Essential Hank Williams	4651	6 98	4651M 7 95
Life To Legend	4680	6 98	4680M 7 98
24 of Hank Williams' Greatest Hits	4755 2	7 98	4755M 9 98
Hank Williams, Hank Williams, Jr — The Legend of Hank Williams In Song And Story	2 SES 4865	7 98	4865M 9 95
The Very Best of Hank Williams	4168	6 98	4168M 7 98
The Very Best of Hank Williams, Vol. 2	4227	6 98	4227M 7 98

TEX RITTER

Woodward Maurice Ritter
Born: January 12, 1907, Murvaul, Texas
Died: January 2, 1974, Nashville, Tennessee
Married: w. Dorothy Fay Southworth (s. Thomas Matthews, Jonathan Southworth)
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1964

Hillbilly Heaven	ST-1623	6 98	
The Best of Tex Ritter	DT 2595	6 98	
Supercountrylegendary	ST-11037	6 98	
An American Legend	SA11241	9 98	BV3K 11241 11 98

BOB WILLS

HANK WILLIAMS

RED FOLEY

ERNEST TUBB

Born: February 9, 1914, Crisp, Texas
Married: w. Elaine (divorced) (s. Justin Tubb) w. Olene Adams
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1965

Golden Favorites	MCA 84	6 98	MCAT 84 7 98
Just Call Me Lonesome	MCA 209	6 98	
Greatest Hits	MCA 16	6 98	MCAT 16 7 98
Greatest Hits, Vol. 2	MCA 24	6 98	MCAT 24 7 98
One Sweet Hello	MCA 294	6 98	MCAT 294 7 98
Say Something Sweet to Sarah	MCA 229	6 98	MCAT 229 7 98
Baby It's So Hard To Be Good	MCA 512	6 98	
The Ernest Tubb Story	MCA2 4040	7 98	
The Ernest Tubb-Loretta Lynn Story	MCA2 4000	7 98	MCAT 4000 9 98
I've Got All the Heartaches I Can Handle	MCA 341	6 98	MCAT 341 7 98

TEX RITTER

ERNEST TUBB

BILL MONROE

UNCLE DAVE MACON

David Harrison Macon
Born: October 7, 1870, Smart Station, Tennessee
Died: March 22, 1952, Readyville, Tennessee
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1966

Uncle Dave Macon	DEC	DEC 4780	6 98
Uncle Dave Macon	FOLK	RF-51	6 98

UNCLE DAVE MACON

PATSY CLINE

JIMMIE DAVIS

RED FOLEY

Clyde Julian Foley
Born: June 17, 1910, Blue Lick, Kentucky
Died: September 19, 1968, Fort Wayne, Indiana
Married: w. Axie Cox (deceased), Eva Sally Overstake (deceased), d. Betty, Shirley Lee, Jennie Lou, Julia Ann
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1967

Songs of Devotion	MCA 86	6 98	MCAT 86 7 98
Beyond the Sunset	MCA 147	6 98	MCAT 147 7 98

Collectors' Records & Tapes

The Red Foley Story	MCA 2 4053	6.98	MCAT 2 4053	7 98

BOB WILLS

Born: March 6, 1906, Limestone County, Texas
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1968

Greatest String Band Hits	MCA-152	6.98	MCAT 152	7 98*
The Best of Bob Wills	MCA-153	6.98	MCAT 153	7.98
Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys	MCA 526	6.98		
King of Western Swing	MCA 543	6.98	MCAT 543	7.98*
Time Changes Everything	MCA 545	6.98	MCAT 545	7.98*
The Living Legend	MCA 546	6.98	MCAT 546	7.98*
Bob WillsAnd The Texas Playboys	LA216J2	9 98	EA-216J	9.98
Wel Tillis & Bob Wills "In Person"	MCA 5[illegible]	6 98		

BILL MONROE

Born: September 13, 1911, Rosine, Kentucky
Married: w. Caroline (divorced); s. James; d. Melissa
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1970

Bluegrass Instrumentals	MCA 104	6 98		
The High Lonesome Sound	MCA-110	6 98		
Bluegrass Time	MCA-116	6 98	MCAT 116	7 95
Greatest Hits	MCA-17	6 98	MCAT-17	7 95
Bill & Charlie Monroe	MCA-124	6 98		
Bluegrass Ramble	MCA-88	6 98		
Bluegrass Special	MCA-97	6 98		
I'll Meet You In Church Sunday Morning	MCA 226	6 98	MCAT 226	7 95
A Voice From On High	MCA-131	6 98	MCAT 131	7 95
Kentucky Bluegrass	MCA-136	6 98	MCAT-136	7 95
Country Music Hall Of Fame	MCA-140	6 98	MCAT 140	7 98
Uncle Pen	MCA 500	6 98	MCAT 500	7 98
I Saw The Light	MCA 527	6 98	MCAT 527	7 95
Father & Son (with James Monroe)	MCA 310	6 98	MCAT 310	7 98

Bean Blossom	MCA-2-8002	9.98	MCATZ-8002	9 98
Bill Monroe	MCA-426	6.98	MCAT 426	7 98

JIMMIE DAVIS

James Houston Davis
Born: September 11, 1902, Quitmann, Louisiana
Married: w. Alvorn (deceased); s. Jim
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1972

Sweet Hour Of Prayer	MCA-189	6 98		
How Great Thou Art	MCA-95	6 98	MCAT-95	7 98*
Highway To Heaven	MCA-213	6 98	MCAT-213	7 98
Singing The Gospel	MCA-118	6 98		
Greatest Hits	MCA-269	6 98	MCAT-269	7 98*
Let Me Walk With Jesus	MCA-127	6 98	MCAT-127	7 98*
Songs Of Consolation	MCA-134	6 98	MCAT-134	7 98*
Old Baptizing Creek	MCA-139	6 98		
What A Happy Day	MCA-298	6 98	MCAT-298	7 98*
You Are My Sunshine	MCA-526	6 98		
Suppertime	MCA-150	6 98	MCAT-150	7 98
Memories Coming Home	MCA-511	6 98	MCAT-511	7 98*
God's Last Altar Call	MCA 323	6 98	MCAT-323	7 98*
Greatest Hits Vol 2	MCA-423	6 98	MCAT 423	7 98

PATSY CLINE

Virginia Hensley
Born: September 8, 1932, Winchester, Virginia
Died: March 4 5, 1963, Camden, Tennessee
Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame: 1973

Greatest Hits	MCA-12	6 98	6 4854		7 98*
Patsy Cline Showcase	MCA-87	6 98	MCAT-87	7 98*	
Sentimentally Yours	MCA-90	6 98	MCAT-90	7 98*	
A Portrait of Patsy Cline	MCA-224	6 98	MCAT-224	7.98*	

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impose himself on the family, which is very fair of him but there isn't anyone else to take up the slack. Mother Maybelle used to run a tight ship, but she seems to be trying to showcase the others. It is a problem other families have faced. The Stonemans never licked it. The Scrugges are just beginning to.

JOHN GABREE

Larry Gatlin
Rain-Rainbow
Monument KZ 33069 5.98
KA 33069 (tape) 6.98

Larry Gatlin is a great songwriter and the perfect singer for his own songs. Listen

to this new album and I think you'll agree.

This is an old-fashioned album for two reasons. First, like Don Williams, Larry doesn't believe in 'album' songs—that is, songs that the artist records, perhaps on first hearing, simply because there is space left on the album. Second, Larry's album has a philosophical scheme to it. To oversimplify it, you could say that the first side is the 'happy' side and the second side is 'sad' except that it isn't really sad when you finish it, because it ends with an appeal to the Almighty to "Help Me."

The happy side begins with Larry's current single, "Delta Dirt," a nice, rockabilly song about where he came from. Then there is "Jannie," a song about his lovely wife. Then, on the same side, there is "Love," about which I can only say that it is a celebration of same. The side ends in visual terms, with a song called "Rainbow."

The "sad" side begins with "Rain," at first my favorite song on the album. Really, it's hard for me to choose a favorite from the first three songs on this side: "Rain," "Found and Lost" and "Those Also Love." After several weeks with the album, I am inclined to speak up loudest for "Those Also Love," because it is about something we all feel whenever we see movies or look at magazines featuring beautiful people falling in love and doing marvelous things. Larry's song says, "Look, these aren't the only ones who have feelings. 'Those also love who stand and wait, and watch love go by.'" The song is unique. The closest thing I've ever heard to this idea is John Prine's song, "Hello In There," and of course Milton's poem, "On His Blindness." Gatlin's "Those Also Love" may also turn out to be a classic. So may his first two albums.

MARSHALL FALLWELL

Asleep at the Wheel
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It's been about five years now since Asleep at the Wheel started out playing weekends at the Sportsmen's Lounge in Paw Paw, West Virginia. Since then, they have moved to California, where they lived in their manager's backyard, gone on the road as the backup band for such artists as Freddie Hart and Stoney Cooper, released a fine albeit largely ignored debut album *(Comin' Right at Ya* on United Art-

ists), moved to Texas, where they presently reside, and signed up with Epic Records. Hopefully, *Asleep at the Wheel,* the group's first Epic album, will mark the beginning of a new and less Gothic chapter in the story of the Wheel.

Pressed to categorize, you'd probably have to call Asleep at the Wheel a western swing band. They would fit comfortably enough in that category were it not for the fact that they are just as comfortable doing their own modern country compositions as they are doing Bob Wills classics.

Here they pretty much cover the spectrum. Their updated versions of old masterpieces include Wynonie Harris' "Bloodshot Eyes," Bob Wills' "Miss Molly," Louis Jordan's "Choo Choo Ch'-Boogie," Rex Griffin's "The Last Letter," and Jesse Ashlock's "The Kind of Love I Can't Forget" (the last two featuring the wholly unbelievable singing of lead female vocalist Chris O'Connell); the group's own writing skills are represented by "Don't Ask Me Why (I'm Going To Texas)," an awesome duet called "Our Names Aren't Mentioned (Together Anymore)," and the destined-to-be-a-classic "Dead Man." All committed to wax under the flawless production of Norro Wilson.

Getting back to the matter of categories, this is really one you'll have to listen to on your own. Beyond that, all I can say is that Asleep at the Wheel are one of the best things to happen to country music in many a year. And Chris O'Connell's vocals could turn her into a star.

NICK TOSCHES

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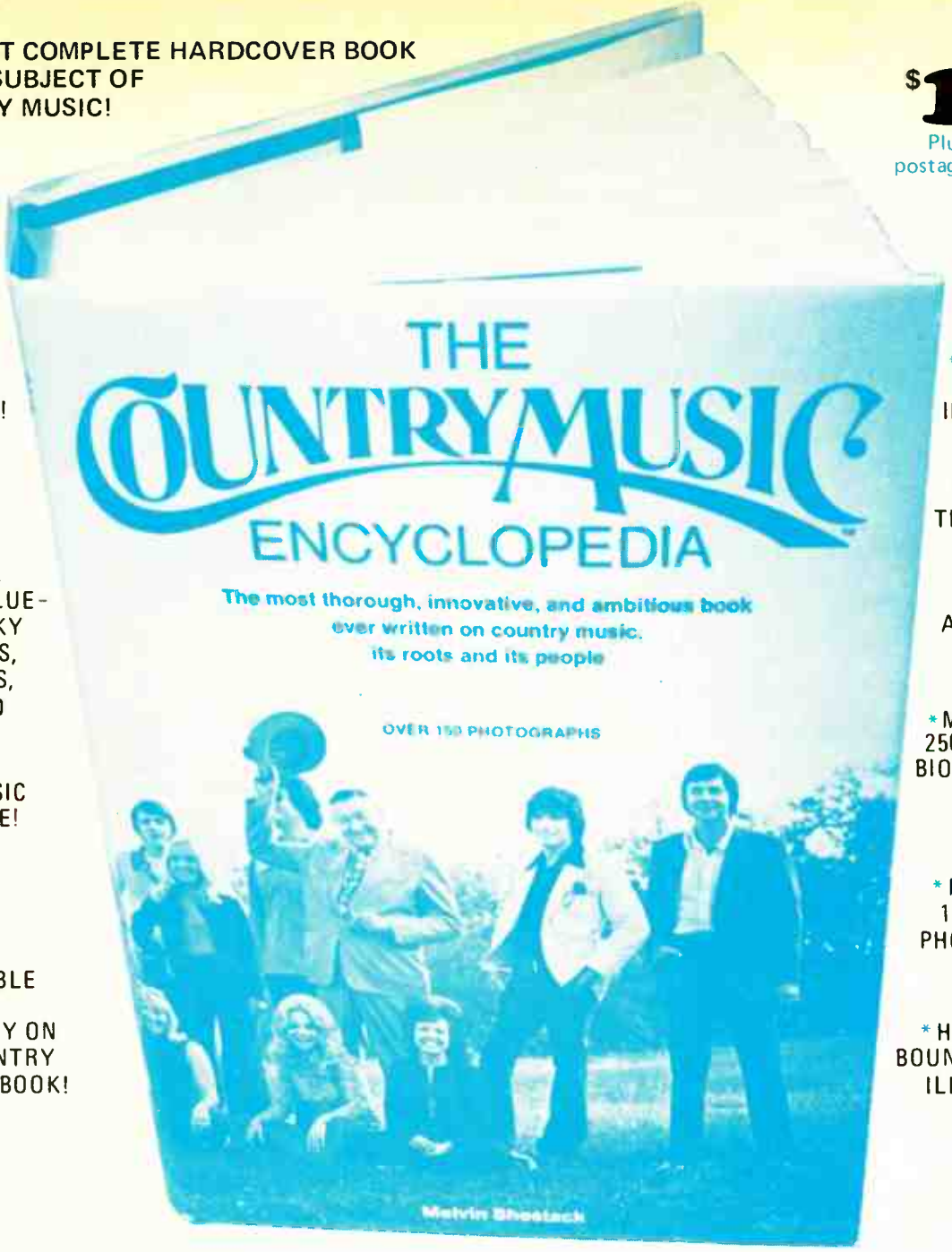

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FAST DRAW!

Gunsmoke Returns To The West

BY TOM MILLER

When twenty-five-year-old Mike Bowan first started taking his future wife to restaurants, she'd notice an odd habit of his. Mike would reach under the table on his right and jerk his hand back. This seemed rather strange to Hazel, not to mention others in the restaurant, until she learned Mike was practicing his fast-draw technique, pretending he was pulling a gun from his holster and shooting. Soon Hazel grew used to it—Mike would sometimes do this while walking down the street. Eventually she took up the sport herself. Today Mike and Hazel Bowan are two of the better fast-draw experts in the Southwest.

Fast-draw is a sport which used to have a strong following until about ten years ago. There were clubs in most states, and regional as well as national championships. Occasionally big meets would be televised. Then for reasons no one's too sure about, it grew less popular, with fewer people taking up the sport and fewer contests to enter. But Mike Bowan, who entered his first shoot at Tombstone, Arizona, just three years ago, senses that there is a slight growth in the sport recently, with more people inquiring about it and more fast-draw events scheduled.

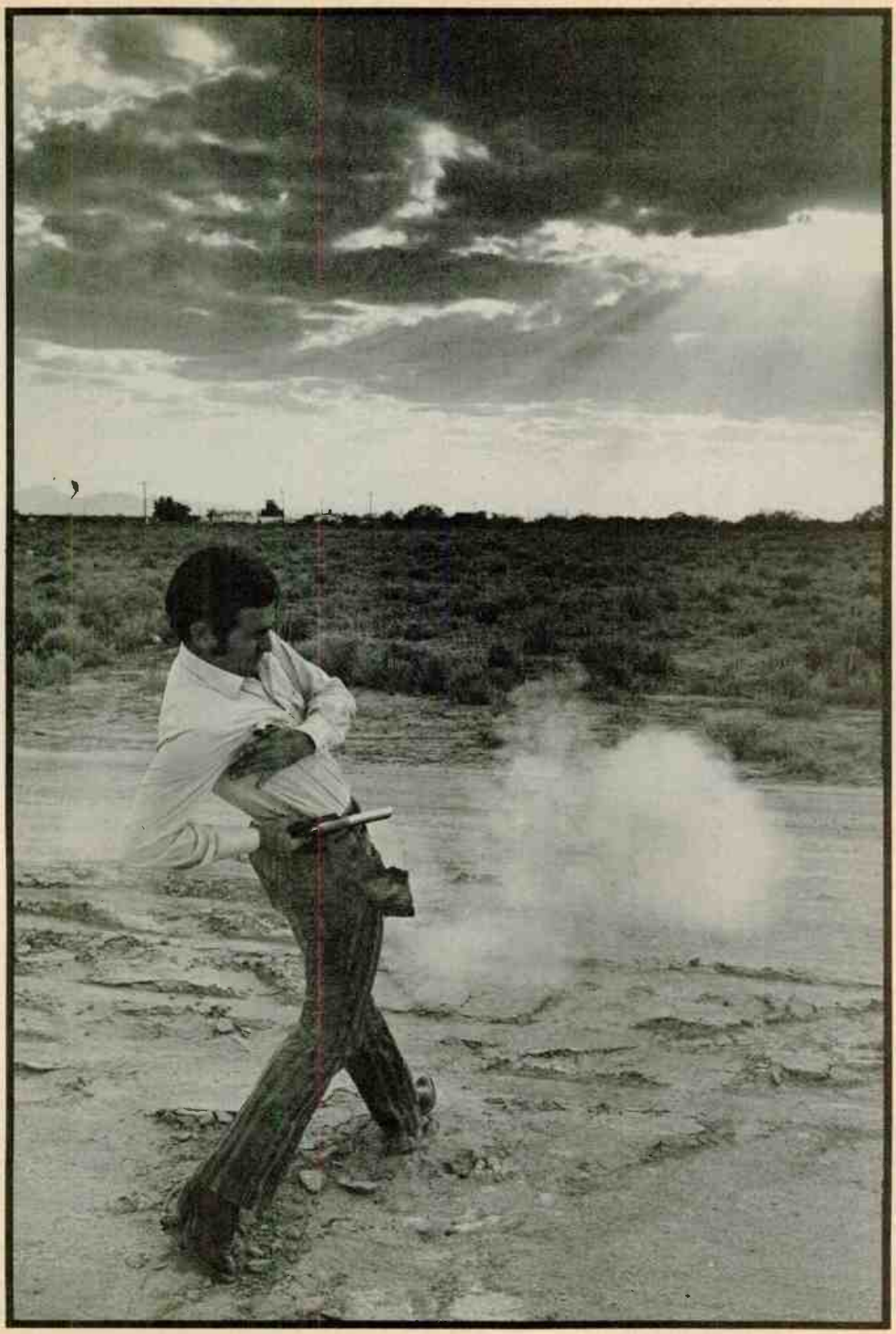
Put simply, fast-draw competition determines who can draw a gun fastest and fire it. "Some people say '*quick*-draw,' but this isn't right," Mike explains inside his Casa Grande, Arizona, trailer. "In quick-draw you use live ammunition. This is what the Hollywood stunt men do. If they shoot single-action guns out of holsters, they shoot fast-draw. We have a lot of shooters that shoot both, but the quick-draw shooters use live ammunition with .357s or larger. No target loads, no light loads, no reduced loads. These are the quick-draw artists. It's pretty much restricted to men between eighteen and forty-five. A lot of them walk around with a limp.

"Now, *we* shoot *fast*-draw. We don't use live ammunition. We don't even allow it on the premises. We use wax bullets and black-powder blanks. Our aim is to promote the spirit, the dress and customs of the Old West."

To get started, Mike recommends fast-draw beginners get either a Rueger or a Colt. The gun often has to be customized, which might mean cutting down a .357 and boring it out, having the hammer built up, and of course it has to be a single-action gun able to hold a half-cock. Little internal mechanisms like the spring and pin can make all the difference, Hazel Bowan adds. Most shooters use Alfonso holsters—often called rigs—which must be worn around the waist. "It can be set out from the body any distance you want, but it can't be cocked more than 45 degrees from where you stand," Mike explains. "These rigs aren't made for anything but fast-draw." Can a shooter use lubricants inside the rig, or is that cheating? "You can use lubricants," Mike replies. "Some shooters use teflon shields, some use baby-powder. We have a club out in California that liberally sprinkles their holsters with baby powder, but it doesn't seem to make any difference. We call them the 'Baby Powder Gang.'"

The final piece of equipment is the bullets. One type is black-powder blanks, filled with coarse black powder with a little kicker in the back. Because there is no demand for this type, they can't be bought commercially. You must load them yourself. The other kind is a wax bullet, which are actually half wax and half plastic. "I can take a wax bullet, put it in a shell, and put it through a quarter-inch sheet of plywood at eight feet," Mike says. "They travel at 900 feet per second." A complete set of equipment to start out with would cost under $200, the Bowans estimate. "This sport isn't limited to anyone who is super-rich or even super co-ordinated. This is for average people," Mike explains as children play in the adjacent yard. "The whole idea of not shooting live ammunition is to keep everybody in it. The boy who just walked out—he's played around with it. We've got eight-year-old girls and boys who shoot. And we've got a man up in Scottsdale who's 82 and *he* still shoots."

There are four basic methods of shooting, and Mike carefully explains them while demonstrating in his living room (without ammunition). The first is called "ram-fanning." The gun and holster are lined up with your target—often a standard 38" by 14½" FBI silhouette—with your left hand in front of you, chest high (directions are for right-handed shooters). The right hand grabs the gun, grabbing the trigger at the same time. You bring it up and ram it straight forward, so the left hand cocks the hammer. The advantage of the ram-fan method is that it is very safe—the gun cannot possibly go off until it is in front of you pointed forward. It is the method taught to new shooters. "There's no chance of running one down your leg and scaring you off," Mike says. "It's an accurate form too, but it's slow. You've got a lot of accuracy but



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you're giving up speed."

The second method seems the trickiest. It is called "slap-cock" or "up-fan." You start with the left hand slightly above and in front of the gun, with your right hand further out at your side. The left hand bats the gun out of the holster, simultaneously cocking the hammer. The right hand catches it and pulls the trigger. This way the gun is cocked even before the right hand touches it. It is faster than ram-fanning because there is less movement and it can be fired from right next to the body. Your timing has to be perfect on this one, and speed is essential. "My hands move between 50 and 60 miles per hour," Mike asserts.

"Twisting" is the method Mike uses most often. With this, you stand sideways to the target with the gun clear around in front of you. You grab the gun with your right hand, at the same time grabbing the trigger. As you lift the gun up, the left hand comes by and cocks the gun. The hammer is pulled while the gun is still coming out of the holster, meaning it is actually fired while still in the lip of the holster. *But*—it takes the hammer .04 seconds to fall, and your hand is going at 60 miles an hour. "So you rely on four one-hundredths of a second to get it out of your holster and up to your body," Mike explains, as if it is all so simple. "Your hands make no movement at all, all it takes is just a twist of the wrist." Advantage: Speed. Disadvantage: Inaccuracy.

"We're speed merchants—that's all we deal in . . . I don't see how anybody can get any faster."

The last method is "thumbing." "It's what you see in Old West movies. Everything's done with the right hand. It takes three years to make a good thumber, but it only takes six months to make a good fanner with the same amount of practice." There are very few good thumbers in the fast-draw game.

"In the movies when the good guys and the bad guys are going to have a shoot out, the good guy tells the bad guy 'you go first,'" Mike explains. "The bad guy always goes for his gun first and the good guy always shoots him down. Well, there ain't no way in hell you can do it.

"We're speed merchants—that's all we deal in. There's a little bit of accuracy involved, but for the most part it's speed. I don't see how anybody can get any faster. We've had police officers try it, and drawing out of a shoulder holster there's just too much movement. They don't have a prayer.

"I would wager that a fast-draw shooter set up shooting eight to twenty feet—which is what they call combat distance—could stand up against just about anybody. Fast-draw guys have been trained—we've all got reflexes and the training is down so fine, we're coming so close to reaction time that I don't see any way that anyone could get a double-action or automatic out and fire it any faster."

The shoots themselves are partly

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social events. There are few enough fast-draw shooters that they all get to know each other mighty quick. At the big meets shooters will get drunk and party just like any other group of people. Hazel recalls one fast-draw party at a motel where half the people pushed each other into the pool—cowboy hats and all. People would be practicing their draws inside motel rooms, and the noise carried on all night.

Hazel recalls one fast-draw party at a motel where half the people pushed each other into the pool—cowboy hats and all.

Fast-draw rules simply say that Western wear must be worn, and that the toes must be covered. Moccasins are allowed, but sandals aren't. Once Hazel showed up for a shoot in what she figured was Western wear: squaw boots, leather hot-pants, and a red kerchief across her chest. The officials wouldn't let her shoot.

The women's fast draw record is .24 second, and the men's is .21 second. You would think that the difference of three one-hundredths of a second was so slight as to make no difference at all, I mention to Mike. "A woman's reaction time is actually about two to three one-hundredths of a second *faster* than a man's, until you put a gun in her hand. Then she just goes all to hell. Now we've got the fastest woman fast-draw up in Mesa—she's at .24 of a second. It's just that they've got some mental block or something, I don't know. The fastest woman will never be as fast as the fastest man. I just don't know why."

Accompanied by a photographer and a couple of neighbors' kids, Mike, Hazel and I leave the trailer park for the edge of the desert where we'll be able to shoot in peace. When we get there Mike instructs the kids to gather empty beer cans so he can demonstrate his technique and accuracy. Mike said he prefers Coors' beer cans because they're made of steel rather than aluminum.

First he holds his gun eight feet from a can, blasting a hole through it. Then he shows the twisting method. The first two were "boot shots"—the shots went off faster than he could get the gun clear of his rig—causing a slight dent in his holster. Finally his timing is smooth, and he shoots off a couple rounds for the photographer. There is a problem, however—Mike can draw and shoot faster than the camera's shutter clicks. Eventually we deivse a method of timing so the shutter will click *before* the draw is complete, so the exposure catches the gun firing.

At last it is my turn. I have never handled a gun before in my life, never really had a reason or desire to, but this hot Arizona afternoon I'm willing to try fast-draw shooting. The anticipation is somewhat exhilarating as Mike patiently explains to me exactly what to do, and I listen intently. But suddenly I realize I am left-handed. His rig is for right-handed shooters. It's no go.

After we return to the Bowan home, Mike puts away his equipment. One of the objects in his equipment box is a piece of metal, a liner which fits at the bottom of the holster, running horizontal to the ground. It is called a "chicken plate." Hazel, who has closed up the clothing store and returned, says "Mike wears one because of the way he shoots. If he drops a load down in here," she says, motioning to the holster's bottom, "it won't hit him."

Mike nods agreement, and explains why more people are coming back to the sport: "It's fast and there's a lot of action and it's competitive. And the people are so damn good in it. The clubs practice at someone's house all the time. We can go to Phoenix [60 miles northwest] and practice any night of the week if we want to. We're a pretty close-knit group.

"It's easy to shoot and it's Western. I think more people are going back to the old style of living, to Western living. Why, if I didn't live in a trailer park I could practice in my own back yard, it's that simple." ■

What Do You Know?

Country Music Goes To The Movies

Country music has contributed both subject matter and talented performers to the motion picture industry. From the early singing cowboys such as Tex Ritter, Gene Autry, and Roy Rogers up to the very latest movies in progress (Robert Altman's "Nashville" and "W.W. And The Dixie Dancekings" starring Burt Reynolds and Jerry Reed) the teaming of country music and the movies has been a rewarding experience for both country music and movie fans around the world.

Here is a quiz designed to test your memory on the entertainment magic of mixing country music and the movies.

Kris Kristofferson in "Pat Garret & Billy The Kid."

1. This country star wrote several songs for Elvis Presley movies long before he wrote and recorded his own "hook" song that zoomed him to the top of the music charts. Who is he?
2. Tex Ritter sang the dramatic Academy Award winning song for what Oscar nominated picture?
3. George Hamilton starred in the tragic life story of what country music great? Also, name the picture.
4. This country music artist not only wrote the music for the movie "Killers Three," he also made his motion picture debut in the film. Who is he?
5. Country music star Charley Pride sang the Oscar nominated song from what recent movie?
6. Rip Torn starred in this excellent film portrayal of a spiritually bankrupt country star. Name the film.
7. The multi-talented Roger Miller wrote the ballads for what ballad picture?
8. An unmeasurable share of the success of the movie "Bonnie And Clyde" was unmistakably due to the atmosphere created for the film by one of country music's greatest instrumental teams. Name them.
9. What country music favorite dueled Kirk Douglas to a finish in "A Gunfight?"
10. "Nashville Rebel" was the title of the movie featuring one of country music's best male singers. Name the star.
11. Singer-songwriter Kris Kristofferson first came to the movies with Dennis Hopper in "The Last Movie" and later attained stardom in 'Pat Garrett And Billy The Kid," and "Blume In Love," but what was the title of the movie in which he debuted co-starring with Gene Hackman?
12. Elvis Presley's second movie role was that of a young country boy shot to fame and fortune by country music. Name the title of this (almost) biography.
13. Country music's Roy Orbison made his movie debut in a Civil War comedy with songs. What was the title of the movie?
14. The Burt Reynolds' western "Sam Whiskey" provided this TV-syndicated country singer with another movie role. What is his name?
15. This country star portrayed Mary Magdalene in the movie produced by her husband, telling the story of Christ. Name the performer and the movie.
16. Name the movie in which Steve McQueen starred as a country music performer who dreamed of stardom as a solution to his prison-plagued past.
17. Marty Robbins, the star of several movies himself, sang the Oscar-nominated song from what movie?
18. The title of the movie, "Smoky Mountain Melody," should indicate the name of the Grand Ole Opry star featured in the movie. Name him.
19. In the movie "Five Easy Pieces," one of country music's most popular female vocalists shared the musical credits with Chopin. Who was the female singer?
20. It is easy to remember Glen Campbell's movie debut with John Wayne and Kim Darby in "True Grit," but he teamed with Ms. Darby again in second movie. What was its title?

DON HUMPHREYS

ANSWERS

1. Mac Davis
2. "High Noon"
3. Hank Williams, "Your Cheatin' Heart"
4. Merle Haggard
5. "Sometimes A Great Notion"
6. "Payday"
7. "The Ballad Of Waterhole #3"
8. Flatt and Scruggs
9. Johnny Cash
10. Waylon Jennings
11. "Cisco Pike"
12. "Loving You"
13. "The Fastest Gun Alive"
14. Del Reeves
15. June Carter, "Gospel Road"
16. "Baby, The Rain Must Fall"
17. "The Hanging Tree"
18. Roy Acuff
19. Tammy Wynette
20. "Norwood"

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The Country Hearth

by ELLIS NASSOUR

When Hank Thompson isn't out flying the friendly skies in his twin-engine Cessna 310, hopping cross-country to concerts, you'll find him in the Oklahoma countryside, building stands and blinds during deer season, waiting for potential venison steaks to appear. Off-season, Hank and his wife Ann can usually be found cruising Keystone Reservoir, the largest man-made lake in Oklahoma, aboard their twin-engine cabin cruiser. Keystone Reservoir is near their home in Sand Springs, a 12-room stone house built on five acres of green, rolling hills outside Tulsa.

"Hank is an avid sportsman," Ann said. "The house is filled with hunting trophies, mounted fish, stag heads, and rifles on gun racks. When he lands the plane after a few days on the circuit, Hank comes in, puts the show costumes and instruments away, and is out the door to go fishing, hunting or golfing. You know, if I don't stand right by the side door I won't get my goodbye kiss as he heads for the garage!"

"Next to flying, my favorite sport is deer hunting," Hank said. "Now I'm not the greatest, but I do okay. A lot of people ask me what do I shoot. Well, I'm very fair about it, you know. I won't shoot at anything that runs faster than 50 miles an hour!"

At their Sand Springs home, one of the highlights is a huge country kitchen with bare red brick walls. Shining copper pots of all sizes hang from the ceiling.

"Hank is at home in the kitchen as he is in the recording studio or cockpit or out hunting deer," laughed Ann. "One of our favorite ways of spending time together is to cook together. During the various hunting seasons Hank brings home duck and deer. I let him supervise the skinning and cleaning, but we work up the recipes together."

Ann, who also runs a dress shop and boutique in downtown Tulsa,

Mr. and Mrs. Hank Thompson

freely admits that Hank is the gourmet cook and wine expert in the family. Here's how he does it.

THOMPSON DUCK WITH LENTILS

1 duckling
1 pound sausages (Italian)
2 cups (quick cooking) lentils
1 1/2 cups red wine
1 clove garlic, chopped
2/3 cup parsley, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
4 tbs. butter (or oleo)
Buttered bread crumbs
Salt and pepper to taste

Place duck in racked pan to prevent it from cooking in the drippings. Set oven at 325° and cook for 1 1/2 hours, pricking duck skin at frequent intervals. While duck is roasting, cook lentils until tender, remembering to reserve liquid broth. Saute onion in butter until transparent. Cook the sausages in 2/3 cup of water for 10 minutes, then drain and slice. When duck is roasted, slice it into small serving pieces. Combine lentils, sauteed onion, parsley, and garlic. Mix sausages and duck so the meat is well-distributed. Place mixture in a buttered casserole, adding the red wine. Pour in broth from lentils. Cover and bake at 350° for 25 minutes. Then uncover, add a substantial layer of bread crumbs on top, and bake another 10 minutes. (Serves approximately 3—dish can be kept warm in oven for some time simply by adding more wine or broth if it tends to become dry.)

HANK'S SMOTHERED RABBIT WITH ONIONS

1 medium to large rabbit (skinned and cleaned)
3 medium onions
3 tbs. butter
1 cup sour cream
Seasoned flour

Cut rabbit into medium size pieces and dredge in seasoned flour. Saute rabbit in butter until browned and cover thickly with sliced, cooked onions. Pour sour cream over onions. Simmer for one hour with pot covered, or bake in a slow oven at 300° for an hour.

OKLAHOMA VENISON MEAT LOAF

3/4-1 lb. ground venison
1 lb. ground beef (lean)
1/4 lb. ground sausage
1 egg yolk
2 tbs. chopped parsley
1 tb. butter or oleo
1 tb. bread crumbs
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. onion juice

Combine ingredients into a loaf. Bake in lightly greased pan at 350° for one hour. While baking, baste with mixture of 1/4 cup butter and 1 cup vegetable stock (instead of stock you can take 1/2 package of dried soup mix and add 1 cup boiling water). Serve with hot buttermilk biscuits or garlic bread. Approximately 5 portions. ■

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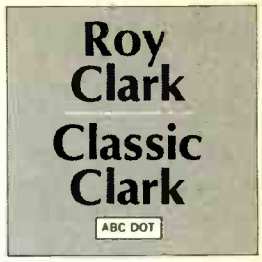

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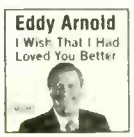

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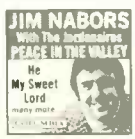

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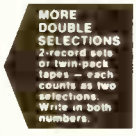

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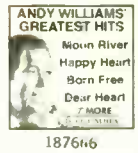

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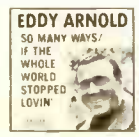

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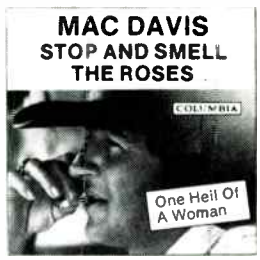

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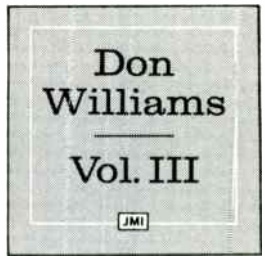

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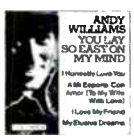

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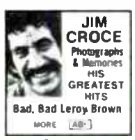

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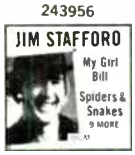

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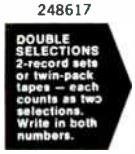

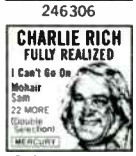

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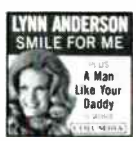

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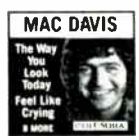

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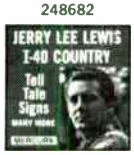

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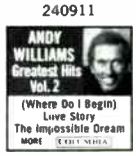

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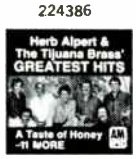

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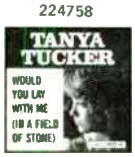

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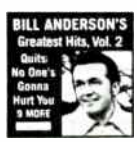

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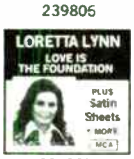

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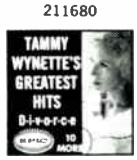

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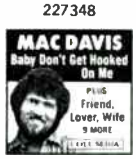

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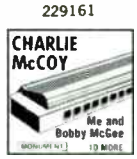

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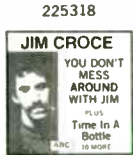

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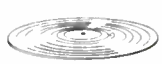

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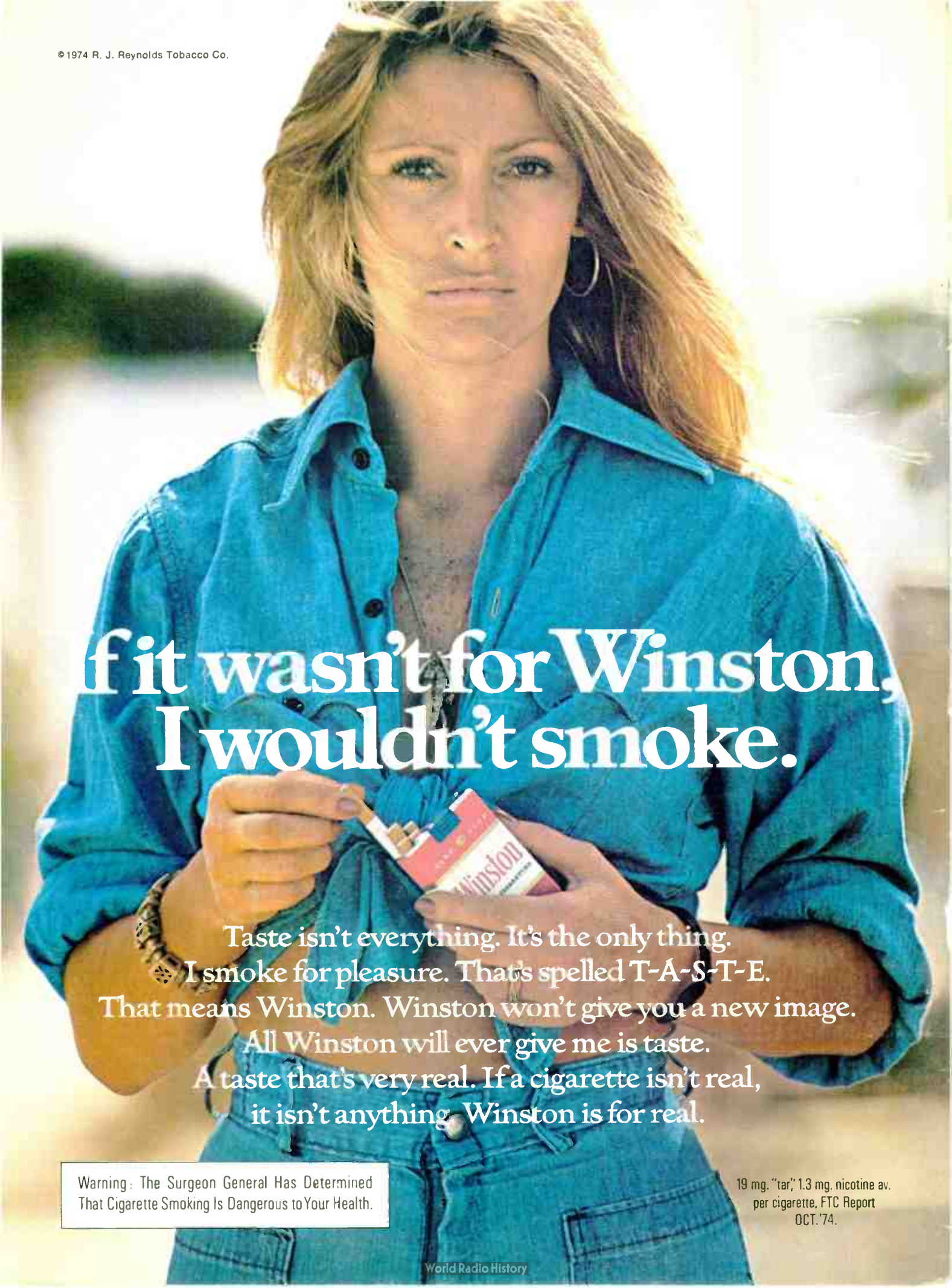

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