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# COUNTRY MUSIC



Cover: Leonard Kamstra

Volume Five, Number Four  
January, 1977

# 1

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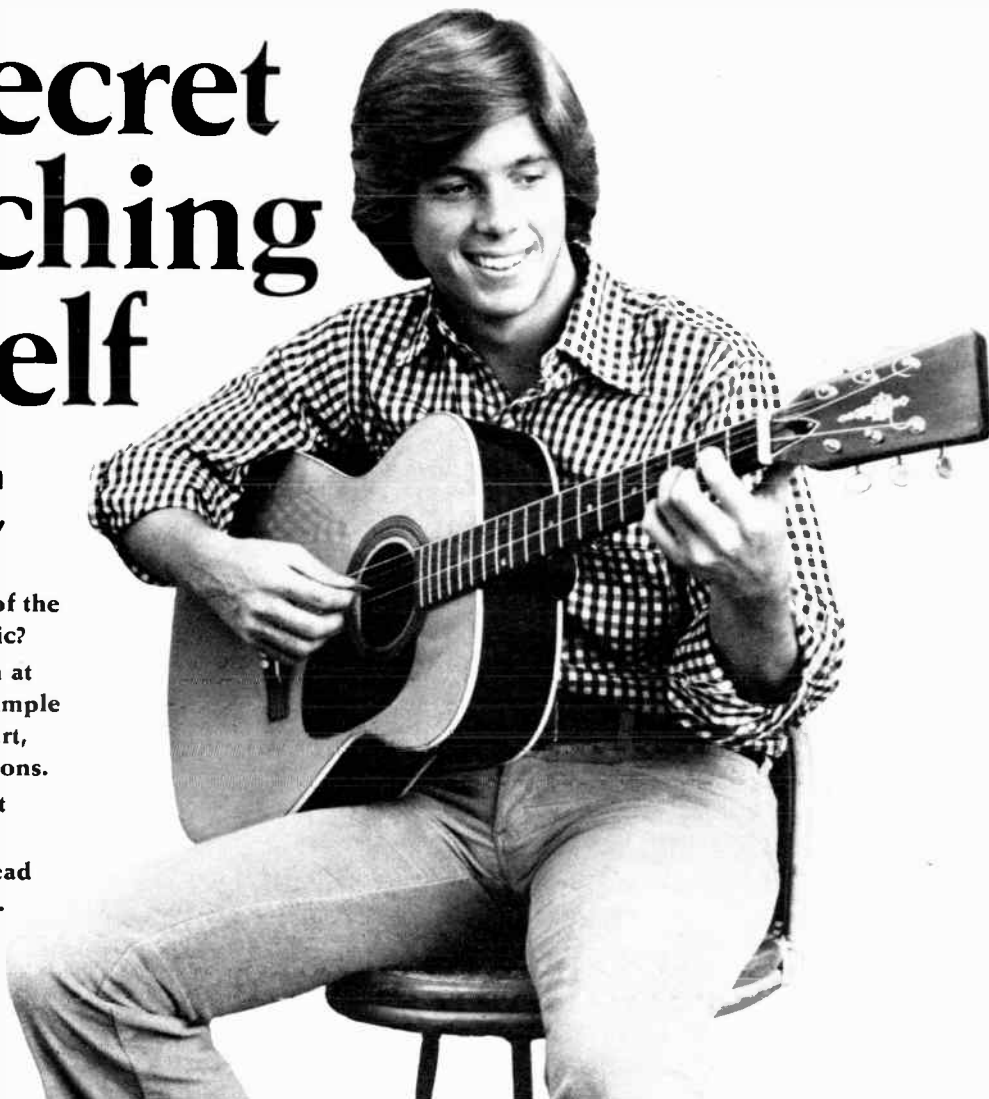
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small conventions. I am even considering making music my career."

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# Letters

... As long as my friends and I here at Florida State Prison have been reading your magazine, we have yet to find a letter from a prisoner. I was wondering, as all others have, if there is some kind of company policy at Country Music Magazine that prohibits you from putting letters in from prisoners. Surely many must have written you. If you could print this letter for me and several great lovers of country music, I would be in your debt forever. Prison is a lonely place and our music is the only company we really have. We have a country music fan club here also.

THOMAS HOPKINS  
FLORIDA STATE PRISON  
STARKE, FLA.

*We have no such policy, Tom. We do get letters from prisoners, but not many. We're happy to print yours, and apologize if we've unintentionally hurt anyone's feelings. Write any time. Ed.*

You have done it again. Another great cover and story on Tammy Wynette. I was in the frozen foods aisle and casually glanced over at the magazine rack. Heaven help those shoppers that stood between your magazine and me.

... I bought three copies.  
I.M. HEPLER  
CLINTON, IND.

*Only three? Ed.*

Many thanks for the great article (and photo) in Country Music's October, 1976, issue about an old favorite—Ernie Lee of WTVT, Tampa, Fla. I used to watch his show when I lived in St. Petersburg, and it's great to have him remembered and given long over-due recognition.

JINI LITTLE  
CONYERS, GA.

In your October issue you had a very nice article on Billy Joe Shaver, along with a couple of pictures. However, the pictures show Billy Joe missing fingers on his left hand and the article states the right hand.

MARY MEAD  
COLUMBIA, S.C.

*The right hand is correct. Guess how the picture got that way. Ed.*

It seems that in this day of scandal chasing, it is fashionable to write about only the sensational, gossip-column, slanderous, lurid aspects of celebrities whether it is true or not. What a pleasant,

refreshing surprise to find this scurrilous, irresponsible approach singularly absent in Country Music Magazine. The authors of the articles on the various stars obviously have genuine feelings of respect and admiration for the artists...

One article that particularly impressed me was the one on Glen Campbell in the August 76 issue. In it, the author mentions only in passing, and briefly, Glen's marital situation. He concentrates on Glen's music, his past as it relates to his current position in his profession. He takes a well-deserved swipe at "rumor-mongers" and Glen himself makes an appropriate remark or two. The article was informative, entertaining, and very well written. My feeling after reading it was: This guy (Arthur J. Maher) obviously really likes Glen Campbell and has written about him in a mature, responsible, pleasant manner. What a relief not to read about his marital problems in gory detail. After all, Glen Campbell is still one hell of a damn fine artist...

HARLAN O. JOBE  
NAPA, CALIF.

*Gosh. It was nothin'. Ed.*

... If not for your magazine, we would have gone on wondering what happened to Don Rich, Buck Owens' lead. It was in your magazine that we read of his accident.

Please keep right on with the good articles.

MR. AND MRS. JAMES M. SPRAGUE  
ROCKFORD, OHIO

... My husband and I attended the Ill. State Fair this year, getting our tickets way in advance for the Waylon Jennings and Jessi Colter show. We were sadly disappointed. Not one word was spoken to the crowd of thousands... They didn't even say hello to their audience. After all, it's the people who have bought their records that have put them where they are. They were the most unfriendly artists I have ever seen, and we've attended many country music shows. We heard many comments while leaving the stadium that were just like ours. They were even late arriving... and didn't even make an excuse to the people...

TWO DISAPPOINTED ILLINOIS FOLKS,  
HAVANA, ILL.

My wife and I have been devout Larry Gatlin fans ever since his first record got air play on our local radio station. For

this reason, we were thrilled to find an article about him in your October issue. We have all three of his albums and would strongly recommend them to anyone who enjoys good music. The article about Larry by Michael Bane was very good with the exception of one statement. Mr. Bane said: "Suffice to say that gospel music is not among Gatlin's strengths." We strongly disagree. Larry's albums contain three excellent gospel songs. One of them, *Help Me*, has been recorded by such heavies as Elvis Presley and Kris Kristofferson... Gatlin's *Light At The End of the Darkness* is one of the best gospel songs we've ever heard...

JOE & LINDA SORRELS  
ATKINS, ARK.

In your July issue, the All Star Hit Parade had a picture of Gene Autry saying he was the greatest singing cowboy star of all time. Tex Ritter, has been recorded by to be elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame while Gene Autry was the 16th member to be elected. It is my belief from my research that Tex Ritter's picture should have been in your July issue of The All Star Parade as "The Greatest Singing Cowboy Star of All Time."

JOHN MORROW  
POPLAR BLUFF, MO.

I enjoyed your article in October Country Music entitled "Hee Haw: The Show They Couldn't Kill." I am very pleased to hear Hee Haw is "Go" for '76. But are you sure that the picture (bottom center) is Maryanne? If that ain't Misty Roe, I'll eat my hat!

J.R. WARD  
CENTER JCT., IA.

*Goofed again. Guess you can't win them all. Ed.*

Just a short note to tell you I recently bought Floyd Cramer's latest tape, and the gal singing *I'm Thinking of my Blue Eyes* is really a great singer. I'm just sorry she sang such a little bit of the song. She has a great country voice, and I hope she comes out with her own records soon. Her name is Pat Daisy and I'm really looking forward to more of her kind of singing.

Thanks for a great magazine.

DARLENE LeGARDE  
BEMIDJI, MINN.

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ELIZABETH FORREST  
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*If anyone is interested, please contact Mrs. Forrest at the above address. Ed.*

I really enjoyed your article on the men behind the Nashville recordings: "The Hands That Made Nashville Great." How about doing an article on the men behind

the stars such as Mel Tillis's Statesiders, Charley Pride's Pridesmen, Bill Anderson's Po Boys, etc. Thanks for a great magazine.

ELMER C. KAPPELL  
LEBANON CT., KY.

*Good idea. We might just do that. Ed.*

Your five page spread on Emmylou Harris in the September Country Music Magazine was very interesting. My best wishes go to Miss Harris and to Dave Hickey. On page 26 you refer to Mack's, and the high whine of Hank Locklin on

the juke box. This tells me that Mack's has the good taste to have Hank's record on the juke box. If you are ever privileged again to hear that beautiful, clear, Irish tenor voice of "America's Most Beloved Folk Singer," I hope you will listen carefully, because you will never hear such a beautiful voice this side of Heaven. Do Angels whine?

IVEY B. BEARDSLEE  
PEMBROKE, GA.

*Mr. Hickey refers to Hank Locklin's high whine as a comfortable mix, along with the clink of coffee cups, the bells of the pinball machine and the rumble of good buddies speaking "CB." Ed.*

I am very pleased with your magazine. It was the first one to tell me about some of my favorites like Waylon Jennings and helped me find albums I would have missed otherwise. . .

GRACE SINGLETERRY  
DAVIS, OKLA.

I just received my November issue and was thrilled to see mischeivous smiling Marty Robbins looking at me from the front cover. I enjoyed every exciting word Marty said and the beautiful way Joan Dew put it on paper.

I enjoy every issue of Country Music Magazine and hope that it will remain just as it is.

Thank you for Marty's story.

KATHERINE HUBBARD  
HEREFORD, TEXAS

In regards to your article on the Willie Nelson Picnic, in my opinion when "Outlaws" get together, who goes? Certainly not the "Good-Guys." That picnic seemed to be plagued with death, rapes, stabbings and thefts.

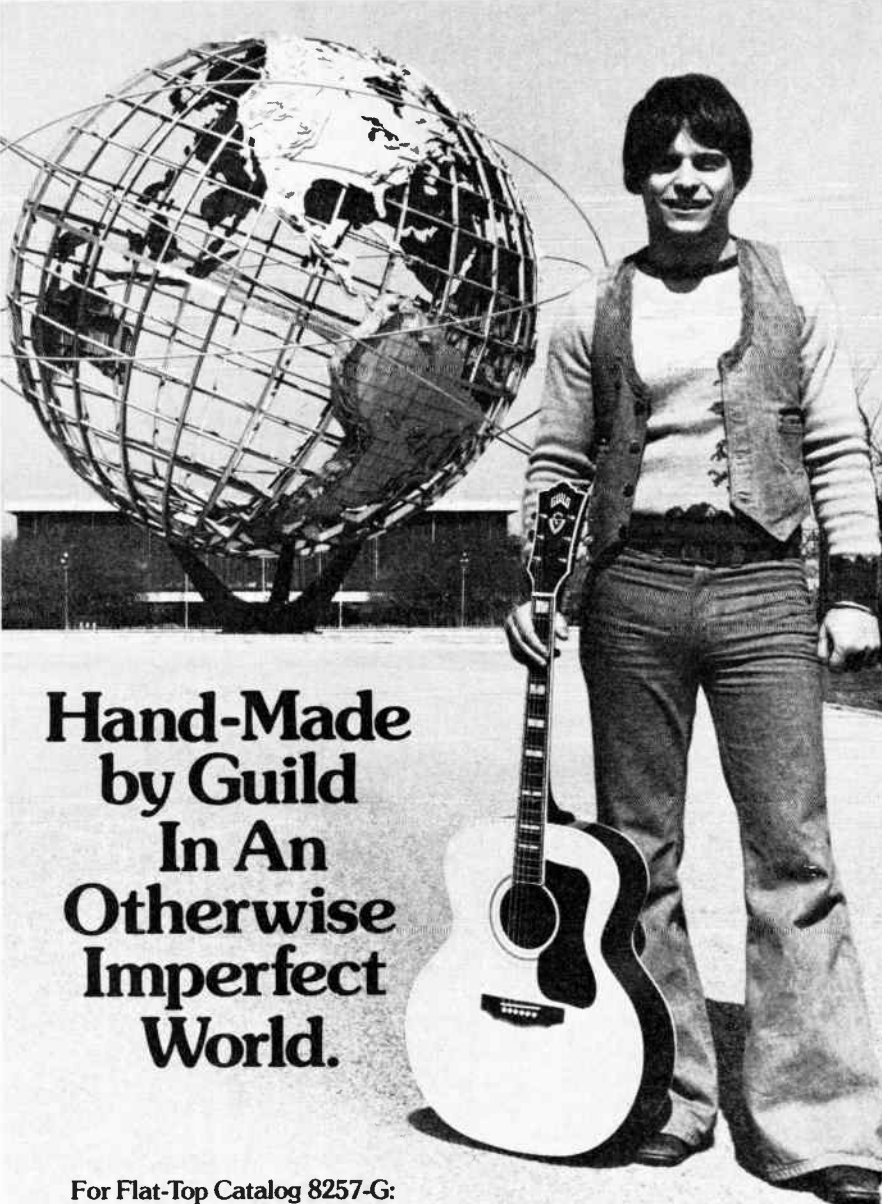
I attended the Statler Brother's Fourth of July Picnic and can report three days of enjoyable entertainment and during that three days only once did I see a policeman ask a fan to please throw away a can of beer.

Not only did I enjoy the performances of The Statler Brothers and the guest star, Tammy Wynette, I also enjoyed the friendship of the whole town of Staunton, Virginia.

Four cheers for the Statler Brothers and a tremendous Fourth of July Picnic.

DEE FORBES  
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.

Due to our great volume of mail, we regret we can't answer all letters individually. We welcome your opinions, and will publish the most representative letters in this column. Let us hear from you.—Ed



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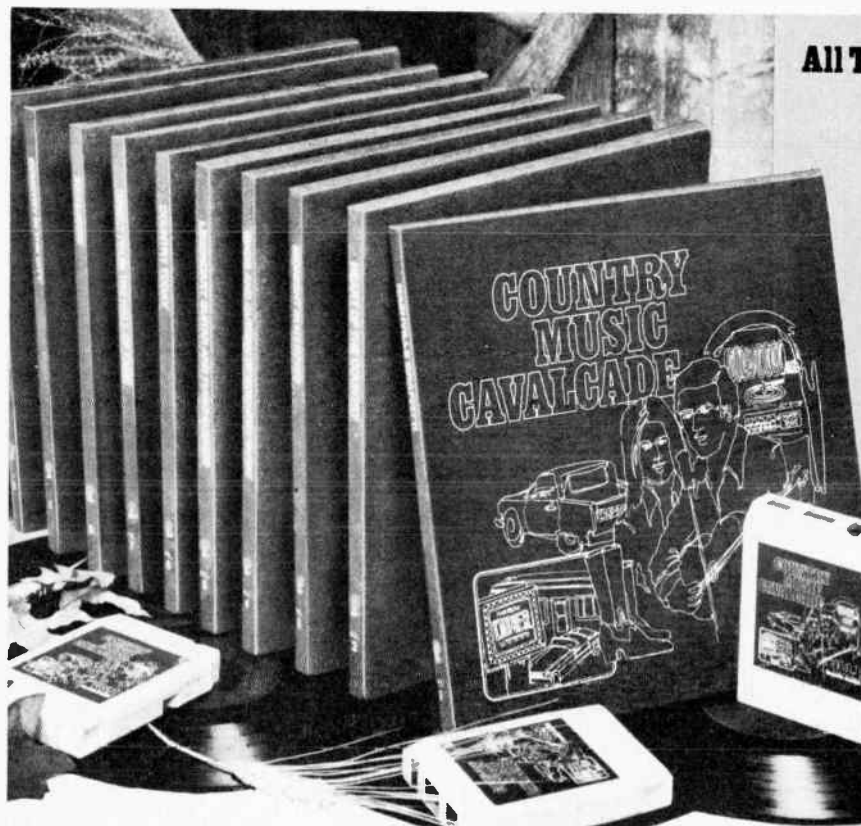
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# People on the Scene

## It's Official: Tammy's Marriage is Finished The Killer's Voice Is Back

by AUDREY WINTERS

When Tammy Wynette announced in early July she would marry Mike Tomlin, a Nashville real estate man, many people bet the marriage would last two months. Some gave it six. I don't know if anyone collected the bets, but the marriage lasted less than two. They married July 18 and separated August 31.

Tomlin was a bachelor and Tammy had been married three other times. They're not saying what went wrong. In their short marriage, the honeymoon was interrupted by Tammy going to the White House and then having a gall-bladder operation. So the couple shared precious little time together.

Tammy's asked for her name back and for Tomlin to pay for the divorce.

Record producer Shelby Singleton and wife, Sandy are expecting their first baby in March. Shelby has two sons by a previous marriage. Shelby produces artists such as Jeannie C. Riley, Webb Pierce, Jimmy C. Newman, LeRoy VanDyke and Hank Locklin.

Dottie West is shopping for a new record label. She was with RCA nearly 20 years and had several big songs such as *Here Comes My Baby* that won a Grammy Award.

Buck Trent's son, Charles, is living in Nashville attending Belmont College. The Trents moved to Tulsa to be near Buck, who is working with Roy Clark and the Jim Halsey Agency. Charles selected Belmont because it is the only college that offers a course in music business and management.

Loretta Lynn spent the afternoon on the set of *MacArthur* in Hollywood to see her favorite actor, Gregory Peck, working in the motion picture.

The guitar of Lefty Frizzell, who died a year ago, has been presented to the Country Music Hall of Fame. His widow, Alice, and his parents were on hand when the presentation was made. Willie Nelson just took one of Lefty's songs to the top of the country charts—*If You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time*.

During a Johnny Paycheck performance in a New York club, The Other End, he was joined on stage by harmonica wizard John Sebastian for a full set. Paycheck said he had admired John since his boy-



Webb Pierce

Photo: Edie Baskin

hood *Lovin' Spoonful* days.

Johnny Duncan has been named the Country/Western spokesman for Texas' Hemophilia Foundation.

*Willie, Waylon and Me* is expected to be one of David Allen Coe's biggest tunes. It was written by David's new bride, Debbie.

Little David was pleasantly surprised when his idol of rock-n-roll days showed up at the club where he was working and joined him on stage for a few songs—none other than "Killer" Jerry Lee Lewis.

Speaking of Jerry Lee, his sinus surgery has left him singing just the way he used to, only better. His latest record proves it—*Let's Put It Back Together Again*.

Mary Lou Turner, who travels with the Bill Anderson Show, tells about her little terrier dog's only puppy. It's half terrier and half great dane.

Martha Carson, famed singer of country gospel music, has opened a wig shop in Hendersonville, Tenn. Martha is best known for her version of *Satisfied*.

Jack Greene says he must be optimistic to buy a brand new silver eagle bus at the end of the summer fair season, when work

is lean. Jack's band, The Renegades, will do the custom interior work in barnwood and saddle tan leather. The rig sleeps seven people. While the guys are busy fixing up the bus, Jeannie Seely, the other half of the show, will be relaxing by her newly installed swimming pool at her farm in Hendersonville, Tenn. Jeannie said the heated pool is complete with a Jacuzzi whirlpool bath. The first thing on her agenda is taking swimming lessons.

Moe Bandy's wife took her 1962 graduating class of San Antonio's East Central High School to the Golden Stallion Club to catch her popular husband's show.

Kenny Starr bought a 65-acre farm near Nashville with a waterfall and a lake on it. The result from his hit record *Blind Man In The Bleachers?*

Wanda Jackson has been in town from her home in Oklahoma to record a country LP and a gospel LP for Word Records.

Congratulations to Jimmy C. Newman for 20 years with the Grand Ole Opry. Jimmy was honored—for his birthday, also—on stage with a cake. The audience sang "Happy Birthday," led by Haril Hensley, late night disc jockey with WSM, and Rufus Thibodeaux, Jimmy's life-time Cajun fiddler friend who came with him to the Opry 20 years ago.

Johnny Cash has received about every award you can think of. Now he's taken home another one. He was honored by the National Council of Judges for his work with prison inmates.

While Esquire Magazine was doing a feature story on the Oak Ridge Boys they ran into a little problem. When the boys went to dress for photos, it seemed someone had stolen their clothes. The alert police ran down the culprits pretty quickly, however.

Freddy Fender is selling more records than any other artists on the ABC/Dot label. No wonder he worked 28 out of 31 days in August.

Faron Young again worked the Texas Prison Rodeo in Huntsville, Tex. last fall. The Rodeo is world famous and is unique in that the prisoners themselves are the contestants.

Dottie West will be subject of an upcoming Grit Magazine story. She also

(Continued on page 62)

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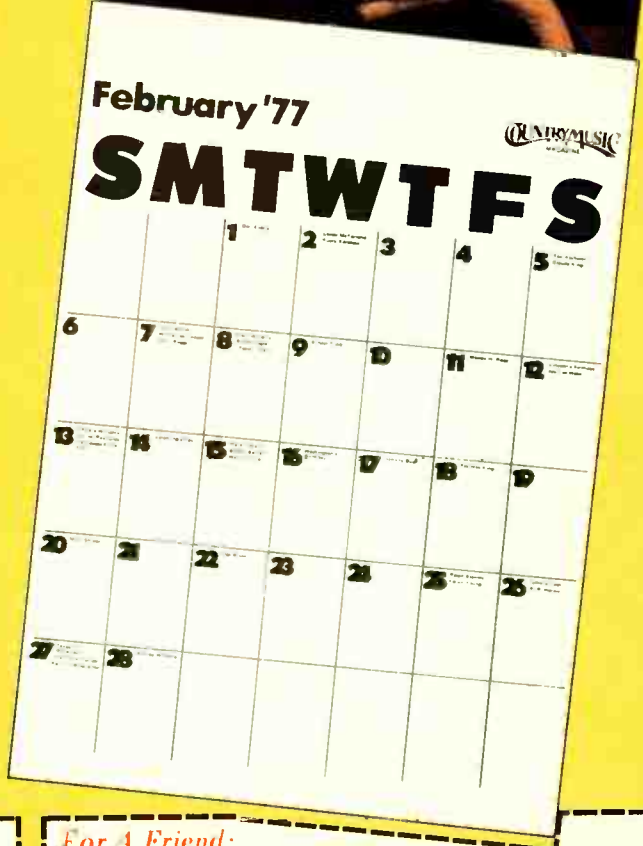
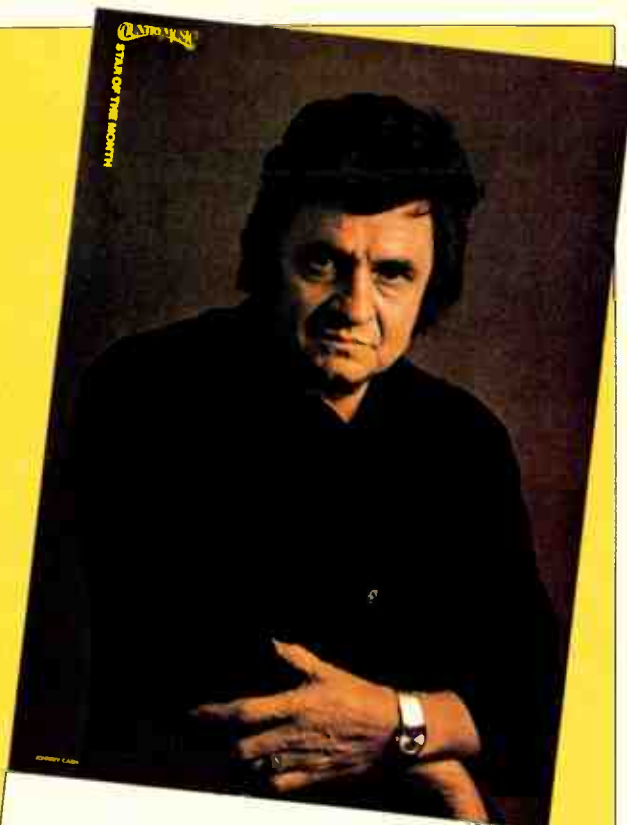
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# Hillbilly Central

## Monkey Attacks Rabbitt Is Nashville Praying For Snow?

by HAZEL SMITH



Photo: Alan Whitman

Tammy Wynette

None other than the beautiful Mrs. Hank Williams, Jr. called to say, "Hazel, I am fed up with Hank telling people that we are divorced, for it just isn't true. I don't know why," she went on. "If it were up to me, the divorce would have been final months ago. But it isn't. And I read in magazines and newspapers that Hank says we are divorced. I want to set the record straight. We are not divorced!" she declared.

Now that Tammy Wynette's marriage has done did it's do, latest I hear is that Tammy wants it annulled. Also heard that Tammy entertained ex-hubby George Jones last week at her Franklin Road mansion. And a buddy of mine who picks with a local star told me that he saw the former Mr. and Mrs. George Jones together in a truck stop up nawth (that means "north," Yankees) over the weekend. Nothing would please this writer any more than to see these two super talents sharing room and board once again.

Bobby Bare's new single, *Drop Kick Me Jesus*, written by Paul Craft, has stirred up quite a bit of controversy for no good reason that I can see. Some radio stations refused to program the single, which prompted WKDA in Nashville to do a survey allowing listeners to voice their opinions on song in question. Being the mouth of the South, I had to speak my peace/piece on said issue, and naturally Mike Hanes put the Country Music writer/songwriter/PR lady on the air. As I

was explaining my convictions and beliefs, and declaring the legitimacy of said song and Paul Craft as an excellent poet, in my princely manner, into my office comes a smiling Mr. Craft, who was driving into town and heard me on the radio. Small world, ain't it? But big enough and smart enough to know a hit song from a flop, I am hoping.

The good word for the week is *Daddy's Little Girl* by Ray Sawyer. Now there's something mighty close to my heart since I wrote the song, and it is out on Capitol Records. Since I write this column so far in advance I just can't foresee where the record will be by the time you read this, but if my prayers are channelled in the right direction, I hope by now that the household word of all my wonderful readers is *Daddy's Little Girl*. Course, ya'll know all residuals made from the record will be for the benefit of a poor old widow woman and her two orphan younguns . . . me and my kids, Billy and Terry Smith!

Here 'n There: Cowboy Jack Clement producing Stoney Edwards. Cowboy Jack also signs contract with Elektra Records with an around-the-world concert deal in the wheelings and dealings so I understand. Outlaw Tompall signs major recording contract with ABC Records. Chip Taylor has a new Columbia LP. Delbert McClinton plays at Nashville's Ole Time Pickin' Parlor that seems to be the new hangout these days.

The Reverend Jimmie Rodgers Snow

(son of Hank) has a church located on Dickerson Road here in Nashville with a marquee in front that formerly read "Open On Sundays." This cracked me up for about a month, but when they changed it to "Pray For Snow," I almost ran off the road. Clever? You bet it is.

Eddie Rabbitt ain't got no monkey on his back, but he had one on his arm that bit him! Yep, Eddie has a pet monkey. Took him to the vet for a shot, and the monkey took a bite of the Rabbitt! Results: the monkey is fine but the Rabbitt had four stitches in his arm.

J.J. Cale is on the road after laying 'round and staying 'round Nashville and thereabouts for over a year.

The new CBS promotional offices located in the beautiful 4 Star Building on Music Row had a bash with food and drinks supreme. The NYC head haunchos like Bruce Lundvall and Jack Craigo showed up, along with locals Mary Ann McCready, Jim Kemp, Laura Lonctaux, plus brand new CBS artist, Harlan Sanders. Also, I spotted producer Ron Bledsoe, Warner Brothers head man and famed songwriter Norro Wilson, Charly McClain, famed producer/songwriter Billy Sherrill, David Houston, David Wills, Doc & Robert, Sterling Whipple, Darrell McCall, Patti Leatherwood, Steve Davis, and the great Billy Swan. You should have seen the CBS table centerpiece made of ice!

Heard that Mickey Gilley was doing a gig at the Illinois Opry when a drunk jumped upon the stage and demanded that Mickey do his own songs instead of his cousin, Jerry Lee Lewis' material. If there was more to the story, I didn't get it.

Saw Jerry Wallace over at the Hall of Fame Restaurant. His hair is as silver as that of the silver fox, Charlie Rich.

Dave & Sugar, the hottest new vocal group to hit this town in many a moon, have seen a year of everything nice because of 'sugar 'n spice' (themselves, the girls are sugar and the guy is spice). The Shel Silverstein song, *Queen of the Silver Dollar* done good for them and their second RCA single, *The Door Is Always Open*, penned by my friends, Bob McDill and Diekie Lec, shot all the way up to number one. Traveling with the Charley

(Continued on page 61)

# The Texas Scene

## Hank Snow Is Going After A New Sound The Armadillo Is Changing Hands

by NELSON ALLEN

The big news, of course, is that Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson swept most of the subsidiary CMA Awards this year—for the Single of the Year, Vocal Duo and (with Tompall Glaser and Jessi Colter), Album of the Year. It's worth noting, however, that neither Waylon nor Willie made it to the top this year—perhaps because of a split vote? Whatever, Willie did his share of loping to the stage, the longest hair he's ever had bouncing out from under an unusually smart headband, to announce that "on behalf of me and ol Waylon" he was grateful. Mr. Jennings, however, was conspicuous by his absence (for "personal reasons," it was said). Willie kicked off the show with an effortlessly perfect "If You've Got The Money, Honey, I've Got The Time," and was obviously the star of the show. Wonder if that will increase this year's crop of beards.

Hank Snow has already said he's gonna try it Willie's way and go after a new sound. Well, Hank, Willie didn't really change his sound—just kept it honest. What Willie, Waylon and others have done is no gimmick. No one needs to grow a beard or change a sound just make good music, as Hank, for one, has certainly done in the past. I'd be willing to bet that Willie and Waylon would be the first to tell you that. It was reported here that Willie and Waylon were going to put a recording studio west of Austin but for various reasons that deal has fallen through. Instead, Willie is considering the purchase of a San Antonio radio station and construction work is near completion on his new Austin club, Whiskey River.

Word is that founders Eddie Wilson and Mike Tolleson may be leaving the Armadillo World Headquarters. Their apparent seems to be Bobby Hedderman. A live album by Bill Monroe is slated to be cut there soon, with possible guest appearances by Emmylou Harris and Jerry Garcia.

Meanwhile, across the Mississippi River from New Orleans, in Gretna, La., (where the C&W clubs have always been) something called the Armadillo East has sprung up, complete with Texas flags and imported Texas beer. The place is doing great business. Jerry Jeff Walker just cut a live album in tiny Luchenbach, the town owned and operated by professional Texan, Hondo Crouch. Jackie Jack (Jer' Jeff's nick

name) and boys are hoping to repeat the success of *Viva Terlingua*, the first album they cut there a couple of years ago, and one of Jerry Jeff's most popular. Walker has just recently been released from a Corpus Christi hospital where he underwent surgery for the removal of cartilage deposits from his nose. It seems that Jerry Jeff's nose has been broken a number of times over the years. Station KOKE's Kandy Kicker and famed Austin cook, The Guacamole Queen, are making plans to enter the ladies' chili cook-off held in



Jerry Jeff Walker

Photo: Mike Fluit

Luchenbach. The top three finalists from Luchenbach are the only women allowed to enter the world chili championships held in Terlingua.

Alex Harvey's new song *Lonesome Cup of Coffee* credits the lyrics to U.T. football coach, Darrell Royal. And from the looks of this season's beginnings it's good to know that Darrell's got another career handy. Just kidding. Darrell Royal and the Texas Longhorns are number 1 in my book and in my column.

A cousin who lives in Mississippi re-

ports that Wynette Pugh was a star, of sorts, long before she became Tammy Wynette. Little Wynette was a high school basketball star and Boonville, Miss. could not be beaten, back when she was a hoop-er. George Jones, however, who grew up in Beaumont, Tex., never played nothing but guitar.

One of my favorite clubs is the Castaways, overlooking Galveston Bay in San Leon. Owner Jerry Robinson, better known as Rotten Red, plays piano and sings old Elvis tunes. It's a great place to drink and watch the Gulf of Mexico. Rotten Red reports that Bucky Meadows, who played guitar and piano on Willie's *Red Headed Stranger* album and who is originally from nearby Cleveland, is performing with him down there now. But I recently caught Leon Rausch and his Cowtowners at Austin's Broken Spoke and Bucky Meadows, along with Pop Nelson, sat in for a spell. Leon told me that he's "been knowing Bucky for 20 years. He's always been a great musician and he's always been squirrely."

The great Tompall, who never spends enough time in Texas, signed a new contract with ABC and has dropped out of the Outlaw tour. He'll be replaced by Steve Young or Rusty Wier. Rusty debuted his new Columbia album *Black Hat Saloon* at Austin's newest hang-out, the Bull Creek Inn, managed by old Austin hand Tim O'Connor. Doug Sahm became disc jockey for a night one Sunday. He debuted on KOKE-FM as Cowboy X.

Townes Van Zandt broke the index finger on his left hand. People were saying he fell off his horse, but the truth is he hit it with a hammer—the finger, not the horse. Anyway, it's healed enough now so Townes can pick guitar.

George Fowler, a photographer and manager of the Filling Station in Austin, also happens to be the husband of Lana Nelson. Having recently moved to town, where everyone is familiar with the Nelson family, he's overheard so many "George Who's" that he's decided to have some T-shirts made up with either the initials W.N.S.L. for Willie Nelson's Son in Law or W.N.D.H., meaning Willie Nelson's Daughter's Husband. Incidentally, George and Lana are expecting. Lana says it'll happen March 6th.

Les Blank hosted an advance showing

(Continued on page 63)



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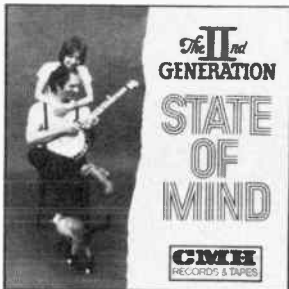
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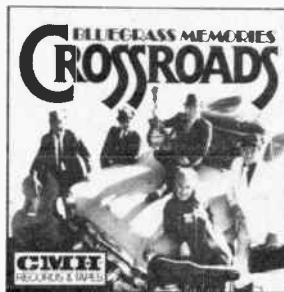
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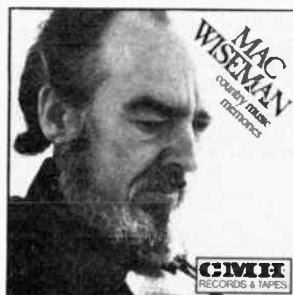
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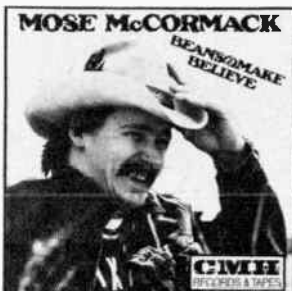
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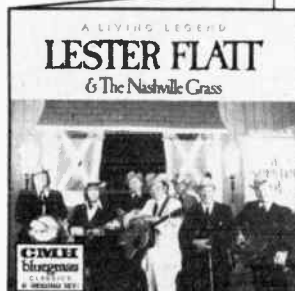
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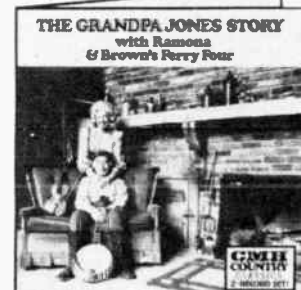
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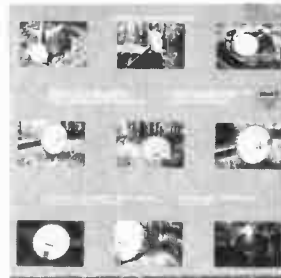
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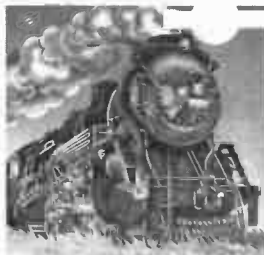
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# Country News

## Outlaws & Others Star In Awards Week: The CMA/BMI/SESAC/ASCAP etc. Results



Photos: Arthur J. Maher

Dolly Parton: CMA Female Vocalist of the Year.



Mel Tillis: Ent-t-ertainer of the Year.



Willie: "On behalf of me an' ole Waylon..."

Despite the noticeable absence of resident outlaw Waylon Jennings, the Country Music Association had more than enough kind words for the music he (along with Texas guru Willie Nelson) represented. This year's nationally televised CMA Awards saw Nelson and Jennings emerge as the major winners, an event that would have been impossible a few short years ago.

The event also introduced a new phrase into the already colorful Nashville slang—"Me and Ole Waylon." That was the particular terminology Willie Nelson used to say thanks for he and Jennings being named Country Duo of the Year and their co-written song—*Good-Hearted Woman*—named Song of the Year.

When *Wanted: The Outlaws* LP received Album of the Year honors, Willie

flashed his familiar smile and for the third time said "Me and Ole Waylon...", adding thanks from Jessi Colter and Tompall for the most popular album of the year as voted by members of the association.

He also set off a series of speculations as to why Jennings—a nominee for Entertainer of the Year and a scheduled performer on the show—pulled a no-show.



Minnie Pearl inducts Kitty Wells into the Hall of Fame.



Hank Snow and Emmylou Harris present: Milsap is Male Vocalist



The Statler Brothers, Vocal Group: "On behalf of us an' ole Waylon..."



June ribs Johnny, who won nothing, and "Pig" Robbins accepts cheers.

The official reasons cited were "personal and private," but others saw Jennings's non-performance as another volley in his continuing feud with the CMA.

As the TV cameras rolled, many people thought either Nelson or Jennings would sweep the awards, as Roger Miller, Merle Haggard and Johnny Cash had done in the past. But in something of a surprise Mel Tillis was named Entertainer of the Year and Ronnie Milsap named Male Vocalist of the Year.

The 90-minute show, hosted by Roy Clark and Johnny Cash, saw the Statler Brothers claim Vocal Group of the Year for the fifth time (appropriately perhaps thanking "Ole Waylon") and Dolly Parton named Female Vocalist for the second time around. Roy Clark and Buck Trent were named Instrumental Group of the Year, and songwriter Larry Weiss took home the Country Song of the Year award for *Rhinestone Cowboy*.

Besides Nelson, the highlight of the evening was Hargus "Pig" Robbins, a blind session pianist named Instrumentalist of the Year, who was escorted to the stage by fellow nominees Johnny Gimble, Chet Atkins, Roy Clark and Charlie McCoy.

Another shining moment was Minnie Pearl announcing that Kitty Wells, the original Queen of Country Music, was elected into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Each year two members are elected into the Hall of Fame—one living and one deceased. Paul Cohen was named the posthumous member.

Produced for Sullivan Productions by Bob Brecht, son-in-law of the late Ed Sullivan, the live telecast claimed a whopping 41 percent of the viewing audience according to the Nielson Report, despite heavy competition from the first television showing of *Jesus Christ, Superstar* on another network.

The CMA awards were only the beginning of a week of awards programs. The BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.) Awards later in the week saw Phil Everly win the coveted Robert Burton Award at the 24th Broadcast Music Award black tie banquet for his *When Will I Be Loved*, the country song most performed during the past year. Acuff-Rose Publishing, which published the award-winning song, shared the award. The gala event, attended by more than 700 people, saw 93 writers and 74 publishers receive citations of achievement during ceremonies hosted by Francis Preston, VP of Nashville's BMI office.

Tree Publishing received more awards than any other publishing company, with six to its credit. Merle Haggard was the winner among writers with four awards.

(Continued on page 60)

## Harlan Howard Burned Out: Birthday Party Ends In Disaster

Harlan Howard had his first birthday party in his entire life at his hilltop home in the exclusive Belle Meade section of Nashville. Guests assembled at the foot of the long hill, well hidden by the late summer foliage, arriving as a group giving the songwriter the surprise of his life.

The writer of such standards as *The Chokin' Kind*, *Busted*, *I Fall to Pieces*, *Heartaches By the Number*, *Too Many Rivers*, and *Pick Me Up On Your Way Down* was flustered. "As a kid, I never had a birthday party," he said. "I lived in foster homes, and each year I'd be in a different home, never spending two birthdays in the same place. Same way with Christmas. Birthdays and Christmas never meant anything to me. But hey, man, this is great!"

The party ended around midnight on September 8. Around midnight on September 9 a house guest heard glass crashing, ran from the upstairs bedroom to the

stairs, but was stopped by smoke.

Rousing Harlan and the other occupants, they realized their only means of escape was by the sun deck, since the entire downstairs area was engulfed by flames. Jumping 14 feet to safety, no one was injured, but the lovely home on the hilltop was completely destroyed by fire, as was Harlan's 1976 Cadillac parked nearby.

The entire house had just been redecorated. Harlan had a Civil War room done in barn wood with guns, and replica's of that era framed on the walls. His many BMI and Grammy awards for songwriting graced other parts of the house beside irreplaceable photographs of people like the late Tex Ritter with a precious autograph. Mementoes by the hundreds, perhaps thousands. . . . He owned eight guitars, one a Martin that stayed in the Civil War room for this was the age of the instrument.

HAZEL SMITH

## Merle Travis Alive And Kicking: The Bossman Plays New York

A living legend played New York recently as part of a concert staged by Metropolitan Friends of Country, Inc., a non-profit group dedicated to spreading the good word on country music in and around the Big Apple. The legend was Merle Travis, and he lived up to his reputation, drawing one of the largest crowds ever to attend an outdoor concert at world-famous Lincoln Center. Freddie Hart was also on the program. But it was Merle that the crowd had come for.

Contrary to rumors you might have heard, Merle is in good health and maintaining a busy schedule of appearances all over the nation. And he was in fine form for New York. Accompanying himself with his distinctive finger-style picking, he ran through such vocal favorites as *San Antonio Rose*, *Oklahoma Hills* and *Sweet Temptation*. He also did songs he wrote which have been tremendous hits for other stars—*Sixteen Tons* (Tennessee Ernie Ford) and *Smoke, Smoke, Smoke* (Phil Harris and Tex Williams). He also sang *Nine-Pound Hammer*, which he wrote and which has become a folk-singer's standard. As enthusiasm built among the crowd, Merle went into a string of such fine instrumentals as



The mighty Merle in Big Apple action.

*Freight Train*, *Cannonball Rag* and *For Me And My Gal*. The response was a standing ovation and cries of, "More! More!" Sad to say, Merle could give only one encore—*Double Eagle*—for Freddie Hart was still to be heard. But when Merle was finished, there was no doubt that New York was very much his town.

ARTHUR J. MAHER

## Nelson Dominated: Teed Off About Big Contest

The twenty years that Willie Nelson struggled trying to make a living in the music business is no longer news or news worthy. Nor is it an "item" that Willie is one of the hottest singers in country music



Photo: John Lee

Willie Nelson: beaten down

today. Being the good ole boy that he is, whether hungry or a household word, Willie always thought the music biz was too important to be taken seriously.

Dominoes . . . now that's another thing. Dominoes, Willie takes seriously. So he entered the domino tournament at Luchenbach, Texas, with the idea of winning. I mean, it was more important than the Grammy he won for *Blue Eyes Crying In the Rain* that he didn't go to accept.

Willie was all set to win the game, and did well . . . real well . . . and would-a won . . . there was some old Texas codger, red faced with a neck to match . . . a-chewing that twist tobacco and rolling his own cigarettes with Prince Albert tobacco who ain't never cared nothing 'bout nothing but dominoes . . . and he went to win too.

Apparently this was a day of dominoes and country stars nor country stardom did not count. For Willie Nelson came in second to the old man, was not happy, did not have a good time, and I understand is still highly teed off about the outcome.

I've tried to think of words of consolation, but every time I think of Willie swearing because he didn't win the game of dominoes, I laugh my fool head off . . . Sorry.

HAZEL SMITH

# Watch This Face: Mel McDaniel

In these times of upheaval in country music, with terms like progressive country, middle-of-the-road country and hardcore country being bandied about, many artists hesitate to tack a label on their own music.

Not Mel McDaniel.

"I'm just country," he drawls in his deep voice, his face crinkling into a sort of grin, then quickly relaxing into his normal intent expression.

If McDaniel's rugged, long-haired looks . . . if his song *Roll Your Own* recorded by Hoyt Axton and Commander Cody . . . if his facing an early morning interview with beer in hand . . . if all this tends to put him into the "progressive" category, then his two releases, *Have A Dream On Me* and *Thank God She Isn't Mine*, bring him back to the "just country" way of things.

"It took me a long time to finally get to Nashville," recalls McDaniel, 34.

And when he first arrived in 1969, it didn't take him too long—two years of pumping gas and having his brother send him \$20 a week for groceries—before he left, taking his wife Mary and daughter Danielle up to his brother's in Anchorage where, within two days, he found a singing job.

"I think I only knew about five songs," he laughs. McDaniel played Alaska clubs for another two years, then returned to Nashville, working for nine months as a single singer at the Holiday Inn. Once again, however, he returned to Anchorage for a short time, before returning to Nashville.



Mel McDaniel

There he met Don Devaney, a songwriter for Combine Music Corp., asked if Combine needed any demo singers, played a tape for Combine vice president Johnny MacRae and "has been with Combine ever since." He has also signed a recording contract with Capitol Records.

His first release, *Have a Dream On Me*, reached 40 on Billboard's chart. *Thank God She Isn't Mine* was selected by Billboard as "Record to Watch," and by Record World as "Pick Of The Week."

McDaniel's Anchorage-to-Nashville-and-back-again trips seem to be a thing of the past, and he's making plans for the future.

"If *Thank God She Isn't Mine* does pretty good, the next step will be an

album," says McDaniel. "We've got a lot of songs that are ready or we're going to get ready."

"I've been doing some promotion shows for Capitol, and I'm hoping this *Thank God She Isn't Mine* will merit enough so I can get me a group together. I know I can do it now."

He and Bob Morrison (who wrote *Have a Dream on Me* and co-wrote *Thank God . . .* with MacRae) just wrote another song for McDaniel, *The Grandest Lady of Them All*.

"It's really hard for me to write a song," confesses McDaniel. "I really have to stew over it for a long time."

One thing McDaniel doesn't have to stew about is his singing or his ability to please an audience. At Combine's reunion show at Nashville's Exit/In recently, he shared the stage with established performers such as Mickey Newbury, Billy Swan and Larry Gatlin.

Despite his breaking a guitar string right off and enduring a frustrating first few minutes, the crowd loved him. They cheered as his face crinkled into that on-off smile. They roared as he broke into his "just country" songs. And they grabbed him as he stepped off-stage, offering congratulations and just saying "Hi."

In these times of upheaval for country music, it doesn't really matter what label we tack on a performer, just so long as he's good.

And Mel McDaniel is definitely that—"just good."

MARY ELLEN MOORE

## Watch This Space: Don't Be Ripped Off

Now that you've bought a guitar, and are thinking of a move to Nashville to become a great country star, there are a couple of things Johnny DeGeorge would like you to know before you plop down the money from the farm for a custom recording session.

DeGeorge is the head of Nashville's local of the American Federation of Musicians, and he's increasingly concerned with the proliferation of rip-off record companies operating in Nashville and other cities.

These are the folks who send salesmen out to your town to sell you a record session on their label. While they're too

smart to promise to make you a star, the implication is clearly there. If you're foolish enough to bite, these clever con-men will reel you into a studio and record you—at your own expense. Then they'll present you with a box of records.

No matter how talented you are, though, you've probably reached the end of the road with Rip-Off Records. Unless, of course, you'd like to donate more money for a follow-up session.

There are legitimate companies who may be willing to record you, but it's extremely rare for any successful record company to ask you to put up the money. There are also skilled independent pro-

ducers who will cut a session for you—at your expense—and try to lease it to a major label.

So how do you tell the phonies from the good guys? A few questions might help, DeGeorge suggests. Such as, does the company have any records currently in the national charts in the trade magazines (*Billboard*, *Record World*, *Cashbox*)? Can you walk into a record store in Buffalo, Elkhart, Tampa, Nogales or Fresno and buy their records? Are they played on radio stations in those cities or any group of cities you might care to name as a national sample? Can you read about their artists in any non-local publications?

If you get positive answers to these questions, you're probably in safe hands. If not, bail out.

VALERIE RIDENOUR

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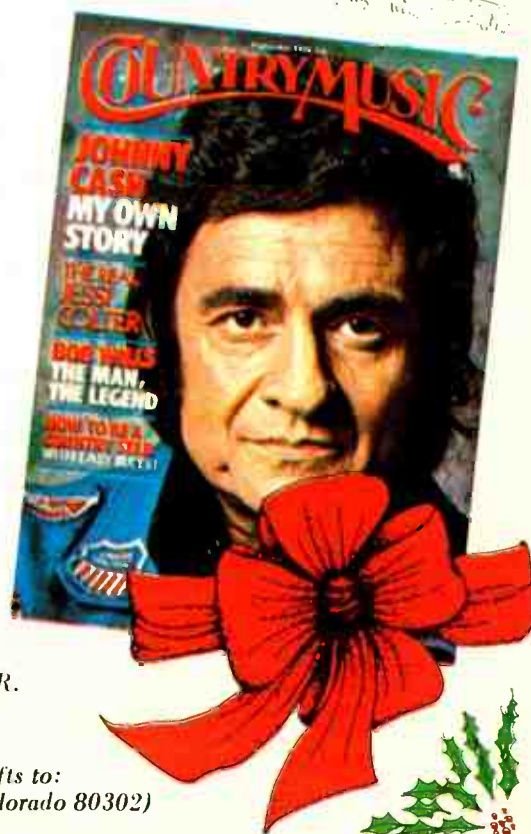
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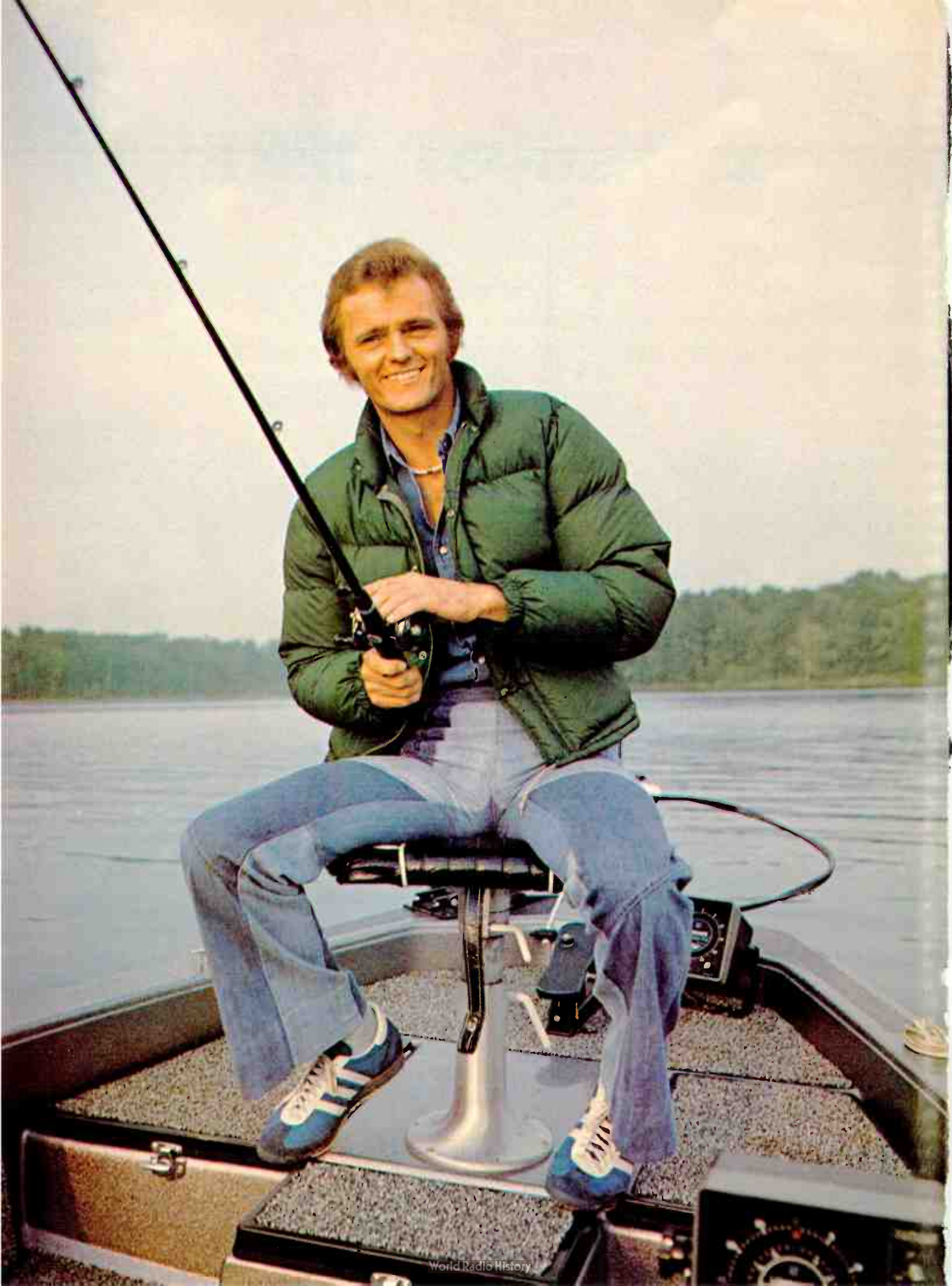
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Working with Burt Reynolds  
in *Gator*, he proved that a  
160-pound, clean-cut picker  
can come on as mean as anybody.

## Hollywood's Unlikely Tough Guy

# JERRY REED

by LOLA SCOBEY

The windshield wipers beat a sloshy rhythm behind my date's steady crunching on popcorn. At the Colonial Twin Drive-In, in Hendersonville, Tenn., home of country stars, our VW bug was beached on a steadily shrinking island of gravel. Inside, the air was several dismal humidity points swampier than the sunny Everglades on the screen. Suddenly, bursting across the screen, flew everybody's favorite Cosmo centerfold, Burt Reynolds—alias daredevil moonshiner Gator McCluskey—leading Justice Department officials on a merry chase with a 137-foot world-record speed-boat jump.

Despite Burt's body beautiful and tantalizing toupee, it was not his name in plastic letters out on the marquee that had lured me out into the dank, drippy night. It was the prospect of seeing one of country music's funkier males, good ole imp-faced, curly-headed Jerry Reed commit cinematic murder and mayhem in *Gator*. And sure enough, right there in the damp plastic interior of our bug, I watched Reed, nattily attired in white shoes and white belt as corrupt political baddie Bama McCall. He punched out guys he would later rub out, sent his goons out to dynamite a go-go joint, cremated an already mangled justice department investigator, and most mind sizzling of all, blasted a jingling jukebox to smithereens

with a sawed off shotgun.

At one point Reed oozed on screen as owner and exploiter of a brothel of teenage whores. He was buttoning up his shirt after bedding down a groggy, pill-up 15-year-old blonde, and offering Gator McCluskey his sleezy, hard-nosed philosophy of life.

*Gator*, a sort of follow-up to UA's outrageously successful *White Lightning*, which introduced the character Gator McCluskey, is the kind of thinly scripted, south of the Mason-Dixon line chase and violence flick that goes down in corporate financial reports rather than film history.

Nasty, no-good Bama is quite a slide up the acting scale from Reed's debut role in *W.W. and the Dixie Dancekings*. That was a sort of bubblegum cinema verite part for Reed in which he played a country singer and leader of a country dance band. In other words, Jerry Reed as Jerry Reed.

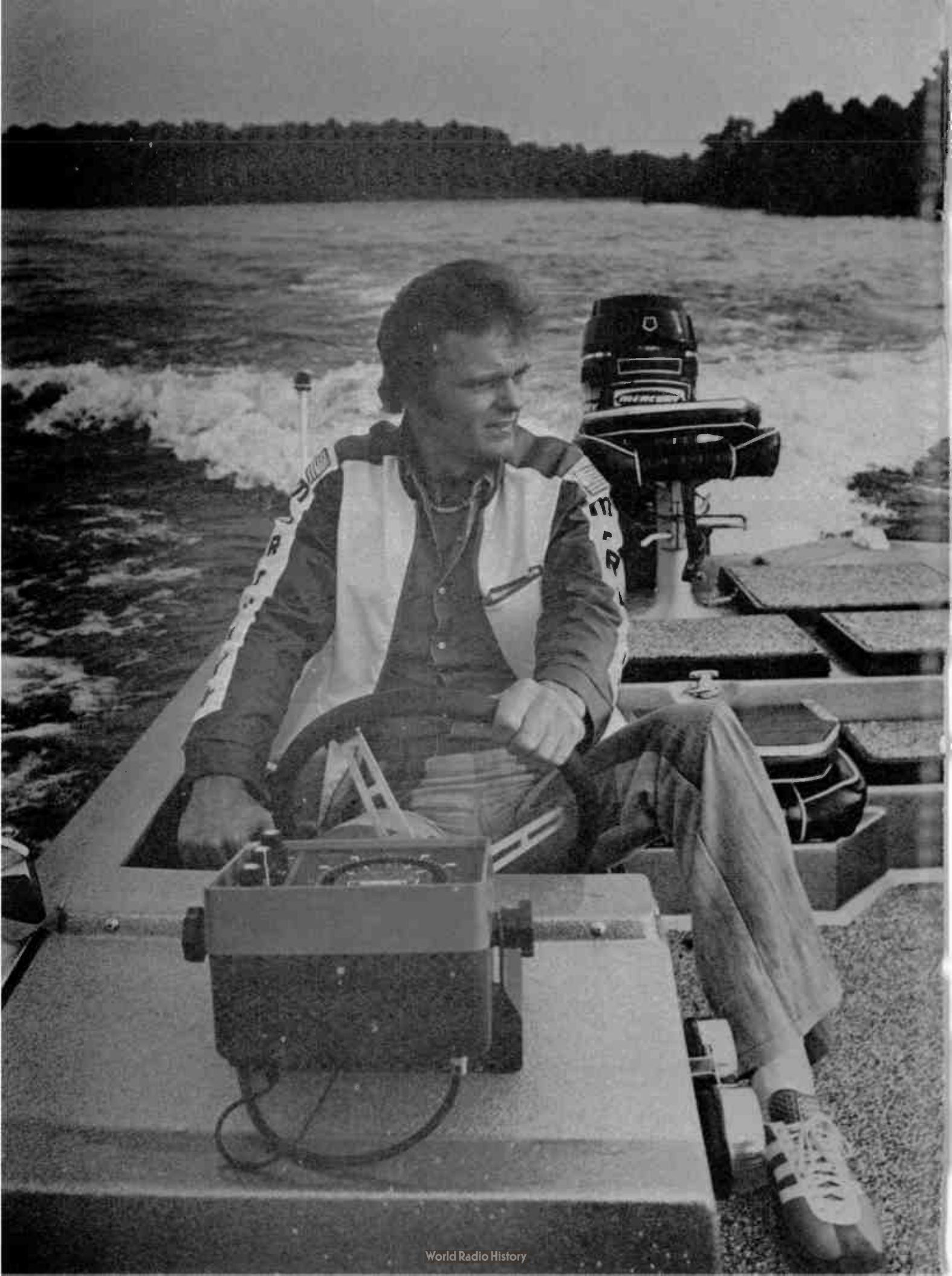
But Jerry Reed as Bama McCall is an improbable piece of casting. The good ole, funky, irrepressible, shrewd, crinkly-eyed, curly-headed country boy with a Pepsodent smile somehow seems out of character strongarming a whole town and running the mayor, the chief of police, local prostitution, gambling, and dope.

Several days after seeing the movie, I

was in Reed's office, asking about his blossoming acting career and how he managed to pull off the part of Bama with such finesse. The office, a non-office except for a desk tucked away in the corner under the eaves and a constantly buzzing phone. ("Let's see what the troops want here," he says bounding off the couch as the phone rings. He stabs at a button, pauses just long enough for the caller to say, "Hello," then hollers back, "Hey, don't you talk to me like that you hairy legged hillbilly.") Located up under the gables of a big three-story bungalow on Music Row, the office is headquarters for Jerry Reed Enterprises and his publishing company, Vector Music.

To reach Jerry's retreat, you enter on the ground floor and walk past a wall with his 19 BMI songwriting awards, a plaster statue of RCA's ever-listening dog, an old RCA gramophone, a baby grand piano, a guitar Reed designed after guitarist D'Jango Rhinehardt's, and a picture over the mantle showing a team of beaming Little Leaguer's all sporting shirts with "Reed's Rangers" sewn across their chests.

Tramping up the stairs to the second floor, you search along the hall past an elegantly decorated ice-blue dining room and a big room with an air hockey game in it, for a little narrow door that looks





At left, Jerry roars out to where the big fish are hiding. He loves to fish. Above, he kneels by the tailgate of his pick-up which bears a huge sculpture commemorating his starring in the flick *GATOR*.

like it's in an arrested stage of development as the shrinking door in *Alice in Wonderland*. Inside this door is a small circular staircase slightly wider than your shoulders. As you wind your way up this tube, your eyes suddenly pop through, crocodile style, at Reed's ankle-bone level.

As I clamored up on to the deep shag carpet, I encountered Reed, barechested, a towel looped around his neck and attired in red gym shorts, knee-high sports socks, and tennis shoes, with one leg slung over the middle of a poker table, doing deep bends from the waist. He expansively announced, inhaling and exhaling, between, that he had just gotten back from playing handball, a sport he had taken up the day before. He was exercising, but cheerfully gave that up, flipped on the replica of an antique ceiling fan over the pool table, and flopped down on one of the deep-cushioned velvety maroon sofas to talk about Burt Reynolds. Reynolds both starred in and directed *Gator*. Now he and Reed have filmed a third movie together, a super-action flick called *Smokey and the Bandit*, directed by Reynolds' stunt man, Hal Needham.

In *Smokey and the Bandit* Reed stays pretty much to the good ole boy role, but he was "shocked" when he got the call from Reynolds to play the heavy in *Gator*. The slender Reed laughs. "I asked him if he had looked at me lately."

But Reynolds hadn't envisioned Reed puffing out his chest and stomping around pretending to weigh 220 pounds. What he had in mind was tailoring the role to fit Reed—surrounding the villain

with hefty "tush hogs" to do the dirty work, leaving Bama "the cool dude, 160 pounds of creeping hell."

"We played it off the wall, dreamed up the guy you really hate, the kind who slaps you on the back, grins at you, laughs at you, tells you funny jokes, then blows your head off.

"Motion picture actors are characters," Reed explains. "More than anything else, they're themselves. John Wayne's going to be John Wayne. I don't care what he's playing. You'll agree with that. So I had to be what Jerry Reed Hubbard would be in that situation—the human being I am now if he'd grown up to be Bama McCall."

The only rough spots came when the still screen-green Reed would forget and start stomping and elbowing. "If I got trying to be a heavy into my head, I'd screw up," he recalls. "I told Burt, 'Now, look, when I start playing this like a heavy, I can't do it. I'll get nervous, I'll get fidgety, and my eyes will twitch and you'll know I'm screwing up.' So in one scene, he walked out on the set and said, 'Hey, I'm reminding you what you told me. Now remember it.' So we shot it again and it was fine.

"Everybody just killed themselves for Burt, yours truly included. It only got tight a couple of times and Burt handled that masterfully. He just told them, 'Look, I'm the director. Let me get tight. You guys be loose. Let me do all the tightness.'"

Some people talk about Reed becoming a sex symbol now that he's a movie star. But when I ask if he considered himself a sex symbol, he gets emphatic. "I'm absolutely not," he declares with finality.

"No, I'm not. I don't try to be. I don't attempt to be," his voice is progressing into strident protest, "I can't! I don't *look* the part. Honey, you have to look the part to be a sex symbol.

"It's no big mystery, you're either Elvis Presley or you aren't Elvis Presley. Whoever you are, you are. And I'm not. I'm not that in the way I carry myself, in the way I conduct myself, I'm not. I don't hope to be. I don't aspire to be. Because I don't think that's my bag."

I ask if he thinks he is sexy onstage. "Oh, I appeal to some women, sure. I am male, after all, so some female's got to like you somewhere along the way. But that's not a sex symbol." He stops and thinks for a second and gives a deep sigh. "And who knows what makes a sex symbol? I don't know. Christ, who knows?" he adds with disgust in his voice. "I wish I did. I'd go out and find me one and make a million dollars."

Reed's frequent co-star, of course, is a certified sex idol, and Reed talks about the influence of the tender/tough Reynolds on the women on the set. "... Women just love to look at him. There's nothing they'd like better than to touch him.

"Something else. Burt has an awful, awful lot of class. You couple that with the sex appeal and women just about follow him around like a little puppy."

Although they have a warm professional relationship, Reed and Reynolds are not drinking or fishing buddies. "I really haven't spent that much time around Burt," he reveals. "On the set I made a point to stay away from him while he was working—out of courtesy.



Like all avid fishermen, Jerry loves to browse in fishing-tackle shops.

So I wasn't around him much, haven't been since—just a couple of times.”

For the most part Reed's social instincts don't run to hobnobbing with actors and actresses. “I like to hang around the stage hands, the drivers, the teamsters. Play tonk. Shoot the breeze.”

Reed got an especially big kick out of the “super dude” who drove the Winnebago he used as a dressing room. “I've just gotta make friends with people,” Reed blurts out with a boyish grin. “I've just gotta be your friend. And I'll jump on you the first time I meet you. I'm on your case. If you're gonna be around me a while, either you're gonna like me, or get the hell out!”

“I knew what kind of a dude he was after I was around him a while,” Reed laughs, slaps his leg, and rares back on the couch. “He was from BAHSTON,” he says rolling the accent off his tongue. It was immediately obvious what kind of things went down between the drive from Bahston and the singer who rhymes “door” with “dough.” “He and I used to just badmouth each other so bad,” he re-

calls with glee, “He did it to break me up, he did it to put me on the floor, is what he did.”

One day the driver went on personal strike against Reed. “He took and put a rope around my neck and led me around the lot holding up a sign that said, ‘Reed is unfair!’ Boy, that brought the house down!” He lets out a belly laugh. “He was a great dude!”

\* \* \*

Reed dropped out of high school in Atlanta four times. He'd go pick guitar with Autry Inman or the Wilburn Brothers or get together a dance band with his friend Ray Stevens. Once he vanished for 30 days, leaving family and friends distraught. He was on the road with Ernest Tubbs.

“I had a lot of hang-ups in high school,” he somewhat shyly admits, “I thought I was a weirdo. Anyway, I didn't need school. I knew where I was going. My very first thoughts as a human being, whenever that was, were about music. As far back as I can remember thinking, I

thought about nothing else.”

Reed started playing gin mills in his early teens, had a recording contract by the time he was high school age, and was practicing furiously every minute, straining to pick out all the licks on his Chet Atkins records, developing the “clawing” guitar style that would help make him famous. At 17 when he got married he told his young bride, “If you marry me . . . you've got to realize . . . I'm never gonna do *anything* else but play this guitar. I know I was put here to do nothing else. Don't *want* to do anything else, couldn't care less about it. If you took this life away from me, I'd go to hell on a sled, that's all.”

For 14 years it was a dead coast. “I used to think, here's this dodo. He can't make three chords and he's got all this money. Here I am playing 20 hours a day on this guitar, going to motion pictures, watching people . . . studying actors, sitting and thinking, living and breathing this stuff and,” his voice rises with past agony and fury, “nothing's happening! What's wrong with me? I hate everybody! I hate God! Where is He? You get down, real down. Where dirt gets high, you know?” He looks at me for some sign of comprehension. “It's because you're so full of *fire* and *vinegar*. You're chomping at the bit to go and nobody will open the door.”

Reed believes totally in fatalism—the idea that all the events in a person's life are predetermined by “fate”—or as he describes it, “when it's your time, nobody has anything to say about it, period.” But it was many uncontrollable years before he could bring himself to accept his own fate.

“This is a part of me I don't really talk about a lot,” he murmurs. He looks down, then focuses straight ahead and continues talking with an edge of desperation. “Finally you get to the point where you say, ‘I'm as low as I can go, I *cannot* get up anymore. My spirit's gone. My head is wrecked and my life is—” he hisses out a spitting sound. “You ask, ‘Why did you put me here with all this down in my guts? Why am I gnawing,’ the words rush out, and crying, begging, and pleading? Nothing's happening.”

“Finally,” Reed, his muscles knotted, relaxes slightly, “you give yourself over to whatever the driving force is in life. I choose to think it's God. You say, ‘All right. I'm tired, I'm weary. I've tried to run my life. Now I want you to run it, I want you to write the songs, and just let me be your messenger. Now I'm just going to take everything off. Walk out in the sun and be just what I was born. Your man.’

“And when that happened, I'm telling you it was just like He took this building here off my shoulders.

“The day I made that total commitment in my mind and quit running the show myself, just tending the garden, get-

(Continued on page 61)

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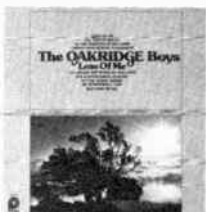
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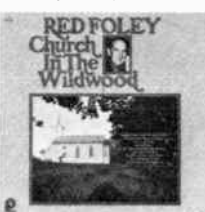
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**J.D.Sumner & Stamps: Green Grass of Home**  
Build My Mansion/Sounds of Love/Keep Me/Green, Green Grass of Home/How Great Thou Art, many more!



**Red Foley: Church In The Wildwood**  
Rock of Ages/Love Lifted Me/Sweet Bye-And-Bye/The Old Rugged Cross/We Gather At The River, more!



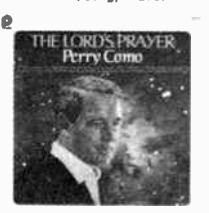
**LeFerves: Whispering Hope**  
Whispering Hope/When I Get Alone With Him/Without Him/Lift Me Jesus/Give Up/Who Am I?/Sing, more!



**Roy Acuff**  
How Beautiful Heaven Must Be/Jesus Died for Me/Thank God/Where The Soul Never Dies, many more!



**Tennessee Ernie Ford: Jesus Loves Me**  
Onward Christian Soldiers/Love to Tell the Story/Jesus Loves Me/What a Friend We Have in Jesus, many more!



**Perry Como: The Lord's Prayer**  
A Garden in the Rain/When You Come to the End of the Day/The Lord's Prayer/Rock of Ages/Ave Maria, more!



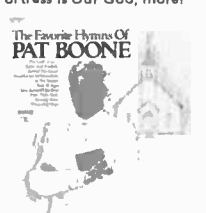
**Tennessee Ernie Ford: Rock Of Ages**  
Just a Little Talk With Jesus/God of Our Fathers/We Gather Together/A Mighty Fortress is Our God, more!



**Tennessee Ernie Ford: Amazing Grace**  
Jesus Paid It All/Amazing Grace/Sweet Hour of Prayer/Did You Think to Pray/It is Well With My Soul, more!



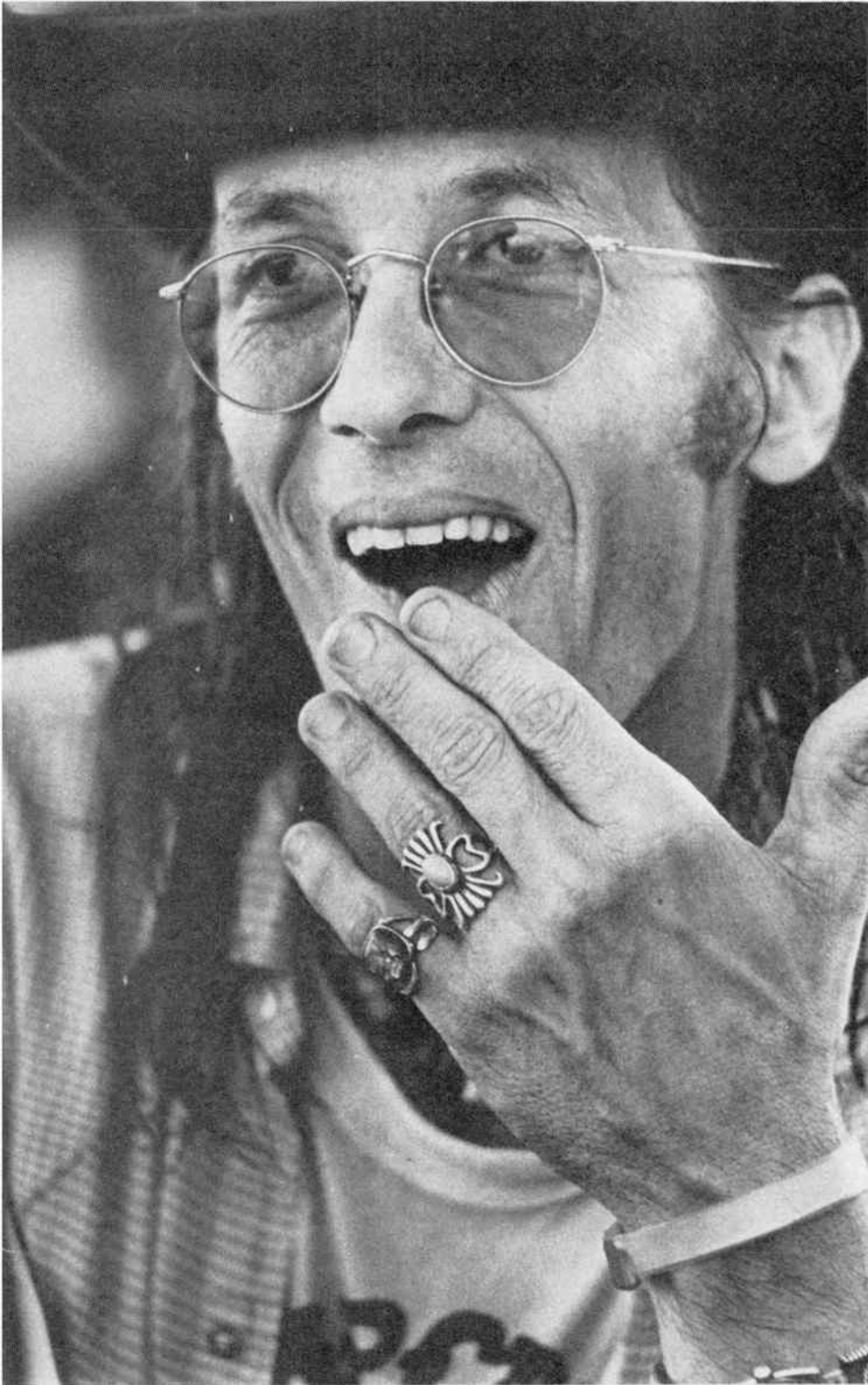
**Billy Graham: International Crusade Choirs**  
The Song of the Soul Set Free/Verily, Verily/To God Be The Glory/Jesus is Coming/Blessed Assurance, more!



**The Favorite Hymns of Pat Boone**  
The Lord's Prayer/Beyond The Sunset/In The Garden/Rock of Ages/Holy, Holy, Holy/Amazing Grace, more!



**Living Strings: Songs of Inspiration**  
Everytime I Feel The Spirit/Where He Leads Me/It Took A Miracle/Beautiful Isle of Somewhere, many more!



**D**oug Sahm steps up to the mike in the little club, his hand flicking up from the Fender with the speed of an Iguana's tongue to knock his funny round wire-framed '67 hippy glasses back up the slippery reaches of his spectacular nose, and launches into his latest Tex/Mex/honkey blues & roll-spaced country song, *Cowboy Peyton Place*. The sound of him and his band of 15-year friends is raucously great. Sahm himself is like a weird little lightbulb, all lit up and triple-tracking at a solid 78.

*"Well I just came in this bar followin' you.*

*I didn't know that country band was playin' too,*

*For I'm in love with the steel player's wife.*

*And I know it's not right, but I want her tonight,*

*And that's how it is in Cowboy Peyton Place."*

This has to be the first country song about intra-band sexual relationships, but that's not all. According to Doug, this is a full assault on country music by himself and his Texas Tornados, who are legendary in other circles. These boys, operating out of Austin, are coming at you courtesy of ABC/Dot Records, and are to be taken seriously. With them comes a new approach, as Doug explains (with incredible speed) in the following terms.

"You see this group shot, man, you'll see what I mean," he begins, referring to a shot of him and the boys. "It's gonna stick out in cowboy music 'cause there's no groups y'know? It's like the Rolling Stones pictures, man, you don't see that in country music, an' I think that's what's gonna do it, they look at that an' they say 'That's country?' Wow, that's those guys, they play country music, that's a group, man, like the Rolling Stones, man, they *really* play country? Really?"

This highly idiosyncratic blitz continues, a word-barrage, a continuous stream of Texan tongue-twisting.

"I mean, it's true, I kind of dug that Grateful Dead approach, it keeps comin' up. Y'know, it's professional, an' we tune,

©1975 Doug Sahm Music/Crazy Cajun Music

# THE TEXAS TORNADO

Mr. Doug Sahm, Friends, Is Comin' At Ya. Watch Out. by PATRICK CARR



Photos: Mike Fluitt & John R. Van Beekum (Close-up)

it's like the Dead who tune for a while, just presentin' a show without bein' rushed, like to really give the people their money's worth... I mean, like on gigs, don't we get more electrified than most country bands? Goin' back to the Dead on that, 'cause I notice we've been doin' a few of those build-ups, y'know what I mean? Cause we feel like it's a natural to go from a real quiet country shuffle played low, into *that*. People dig these freaky things, like, I dunno, I can't explain it, it's like you an I were talkin' about—oh, man, wasn't that *weird*, I mean, really strange or something?—the Grateful Dead with hits! No, man, that wasn't it, it was, like a *country Grateful Dead with hits!* Wow."

While Doug gulps enough air for the next statement, it is worth noting that the Grateful Dead, who came out of San Francisco in '66, were responsible for the invention of the modern rock & roll concert, and for many years were its most compelling practitioners. The modern rock & roll concert is an event carefully structured in such a manner, with such peaks and valleys, that the audience is

driven routinely to a state of entranced boogie-itis somewhere around the 2/3 time mark. This requires great skill, energy, and volume on the part of the band. Not country.

Doug continues, capping off the train of thought.

"It's like, let's face it man, like any band that can be the people's band and have country hits and pop hits, they're gonna be, like, the biggest thing since the Beatles."

I'm reeling. I see the point. What's more, I like it. After suffering through waves of vapid, laid-back West Coast Sons of Poco ever since West Coast country-rock melted, and simultaneously falling asleep before the very performing feet of many a newly-country Sensitive Songwriter, I am thrilled to know that the outrageous, legendary Doug Sahm has finally decided, as they say in *Billboard*, to "enter the country field."

\* \* \*

San Antonio, Texas, is the birthplace of Doug Sahm, who grew up in a musical atmosphere and, equipped with a three-necked Fender steel, became a child star

of sorts. Little Doug, he was then, practicing all day and sitting in with bands at night. Webb Pierce wanted him to go on the Opry, but his Moma wouldn't let him, thought he should stay in school. In high school, he connected with the blues—T-Bone Walker, Bobby Bland, Joe Turner—and, soon after, he launched his first band, the Knights. They played blues and rock & roll and were high school heros. Doug fell in with one Jimmy Johnson. Doug once explained the influence to Chet Flippo of *Rolling Stone*, the only journalist ever to make the hot-rapping Mr. Sahm divulge biographical details in their correct chronological order.

"He was a big influence," Doug told Chet. "Really showed me the ropes—chord structures and all that. I came up with people like that instead of today, where a cat comes up diggin' Led Zepelin or somebody. I mean, these cats were really musicians. They weren't just super-groomed, puff-sleeved rock & roll cats who make a million dollars or something. It was realism. *R-E-A-L Roots.*"

The roots in question were Spanish, Black, country, and white-punk rock & roll, and when Doug eventually met the ineffable Mr. Huey Meaux, with whom readers of this magazine should by now be thoroughly familiar (Huey, apart from many other accomplishments, was the man who Did It for Freddy Fender), he poured all of that stuff into a record called *She's About A Mover*, which is what Did It for Doug and the Sir Douglas Quintet. In his wisdom, Huey (who is still Doug's producer) had given the band that name because, this being 1965, it sounded English. The record, however, didn't sound English. The "English organ" upon which Huey had insisted, and which was played by Augie Meyers, came out of nowhere but Augie and the aforementioned South Texas musical synthesis. It was a new sound, and the record was a smash, and the Sir Douglas Sound was born.

Now, the rest really is legend, though hardly in country circles: Doug in San Francisco, putting together various honkey blues and/or Chicano big-band congregations and hanging out with the likes of Janis Joplin and the Grateful Dead, doing the Summer of Love, the Avalon Ballroom. Fine times were had. Doug's world view expanded. Many albums were cut. He went to Los Angeles. Finally, around 1970, he decided to go home. "Like I O.D'd on Hollywood bull," he told Chet Flippo. "I just couldn't stand it. It got me sick for a while. All them beautifully cut sideburns, cats hangin' out on Sunset Strip, all that crap. I just wanted to throw up, man." He went home to San Antone and drank so much Lone Star that he was sick for days, turning green under trees while his friends and kids tried to rope him into softball games. He still can't drink Lone Star.

There followed a period which might be described as semi-fallow—a matter of  
(Continued on page 64)

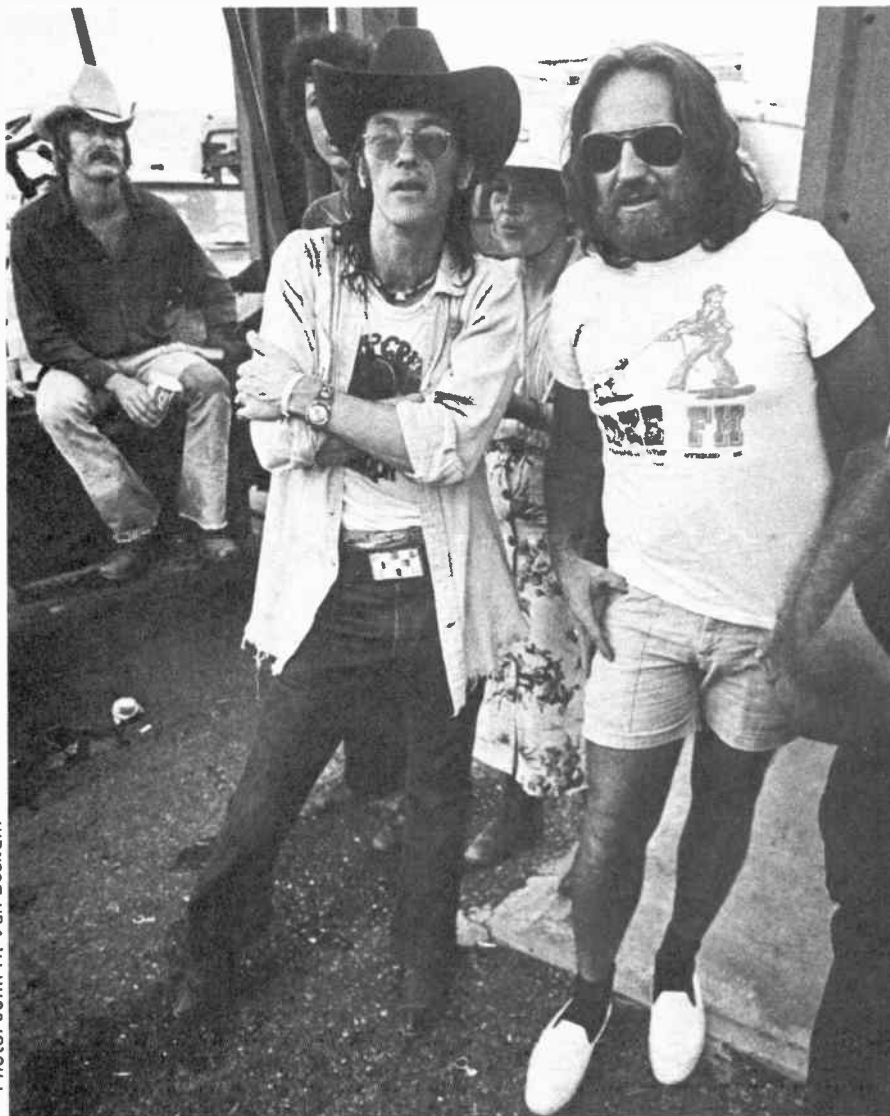


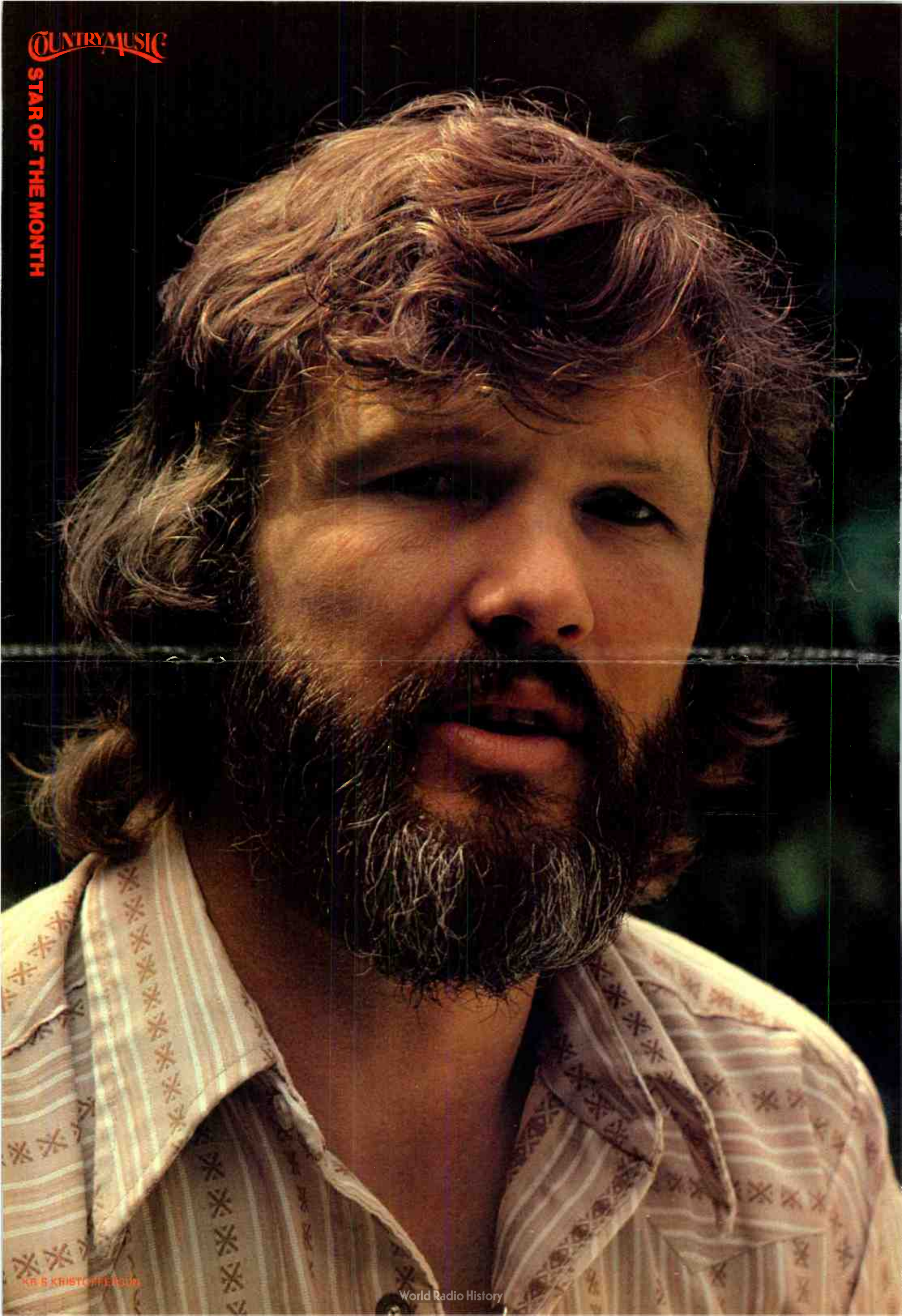
Photo: John R. Van Beekum

Texas, July 4th, 1974: Mr. Doug Sahm with a well-known friend.



COUNTRYMUSIC

STAR OF THE MONTH



KEVIN KRISTOFFERSON

World Radio History

# Roots & Branches

## Part Two

# THE BIRTH OF AN INDUSTRY

by BILL G. MALONE

Although the commercial roots of country music extend as far back as the origins of the United States, and even earlier, the music didn't actually begin its evolution toward industry status until radio and recording combined in the early twenties to provide rural folk entertainers with outlets to the public.

Folk entertainers began appearing on southern radio stations almost as soon as the stations opened their doors. WDAD in Nashville, WBAP in Fort Worth, WSB in Atlanta, and even KDKA in Pittsburgh and WLS in Chicago, were only a few of the stations which pioneered the programming of folk talent. WSB deserves special mention as the principle showcase for some of the greatest talent in early country music: Fiddlin' John Carson, Riley Puckett, Clayton McMichen, Lowe Stokes, and Gid Tanner.

One of the first known usages of the term "barn dance" to describe a radio variety show came in 1923 over WBAP, a station still important in country music. The most influential barn dances, however, were destined to be those associated with WLS in Chicago and WSM in Nashville.

The WLS Barn Dance, inaugurated in April, 1924, was heard throughout the Midwest and much of the South, and helped launch such outstanding stars as Bradley Kincaid, Patsy Montana, Karl and Harty, Lulu Belle and Scotty, and Red Foley. The WLS talent roster included both Southerners and Midwesterners, and the program featured both southern folk music and vintage pop songs, like *Silver Threads Among the Gold*, with which listeners everywhere could identify.

The WSM Barn Dance, on the other hand, which George D. Hay named the Grand Ole Opry sometime after 1926, was always preeminently a southern rural show with a self-image of down-home hospitality and family solidarity. Although WSM may not have broadcast the first country music in Nashville, and the Grand Ole Opry may not have begun in precisely the manner in which conventional histories tell the story (Opry scholar Charles Wolfe has challenged both assertions), the Opry did attract some of the greatest talent in country music, such as

DeFord Bailey and Uncle Dave Macon, and with its 50,000-watt, clear-channel coverage it became an institution.

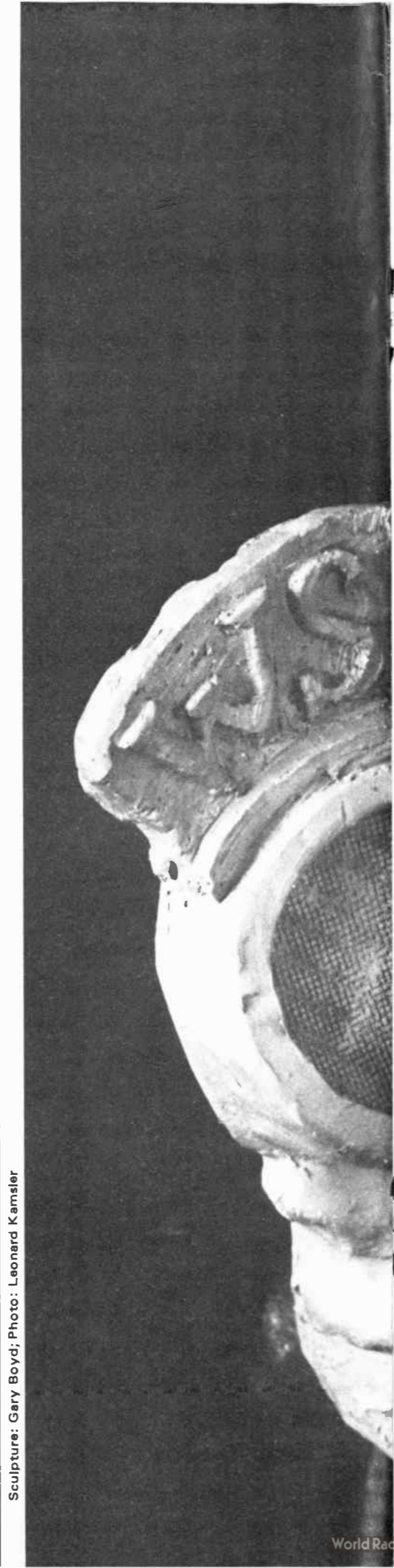
Students of early country music have not always appreciated the powerful role of radio in popularizing country. Instead, they have devoted an inordinate amount of attention to the phonograph record, principally because it can be easily collected, catalogued, and analyzed. The early broadcasts were not recorded and preserved, and broadcast logs, sometimes available in newspapers and magazines, provide only a minimum of information about the early shows. But we tend to forget that radio was the principal means of exposure for most country performers, and that most entertainers never made records.

The phonograph industry moved toward the utilization of folk talent only a few years after radio made its first ventures. In fact, the phonograph companies' search for fresh talent and new sounds seems to have been largely inspired by the growing competition of radio. Folk songs were certainly recorded before 1922, and there may very well have been genuine folk talent on records before that date—this is an area that still needs to be thoroughly researched—but the first known Southern hillbilly recording performers were Eck Robertson, a fiddler from Texas, and Henry Whitter, a guitarist and singer from Virginia, both of whom made unsolicited trips to recording studios in New York in 1922 and 1923.

The industry seems not to have paid much attention to such music, however, until June, 1923, when Fiddlin' John Carson recorded in Atlanta *The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane* and *The Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster's Going to Crow* for Okeh. The record sold so well that Okeh and other labels such as Columbia, Victor, Brunswick, Paramount, and Genett, moved intensively toward the recording of rural talent.

The music demonstrated its commercial potential in 1924 when a New York singer of popular and light opera music, Vernon Dalhart, recorded a song made up of old folk fragments called *The Prisoner's Song*. The song became the first hillbilly hit and, in fact, was the largest selling record of any kind up until that date.

Sculpture: Gary Boyd; Photo: Leonard Kamler



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LEO ADDEO BLUE HAWAII - CXS-9035  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Sing Me A Song Of The Islands; Lovely Hula Hands; My Little Grass Shack In Kaelekeua Hawaii; Beyond The Reef; Mauna Lo; My Isle Of Golden Dreams; Hawaii On Sunset; Medley; To You Sweetheart Aloha; Aloha Oe Pearly Shells; Hawaiian War Chant; Little Brown Gal; Blue Hawaii; Hawaiian Wedding Song; Under Blue Hawaiian Skies; Pagan Love Song; Tiny Bubbles; Sweet Lelani.

CHUCK BERRY - PTP-2061  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Johnny B. Goode; Maybelline; Reelin' And Rockin'; Roll Over Bertoven; Sweet Little Sixteen; School Days; Rock And Roll Music; Back In The USA; Memphis, Tennessee; Sweet Little Rock And Roller; Carol; Oh Baby Doll; C. C. Rider; Check Me Out; Ramblin' Rose; Goodnight Well It's Time To Go Back To Memphis; It Hurts Me Too.

BLUE SKY BOYS - ADL2-0726  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
BLUEGRASS MOUNTAIN MUSIC: Are You From Dixie?; Down On The Banks Of The Ohio; Katie Dear; Beac- hful, Beautiful Brown Eyes; Short Life Of Trouble; Kentucky In The Hills Of Boone County; Mary Of The Wild Moor; Brown Eyes; Paper Boy; Dust On The Bible; Sunny Side Of Life; The Last Mile Of The Way; Pictures From Life's Other Side; Whis- pering Hopes; Little Bessie; The Butcher's Boy; Story Of The Knoxville Girl; The Convict And The Rose; My Last Letter.

COUNTRY AND WESTERN JAMBOREE - ADL2-0579  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
SPADE COOLEY AND HIS BAND: The Last Round- Up; The Old Spinning Wheel; Empty Saddles; Wagon Wheels; Beyond The Sunset; ROSALIE ALLEN: I Want To Be A Cowboy's Girl; Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels; BILL BOYD AND HIS COWBOY RAMBLERS: Lone Star Rag; Under The Double Eagle; DALE EVANS AND ROY ROGERS: Happy Trails; My Chickashay Gal; Home On The Range; GENE AUTRY: Cowboy's Heaven; Yellow Rose Of Texas; PATSY MONTANA AND HER BUCKAROO'S: If I Could Only Learn To Yodel; Mama Never Said A Word About Love; JENNY LOU CARSON AND HER TUMBLEWEED TROUBADOURS: I'll Never Trust You Again; I Feel Like Cryin'.

PERRY COMO - CXS-9002  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
When My Dreamboat Comes Home; Please Don't Leave Me; I'm Gonna Be A Wheel Someday; I'm In The Mood For Love; Let The Four Winds Blow; Whole Lot Of Loving; Jambalaya; Ain't That A Shame; So Long; Blueberry Hill; Ballin' The Jack; Kansas City; Trouble In Mind; Heartbreak Hill; Why Don't You Do Right?; On A Slow Boat To China; Red Sails In The Sunset; I've Got A Right To Cry The Blues.

FATS DOMINO - PTP-2031  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
When My Dreamboat Comes Home; Please Don't Leave Me; I'm Gonna Be A Wheel Someday; I'm In The Mood For Love; Let The Four Winds Blow; Whole Lot Of Loving; Jambalaya; Ain't That A Shame; So Long; Blueberry Hill; Ballin' The Jack; Kansas City; Trouble In Mind; Heartbreak Hill; Why Don't You Do Right?; On A Slow Boat To China; Red Sails In The Sunset; I've Got A Right To Cry The Blues.

TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD - PTP-2050  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Amazing Grace; Sweet Hour Of Prayer; My Jesus, I Love Thee; Jesus Paid It All; Comin' Home; Break Thou The Bread Of Life; Did You Think To Pray; My Faith Looks Up To Thee; It Is Well With My Soul; Onward Christian Soldiers; Oh How I Love Jesus; The Church In The Wildwood; I Love To Tell The Story; Count Your Blessings; Jesus Loves Me; When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder; Shell We Gather At The River; Bringing In The Sheaves; What A Friend We Have In Jesus.

BILL HALEY AND THE COMETS - PTP-2077  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Rock Around The Clock; Skinny Minne; Ling-Ting Tong; Rock The Joint; Rock A Beating Boogie; Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On; See You Later Alligator; Flip Flop And Fly; The Saints Rock And Roll; Shake, Rattle And Roll; Razzle-Dazzle; Yakety Sex; Jenny Jenny; Johnny B. Goode; Rip It Up; Rudy's Rock; Lucille.

SONS OF THE PIONEERS - ADL2-0336  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Riders In The Sky; Empty Saddles; Home On The Range; Red River Valley; Ole Faithful; There's A Gold Mine In The Sky; The Timber Trail; Wind; The Ballad Of Davy Crockett; High Noon; Down The Trail To San Antonio; Blue Prayer; Cool Water; Cow- boy Camp Meeting; Cigarettes, Whiskel and Wild Women; Wagons West; Let's Pretend; Outlaws.

JERRY LEE LEWIS - PTP-2055  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
High Heel Sneakers; Crying Time; Hound Dog; Sticks And Stones; Too Young; Flip, Flop And Fly; Halle- lujah; I Love Her So; Baby Hold Me Close; You Went Back On Your Word; Got You On My Mind; Roll Over Beethoven; Don't Let Go; Herman The Hermit I Believe In You; Maybelline; Johnny B. Goode; Green Green Grass Of Home; Long Tail Sally; Breathless.

GUY LOMBARDO - PTP-2009  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
All The Things You Are; Seems Like Old Times; I'll Be Seeing You; Third Man Theme; Seems Like Old Times; Let's Do It Again; Where Or When; I Got Plenty Of Nothing; Bewitched; I'll Be Seeing You; Taking A Chance On Love; All The Things You Are; People Will Say We're In Love; The Surrey With The Fringe On Top; I Could Write A Book; Getting To Know You; September Song; Fascination; Ebb Tide; Caquette; If I Loved You; The Breeze And I, Para- dise.

THE MILLS BROS - PTP-2008  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Across The Alley From The Alamo; I Guess I'll Get The Papers; Tonight You Belong To Me; Do You Ever Think Of Me; Mood Indigo; So Rare; Glow Worm; Sweet Lelani; Light On The Trail; Celio Lindo; Mood Indigo; Lindo; Say Si Si; Siboney; Any ime; Solitude; Once In A While; One Dozen Roses; My Mothers Eyes; When You Were Sweet Sixteen.

THE MILLS BROS. - PTP-2030  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
I Can't Stop Loving You; There's A Goldmine In The Sky; Sometimes I'm Happy; Till Then; Dream A Little Dream Of Me; Poor Butterfly; You Always Hurt The One You Love; You're Driving Me Crazy; Blues; Sweethearts On Parade; Be My Life's Com- Trade Winds; Till We Meet Again; Basin Street; Mister Sandman; Teach Me Tonight; Every- body Loves My Baby; If I Could Be with You; He'll Have To Go.

PRECIOUS MEMORIES - CXS-9020  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Precious Memories; Skeeter Davis; I Believe, Dolly Parton; The Keeper; Of The Key; Porter Wagoner; Old Time Religion; George Beverly Shea And Clifford Barrows; Oh Happy Day, The Blackwood Brothers Quartet; Keep On The Sunny Side, The Carter Family; Will The Circle Be Unbroken, The Statesmen Quartet With Hovie Lester; The Great Speckled Bird, Hank Locklin; How Great Thou Art, Doris Akers; An Evening Prayer, George Beverly Shea; Amazing Grace, The Blackwood Brothers Quartet; A Gathering In The Sky, Norma Jean; Standing In The Need Of Prayer, Jimmy Dean; Put Your Hand In The Hand, Rex Humbard And The Cathedral Singers; It's No Secret, Stuart Hamblen; Mansion On The Hilltop, The Browns; My God Is Real, Don Gibson; Sweet Hour Of Prayer, Norma Zimmer.

50 GREAT POLKAS - PTP-2081  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Clarinet Polka; Barbara Polka; Ah Frenchy Polka; Jolly Fellows Polka; Rolling Rock Polka; High Low Polka; Cuckoo Polka; Jim Dandy Polka; Lichtensteiner Polka; Helena Polka; Pickled Polka; Gerald's Polka; Everybody's Polka; Beer Barrel Polka; There's A Tavern In The Town Polka; Simple Sy Polka; Round Roy Polka; Ely Polka; Rain, Rain Polka; Emelia Polka; Jolly Coppersmith's Polka; Real George Polka; Pittsburgh Polka; Copper Polka; Tony's Polka; Bee Flat Polka; Krakowick; Ukranian Kolomeyka Polka; Piano Polka; Springtime Polka; ara Siacato; Town Tavern; Sweetie Pie Polka; Be Mine, Be Mine Polka; Hamtramick Polka; 1:30 Polka; El Rancho Grande Polka; Dick's Kicks Polka; Blando Bombshell Polka; Radio Polka; Musicians Come And Play Polka; Mary Lou Polka; Andy's Jolly Hop Polka; Wanda And Slach Polka; Fanny Polka; Julida; Gallup Polka; Cleveland Spaghetti House Polka; Hoosier Susie Polka; How Good For Me Polka.

BOB RALSTON ORGAN FAVORITES - CXS-9021  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Tea For Two; I'll Be Seeing You; Fascination; Ha- waiian Wedding Song; Tico Tico; Red Roses For A Blue Lady; Who Can I Turn To; Somewhere In Your Heart; When You Wish Upon A Star; Rose Of Wash- ington Square; When My Baby Smiles At Me; I Want A Girl; Have You Ever Been Lonely; You're Nobody Til Somebody Loves You; Canadian Sunset; Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland; Skater's Waltz; I'll See Yoc In My Dreams.

JIM REEVES - CXS-9001  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Blue Side Of Lonesome; Don't You Want To Be My Girl; Yonder Comes A Sucker; A Railroad Bum; I'm Gonna Change Everything; Battle, Take Effect; I've Lived A Lot In My Time; If You Were Mine; Most Of The Time; The Talking Walls; A Letter To My Heart; I Won't Forget You; The World You Left Behind; Little Ole Dime; Waitin' For A Train; I Can't Fly (You're Looking For An Angel); What Would You Do; Overnight.

HANK SNOW - CXS-9009  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
The Wreck Of The Old 97; The Last Ride; I Went To Your Wedding; Roll Along Kentucky Moon; The Southern Cannonball; The Highest Bidder; Poison Love; Memories Are Made Of This; Sunny Side Of The Mountain; The Galveston Rose; My Nova Scotia Home; The Byue Velvet Band; Lousome Whistle; Spanish Fire Ball; El Paso; Somewhere Along Life's Highway; Travellin' Blues; Waitin' For A Train.

HANK SNOW - ADL2-0337  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Your Last Kiss Has Broken My Heart; The Answer To The Blue Velvet Band; On The Mississippi Shore; I Wonder Where You Are Tonight; Under Hawaiian Skies; How She Could Yodel; Little Buddy; Sea; Our Parting With A Kiss; You've Broken My Heart; My Filipino Rose; Linda Lou; Wasted Love; There's A Picture On Pinto Bridge; Journey My Baby Back Home; Your Little Band Of Gold; When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again; The Anniversary Of My Broken Heart; I'm Sending You Red Roses.

MONTANA SLIM'S GREATEST HITS - ADL2-0694  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes; When It's Springtime In The Rockies; There's A Bluebird On Your Windowill; You Are My Sunshine; The Fate Of Old Strawberry Roan; The Blue Canadian Rockies; Rattlin' Cannonball; Hang The Key On The Bunk- house Door; There's A Love Knot In My Lariat; It Makes No Difference Now; The Prisoner's Song; Red River Valley Blues; Waiting For The Train; My Swiss Moonlight Lullaby; Capture Of Albert Johnson; Old Shep; Streamlined Yodel Song.

50 YEARS OF COUNTRY MUSIC - ADL2-0782(e)  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
CHET ATKINS; For The Good Times; THE COUNTRY RAMBLERS; Rose Garden; HANK SNOW; Beggar To A King; DOLLY PARTON; In The Ghetto; LOVING VOICES; Statute Of A Fool; My Lovin' Guitar, Bona- parte's Retreat; WAYLON JENNINGS; Folsom Prison; PORTER WAGONER; A Satisfied Mind; SKEETER DA- VIS; I Walk The Line; DON GIBSON; Half As Much; GEORGE HAMILTON IV; Walking The Floor Over You; WILLIE NELSON; San Antonio Rose; FLOYD TILLMAN; Slipping Around; DOTTIE WEST; It Makes No Difference Now; SONS OF THE PIONEERS; Mexi- coli Rose; GID TANNER; Down Yonder; THE CARTER FAMILY; Wabsh Cannon Ball; THE MONROE BROTHERS; The Great Speckled Bird.

THE RAGTIMERS - ADL2-0360  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Sav, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose; Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Ole Oak Tree; That's Why You Remember; Delta Down; Oh Happy Day; Amazing Grace; O Rock Of Ages; Give Us This Day; Angels Over Me; Led By The Master's Hand; The Keys To The Kingdom; Sheltered In The Arms Of God; Precious Memories; Ivory Palaces; Bridge Over Troubled Water; What A Friend; Whispering Hope; God Is Just A Prayer Away; My Name Is Jesus.

BLACKWOOD BROTHERS QUARTET - CSX-9011  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
Put Your Hand In The Hand; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; In The Sweet By And By; Oh Happy Day; Amazing Grace; O Rock Of Ages; Give Us This Day; Angels Over Me; Led By The Master's Hand; The Keys To The Kingdom; Sheltered In The Arms Of God; Precious Memories; Ivory Palaces; Bridge Over Troubled Water; What A Friend; Whispering Hope; God Is Just A Prayer Away; My Name Is Jesus.

JOHNNY CASH - PTP-2045  
2 RECORD SET - SPECIAL PRICE \$3.98  
I Walk The Line; Rock Island Rock; Born To Lose; Cry, Cry, Cry; Straight A's In Love; Remember Me; I Forgot To Remember To Forget; Luther's Boogie; There You Go; Get Rhythm; Train Of Love; Hey Porter; Come In Stranger; The Wreck Of The Old 97; I Heard That Lonesome Whistle; Home Of The Blues; Wide Open Road.

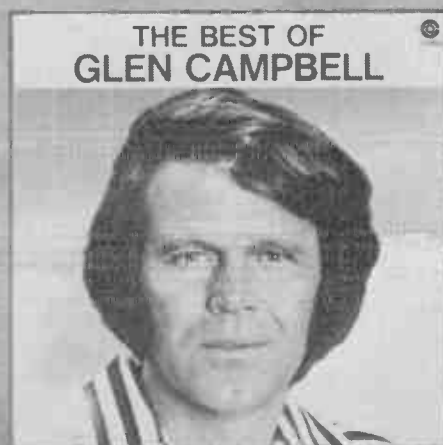
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The Texas-born Dalhart, whose real name was Marion T. Slaughter, became exclusively a hillbilly singer and, recording with a multitude of pseudonyms such as Al Craver and Jeff Calhoun, circulated his versions of such songs as *The Death of Floyd Collins* and *Little Marian Parker* throughout the nation. Dalhart's repertoire was large and varied, but he specialized in the recording of the "event" song, a ballad which seized on dramatic news of the day for its inspiration. Several songwriters such as Carson Robison, Andy Jenkins and Bob Miller turned out scores of songs about murders and assassinations, train and ship wrecks and other incidents of topical interest, which were picked up by Dalhart and other hillbilly singers.

Early recorded hillbilly music tended to be heavily oriented toward southeastern performers. One can only speculate as to why the early talent scouts conducted most of their searches in the upper South and along the Atlantic seaboard, and why so few southwestern performers played prominent roles in recorded music. The three Texans who distinguished themselves during the early commercial years—Eck Robertson, Vernon Dalhart, and cowboy singer Carl Sprague—either traveled to New York to seek auditions or, as in the case of Dalhart, already lived in the city.

The distance to Texas may have inhibited the travel of portable recording units, or the A&R men, like the academic folklorists who had begun to collect folk material, may have been overly enamoured of the southern mountain mystique and may have falsely believed that there were no worthwhile folk traditions outside of the Appalachians.

Whatever the cause, the early recording artists came usually from states like North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia. Although the geographical focus represented by these performers may have been relatively narrow, their music was not. There is a great diversity of material deposited on the old 78 rpm records, and they are valuable introductions to the values and lifestyles of the people who both made and bought them. The early hillbilly entertainers sang and played British ballads like *Barbara Allen*, native American ballads like *John Henry*, sentimental parlor tunes like *The Little Rosewood Casket*, minstrel songs like *Old Dan Tucker*, play-party tunes like *Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss*, songs from the shape-note hymnals like *Angel Band*, instrumentals like *Eighth of January*, and of course original compositions.

The basic performing unit in these early days was the string band, the direct ancestor of most of the dominant instrumental styles of today, such as bluegrass, honky tonk, and western swing. A "band" was often, as in the case of G.B. Grayson and Henry Whitter, no more than a fiddle and guitar, or a fiddle and banjo, or a combination of the three. But everything from kazoos, jews harps and harmonicas

to pianos and accordions can be heard on the old recordings. Like the rock bands of today, these early groups often bore colorful titles like the Fruit Jar Drinkers, Gully Jumpers, Possum Hunters, Champion Hoss Hair Pullers, and Skillet Lickers. One such group, Al Hopkins's Hillbillies, lived to see their title become the name for the entire field of country music.

Although string bands predominated on both radio and recordings, a large number of balladeers and individual vocalists competed with them, and they differed greatly in style and indebtedness to rural tradition. Dalhart no doubt had the widest national exposure and came closest to genuine star status; but Uncle Dave Macon and Fiddlin' John Carson, to cite only two examples, were more valid inheritors and interpreters of earlier musical traditions, both drawing upon older popular, religious, and rural sources.

In his performing style Macon embodied the exuberance and vitality that must have characterized minstrel presentations, while Carson's singing, which is often unfortunately ignored, reflected the serious, almost-formal style of the old-time ballad singer. A few singers, like Riley Puckett, Buell Kazee, and Bradley Kincaid, while representing authentic folk roots, showed the effects of formal musical training. There was no finer singer, in fact, in the whole wide spectrum of country music than Kentucky-born Buell Kazee, who could have performed competently in any musical format. His ballads and love songs, like *The Butcher's Boy* and *Lady Gay*, represented the finest specimens of the Anglo-American folk song tradition.

Another Kentuckian, Bradley Kincaid, had about as large a following outside the South as any country singer—he toured extensively in the East and Midwest—and he did as much as any one singer to popularize and perpetuate such vintage folk songs as *Barbara Allen*. Other singers, like Dock Boggs, Clarence Ashley, B.F. Shelton, and Kelly Harrell, did not enjoy the kind of popularity experienced by a Kincaid or a Dalhart and were scarcely known outside of their home grounds. But they represented the very oldest and most genuine of native folk traditions. B.F. Shelton's version of *Pretty Polly*, for example, is as authentic as any song deposited in the Archive of Folk Song in the Library of Congress.

In these early years of commercial country music, most hillbilly entertainers spent their entire careers performing on low-wattage radio stations or making personal appearances in churches, theaters, tent shows, or school houses. Only rarely did a southern performer or group appear in a northern city. Radio signals, however, often penetrated into the remotest of American regions and, of course, the WLS Barn Dance and its imitators were heard distinctly in northern areas. It is impossible to know how widely circulated hillbilly records were, although

those of Vernon Dalhart and Carson Robison seem to have made their way into just about every locale of the United States. Hillbilly music may have been essentially a southern-derived music—that, at least, was its image—but there was a genuine urge for homespun music throughout the nation in the chaotic twenties, and hillbilly music seemed to satisfy this craving.

Henry Ford was not alone in his desire to reinvigorate the old-time dance music of his youth which was being forgotten in the rapid movement to the city. Although his automobile contributed greatly to the demise of rural supremacy in the United States, Ford ironically led the campaign to revitalize the kind of society that predated the industrial assembly line. He led the campaign against jazz and hot dance music, and promoted old-time fiddle contests throughout the nation. Hillbilly music no doubt found a friendly reception among Americans everywhere who were tired of jazz and afraid of the social anarchy it allegedly represented. Those who loved the old pop songs of yesteryear and felt they were being submerged by the deluge of jazz could often find them conserved on hillbilly records or broadcast on barn dances.

Country music, however, has never been solely a reactionary or nostalgic music, reflective of only a disappearing rural society. The music embodied the American ambivalence toward technology and the city—the confusions and divided longings of a society born in the country but persistently moving to town. Blind Alfred Reed could lament those flappers who bobbed their hair, and Uncle Dave Macon, in reacting to the Scopes Monkey Trial, could remind us that "the old religion's better after all." But he could also wax rhapsodic, as in *The Dixie Bee Line*, about the distance-conquering feats of the Ford automobile. Country musicians were never blindly resistant to innovation—their music always showed the interaction between rural and urban ways.

Nowhere were these divided impulses more vividly displayed than in the songs of country music's first great superstar, Jimmie Rodgers, whose recording career began in August, 1927. Rodgers often sang about old-fashioned sweethearts, dear old Daddy, and the old southern home town. But, like country people and country singers throughout this century, he was innovative, and ardently utilized the jazz rhythms that frightened some people.

*(Editor's note: Rogers also borrowed from other forms, such as blues and folk music. However, his influence was so great we will devote a separate article to him in a future issue.)*

Even in its commercial infancy, country music demonstrated both the sense of tradition and the receptivity to change that have marked it throughout its history. ■

Family ties are strong among the Wilburns. 1. Doyle and his mother in the kitchen. 2. Teddy reads the bible.



Doyle is especially addicted to hard work. 3. He talks over some business from home office. 4. He and Teddy take in some records. 5. He mows the lawn of his modest Nashville home.

# The Wilburns Are A Pair Of HUMAN DYNAMOS

As Doyle and Teddy struggled their way to the top, they had a formula that still works for them today: The backing of a good family and a capacity for plain, old fashioned hard work.

by NELLE PHELAN

"Doyle and I do better if we are interviewed separately," declares Teddy Wilburn. And the first to amen this is his brother Doyle. I would be the second, except I'm not sure you can really separate the two.

They give off a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and generally the vibes are beaming in opposite directions. They can be overwhelming. But just mention Ernest Tubb or Roy Acuff and they are together—talking about respect, love and gratitude. Or ask any of the countless number of people they have helped and encouraged and you find they often think alike. Then there's the Wilburn hospitality.

\* \* \*

"I'm cutting the grass," says Doyle, when he finally answers his phone. "Come on out. But you may have trouble. I bought a hide-away so people couldn't find me."

The modest brick house is in a just-average Nashville neighborhood where through streets are non-existent. But it's worth the trouble to find—especially if you're lucky enough to arrive at dinner time.

Goldie, the big golden retriever, wants to be petted. The neighbors are out talking over the fence. Doyle's teasing banter takes in everybody. And it's all as natural as grits and gravy.

He doesn't ask. He assumes you'll stay for dinner. So we sit down to batter fried chicken (never mind the secret herbs and spices—this is the real thing), steaming hot corn muffins with loads of butter, potatoes, corn, snap beans, and garden grown onions that bring tears to your eyes with every bite.

And while we eat, Doyle talks about his "special buddy," the beloved Pop Wilburn, who dreamed of better things for his five children than a dirt farm in Hardy, Ark., where, "The ground was so poor it wouldn't grow a good rock."

"Dad was a hustler," says Doyle. "I mean, he would really go out after things." Work was the name of the game, whether it was farming the rocky terrain, bounty trapping for the government, or just going fishing. "We would finish our work for the day and Dad and I would go down to the creek and fish." Great fun—barefoot days . . . fishing in the creek. "Oh, I loved it. But back then it wasn't a sport. We

went fishing for something to eat."

Pop Wilburn was a hard worker, with something of a sixth sense about the business of music. He started his kids—Lester, Leslie, Geraldine, Doyle and Teddy—singing on street corners for coins that were tossed their way. Because they were the smallest, Teddy and Doyle were up front, hoping for a silver coin to fall among the copper ones, so they could ease a foot out and cover it before anyone beat them to it.

"Dad would be driving along and he'd see a cattle auction going on, and he'd stop and talk them into letting us sing. It was hard to see those pennies—they are just about the same color as most of the ground in a cattle pen." Did they miss many pennies? "We never left a one!" he laughs.

But he doesn't feel they were deprived. "No! No, not at all! I think I had a privileged childhood. We had calluses on our thumbs from shooting marbles—like any other kids." But Doyle's never serious for long. His favorite game, he says, was played in the woods with simple rules: "You just close your eyes and see how far you can run."

Pop Wilburn didn't wait for the breaks. In 1940, when their old car broke down and they missed the talent contest in Birmingham, where the grand prize was an appearance on the Opry, he just headed on to Nashville. He set his little group up in the alley behind the Opry, and told them, "When you see Roy Acuff come out the door, start singing."

Acuff was impressed, and offered them a guest appearance on the Opry. Other appearances followed—then a bid for membership. But after about the sixth stint, word came that the Child Labor Law precluded their working on the network. Doyle was then ten—Teddy nine.

They still consider the ruling unfair. But then a lot of things came along that were unfair. World War II intervened. The act was split. Leslie was wounded. Then came Korea where Teddy and Doyle both served. But through the years there were jobs on radio stations all across the South, a featured spot on the Louisiana Hayride, and eventually they were back with the Opry.

Geraldine married and decided to retire from the business. When Teddy and

Doyle returned from Korea they teamed as a duet and it wasn't long before the hits started coming. With their brothers they formed Sure-Fire Publishing, and then Wil-Helm Talent Agency. Pop Wilburn died in 1966, but he lived to see his boys with a veritable empire in the music business.

Neither Doyle nor Teddy are much on displaying wealth. Doyle says, "This house suits me just fine, and I've got an office set up here so I can work."

Doyle appreciates work. His work—anybody's work. "I'm interested to know how you go about writing," he says. And you can depend on him to keep things moving. ". . . we've got two shows tomorrow afternoon at the Opry . . . a show tomorrow night . . . about 120 miles from here. . . ."

In the meantime he assures us, "You'll see a very different kind of house when you get to Teddy's."

\* \* \*

At Teddy's and Mamma Wilburn's house, Silver, the collie who is always on hand for the close of the Wilburn's TV shows, bounds across the beautifully landscaped lawn. There's more attention to neatness and esthetics here than at Doyle's. But Mamma Wilburn's crocheted afghans and family pictures are all about, and one of Pop Wilburn's poems is framed and displayed on the mantle.

Health problems keep her activities restricted these days, but Doyle says, "When we were kids I don't ever remember Mother just sitting down." And both boys mention coming in late from a show, ". . . and it didn't matter what time it was, Mamma would have a big pot of homemade soup waiting for us."

Over coffee and pastry hot from the oven, Teddy talks—not so much about the old days—but more about now. For the last six years he has lived in California, attending acting school and commuting to Nashville for tapings. He's at something of a crossroads—having just about decided to move back to Nashville. "I have the feeling God wants me back in Nashville . . . working with my brother."

The past few years have been troubled ones for Teddy. He speaks of "drinking too much . . . really becoming paranoid." Then in February he had a religious experience that turned his life around. It's a

## And They Always Have a Helping Hand For Someone Else

In her book *Country Singers As I Know 'em*, Mae Boren Axton, Nashville publicist and songwriter, tells of a time when she was in need of money. She doesn't know how the Wilburns found out, but on the Saturday before her Monday deadline to acquire the needed amount, two smiling brothers arrived backstage at the Opry and presented her with a brown paper bag. In the bag were four jars of muscadine jelly, which Geraldine Wilburn Gresham had canned after Teddy and a nephew gathered the grapes. In among the jelly jars were bills totaling \$1000.

Needless to say Mae was overwhelmed. (And pleased when she was able to pay them back within a couple of weeks.) But later she learned the boys, who at that time were really just getting started, had to skip a house payment to help her out.

Teddy is a little vague when asked about such stories. "Oh, I don't remember exactly . . ." he'll reply. And on other such matters he's apt to say, "I think Doyle was helping out. . . ." But he does like to tell about the time, back in the late 1940s, when the Wilburn Bros. hired a young singer on their early morning radio show in Shreveport, La. The singer was working as a salesman in the shirt department at Sears & Roebuck and his name was Webb Pierce.

Teddy likes that story because he can point out that after he and Doyle got out of the Army it was Webb Pierce who hired them and helped them secure their first contract with Decca Records. So—is that what country music is really all about? "That's what *life's* all about," says Teddy.

George Hamilton IV remembers when he was starting out, Doyle told him, "You have to put more into country music than you take out." And Doyle says, "Well . . . yeah . . . that sounds like something I probably said. I always tell young people you can't *just* take out." He's not impressed when it's pointed out that the business doesn't always work that way. "That's how it ought to work," he says flatly. But it doesn't, of course. "I don't care. I'm telling you what I think. That's how it *ought* to work. Just like us . . . and Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb."

Of course, the best known of those helped by the Wilburns is Loretta Lynn. Teddy says, "Loretta would have made it big with or without us." But the fact remains it was the Wilburns who launched her career and directed those early years. Not only Loretta, but her sisters, Crystal Gayle and Peggy Sue, along with her brother, Jay Lee Webb, were at one time all under the Wilburn

guidance.

The list of big names they've helped is a long one. It was through their efforts the Osborne Brothers obtained their first recording contract as well as a spot on the Grand Ole Opry. Doyle was trying to interest a major label in a demo he had cut on Jeannie C. Riley before Shelby Singleton got around to making her name and *Harper Valley PTA* household words. During the lean years before Charlie Rich broke through the sound barrier, being a sort of semi-regular on the Wilburn TV show helped keep him going. When Sammi Smith first came to Nashville it was Doyle who helped her find a place to stay, and the Wilburns helped with bookings here and there when work was scarce for the future superstar.

But what about those names you don't recognize? Those still trying to get that one foot on the ladder? The word that goes out on the grapevine (especially in their home state of Arkansas) is: Go by and talk to the Wilburns. From the Wilburns you won't get that all too familiar put down. They won't step on your dream.

One young hopeful whose path crossed with the Wilburns is Judy Kester. She arrived in Nashville six years ago. Like many others she had a fine voice and striking good looks. But Judy was a couple of steps ahead with a recording and writing contract already in hand. Then the breaks came—the bad ones. There was the choice of an ear operation or hearing loss. Her record company went out of business. And writing contracts don't mean a thing if no one records your songs.

Looking back to those early days, Judy says, "I didn't know anyone to speak of. I didn't have any friends . . . no contacts. But I could go by there (the Wilburns) and they would at least talk to me. Of course, I was from Arkansas and we had that in common. But they did put me on their show, and there wasn't another syndicated show around that would have put me on. I was a nobody, really, but they didn't make me *feel* like a nobody.

"Doyle took time to really talk to me. He gave me a lot of advice." She smiles a little ruefully when she admits, "I didn't exactly follow his advice. But just about everything he told me turned out to be true." She remembers he talked about "not just taking out." And she remembers, too, and smiles a little brighter, "One thing . . . he told me success wasn't going to happen overnight . . . so . . ."

So the dream is still there. And it ought to be.

touching story—a personal story—better told or written by Teddy himself than secondhand.

And I think it's likely he will write about it. Doyle reflects his father's capacity for work. Teddy, like his father, has the need to record his feeling on paper. A lined, yellow note pad is never far from him. He jots down songs—ideas for songs—poems. Some poems are in flowing free verse—*Look inside somebody . . . there's a good soul . . . most of them tired . . . so be gentle when you look . . .*

"I don't mind working," says Teddy, "but Doyle overdoes it." He recalls an extended tour a few years ago that afforded only four days off. Then Doyle had the promoter book them for two extra shows, both prison benefits, and cut their free time in half.

And by tomorrow I would begin to get a pretty good idea of what Teddy meant.

\* \* \*

Their afternoon shows are fast paced and nostalgic. Roy and Mildred Acuff are on hand. Roy has been out on the Opryland grounds signing autographs. They slip in a side door to watch the first show. Except for Geraldine, the kids Roy first saw singing in the alley are all here. Lester and Leslie Wilburn, both Opry musicians, are picking back-up for their brothers, and the four get together for some old-time gospel harmony.

There's a softness in the Wilburn sound—*Country Feeling . . . Arkansas*. It's probably traceable to the Anglo-Saxon ballads that survived in many mountain areas. They lack the harshness and downright rowdiness that developed in some mountain music. But rowdiness threatens to erupt today when Faron Young, who isn't scheduled, explodes on stage to join them. It's an afternoon for the spontaneous—the kind of thing the Wilburns enjoy and handle well.

Back at Mamma Wilburn's there's fresh lemonade waiting. Teddy's tired. Even Doyle is tired. But he says, "I just can't let Ralph Emery down." So we're off to Paris, Tenn., where Nashville's best known DJ started in radio, for—what else?—a benefit show.

We stop at a corner grocery first, and then head off into the sunset—an ill-assorted group of five—passing canned Cokes and ham and Arkansas steak—that's bologna—sandwiches from the front seat to the back. Most of the way it's two-lane blacktop. Doyle sleeps. Teddy reads some from the Book of Revelations. Then to pass the time we're all singing hymns . . . mostly the old ones . . . *Where He Leads Me I Will Follow . . . I Walked One Day Along A Country Road*.

A service station attendant mis-directs us and we drive 32 miles out of the way. Eventually we get there. And eventually the day does end—somewhere around 3:30 A.M. And what is Doyle saying now? Something about, " . . . two afternoon shows . . . and a 10:30 Opry spot before we leave for Hot Springs." ■





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# COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIG ON THE TUBE... AGAIN

Big city TV execs are starting to realize what you knew all along—that there are millions of people who want to see and hear country stars on TV.

by DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Once again country music has begun an assault on that magical medium called television. Dolly's got herself a sparkling new show, rough-edged Johnny Cash was back on in a late summer mini-series, *Music Hall America* features country music every week, and of course ole Porter Wagoner's syndicated show is still going strong after more than a decade and a half. And speaking of syndication, *Hee Haw* is currently the top syndicated show in the nation! It's seen on more stations now than it ever was on a major network.

Something of a golden age, right? Well, maybe. Actually, country music and television have been walking hand in hand from the wobbly beginnings of that all-encompassing medium, and it is only the relative dearth of country network shows in the early and middle 1960s which makes the TV boom of the late '60s and that of today seem dramatic.

Laura Lee McBride—Bob Wills' first girl singer—claims it was her father, Tex Owens, who pioneered country music over the airwaves. Owens, a popular cowboy singer in the 1930s, is best known for his 1935 hit *Cattle Call*, and appeared on an experimental broadcast late in the decade. The year, 1936; the place, Kansas City; the song, naturally, *Cattle Call*.

On the other hand, another strapping singing cowboy, named Red River Dave McEnery, claims the honor of pioneer, having been TV's first country singer. He and his Swift Cowboys (Bill Benner and Roy Horton) played over TV from the RCA exhibit during the 1939 World's Fair in New York. Although he didn't think a lot of it at the time (he recalls the intense heat of the floodlights most vividly), he's getting plenty of mileage out of it now. His yellow Buick with the words, "Red River Dave: World's First Television Star" emblazoned on the doors is a Nashville landmark.

The honor of the first syndicated series—and you thought Porter Wagoner was a pioneer, didn't you—goes to a show called

the *Old American Barn Dance*, which began in 1949 and was hosted by a genial fellow named Bill Bailey. Since the show was a conscious attempt to bring together all of country music's factionalized regions the guests made a wide regional mix: Merle Travis and Tennessee Ernie from California, Johnny and Jack from Shreveport, Pee Wee King from the Southeast, and old timers like Doc Hopkins and the DeZurich Sisters from Chicago, where the series was filmed. The show ran until the early '50s.

The visual format of the *Old American Barn Dance* was typical country corn, replete with hay bales and barnyards. It was an image lifted straight from barn dance stages, and one which has dogged country music on television ever since.

Local shows were frequent, and unfortunately remain largely undocumented. They were simple live performances, with no kinescopes made and no videotape in existence. The performances of the great and the wretched both went unrecorded. It is a form which thrives to this day: Ernie Lee in Tampa, Country Boy Eddie in Birmingham, Cas Walker in Knoxville all host early morning live television shows which feature country music prominently. And in Nashville, Ralph Emery hosts a live morning show which, in various formats, goes back to the early days of WSM-TV, where even Hank Williams had a show for a while.

Speaking of Hank, his two network appearances are both historic milestones: his 1951 shot on the *Perry Como Show* may well have been the first nationally broadcast appearance by a country singer, while his appearance on the *Kate Smith Show* in 1952 was filmed, and is now the only existing visual record of a Hank Williams performance.

Cincinnati, oddly enough, was the home of a very early televised show: the *Midwestern Hayride*. It began in 1948 on a three (later four) station link-up in Ohio called the Crosley Network. Between 1949 and 1951 it served as summer re-

placements for both the *Show of Shows* (Sid Ceaser) and *The Milton Berle Show*, at least on a regional basis, as well as one summer stint as an across the board five days a week afternoon show called *Straw Hat Matinee*, a summer replacement for the *Kate Smith Show*.

Hosting of the *Midwestern Hayride* was shared by Willie Thall and singer Ernie Lee. The cast included The Turner Brothers, steel wizard Jerry Byrd, Judy Perkins, and superyodeler Kenny Roberts. After its replacement days the show carried on regionally over WLWT-TV for years—ending its run only last year. Since the late 1950s it's been hosted by "The Round Mound Of Sound," Kenny Price.

One of the most interesting uses of country music in the dawning days of TV was the series of two- to four-minute films made in 1951 by the Snader Telescription Service in Hollywood. When a TV show ended before the hour or half hour, Snader films used to fill the time until the beginning of the next program on the hour or half hour. Television soon shaped up its act, eliminating the need for fillers like the Snader Telescriptions. But a number of remarkable performances by Bob Wills, Carolina Cotten (with Wills and the Texas Playboys), Tex Ritter, Merle Travis, and Wesley Tuttle and his Western All Stars were broadcast frequently, and have been preserved thanks to this ill-fated idea.

Yet the golden age was still to come, for the mid to late 1950s—as opposed to the present—was really the peak of country music exposure on national television, and if the performances and the settings seem dated today, many of them at least have a certain straightforward charm (as well as a nostalgic one), concentrating on the singer and his or her songs, rather than the cute, overly slick tricks and dialogue that plague today's country TV productions.

An exceedingly important local show was *Town Hall Party*, from Compton, Cal. A popular barn dance type show which began on radio in 1949, it went on



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the air over KTTV-TV in Los Angeles in 1953. Starring Tex Ritter, Merle Travis, and Johnny Bond, it featured many other prominent West Coast artists, including Rose and Joe Maphis, Les Anderson, Tex Carman, and a very youthful Freddie Hart.

Another extremely important local program which went into syndication was *Town and Country Time*, hosted by Jimmy Dean. long before his network show of the early 1960s. Here was the old Jimmy Dean, decked out in fancy cowboy duds, backed by the ubiquitous haybales, and leading his band, the Texas Wildcats, on the accordion. He had changed his image drastically by the time he began his network program in 1961—conservative western clothes, a hand held mike and a stool, and slick songs were the order of the day then.

The big syndicated series of the decade was, without question, Albert C. Gannoway's *Stars of the Grand Ole Opry*, which has been repackaged and repackaged again and again, running into the 1970s in some areas. Filmed in Nashville in 1955 and 1956, most of the major stars of the Grand Ole Opry appeared on the screen: Tubb, Wells, Pierce, Smith, Robbins, and many others, including several now deceased: Ira Louvin, Rod Brasfield, Moon Mullican, Cowboy Copas, Jack Anglin, and more. Many of these performances are classics, and Gannoway, the recycling king, plans to make them available once again in movie form, along the lines of MGM's super-successful film *That's Entertainment*.

Another interesting TV series which came out of the 1950s was a set of Army recruiting films starring country music stars, mostly from the ranks of the Grand Ole Opry. These 15 minute shorts—replete with advice from the stars themselves on enlistment ("You get choice, not chance, in today's Army")—were called *Country Style U.S.A.*, and were filmed in Owen Bradley's Nashville studio. Among the diverse set of hosts were Flatt and Scruggs, Jimmy Dickens, Pee Wee King, Lonzo and Oscar, and others. Faron Young was by far the most frequent host.

The 1950s also had two important network series as well—the first being *Eddy Arnold Time*, which began as a summer replacement for Perry Como, then went into very popular syndication. On it, the by then ultra-slick Arnold featured Chet Atkins and the Jordanaires. The show helped earn Arnold his lasting reputation as country music's ambassador to the world of easy listening.

The other network show was the *Ozark Jubilee*, which began over ABC in 1955. Broadcast from Springfield, Missouri, the show and its producer, Si Siman, lured Red Foley away from the Opry as host, to lead an all-star cast which included Porter Wagoner, Jean Shepard, and Hawkshaw Hawkins.

The outfit later changed its name to *Jubilee U.S.A.*, and then changed again



"Midwestern Hayride" came out of Cincinnati for years from WLWT-TV.



Last gasp of the WLS Barn Dance, WGN-TV, Chicago.



The Town Hall Party Gang were telecast out of KTTV-TV, Los Angeles.

Photos: Courtesy of Douglas B. Green and Ernie Lee

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World Radio History

Photos: Mike Borum



# Is VERNON OXFORD Really Too Country for Country?



Like many a country boy these days, Vernon Oxford appreciates a good gun. In picture at top, he shoulders an exposed-hammer double-barrel. In bottom pic, he poses by his car adorned with bumper stickers calling attention to his hit single record, REDNECK.

by John Pugh

**H**e arrives each morning promptly at nine. He exchanges greetings and pleasantries with the staff, gets a cup of coffee and heads for his "office," a private, windowless, almost eerie room whose space is taken almost completely by a huge conference table. He takes out two legal pads filled with the call letters and program directors of some 600 radio stations from Bangor to Burbank and settles down to work. For the next seven to eight hours he will call as many of these stations as possible.

On the face of it there is nothing particularly unusual about this. It is a necessary labor for many artists, especially young, struggling unknowns. But in Vernon Oxford's case something most unusual happens all too often. Each day any number of these stations will tell Vernon he is "too country" to be played. Repeat: he will be told he is "too country." He will be told this by metropolitan 50,000 watt stations playing country music 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and by stations whose listeners have never been in a town over 50,000 population. He will hear any number of explanations: "doesn't fit," "not our type record," "not what we're programming," "not what we're trying to reach our audience with," or "not the sound we're looking for." They all add up to the same thing.

Nashville's music community is of a very mixed opinion regarding Vernon and his music. Some see him as the purest country singer in years with his mournful, plaintive ballads and aching, nasal vocal quality, and readily compare him to Hank Williams. Others see him as a comical anachronism, a man lost in the 1950's, a voice dying in the wilderness. Regardless of how they view him, many do not quite know how to take him, for Vernon is as unique personally as he is musically. He is tall, bony and semi-stoop shouldered (again evoking comparison to Hank Williams, to whom Vernon disavows any intentional similarity). He dresses nondescriptly, excepting a massive, attention-riveting belt buckle. He affects no condescending airs, no hip smugness, and no feigned jadedness. His speech—ah, his speech—is so genuine that at times it sounds almost like an old Dave Gardner caricature of white "south Alabama." All in all, he comes across as the stereotype lovable, innocent, good-natured country boy in a World War II platoon on the Iwo Jima midday movie.

Vernon tells his story. "I was born about 20 miles east of Rogers, Ark. I was always going to old country churches and revivals. My mother sang and I'd get up and join her. The preacher'd hold me up and say, 'I want you to look at him. Just four years old and already singing for Jesus.' During the week I'd sing and preach to the cows and chickens while doing the chores. Wouldn't be nobody but me and the cows, but I'd just have a ball. When I got older I started singing in taverns and any other place they'd let me.

And there was always a square dance or something on Saturday nights. People kept telling me I ought to come to Nashville and my wife kept saying, 'You'll never be satisfied until you do.' So we came in May, 1964.

"I said, 'I don't know where to go or how to get started. I'm just going to take my guitar and set out.' The first place I went was RCA. I walked in and said, 'I come to see about doing some recording. I got my guitar and I'd like to have somebody listen.' They said they'd be right out. A few minutes later Bob Ferguson kind of poked his head around the corner and gave me the once over and finally said, 'Well, come on in, we'll see what you got.' He listened and said, 'If you can't do anything anywhere else, come on back.' I went to every other company and couldn't get in. So I went back to RCA and said, 'Nobody wanted me to come back, so here I am.' He said, 'Come back later and we'll cut a tape on you and find out what you really sound like.' I went back the next morning and he cut a tape, just me and my guitar. He tried to get me signed with RCA and they wouldn't take me. I tried off and on for a year and a half until they finally signed me in November, 1965.

"My first record was released the following February, *Woman, Let Me Sing You A Song*. It really took off for three or four weeks, then fell off the charts just as quick. *Let's Take A Cold Shower* did nothing. *Baby Sister* did fair. *Stone By Stone* didn't hit the charts. *Little Sister, Throw Your Red Shoes Away* was the only one on the national charts. RCA finally dropped me in 1968 because I wasn't selling. I put out two records on Stop that didn't go nowhere and one on Omni that didn't do nothing.

"In the meantime a man in South Carolina sent a tape of mine to a friend of his in England. The friend played the tape in all the country music clubs in his area and they sent it to others. Just one guy started it. They're the fightin'est bunch of people I ever saw if they believe in you. There was a Vernon Oxford Appreciation Club started in Sweden sometime after I was dropped from RCA, and it was 1972 before they could even find out how to reach me. Fightin'est bunch of people on earth. They finally got me over in England in 1973 on a 17-day tour. I had standing ovations, packed houses. I didn't know how to act. Some people rented a bus and followed me the whole time. One family took off two weeks and went with me all the way. Fightin'est bunch ever was. I came back and went back to trying to get on record. I tried every label and couldn't do no good. But all this time the people in England and other countries were sending letters and petitions to RCA to re-sign me. It finally came to 1500-2000 letters and 5000-6000 signachers. I re-signed last fall.

"Then this year (1975) I had more people requesting me to be on the Wemb-



Vernon spends many a day at the RCA offices in Nashville plugging his records. Here he's shown with RCA receptionist Sheila Wilson.

ley Festival than any other artist. (Note: the annual Wembley Festival is a three-day bash held each spring in London featuring 10-12 of the top U.S. country acts.) I got over there and all my albums sold out the first night. They got all my other records out of the warehouse and sold them in less than 30 minutes and people still asking for them. They were black marketing tickets, everything. When I got onstage I encored for an hour. I came off and it took five bodyguards 15 minutes to get me a distance 'bout from here to that door over yonder. Fightin' bunch, I tell you."

Bob Ferguson, Vernon's producer and still staunchest believer, said, "Mary Reeves called me and said, 'Guess who took Wembley by storm? Vernon Oxford! I was standing backstage and I thought the walls were coming down. I wondered who was causing all the excitement and I went out front and there was Vernon tearing them to pieces.'"

But when he returned home, Vernon found that the U.S. papers had given all the Wembley headlines to the big names. While they went back to the trappings of stardom, he went back to work on the telephone, his overseas triumph completely ignored in the States.

"Yes ma'm, this is Vernon Oxford of RCA Records calling from Nashville. Is your music director in?" Pause. "He's not in?" Pause. "He'll be back next week?" Pause. "I'll call back Monday the 28th. Thank you."

"It gets disheartening," Vernon sighed, draining another cup of coffee. "I try so hard and I don't even get what I feel is an equal chance. Course, I realize they got a lot more things to worry about than Vernon Oxford. But a lot of them play God with your future; they don't seem to

realize they're keeping back a man's career, his life. Why can't a station play a record a few days and let the *listeners* decide if it's too country?"

But it has not all been a fruitless quest for Vernon. He is on the playlist of 103 stations, 54 of them, surprisingly, in Texas. The state of Willie and Waylon, of Johnny Bush and Freddy Fender, of western swing and honky-tonk has also given a fair hearing to Vernon's old-time wailing tearjerkers. Nothing big yet, just little places like Alice and Pasadena and Midland, but it's a start, a hope. "There's some other places that's been pretty good, too," Vernon said. "Louisiana, North and South Carolina, over in east Tennessee. And the northern states: Maine, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio. And for some reason Washington State has been pretty big for me. It gets to be like a game of checkers," he laughed. "You try to sneak it in somewhere and get a few plays before some big shot at the station notices and says, 'Who's been playing this hill-billy?'"

It is almost unnerving how often Vernon makes light of his plight, acting like some gigantic practical joke is being played on him and pretty soon everyone will jump out and yell "Surprise! Surprise!" His work and his music are taken so seriously by him that he must, by necessity, view everything else (and sometimes even them) with a certain amused detachment. Even his overseas conquests are spoken of in an "Imagine, them making such a fuss over me" kind of tone. There are a few of his genre still left: Stonewall Jackson, Stoney Edwards, Loretta Lynn; the last pure country people in a business gone wild with two-tone patent leather Guccis, brushed denims and the outlaw look. But totally without

affectation, pretention or guile, Vernon Oxford is the absolute last genuine-article-if-there-ever-was-one. And now a whole business watches—some encouragingly, others derisively—to see if it will be his curse or his blessing.

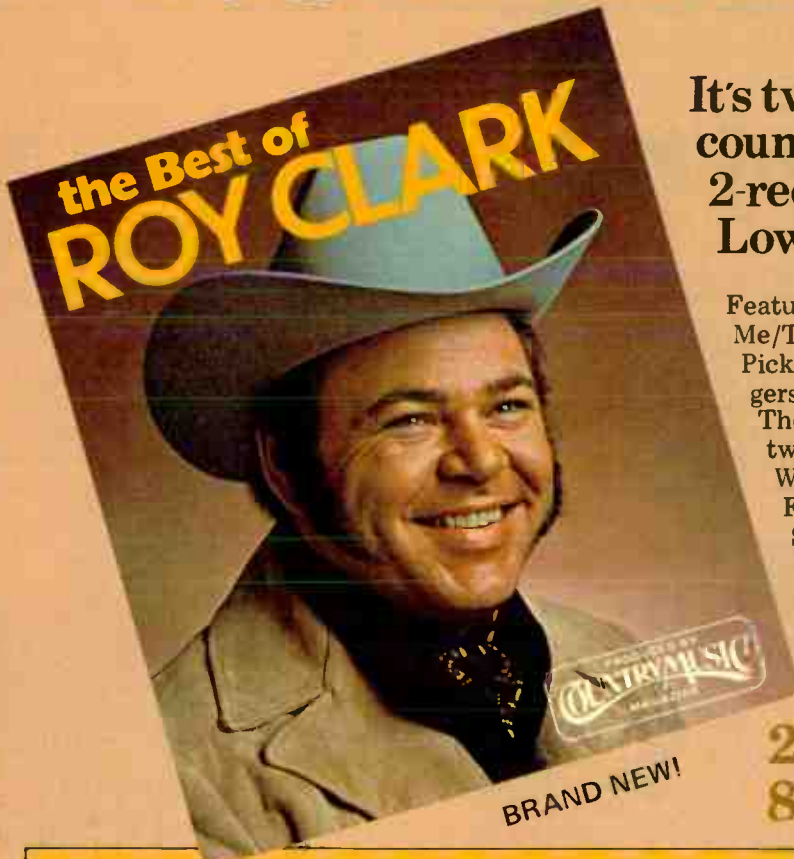
## EPILOGUE

As almost any country fan now knows, particularly one who was born with a six-pack in his hand, hunts honky-tonk queens and grooves on Waylon and Willie, Vernon's ceaseless phonings have finally gotten results. At this writing his record, *I'm A Redneck*, an up-tempo, novelty number, is in the 30's and 40's on the record charts, and has set off the usual chain reaction of more bookings, more exposure, more publicity—and more attention for Vernon whenever he now calls a station.

"Yeah, things a lot better 'n the first time you talked to me," he grinned. "Give you an example, I'm now number one on a station in Miami that never would play me before. I'm gettin' a lot more dates; I went over to Sweden and Norway for the first time. We're havin' a lot of fun with the record. We come out with *Redneck* bumper stickers, belt buckles, T-shirts. We got a *Redneck* billboard in Houston where 176,000 cars pass each day. I'd rather sing a ballad or a tear-jerker, but I'll sing anything the people want. If they like *Redneck*, I'll sing another one just like it.

"I quit smokin' and drinkin'. Don't want to do anything that might cause me to mess up. Back then I was hopin' against hope. Now I think I might have a chance. You know why? Because now the stations are beginnin' to call me." ■

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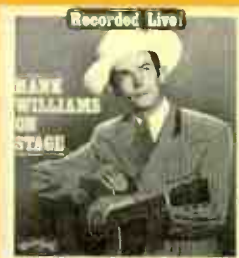
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# RECORDS

HOW WE RATE THE ALBUMS: 5 STARS ..... ALBUM OF THE MONTH      2 STARS ..... GOOD  
 4 STARS ..... EXCELLENT      1 STAR ..... FAIR  
 3 STARS ..... VERY GOOD      0 STARS ..... POOR

## ALBUM OF THE MONTH

### Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys

The Tiffany Transcriptions, 1945-1948  
*Tishomingo BWO1 \$6.98*  
 No tape available.  
 Star rating: ★★★★★

With the resurgence of Western swing, there is so much of Bob Wills on the market it makes choices difficult, whereas

not long ago it was hard to find old Bob at all.

Whether *The Tiffany Transcriptions* is the ultimate set to have is hard to say. But on the other hand it's hard to surpass, for here are some of Wills's best musicians, twenty songs, and all the life and energy of live performance. And none of it has been commercially available before.

These cuts were originally made for Tiffany Transcriptions, to be aired on radio as if they were live shows, and therein lie the strengths and weaknesses of the set. The weaknesses: second-rate sound quality, a fluff or two, and several unfortunates.

But the strengths are overpowering: a broad range of music from superb old-time fiddling such as *Cotton Eyed Joe*, to hot swing such as *C Jam Blues*, to pop such as *Chinatown*, to blues such as *Don't Cry Baby*, to big-band swing such as *Woodchopper's Ball*. Bob's two greatest hot fiddlers, Louis Tierney and Joe Holley, are here, as are Eldon Shamblin, Junior Barnard, Alex Brashear, Millard Kelso, Tiny Moore, Herb Remington, and Noel Boggs, plus the magnificent Tommy Duncan on vocals.

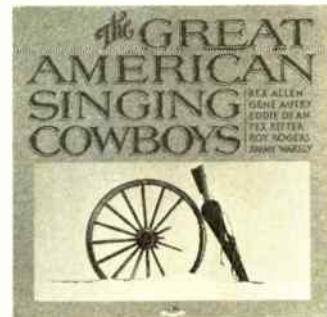
An assemblage of most of the musical sources that helped form Western swing, an assemblage of many of its best musicians, *The Tiffany Transcriptions* is even more a moving and revealing glimpse into Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys as performers. It's easy to see why they were one of the most exciting bands on earth.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN



sies by Eddie Dean previously available only on rare Sage and Sand 78s. Other artists included here are Rex Allen, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers, and, of course, Gene Autry, the head of Republic Records.

The material, mostly from the 1950s, varies considerably in style, but the quality is uniformly high. Rex Allen comes closest to sounding like he's just going through the motions, but his voice is full of the power that led many to say he was the finest of the singing cowboys, just a bit too late. Gene Autry's singing is



surprisingly lively for this late in his career, and Eddie Dean's powerful voice nearly blows the needle off the turntable with his *Banks of the Rio Grande*.

Both Tex Ritter and Jimmy Wakely have had their cuts updated at Wakely's Shasta studio; the more modern sounds are incongruous, but inoffensive. Tex is in superb voice, and Wakely, my favorite cowboy singer of all, reminds me why with his controlled, even, and beautiful voice.

It is Roy Rogers who provides the high point, however. Backed (without credit) by the Sons of the Pioneers, his *Blue Shadows on the Trail* is everything a cowboy song should be: great lyrics, great tune, great harmony.

### Gene Autry and Friends

The Great American Singing Cowboys  
 Republic IRDA-LPN-R-6016 \$6.98  
 8 track tape \$7.98  
 Star rating: ★★★

If you're one of those diehards who thinks that singing cow-

boys ruined the beauty of country music with their crass commerciality, be sure to pass this record by. On the other hand, maybe you ought to pick it up, because it might just change your mind.

There's no question this col-

lection will be a treasure to singing-cowboy freaks (those few of us still on the range), for it presents a good many rare performances: two from *Melody Ranch* transcriptions, four transcriptions from Jimmy Wakely's CBS radio show, and two clas-

Two major flaws: hopelessly inadequate liner notes (seventy-five rambling words by John Wayne) that give neither recording information nor dates, both essential in a good historical re-issue, and hopelessly hokey and pointless spoken introductions to each number.

Still, the magnificence of some of these performances outweighs the flaws. It's a great sampler, a collector's item for fans of cowboy music, and a fine way to start exploring this often overlooked and often maligned genre of country music.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

### Bill Anderson

*Peanuts and Diamonds and Other Jewels*  
MCA MCA-2222 \$6.98  
MCAT-2215 (tape) \$7.98  
Star rating: ★

This is an album of extremes. Half of the ten selections are beautifully crafted, brilliant, and hard; the others are disappointing.

Bobby Braddock's magnificent title song, a tale of poor cowboy and wealthy lady forever divided should become a modern classic, a 1976 *Mansion on the Hill*. Anderson's understated vocal gently glides through the song's many twists, giving it even more impact in the process. His own *Meanwhile Back in Cleveland* likewise deals with contrasts. *Why'd the Last Time Have To Be the Best* plaintively



reflects an abortive affair while the moralistic *Liars One, Believers Zero* cleverly keeps score on a cheating husband.

The rest of the album simply can't follow these songs. *Let Me Whisper Darling One More Time* is a pedestrian lament that comes off more silly than sensual. *Your Body Blows Me Away* is hopelessly muddled in its own triteness. If you've ever felt that tranquil homelife does not a country song make, hear

*We've Got It All* and the too sweet *Daddy You Know*: What for proof. *Sweet Texas*, which may be Bill's worst song, strings together all the stupid Lone Star cliches you've been putting up with in songs for the past year: rodeos, beer, *San Antonio Rose*, tacos, and the boring rest. *Thanks* is heavy-handed religious dumbness.

That this record could contain so much good and bad material is almost unbelievable. Bill Anderson can make a good song better, but no singer can improve crummy material. The best conclusion seems to be that while *Peanuts and Diamonds and Other Jewels* contains some of his finest work, it's certainly not his best album.

RICH KIENZLE

### Tanya Tucker

*Here's Some Love*  
MCA MCA-2213 \$6.98  
MCAT-2213 (tape) \$7.98  
Star rating: ★★

It sounds highly improbable, but in *Short Cut*, there's Tanya scatting along with a jazzy flute. Then again, perhaps it should be no surprise. For Tanya has been growing for some time now, and any similar-



ity between the one-time child star and the full-grown lady in this disk is not readily apparent.

*Here's Some Love* finds Tanya with her usual ration of rockers, personality pieces, and man-worship. The character portraits have always been a strong suit, and previous albums have been thick with tales of rainmakers, peripatetic connen, and the like. Indeed, something in her morose, throbbing vibrato equips her to tell such stories with evocative, and seemingly personal, conviction. This album's entry in the Tanya Tells About American Losers sweepstakes is a power-packed wailer called *The Gospel Singer*.

Now we come to the other side of Tanya, and her ability to take

the worst sort of abuse from those selfish guys who infest her vinyl love-life. *Gonna Love You Anyway*, she insists to one character. *You Just Loved the Leavin' Out of Me*, she tells another jerk.

The pop chart bullets are starting to appear. She's making good, accessible music, and most of all she's officially a woman, having beat the child-star jinx. Her peers are few; more power to her.

RUSSELL SHAW

### Little David Wilkins

*King of All the Taverns*  
MCA MCA-2215 \$6.98  
MCAT-2215 (tape) \$7.98  
Star rating: ★★

Singer and pianist Little David Wilkins has been a writer of hits for Brenda Lee and Stonewall Jackson, an artist on Sam Phillips's Phillips International label, and, more recently, a fixture on Ernest Tubbs's *Midnite Jamboree*. Trying to plot his place on the rockabilly-honky-



tonk axis can be deceptive; suffice it to say that he falls somewhere between Swan and Stewart.

*King of All the Taverns*, his first album in two years, features ten original songs that range from outstanding to confusing, all packaged in basic, excellent arrangements and carried by his strong, unpolished voice. The highlights are numerous, and include his recent hit *The Goodnight Special*, an unbridled celebration of sexuality, *Make Me Stop Loving Her*, a fine ballad of unrequited everything, *Half the Way In, Half the Way Out*, one of the better cheating songs I've heard recently, and *One Monkey Don't Stop No Show*, an anthem of good-bye and good riddance. The only real failures are *Disco Tex* (yes, just what you'd expect) and *Let's Do Something (Even If It's Wrong)*, which

is so vague that it could refer to anything from throwing bombs to spitting on the sidewalk.

A few years ago, the only country singer who regularly pounded a piano was Jerry Lee Lewis. Now that's changed and it seems that the time's right for Little David. *King of All the Taverns* is a dynamic piece of work, and hopefully the next album won't be two years away.

RICH KIENZLE

### Tom T. Hall

*The Magnificent Music Machine*  
Mercury SRM-1-1111 \$6.98  
MC-8-1-1111 (tape) \$7.98  
Star rating: ★★

What Tom T. Hall has done in *The Magnificent Music Machine* is very good and very smart. His music lately has been pretentious and drab. Lyrically, he has been full of silly, vain-glorious cliches, presented as wisdom, and musically he has been repeating the same tired melodies first heard in his *Ballad of Forty Dollars and Other Great Songs*.

But Tom T. Hall does have a lot of wisdom to offer. It's not to be found in *The Man Who Hated Freckles* nor *I Love*, but in stuff like this: beautiful, down-to-earth lyrics and high-flying music. Hall calls this a



bluegrass album, and musically it is: fine high harmonies, strong and fluid picking. But Hall's writing, which accounts for most of the songs, is better than the usual dry bluegrass tropes, and *I Don't Want My Golden Slippers* and *Mama's Got the Catfish Blues* are great songs no matter what you call them. Other highlights are John Prine's *Paradise* and Bill Monroe's classic *Molly and Tenbrooks* (Monroe performs in the album too).

*The Magnificent Music Machine* is Tom T. Hall at his unassuming, natural best.

NICK TOSCHES

## Larry Mahan

King of the Rodeo  
Warner Bros. BS 2959 \$6.98  
BS-2959 (tape) \$7.98  
Star rating: ★ ★

Larry Mahan, who's widely regarded as the greatest rodeo star in history, has won the "all-around" championship a record six times. He's had his jaw broken, as well as about a dozen different bones. He's also pulled biceps and cracked a couple vertebrae. All this and you expect him to sing like Johnny Cash too?

Which is a polite way of saying that Mahan's shaky voice doesn't quite make it. He has problems just staying in tune. If you don't believe me, check out *Larry's Salty Dog Blues*, his reworking of the bluegrass classic, and a prime example of his sly sense of humor: "It's too damn bad that I can't sing/But honey you can't have everything."

With this album, Mahan does

for rodeo stars what Dave Dudley did for truckers and C.W. McCall for CB radios. Mahan's songs are about the men who get calluses on their calluses and bruises on their bruises from trying to make a buck by wrestling



steers and riding bulls and broncs. But it's not always as grim a life as the one suggested by *Freckled Face and Pretty Ribbons* or *Up Jumped the Devil*. *Stunt Man* is a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the film stand-in who's "stuck here on the bottom

of another damn stampede;" it features a delightfully woozy fiddle break. And these men know something about the joys of roaring on their day off. They are perfectly capable of poking some fun at themselves (*Rosie's Palace Pure Love and Fingertip Massage*) because of it. If Mahan's look at this alien (to most of us) subculture seems highly romanticized, well, that's just the way songs are. The good ones always have a kernel of truth at the heart of them anyhow.

The music, while based in country, veers sharply towards easy listening pop. Mahan himself comes off a real likable crackerjack, the sort of guy you'd enjoy swapping stories with over a few beers even though his lies would always turn out to be better than your own. And wonder of wonders, once you get used to it, even his singing voice might just start growing on you. It has the same

kind of charm as those amateurish family Christmas portraits your kid took with his first Instamatic.

JOHN MORTHLAND

## Jimmy Wakely and Friends

The Way They Were Back When...

Shasta LP 517 \$5.00  
8T-517 (tape) \$6.00

Star rating: ★ ★ ★

It's really a shame, but live country radio shows seem to be a thing of the past. Not *The Grand Ole Opry* and its spin-offs, of course, but shows such as Gene Autry's *Melody Ranch* and Knoxville's *Mid-Day Merry-Go-Round*, programs in which the concert hall atmosphere was replaced by a more intimate setting. Transcriptions of these shows are scattered everywhere today and while a few occupy honored places on the shelves of collectors, thousands more

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gather dust in radio station libraries and garages.

**The Way They Were Back When...**, culled from transcriptions of Western film and recording star Jimmy Wakely's CBS radio show from 1953 to



1958, and issued on his own Shasta label, is a truly fascinating memento of those days. Not only does it capture the friendly, loose atmosphere of the programs, but also provides a look at the smooth, swinging sounds that emerged from postwar

southern California, influenced by the pop-Western ballads featured in the cowboy movies of the period. Wakely, Merle Travis, Wesley Tuttle, and Tex Williams, all featured in this record, worked within this style in most of their recording.

The high points here are many: *Detour* with Tuttle, Wakely, and Travis taking turns on vocals; Tex Williams's low-down version of *Nine Pound Hammer*; Tommy Duncan's mellow *Dusty Skies*; Tex Ritter's plaintive *These Hands*; and the lively banter between Wakely and his old sidekick Johnny Bond. Hank Penny tells a hilarious Christmas story and sings a snatch of his theme song, *Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon*, backed, as is everyone, by a superb studio band.

**The Way They Were Back When...** is a truly historic document recalling a period of country music that's fallen by

the wayside. But it's also damn fine music, and every one of the twelve cuts is a treasure in itself.

RICH KIENZLE

### Marty Robbins

El Paso City  
Columbia KC-34303 \$5.98  
CA-34244 (tape) \$6.98  
Star rating: ★★

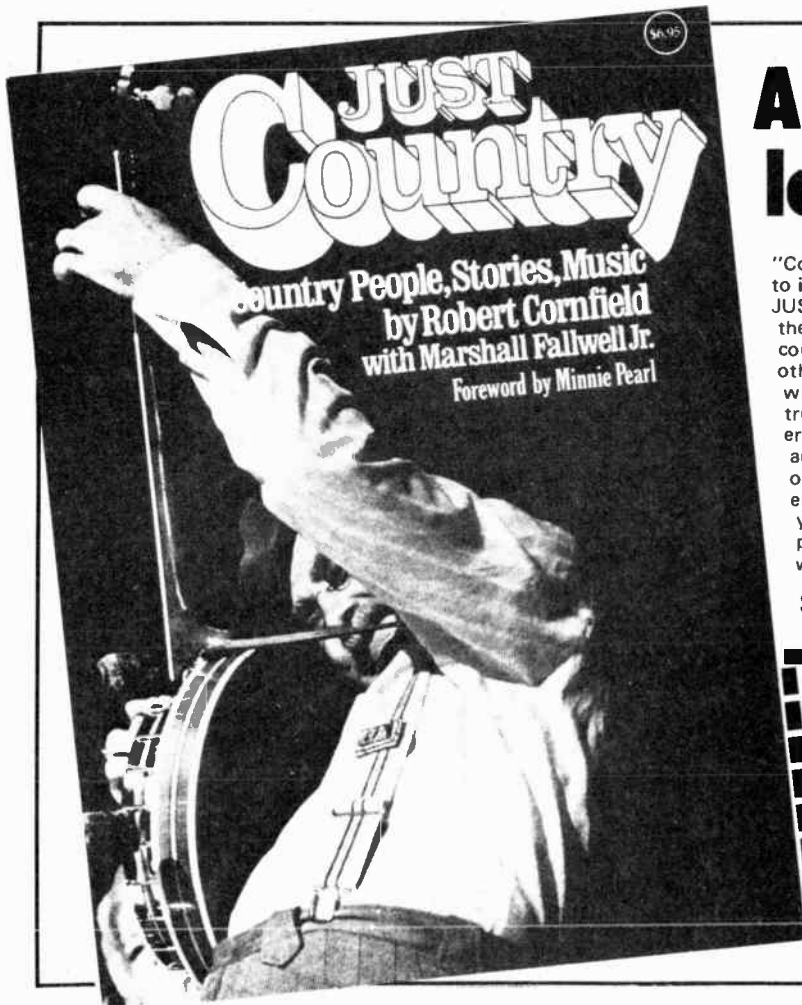
**W**hat! Marty Robbins tells *Country Music* two issues ago that the song, *El Paso City* isn't about reincarnation? I can't believe it. Why, even before he opens his mouth in the song, I'm hearing and seeing things I've heard and seen before, as those Tex-Mex mariachi horns, underscored by trilling marimbas, create an instant dusty border scenario. Then it's *deja-vu* when Marty brings that easy, unfettered voice into the tune, backed by a simple Spanish guitar, and spins a romantic, sometimes violent tale of some

young buck in the Old West.

The gunslingers, brownskin women, and mythic Mexico just can't be ignored. Simply put, the stuff that made Robbins the heir apparent of singing cowboys fifteen years ago is back again.



But there is more to it than just a return trip to El Paso. Two cuts pay homage to the mysterious Maria, a sort of Dolores Del Rio siren who played catalyst in many of Robbins's previous tales. The first, *Ava Maria Morales*, is about Maria's cow-



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boy lover who unbeknownst to her is also an outlaw. In the second, *I Did What I Did for Maria*, she plays the field as Marty describes gunning down another guy in lustful revenge. Other tales of pistol-packing such as *The Ballad of Bill Thaxton* and some breezy yodeling by Marty in *Way Out There* complete the classic image.

By keeping a detached air toward his subject matter (whenever someone is snuffed, he maintains a remorseful tone), thinking cool thoughts, and not, thank God, capitalizing on the outlaw portion of his narrative, Robbins carries on a tradition that has faded with the passing of the Hollywood Westerns and the concept of the Good Guy. He's the best Old West story teller this side of *True West* magazine.

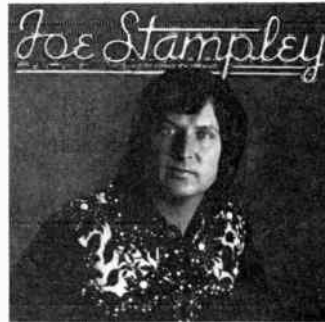
JOE NICK PATOSKI

### Joe Stampley

Ten Songs About Her  
Epic KE-34356 \$5.98  
EA-34356 (tape) \$6.98  
Star rating: ★★☆☆

Joe Stampley is what you call a good, solid country singer. Rarely is there anything remark-

able in his music; it is the stuff of jukeboxes, car radios, and thick, black stacks of party 45s. Like many older country singers, Stampley's lyrics are often pedestrian, but his voice works



magic on them. As they used to say before the Deep Meaning Boys took over, it ain't what you say but the way how you say it.

There's some stuff in *Ten Songs About Her* that'll blow the metal out of your mouth. *She's Long Legged* is not only one of the best titles ever, but also one of the killer blacktop songs of the season. *Apt. #4 Sixth Street and Cincinnati* is fast and loud and sexy. *Backside of Thirty* is one of the strongest honky-tonk cuts Stampley's ever cut. My one complaint is in the production. Adding sweet

strings and background voices to this sort of music is ridiculous; Joe Stampley's music deserves sissifying no more than Lefty's or Hank's did.

NICK TOSCHES

### Jerry Lee Lewis

Country Class  
Mercury SRM-1-1109 \$6.98  
MC-8-1-1109 (tape) \$7.98  
Star rating: ★★☆☆

Yes! The Killer rises again, indomitable. It's true that the usual production techniques



weaken much of this album, but it's also true (and more than slight reason for celebration) that a few of the cuts are undiluted, cello-less Jerry Lee Lewis.

*I Sure Miss Those Good Old Times, Only Love Can Get You in My Door, The Closest Thing to You*, and the eternal (think about it) *You Belong to Me* are as great as anything Jerry's cut in Nashville since his Smash days.

The Killer's voice is far better than it's been in the last couple of albums: less battered, less nasal, and more energetic. And the album cover is his best since *Would You Take Another Chance on Me?*

Jerry Lee Lewis will never end.

NICK TOSCHES

### Rex Allen Jr.

Ridin' High  
Warner Bros. BS-2958 \$6.98  
B8-2958 (tape) \$9.97  
Star rating: ★★☆☆

Times may have changed since the days when Rex Allen, Jr.'s father was himself a singing star, but with all the current cowboy nostalgia, there's still a demand for the music popularized by the people Rex, Jr. salutes in his semi-autobiographical *Can You Hear Those Pioneers*. His heroes include Eddy Arnold, Rex Allen, Sr., Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Gene Autry, Tex Ritter, and especially the Sons of the Pioneers.

Rex, Jr. further declares in that song that he thinks "it's time that we put western back in the country sound," and that's just what he does on several other cuts. He eases through a novel version of *San Antonio Rose* like a cool breeze on a hot, lazy day, and also delivers a fitting performance on *Tear-drops in My Heart*, the cowboy's lament first recorded by his father and the Pioneers nearly 30 years ago. Most dramatic of all is *Streets of Laredo*, which consists of just Rex, Jr. singing and an acoustic guitar strumming faintly in the background.

Rex, Jr. is a smooth singer with crossover potential. He doesn't limit himself exclusively to cowboy songs—there's an interesting version here of the old Everly Brothers hit *Crying in the Rain*—but the western material is definitely his strongest suit. Like father, like son.

JOHN MORTHLAND

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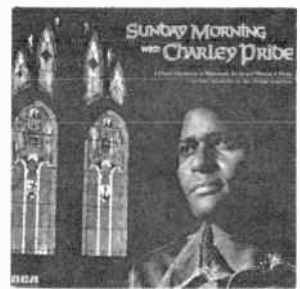
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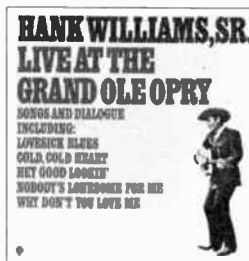


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## NEWS

(Continued from page 18)

Waylon Jennings, Tom T. Hall, Billy Sherrill, Billy Swan, Linda Hargrove, Dolly Parton and Ben Peters each received three citations.

Taking home two citations each were: Don Reed, Jessi Colter, Donna Fargo, John Farrar, Kris Kristofferson, Willie Nelson, Conway Twitty, Kenny O'Dell, and the late Hank Williams, accepted by Acuff-Rose.

Songwriter Rory Bourke was the top ASCAP (American Society of Composers and Publishers) writer, capturing six awards; followed closely by Ray Griff, who was a five-time winner for songwriting. ASCAP awards are not only presented to the songwriter but also to the publisher, producer and artist. Ray Griff, guilty on all counts, took home a record-breaking 16 plaques, setting an ASCAP record.

Other multiple winners were: Owen Bradley, Nelson Larkin, Ray Stevens, Tom Collins, Milton Okun, Bill Rice, Jerry Foster, Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Eddy Raven, Webb Pierce, Willie Nelson, Bob Morrison, Earl Conley, Bill Hall, Glenn Keener, Johnny Wilson, Ronnie Prophet, Bob Dean, Ron Chancey, Roy Dea, Billy Sherrill, Berny Leadon, Charlie Fields, Harold Hinde and Don Riis. The banquet was hosted by Ed Shea of ASCAP Nashville and Stanley Adams, ASCAP President.

Some 500 attended the SESAC banquet at Woodmonth Country Club and saw William Fries (C.W. McCall), win the top award for writing the best country song with his talking CB hit *Convoy*. Gene Autry was elected ambassador of country music. The event was hosted by Bert Parks and five contestants of this year's Miss America Pageant. Other SESAC winners: A&R producers of the year, Chip Davis and Don Sears; country music writer, Ted Harris; most promising country music writer, Gary Jackson Price; most recorded SESAC country song, *Burning Bridges*; international song *From Woman to Woman*; country single, *The Happiness of Having You*; SESAC hall of fame song *Hillybilly Heaven*. SESAC, by the way, is a music licensing group similar to BMI and ASCAP.

Noticeably absent from the Grand Ole Opry's 51st birthday celebration was Roy Acuff, who suffered stomach pains at the ASCAP banquet earlier in the week, and Minnie Pearl, who collapsed on stage at the CMA banquet. Acuff is in Miller Hospital in satisfactory condition, while Minnie Pearl, reportedly suffering from exhaustion, is resting at her Oak-Hill home.

Willie Nelson managed to make almost every show in town, including the Old-Time Picking Parlor, George Jones' Possum Holler and Tootsie's.

HAZEL SMITH  
MICHAEL BANE

# JERRY REED

(Continued from page 26)

tin' the weeds out, that's when it did a complete 180. Life's like having a baby. Until the nine months is up you can't do anything about it, but when it's your time, you can't stop it."

One of the most intriguing facts about Reed's odyssey of self-discovery is his continual unearthing of the fact that he is different, that he's not like everybody else, that he doesn't fit most of the established categories. This seems to have created the desire to be like everybody else in certain ways—particularly as a 100-percent all-American man.

For example, as he indicated earlier, the all-American man is not a sex symbol. And the all-American man is not an outlaw. Since he had released an album titled *Nashville Underground* with liner notes by John Hartford, since he had talked about the problem of categorizing his music and getting it played on the radio, ("I'm kind of a renegade out there somewhere. A lot of country dudes don't like to play me. And then your top 40 won't play me, they say I'm too country.") I wondered if he felt some identity with the self-styled "outlaws" of country music.

"Nooooo," he says, taken aback. "Outlaws? No, oh no. I love that 80 percent of America out there that kicks their shoes off their feet, and gets their beer out and sits back and watches *All in the Family*. I don't consider myself an outlaw. Outlaw is just a name when you come right down to it, and an attitude."

Reed's come to terms with himself in some impressive ways. But he still hasn't completely cracked open that dam. "I wish I could be as loose about everything as somebody like Glen Campbell is," he confesses, "I really do. I'm really too tight knit, I guess. Sometimes I wish I could say ---" he breaths out with a whooshing noise, "and just really blow it out."

"Ah, girl, I've always wanted to be an actor. I've just been laying behind a log, honey, waiting on something." Reed's all outgoing enthusiasm again as we talk about his fourth movie, *Semi-Tough* for MGM. Just for the record, it doesn't include Burt Reynolds. Reed will play the president of a record company. I suggested he would surely come across as one of the more loose executive types around. He laughs, but seems half seriously injured. "Now, well, you don't know, you haven't seen me perform yet. You just wait before you say how loose I'm gonna be."

His eyes crinkle with amusement, "I might even look like a . . ." he rares back, makes a preposterous pompous face, and tugs on imaginary suit lapels, "legitimate recording president. You never know." He grins. "You don't know what I've got up my sleeve. But you're probably right. I imagine it'll be kind of loose, really."

# HILLBILLY

(Continued from page 13)

Pride Show, the group was nominated by CMA for vocal group of the year and single record of the year. *The Door Is Always Open* was nominated for song of the year, while one of the trade magazines declared the group is today's most promising new vocal group.

Names and faces to watch: Billy Ray Reynolds, Marshall Chapman (a girl!), Bobby David, Paul Craft, Panama Red, Don White, Gordon Payne.

Steve Holt, who picks drums with Ronnie Milsap, has been a friend of mine for more moons than I can remember. Steve is black, Ronnie is blind, and yesterday society would have taken a "looking down" attitude at this pair. Steve is more than your average drummer. He serves as Ronnie's eyes, and if there was a musical humanitarian award, it should go to Steve Holt. And if there was a nice guy award, it should certainly go to Ronnie Milsap.

One of my all-time heroes, Ernest Tubb, is recording again. Heard from a young, hip, blue-eyed musician who some folks would call hippie, but I call neat guy, who said, "He's gonna be the next super star."

The \$50-a-plate dinner hosted by Tom T. and Dixie Hall at their suburban home, Fox Hollow, netted \$15,000 for the Nashville Humane Society. Among those attending were Little Jimmy Dickens, Minnie Pearl, Carl Smith, and Mayor and Mrs. Richard Fulton.

'Bout all for this month 'cept to say Happy Birthday to my great aunt, Mary Rumbley, borned and raised in Caswell County, N.C., who just turned a ripe young 96 years old. Ain't that great? ■

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# PEOPLE

(Continued from page 10)

posed for Photoplay Magazine modeling fashions made especially for her by Simplicity Pattern Company. The photos were shot at Opryland.

Songwriter Jerry Chesnut, writer of such songs as *It's Four In The Morning*, is hospitalized after injuring his leg while digging post holes with a digger attached to a tractor.

Ray Price's Dallas home was burglarized to the tune of an estimated \$70,000 in damages.

The father of Buck Owens, Alvis Edgar Owens, Sr., died at the age of 67. He managed a ranch for Buck in Bakersfield, Cal.

Sammi Smith hurt her back when she bent over to lift her saddle out of her pickup truck. She is getting along fine now.

Mel Street's daughter, Sherri, 18, married recently. Mel, his wife, Betty, and their other two children swapped their present home for a new lake-side house facing Tennessee's Old Hickory Lake. The home is in the \$125,000 price range.

Remember the court battle between Ray Stevens and Webb Pierce over Webb's having a tour-bus ramp built next to his property? The property (and ramp) are right across the street from Ray's house. The court eventually allowed the ramp, whereupon Ray put his own house up for

sale.

Well, Ronnie Milsap has bought the house from Ray. Blind from birth, Ronnie said, "I bought the house sight unseen." He told Webb to sell all the tapes and albums he wanted to at his famous swimming pool. If anybody asks, said Ronnie, "I'll just say I never saw a thing."

Merle Kilgore and wife, Helen, are divorcing. Merle has moved in with Faron Young, who's also getting a divorce. Merle said, "Faron and I lived together when we were 18 and here we are again."

Mickey Newbury is mending from back surgery. He lost quite a bit of weight during his illness.

Dolly Parton has named her new band the Gypsy Fever. It will consist of five musicians and two back-up singers.

Webb Pierce and Carol Channing have a new duet album out. They recorded it a few months ago when Carol was in town to film with *Captain Kangaroo*.

Pretty Miss Norma Jean was visiting the Opry a few weeks ago from her home in Norman, Okla. She is wearing her hair in a short Afro. You may remember Norma from the Porter Wagoner Show, before Dolly.

Hank Williams, Jr. recorded his first sessions for the Warner/Curb label in Los Angeles. Hank's new girl friend is singer Jamie Kaye. Jamie has had several chart records with Mercury. One was *Peace On You*, written by Charlie Rich.

How time flies. Carl Smith and Goldie Hill were telling about their children at a recent party. Lori is now 18 and is attending college. Carl, Jr. is 15 and in high school. Dean is now 11.

Bill Anderson and his wife, Becky, made some TV appearances in Los Angeles recently, including a husband-and-wife show, *Tattle Tales*.

Conway Twitty's younger daughter, Kathy, is joining sister Joni and brother Mike in the recording game. Kathy has changed her name to Jesseca James for recording. She says if she doesn't make it in music, she will go to college.

Helen Cornelius has joined the Jim Ed Brown road show and his regular TV show, *Nashville On The Road*. The two recently soared to the top of the charts with a duet titled *I Don't Want To Have To Marry You*.

Dolly Parton and Emmylou Harris are two of the backup singers on Mary Kay Place's new Columbia album. As you know, Mary Kay is Loretta Haggers on the TV soap opera *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*.

Jeannie C. Riley will hold an auction at her farm in Williamson County, Tenn. Since Jeannie C. and husband Mickey have bought the old historic farmhouse, Jeannie thinks it ought to be furnished in antiques. She had Spanish furniture in her other home and "it sure don't fit out here," said Jeannie. ■



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# TEXAS

(Continued from page 14)

of his new documentary film about Texas Border music. Its an excellent film which showcases Flaco Jimenez, The Alegres De Teran, and Lydia Mendoza, among others. The movie, *Outlaw Blues*, is moving ahead, still starring Peter Fonda, but sans Waylon Jennings. Writer Bud Shrake is the latest to snare a role. He'll play the bartender in scenes to be shot at the Soap Creek Saloon. He got the part when Soap Creek's owner, George Majewsky blew the lines, "Hey, look, Garland's on TV!" George has definitely got star potential, however, as any of us who've seen him do his juggling act behind the bar can attest.

The aforementioned Shrake teamed up with Fort Worth writer Dan Jenkins to produce *Limo*, a "progressive country novel." And while we're into books: J. Frank Dobie, considered by many to be the granddaddy of Texas literature, left behind a ranch in the hill country called Paisano. Each year a different writer or artist receives a grant to stay and work there for one year. This year's recipient is Jan Reid, who penned the book *The Rise of Redneck Rock*, one of the first attempts at examining modern Texas music.

Speaking of books, came across *The Buddy Holly Story* by John Goldrosen, published by the Bowling Green Press - an interesting, mostly factual, account of Holly's career. For example, anyone who doesn't believe that Buddy Holly died before his time, consider this: In 1959 (the year he died) Holly was living in Greenwich Village with his Puerto Rican wife, had decided to produce his own records because he thought his had been over-produced in the past, and was making plans to produce a young Waylon Jennings, whom Holly considered a future star.

George Jones played Gilley's Club in Houston recently, and his bus was surrounded by a train of some of the best looking snuff queens I've ever seen.

Armadillo artist Michael Priest has been picked to do the artwork for Asleep At The Wheel's next LP. Jerry Jeff Walker and Guy Clark did a benefit for Castle Creek, one of Austin's oldest clubs. Guy's new album on RCA is called *Texas Cookin'* and the title fits it fine. The great Jimmy Reed passed away this month. As far as I'm concerned when you put rhythm in front of blues you're talking about Jimmy Reed. There was a time (the late fifties) when you couldn't hear nothing on Texas radio but Jimmy Reed. He was a fine gentleman and a great part of our music. We're gonna miss him.

I'm in love with the cover of Linda Ronstadt's new album, *Hasten Down The Wind*. I can't help it. I carry it everywhere and dream about it at night. That's it for this time except I'd like to report that no one anywhere saw Billy Joe Shaver this month.

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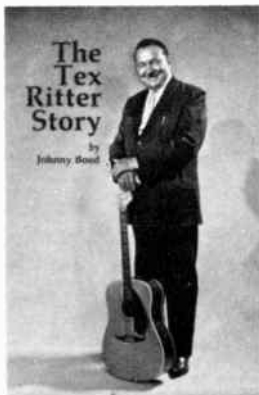
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## DOUG SAHM

(Continued from page 30)

living the Texas life, moving to Austin, making records but not the charts, playing football, working with Jerry Wexler of Atlantic Records ("he's *beau-tiful*, man"), and becoming, more or less by accident, a well-loved ingredient of the Austin-angled, Willie Nelson-dominated Wave of the Future in Country Music. Of Austin, Doug says that "there's a lot of strength that people don't see, which is the underlying things that don't get in the magazines, like the baseball team an' me an' Alvin Crow... that's where it is, I really like the bars, there's one place called The Split Rail an' you can go over there any day an' find me or Alvin and Ray Benson. Y'know, everybody's doin' their business, but they're all hangin' out, y'know. It's real kinda slow an'—healthy."

He tells me this in New York, on the verge of a train trip to Philly. Before he leaves, we find a fern bar to eat in, and Doug, loving the food, confesses that he loves New York for gastronomic reasons but he loves Austin better. Big Reds, Mexican joints, Pearl beer... oh, man. And he's *crazy* for softball. What a life. All those roots.

"The media's really pushin', like, 'Will the industry go to Austin?' like you an' I were talkin' about," he gasps. "Well, it ain't yet an' it might not ever be, an' I'm prepared either way, I don't care. I just don't know if I really want, y'know, Nashville Row there... so I'm readin' a lot of feedback of what people are writin' about us down there, an' I can almost tell better by what *they* say 'cause I'm so into my own trip that I'm doin', man. I just kind of go out an' do it, on automatic pilot all the time, y'know, burn up four or five hours of energy. It's like a job, y'know, it's fun. I really love it."

He has one minor beef with Austin, however, and that is that nobody in Austin knows how to play blues. "Austin's so hip, man, but they're, like, very naive about the outside world," he says, fingers slapping out a natty drum roll on his scraggy jeans. "It's 'cause they never hear no R&B. Like, they realize their thing is a trend an' everybody wants to do that trip, get a T-shirt, y'know. It's like, there's no blues much. Next week we're gonna play a country night an' a blues night... Someday I'll just say 'screw it' and drop out and say 'later, man, I just wanna do country an' be that way for a while.' Maybe then people would see that I'm really just a hillbilly with long hair."

\* \* \*

Back in New York, Doug Sahn is jumping around his hotel room like an oversized bedbug, his conversation reeling from terminal to terminal, brain stumbling ahead of mouth, glasses dropping off the end of his nose, burning up the energy, looking forward to the train ride... wheels clicking, fence posts drum-

ming past, music rolling in his head... somehow it seems the only conceivable context in which Doug Sahn would find it possible to sit still. "Oh, wow," he says, "really, man. Trains. Love it!"

"But like, you asked me, man, about this country trip, y'know? Yeah, well, just playin' good country songs, man... like other people in Austin, especially, like, you know, the ladies. They, you know, liked to hear me sing those real sensual love songs, an' that's where I got into, like, developing it, know what I mean? Like *Cowboy Peyton Place*."

"I mean, we're prepared to play fairs an' all. I like to play for country people—if they smoke or if they don't smoke, if they drink or if they don't, if they're city or they're country, it really don't make no difference as long as you love the music. I mean, you *got* to love the music, you know what I mean? It's like a commitment. You gotta make your statement."

We take a break while Larry Baunach, ABC/Dot's country promo man and Doug's main connection in ABC, calls to ask if Doug has seen the *New York Times* review of last night's show. The *Times* drew attention to, and lavished praise on, Doug's commitment to roots. Doug's already read it, but he's still ecstatic anyway. Back to subject.

"I mean, Larry's really gonna go on this thing. Larry's the reason we're here. It was my choice to go on Dot, y'know. I wanted that country, that Southern feeling to it all. It was a *hell* of a deal for people who didn't know me... Like, you know, we're not quite like the average people, you have to admit. And, er, this really worked out good."

Larry, meanwhile, is out looking for old Doug Sahn albums—there are "over a dozen" out there.

"Y'know, man," says Doug, "there's really a lot of people in this country, and there's a lot of rock people seen the thing go, like, right across the plank already, an' I can feel those people really, y'know, comin' in there an' sayin', 'Get out of bed, Doug, we're goin' to the CMA thing.' Wow. I really dig that, man."

After all this, I really have the feeling. In my mind's eye I remember Willie Nelson's Picnic in '75, when Doug and his Tornados floated *Mendocino* out over the crowd in the first hours of darkness with a relentless rolling beat and long, swaying, Chicano-swampy harmonies, tuning the crown for the first time that day. Then I remember him in San Benito, Texas, at his old friend Freddy Fender's Homecoming Day, blasting the night apart with a set any white boy country-blues cat could have used for an epitaph, the local Texans grinning in delight and Freddy jumping back into his rock & roll energy roots, he and Doug duetting their hearts out. Simply put, Doug Sahn provides the same kind of beauty you get from a Gary Stewart or a Delbert McClinton, or an Elvis; the thrill of a wild, crazy card played with transcendental style. ■



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