

COUNTRY music STAR LIFE

No. 3
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**3 Uncut Country Conversations ■ BOBBY LORD INTERVIEWS ROY ACUFF
■ WEBB PIERCE SPEAKS HIS MIND ■ SHOOTING THE BULL WITH ERNEST TUBB**

IN COLOR!

- ★ **Why JERRY REED Wants To Quit The GLENN CAMPBELL SHOW!**
- ★ **Saint Dolly of Nashville: The DOLLY PARTON Story**
- ★ **The Women In BILL ANDERSON'S Wildlife!**
- ★ **MERLE HAGGARD: Bad Boy, Beautiful Husband!**

ANNE MURRAY: Cinderella in Blue Jeans

**Mrs. Doug Kershaw Tells: HOW TO DRESS
LIKE A NASHVILLE STAR!**

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- WORKING MY WAY BACK TO YOU

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I now weigh _____ pounds.
I would like to weigh _____ pounds.

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COUNTRY MUSIC STAR LIFE

NUMBER 3

Publisher..... HARRY MATETSKY
 Editor..... PETER WOLFF
 Associate Editor.... DOROTHY HORSTMAN
 Assistant Editor..... AMANDA MURRAH
 Art Editor..... EVRA TWOING
 Photos..... BILL GOODMAN

Country Music Star Life is published quarterly by Captain Publications, Inc. 95 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10014, Room 807. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or pictures. All manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Volume 1, No. 3.



THE COUNTRY CRACKERBARREL

Cons riot for Porter; Hank Junior takes a bride, Jerry Lee loses one; Babies for George & Tammy, Roger Miller, Roy Orbison; Carl & Goldie, Scruggs & Baez, Mel Tillis, Jack & Jeannie on the town; The Making Of Charley Pride; Connie Smith: God's Newest Fan; Cousin Roy Clark: Here thar & Everywhar; The Lynns & The Twittys
 ... dozens of photos!..... 6

KITTY & JOHNNY: MARRIAGE COUNTRY-STYLE

How it works, why it lasts!..... 20

JOHNNY CASH: THIS IS YOUR LIFE!

Rare shots of the Great One and his family. Baby photos of John Carter Cash!..... 22

BOBBY LORD INTERVIEWS ROY ACUFF

Exciting excerpt from Bobby's spiritual classic!.... 24

SHOOTING THE BREEZE WITH ERNEST TUBB

The Texas Troubadour lets it all hang out, as they say!
 26

THE HEE-HAW HEART ATTACK HEX

Ticker trouble plagues the TV show's cast. Are they jinxed? 28

THE STONEMANS—THEN & NOW

Story of the legendary clan—in words and photos. 30

WHY JERRY REED WANTS TO QUIT

In color! Glen Campbell's buddy at home..... 33

SAINT DOLLY OF NASHVILLE

Dolly Parton, what makes her tick and why fans adore her. In color!..... 37

MERLE AND BONNIE HAGGARD

"A rotten kid" but a fine daddy, why did he change? In color!..... 39

BILL ANDERSON: THE WOMEN IN HIS WILD-LIFE

Divorce, marriage and love and what they mean to the Whisperer..... 42

WEBB PIERCE SPEAKS HIS MIND

A fascinating conversation with one of Nashville's super-greats..... 45

HOW TO DRESS LIKE A NASHVILLE STAR

Mrs. Doug Kershaw reveals the apparel secrets of your favorites..... 48

ANNE MURRAY: CINDERELLA IN BLUE JEANS

That Snowbird girl. Who is she? Why is she?..... 50

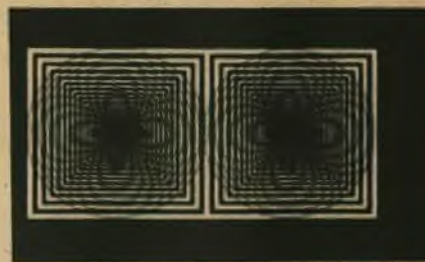
WHERE TO WRITE YOUR C/W HEROES

A private address book of your very own!..... 53

CONTINUING OUR FACTS 'N FOTOS FILE

Jimmie Skinner, The Stoney Mountain Cloggers, Guy Drake, many more..... 70

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ADDRESS _____
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with
**Windy
Wolverine**



NEWSFLASHES: RIOTING FOR PORTER; HANK TAKES A BRIDE; JERRY LEE LOSES ONE

(1) Georgia's state prison director recently revealed one of the year's saddest C/W stories. It seems that a group of cons at the Wayne County Prison got into a scrap about what to watch on the jug's TV: Porter Wagoner or the evening news. Pushes led shoves and before it was all over, some three days later, one man had been stabbed, the prison had been racked by riot, and the warden had been sacked. Porter's warbled many tunes bemoaning the fate of the jailbird but we're certain he wouldn't want to be the cause of bloodshed. (2) Hank Williams Jr., son of the Late & Great, added another American Beauty Rose to the Williams family flower garden

when he tied the knot with the stunning daughter of a Dallas cattleman, Gwendolyn Sue Yeargan. Hank and the ex-model were hitched at Nashville's First Presbyterian Church and later treated friends and relations to a reception at Music City's Staller-Hilton. The pair honeymooned on his grandpa's farm in Banks, Ala. where they hunted, fished, and such. (3) Meanwhile, colorful Jerry Lee Lewis was axed from the rolls of the happily married when his lovely spouse shed him on several charges—including indiscriminate womanizing. It was the second bit of heartbreak for Jer this year. His ma, Mamie, died in April of lung cancer.



Shades of The Old Johnny Cash Dept.: **Hee-Haw's Lulu Roman** has an apartment in Dallas. Recently, that apartment was raided by Big D constables who claim they found a large quantity of illegal drugs. Sometimes, the strain of performing just gets to be too much for some folk.

Bobby Harden got himself lost in the Arkansas woods during a deer hunt but was too abashed to admit it. Deep in the brush, he came upon a Mennonite general store ("Sorghum, Honey & Peanuts" said the sign). So, red-faced, Bobby bought a whole passel of goods and asked for a ride back to his car (he didn't want to "look" lost.) It took a two-hour jaunt in an old horse-drawn buggy to get back to his hunting buddies!

At the waxing of **Jerry Chesnut's** "The Wonders You Perform," **Tammy Wynette** had the whole sound studio in goose pimples . . . even the hardboiled sound engineers.

Leon Ashley talks to jukeboxes. Following a tender ballad at The Clubhouse recently, Leon was overheard to say, "**Margie (Singleton)** and I don't view it that way."

Rural renewal? The Music City News Building near Music Row in Nashville is coming down, and **Faron Young** is putting up a 250-unit, multi-million dollar motel in combination with Holiday Inns . . . every floor will be dedicated to another star, with custom-designed wallpaper bearing his picture . . . **Haggard, Pride** and **Cash** fans will be asking Faron where they can get a few rolls.

Speaking of **Charlie Pride**, we overheard recently him asking **Doug Kershaw** to write him a Cajun song . . . Kershaw replied, "If you start singing Cajun, I'll march on you."

At a not-too-recent telethon for MD (Muscular Distrophy), **Skeeter Davis** found a cute baby backstage she thought would make a hit with the television fans. . .until she found out it belonged to her ex, CW disc jockey **Ralph Emery**. Surprised, Skeeter almost dropped

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the tot when she found out whose it was . . .

Nashville's Most Unassuming Young Man: **Roy Acuff, Jr.**, budding recording artist, is learning the business from the ground up . . . among his chores at Acuff-Rose are record-stacking, filing and coffee-fetching . . . He says he'll fill any unmanned post in the business.

When **Junior Samples** goes into a restaurant, his road manager sells photos of him for a dollar apiece . . . they always come out ahead, even though Junior's appetite is huge.

Capitol recording artist **Sonny James** won't play jobs where liquor is served or dancing is allowing . . . when asked whether he receives jewelry and love letters from his fans, he replied: "No, it's more like tea cakes and jamcakes."

Songwriter **Vince Matthews**, upon hearing that he'd sing one of his own songs about a crinkled dollar bill on the **Johnny Cash Show**, practically had to be carried home by his wife, Melva. Vince has written for **Charlie Pride** and **Tompall and the Glasers**, and Johnny ("Melva's Wine").

Little Jimmie Dickens, prior to his going overseas for 12 days, left everyone with the feeling he was 7 feet tall, rushing around tying up loose ends and pausing only long enough to bring **Del Reeves** up on his current routine . . . Del is known for his imitations of Jimmie.

Good health to **George Jones**, **Tammy Wynette's** husband, who is suffering from emphysema. . . .

Covention Sights and Sounds: At the CMA Disc Jockey Convention in Nashville, the most touching moment was at the Decca Show, when **Loretta Lynn** was given a gold album for her "Don't Come Home A-Drinkin' With Lovin' on Your Mind" . . . **Teddy Wilburn** of the Wilburn Brothers said, "I've been there all the way. . . I've seen the heartache and the love of this girl. . . ." when his voice broke. Emcee **Ernest Tubb** stepped in, consoled him with, "That's all right, Teddy, she's one of the greatest."

The convention show-stopper was **Ray Price**, who received two standing ovations . . . for a medley of his hits including "Heartaches by the Number" and for "For the Good Times". . . . you could
continued on page 73

NEWLY ARRIVED

(1&2) It was a prince for the king and queen of Country Music, George Jones and Tammy Wynette and the couple looked truly proud and said so, while doing a little chin-chucking and cooing for our cameraman. (2) Rodge and Leah Miller named their recent additional tax deduction Shannon Elizabeth and wasn't her older brother, Dean, an excited looker-on! (3) Roy Kelton Orbison, Jr. is the rosy apple of the sunglassed-eye of his daddy and namesake, that famous rockabilly kid. Mamma Barbara's doing just fine!



Revealed at last by one of America's most successful weight-reducing doctors, a simple plan of Hearty Eating and gentle body toning that

Turns up your "Digestive Furnace" and burns flab right off your body!

From the office of the "body-stimming specialist" whose patients have lost from 26 pounds to 148 pounds each, without a single moment's hunger!

A doctor who is so successful—who has produced so many incredible weight losses for men and women of all ages—that new patients are often forced to wait as much as several months to see him!

And—most astounding of all—a doctor who forces his patients to lose weight by eating! By eating three full meals a day—all with second helpings, and with "fill-em-up snacks" at bedtime (if they still have room for them)!

Because this doctor has discovered an "upside-down" way to reduce! A way to lose weight (to repeat this all-important fact once again) by eating, and not by starving! Because the foods he feeds you—and the simple "body-toning exercises" he recommends for you—automatically make your "inner furnace" burn hotter—so that flab turns into fuel—and you can lose 20... 40... 60... 80... even 100 or 120 ugly pounds in the most delightful way you've ever dreamed possible!

Revolutionary? Yes! Controversial? Yes! But It Works! Hundreds Upon Hundreds Of Personal Patients Follow This Simple Plan Every Month! AND We'll Let You Prove At Our Risk That It Can Work For You!

So here it is: A new way to lose the kind of weight you've always thought it was possible for you to lose. And do it—not by starving—but by eating as much as you want wisely!

Yes, this is a diet—an eating diet! That forces you to eat at dinner, even though you may actually feel full from breakfast and lunch and the hearty snacks you've had in between!

Yes, there are certain foods you can't eat, because they're poison for your weight. But this doctor pays you back for passing by those "poison foods"—by letting you take another second helping of other foods you love instead! And you keep right on burning off the weight!

Yes, you have to stick to the diet every day if you want to keep on melting off those pounds. And you have to stick to the diet even if you're lost 40 or 60 or 80 or 100 pounds—so you can keep that weight off for good! But who wouldn't want to stay on a diet that lets you fill up your plate with delicious delicacies over and over again! And snack in the morning! Snack in the afternoon! Snack delightfully every night before you go to bed!

And One Extra Point: This Diet Has A Second Giant Benefit For You! It Drains THE EXCESS FLUID Out Of Your Body, That You May Never Have Been Able To Lose Before!

This second way of evaporating ugly flab from your body is perhaps equally as important as the

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Doctor Ernest R. Reinsh entered University of Nebraska in 1917, received Bachelors Degree in 1921; Doctor of Medicine in 1923.

Doctor Reinsh interned and has been associated with Providence Hospital, Detroit since graduation and has been in continuous practice except for the interruption of three and one half years as a Medical Officer in U.S. Navy.

Professional Memberships: Wayne County Medical Society, Michigan State, American Medical Association and Society of Abdominal Surgeons.

The interest in the problems of obesity was accentuated when patients came from the corners of the earth, such as Australia, South Africa, Europe, England, Sweden and South America.



first. For medical science now knows that a huge portion of those ugly bulges on your waistline, hips, thighs, buttocks and elsewhere is nothing but plain trapped water! And that even when you melt away the fat itself, too much bulge remains until you get the trapped water out with it!

You probably already know this. But did you know that most of the ways you use to lose weight today—most of the so-called "diet foods" you use to try to starve that weight off your body—actually increase the amount of trapped water in your tissues!

This includes the Number One "reducing fruit," eaten by millions of men and women when they

want to go on a "crash diet"—and that is so effective at retaining water in the body that the armed forces use it to keep men from bleeding to death when they have no plasma handy!

This also includes the Number One "reducing cheese"—and the Number One "reducing hot drink"—and every single one of the so-called "no-calorie" or "low-calorie" soft drinks! They are all "super water holders"! And unless you know when and how to use them—and when not to use them at all—you'll simply swell up like a balloon, even if you're conscientiously starving yourself twenty-four hours a day!

In Just Fifteen Minutes With His New Book, This Doctor Teaches You How To Drain Out That Excess Fluid—As Well As That Ugly Flab—And Do It Without Destroying Your Face!

At this point, we must quote the doctor himself. Here is what he says:

"The results of this diet will never be seen by your friends in sunken cheeks, hollow eyes, folds of unfilled skin, or other evidences of the typical starvation diet. If you stand before a mirror, you will have nothing but memory, and perhaps an old photograph, to tell you where you carried the weight before which has now disappeared."

At the same time, he also says: "My patients find that soon enough their clothes will become frightfully loose; even their shoes become too big. If you stick to my diet, you might even have to have your bowling ball redrilled."

And he quotes patient after patient, like this: "I am very happy with the results. I can wear a size 12 dress (was 20) or suit, and some size 10 dresses. Weight was 183, now 136... I feel 10 years younger too."

No wonder prospective patients wait as much as several months to see this man—to learn how they can lose 20... 40... 60... 80... 100 and even 120 pounds with a diet that forces them to eat and eat again—and that drains excess fluids right out of their bodies at the exact same time!

But YOU don't have to wait a single minute! All you need to do to try this revolutionary diet—AT OUR RISK—is simply send in the coupon below! It must work for you, or every single penny of your money back!

Why not start losing that ugly flab—for good—today!

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OUT ON THE TOWN

(1) Two folks we rarely see enough of are Carl Smith and his glamorous missus, the ever-popular Goldie Hill. They spend most of their time back home on the range. (2) And here's another handsome Nashville couple, Jimmy C. and Mae Newman. Ain't they dolled up fit to kill, though! (3) "You all be more careful now, hear?" is what Skeeter D. seems to be advising Hank Loughlin as she investigates his hizzoner's busted paw.



(1) Big Buck O. and Sheriff Faron Y. find a lot to chew the wool about whenever they get together. In addition to being top-flight C/W superstars, they're both wealthy businessmen. (2) Recognize these two fine friends in their finest finery? It's Glenn Ford and Ferlin Husky, who perked up TV sets across the land with their capering on NBC-TV's **Howdy** special. (3) Two of the hipper Nashville cats have been dating. Can it be love for John Hartford and Linda Ronstadt? Whatever it is, we think he should remind Linda to button up on cold nights.



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Pump



THE MAKING OF CHARLEY PRIDE

How did Charley Pride become Charley Pride? Well, that's a long, round-about tale. "I wanted to try out for the Mets," Charley recalls. "I ordered six bats (Brooks Robinson models) with my name on them and took time off from the smelter to go to training camp. To make a long story short, Casey Stengel didn't seem to know I was coming and I overheard him saying that he wasn't running a goddamn tryout camp. They let me try out anyway but I wasn't good enough, so on my way back to Montana, I stopped in Nashville at one in the morning and woke up Red Sovine and told him I was here." "Charley's a shock to most people at first," Red says, "It's like when I first heard Elvis Presley on a record, and I told Red Foley we should go hear this new colored boy in person and Red told me he was white and I didn't believe him. That's the question that most people ask

Charlie . . . how come you don't sound like you supposed to, but I guess that's how the good Lord wanted him to sound. I wish I sounded that good." Chet Atkins recalls the first time he played one of Charley's songs for the top brass at RCA. "I played the record and everybody agreed he was worth signing up. Then I told them he was black. Pure silence. Finally, someone broke in, 'He's great, though. Let's take a chance.' And the rest is history. A lot of people believed we were making a mistake, that disc jockeys in the deep South wouldn't play him. That he wouldn't get any promotion. They were wrong." Charley's buddy, Willie Nelson tells the same sort of story: "I'd heard Charley's records and thought he'd be a great novelty act. But when the local promoters in Fort Worth and Dallas heard that Charley was black they called me. 'You bringin' a cullid boy to sing in Texas? You crazy, Willie. You want to get us all killed?'" "We're all still alive," is Charley's grinning answer to that one.

CONNIE SMITH: GOD'S NEWEST FAN

Connie Smith, pictured here with Snuffy Miller and little Cathy Twitty, Conrad's daughter, has undergone a major shift of values since coming to Music City. "When I came here from Ohio," she says, "everything happened so fast, I couldn't believe it. It was like it was happening to someone else . . . I didn't know how to handle people . . . I had no tact and no diplomacy . . . I was called 'stuck up' and a lot of other things . . . I had hardened my heart because I couldn't take life's hurt." Her problems almost led to tragedy. "I threw tantrums, had headaches and was seeing a psychiatrist. I couldn't cope with the business and it almost broke me," she recalls. Her little boy, feeling abandoned while she was on the road, would sulk at home, listening to her records, standing at the window and crying as he waited for her to return. Then, with the help of the Rev. Jimmie Snow, Hank's lad, she found God. Now, Connie says, "The only way I can repay God is to point more to Him. That is my job now." A changed woman, Connie just hopes she can be of value. "The more I give to God the more I get from him" has become her motto.



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196972



195727



193615



195685 2 records count as 1



191338 2 records count as 1



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185843

Any 12



188060



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196089



186809



189928



191825



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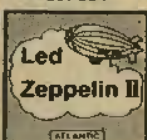
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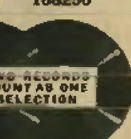
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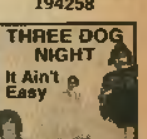
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186114



193623



196717



196444



196493



195719



193789



193821



194662 2 records count as 1

records for \$2.86

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SAVE ALMOST 50% ON RECORDS
Savings are off regular Club prices
AS A MEMBER OF THE
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You simply agree to buy 10 records during the coming 2 years



195701



192096



194019



195511



188136



171504



191205



186197



194357



196196



189449



191734

YES, IT'S TRUE — if you join the Columbia Record Club right now, you may have your choice of ANY 12 of these best-selling hit records for only \$2.86. And all you have to do is agree to buy as few as ten records (at the regular Club price) during the coming two years.

That's right — you'll have two full years in which to buy your ten records. After doing so, you'll have acquired a sizable library of 22 records of your choice — but you'll have paid for just half of them... that's practically a 50% saving off regular Club prices!

AS A MEMBER you will receive, every four weeks, a copy of the Club's entertaining music magazine. Each issue describes the regular selection for each musical interest and almost 300 other records... hit albums from every field of music, from scores of record labels.

If you do not want any record in any month — just tell us so by returning the selection card by the date specified... or you may use the card to order any of the records offered. If you want *only* the regular selection for your musical interest, you need do nothing — it will be shipped to you automatically. And from time to time, the Club will offer some special albums, which you may reject by returning the dated form provided — or accept by doing nothing.

RECORDS SENT ON CREDIT. Upon enrollment, the Club will open a charge account in your name... you pay for your records only after you have received them. They will be mailed and billed to you at the regular Club price of \$4.98 (Classical and occasional special albums somewhat higher), plus a mailing and handling charge.

FANTASTIC BONUS PLAN. As soon as you complete your enrollment agreement, you will automatically become eligible for the Club's generous bonus plan, which entitles you to one record of your choice free (plus 25¢ for mailing and handling) for every one you buy thereafter!

SEND NO MONEY — JUST THE COUPON! Write in the numbers of the twelve records you want, for which you will be billed only \$2.86, plus mailing and handling. Be sure to indicate the type of music in which you are mainly interested.

Columbia Record Club
 a service of
Columbia House
 Terre Haute, Indiana 47808



191270



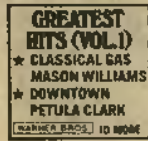
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191445



193805

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Columbia Record Club, Terre Haute, Indiana 47808

Please accept me as a member of the Club. I've indicated below the twelve stereo records I wish to receive for only \$2.86, plus mailing and handling. I agree to purchase ten records during the coming two years (I understand I may choose selections from any field of music), under the terms outlined in this advertisement. I may cancel membership any time thereafter. If I continue, I will be eligible for the Club's generous bonus plan.

SEND ME THESE 12 RECORDS FOR ONLY \$2.86

MY MAIN MUSICAL INTEREST IS (check one only)

- Easy Listening Today's Sounds
 Country Classical
 Broadway and Hollywood Jazz

Mr. Mrs. Miss
 (Please Print) First Name Initial Last Name

Address.....

City.....

State..... Zip.....

Do You Have A Telephone? (Check One) YES... NO
 APO, FPO addresses: write for special offer

N28-7/6Z

MAYF NUTTER: POLLUTION FOE

Folks blow hard about stopping pollution but it takes a born fighter like Mayf Nutter, the Starday recording star, to do something about it. Last year, the Clarksburg, W.Va. boy wrote a song about a local stinkeroo called "Simpson Creek" which had been contaminated by strip mining carried on by the Consolidation Coal Co. The song raised enough Cain that the Pittsburgh-based fuel firm was forced to speed up its anti-pollution research and soon developed a micro-organic waste detergent. Of course, they chose Simpson Creek as the place to test the new concept and a pilot program is now in operation. All-American Mayf is the virtuous sort. "I have an absolute thing about being on time and sticking with something until I get it done. I don't drink, use drugs or even swear—without sufficient provocation. But I'm no goody-goody. I have vices. Things like ambition, causes, writing and acting." Mayf's his real monicker, although he likes to kid about it. "My folks used to raise rabbits. That's why my real name is Leonard Hutchclutter. I use Mayf Nutter because it sounds more refined," he jokes. Some folks still don't believe him. His auto registration reads "Miss May F. Nutter."



BEAVER IN A BLIZZARD

Clyde Beaver is one of the great pioneering ambassadors of Country Music. Recently, for instance, he took his entourage (The Eager Beavers) up to Thule, Greenland to entertain the troops there. It's usually 20-below in those parts and that's chilly, brother! Not a tree in sight and only three females (Clydes's gal singer made it four, temporarily). To top it off, the band got confined to quarters during a Phase One Alert—which is what the U.S.-kimoos call a blizzard up there!

GLENN BARBER'S GENERATION BRIDGE

Glenn Barber's dad toiled hard to help him in his career and now Glenn, a father himself, is doing the same for his own son. "My father," he recalls, "was a carpenter and he put in many hours to pay for my musical training. Even though I play by ear, and learned guitar from my ma and on my own, the formal music training he provided has been a great help. My mom sang and played the guitar. I guess she was the one who planted the seed in my mind to do something with my inborn feel for music. When I was six years old, I was scolded for touching a neighbor's guitar—and this was a guitar he didn't even use! I went home crying and my father worked one full day (at \$3.50-a-day wages) to buy that instrument for me. From then on, my guitar went everywhere with me, especially on my daily mile-and-a-half walk to and from school." Recently, Glenn joined with his son, Glenn Junior, to employ the family's traditional carpentry skills on a new project: a home-made recording studio in their own backyard. Together, they built a monument to the fact that the generation gap can be bridged. We salute them for it!





COUSIN ROY: HERE THAR 'N EVERWHAR

Although' he may look like a slow-movin' Culhane, Roy Clark gets around so much that keeping tabs on him is like trying to catch a whirlwind. Here are some shots of Our Man in London, synchronizing his watch by Big Ben and greeting some youthful fans in the street. For sports fans, we dug out this photo of Roy and baseball slugger Boog Powell—big birds both!





(1) When Audrey Williams (in cowboy hat), Hank's devoted wife, gets together with Goodtime Mel Tillis and his Doris you can bet friends are in for a delightful evening of songs and storytelling. (2) Astronaut Pete Conrad is a great C/W fan and a good friend of Faron Young and Charlie Pride. (3) You think Jerry Greene and Jeannie Seely look lovey-dovey only on stage. Well, here's a shot of them relaxing before a show. Don't fret though, both are happily married and just good, good friends.



(1) It was a banner day for folk and country music when Earl Scruggs and his boys got together with lovely songbird Joan Baez for a hootenanny in the Scruggs home.



THE LYNNS & THE TWITTYS: A FAMILY AFFAIR

Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty are family-type persons, and so, when they get together to record a duet, there are usually lots of friends and relations present in the studio. At one session, our photog captured (1) Loretta with Conway's daughter, Cathy Twitty. (2) Loretta's sister, Peggy Sue, with Loretta's niece, Doyletta (named after Doyle Wilburn and Loretta) and (3) Conway, his lovely wife, his daughter and Loretta.



continued on page 72

Kitty
&
Johnny: **MARRIAGE--COUNTRY-STYLE:**



Kitty Wells and Johnny Wright are united not only by a love and talent for music—but an everlasting domestic harmony as well.

She isn't pretty, not by conventional standards, anyway. And she isn't young any more. And the hard work and the heartache of three decades of singing and traveling have left their mark on her good, honest face.

But the voice has always had a tough kind of beauty all its own. And the years have done nothing to change the warmth and the strength of character that are the hallmarks of Kitty Wells.

"Sweet Kitty Wells," people call her, from the deejays at WSIX, Nashville, where she first began singing, to the movers and shakers along Music Row, to her millions of fans around the world, wherever country music is played and loved. Her worldwide fame, and the tidy fortune that she and her husband, Johnny Wright, have amassed, haven't changed Kitty since the days her mother and father called her Muriel Deason,

WHY IT LASTS, HOW IT WORKS



and she sang in the church choir.

Today, the Queen of Country Music is a woman who likes to bake Cheery Cherry Coffee Cake for her family's breakfast, and who answers her own telephone.

Kitty is one of the few leading citizens of Music City who was actually born in Nashville. It was there that she first began to listen to country music, back in the days of the first flowering of the Grand Ole Opry. It

was there that she began to pick guitar, and to sing spirituals.

And it was there she met a boy from nearby Mt. Juliet, at the age of 18, while singing on the radio with her friend, Bessie Choate. He told young Muriel that she reminded him of a song that the Pickard family sang on the Opry—If I Could Marry Kitty Wells.

The boy not only persuaded (Continued on page 57)



JOHNNY CASH



This is your life!!!

During the winter, Ralph Edwards and his cohorts on the TV surprise show, *This Is Your Life*, devoted an entire program to the career of the great Johnny Cash. On these pages, we've printed the pictures of some of the most important people in John's long life. At top left, that's J. C.'s parents, Roy and Carrie. At the top right is a touching photo of John comforting his ageless mother-in-law, Maybelle Carter. Below, left, is a portrait of the lovely singing Carter sisters: June Carter Cash, Anita Carter, and Helen Carter Brown. On the right are some rare pictures of John and June playing with the newest member of the Carter-Cash combine: John Carter Cash. Looks like parents and tot are havin' a ball.



Country Conversation

No 1

BOBBY LORD INTERVIEWS ROY ACUFF

The following piece has been excerpted from Bobby Lord's outstanding inspirational volume, *Hit The Glory Road!*, copyright 1969 by Broadman Books. Available for \$3.95 at your local bookstore or order from Broadman Books, Nashville, Tenn.

"My father was an ordained Baptist minister," Roy Acuff told me. "He was also a graduate of the law school in Knoxville. He was a good speaker and had a good singing voice. My father played the fiddle and my mother played the organ. Mother was also talented with the string instruments. I grew up in a family of five children, three boys and two girls. All of us sang. One of my sisters even sang semi-professionally. She sang classical music. While she was training her voice (you know that high note on the piano), I used to mock her in the kitchen. She'd start bawling, and Mama would run me out of the house. But, by listening to my sister practice and mocking her, I learned how to sing that high voice and come out with a lot of oomph.

"We used to sing in BYPU, and all of us sang in church, I finished school at Central, Knoxville. I played all kinds of sports—football, baseball, basketball—and I really had a desire to become a ballplayer. I thought I would have a career as a player and then coach, but I got sunstroke.

"While I was recuperating from the sunstroke, I took up my father's fiddle. I had to play in the late afternoons because I couldn't get up and get around much during the daytime. Getting over the sunstroke took a long time, practically two years, so I had plenty of time to learn the fiddle. Papa would bring home fiddle records. I would play them on the talking machine, then try to learn them on Papa's fiddle.

"A Dr. Howard who was a medicine show man (he sold Moc-E-Ton medicine) heard me one evening and asked me if I would be interested in going on a summer's tour with him through Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. I told him I didn't think I could stand the work on account of the heat. He said, 'Well, we'll work altogether at night.' I said, 'Well, I'll give it a try.' So I went to work on the Moc-E-Ton Medicine Show and worked that complete summer.

"Back then we did blackface, 'Toby' and all kinds of entertainment. I played a variety of parts, from a little girl to an overgrown boy. I learned a lot of show business that way. Back then, you had to perform. There were no microphones. When you sang—and I remember singing to three or four thousand people many a night—you had to put out a lot of voice to get out there to them. When you were on stage, doing comedy or telling jokes, you had to speak loud.

"I finished that season on the medicine show, and then I came back to Knoxville. A group insisted that we go up and try out on radio station WROL. We did pretty good, I guess, because they kept us for awhile. And then we went on to WNOX. We

started what was always called later 'The Noonday Merry-go-round.' We stayed on that for awhile before I went back to WROL. I played that whole territory for five or six years, and all that time I was trying to get on the station in Nashville. I would hitchhike to Nashville, and I would drive down, but I always got the same answer: 'Sonny Boy, we're sorry, but there are too many applications in ahead of you.'

"I don't guess I've ever told the true story of *The Great Speckle Bird* before. I never was asked. There was a boy by the name of Charlie. I can't remember his last name, bless his heart, but he was the first one I heard do *The Speckle Bird*. He was doing some others, also. I paid him fifty cents to write off for me a copy of *The Speckle Bird* and one other. He left Knoxville about the time that I started singing *The Speckle Bird*.

"On one of my noonday shows, the Columbia people had scouts in the audience. After the program they came to me and asked if I would like to go to Chicago and record a session. I had not known they were in the audience, and I was doubly surprised. It wasn't me they wanted, it was *The Speckle Bird*. They told me after that they were not looking for the man but for the song. It was creating so much talk the Columbia



Bobby Lord

people wanted to record it and we did. That was a long time before Nashville."

Since Roy is famous for *The Great Speckle Bird* and a number of other songs that have religious overtones, I asked him if religion showed as any kind of pattern in his songs.

"When I look back on the numbers that I have written," Roy replied, "hardly any of them lack a reference (Continued on page 56)

Roy Acuff



SHOOTIN' THE BREEZE WITH THE TEXAS TROUBADOUR

"Jimmie Rodgers did more in five years than all of us put together all our lives . . . I can't think of anything worse than raising a child who never sees a horse or cow . . . The hippies who've been my fans so far have been clean . . . I want to live life as it comes . . . I got Judge Hays to ask everybody to quit using the word 'hillbilly' on the Grand Ole Opry . . ."

by
DOROTHY HORSTMANN

The following interview took place at the Ernest Tubb Record Shop in the midst of the busy C/W convention. Mr. Tubb was gracious enough to give this interviewer more than two hours of his precious time. After the interview was completed (it was taped), I tried to play back the tape, and to my dismay, the recorder had not been working. Ernest patiently repeated the entire interview, while scores of fans and business associates waited to see him. I then realized why some stars are great and remain great. Mr. Tubb is one of the rare ones. He is considerate to all, loves his fans and is loved in return. It is small wonder that he has been a successful Decca recording artist for the past thirty years.

Mr. Tubb, to what extent do you think you have influenced country music?

ET: Really, I never thought about what influence I may have had on country music. When you mention "influence," I think naturally of my idol, the late and great Jimmie Rodgers, the Singing Brakeman, America's Blue Yodeler. He was my idol, my inspiration. Not only mine, but other people's: Hank Snow, the late Tommy Duncan (who sang with Bob Wills all those years) and even Lefty Frizzell, who was only two years old when Jimmy passed away. I think Jimmie had the strongest impact on country music of any one single artist, and I believe that most people in the country music field, at least if they're past 35, would have to agree with me. He's the one who made this type of music popular all over the country, all over the world. And so, considering his impact, I don't know whether I've had very much or not. I certainly hope so. Like some of the people who do imitations . . . Ferlin Husky says he usually gets the biggest hand when he imitates Ernest Tubb. Imitation means impact . . . and so at least I've had some. I've had a few others who did me on the stage as an imitation, and they say that's the sincerest form of flattery when they imitate you. But compared with Jimmie Rodgers, I'm just carrying on in a small way. He did contribute so much to our music and made it commercial—sort of paved the way for all of us. Some of the younger artists sometimes get to feeling like they're setting the world on fire, and I say, "Looky, Jimmie Rodgers did more in five than all the rest of us put together." I've had a whole lifetime and I have not accomplished what Jimmie did.

Are there other artists who were as strongly influenced by Jimmie Rodgers as you were?

The late Hank Williams, who was a very dear friend of mine, and a great artist, had some of the things that Jimmie had. Hank idolized Jimmie, too. Oh, let me tell you this

story Hank told me after I came to the Grand Ole Opry and convinced them that they ought to bring Hank here to Nashville and give him a chance. Well, he toured with me for about seven months, when he first came here. He was telling me how he got started. He said he heard Jimmie Rodgers—his family had the records and he loved Jimmie and he sang like Jimmie. Then he heard Roy Acuff and he started singing like Roy Acuff. And then he said: "Then you came along, and I started singing like Ernest Tubb. When I'd sing a Roy Acuff song, they'd say, 'You sound just like Roy.' And when I'd sing an Ernest Tubb song, they'd say, 'You sound just like Ernest Tubb.' But I was still playing for two dollars a night down in them joints in Alabama. So finally, I found me a place and a style right between you and Roy. I kind of like it there, and I'm going to stay there." And do you know, to this day, if you'll listen to some of Hank's records when he sings a regular honky-tonk type thing like I do, you'll notice he phrases it just a little bit like I do. When he sings a hymn or a spiritual song like *I Saw The Light*, you'll hear the Roy Acuff phrasing in there. He kept a little of Roy's style and a little of mine, and developed his own style right in between, just like he said. Now he's one of the few that I think will live on and on for a long time. He's proven that since 1953—that's 17 years—and his albums are still selling over and over. He's the closest one who has come along since Jimmie Rodgers.

Next to Jimmie Rodgers, who's your favorite country singer?

Well, next to Jimmie Rodgers, my favorite singer has also passed on—Rex Griffin. Now I have many favorites, but Rex had more, I suppose, of what Jimmie had, so naturally, that puts him second. In later years, great contributions have been made by many people—Jim Reeves, whom we've also lost; Johnny Cash, Charlie Pride. Charlie's a sincere person, a good singer. He loves to sing, loves what he's doing, and I love him for it. And don't forget Buck Owens. I heard Buck Owens when Donny Young (who later changed his name to Johnny Paycheck) played me one of Buck's records . . . some off-brand label. And I said, "If this boy ever gets on a good record label, he's gonna be a good artist and a good seller." And sure enough, he came along. But since Johnny Cash, I'm gonna have to say that Merle Haggard is the greatest young artist that's come along. He's got a lot to offer as an artist, plus he's a terrific songwriter. He's a young Hank Williams when it comes to writing songs. He can take most any subject and make a very clever song, like *Mama's* (Continued on page 65)



THE HEALTH HAZARD THAT HAUNTS NASHVILLE: BEHIND THE HEE-HAW



HEART-ATTACK HEX



Since the show started, Roy, Junior and Grampa have all had trouble with their tickers. Is the popular TV show jinxed?

Network TV is a gruelling rat race. Country music folk, used to a slower pace and less demanding schedules, usually work in a more relaxed performing atmosphere. This could be one of the reasons for the bizarre series of health tragedies that struck the popular CBS show, *Hee-Haw*. It all started when Junior Samples, erstwhile small-time fisherman and tale-teller, was laid low by a heart attack. Now it's true that Jumbo Junior is more than a little overweight—but his girth didn't bother him all that much when he was only a white-lying angler in Cumming, Ga. No, most doctors would agree that the combination of lardiness and overwork could easily lead to ticker trouble. Then, only a few months later, the seemingly indestructible Grandpa Jones was off to the hospital with heart trouble. Now, Grandpa's no spring chicken but it's interesting to note that he got into real trouble after only a few months of *Hee-Haw*. Then, while Gramps was still ailing, Roy Clark's valentine began acting funny. Roy, of course, is overweight, but heart ills are pretty new to him, too. Fortunately, all three stars recovered. Still, we urge future C/W TV shows to enjoy a more deliberate pace. We don't like to see our favorites sick, even though we know they're all heart!

THE STONEMANS-- THEN and NOW



Pop's musical
multitude made the
big leap from
Mountain music to
Mod melodies
with amazing
grace!

Ernest V. Stoneman and Hattie Frost
founded a clan that's left an indelible
imprint on the course of Country Music.

A great technician as well as a pioneer
of recorded music, Pop was the world's
oldest disc star at the time of his death.

On Feb. 9, 1971, Georgia Hattie Hemrick, 7 lbs.-7 oz., entered the world as the newest member of the Stoneman clan.

This lovely little gal, the daughter of Roni Stoneman and George Hemrick, became, in the minds of many country music fans, the living extension of the legend of a great musical family.

The fact that the little girl was named after Roni's mother, Hattie, only added to the symbolism and made many insiders recall the sad days in 1968 when E.V. "Pop" Stoneman, patriarch of the clan, passed from this mortal stage.

A man who had labored to raise 23 children during the hardscrabble days of the Great Depression. "Pop" Stoneman was, during his final days, America's oldest recording artist.

Burdened with ulcers, arthritis, a disintegrating hip, he nonetheless appeared at each recording session with his homey vittles: a



This photo, taken in 1928, shows Pop and his "Dixie Mountaineers"—Ives Edwards, Uncle Eck Dunford, and Hattie Stoneman (standing); George Stoneman, Pop (don't he look wet behind the ears, though!), and Hattie's brother, Bolen Frost (seated). Photo was taken in Galax, Va.



thermos full of milk and a bag of mint sweets.

His children, Donna, Van, and Roni were well aware that their father was dying. They were determined, however, to do two things: cut an album of his music before he went and set the stage so that they might carry on his musical message after his departure.

During these last recording sessions, Pop labored upon his treasured autoharp until his lips bled. The final session left him utterly exhausted.

Dulled by pills (for his ulcerated stomach and agonized hipbone), Pop returned to Amarrillo on crutches and wheelchair.

During a personal appearance the following day, Pop finally collapsed and was rushed to the hospital. One week later, Pop Stoneman, aged 74, entered surgery at Nashville's Vanderbilt Hospital. Doctors removed over half his stomach and his stone-filled gall bladder and fixed up a hernia. Doctors noted his

remarkable recovery but decided there was still more cutting needed. On May 16th, he went under the knife again. He came through the operation swimmingly.

During the next few months of recuperation, Pop's spirits were constantly buoyed by the prospects of his last album. Nevertheless, further complications developed. On June 11, he was operated on once more. The next day a blood clot developed in his lung. 72 hours later, Pop Stoneman, a living legend, was dead.

Yet, it must be said, that only Pop's earthly shell passed away. For this proud man, pioneer recording artist, carpenter, factory worker, father of almost two dozen children, expert on geography, left behind not only a musical testament but a large, loving family that embodied these country virtues.

On records, they are hard to separate. So here's a rundown on the group members, one



Here's an old shot of the whole clan. Roni and Van are settin' on the truck. In the middle, we find Scott and Mom with violins, Pop, Grace (with the mike), Dean, Gene and Eddie. Seated are John, Bill, Donna, Jim, and Jack. Pattie and Van are missing.

by one:
DONNA: Stoneman # 19 born in Alexandria, Va., Donna studied the mandolin as a child because she could shake her legs while playing it. Dancing has always been a very important part of her life (as it was with her brother, Dean "Crazy Legs" Stoneman) and she's a fabulous go-go artist. Donna's married to a guy named Bob and lives near Nashville.

JIM: The silent Stoneman, big Jim, # 13 in line, was born in Washington, D.C., one of twins (the other, a girl, died in childbirth). He's been playing his bass fiddle—which he calls "Kay"—since he bought it used, for \$175 at age 13, and he treats "Kay" like a baby although the inevitable cracks are beginning to appear on her already. Eventually, he hopes to turn the big fiddle into a coffee table that will be prominently displayed in the Woodbine, Tenn. home he shares with his wife, Mary.

PATTIE: As the next-to-the-eldest Stoneman daughter, Pattie had been out on her own playing bluegrass for quite a while before she replaced her family in the family act in 1968. Generous (she used to give away the family blankets to railroad bums) and intelligent (she acts as moderator at bluegrass talkfests on campuses across the country), Mrs. Jack Murphy (hubby's a former *(Continued on page 61)*)



This is what the mad, mod team looks like today. Their looks, as well as their music, has changed with the times. But their music hasn't changed quite as much as their looks!

Why Goodtime Jerry Reed wants to quit: "I'D LIKE TO GET AWFUL RICH, AWFUL FAST!"

Fans were shocked when they heard likeable Jerry announce, on TV, that he's lookin' to get out of C-W biz.





Popular as a recording star already, Reed earned new glory with Glen Campbell.

Jerry wants more free time with his handsome, growing family.



Mrs. Reed, Prissy Mitchell, gave up her C/W career to manage their household.



The Reeds are a relaxed, friendly, all-American group. Here's an at-home look at 11-year-old Sedeina, Priscilla Mitchell Reed, the new baby, and proud Jerry. ▶

Jerry Reed isn't really much different than he seems on TV. "The Alabama Wild Man" seems somewhat out of place, seemingly too relaxed and low-key for the busy world of network TV. That beatup old fishing hat, the well-worn tennis shoes, the knit T-shirts and bluejeans are no disguise. They're *him*. Small wonder then that the ex-cotton mill hand recently announced his intentions of "dropping out". "I've been 'going' since 1955," he told a talk show host. "I'd like to get awful rich, awful fast and then quit." Unlike some stars, Jerry has a lot to look forward

to when he comes home from a recording session or roadshow. There's his lovely wife, Priscilla (whom you'll remember from *Yes, Mr. Peters*), his daughter Seideina, his new baby, his houseboat, his scuba equipment, his golf clubs, his hunting gear, and his marvelous home. That's a lot of living to do—and Jerry wants to get it done while he can. So, while we think this boy is one of C/W's most affable citizens, we'd applaud any decision he'd make that would get him away from the hurly-burly world of public performances. Good luck, Jerry, we'll miss you!





Successful
and
beloved,
here's
why
they
call
this
blonde
bombshell:
**SAINT
DOLLY
OF
NASHVILLE**



For a long time, Dolly Parton was "the other woman," as far as American country music devotees were concerned.

In fact, when she replaced lovely Norma Jean as Porter Wagoner's duet partner on TV, many fans were downright hostile. Little Norma had earned a top berth in their hearts; Dolly was merely a pretender to the throne.

Today, however, Dolly has her own identity, her own success, and her own legion of followers. And she's had to work harder than most to achieve this.

Lovely to look at and delightful to hear, Dolly was never one to get lost in a crowd. As the fourth of 12 children from Sevier County, Tenn., she learned early how to make herself heard.

Lee and Avie Lee Parton were farm folk (with Lee working construction on the side) and still live on the family acres in the shadow of the Smokys. "Dolly sang almost before she could talk," Lee recalls. In fact, by the

time Dolly was six, the bold youngster was already singing in her grandfather's church.

The Reverend Jake Owens was to become a very important factor in Dolly's life (as well as the subject of one of her most popular songs). "I think what soul I have in my voice, whatever feeling is there, is strictly from my church-singing days. I get a feeling from singing gospel songs that I never get from singing anything else," says Dolly today.

One of Dolly's earliest boosters was her Uncle Bill. "Bill Owens was more than just a manager or an uncle; he's been like a brother to me. . . . When I was 10, Bill worked with me and rehearsed songs with me and got me ready to audition for the Cass Walker show in Nashville. So, really, he was the start of it all. He took me down there. He had the confidence in me. He believed in me."

Bill Owens, on the other hand, gives Dolly most of the credit: "Dolly was singing around home all the time. She'd sing when she put

SAINT DOLLY



her younger brothers and sisters to bed. And she sang good! All of a sudden the thought came to me that I should take her to Cass Walker . . . and I'll never forget that first time. . . . She was an instant hit!"

Walker was soon to find that little Missy Parton was a super-eager beaver. She'd walk to the radio station every spare moment, taking occasional "unauthorized vacations" from school, and using all her free time during Easter, school holidays and the summer recess to be close to her music. Even then, she was writing songs . . . by dictating lyrics to her mom.

At 10, Dolly cut her first record, *Puppy Love*, for a small Louisiana disc company. "The record didn't do anything. In fact, it wasn't even too good. But it was a start and we had big dreams."

In 1959, at Sevier County High School,

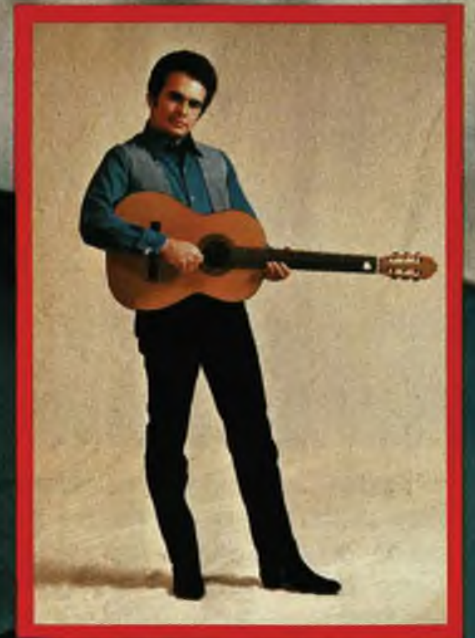
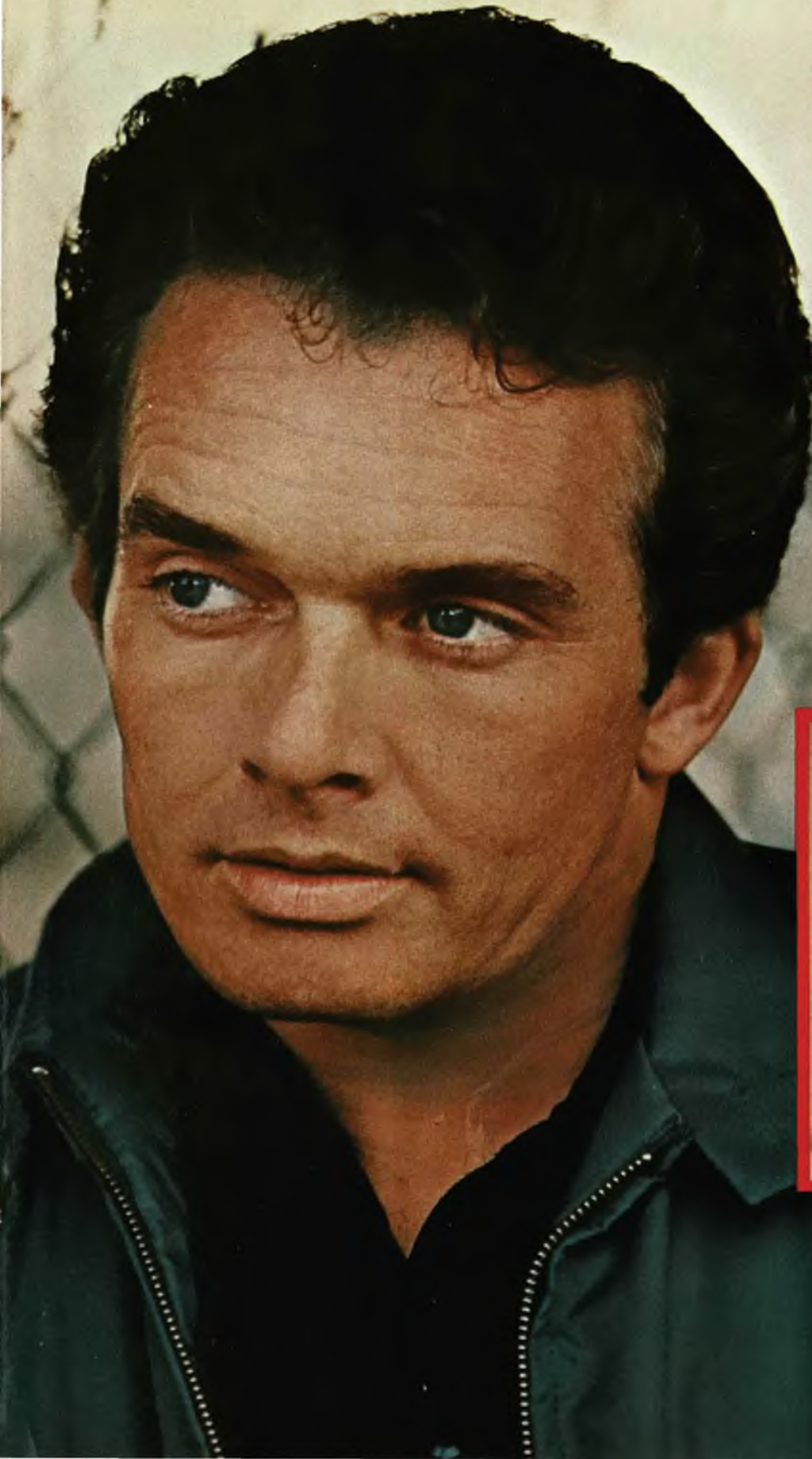
Dolly joined the school band as a snare drum specialist. Judy Ogle, a classmate and fellow drummer, recalls that, during band practice, "Dolly always went to the piano and wrote songs." As a freshman at Sevier, Dolly became a professional songwriter for Tree Publishing and recorded a song on the Mercury label. It, too, didn't quite "make it."

"No matter how much I loved the music," Dolly recalls, "I wanted to finish high school just to show myself that I could. So I stayed in school and the Mercury contract expired, I think, after three years."

In 1964, Bill Owens and his family moved to Nashville. Shortly after, almost immediately upon her graduation, Dolly hopped aboard to bus for Music City and moved in with them.

On her very first day in Nashville, Dolly met young Carl Dean (*Continued on page 61*)

**Merle Haggard
&
Bonnie Owens:
A "ROTTEN
KID"
BUT A
FABULOUS
HUSBAND**



Merle & Bonnie



Today, when Merle Haggard looks into the eyes of his children—Marty and Noel, Dana and Kellie—he fortunately doesn't have to remember his own youth. It was something less than memorable.

"I was a rotten kid, a real mess-up," he recalls, thinking back to the 2 years-9 months he served in the pen. "My mother couldn't control me," he adds.

Today, so many psychological light-years later, he can return to San Quentin, with

his lovely wife, Bonnie, on his arm, and feel like a new man. Why? The answer is determination!

Merle was born in Bakersfield, Calif., in 1937, the youngest son of parents who had fled to the Golden State from a dustbowl home in Checotah, about midway between Muskogee and McAlaster, Oklahoma.

In the Promised Land of California, Merle's father worked on the railroads and ranches around (Continued on page 69)





Bill Anderson Faces A New Marriage:

THE WOMEN IN WHISPERIN' WILLIE'S WILD LIFE!

"It's my life to do with as I please," Bill told his first wife—and it's become a creed to him now!

There's a book available from your local bookstore that calls Bill Anderson "an idol to anything in a skirt between Bangor and San Diego."

Now, *Whisperin' Bill* is no wild womanizer—but he does have his problems. . .including a recent divorce and re-marriage.

"It is a wonder that *anybody* in show business can stay married for any length of time . . . (These) obstacles are compounded for the average Nashville star because country music has become about the last outpost of the one-nighter," writes Paul Hemphill in *The Nashville Sound*.

Hemphill recalls sitting with Bill in the singer's personal sanctuary, a large lake house on a private island in Old Hickory Lake, just east of Nashville.

Bill was composing his hit, "It's My Life, Throw It Away If I Want To." He was writing it to explain his state of mind to his wife, Becky, who, with his two daughters, was 20 miles away in their Nashville home.

"You don't understand the pattern of my life," he wrote. "You think. . .I'm throwing away my happiness by leaving you."

Shortly after, he divorced her and wed another.

When they'd first met, Becky was the daughter of a policeman in Atlanta and Bill was practically an unknown, picking up \$50 a night, now and then, playing local country shows.

"All I ever wanted to do was pick and sing," recalls Bill. "All of this other stuff drives you squirrely."

Among these other things was "women." Bill never had to seek them out, they found him. He had natural sex appeal and a great deal of human sincerity and warm emotion.

One of Bill's fans puts it very bluntly—she says Bill saved her life. "I got real sick a few years ago. And the doctors didn't know what was wrong. . . .Nothing interested me. I just sat around all day, not doing anything." One night this gal attended an Opry show and saw Bill for the first time. "I'd never even heard of him," she recalls. "Well, that did it! I fell in love. . . ."

Her "love", of course, was just the adulation of a fan but adoration usually wears well only on kings, princess, and millionaires. It's tougher on the son of a Decatur insurance man.

On another occasion, Bill confessed that he wrote the song "Still" to an old girl friend. "I hadn't seen her in six or seven years. I wasn't still in love with her, but I put myself in the place of how I would feel if I were."

Being a creative artist creates a crazy-quit of emotions where love's concerned. "I'm on a very hectic treadmill," Bill told Bobby Lord once. "I'm trying to do fifteen things at once."

While he's doing all this, Bill's mind is also kept busy worrying about all the women in his life: his ex-wife, his new wife, his duet partner Jan Howard, his two daughters, his enchanted lady audiences, and his old girlfriends. And that's a pretty wild, woman-filled world to keep a straight noggin in.



Country Conversation

No 3

WEBB PIERCE SPEAKS HIS MIND

"You gotta sing about things people think about but don't talk about, then they feel they have a friend in your song . . . There were enough people saying, 'That's us, honey,' to make *Back Street Affair* a top hit . . . I figured *There Stands The Glass* would be a hit because 75% of the world drinks. It's become the national anthem of bar songs . . . I'd rather have my fans send me pictures of themselves than presents . . . New songwriters shouldn't bother an artist when he's trying to do a show . . . At home I listen to a middle-of-the-road C/W station."

by MISS RAINBOW

Webb, How many hits have you had so far?

Sixty-eight.

That's phenomenal!

Twenty-four out of the 68 were number one. The rest made the top five and 10 across the nation.

Have any of them crossed over to the Pop charts?

Oh, yes, about six of them: *I Ain't Never, Why, Baby, Why?, This Thang, Holiday for Love, No Love Have I, Slowly, and More and More.*

Are you still predicting hits when you first hear them?

Yes sir. I predicted *Sunday Morning Coming Down* was gonna be a hit when Ray Stevens first did it. It should have been a hit then, but Johnny Cash got the song across because he was so hot on television. You can take that television network, and you can sell almost anything with all that power behind you. That's a great song. I always liked it long before Cash recorded it. I predicted that other song of Krisofferson that Ray Price had out, *For the Good Times*, too. That's a great song.

How do you spot a hit?

That's a good question. It's just something . . . you have to listen to a song. If you like it, you feel it, you record it, and you wait for the public to make a hit out of it for you. It's up to the public. If they like it, it's a hit. If they don't like it, it's not a hit. You never know when you put one out what's gonna happen.

But certainly those 68 songs have something in common. What would you say are the ingredients of a hit song?

Well, it's different things that make a song a hit. One of the things is you sing about the things they think about the most, but don't talk about. That becomes an emotional outlet for the people, and they feel they have a friend in the song. They like it, they buy it, they play it, they sing it, because it's something that seems to fit their purpose.

How important do you think the melody is?

The melody is important, but the lyric is the most important thing—the words to a song. You can develop a liking for the music. Once you like the words, you like hearing the words, the music will just grow on you.

Are there any subjects in particular that people buy in a song lyric?

Not any special subjects . . . that is, there are special subjects, but there are many of them. I think people like songs about back street affairs. It's a proven fact that they bought that *Back Street Affair* of mine. I think the reason that song hit is that there were a lot of people having back street affairs, and it was something they were keeping hidden. Then, when the record came out, it

became an emotional outlet for them. They hear somebody singing about back street affairs, they kind of smile and say, "That's us, honey. Let's play that one. Let's buy that one." You know. There were enough people saying, "That's us, honey," that it sold a lot of records and got a lot of plays. *There Stands the Glass* is another instance. There's a drinking song that I just figured would hit, because 75 per cent of the people in the world drink. You know, they take a drink at sometime or other. They drink sociably, and some drink to extremes, but *There Stands the Glass, Fill it Up to the Brim* . . . they like that song. It's still one of the most-requested songs I've ever recorded.

But, Webb, there are so many bar room songs that have also become hits.



WEBB PIERCE

There Stands the Glass, though, is like the national anthem of bar room songs. It's the top of all. There's a lot of bar room songs, that's true, but *There Stands the Glass* conquers all of them. It's a proven fact that anywhere an artist goes, if he plays a bar room, they're gonna ask him to play *There Stands the Glass*. That song took care of all the drinking songs when it happened. Every artist—of which I know every artist in the business—and every one of them tell me the same thing: "Webb, that song of yours, *There Stands the Glass*, if I play a bar room or a night club, I have to sing that song. If I don't, they'll kill me. They've gotta hear that song." And they ask me, "How is it with you?" I said that's the first thing they ask for. I said, people can walk up to me and say, "I'd like for you to sing that song." And I say, "I know, *There Stands the Glass*," and they say, "How'd you know?" I'd say, "That's what everybody else wants, I figured that's what you'd want, too."

How did you get into country music?

Well, I always liked it. I listened to it when I was a little boy in Louisiana on the farm. I got me a guitar, decided I'd learn how to play the guitar and sing, and that's about how it started. Then, when I was a little older, I got a job on the radio singing—on a local radio in Monroe, Louisiana. Then I came to Shreveport, got on the *Louisiana Hayride*, and started singing there. Then I got a Decca recording contract, and I had this song *Wondering*, which hit big. And, so, after that song hit—and I had another hit too, called *Don't Do It, Darling*—then I got an offer to come to Nashville, Tennessee, and be on the Grand Ole Opry, and that's how it started.

Did you ever play in any of the Cajun bars down in Louisiana?

Yes, I've played a few. In fact, that's how I first met Jimmy Newman. I believe we played a club somewhere in Lake Charles, Louisiana. I can't think of the name of the club, it's been such a long time ago. Yes, I've been around Cajuns a lot. I like them. They're good people.

What was the turning point or high spot of your career?

Well, I guess you have a lot of high spots when you go through a career such as mine. You have a lot of high spots. You have your early high spots, your middle-ways high spots, your later high spots. You have high spots all along. I guess my first thrill was when I had my first #1 hit. I guess winning the four triple crown awards were thrills, too. Each time I won them was a

thrill. I'm the only holder in the world of four triple crown awards. There's no one else in the music industry with more than one. And so I'm very thankful to be holding four. And each award which I've won through my career was very thrilling. I've also won the top country singer in the country for eight different years, and there's no one else who's won it more than twice, so I feel elated about that.

How important are awards in the Country Music business?

They're outstanding. They're very important. You see all of these, (pointing to his awards on the walls in his office) across here. That's just like winning an academy award in the movies. Getting an award in the music business makes an impression or an impact on your career just as it does in the movies. And people pay attention to them. They're pre-

mented to you, the public is impressed by them, they're a sign of achievement, and you don't get them unless you win them.

Aren't you one of the few people who has a lifetime contract with Decca records? What do you have to do to get such a contract?

You have to make them so much money till they just automatically give you one.

Can you tell us some funny things that have happened to you in the music business?

Oh, there's been a lot of funny things happen, but you more or less forget them as you go along. They're only funny for a week or so. I never crowd my mind with things. I laugh it off, let it go, forget about it. Just like I don't keep one thing on my mind all the time. I keep it on my mind for a little while, then when I'm through with it, I'm through with it.



But right off the top of my head, I can't think of any funny things that happened.

How have wealth and fame affected you?

Well, money is comfortable to have. It's not the only thing in the world, though. There are a lot of other small things in life. The little things mean a lot too, you know. Money is a very comfortable feeling, but it's certainly not my God. Well, I appreciate all this happening to me. I've got God to thank for them, all the good things that have happened, and I'm glad he saw fit to let me have it. All I can say is I'm real thankful.

What about fame?

Well, money and fame go hand in hand. The fame is great especially in the early part of your career, you enjoy it a lot. After you've been in it as long as I have, it's not as much

a thrill as it was in the beginning, you know. You get used to it. When I first started, I always wanted to be where the people were. If there were some people around, I wanted to go talk to them. Now, I enjoy talking to my fans, but I don't like to get mobbed. You know, big crowds, where there's one pulling you one direction, one pulling you in another, one in front of you trying to talk to you, one in back trying to talk to you. That becomes annoying to me. Just like at the Decca party (CMA convention) the other night. Well, I enjoyed doing the show. It's fine and everything, but the thing is, you couldn't have any peace back there. You're trying to think about the show, trying to get the show done and the people back there, just ripping and tearing at you, and wanting you to listen to songs. Songwriters, they bug you to

death. Yea, songwriters want sing you a song while you're back there trying to do a show. Somebody would write a good story about songwriters and tell them one thing: don't bother an artist while he's trying to do a show. 'Cause he's not gonna pay any attention anyway. If you want to get a song recorded, the best thing to do is to mail the song to the artist at his home. The artist feels that the songwriter should have more respect for him. He's trying to do a show. He hasn't time to listen to that silly song. Half of them aren't any good anyway. I've hardly ever run into one in my life that was any good, where some writer at random, just ran up to me and said, "Wait just a minute, don't go on stage now, let me sing you a song first." I've never found one of them any good. They'll drive you crazy. They have no respect for your position. They think you have to stop the whole show and listen to their song.

Have you ever received any hit songs through the mail?

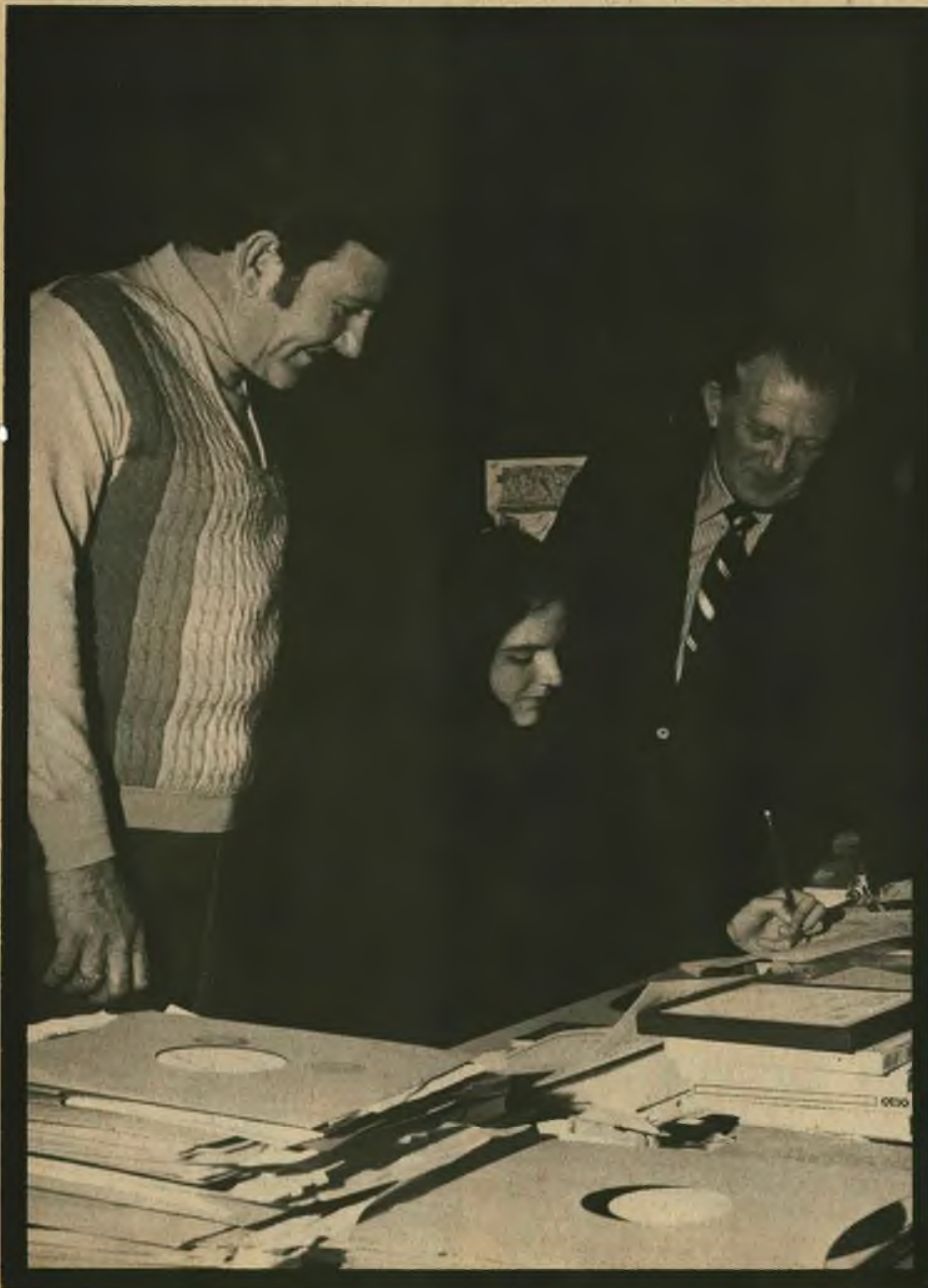
A couple. *Satisfied Mind* was one of them. But it didn't hit for me. I didn't record either one of them. I just found them after they hit in my home. I guess I didn't pay enough attention to them or listen close enough. So later on I was going through my records, and there they were. But I couldn't complain. If I never got another hit, I couldn't complain. I think I've been blessed enough. I had the number one song then, when I found *Satisfied Mind*. If I had wanted number one and number two, that would be a little selfish and greedy wouldn't it?

Have you any advice for young performers or songwriters starting out in the business today?

Well no, just other than if you want to play the guitar and sing, get yourself a guitar and start playing and singing. Those of you who want to write, just get yourself a piece of paper and a pencil, and sit down and start trying to write. That's about the only thing I can say, 'cause I'm really not an authority on either one myself. Only now it's a little tougher than when I started out. There are a lot more entertainers in the business today. Competition is rougher. And it wasn't easy when I started out. There's too much difference in the odds now. Golly, there's a top one hundred now. When I started, there was only a top ten. Of course they had a top one hundred then. They tabulated up to fifty, but they didn't show more than ten. Today they list a hundred. I guess then you were in competition with more than ten, but today you're in competition with more than one hundred.

Are you still as busy as ever, nowadays?

I've started going on the road again, just working weekends. I go on any (Continued on page 56)





Elsie Kershaw

CMSL FASHION SPECIAL: how to dress

Doug Kershaw's wife, Elsie, is responsible for outfitting dozens of C/W artists. Here are some of her Nashville - "look" secrets.

What the House of Dior is to the midi-skirted mannikins of Paris, the House of Kershaw is to the swinging Nashville set.

Elsie Kershaw, wife of Cajun singer Doug Kershaw, has been designing for Nashville's top talent for a number of years. Sonny James, Jeannie C. Riley, Johnny Cash, Molly Bee and many other stars have worn her distinctive costumes both on and off stage.

The secret of the success of her designs and of the House of Kershaw is summed up by Elsie:

"Our first requirement is that we must like our artists," Elsie said. "From there, it's a matter of good design and perfect workmanship. On stage, you have to create the image that the artist needs and wants and what the audience expects. That makes a good combination."

"An artist at all times should represent himself, and then he's comfortable."

Elsie said that, offstage, the artist always should wear a "touch of the other person."

"At a business meeting, for example, the artist should show respect by adding a touch of the conservative which instantly creates a good atmosphere," Elsie said. "With another artist, of course, it's competition, and he should remain himself."

Using husband Doug as an example, she explained how she made the transition from his role as a member of the Rusty and Doug team to his present single act. She said that while he was appearing with his brother, he was dependent on Rusty to carry his end of the show.

"When they disbanded, Doug didn't perform for four years," she said, "and that's a long time in a career. When (Continued on page 58)

In Elsie's book, Sonny James is the easiest singer to dress. "He always stays within his image as a Southern Gentleman."



Eddy Arnold, Elsie reminds us, "started the trend to simple, conservative-style clothes after he became successful in real estate."



Elsie's candidate for "best-dressed" C/W personality is Judy Lynn. "All her clothes spell Judy Lynn," she notes, with feminine approval.



like an opry star

Elsie's hubby, Doug, "gradually eliminated some of the frills as he got more confident as an artist . . . He identifies with velvet."

Jeannie C. Riley, says Elsie, has a thing for bright colors—but shouldn't wear them. She needs darker hues to tone down her appearance.

"The fashions change," says Elsie. "But Elvis always remains stylish."



"Wilma Lee Copper represents the beautiful married woman who loves her work. She feels secure in gingham and probably couldn't change if she wanted to," says Elsie Kershaw

Johnny Cash wears "traveling" costumes. "He's blended the Mississippi gambler, the Southern gentleman, and the preacher," says Elsie, who's a big fan of his.





ANNE MURRAY: **Cinderella in Blue Jeans**

**This red-hot snowbird
from Hank Snow country
is truly the girl-next-door!**

Welcome Anne Murray, here from Nova Scotia, Hank Snow's home territory, already adored by our friendly neighbors across the border, less friendly at the prospect of sharing the warmth and talent of a young lady now regarded as a national treasure.

But ac-"claim-jumpers" in the US of A, nevertheless, are mining their share of a girl whose vocal abilities ignite powderkegs of praise and produce a veritable avalanche of adoring adjectives.

Fame began to broaden as her rendition of "Snowbird" raced to the top of the best-seller charts in both countries, promptly roared into position for Gold Record consideration, and rewarded listeners with a hearty sampling of pure, potent ability.

It became clear quickly. She's more than the average singer; she's a star.

Johnny Cash grabbed her for a guest appearance on his television series and the Glen Campbell *Goodtime Hour* people locked her up for five visits with the popular super-troubadour.

They wanted her for more, in fact, but Canadian obligations were crowding the itinerary well into the new year.

Too, there were scheduled tapings of *The Tommy Hunter Show*, on which she guests, and for *Sing Along Jubilee*, the Canadian Broadcasting Company series on which she's a regular.

Anne Murray, you see, has the distinction of holding the only exclusive contract ever negotiated by the CBC with an artist. It covers a two-year period for both Canadian television and radio, specifies a certain number of guest appearances in addition to three of her own TV specials.

"She's something special," says Nick Sevano, executive producer of Campbell's CBS-TV series, who signed young Miss Murray to Glenco Productions and the multipl appearances. "Those certain qualities that helped make Glen Campbell the giant he is today are evident in Anne. It simply has to happen; there's no stopping it."



Sevano ought to know. He's also Campbell's personal manager.

Some observers characterize Anne Murray as the feminine counterpart of Glen. Others say her bright blonde freshness is reminiscent of the vivacious young singer who left Les Brown's band to become Doris Day.

Comparisons rarely work, but it's sound to suggest she's blessed with those girl-next-door qualities that charm, enchant and ultimately enslave, particularly when the girl is as pretty as Anne.

And, her voice is the frosting, variously categorized as smooth, clear, sweet; gutty; deep, rich, velvety; powerful. Gracious! She can sing, you see.

Anne was born in the mining town of Springhill, Nova Scotia, the single sister to five brothers. She grew up a tomboy, more comfortable in blue jeans and shorts than dresses, and ultimately graduated from the University of New Brunswick with a Bachelors degree in physical education.

A year of teaching in Prince Edward Island preceded her decision to fully pursue a career in show business. It was no obsession, rather a move to something she preferred doing, and she quickly began doing it better than most.

She started with backwoods concerts, graduated to small clubs and local television. Audiences grew. Applause grew louder. She recorded two Canadian Capitol albums; they became best-sellers. The CBC stepped in, and Anne Murray stepped out as potentially the biggest female star ever produced in Canada.

Get together, indeed. It's all together.

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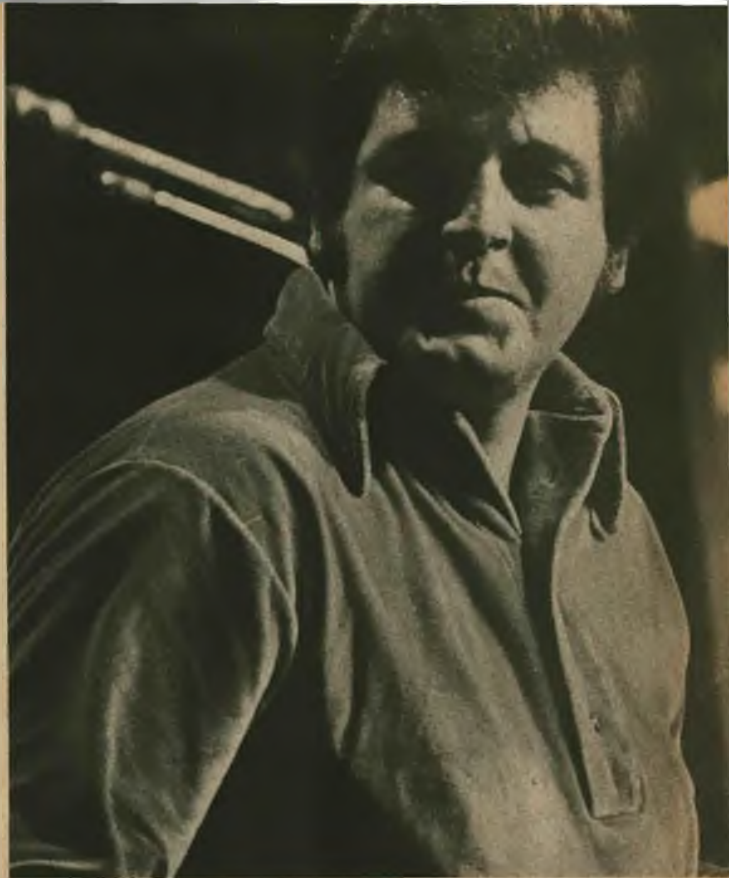
Greater success, certainly, but, too, time to step back and enjoy the simpler, less complex pleasures of home, in and among members of the family and her friends.

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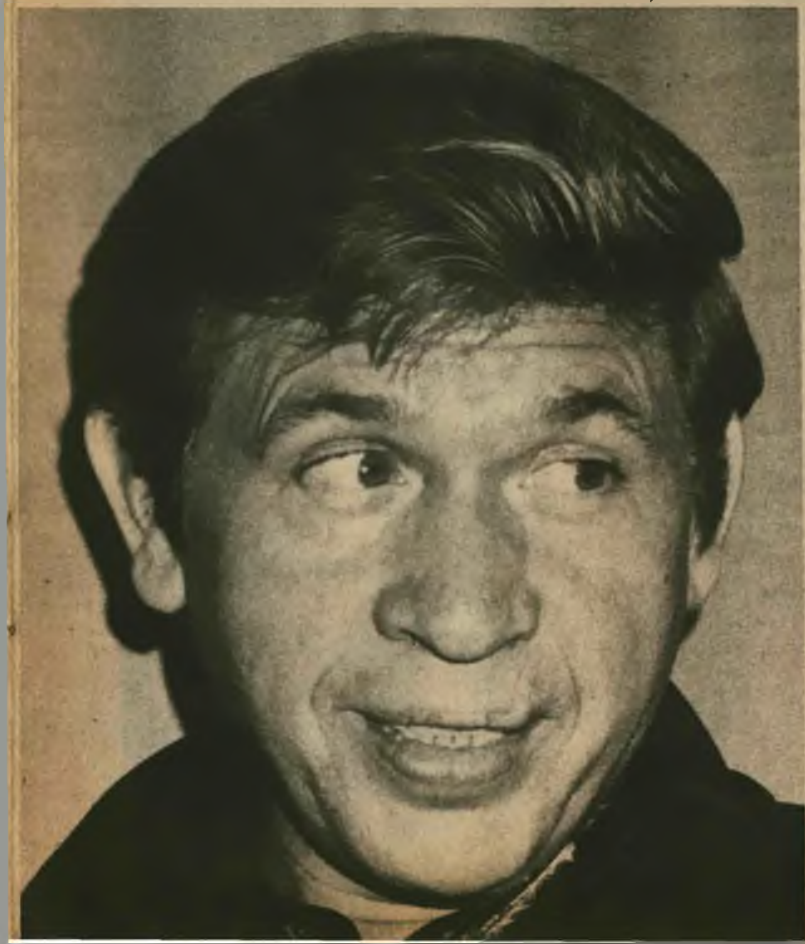
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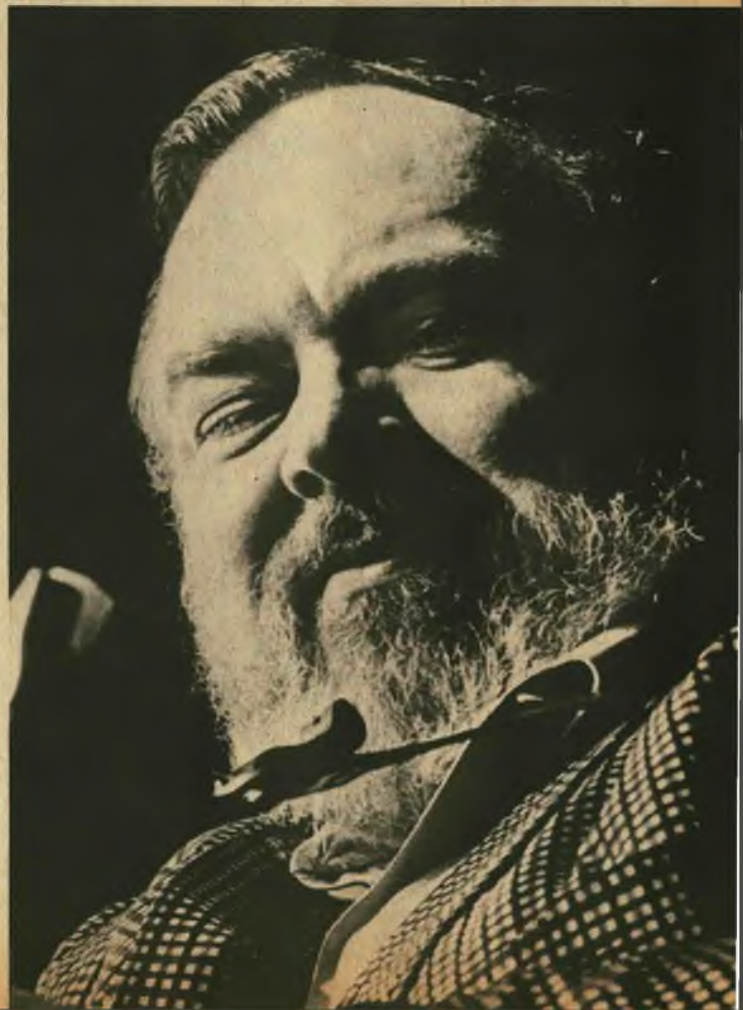
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ROY ACUFF

continued from page 24

to religion or the Bible. Take *The Precious Jewel*. I had one thought I wanted to bring out. The earth holds all kinds of precious jewels. But when a body is buried in the ground there is one thing it does not contain, and that is the soul. I had to bring that thought out. It goes back to my childhood. When I would wander the hills as a boy I often wondered about it—the body buried deep in the grave, but not the soul.

"Or, take *That Beautiful Picture*. That's of Mother in heaven."

Roy has been a part of the growth of country music. Years ago, when he first came into the business, country music people were not even recognized as musicians by the Musicians Union. How hard was it in the early days?

"The boys and girls who are in country music today because money has invited them would find it hard. But not those who enjoy going on stage, enjoy the Opry, enjoy playing an instrument.

"Money wasn't such a big factor in the old days. I opened up the station for a number of years without getting any salary for it at all. We would begin broadcasting at five or six o'clock in the morning. Even though we got no pay at all, we got the people out there to hear us. They would write in for us to come out to Podunk and play a school, and I'd take in \$50 and give \$49 to the boys, using the dollar left over to buy gasoline. I played every schoolhouse within a hundred miles of Nashville. I worked day and night.

"Every person that I have ever seen who has been successful has created a style. Roy Acuff, Bobby Lord, Ernest Tubb. No three of us have the same style. The fans may never have seen your face, but they like the style you create.

"I was always myself. That is, when I was successful. I couldn't be any other way. Back when I first went on radio, Crosby was real hot with his crooning. I sang a lot of his songs and crooned them like he did, but it wasn't my style. When I went into my own style, that's when the people listened to me and bought my records."

Being oneself—I think this is the theme of country music. Even the music is honest. Even though we sing songs about people who do bad, we do not condone the bad. In a prison song, for example, the man is in jail because he rightfully belongs there. We don't put flowers on the situation. But many who sing the other types of contemporary music do. They make the bad guys into the good guys. True country music upholds a code of ethics. We have something that we can live by. There are people who do bad things in our business—what group does not have them?—but I am of the opinion that

most of us live by our codes, and most of us get along very well together, protect each other, come to one another's aide in time of trouble or misfortune.

Roy agreed. "Country music people help one another," he said. "If anything happens to a performer, the first ones to jump in and help are his fellow performers. I've seen it happen many times. A performer gets down or has trouble of some kind. We throw a benefit show, and everybody who's available will get on the show. I remember one benefit show we did down in Florida. So many people were on it that Ira and Charlie didn't get to perform before the curfew ended the show."

Roy continued. "I'll tell you something I'd like to see develop more in country music—the instrumental. Let me take you back to something I learned in the medicine show days. Showmanship is one thing and a star is something else. It takes more than a person just wanting to record and make a lot of money out of it without having any fun and enjoying performing. Get on stage and put on a show for the people—that's what I'm for. Got to have all the others. Got to sing. But there are a lot of people who love instrumental music. There are some beautiful things that can be done on the violin, banjo, guitar, harmonica. I think we should have more instrumental music."

Roy was silent for a moment, as though he were thinking back to some of those old days. I shared with him my conviction that the people are coming back to the old ways, that we have got to have a change, that America must hit the glory road again or we are doomed. I shared with him my feeling that country music represents sincerity, having fun, wanting to sing regardless of how much, if any, money is involved—in other words, attitudes he seemed to indicate had influenced him in his career. Roy could have done something else for a living. Why did he choose music? Was it because he would have had to do it because he loved it?

WEBB PIERCE

continued from page 47

long tours. Weekends, two or three days is enough. And I'm doing that cause the public still wants me out there. I'm doing it for the people. I'm tired of the road. I think every artist who's been in the business ten years is tired of the road. If you could only do it right here in town you know, and didn't have to travel. The only part you enjoy is when you're doing the show. This traveling is a man-killing job. Staying in hotel rooms, being away from your family, taking a chance on getting killed, flying from here to yonder. You never know when one of those

planes is going down, and when it does, it's all over. Then having to get out of the plane, grab a cab, and go halfway across town. A lot of times there are plenty of places you can't get to in a plane, so you have to get an Avis and drive. So, all of it together is rough on your nervous system. And the only thing you enjoy is the part where you do the show for the people and the wonderful applause that they give you.

Do you see the same fans in the same places when you're on the road? Do you remember them?

Some of them I do. But then you can't remember all of them. There are familiar faces, always a lot of familiar faces that you see. But as for calling their names, you can't call their names. And they even expect you to call their names. I've had them come up to me and say, "Hey, Webb, don't you remember me?" Now this is something that really bugs an artist. Not only me it bugs them all, 'cause I've heard them all make the same statement. Somebody comes up and says "Hey, Webb, don't you remember me?" I say, "No I don't." "Well, I don't understand why you don't remember me," and they get mad about it, see? "Well, why should I remember you?" I say. And he says, "Well, I met you about five years ago, backstage here." I say, "What was I doing?" He says, "Well, there was a bunch of people, you were autographing, and I got your autograph." Now I ought to remember him, he thinks. Well, you can't, and he oughta know. He said "I told you my name back then." Five years ago and me signing autographs with five hundred people standing around, clamoring for autographs. And me signing autographs, and him saying, when I signed, "My name is so and so, Webb. I wanta shake your hand." And that's all that ever happened. I shook his hand. He told me his name. And five years later he walks up to me, expecting me to remember his name, and can't understand why I don't. Every artist in the business they pull that on. Well, not exactly "pull." They really think you should. Well, they oughta have enough sense to know that if you haven't seen them in five years and you only shook hands with them once, how in the world are you gonna remember their names?

Do you receive presents from your fans?

Yes I do. They bring them to me. They mail them. They're great. But I've always mentioned in publications that I'd rather have them send me just a picture of themselves than send me presents and things. Because I'll take that picture and put it in a book that I have with all my fans pictures in it.

Are there any musicians, like sidemen and arrangers, whom you've worked with, and consider outstand-

ing?

Let's see, the Wilburn Brothers used to be sidemen in my band; Faron Young was a sideman in my band; Goldie Hill was a girl singer in my band. They were all enjoyable people to work with. Cliff Harmon is great. He does alot of arranging for me. Owen Bradley can arrange too, if he wants to. He does all his arranging up in his head, you know. He'll get out there and get an arrangement going . . . you know he plays piano, he's not just an A&R man. He writes music and knows music, and I really enjoy working with him.

Do you enjoy other kinds of music, besides country music?

I like an artist like Brook Benton. I like his type of music. I like *Intermezzo*, that's a good piece, I like that. I don't care too much for opera. As far as Broadway musicals

are concerned, that type of music doesn't send chills down my spine. Let's put it that way. I listen to a stereo FM station here which plays mostly middle-of-the-road Country Music.

Do you have time for hobbies?

Occasionally. I golf, bowl, go fishing. No hunting. I never could hit the side of a brick wall.

With your talent, Webb, you don't have to worry about that.

COUNTRY MARRIAGE

continued from page 21

her to change her name to "Kitty Wells," butto marry *him*. The young man was a singer named Johnny Wright, and, as he recounts the tale of their romance, "We dated for about two years, picking and sing-

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ing, before we were married in 1937 at Franklin, Ky. I was 23 years old and Kitty was 18." That was in 1937. In the world of country music, where so many great stars have lived tragic and tormented personal lives, the lifelong love of Kitty Wells and Johnny Wright shines like a beacon. It is possible to have a successful career and a blessedly happy marriage.

Though, heaven knows, it looked like a bleak future the young couple faced when they started out. Johnny was working at the Davis Cabinet Company in Nashville, for the princely sum of 10c an hour. Kitty was working at the Washington Manufacturing Company for \$9 a week. Neither of them considered that much of a career. Their young hearts were set on singing, and they sang, on the radio, at dances and churches, every chance they got.

After their first child, Ruby, was born in 1939, they decided to work at their music full-time. By this time, Johnny had teamed up with Jack Anglin, and the three embarked on a long string of ill-paying, widely separated radio jobs all up and down the South. They covered countless miles, and they didn't end up appreciably richer than they'd started. But the three of them were getting better and better as time went on. In 1947, they had enough confidence in themselves to go back to Nashville and play the Opry. They stayed for about a year and "lost everything." The family picked up and went to Shreveport to "start all over again" with the *Louisiana Hayride*.

It wasn't till 1952 that Kitty finally made it in the way that she deserved. The record was the all-time anthem of every woman who's ever been done wrong by a man—*It Wasn't God who Made Honky-Tonk Angels*. It was Kitty's first record for her first, and only, record company—Decca. To this day, nearly twenty years later, it is her most-requested song, in spite of the many equally great hits she has recorded. There is something about the way Kitty delivers this great "weeper" that reminds us that in spite of sin and foolish mistakes, there is something noble and enduring in the heart of every woman.

Not surprisingly, the Opry want-

ed Kitty back, but this time as a full-fledged star. Kitty was honored and happy to accept, and the Wrights brought their family, now including Carol Sue and young Bobby, to Nashville permanently. Kitty was crowned the "Queen of Country Music"—an honor she richly deserved, for up until this time, country music had been predominantly a man's world. Kitty was its first lady superstar. In recognition of this, the late Gov. Frank Clement named her the Outstanding Citizen of the state in 1954, praising her as "an outstanding wife and mother in keeping with the finest traditions of Southern womanhood." Her fans couldn't have agreed more.

Kitty, Johnny, and Jack put together one of the finest and most professional shows in country music, delighting millions of fans across the country. At last prosperity and satisfaction seemed to be making up for all the lean and exhausting years. But on March 7, 1963, the happy Johnny & Jack duo was separated permanently, when Jack was killed in an auto accident. Grief-stricken, Johnny found himself a solo artist again. "It was like starting out all over," he recalled. A chilling prospect for any man.

Luckily, Johnny had the devoted and sustaining love of his own "honky-tonk angel" to help him through his agony over losing his friend, and his uncertainty at shaping a new career for himself. He began working with the whole family backing him up, and just as Kitty had foretold, became a huge success. The new Johnny Wright-Kitty Wells Show, as it's called, is one of the hardy perennials of country music. In 1963, the group logged a staggering 265 performances, all of them sellouts, all of them memorable.

Today, Kitty's schedule has relaxed only a little. With her children grown and embarking on their own careers, her big, friendly house in Madison is quieter. She and Johnny have always found their greatest happiness in each other, and in performing together for the fans they love. And so there's little chance that Kitty and Johnny will be letting up their careers. Their life is in each other, and their world is country music.

HOW TO DRESS

continued from page 48

he returned to the stage, he wasn't used to going it alone. In one year, we took him through a five-year psychological trip.

"Starting with a very stagey costume including bright colors, rhinestones and stretch lame, we gradually eliminated some of the frills and made his costume more conservative as he got stronger and more confident as a lone artist. Finally, we

settled on velvet because he identifies with velvet. Velvet is the nearest material to the marsh and the moss in the bayous, and he's comfortable with it. Also, his fans won't let him out of it—he has to wear velvet in the hot summer."

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costumes for wives of ambassadors, senators and congressmen. Her greatest triumph was the presentation of the American Debutante to European society at the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, France. Elsie lives in suburban Belle Meade with Doug, her son Johnny and her daughter and co-designer Karole.

She has dressed all kinds, but Elsie says she likes country and western people best. "I react better to them," she said, "because they're more basic than other performers, and I also find them more open to ideas about dressing."

"Before they went into music, most of them had a 'have-not' life, and they generally know what they *don't* know. A sophisticated club artist 'knows everything,' and there's no way you can change him. I think that's why country artists last so much longer—they take on a little bit of everything they touch."

Elsie pointed out the similarities in popular stars like Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. She said there is not much difference between them in the way they dress, and that their differences are mostly in action.

"A designer can make or break a performer," Elsie continued. "A line here or a color there, and they'll look ridiculous. They may not realize the reason behind it, but believe me, they'll mess up on stage. That's why young people pay so much attention to their clothes—they get a certain amount of security from the way they look."

She said nobody is really hard to dress, unless she gets two people who have similar personalities. Then she gets two people who have similar personalities. Then she tends to want to dress them alike. Besides her husband, she said the easiest person she had found to dress is Sonny James. "He always stays within his image, that of a country gentleman," Elsie explained, "and nothing can dispel that."

Asked about the costume she is most proud of, she said she's proud of every one. "We get excited over each new garment," she said.

Her candidate for best-dressed performer, she said, is Johnny Cash. "Johnny has created and sustains his image," she said, "that of the rangy, knowledgeable, understanding man. Most people don't realize it, but in his costumes Johnny has blended the Mississippi gambler, the Southern gentleman and the preacher, with just a touch of the Old West. It's a traveling costume—the gambler traveled, the gentleman traveled, the preacher traveled."

Elsie said that, once a performer has chosen the image he wants to project, it's very hard for him to change it. "Elvis Presley is proof it can't be done, no matter how the fashions change," she said, "yet he still looks stylish. There hasn't been much change in Elvis even though his hair is bit longer."

"Once a star has established an

image, he's going to wear it for many years. You can add to it or subtract from it, but basically you leave it alone. That's why I don't go to extremes either way—I play the middle, then I don't limit them."

She said she could think of only a few exceptions—people who have changed their image.

"Eddie Arnold is one," Elsie said. "He started the trend to simple, conservative-type clothes after he became successful in real estate. Tex Ritter and Rex Allen followed him. But that's the rare exception."

Sequined clothes are coming back in again, according to Elsie. She said they have gone about as far as they can go in the conservative direction, and she looks forward to a swing back to loud colors and more fanciful dress.

On the distaff side, Elsie said that Dottie West is noted for her wardrobe and has beautiful taste. Still, she said, her candidate for "best-dressed" is Judy Lynn even though she doesn't dress her. Judy's clothes spell Judy, she explained, and her wardrobe is well coordinated. On the pop side, it's Carol Burnett. "Simple and good taste," said Elsie.

"Then there are the gingham girls," she said, "like Kitty Wells and Wilma Lee Cooper. They've been well-loved for many years, and those were the country fashions when they started. Gingham has come to represent the beautiful married woman who loves her work and Kitty and Wilma Lee are singers because they love to sing."

"I don't think either one started out after a career; their careers found them. And, of course, they feel secure in gingham, too. They probably couldn't change if they wanted to."

More important than material or even style is color, according to Elsie, and it's the most important thing about dress the designer can control. She explained that when an artist goes on stage, two things happen—the audience reacts to the color the singer is wearing and the singer reacts, too. It may all be subtle and unrecognized, but it's there just the same.

"You can control an act with color," Elsie said. "If you want them to come on with a splash, you put them in a color they'll live up to—red or bright green or white. Some girls feel sexy in white or black. Then, when you want to take them down, you take a color that quiets them."

"You can do all sorts of things as long as you have enough costume changes," she continued. "If an artist is in a strange place where he feels insecure, he should wear the color he feels most comfortable in. Then, as he warms to the place, and begins to feel more at home, he can get bolder. The designer can actually give the artist a helping hand during the performance, adding to his music."

Elsie said that Leon Ashley likes

off-white, what she called a "de-lustered" appearance, and prefers a loose shirt to a jacket. She said Sonny James now wears subdued brocades in brown and black, though it was hard to talk him into it. Then there are those artists who shouldn't wear certain colors even though they like them. Jeannie C. Riley, for example loves bright colors, but should wear darker colors to tone her down, according to Elsie.

Mechanics, too—the way a costume "works" on stage—is a very important part of Nashville designing that isn't a problem elsewhere.

"Now take a drummer, for example," Elsie said. "You have to have the legs loose enough so they can be rolled up, because drummers move their leg so much the trousers get caught in the instrument. And the waist has to be loose so he can get free movement from side to side.

A bass or other heavy instrument throws the body off balance, and if you don't compensate for that in the design, he'll look awkward on stage. With a lead guitarist, of course, you're home free, because he stands fairly straight. But with a fiddler, look out, because he moves everything."

Elsie said that when she designs for a group, she picks the member with the most problems, solves them, then dresses everyone else to conform. But far more complicated than dressing artists for the stage is dressing them for the rodeo.

"There are more rules to rodeo dressing than there are in the Court of St. James," said Elsie, "and I know—I've had suits in both of them.

"Of course, many of the rules are safety rules. The cuffs can be only so deep, sleeves only so full, because you have to have total control over your body at all times. Certain colors—even certain types of rhinestones are taboo, because they reflect too much."

She was asked if she felt proud, being one of Nashville's leading designers, who clothes are seen by thousands of fans all over the country.

"It's a very great responsibility," said Elsie. *Dorothy Horstman.*

THE STONEMANS

continued from page 32
lobbyist) once made newspaper headlines when she fainted from hunger at school during the family's Depression days.

VAN: The vitality-filled junior member of the firm, young Van exemplifies the carefree Aquarian spirit that seems to have seized the youth of America today. Perhaps, he is the future spirit of the Stoneman's music and, if he is, his sons Randy and Van, Jr. will be in direct line for

his message. Van's a 1920's "bug" and wed to a lass named Helen. They live in Nashville.

RONI: Kooky Veronica, the vampish "voluptuary" (she sometimes pretends) can still recall the days when she traveled through the world with her two most cherished possessions: her banjo and her pet chicken. Today, still a clown and a fine banjo-picker, she's also the mother of five children.

So there they are, the Stonemans, past and present. May the next 40 years be as rich and rewarding as the first 40!

DOLLY PARTON

continued from page 38

They were married two years later, in May of 1966.

Bill got various jobs as a guitar player for some of the biggest stars. He made important contacts. To-

gether, they got Dolly a contract with Monument.

Dolly's first recordings simply weren't her. "They presented me as a rock singer. I guess they figured my voice was so weird that country people would never go for it." So, while her public was hearing rock 'n roll, Dolly continued to sing C/W only on demo records. One of these records, *Put It Off Until Tomorrow*, came to the attention of Bill Phillips, who waxed it . . . with Dolly singing harmony. The song was a success.

"That gave me all I needed to fight back and says that I was going to do country or I was going to leave!"

Her ultimatum worked. Shortly afterwards, Dolly recorded her first hit, *Dumb Blonde*, and, as a result, received that famous phone call from Porter Wagoner.

"Porter was telling the boys the other night that he could see the potential in me all along," Dolly continued on page 64

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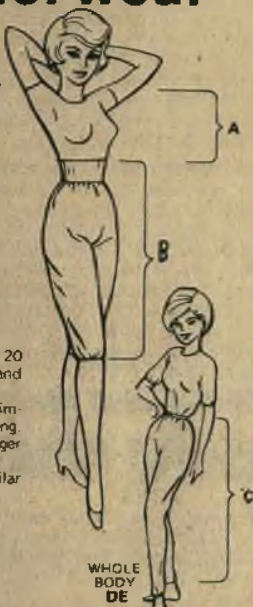
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DOLLY PARTON

continued from page 81

says, thinking about the first phone call. "He'd never seen me, in person or on TV. He'd just heard my records. He called me and said he had some business to discuss and asked me to come down. I thought it was about some songs of mine they had. When I got there, he told me that Norma Jean was leaving his TV family to get married, and that he wanted me to replace her. I sat down with my guitar and sang some songs, and he says that's what sold him. . . . Then we talked about how hard it was going to be, but I just couldn't begin to imagine how hard it was *really* going to be. . . . It just froze me because I was stepping into big, big shoes. Norma had been with the show for seven years and I knew everybody would just naturally resent me for trying to replace her . . . *even* the band, at least until they got to know me."

"Oh, I can never make it plain to anyone what torture it was the first few times on that show, knowin' that everybody was wanting to see and hear someone else. *It was like murder!*"

Porter remembers that first meeting very well, too. "I remember to this day feeling so *lucky* to know a person like Dolly. After I talked more with her, I knew she was the girl I wanted. There was a lot that sold me on Dolly, but I think the deciding factor was her personality—her warmth, her sincerity, her bein' a real person. She's the kind of girl you can take anywhere under any conditions to meet anyone, and they'd like her. That's why I chose Dolly. It's because she is the way she is—*genuine!*"

In the summer of '67, Dolly began appearing on Porter's socko syndicated TV show. She was nervous, to say the least. "I'd always been aware of my voice, knowing that some people just didn't like to hear me sing, and I knew that others would have to get used to my voice," she says.

"Every time she went on stage, I wished I could do it for her," adds Porter. "But you can't do that, and I knew it. I also knew she had the backbone to stand up under all this, and she did. . . ."

"I think the duet idea came out of these rough months. I wanted to make this transition period as easy on Dolly as I could. I get personally involved with all the people on my show, they're like my own children, or my brothers and sisters. So I sang with Dolly on the bus to try to add to her confidence. And everything we did sounded so good. I knew we had something."

On October 10, 1967, Dolly and Porter added another page to C/W history when they recorded *Just Between You And Me*. And, with it, Dolly was on her way to becoming a superstar.

But more than fame, she has es-

established an unblemished record in her dealings with people. She is one of the few show business personalities who is universally adored—almost to the point of sainthood. Her long-time confidant, Uncle Bill Owens, puts it this way, "Can you imagine two people working together over 15 years without even a single harsh word or argument? That's how it's been between me and Dolly. She is the most wonderful person to work with. She believes in total cooperation and sharing."

Porter adds an "Amen." "Dolly's a very sensitive person. She can feel hurt deeply and easily. Everything is personal to her. Dolly's the kind of person that if someone gives her a picture or a clipping or sends her something personal from them, she can't throw it away. She breathes her own life into a song, whether she's writing it or singing it. The song becomes her."

"I always believed things would go well and I dreamed that they would even before I was in high school," Dolly sums up. "I always wanted to be a star. It just seemed natural for me. I know now, of course, that I've been very lucky. But then I never was discouraged or disheartened. I knew it would be there. I felt I could outstep anything that came in my way!"

ERNEST TUBB

continued from page 26

Hungry Eyes, Mama Tried, I Take A Lot of Pride in What I Am. On up to Today I Started Loving You Again, and then his later ones like *Okie From Muskogee*. I guess my favorite would have to be *The Fighting Side of Me*. That riles me up.

Who are your favorite artists outside of country music?

Well, I'm still a Bing Crosby fan. Bing Crosby, Perry Como, who, to me was inspired by Crosby. Frank Sinatra, I like him too, but only certain things, certain songs. I know he can sing well, but certain songs I don't care too much about. Which is a difference. In the country field, I think we sell ourselves. Of course, you gotta have good songs, but you could even get by with a bad song. They will buy it if they're an Ernest Tubb fan or a Merle Haggard fan. They'll even buy a bad song once in a while, but I don't they'd continue to do it. In the pop field, however, the fans don't do this; they buy the record if they like the song. They don't buy the artist. They don't buy a Perry Como record just because he's Perry Como. When c/w fans come into a record shop to buy a record, they say "Have you got anything new by Buck Owens?" or "Have you got anything new by Bill Monroe?" or whoever. But back to what we were talking about, I say Bing Crosby to me will always be the greatest.

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Are you gaining new fans, or are your fans a certain age group?

Well, I think I'm gaining a few, because in California I had at least a half dozen hippies who came back stage and wanted to shake a hand. They were Ernest Tubb fans. But the hippies that have been my fans so far have been clean. They washed their hair and they wore shoes. If they had on sandals, I didn't notice, but I know they didn't have dirt between their toes. Here some time ago I had a postcard from a four-year-old child. His mother addressed it for him 'cause he couldn't write well enough, but she let him write the card. Then, that same day, I had a letter from a grandmother, 84 years old. So I like to think of my fans as 4-to-84. The bulk of my fans, though, are those who were growing up during the war years, anywhere from 35 to 60 years old. It tickles me, though, when a mother or father bring their youngsters back to say hello. And they'll say, "My son wants your autograph," and he'll say, "Mama, I don't want his autograph, you want his autograph." But then again, a lot of times they'll come back and little Richard is a fan, because he'll tell me, "I love Thanks A Lot." And he will know some of the songs that have come out in the last few years and mention them.

Do you miss the Forties?

I don't think so. I guess I tend to want to live life as it comes. It's up to all of us to make every day that we live as pleasant and enjoyable as possible.

Can you tell us a little about your life as a young boy?

Well I was born about 30-35 miles southeast of Dallas, Texas. You'd have to be born there to know where it is. It's not even on the map. I'm one of the few entertainers who has publicized my hometown for 30 years . . . and it disappears! We went back to show it to my children a few years ago, and there was one store building left. They were farming the land all around where the town of Crisp used to be. There was a depot, a gin mill, a general store, a blacksmith store . . . all this was gone. Just one store building left, but it was built the year I was born, 1914, and it said, Crisp, Texas. Then two years ago, I went back again to show the children where I was born, and the place, which was a four room house, had been cut in half. There were some farm tenants living in it. The pictures you always see is just half the house I was raised in. Now they've even torn the old store down, but they've got a brand new sign out on the road that says "Crisp, Texas." So my daughter said, "Well, Daddy, let's take a picture of your sign, anyway." So I was standing in front of my sign, and a delivery truck came by from Dallas, and it stopped, and the man said, "You all getting a picture of Ernest Tubb's hometown, eh?" And the kids

thought that was funny. Anyhow, you know really, the house where I was born I don't remember. Shortly after this my daddy moved out in the country about 5 or 6 miles from Crisp. He was an overseer of a cotton farm, a big farm, you could call it a plantation. We had these little 2-room dwelling houses, about 8 or 10 of them where these Negro families who worked for my father lived. This I remember when I was a kid, playing on the porch, when these colored people'd come in from work, they'd come by the well and all of 'em would get a sip of that good ole country well water. We also had a Negro mammy who looked after us kids, helped my mother. And that's about all I remember.

Can you give us just a brief sketch of your early career?

Well, the first time I was introduced to a Jimmie Rodgers song, my sister came home from Dallas where she had had a chance to hear his record. We lived down around Kemp, Texas by this time. She said, "This guy is great. I know you'll love him. I didn't get his record, but I heard this one." And she started singing *In The Jailhouse Now*, and when she got to the yodeling part, she made a sort of squeaking noise like a yodel. A few months later, I did have the pleasure of hearing a Jimmie Rodgers record. The first one I heard was *Brakeman's Blues*, which was *Blue Yodel #2*. So I think he must have had 6 or 7 records out by this time. He inspired me. I bought every record he had out. Jimmie was never typed in any category. He was just Jimmie Rodgers. Louie Armstrong made records with him. He sang with brass or with almost anything. Then they got to calling it *hillbilly* music. I detested the word, and even Decca used it. I got them to quit using the word *hillbilly*, and I got the late Judge Hays to ask everybody to quit using it on the Grand Ole Opry. I had a reason for it, because people who weren't acquainted with our music would sort of shun it. They thought the word *hillbilly* made it kind of an inferior type music, and they didn't want to be identified with it. "Hillbilly" depicted some guy out here in the hills, barefoot, with a banjo and chewing tobacco, making white lightning. Let me tell you a little incident. The first time I was booked up north, during the 40's, was in Buffalo, New York. My manager sold advance tickets and booked me in for three days. A lady came up the afternoon of the first show in a chauffeur-driven limousine, and she bought four tickets. As she was leaving, he said, "I hope you enjoy the show tonight." And she said, "I'm getting these for my hired help; I don't go for that hillbilly music." So that night he was at the door taking tickets, and the same lady came in with three of her very dignified-looking friends with fur coats and diamonds, and he recognized her. And he said, "I sure

hope your maids enjoy the show tonight." And she couldn't say a word. She just went on up. I think the word hillbilly was bad for that reason. Maybe "country" isn't the right word either, but it's been accepted. There was a time when all we had was a country. We didn't have any cities. Most of us today came from the country. Of course, that's changing, but I think those people who were raised in the country are lucky, because I can't think of anything worse than raising a child who never sees a horse or a cow.

What kind of publicity would a "country singer" get in the Thirties?

Well, in about 1934 (Jimmie passed away in 1933) I was working and singing on the side in San Antonio. I got on the radio station there three times a week. They didn't pay you. You were lucky if they let you on the station singing this type of stuff—except Jimmie himself, of course, they would play some of his records. In fact, KONO was one of the first stations that had what they called a "cowboy jamboree." I was working in this drug store, and I always wore my white hat and cowboy boots and carried my guitar, and rode a bicycle downtown to KONO every week. Well, there was a news columnist who wrote a column called "Around the Plaza." And one day he wrote, "Who is the drugstore cowboy that rides the bicycle to KONO three times a week?" And that was the first publicity I ever received.

How did you first meet Mrs. Jimmie Rodgers?

I knew that Jimmie Rodgers lived in San Antonio, but I thought his wife had moved back to Meridian, Mississippi, where Jimmie was born. But I looked in the phone book anyway to see if . . . maybe . . . she still lived there, because I didn't have a good picture of Jimmie. All I had was a little one the record company put out. So I called her and she answered the phone, and she was the real Mrs. Jimmie Rodgers. Actually, I didn't much care about meeting the real Mrs. Rodgers, because when I was a kid I thought she had given Jimmie a rough way to go. She might be the Thelma that he'd been singing about. But I wanted that picture. Then she was so nice, she invited me out to the house the next Sunday, and I was there over two hours. She showed me his guitar, his boots, his hat, his scrapbook. She autographed a picture of Jimmie for me and she let me strum his famous Martin guitar. As I was leaving, I told her I did try to sing, and the only songs I knew were Jimmie Rodgers songs, and that I was on KONO three times a week at 5:30 a.m. Well, sometimes later, she called me at the drug store. And as it turned out, she had listened to me every week for six weeks, trying to analyze me, and finally decided I had something to offer. So I went out to see her, and we talked it over, and she told me how rough

it was gonna be, but that she'd help me get on records. Her sister, Elsie MacWilliams, who collaborated in a lot of songs with Jimmie, had written one called "The Passing of Jimmie Rodgers," and this was the first song I recorded.

Then Mrs. Rodgers more or less became your manager. Was she a good one?

She certainly was. I used to work at singing, you know, and she would say, "Gee, if you could see your face. You look like you're in misery." I'd sing a sad song, I'd be in misery, so she made me practice standing in front of a mirror and that's how I learned to smile while singing a song. "You're not going to die you know," she'd say, "so even though the song is sad, you don't have to be so sad about it—you don't have to make such faces." She asked me to practice an hour a day, whether she

was around or not, and that brought me out of it. I yodeled and sang as close to Jimmie as I could. Well, the record didn't sell, but to help promote it, we went on a tour of theaters in the south and central Texas. I was so poor, I didn't have a suit back in those days, and I think this hurt me. Jimmie had two costumes he sang in, a brakeman's uniform and a tuxedo. I'm not a brakeman, and I'd look phony in a brakeman's uniform, so I wore the tuxedo. This was a great mistake. After we did our little show, the people wouldn't come and ask for an autograph, they'd walk around me and just look at me. Like I was something on exhibit. Here I was, a country boy, dressed up in a tuxedo and singing Jimmie's songs. And, of course, Jimmie's fans resented me using his guitar, especially with that tuxedo on. But, usually, I wore Western

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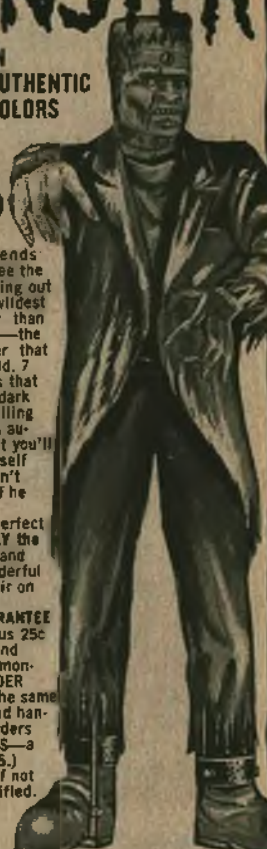
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slacks and a Western shirt. Back then, you could get those silky-satiny type shirts for about \$1.98. I always had a good hat, though, and good boots.

Were you making your living as a singer then?

Oh, yes, that was in the early 30's. Prohibition had just been repealed, and beer came back in, and they had all these drive-ins. Well, I felt pretty proud of myself, because most of the singers around San Antonio were making a dollar a night, and I was getting \$1.50. In the summertime, everybody wanted to get out and have a sandwich and drink some beer, so they got the idea of having entertainment. On one side, they'd have a platform. They had big speakers that covered the whole area. One job I remember out on Broadway in San Antonio—I was singing there with the Casselman Brothers that I got started with. Mervin Buffington worked with them, and he would play guitar behind me—not the style we have today with the melody, but runs and fill-ins behind my singing. We sang a few duets, but mostly it was me solo, singing Jimmie Rodgers songs. There was always somebody coming around, wantin' us to let them sing or play. They still do that. One night, a yodeling cowgirl came around with an old red-headed boy that was tongue-tied—he had an impediment in his speech, and he couldn't sing too good. Back in those days, a lot of them sang what we would call popular songs. I remember the first song I heard him sing was *I'll String Along With You*. The girl would sing Patsy Montana songs. So we let them sing, and I remember he sang it, *I'll Ting Along With You*. Then the owner found out he could get them for a dollar a night—the girl looked pretty neat, she had on Western clothes—so they got our jobs. We came back and they was singing in our place. I wanted to kill that tongue-tied boy. But, anyway, we got another job.

When did you have your first success?

The tour with Mrs. Rodgers wasn't successful, and I was pretty discouraged, but she said, "Now, don't give up. I still have faith in you. There's other record companies." And sure enough, four years later, she got me an audition with Decca Records. I auditioned April 3, 1940, and April 4th I recorded my first two sides for Decca, *I'll Get Along Somehow* and *Blue-Eyed Elaine*. This sold very good, and it was a good thing, because the next five records didn't do very good, and I was quite worried. By this time I was living in Fort Worth, Texas, and had a sponsored program on KGKO, a bigger radio station. And I had worked my way up from \$10 a week I was making in the drug store to \$75 a week. This was in 1941. I had just written *Walking the Floor Over You*, and Dave Kapp

happened to be in town with his portable equipment, so we set up a recording date. I had four songs altogether, and Dave liked *I Wonder Why You Said Goodbye*, and wanted to release this next. But I said, "Mr. Kapp, do me a favor and release *Walking the Floor Over You* next, and I'll never ask you another favor." Well, he agreed, and that record was such a hit that I guess I'm the only Decca artist who has picked all my releases since 1941. Back on the old 78 rpms, records sold anywhere from 275,000 to 35,000. I don't think from 1941 to about 1948 that I had a record that sold less than 400,000. And some of them, like *Rainbow at Midnight* and *Filipino Baby*, sold a lot more. Of course, even back in those days Decca had a standing order for 100,000 of my records.

How come you never got a gold record, Ernest?

Well, I think at least *Walking the Floor Over You* would have made it, but there was a war on, and you had to have a shellac to make records. The government had priority on all shellac as war material, so each record company was rationed. Decca had a policy that, to be fair to all the artists, they would print ten per cent of your demand. If a distributor ordered 10,000 Ernest Tubb records, he would get 1,000. If he ordered 1,000, he would get 100. So I'm lucky to have sold what I did, considering that they couldn't press all of them. *Walking the Floor* did not sell a million until much later, and of course you know to get a gold record you have to sell a million the first year. It did sell 200,000 the first year it came out, so if you figure they could only print ten per cent, that would have been 2 million the first year. After the war, they re-issued *Walking the Floor* several times; it was probably 1947 before it sold a million. At my 25th Anniversary party with Decca, the president said it didn't matter to Decca that I never got a gold record, because I'm one of the most consistent sellers they've got. And that made me proud. Of course, it would have been nice to have a million-seller.

Well, Mr. Tubb, you've still got a lot of years left. Do you have any plans to retire?

Gosh, no. I'm just going to keep on "trying to sing."

We sure hope so. And thanks, Ernest Tubb.

MERLE HAGGARD

continued from page 40

Bakersfield. They did not go hungry during the depression when the family was still in Oklahoma, nor at any time in California.

In 1948, when his son was nine

years old, Merle's father died of a brain tumor.

The death had an immense impact on the boy and he began to slip in school.

He hated authority. The authority of home. . . of school. . . of police. . . of a job. . . of life. At the age of 14 years, Merle Haggard was committed to the Fred C. Nellis School for Boys in Whittier, California. They tried to beat the fear of authority into Haggard.

He was later committed to the Preston School of Industry near Stockton and released at the age of 17.

Following his release, he began working the oil fields around Bakersfield. Then, with a friend, he began a junk business. Some of the junk they picked up belonged to somebody else.

He was given 90 days in a road camp, got drunk, ran away to Utah where he couldn't find work, and wound up in Eureka, California, where Merle found a job in a plywood factory.

A fellow worker finked, Haggard was caught, and a year was tacked onto his sentence. Thirteen months.

At the age of 19, he and a friend pulled a safe job. They wouldn't have been caught except they attempted another robbery while drunk, and were picked up on suspicion. Police discovered evidence in the car linking them to the earlier safe job. It was that encounter with the law that netted him 1-15 years in San Quentin.

Merle was released at the age of 22, in February, 1960.

He had begun playing guitar while he had a job picking cotton near Modesto one year, and as a kid had even written some songs. *Skid Row* was penned by Merle when he was 14.

But he really didn't start writing or performing until he was invited to take part in the "Warden's Show" at San Quentin.

"I had a friend who was a guitar player and he knew that I sang and he got me on the 'Warden's Show.' We played a lot of times and I learned a little bit about performing. And I guess I learned a lot about music," said Haggard.

When he was released, Merle went to work for his brother in Bakersfield as a helper to an electrical contractor. Merle dug ditches, lay wire, dug post holes and drove a truck for \$80 a week. He augmented this income by playing lead guitar—not even singing—at the High Pockets, a Bakersfield country music club. He earned an additional \$20 a weekend.

Then Merle picked up an extra night and then another. He worked five days and played four nights. "One thing led to another and I got another club offer and the another and pretty soon I quit my brother and I was in the uh Country music business,"

From 1960 to 1965, Haggard played the Kern County, Calif., County music clubs, cut a few records and attained moderate success. He had known Fuzzy Owen—a steel guitar player and owner of a small record company as well as a local Country Music television personality—for some time, but it wasn't until Merle played the Lucky Spot that they became friends.

On Fuzzy's "Tally" label, Merle recorded *Strangers, Sad Song* and others primarily with the idea of interesting a major recording company. They had gone to Capitol with some earlier cuts and were turned down, but when *Strangers* went to Number Four on the best-seller charts, the label became interested.

Merle, meanwhile, was dissatisfied with the backing he got from house musicians in the clubs and concert dates he'd started playing around the country, so he formed The Strangers.

He met Bonnie Owens when she was working as a cocktail waitress and singing one night a week. Merle and Bonnie were married in 1965 forming a partnership with her husband on the stage as well as in life. Merle and Bonnie released *Just Between The Two of Us* in 1966 and neither of them have been off the music charts since.

Haggard's biggest song to date started as a joke. He, Bonnie, The Strangers and his touring personnel were in their giant traveling bus when the conversation turned to the Muskogee area where Merle's parents had come from.

"I sang 'We don't smoke marijuana in Muskogee' and that was it. But maybe a month later I got to thinking about all the trouble they've been having around the country and the line about Muskogee kept coming back to me," he said.

Hits such as *Workin' Man's Blues* and *Mama's Hungry Eyes* along with *Okie* and *Fightin'* have reaffirmed Merle Haggard as the poet of the common man. But his appeal extends beyond the blue collar worker and the redneck. He's a chronicler of our times, who writes and sings about the 70s.

"If I had to take my choice, I'd rather write a song that people may not agree with than one they never hear at all. You got to make people turn their heads and listen closer to you and maybe say to themselves. 'What did he say?'" he said.

"But I'll tell you one thing," he added, "I believe in love, wherever it is."

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More portraits and biographies of C/W's biggest stars! Save 'em! Collect 'em! Use 'em as a permanent reference file. This is Part Two. And there's much more to come in future issues of CM Star Life.



PATSY SLEDD

One of nine children, Patsy had to be resourceful as a music-loving youngster: "I beat the straws out of Mom's broom pretending it was a guitar." Born January 29, 1944, she soon became an accomplished strummer on a mini-guitar given her by Billy Grammer. As a teenager, she sang at the "Lake of the Ozarks" and success here led to a trip to Nashville, where she met—and wed—Dale Sledd, now a singer and guitarist with the Osborne Brothers.



JOHN REEVES

Country music is family music—and much of the plucking and crooning is done by folks who are either kith or kin to each other. The problem of filling the footsteps of your loved ones is not rare in Nashville—for this very reason. Big John's one newcomer who's got people talking about his talent—as well as his pedigree. The handsome Texan is a cousin of the late great Gentleman Jim Reeves. John records for Spar, where he waxed *This Time It's Over*.



JIMMIE SKINNER

One of CM's hallowed ones, Kentucky's own Jimmie Skinner is coming into his fortieth year as a hillbilly hit-maker. Born in Berea, Ky. (on April 27th), Jim hit his first home run with *Doin' My Time* in 1941, later gained thousands of followers thru his radio show on WNOP (Newport, Ky.). He's shook the hit lists with such songs as *Will You Be Satisfied That Way?*, *Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello*, *I Found My Girl In The USA*, and *Dark Hollow*. Besides his singing chores, the Border Balladeer has a Cincinnati record shop, which is a C/W landmark.



MARTY MARTEL

Another one of those C/W rarities, a hillbilly star who was born in the American Northeast, Marty Martel is known and loved by all those die-hard countryphiles who tune in regularly to the WWVA Jamboree. A songwriter, as well as a stage standout and recording artist, Marty lives in Nashville. His band's called *The Ever-Blues* and he makes his music on the Adell label. One of his recent smashes was *The Last Time I Saw Nashville*.



BEN SMATHERS

From the hills of western North Carolina, settled ages ago by Dutch, German, and Irish pioneers, has come a great musical heritage. With this tuneful legacy, comes the unique form of country clog dancing that has been performed on the Opry for 14 years by Ben Smathers and his Stoney Mountain Cloggers. Ben and his talented brood come from the same locale where the dance form originated. Today, the group includes Ben, his wife Margaret, his sons Hal and Mickey, and two Stoney Mountain sisters, Ruby and Mary Hoffman, all expert cloggers.



GUY DRAKE

The man who sold **Welfare Cadillac** to a delighted nation, Guy Drake, was born in Weir, Ky. In '47, he formed his own swing band, composed of himself, his wife Mary, and his brother-in-law. Four years later, the group broke up and Guy went into a lucrative career as an aerial steeplejack painter. Then, in 1969 he moved to Nashville, because his married daughters lived there with his three grandchildren. The move made **Welfare Cadillac** possible. "People tell me it's a Cinderella story," Guy says. "But to me what has happened is nothing but proof that Nashville is still the kind of town that's not too big to give an old country boy a break."



MAC CURTIS

Now an a.m. deejay with WENO in Nashville, Mac Curtis got to the top o' the heap without hardly trying. In fact, when started out in Fort Worth (his home town), Mac had a pretty lax attitude about making a career in music. But, after racking up a slew of trophies for his C/W work in the Army, Nashville decided to take **him** seriously. Mac's had many hits, like **Honey, Don't, Sunshine Man, Don't Make Love, and Friendly City.**



HAROLD MORRISON

Banjo-master, TV Country star (with the Wilburns), Hendersonville lakeside loller, old crony of Porter Wagoner's, duet pard of Jimmy Gately's, hubby to Eva Lou, proud daddy to Gina and Carla and Georgia, Hal is many things to many folks. The red-hatted, loud-coated, nimble-fingered native of Ava, Mo. (hatched thar Jan. 30, '31) teed off muchos moons back with a \$5 steel guitar, then joined a square dance troupe just to get a new banjo.



LINDA RAE

This lovely little Canadian Canary got into the C/W biz via the Cinderella route. Born Linda Rae Gilpin and schooled in California, she filled in a contest blank in the **Western News** and submitted a tape of herself singing an original tune, **The Other Key.** It won her a contract with Canary Records. Linda lives in Vancouver, is seen frequently on TV, and is often accompanied on guitar by her manager, the popular North-western U.S. C/W personality, Smiley Miies.



WARREN ROBB

Raised on a cattle ranch near Pueblo, Colo., Warren might well have become a champion rodeo rider if a couple of buddies hadn't dared him to enter an amateur singing contest. Although he doesn't recall either winning or losing, Warren knows full well that he was soon on his way to Music City. In June of '67, the good-lookin' Rocky Mountaineer inked his first contract with Starday records. Some of his biggies have been: **I Can't Stand The Light, Face Of Love, Pretty Pictures, Pushups From The Ceiling.**

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The West Coast C/W Academy Award featured an awesome array of talent, including: (1) Buddy Alan, Buck Owens' son, and Sammi Smith, selected "most promising" and rewarded by Bobbie Gentry and Lee Merriweather; (2) Hugh Cherry (left), the writer, and Burbank DJ Corky Mayberry, both honored this year by their friend, Conway Twitty; (3) and C/W's top bassman, Billy Graham, who won the applause of Anne (Snowbird) Murray and Tennessee Pat Boone.



INSIDE ERNIE ASHWORTH

Considering such tunes as *Talk Back Trembling Lips* and *Lips Start Talking*, it's understandable why Ernie Ashworth is such a good listener. Outgoing and amiable, with a legion of friends, he enjoys meeting people and learning about them. He likes to be where the crowd is, where there's plenty of activity. Infact, if it weren't for his unusual voice and his great love for music, he'd probably have been drawn into some form of social work or politics . . . or even teaching or preaching. His simple charm can be very, very winning. Ernie's only mini-gripe concerns the fatigue brought on by road tours. "I like traveling," he says, "short or long hours, it doesn't matter as long as I'm moving. It's nice to try various foods wherever I go. Especially the foreign menu. I'm particularly fond of sausage, ham, bacon, meatloaf, sauces, cheese, fresh green vegetables and salads, as well as most meats, poultry, and some seafoods." And being over six feet high and slim, he can afford to eat it all! Although Ernie's been on the entertainment trail for a long time, he once turned his back on it to try something new for a season. Soon, he found himself drawn back to C/W, stronger than ever. He just missed the helter-skelter. Ernie's realistic sense of values and serious view of life help him to understand and relate to his fans. Deeply appreciating all that has come his way, he has faith in Country Music and is proud to be playing his part in it.—*Ruthie*.



CRACKERBARREL

hear a pin drop, and the world on everybody's lips was "gorgeous."

At the Opry's 45th Anniversary Show, **Bill Anderson** was the star of the evening with his rendition of "Where Have All the Heroes Gone?" Bill signed autographs on-stage at Ryman Auditorium and posed willingly for photos . . . Anderson fans please note.

The Opry's outstanding first was the combination of bluegrass groups **Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys** and **The Osborne Brothers** . . . Bill was given a long-overdue place in the Country Music Hall of Fame this year, along with **A. P. Carter** and the original Carter Family.

Merle Travis held forth at the Ramada Inn, picking, singing, and showing his skill as a story-teller . . . among his best was the one about how he wrote "Dark As A Dungeon" . . . painting a fence and thinking of a girl named Fern Judd.

Magnolias to: exciting singer-songwriter **Mac Davis** of Columbia, who moves audiences to tears

with his renditions of "I Love Beautiful Music" and "Whoever Finds This, I Love You."

Jimson Weed to: **Ray Stevens** for being completely out-of-Country with his "Mr. Businessman"—which completely turns country audiences off.

Webb Pierce told us that he's changed politics from his old mainstay, the Democratic Party, this year to campaign for Republicans like Ronald Reagan . . . but he says he's in good company . . . Frank Sinatra, among others, is, too.

Misty Morgan and **Jack Blanchard**, since their recent hits, "Tennessee Birdwalk" and "Humphry the Camel," are in their star bag . . . come off it, Misty and Jack, we're all friends.

Though **Kris Kristofferson** won Song of the Year for "Sunday Morning, Coming Down," and is on his third movie, his apartment in one of the old houses on Music Row matches his patched jeans. . . . rumors have it he has been seen lately with Barbra Streisand.

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