

**WSM's
OFFICIAL**

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GRAND OLE OPRY

HISTORY-PICTURE BOOK



ROY ACUFF



MINNIE PEARL



BILL MONROE



HANK SNOW



ERNEST TUBB



KITTY WELLS

GEORGE D. HAY

Let 'Em Go Boys!



A STORY OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY . . .



The Grand Ole Opry

During World War II on Guam a single file of U. S. Marines stood at the front of a Post Exchange. It was a bright Saturday afternoon in the latter part of 1944.

Behind the mesh-wire window on the PX counter was a radio tuned to the island's only assigned frequency, programming transcribed rural rhythm.

"That sounds like the Grand Ole Opry!" exclaimed a PFC brightly in an accent unmistakably midwestern.

"What do you know about the Opry?" drawled a companion.

"I've been to the Opry several times," the PFC replied.

"Are you from Nashville?" asked the other.

"No," he explained. "I'm from Canton, Ill. But me and my family have driven down there—sometimes as often as three or four times a year.

"We would leave Canton on Friday afternoon late," he reminisced, "and get to Nashville early Saturday. We drove back home Sunday.

"I wish I were there tonight. And if and when I get out of this war I'm going to see the Opry again many times."

The preceding authentic dialogue firmly attests to the international popularity of WSM's solidly-established weekly Grand Ole Opry attraction. It's more descriptive than the thousands of words which are to follow.

Nashville is described by impartial observers as a city of culture.

Centennial Park on its western side is the site of the replica of the ancient Parthenon.

Within the city limits are buried the remains of two presidents, Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk.

Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, is the hub of Methodist and Baptist religious publication activity.

Its landscape is dotted with such an abundance of schools, colleges and universities that years ago it was appropriately named "The Athens of the South."

It is situated within casting distance of numerous man-made lakes, a lure for fishermen and boating enthusiasts.

Nashville's attractions are many—yet to millions throughout the world, Nashville means only one thing:

WSM's Grand Ole Opry!

A department store buyer registers at a plush New York hotel.

The room clerk studies the guest card, spies "Nashville, Tenn." and automatically observes:

"Oh, from Grand Ole Opry country!"

A vacationing family stops at a Texas service station for gas and an oil check.

The attendant takes note of the Tennessee license

plate, pauses momentarily from his windshield-cleansing chore, and remarks:

"Tennessee! that's where we listen to the Grand Ole Opry from; you folks from Nashville?"

It happens all the time; and it happens all over.

In The American Tradition

This linking of the names, Nashville and Grand Ole Opry, has grown up in the American tradition—and like many other traditions it was not planned, but just happened.

The Opry's birth wasn't anticipated or heralded. The Stork was spontaneity and the delivering "physician" was George D. Hay, "The Solemn Old Judge," doctor of ad-lib!

It was Hay who defined the Grand Ole Opry—thusly and conclusively:

"Simple as sunshine; an entertainment that requires no tricks or gimmicks; no fancy key to open its front door. The latchstring is always out.

"It sends forth the aroma of bacon and eggs frying on a kitchen stove on a bright spring morning.

"An aroma welcome all the way from Maine to California—and since World War II, it circles the globe." WSM's original sign-on was heard October 5, 1925.

Hay was the first director of the "We Shield Millions" station. A newspaperman out of Memphis, Hay's background included an inherent fondness of, and extensive experience in the folk music field.

The Grand Ole Opry, as Hay vividly and fondly recalls, is a very simple program which started in a very simple way.

A few months before joining WSM, Hay had originated the WLS Barn Dance in Chicago; a show later to be known as the National Barn Dance.

Almost immediately after his arrival in Nashville, Hay recognized the unmined lode of folk music material and talent available on the farms and in the hills of Tennessee.

Hay, the prospector went to work, and was soon to discover, as one author later wrote, that there was "gold in them thar hill-billys."

'The Solemn Old Judge'

Presenting himself as "The Solemn Old Judge"—although a young man—Hay launched the WSM Barn Dance at 8 p.m., Saturday, November 28, 1925.

The first performer was Uncle Jimmy Thompson of Nashville.

Reminiscing, Hay elaborates on this pioneer artist. "Uncle Jimmy was past four score years old. He boasted that he knew a thousand tunes.

"We sat him in a comfortable chair in front of an old carbon microphone.

"I introduced Uncle Jimmy and announced that he would be glad to receive requests for old-time songs.

"Telegrams and telephone calls started pouring into WSM.

"Uncle Jimmy played and played for an hour and didn't want to stop when time was up.

"I still remember his almost vehement protest.

"'Shucks,' he muttered 'I just won an eight-day fiddling contest in Dallas, Texas—and here is my blue ribbon to prove it.'"

The casual 60-minute event, impromptu, unrehearsed and with a minimum of planned production, marked the real beginning, however humble, of country music as an important segment of radio programming.

It is significant, and unlike the current trend, that in those early years of country music, the emphasis was on instrumental music.

Singers were rare—and played second fiddle, so to speak, to the fiddlers, banjoists and guitarists who converged on WSM for auditions, in the wake of Uncle Jimmy's suddenly discovered success.

These were followed by larger groups of folk artists. In the van of these old-time bands was a troupe led by Dr. Humphrey Bate, a Sumner County physician of repute, whose hobby was folk music.

Dr. Bate played the harmonica and brought along six of his neighbors who performed on other instruments; improvised and orthodox.

He and Judge Hay labeled the group the Possum Hunters. It's still a part of the show and has two of its original members, Mrs. Alcyone Bate Beasley (Dr. Bate's daughter), and Staley Walton.

Later the Crook Brothers, the Gully Jumpers and the Fruit Jar Drinkers were added to the regular cast and they too have remained—with many changes in personnel, as some of the pioneers passed on.

The Grand Ole Opry was doffing its swaddling clothes and approaching the "growing pains" period.

The fiddlers and pickers had "put the show on the road," as the saying goes, but the time had come to improve the property.

The spotlight was large enough to include a singer in its glow—and that singer, the Opry's first singing star—was Uncle Dave Macon.

Billed as the Dixie Dewdrop, Uncle Dave came to WSM in 1926, after several years in vaudeville.

His earthy tunes, his spry musical wit and inborn flair for showmanship, garnered instant popularity and during the show's first 15 years he was its biggest single attraction.

During this primary span, the Opry was broadcast from Studio A on the fifth floor of the National Life building.

With the gradual additions to the cast, Studio A became inadequate. New and larger quarters were necessary, so WSM built Studio B on the fifth floor.

With the latter came WSM's decision to comply with listeners' consistent demands for admittance to the studio—to watch the Opry stars perform in person.

This was one of the earliest live audiences actually admitted to a radio studio.

When Uncle Dave Macon joined the program, it was still known as the WSM Barn Dance.

It remained such until the autumn of 1927—and then it received a new and more descriptive title, quite accidentally.

By that time—1927—the National Broadcasting Company had been formed. WSM was one of NBC's first network affiliates and still remains a basic outlet.

The Barn Dance, now developed into a three-hour presentation, retained its original 8 p.m. starting time, and in this period followed NBC's Music Appreciation Hour, directed by the famous composer and conductor, Dr. Walter Damrosch.

One night, Dr. Damrosch, introducing the final number of his program, said:

"While most artists realize that there is no place in classics for realism, I am going to break one of my rules and present a composition by a young composer from Iowa. This young man has sent us his latest composition, which depicts the onrush of a locomotive."

The Solemn Old Judge listened attentively and was apparently feeling the exuberance of youth that fall evening.

He received the signal that the Music Appreciation Hour had ended and that he was on the air with his country hoedown.

The Hay humor came to the surface. He complimented Dr. Damrosch respectfully—and then decided on the spur of the moment to spice the praise with a good-natured rib.

Hay recounts the remarks:

"Friends, the program which just came to a close was devoted to the classics.

"Dr. Damrosch told us it was generally agreed that there is no place in the classics for realism.

"However from here on out for the next three hours, we will present nothing but realism. It will be down to earth for the earthy!

"In respectful contrast to Dr. Damrosch's presentation of the number which depicts the onrush of the locomotive, we will call on one of our performers, DeFord Bailey, with his harmonica to give us the country version of his "Pan American Blues."

WSM's early harmonica virtuoso, stepped before the microphone and played his tune about the train.



THE CROOK BROTHERS



THE FRUIT JAR DRINKERS



SAM AND KIRK McGEE



THE POSSUM HUNTERS

Old Timers

THE GULLY JUMPERS



A Name for the Opry

Judge Hay resumed: "For the past hour we have been listening to music taken largely from Grand Opera, but from now on we will present, 'The Grand Ole Opry,' bearing down heavily on "Ole Opry."

The name struck a responsive chord with the studio and listening audiences.

The christening, although not pre-conceived, had "just happened"—and was official.

It was the "Roaring Twenties" era and the Grand Ole Opry was gaining in stature and appeal.

People clamored for admittance to Studio B.

The Opry's popularity pleased the station's owners and operators and the performers—but it precipitated an incident which momentarily endangered the show's existence due to crowding in the building that brought a ban against live audiences.

The Opry continued, but it was obvious the performers missed the spark ignited by the spectators' presence and applause.

The situation was soon remedied.

WSM rented the Hillsboro Theater, a former movie house in the southwest part of the city.

The Opry departed its cramped quarters and in new surroundings quickly regained its temporarily lost warmth and color.

Crowds filled the theater and many were turned away every Saturday night.

A larger hall was again necessary.

A large tabernacle across the Cumberland River in East Nashville was available, and tentatively leased.

The place lacked certain necessary facilities and was situated in an off-beat area.

Strangers to the city, and some residents, had difficulty finding the tabernacle—and even then the location posed a parking problem. It had to be abandoned.

The Opry's next address was the War Memorial Auditorium near the heart of the uptown shopping district and across from the National Life Building and WSM studios.

State-owned and operated, the War Memorial Auditorium seated 800 fewer persons than the tabernacle, but overcame this space deficit with a modern stage which lent to better production, better viewing by the audience and convenience for spectators.

The latter precaution, by the way, is a MUST with WSM officials. The safety and protection of the Opry fans are uppermost in the operation. Hence the ever-present squadron of policemen, firemen and ushers at the present auditorium.

Prior to the War Memorial Auditorium shift, tickets to the Grand Ole Opry had been distributed free.

Now, as a measure of gaining control of the live audience, it was decided to charge 25 cents for general admission.

It was now 1939. The Opry had been on the air uninterruptedly for 14 years.

The weekly crowds averaged better than 3,000.

A Home at the Ryman

Many will recall 1941 as the year of "Pearl Harbor"—and rightfully so. It also will be remembered by WSM staff members and Opry oldtime stars as the year a move was made to the historic Ryman Auditorium.

The staid old Ryman, haunted by dramatic and operatic (the Grand or Met type) ghosts of yesteryears, is a story in itself.

The Ryman provides a proper setting and atmosphere for the Opry.

It is a structure with a colorful background.

Captain Tom Ryman was the owner and operator of a line of pleasure boats on the Cumberland during the last half of the 19th Century.

The Ryman craft featured gambling rooms and luxuriously equipped, decorated bars—waterborne casinos and saloons.

Captain Ryman's enterprise was regarded as sinful and in disfavor by noted revivalist Sam Jones, then (this was about 1891) holding a series of daily services on the old Union Gospel grounds.

Jones challenged Ryman to attend one of his meetings.

Ryman not only accepted the defiant invitation but included in his party a rather motley crew of riverboat ruffians, callous deckhands and hardened hangers-on.

The Ryman delegation sat in the rear row, cocky and amused in its religious surroundings.

Jones chose as his subject, "Mother" and the theme hit Ryman in a soft spot.

Ryman, who had come to heckle, remained to pray. He was converted that very night.

"No fine man such as Sam Jones should be preaching in a tent," Ryman concluded.

"I'm going to do something about it," he emphasized.

Ryman was faithful to his promise.

Captain Ryman's conversion prompted him to remove the bars and gambling tables from his steamers.

And he immediately established a fund to build a tremendous tabernacle, available for all such revivalists, regardless of creed or denomination.

Ryman Auditorium—or tabernacle—was completed in 1892.

The Confederate Veterans reunion was scheduled in 1897—and a balcony was added for the meetings.

It is officially known, and so marked, as "The Confederate Gallery."

The Grand Ole Opry's appeal is universal. The majority of its audience is comprised of enthusiastic, friendly folks from the 48 states, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada—and foreign countries.

Naturally, most people from Nashville and Middle Tennessee towns don't go to the Opry every Saturday night.

If such were the case there would be no room for the visitors.

Ryman Auditorium, with its church-like pews, is equipped with 3,574 seats. Of this total 1,384 are reserved; the remainder are open to general admission ticket holders.

Proof of the Opry's hold on its patrons was emphatically expressed during early 1951 when Tennessee and the Central South were paralyzed by a disastrous ice and snow storm.

All public transportation was halted for almost a week. Electric power and telephone service were disrupted for several days.

Highways into Nashville were virtually impassable.

Many WSM staffers were unable to make their way downtown to work.

Nevertheless on Saturday night, an ardent and eager 2000 patrons were at the Ryman cheering for, and laughing with, the Opry stars.

One of the most significant eras in country music's history was the decade which followed 1940.

During that span this type of music attained professional maturity and achieved global renown.

Chiefly responsible for this step was the development of the country and western singing star.

It was true that Uncle Dave Macon was the Opry's original singing star and remained its top single attraction for 15 years—but the basic talent was the oldtime band.

The singer was a part of the band—but he was subordinate to the musicians.

He was on a level with the featured vocalist of the present day dance orchestra.

Singer Roy Acuff

Roy Acuff reversed the standard procedure. He actually represents the transition from a band featuring a singer to a singer backed by a band.

Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys first came to WSM in 1938.

They struggled for two years before becoming a really big hit.

During those formative months, Acuff several times re-organized his band—but always retained its homespun style.

A final re-organization attached more prominence to Acuff and his singing.

Acuff, whose business ability compares with his skill as an entertainer, branched out in later years as an operator of Dunbar Cave, recreation park, near Clarksville, Tenn., and part-owner of a very successful song publishing firm.

Opry acts of that day included Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys, a band with a pair of instrumentalists, who doubled in brass as singers.

One of the latter was Eddy Arnold, billed today as "The Tennessee Plowboy." Guitarist Arnold, a farm lad from Henderson, Tenn., found a song, "Mommy Please Stay Home With Me."

It so fitted his style that it became extremely popular and lifted him from a subordinate position with the band.

Arnold formed his own group—this time the band was organized to support a singer who had already become prominent.

The rush was on!

Click with a song, get a band—and you got it made, the entertainment experts counseled.

Red Foley hit with "Smoke On the Water."

Ernest Tubbs became a star with "I'm Walking the Floor Over You."

Cowboy Copas brought out "Filipino Baby."

"Love Sick Blues" was the springboard by which the late Hank Williams leaped to a sensationally successful singing and song-writing career.

Birth and growth of the singing star uncovered a new phase of country music, but it was only partially responsible for the phenomenal spread in popularity and prestige.

The second, an important factor, was the increase in listeners.

Several years after the Opry began, the Federal Communications Commission designated certain frequencies as clear channels—meaning that only one radio station would be permitted to operate on each clear channel frequency.

WSM became one of the clear channel stations, or in lay terms, WSM could be received without interference as far as its signal carried.

Three years later WSM built what was then the nation's tallest radio tower—878 feet tall—and increased its power to 50,000 watts, and adopted the slogan, "Air Castle of the South."

The increased power and the clear channel enabled WSM to be heard all over the U. S. A. and in large parts of Canada and Mexico.

On Network Since 1939

Late in 1939 NBC and national advertising agencies began negotiating with WSM about a network radio show. R. J. Reynolds, makers of Prince Albert smoking tobacco, signed for a 30-minute show.

The program is carried by the vast NBC network, this being an eloquent testimonial to the Opry's advertising results. Today Prince Albert's Grand Ole Opry stands as Radio's longest commercial broadcast.

New York critics agree that what appears on the

Ryman stage as "Organized Confusion" comes out a finished radio production.

Vito Pellettieri, Opry stage manager since 1935, handles the complicated stage traffic.

In the 1940's as age was catching up with Dr. Bate, Jimmy Thompson, Uncle Dave Macon and other early members of the Opry, a galaxy of talented newcomers arrived to take their places, as will be recorded later.

But before Uncle Dave's fadeout the Opry was to hit the silver screen.

Hollywood beckoned and on the Republic Pictures lot and in its studios the motion picture, "Grand Ole Opry," was shot.

The plot was soft-pedaled and the "actors" were Uncle Dave, Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys and The Solemn Ole Judge—all playing themselves.

The "Grand Ole Opry" film was popular over the nation and served to introduce Opry stars to theatergoers, many of whom had never seen a photographic likeness of the artists they listened to every Saturday night.

It was premiered in Nashville's Paramount Theater with all the trappings and glamor of a Hollywood first-night.

The instrumentalists and the singers were firmly entrenched in the public mind with the advent of World War II and the Opry did much to provide needed entertainment for a mobilized nation.

An air-powered Opry invasion of the European fighting front took place, with Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys leading the group. Acuff was voted by America's fighting men as the most popular entertainer to visit them overseas.

Later in the Korean War groups of Opry performers visited the servicemen and won their hearts with the "music from home."

Minnie Pearl and Rod

Earlier comedians of the Opry were succeeded in the 1940's by Minnie Pearl and Rod Brasfield, literally the queen and king of Opry comic royalty.

Minnie, born Ophelia Colley, a Ward-Belmont graduate, spurned, or rather sidestepped, a school-teaching career to embrace the Opry.

She made her debut Nov. 7, 1940, after being counseled by George D. Hay: "Love 'em, honey, and they'll love you back."

Through the years Minnie has loved the people and the "courtship" has been mutual.

Minnie, who was recommended for an Opry audition by Nashville banker Bob Turner, is married to Henry Cannon of Nashville but harvests hilarity from her make-believe romances with her Grinder's Switch beaux, or beaux.

When Minnie first came to the Opry, she wore a yellow dress, white cotton stockings and a brightly

trimmed straw hat with dangling price tag. The garment get-up has remained her favorite costume.

Minnie's advent on the Opry scene preceded arrival of Rod Brasfield by four years.

Brasfield had been a comedian and performer with numerous tent shows before joining the Opry in 1944.

He had seen service with Bisbee's Comedians throughout Kentucky and Tennessee for 10 years when the Army beckoned in 1942. An old back ailment brought a medical discharge in 1943 and shortly thereafter he headed to Nashville and the Opry.

The Grand Ole Opry now has variety—gay songs, ballads, instrumentals, hymns and funny stories.

Paul Ackerman, a nationally renowned expert on the subject, wrote early in 1957: "The most pertinent fact about country music today is its resurgence as a vital force in the over-all music-record scene.

"Not since the days of the late great Hank Williams has such a comeback been in evidence.

"The contribution of the country field to musical Americana has two chief facets. One of these is the influence of the country and Western song material. The other is the influence of the country and Western artist."

Hank Williams' Years

"Hank Williams was such an outstanding figure—both as a performing artist and songwriter—that his death in 1953 created a temporary void in the country field."

A prolific composer, Williams joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1949, and by 1950 he was a nationally known figure in the field of folk music.

Born in 1922 at Georgiana, Ala., Williams contended that he developed his singing voice hawking newspapers on the streets of Montgomery, Ala.

Williams' compositions set a pattern for other writers of country and western music, when his tunes attracted the attention of popular music singers.

Traditionally, country songs and country artists were confined to the so-called country market.

However as the Opry grew into maturity, the songs its stars popularized attracted the attention of the broader pop field.

Songs which were originally recorded by Williams and more recently Marty Robbins, Faron Young, Johnny Cash, Jim Reeves, Ferlin Husky, Ray Price, Jimmy Newman, and others were later covered by singers of popular songs.

The Grand Ole Opry had weathered World War II and the Korean conflict, and while many radio shows succumbed to the inroads of television, the Opry wasn't appreciably affected by the new medium.

If, as historian-critic Ackerman chronicled, country and western music had suffered a void in 1953, it wasn't overly obvious on the Opry.

Opry Immortals



Hank Williams



Rod Brasfield



Uncle Dave Macon

Many great artists have come and gone during the melody-laden Grand Ole Opry history, but three stand out as "immortals" of the Country Music World—Hank Williams, Uncle Dave Macon and Rod Brasfield. Hank came to the Opry in 1949 with his brilliant "Lovesick Blues" and grew in stature with a host of hits, from "Cold, Cold Heart" to "Hey, Good Lookin.'" Uncle Dave, the Opry's feature singer for some 15 years, made memorable such originals as "Chewing Gum," "11-Cent Cotton, 40-Cent Meat" and "Bully of the Town.'" Rod Brasfield, the beloved "Teller of Tall Tales from Hohenwald, Tennessee" whose beguiling "Hi-dee friends!" and country flavored humor endeared him to 14 years of Grand Ole Opry audiences, was known as a master of perfect timing, quick wit and the zany facial expression.

And the memories of many other Opry stars gone by, including Uncle Jimmy Thompson and Dr. Humphrey Bates of the very earliest days, are enshrined in the hearts of Opry lovers who recall their dedicated service.

The response to the Opry broadcasts remained solid and heartening to sponsors and WSM.

The "early settlers" such as Roy Acuff, Rod Brasfield, Cowboy Copas, Fruit Jar Drinkers, the Old Hickory Singers, Minnie Pearl, Bill Monroe, Hank Snow, Ernest Tubb, the Possum Hunters, Gully Jumpers, Sam and Kirk McGee, and the Crook Brothers were being augmented by new, and younger, additions.

New Stars Arrive

The post-war and television-introduction period, produced such stars as Flatt and Scruggs, Lonzo and Oscar, Ray Price, Johnnie and Jack, and Kitty Wells.

Later were to be added Chet Atkins, the Carlises, Mother Maybelle Carter, June Carter, Ferlin Husky, the Jordanares, the LaDells, Stringbean, Benny Martin, Cousin Jody, Marty Robbins, Jean Shepard, Justin Tubb, Del Wood, Faron Young, Jim Reeves, George Jones, Jimmy Newman, Johnny Cash, the Wilburn Brothers (Teddy and Doyle), Porter Wagoner, Wilma Lee and Stoncy Cooper, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Stonewall Jackson, and the Everly Brothers (Don and Phil).

Comprehensive, illustrated articles about the Grand Ole Opry and its unusual appeal to the hearts of people have appeared in scores of national magazines, including a 7-page spread in *Life Magazine* in November, 1956. *Newsweek* featured Roy Acuff on its front cover with a profile and Opry story inside, and *Readers Digest* has given it exhaustive treatment—as have scores of other magazines.

During 1957 the Opry attracted an unusual number of guests from foreign lands, including governmental officials, industrialists, students, and others. All testified to delight and interest in American Country Music—with its universal appeal.

And in that year the Opry was host to visitors attending WSM's 6th Annual Country Music Disc Jockey Festival—one of the outstanding music gatherings in the nation.

The festival was started by WSM in 1952 with a few hundred attending, but throngs have grown with the years and delegates now number into the thousands—including country music disc jockeys, leading artists of the field, recording company officials, songwriters, and talent managers. It's a mammoth celebration, held in recognition of the Opry's annual birthday.

The Solemn Old Judge, George D. Hay, on a not-too-long ago Saturday night, told a back-stage visitor that the idea about the Opry came to him as a result of his coverage of a funeral in Mammoth Springs, Ark. while he was a young reporter for the *Commercial-Appeal* in Memphis, Tenn.

"I was impressed by the down-to-earth goodness of the Ozark people who attended that funeral," Hay recalled.

"I was influenced by their inherent love of the land—Here, I thought, was America at its best; at grass-roots level.

"I was determined that some part of the American heritage should be dedicated to these people—and the answer was folk music."

Hay calls Edwin W. Craig, National Life and Accident Insurance Co., board chairman, the savior of the Grand Ole Opry.

"He's the man," Hay explains, "who repeatedly saved the Opry from an early demise at the hands of critics, who in the early days wanted it scuttled.

"He is the man who kept me from being run out of town during that formative period when we did not know from week to week if the community would permit the Opry to live—and thus become a great civic asset to Nashville."

As a result of many people's foresight, zeal, perseverance, energy and talent, the Opry has grown in stature, depth and prestige.

Nashville—Music City, USA

Because of the musical traffic created by the Grand Ole Opry, Nashville has become known as Music City U. S. A.—trailing only Hollywood and New York in providing entertainment for the world.

Because of the Opry, Nashville has more than 3,000 residents who can trace their livelihood directly to the local and national Country Music industry; . . . representing millions of dollars in income, and affording employment for additional thousands.

Because of the Opry over 400,000 tourists come to Nashville and Middle Tennessee every year, naming the Opry as their major attraction, and staying in the area for a day or two.

Because of the Opry, millions of radio listeners and television viewers throughout the world hear their favorite programs and artists broadcast from Nashville, or made available through country and western records, produced at sessions in Nashville, and aired by disc-jockeys around the globe.

Because of the Opry, Grand Ole Opry stars cut 20-million of the 30-million country and western records sold yearly—and which invariably dominate the popularity charts, as published by the trade magazines, *Billboard* and *Cashbox*—and the numerous periodicals devoted to folk music.

Because of the Opry, more than seven million Americans, Canadians and Alaskans attend annually the Opry road shows which travel the continent—and frequently go abroad. Opry stars journey three million miles a year to present these shows before audiences ranging from hundreds in small schoolhouse gyms to throngs in the high thousands, at parks, auditoriums and open air arenas.



ROY ACUFF

Because of the Opry, country music is a superb attraction despite all competition.

Because of the Opry, Nashville as a name and as the "Home of the Grand Ole Opry" has become a byword with folk music devotees throughout the world, and a city known for its friendly hospitality.

Nashville is a synonym for Grand Ole Opry, or vice versa—and Grand Ole Opry means true, wholesome entertainment and good-will!

Roy Acuff

Discuss country music and you cannot get away from, or nearer to the subject, than Roy Acuff.

Here is the legendary figure of the legendary Grand Ole Opry!

Acuff is what exemplifies the Grand Ole Opry.

He was there when most of it happened.

Acuff is a natural artist who started as a fiddler and wound up as a singer.

Perhaps it should be more appropriate to reverse the field and report that he was an athlete, who began as a baseball player and a football quarterback—but that is another story; and in the realm of sports.

He chose the "Wabash Cannon Ball" in preference to a homer with the bases loaded, or a 100 yard dash.

Maynardsville, Tenn. is Acuff's hometown and through the years, through adversity and success, he has not, as the saying goes, "forgotten his rearing."

Acuff is a man of many facets:

He has an inherent fondness for politics—and once was a candidate for governor. He was not elected but a popular loser.

Ironically enough, Acuff's next-door-neighbor today on Old Hickory Lake, is Gov. Frank G. Clement, who delivered the Democratic keynote address at the 1956 national convention in Chicago.

Acuff owns and operates Dunbar Cave, a popular summer resort 50 miles from Nashville, on the outskirts of Clarksville, near Fort Campbell.

He is active, with his charming wife, Mildred, in the Acuff-Rose Music Publishing Company; a firm which has published, and still is producing, many top tunes.

He and his Smoky Mountain Boys have recorded for numerous labels, including: Capitol, Columbia, Vocalion, Okeh and Decca.

He is known around the globe, having performed for GIs in such faraway places with odd-sounding names as, Point Barrow, Alaska; Pusan, Korea and bases in Germany and Japan.

He has appeared in more than a dozen films and on network TV with the big names of the entertainment industry.

Acuff has traveled a long way since his first job as call boy for the Louisville & Nashville railroad.

He has parlayed common sense and religious training to become one of the most beloved persons in his chosen field—among colleagues. He's an entertainer's entertainer!

"I wanted to be a baseball player," Acuff frankly admits. "And I think I might have made a go of it."

Protracted illness detoured Roy's original ambition. He was advised by physicians to "get out in the open."

He joined a medicine show and in 1933, after 3 years barnstorming, organized his own band to play on stations WROL, and later WNOX, in Knoxville.

"I came to WSM for a tryout in the early months of 1938," Roy recalled.

"We were accepted," he remembered. "But it wasn't easy; for two years it was very discouraging.

"A musician would quit and I would have to rebuild the band. It happened so many times.

"After bleak days, the sun began to shine. We clicked with 'The Great Speckled Bird' and 'The Wabash Cannonball.'

"Republic Pictures signed us for the 'Grand Ole Opry' movie.

"Our efforts had paid off," Roy recalled.

The "King of the Hillbillies" has a rare ability to get along with people in general and those who work for him in particular.

It is no myth that this congenial artist, astute businessman, goes beyond the call of duty in relations with those fortunate enough to be in his employ.

New Year's Day, 1957, Acuff resolved to curtail his tours and spend more time with his family, which includes in addition to wife Mildred, son Roy Neal.

By the following mid-February, however, his nomadic nature was beginning to assert itself.

"I am missing the road. I am missing the people," Roy confessed.

The people and the road were missing Roy Acuff, because he, like the Grand Ole Opry, belongs to the people.

Chet Atkins

The best way to describe Chet Atkins is to reprint his recent remark to a friend:

"I enjoy playing the guitar. It is a good living. However if I didn't make a living out of it, I would still enjoy playing the guitar."

Lanky, easy-going Atkins, he of the wistful, semi-forlorn smile, is considered by many to be the greatest guitarist in, or out of, country music. He is also a musical director for RCA-Victor recording sessions.

He is a stylist supreme; in demand as a soloist and as accompanist for Opry stars.

Atkins, resident of Nashville, was born in Luttrell, East Tennessee, but moved to Columbus, Ga. when he was 11 years old.

Primarily Atkins' musical training was in voice and on the piano, taught by his father.

The Atkins family owned and lived on a farm near Columbus. Young Chet spent many post-school hours listening to the Negro workers of the farm, for whom he played the guitar.

Chet attributes his sincere sense of rhythm and style to these field hands, whose lives were brimmed with music.

Chet's first professional job was with radio station WRGL in Columbus.



CHET ATKINS

He moved to WNOX in Knoxville in 1942, where he worked with numerous groups.

It was about this time that Red Foley signed a contract with the Opry and prepared to head to Nashville from Chicago.

Atkins auditioned for Foley and was signed. He remained in Nashville for less than a year—and again was the wandering minstrel.

Stops included Springfield, Mo., Denver, Colo., and sundry way stations.

Then came the BIG double-break:

An RCA-Victor representative contracted him for a New York record session.

Almost simultaneously, the Opry persuaded him to return "home."

He did; the moving-around was at an end.

Yes, it is true, as the talented guitarist says, he enjoys his work—and he shares this enjoyment with a legion of Opry fans.

Atkins is married to the former Leona Johnson of Cincinnati. They are parents of a daughter, Merle.

Don Gibson

A new star has been added to the horizon of WSM Grand Ole Opry artists. Don Gibson is his name and is already well known by country music fans and disc jockeys across the nation. Don's popularity has grown tremendously as a song writer and singer. And his first release on the RCA Victor label entitled "Too Soon to Know" was a fast hit with the follow up "Oh Lonesome Me" jumping into all the popularity charts immediately.

The dark haired young man stands six feet and is a striking figure on the stage. Goodlooking Don was reared in Shelby, North Carolina and had made his professional debut by the age of 14. He received his first real break in this selective field when he moved to East Tennessee and became associated with Radio Station WNOX and the Tennessee Barndance. He immediately organized his own band and began to play club dates as well as special guest appearances on other radio and television stations.

Handsome, high-spirited, friendly with everyone, Don has a style of singing that is decidedly different. He has been in great demand since his latest recording has soared into popularity, being recognized all over the nation and Canada as one of the most distinctive and brightest new stars to develop in the past year.

Carl Butler

A 6-foot-2, 170-pound package of dynamite explodes—and dynamic, crowd-pleasing Carl Butler is belting another song!

Newest star on the Grand Ole Opry, Butler is an old hand at pleasing the customers with both country songs and hymns and has more than 25 records to his credit. "If Teardrops Were Pennies" is the best known, but Carl himself prefers "River of Tears" and the sacred song "Angel Band." Audiences have their say-so by giving deafening approval any time the Columbia Records star sails into his show-stopper, "I Know What It Means To Be Lonesome."

In addition to making hit records, countless personal appearances and his years of radio and television in Tennessee, North Carolina and Kentucky, this talented newcomer to the Opry has written more than 200 songs, some of which have been recorded by Roy Acuff, Kitty Wells, Rosemary Clooney, Carl Smith, and Flatt & Scruggs.



DON GIBSON



CARL BUTLER

The 32 year old native of Knoxville, Tennessee, learned the basic guitar chords on the \$7.50 guitar his mother gave him one long ago Christmas. He turned professional at the age of 12 when he started picking for square dances and singing between the sets.

Serious and determined, Carl Butler is regarded as one of the hardest workers in Country Music. "There's no use singin' it unless you live it," he says, and those who have witnessed his work agree that the boy from the foothills of the Smoky Mountains really lives the songs he sings.

The Carlises

Bill Carlisle's act is one of the longest established in show business.

Always beamed for country music fans, Carlisle was clicking as early as the 1930's with a Bluebird recording of "Rattlesnake Daddy."

A decade later it was "Rainbow at Midnight." The '50s found the Carlises' "No Help Wanted" among the leading sellers.

Residents of Wakefield, Ky., the Carlises traveled 40 miles northwest to Louisville for their first radio appearance in 1937.

Back then their act was Bill and Cliff, the Carlisle Brothers, and what they sang over station WLAP at-



THE CARLISES

tracted much attention. Soon the Carlises were traveling around the country, finally settling down in Knoxville, Tenn.

During the early '40s Cliff returned to his Lexington, Ky. home and decided to devote his time and efforts exclusively to paint contracting—at which he has become successful.

Bill, however, stuck with show business. He signed Dottie Sills and Honey Bear Collins, and formed one of the most colorful novelty acts in the country and western field today.

The Carlises joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1950 and Bill, with his wife Leona, son Billy and daughter Sheila now live in Nashville.

June Carter

A piquant and pert elfin-like bundle of energy—that is an adequate approach to a definition of Opry personality June Carter, an artist ever searching for means of improvement.

Slender and songful with soulful eyes, June was not completely satisfied with her singing and comics—so she enrolled in a New York dramatic school.

The net result hasn't been ledgered on the entertainment books, but June's loyal fans—who are legion—



JUNE CARTER

agree that she has gained added stature and depth as a performer.

June through the years has retained her style, but has revamped her stage fashion. She has discarded her famed ruffled pantaloons (for how long, nobody knows) in favor of bright gingham and calicos.

Quiet, unassuming and well-mannered offstage, June comes brightly alive in front of an audience.

"I know the people are out there and that they are for me, so I respond," she says.

Born in Maces Spring, Va., June turned professional vocalist at the tender age of 11 years, when she joined her mother (Maybelle) and sisters (Anita and Helen) in an all-family act for a radio station in Del Rio, Texas.

By 1950, the Carter group, with June in the vanguard, had arrived at WSM's Grand Ole Opry as regulars.

More recently she has branched out as a single, but still prefers to be known as "one of the Carter family."

Appearances on TV resulted in contracts to emote before film cameras for this wholesome, attractive lassie.

Grandpa Jones and his Grandchildren

Louis Marshall (Grandpa) Jones was born in Henderson County, Kentucky, the youngest of ten children.

When he was about 11 years old, a saw mill was put up near his farm and one of the operators brought along a guitar. He fell in love with the guitar, and begged his brother into buying him one for the large sum of seventy-five cents. In March, 1929, he won an amateur contest, which was conducted by Wendell Hall, "The Red Headed Music Maker," one of radio's big stars a quarter of a century ago. The first prize which he won was \$50.00 in gold, which he used at once to buy a better guitar.

Grandpa Jones played straight in those days, singing ballads and novelty numbers. In 1936, he got a job with Bradley Kincaid, who was one of the biggest stars in radio then. They toured New England and it was there that Bradley called Louis Jones, "Grandpa" Jones. At one time, he was a valuable member of "The Lum and Abner Show" at WTAM, Cleveland, Ohio which was called "The Friday Night Social." The show was broadcast over a network of 44 stations.

In 1937 he went to Wheeling, West Virginia, where he started an act called "Grandpa Jones and his Grandchildren."

In 1941 he joined the staff of WLW, Cincinnati where he made his headquarters for three years. In 1944, he joined the U.S. Army and was made an M.P. In 1945 he was stationed in England and Germany during which time he entertained on the American Forces Network station in Munich. He returned to the states in



GRANDPA JONES

'46 and joined WSM Grand Ole Opry for the first time in March of 1947. He was on the Opry for about two years at which time he received a very attractive offer to join Connie B. Gay's radio show at WARL, Arlington, Virginia, just a few miles from Washington, D. C.

Not long after that he headed a company of performers to entertain the boys in Korea where he put on one show about two hundred yards behind the front lines. He and his troupe got over there just before the U. S. Army began to rotate the boys, who had been on the firing lines for about eight months. In fourteen days he put on 34 shows to about 38,000 service men. During his first day in Japan he put on 15 shows in hospitals. He left for Korea from WRVA, Richmond, Virginia where he was working on "The Old Dominion Barn-dance" at the time. In 1952, he entertained the service men in Germany, Austria and Italy.

He came back to the Grand Ole Opry on July 15, 1952.

During his years of entertaining, he met a lovely girl, a member of the company, whose professional name is Ramona. They have been married eight years and have a lovely family. She has made all the overseas tours with him. She works as a member of the "Grandchildren" plays fiddle, mandolin and they sing duets together.

He records exclusively for RCA Victor!



SHOT JACKSON
Steel Guitar



TOMMY JACKSON
Fiddle



LIGHTNIN' CHANCE
Bass

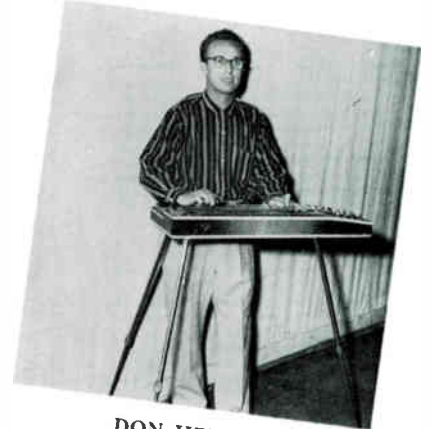


GRANDPA JONES
Banjo



ROY WIGGINS
Steel Guitar

Pickers' Page



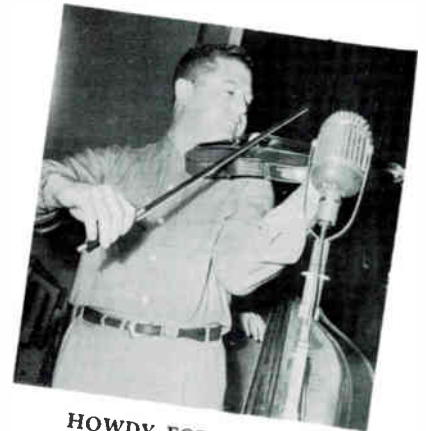
DON HELMS
Steel Guitar



BILLY BYRD
Ernest Tubb's Electric Guitarist



EARL SCRUGGS
Banjo



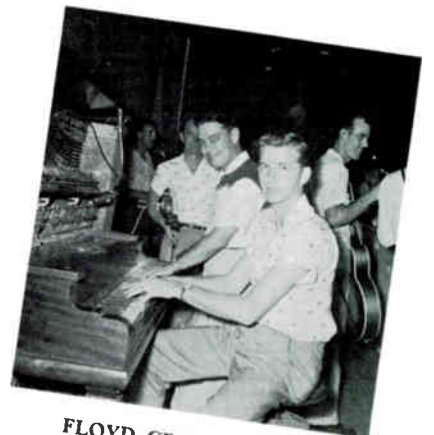
HOWDY FORRESTER
Roy Acuff's Fiddler



DELL WOOD
Piano



HANK "SUGARFOOT" GARLAND
Electric Guitar



**FLOYD CRAMER AND
MARVIN HUGHES**
Piano



STONEWALL JACKSON



MARTY ROBBINS



JUSTIN TUBB



MINNIE AND THE
LATE ROD BRASFIELD



OLD HICKORY SINGERS



RAY PRICE



KITTY WELLS



FERLIN HUSKY



FARON YOUNG



COWBOY COPAS

Cowboy Copas

The nickname is no misnomer.

Copas actually was a cowboy during his youth in Muskogee, Oklahoma where his family operated a ranch.

"Music surrounded me from birth," Copas recalls. "My entire family sang, hummed, whistled or played some string instrument or piano."

Self-taught guitarist Copas was 10 years young when he won an amateur radio contest in Tulsa, singing a rousing "Red River Valley."

Later when the family moved East to Ohio, Copas called, and played and sang at square dances. He was appearing regularly on radio at the age of fourteen.

There followed county fair dates, one-night stands and in the intervening years he has spanned the land from Canada to Mexico.

The Grand Ole Opry beckoned in 1946 and the alliance has been happy and mutually beneficial.

Copas' disc of "My Filipino Baby" was a best-seller, and sentimentally favored to a degree that it is now his theme song and musical signature.



COWBOY COPAS

Ensuing records, especially "Signed, Sealed and Delivered," have sold more than 5,000,000 copies and established Copas as a standard on the Grand Ole Opry.

Wilma Lee, Stoney & Carolee Cooper

Handsome in appearance and billed as West Virginia's most talented radio and television team, Stoney and Wilma Lee Cooper and their pretty daughter, Carolee, joined WSM's Grand Ole Opry in early 1957—and promptly gained favor with visual and listening audiences.

Wilma Lee, she of the brown eyes and jet-black hair, was born in Valley Head, West Va. and attended Elkins High School and Davis-Elkins College in Elkins, West Va.

Wilma Lee's folks, The Leary Family, were country-style church singers, but educated her for a business career. However the girl's inherent musical ability expressed itself.

Stoney Cooper, also a West Virginian, was born in Harman and while directing the Clinch Mountain Clan, met, wooed and won Wilma Lee.

Backed by the Clinch Mountain Clan, the Coopers, formerly of WWVA, Wheeling, W. Va., project a different type of music and songs, thus adding to the diversified makeup of the Opry.

The Coopers have been in radio since 1945 and as evidence of their popularity and stability, had the same sponsor for eight consecutive years.

A close-knit family, the Coopers share their fondness



THE COOPERS



THE BEN SMATHERS DANCERS

for the outdoors, and in their spare time, which is limited, what with a full schedule of personal appearances, etc., hunt and fish together. They also collaborate on songwriting, having composed such religious favorites as, "He Will Save Your Soul," and "The Legend of The Dogwood Tree."

The Coopers have established numerous attendance records throughout the USA and in Canada.

They record for the Hickory label, and some of their bigger songs have been, "Just For Awhile," "I Want To Be Loved," "Cheated Too," "Loving You" and "The Tramp On The Street."

Old Hickory Quartet

A familiar and frequently heard part of WSM's Grand Ole Opry is the Old Hickory Quartet, an all-purpose group, equally capable on commercials as on hymns, folksongs and popular tunes.

Organized in the mid-30s by tenor Claude Sharpe, the foursome's combined professional experience approximates 100 years.

Complementing Sharpe are: second tenor Claude Waller; baritone Luther Heatwole; and bass Joseph MacPherson.

Sharpe, native of Maynardville, Tenn., was educated at George Peabody College in Nashville and studied voice in Nashville and New York City.

Owner of a large farm on the outskirts of Nashville, Sharpe breeds championship bird dogs. He enjoys hunting and fishing and is active in Methodist Church work.

Heatwole's versatility includes playing the piano, cello and bass violin. Born in Virginia, he attended Shenan-

doah College, Peabody Conservatory and Baltimore College. A veteran of World War I, Heatwole's background also includes appearances in musical comedy.

He owns and operates an antique shop in Nashville and sings in a Presbyterian Church choir.

MacPherson, an alumnus of David Lipscomb College, studied voice and piano in his hometown of Nashville. He was leading basso in the Metropolitan Opera in New York City from 1926 to 1932.

MacPherson as a result enjoys the distinction of having performed with the two giants of the musical field—Grand Opera and Grand Ole Opry.

He prefers hymns and songs of the Old South—and when he isn't singing with the Old Hickory Quartet, sells insurance.

Waller comes from a musical family. He and his younger brother, Fred, were for many years a popular singing duo on radio.

Waller, who joined the quartet in the late '40s, is with the Tennessee Valley Authority. He lives in East Nashville and is active in the Methodist Church.

Flatt & Scruggs

A genuine folksong duo are Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, one of the more consistently popular acts on WSM-Grand Ole Opry.

A simple and solid presentation of grass-roots entertainment, this pair is known in the trade as sincere salesmen of "blue grass music."

Sponsorship is no worry to Flatt and Scruggs. The appeal of their entertainment is wide in scope. No town



FLATT AND SCRUGGS

or stage is too small or antiquated for the "Foggy Mountain Boys," as they are called.

Flatt, born in Sparta, Tenn., is the leader of a group which includes talented musicians and comedians.

Scruggs is generally recognized as the nation's No. 1 banjo picker—and that banjo you see him playing on TV and the Opry stage is valued at \$1,000—wholesale.

A native of Flint Hill, N. C., Scruggs is one of the most imitated instrumentalists in the business.

Flatt and Scruggs signed with the Opry in 1955 and their bookings include big cities (New York, to mention one) and hamlets.

The Flatt-Scruggs bus is a showcase in itself: A specially equipped diesel with modern living quarters—including a "rehearsal hall."

"We are always on camera," says Flatt. All of which, in the final analysis amounts to keen and smart showmanship. The group is said to make more personal appearances than any other Opry act.

Hawkshaw Hawkins

To the uninitiated the tag, "Hawkshaw," might signify a private-eye, but to Opry fans Hawkshaw Hawkins is a clever entertainer who has been in the public eye for years.



HAWKSHAW HAWKINS



FERLIN HUSKY

Hawkins is a guy who as a kid took a dare.

He accepted a challenge to perform on an amateur contest in his hometown, Huntington, West Va. He won the contest—and the prize was a job in radio.

Singer and composer, Hawkins' background includes service on WWVA, Wheeling, W. Va., and barnstorming with rodeos.

The six-foot, five-inch Hawkshaw, who records for RCA-Victor, augments his singing with a bullwhip marksmanship chore which has made him an outstanding attraction at parks and rodeos.

A great horseman and trainer, Hawkins' property in Music City, U.S.A., includes a stable of fine horses, expertly trained.

Graced with a wide smile, Hawkshaw is noted for his humor and wit.

Ferlin Husky

A Grade-A, double-barreled minstrel, Ferlin Husky has multiple talents.

He is a handsome singer with a flair for comedy.

He thrills with his vocalizing and then assumes the character of Simon Crum to provoke extended laughs with his zany antics.

When Ferlin was nine years old, Santa gained favor in the Husky household by depositing a "For-Ferlin" guitar under the family Christmas tree.

The stringed gift was a turning point in Ferlin's life. He soon became a sought-after performer at talent shows and community get-togethers.

Nothing sensational happened until the early '40s when Husky joined the Merchant Marine, taking along his guitar for company.

Ferlin's MM shipmates were serenaded from shore-to-shore and ship-to-ship for five years. He developed a stage poise and singing style.

Once out of service, Husky hustled to St. Louis, for no particular reason, and obtained employment in a steel mill cafeteria as fry cook by day—and entertainer on radio and night clubs by night.

A recording company talent scout tapped him for a session in California and he accepted.

Among his records was the popular "Dear John Letter." It boomed Husky to fame and a minimum of fortune.

An opportunity to join the Grand Ole Opry was what he had always hoped for. This opportunity came in 1954, and he made another move.

Later he dreamed—"or night-mared" as he puts it—the Simon Crum bit.

Many Opry fans do not realize that the good-looking Ferlin and the lazy-appearing, good-for-nothing clown, Simon Crum—are one and the same.

Early in 1957 Husky recorded a sensational song,

"Gone," for Capitol Records, and it began to sweep the nation. Within a fairly short time it had sold more than 1,000,000 copies, winning for him the coveted gold record for outstanding sales. He also became immensely popular on nationwide television and motion picture productions, demonstrating remarkable dramatic ability. But all the while he kept his close touch with the people, convulsing Opry crowds on Saturday nights.

Stonewall Jackson

A twenty-five year old North Carolina born, ex-farmer, logger, out of Moultrie, Georgia is one of the newest acts signed for regular performances on WSM's Grand Ole Opry.

He is Stonewall Jackson, and that's no fictitious name!

The song-stylist and composer with the Dixie military-flavored name, traveled an unusual, if not straightforward route to achieve his Opry standing.



STONEWALL JACKSON

Stonewall drove his logging truck from his Moultrie home to Nashville in October, 1956, and without advance arrangements or recommendations, received an audition with Judge George D. Hay, Opry originator.

Jackson's natural talent and his confidence so impressed Judge Hay, that he was contracted for his first appearance at the Ryman Auditorium, Nov. 3, 1956.

Despite his sudden, but not unexpected success, Jack-

JOHNNIE AND JACK



son remains a "Country farmer" at heart.

"I'm holding on to that logging truck, just in case" he declares, grinning.

Oldtimers recall that Stonewall is the first artist in years to gain a spot on the Opry without first having a record's popularity to put him in demand.

Johnnie and Jack

Johnnie and Jack are a family act.

Jack's wife, Louise, is Johnnie's sister. Johnnie is married to the famous singing star, Kitty Wells.

One of the most consistently booked acts in the Grand Ole Opry lineup, Johnnie and Jack made it the hard way and joined the Opry in the early '50s.

Shortly after Jack was wed to lovely Louise Wright of Columbia, Tenn., he teamed up with Johnnie and his wife, who was christened Muriel Deason. Johnnie later changed her name to Kitty Wells.

Uncle Sam summoned Johnnie in 1942 and Kitty continued as a single on radio station WNOX in Knoxville.

Later the foursome reunited, but ran into tough luck. One night they left Charles Town, W. Va., after a show, with only \$15 among them.

They landed on their feet in Raleigh, N. C., survived several setbacks and finally signed on the Louisiana Hayride. In addition to the latter they sang on WEAS in Decatur, Ga.

The pair inherited their love for and gift of music from their fathers. Johnnie's dad played a five-string banjo and his grandfather was a champion oldtime fiddler in Tennessee.

Jack's father also was an oldtime fiddler and taught his son to pick a guitar.

Tenor Jack and baritone Johnnie record for RCA-Victor, and among their big tunes are: "I Get So Lonely," "Goodnight Sweetheart," "Poison Love," "Cryin' Heart," "Hummin' Bird," "Three Ways of Knowing," and "S.O.S."

They have written more than 100 songs—many of them recorded by other artists.

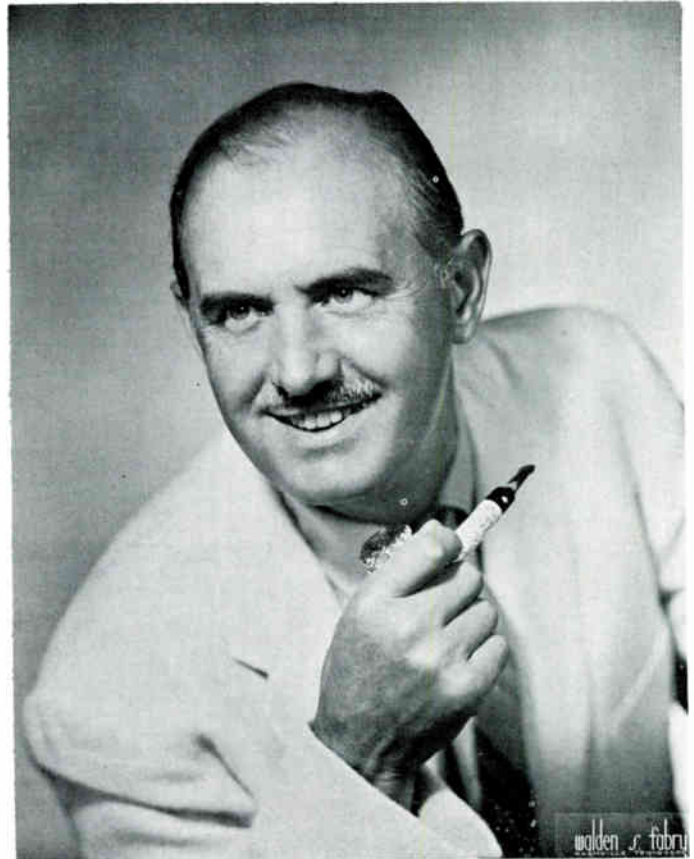
Johnnie and Jack and their families live in Madison, Tenn., and an interesting sidelight to their story is that Johnnie's brother Jim Wright, lineman for the Nashville Electric Service, is a successful songwriter.

Among Jim's compositions are "After Dark," "One By One" and "You And Me."

Archie Campbell

One of the newest faces at the Grand Ole Opry belongs to Archie Campbell, a native of Greene County, Tennessee. After graduating from Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, North Carolina, Archie worked as an artist for some time before joining Roy Acuff on WNOX in

Knoxville, where he remained from 1936 until 1942. After spending three years in the navy as a photographer, Archie returned to his first love country music and went into television in 1952. After doing his own shows in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Bristol and Johnson City, Archie did a series of network shows for CBS radio and recorded for Mercury records. Archie is married and has two sons aged 12 and 7 and when he isn't busy at the opry, he can usually be found on the golf course. Archie owns a driving range and golf course in Knoxville but his first love is show business.



ARCHIE CAMPBELL

The Jordanares

Regulars on the Opry, the foursome of Gordon Stoker, Neal Matthews, Hoyt Hawkins and Ray Walker have provided the background chorus for some of the big names of show business.

Organized in 1948, the Jordanares joined the Opry a year later. Winning an Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout show gave the group momentum and early prestige.

Hawkins sings baritone, plays the piano and bass. Born in Paducah, Ky., he attended Peabody College in Nashville, after two years' service in the army. He is married and the father of two children.

Matthews, who sings second tenor, has been a professional entertainer and has played guitar since he was

13. A veteran of the Korean war, being awarded the bronze Star for bravery, Matthews, an alumnus of Belmont College, Nashville, was married in early 1957.

Stoker, the first tenor and manager, is a native of Gleason, Tenn. After serving three years in the U. S. Air Force, Stoker attended Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla., and later Peabody College. He is married and the father of one child.

The newest addition to the group is Ray Walker, who sings bass. A native of Centerville, Mississippi,



THE JORDANAIREs

Ray is a graduate of David Lipscomb College in Nashville. He is married and is the father of three sons.

Under contract to Capitol Records, the Jordanares' work varies from spirituals to pop, which frequently rates among the coveted "top ten" nationally.

Billy Grammer

Billy Grammer—one of the most promising stars to sweep across the Country and Western Horizon in many a year—has added his name to the star-studded roster of Grand Ole Opry performers.

His first record for Monument—"Gotta Travel On"—

soared to the thin air at the top of the C & W list and Pop Charts with the speed of a rocket . . . and his next release bids fair to do the very same. His present sales on "Gotta Travel On" total 900,000.

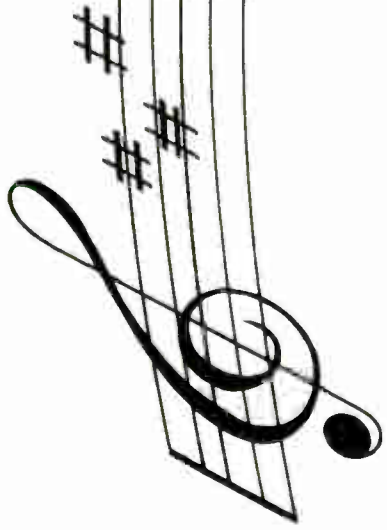
And it couldn't happen to a nicer boy. In this day and age of brash, young sophisticates, Billy's quiet but confident manner is as refreshing as a Spring day. Further—he's not only one of the nicest persons you can meet, he's also one of the most talented and accomplished performers.

For tall, good looking Billy Grammer has worked hard for his success. Now only 30 years old, he is one of 13 children whose father was a farmer and coal miner in Benton, Illinois. In Billy's ten years working as a musician with various groups including Jimmy Dean on CBS-TV, Grandpa Jones and Hawkshaw Hawkins, and in his own Western Dance Band, he learned the business from the ground up.

An accomplished musician and fine instrumentalist, he has a great ear for the sounds that are pleasing to the audience. Important too, is the fact that Billy Grammer was willing to wait until just the right sort of tune came along. When it did, he was ready. And now he finds the audience ready for him when he appears as a star of the world-famous Grand Ole Opry or on Grand Ole Opry personal appearances throughout the country.



BILLY GRAMMER



PORTER
WAGONER
TRIO



ROY ACUFF AND
THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN
BOYS



FERLIN HUSKY AS SIMON CRUM



THE WILBURN BROS.



DEL WOOD

A Night at the Opry



HAWKSHAW HAWKINS



BENNY MARTIN



COUSIN JODY



THE CARLISES



DON GIBSON



FLATT AND SCRUGGS



CARL BUTLER

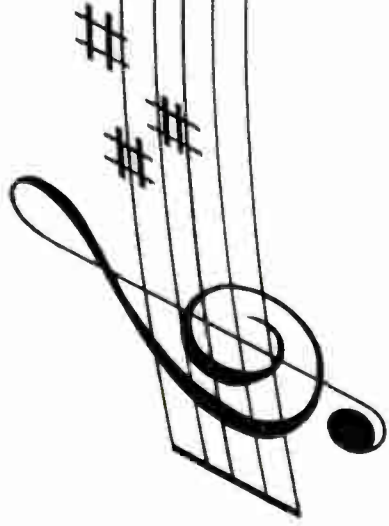


GRANDPA JONES



THE COOPERS





JUNE CARTER



JEAN SHEPARD



STRINGBEAN



CHET ATKINS



THE JORDANAIREs

Lonzo and Oscar

Rare are the performers who have been able to burlesque or satire country musicians successfully; in the case of Lonzo and Oscar—that is something different.

Born Johnny and Rollin Sullivan, they are the only duo on the Grand Ole Opry who can get by with poking fun at their colleagues and the music they sing seriously.

For Johnny (Lonzo) and his three-years younger brother, Rollin (Oscar), the road to stardom was rocky.

Born in Kentucky, Lonzo and Oscar made their debut on radio via WTJS, Jackson, Tenn., shortly before World War II.

The latter conflict interrupted their entertainment career and after military service, they rejoined a band playing over WAVE in Louisville.



LONZO AND OSCAR

Originally another star, Ken Marvin, and Rollin Sullivan comprised the "Lonzo and Oscar" team—and recorded the famous, "I'm My Own Grandpa."

Shortly afterwards Marvin withdrew from the act and brother Johnny Sullivan became a fulltime member of the combination—as part of the Eddy Arnold troupe.

They remained with Arnold for several years, and then formed their own group.

They went on to new heights as a comedy team, making 24 television films, 21 records totaling 42 songs of which 10 were parodies.

They appeared as guest stars on network telecasts with Kate Smith, Ed Sullivan, Dave Garroway and others.

Add to this bonanza, full-length transcriptions, records for Decca and commercials.

The Sullivan brothers live in Madison, Tenn. Lonzo is married to the former Mildred Perry of Brownsville, Tenn. and they have three sons; Oscar's wife is the former Ruth Evelyn McAdams of Luray, Tenn. and they are the parents of a teen-age daughter.

Incidentally, both are accomplished musicians: Lonzo on the guitar and base fiddle, and Oscar on the mandolin, an instrument on which he is considered a top man.

Benny Martin

Happy, easy-going Benny Martin started singing at the age of eight, and three years later made his debut on radio from the lobby of a courthouse.

A native of Sparta, Tenn., Benny, his sisters Pauline



BENNY MARTIN

and Roberta, and their father, George Martin, comprised a singing group, which for several years broadcast from the Putnam County Courthouse over Cookeville, Tenn. station WHUB.

A one-time worker in a shirt factory, Martin is now



MINNIE PEARL

a full-time member of the Grand Ole Opry and composer of numerous successful tunes.

Fiddler Martin, who never took a lesson in his life, recalls that his first "instrument" was a one-string homemade bass fiddle, fashioned from a discarded washtub and clothesline strand.

Benny, who lives in Nashville with his wife, the former Epsy Fykes of Hamilton, Ala., and their three children, Benny, Jr., Belinda Ann and Shelia Karen, first moved to WNOX in Knoxville and WLAC in Nashville.

Martin joined the Opry in 1946 as a sideman with the "Musical Millers."

Originally on the Mercury label, Martin is now with RCA-Victor and among his best-sellers have been, "Ice Cold Love," "Whipporwill," "I Can Read Between The Lines," "Lover of the Town," "Look What You've Done" and "The Story of My Life."

Minnie Pearl

The late Alben Barkley, when notified in 1948 that he had been elected vice-president of the United States, remarked:

"As Minnie Pearl would say, 'I'm so glad to be here.'"

The veep's declaration was a sincere compliment to the fine comedienne's global popularity.

Born Ophelia Colley in Centerville, Tenn., Minnie Pearl is the Opry's counterpart of Roy Acuff.

"Pearl," as she is known to her Opry colleagues, has taken her homespun humor around the world—and the world loves and enjoys the gal from Grinders Switch.

Educated at Nashville's cultured Ward-Belmont College, Minnie's original objective was serious drama—she wanted to be another Katherine Cornell or the like.

She forsook this ambition shortly after graduation for a brief fling at school-teaching in her home county.

In 1934 she joined the Wayne P. Small Productions Company of Atlanta and toured the South giving dramatic readings and tutoring home talent for amateur productions.

She still yearned for the serious side of drama, but fate appeared to conspire and turn her to comedy.

There was (and is) an abundance of humor to be found in these small Dixie communities—humor which begged for expression and projection.

Bit by bit Minnie picked up wit and humor from the natives, which she incorporated in the character she began forming—forming with a single idea in mind—presenting it to the Grand Ole Opry.

Minnie Pearl, then, is no one character—but a composite of many people Ophelia Colley knows well. And Grinders' Switch, where Minnie "lives," is actually a settlement not far from Centerville.

"Nobody lives there anymore," Minnie explains. "So I thought they wouldn't mind if I moved Minnie in."

Incidentally, that name is part of two persons who contributed to the creation of Minnie Pearl. But, since her Opry debut, Minnie has heard from numerous genuine, honest-to-goodness Minnie Pearls.

Minnie, on stage, demeans her romantic lot in life—and this accounts for numerous proposals of marriage, via letter.

Married to airplane pilot Henry Cannon, Minnie is active in church work and charitable projects in Nashville—donating her valuable services freely, frequently—and willingly.

For the people there will be only one Minnie Pearl.

Minnie's appearance on the nationally famous "This Is Your Life" program was said to have been one of the best.

Bill Monroe

Synonymous with the Grand Ole Opry since 1939 are Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass boys.

Devoting their musical output exclusively to folk tunes and sacred hymns has proved fruitful for Monroe and company.

The presentation has proved successful both in personal appearances and records. The act is popular with audiences across the nation; in cities and villages—and Monroe's recordings featuring his high falsetto tenor voice, have sold more than six million copies.

Monroe was born in the small town of Rosine, Kentucky to a large family which included eight brothers and sisters.

Bill was a church vocalist during his teens and continued to sing religious songs when he embarked on a radio career in the depression-hit '30s.

Somewhere along the route, Bill mastered the art of playing old-time favorites on his ever-present mandolin, on which he registers listenable melodies such as his trademark, "Mule Skinner's Blues."

Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys attract solid bookings and they consistently make four or five personal appearances weekly, 52 weeks in the year.

Despite his busy schedule, Monroe finds time to attend to his prize game roosters and Tennessee Walking Horses which he raises on his farm as a hobby.

Although Monroe recorded for Columbia for years, he currently is under contract to Decca.

Jimmy Newman

Jimmy Newman is a handsome young country artist from the fabled Bayou country.

Born in Big Mamou, La., Newman realized his chief ambition in August, 1956 when he was signed as a regular on WSM's Grand Ole Opry.

Guitar-playing Jimmy was introduced to show busi-



BILL MONROE

ness in 1946 when he began picking and singing with a band in Ville Platte, La.

Three years later he joined KPLC-TV, Lake Charles, La., em-ceeding his own radio and television show. He cut his first platter with a small and virtually unknown record company.

Newman's style eventually attracted the attention of Dot Records' fabulous Randy Wood, who signed him to a contract in 1953.

Under WSM's promotional guidance, Newman has



JIMMY NEWMAN

become a top flight performer on the air and television and as a boxoffice attraction.

Jimmy's hits include, "Cry, Cry Darling," "Come Back To Me," "Honky Tonk Tears," "God Was So Good," "Blue Darling," "Seasons of My Heart" and "Let The Whole World Talk" and then came the fabulous "A Fallen Star."

It is estimated that 75 per cent of Newman's records have been listed on the popularity charts of trade magazines. On personal appearances he always sings "Jole Blonde" (Beautiful Blonde) in French.

Newman lives in Madison, Tenn. with his lovely wife, Elva Mae (formerly of Ville Platte, La.) and their son, Gary Wayne.

Jimmy's hobbies are fishing, hunting, golf, and eating the enticing French dishes his wife prepares.

Ray Price

Texas can add Ray Price to her host of native sons who have become country and western music stars, because the Leatherneck hero appears destined to be an all-time great.

Born on a ranch near Perryville, Texas, 100 miles from Dallas, Price started in music early, picking up an older brother's guitar and singing a tune.

He studied veterinary medicine at North Texas State Agricultural College for three and one-half years before enlisting in the U. S. Marines. He served overseas with the famed Second Division on Tarawa and other Pacific beachheads. On honorable discharge after five years service he chose music as a career, organized a band and barnstormed all over Texas and Louisiana.

In 1951 he joined the Grand Ole Opry and signed a recording contract with Columbia.

Part Cherokee Indian, Price often wears a bright blue custom-tailored jacket. Its multi-hued Indian headdress on the back is a familiar sight to country music fans throughout the United States. He has been pictured and profiled in *Life Magazine* and other national periodicals.

His "Crazy Arms" record for Columbia won the triple-crown by leading all country music trade magazine charts, and earned him a "Golden Guitar." He also scored with "I've Got a New Heartache" and "Wasted Words."

Previously he rated high with "You Done Me Wrong," "Run Boy," "Talk to Your Heart" and "Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes" which he sang with Rosemary Clooney.

Price is an outdoorsman, a big game hunter of marksman calibre, and an expert fly-caster who traveled with sports shows before his music career began.

He collects guns and his trophy room includes several priceless antique weapons. Price's backyard is populated by three champion birddogs.

The Wilburn Brothers

Teddy and Doyle Wilburn, similar to other Opry heroes, started humbly, singing at church picnics, livestock auctions and farm sales, often for free.

The handsome sons of Benjamin and Geraldine Estest Wilburn, in fact, recalled recently: "I believe the first money we were paid for our performance was \$6.40 in our hometown of Hardy, Ark."

The Opry knows the Wilburn Brothers today, because their dad, a World War I disabled veteran, trained them early as professional musicians.

Pop Wilburn had seen a traveling group perform in Hardy and it gave him an idea to prepare his offspring, which also includes brothers Lester and Leslie and sis Geraldene, for show business.



RAY PRICE



The Wilburn Brothers
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THE WILBURN BROTHERS

He preferred that the kids work as a family group, so he ordered a mandolin, guitar and fiddle from a mail order house.

The Wilburns made their first pro appearance in Thayer, Mo., after which came catch-as-catch-can bookings in the Ozarks.

The family's first radio appearance was in Dothan, Ala., in the late '30s, but their first big break came during a talent contest at Birmingham in 1940.

They sang, "Farther Along" and Roy Acuff heard them.

Acuff was so impressed with the Wilburns' appearance and their talent that he brought them to the Grand Ole Opry.

Along came the Korean conflict and Teddy and Doyle joined in the fight.

Mustered out of service the Wilburns returned to Nashville.

The Wilburns' Decca hit records include, "Let Me Be the First to Know," "Carefree Moments," "You're Not Play Love," "I'm So in Love with You," and "Go Away with Me."

Jean Shepard

Pretty Jean Shepard traveled across the nation to join the Grand Ole Opry.



JEAN SHEPARD

She was singing on Hank Thompson's show in California when she decided to try for a berth on the Opry, goal of all country music stars.

Born in Paul's Valley, Oklahoma, Jean moved with her family to Visalia, Calif., in 1943, where she attended high school and sang with the school's glee club.

Encouraged by her family to try singing as a profession, the petite Opry-star-to-be promptly signed with the "Melody Ranch Girls."

It was while with this group that Thompson heard her sing and arranged a contract with Capitol Records.

Jean's "Dear John Letter" and "Forgive Me John" in 1953 earned Cash Box magazine's "Most Promising Star" rating and her spot on the Opry.

Jean is versatility personified. She plays the drums, string bass and guitar in addition to her vocalizing—and her neat appearance adds prettiness and charm to stage shows.

Miss Shepard is an expert horsewoman, and one of Jean's latest hobbies is teaching her Minah Bird to talk.

Hank Snow

You generally picture a country and western performer as a product of the South or Southwest and generally this is true.

The exception to the rule is Hank Snow.

Snow, a consistently red hot Grand Ole Opry star, is from North of the Border, Nova Scotia, where he was born, reared and worked at various jobs, until deciding to become an entertainer.

A one-time sailor, ex-lumberjack and former stevedore and cowboy, Snow traveled a path strewn with mental and physical obstacles—and overcame parental objection to become a world-known talented artist.

Hank was punching cattle on the Canadian plains by day and entertaining fellow cowpokes by night when he landed his first professional job with Radio Station CHNS in Halifax.

Bitten by the entertainment germ, Snow soon organized his "Rainbow Ranch Boys" and branched out as "The Singing Ranger."

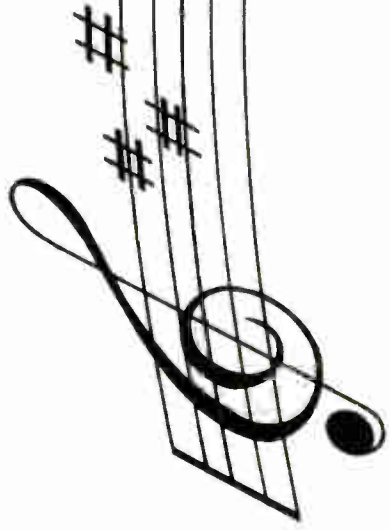
Progress came gradually and Snow was signed for a feature spot on the established "Canadian Farm Hour."

Simultaneously he was contracted to record on RCA-Victor's Canadian label.

Hank's platters, best sellers in the provinces and Australia, were not released in the USA until 1949, to coincide with his first American tour.

Snow's debut in the USA boomed his popularity for personal appearances and records.

By 1950, Snow had worked his way upward to a starring role on the Grand Ole Opry, an association which has proven mutually beneficial. In 1957 he celebrated his 20th anniversary as a recording star with RCA-Victor.



STONY MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS



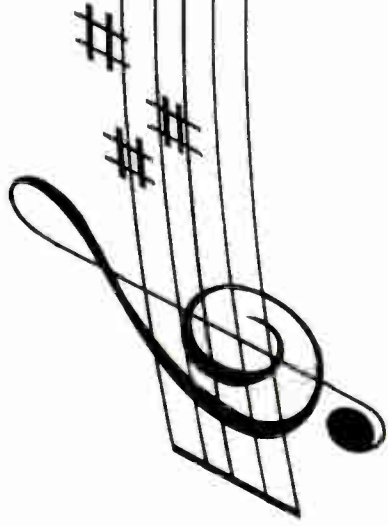
ERNEST TUBB



JOHNNIE AND JACK



JIMMY NEWMAN



LONZO & OSCAR



JEAN SHEPARD



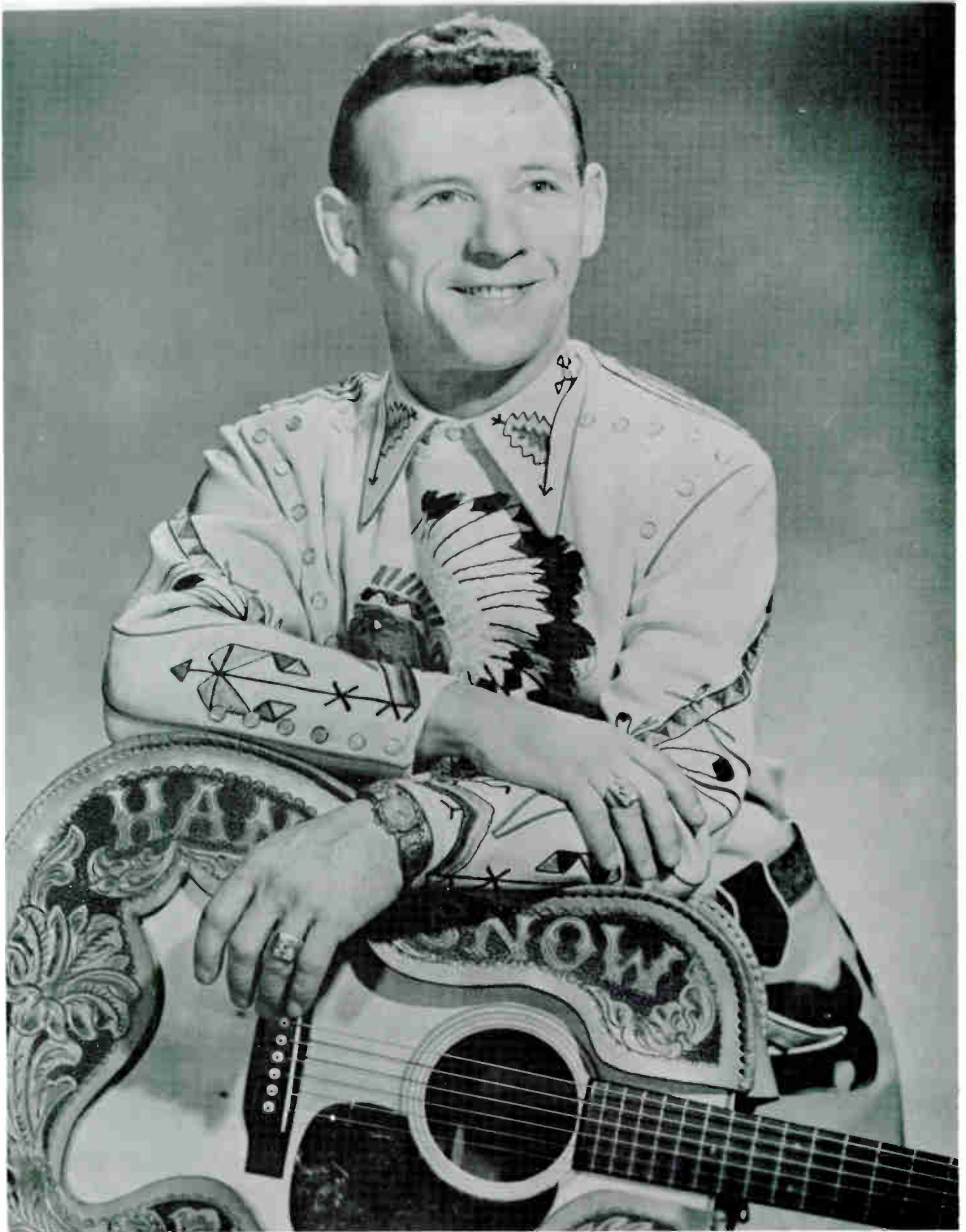
HANK SNOW



BILL MONROE



TENNESSEE TRAVELERS



HANK SNOW

Success has come to Hank Snow, yet he remembers cold, wet nights as a cabin boy on a North Atlantic freighter. He recalls lonesome nights in the snow as a cattlehand. Yet withal he basically remains the same eagerly ambitious youngster who unloaded a shipload of corn to earn money enough to buy his first guitar.

Yes, as the lyrics of his biggest hit go, Hank Snow is still "Moving On."

Hank's other best-sellers include, "I Went to Your Wedding," "The Gold Rush Is Over," "I Don't Hurt Anymore," "Rhumba Boogie," "Now and Then There's a Fool Such As I," "Music Making Mama from Memphis" and many others.

Hank and his wife Minnie and their son, Jimmy Rodgers Snow, live in Madison, where the star's hobby is raising thoroughbred horses, the prize of his stable being "Shawnee," an Indian pony.

Stringbean

They call Stringbean the "Kentucky Wonder" and this causes his fans from coast-to-coast to inquire: "Wonder how he gets into that costume."



STRINGBEAN

Stringbean, whose real name is David Akeman, is a banjo-playing wizard, with a neat flair for clowning, but it is his comical and ridiculous costume which garners laughs before he strums a string or opens his mouth.

Stringbean, an avid baseball fan, was a farm boy before he embarked on a professional music career, and he still remains not too far out of character as a man of the soil.

Stringbean and his charming wife live on a small farm in the suburbs of Nashville. "Just big enough to keep my hand in practice," he says of the property and his bent for agriculture.

Easy-going, friendly and nice-looking, Stringbean is known far and wide for his ability as a fisherman and hunter.

Ernest Tubb

A hardy perennial, a veritable evergreen of the Grand Ole Opry—that's genial Ernest Tubb, the Texas Troubadour.

The lanky, handsome Tubb was born in Crisp, Texas, and was raised in cattle-growing Ellis County.

The late Singing Brakeman Jimmy Rodgers was Ernest's boyhood idol, although Tubb never saw him. Mrs. Jimmy Rodgers helped Ernest a great deal in his early career, at one time serving as his manager in arranging personal appearances.

Tubb was introduced to radio at San Antonio in 1933—but it was eight years later before he made his professional debut—on KGKO, Fort Worth.

Tubb's first big record was "I'm Walking the Floor Over You," which was to become his musical signature. The disc sold more than 3,000,000 copies in 10 years—and is still in demand.

Tubb, who has no musical training, brought his deep baritone voice and winning personality to the Opry in 1942 and was an instant success.

During the ensuing seasons, Tubb, genteel and generous, has counseled numerous Opry stars.

He has made personal appearances throughout the USA and in Europe and has appeared in the movies and on television.

Tubb's hobby, if any, is the operation of his record shop, situated only a few hundred yards South of the historic Ryman Auditorium, the Opry's originating point.

Saturday nights, after the Opry's stage assignment is concluded, Ernest moves to the record shop for a post-midnight broadcast and to greet friends.

Tubb's many hits on Decca include, "You Nearly Lose Your Mind," "Soldier's Last Letter," "Tomorrow Never Comes" and "Missing in Action."

Ernest and his wife, Olene, and children Elaine, Erlene Dale, Olene Gayle and Ernest T., Jr., live in suburban Nashville.

Justin Tubb

Justin Tubb, to repeat a frequently-used expression, is a chip off the old block.



ERNEST TUBB

Meaning that the youngster has the physical characteristics and artistic attributes of his beloved father, Ernest Tubb.

The younger Tubb was born in San Antonio, August 20, 1935, and began his show business "career" while still in three-cornered pants.

Justin traveled with his father until time to enroll in elementary school, rejoining him during vacations.

Justin enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin but quit after several semesters to accept a disc-jockey job with station WHIN, Gallatin, Tenn.

Valuable experience behind the turntables and in



JUSTIN TUBB

front of microphones gave Justin the impetus to embark on a singing career.

During his formative years, Justin refused to capitalize on the popularity of his famous father, preferring to make his own break.

Justin, however, is the first to point out that Ernest's guidance and advice about singing and writing, were greatly responsible for his quickly-achieved success.

"I listened to what dad told me," Justin says, "but didn't want to pattern my style after him. My ambition was to make it on my own."

Tall and talented, Justin has inherited his father's easy-going personality. He wears colorful uniforms, sharply-tailored.

Standing more than six feet tall in his stocking feet, wavy-haired, 160-pound Justin lives in Donelson, Tenn., suburb of Nashville, where his favorite pastime is playing records. He is married to Bee Swift of Nashville.

Justin records for Decca and has several top platters to his credit.

Kitty Wells

Few, if any, female singers sell as many records as quiet, amiable Kitty Wells, a sincere person, dedicated to country music.

An active church worker, and a true daughter of the South, her lure at the box office genuinely qualifies her as the "Queen of Country Music."

Born Muriel Deason in Nashville, she is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Deason, and the wife of Johnnie Wright of the Johnnie and Jack team.

Kitty began to pick a guitar and sing spirituals at the age of 15. Three years later while singing on the radio with Bessie Choate, she met handsome Johnnie from nearby Mt. Juliet, Wilson County, Tenn.

Johnnie not only changed her name to "Mrs. Wright," but later gave her the nom-de-stage of Kitty Wells.

The name-change was inspired by the song, "I Could Marry Kitty Wells," sung by the Pickard Family on the Opry in the early '30's.

Kitty has been four times voted the top female country singer in the USA.

Gov. Frank G. Clement of Tennessee in 1953 presented her a testimonial which included this praise:

"Kitty Wells, in addition to her artistry, demonstrates that she is an outstanding wife and mother in keeping with the finest traditions of Southern womanhood."

Kitty's best-selling records on the Decca label, include, "Searching," "Back Street Affair," "Making Believe," "Lonely Side of the Town," "I Don't Claim to Be An Angel," "After Dark," "One by One," "You and Me," and "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels."

Kitty, the mother of Ruby Jean, Johnnie, Jr., and Carol Sue Wright, lives in Hendersonville, Tenn.

Porter Wagoner

There was, and is, a popular song tagged, "I Found a Million Dollar Baby in a Five and Ten Cent Store."

The title in this particular reference could be paraphrased slightly to read, "I Found a Million Dollar Singer in a Grocery Store."

Well, give a buck or two here or there during inflation and the "million dollar singer" is a personable potential from the Ozark Mountains—Porter Wagoner.

Slender and six feet, this farm-raised lad with the soft



KITTY WELLS

speech, began his singing career in an atmosphere of canned goods, breakfast cereals, pickles, and meats.

Furthermore, the "talent scout" who discovered Porter Wagoner was the store's proprietor.

The youngest son of Charles and Bertha Wagoner, teen-age Porter's first job-for-money was as butcher-clerk in a West Plains, Mo., market (Vaughn's).

For no particular reason, Wagoner took along the guitar, which he had learned to play as a small boy.

During a business lull, shortly after he had been employed, the boss suggested that Porter and the guitar present an impromptu song-session.

The boss enjoyed what he heard and immediately telephoned the local radio station. He purchased 15-



PORTER WAGONER TRIO

minutes of air time—with his combination butcher-clerk as the featured performer.

Porter hit the air at 6 a.m. daily, picking, singing—and doing the commercials.

By Labor Day, 1951, Porter had gained enough poise and entertainment savvy, to warrant a look at greener pastures.

Springfield, Missouri's KWTO signed him and programmed him on a weekly series. Red Foley joined KWTO about this time and more or less took young Wagoner under his wing.

"He taught me a lot," Wagoner says of the former Grand Ole Opry star.

There followed success on top of success. Wagoner was spotlighted in TV network shows; signed with the Victor recording label and organized a trio, which includes Don Warden and Red Gale. His "Satisfied Mind" record was an outstanding hit.

Five years on the Springfield stations shows matured and prepared Wagoner for the Grand Ole Opry—which he joined in early 1957.

Wagoner's popularity and success stem, perhaps, from the sincere love of his work.

It is said of the tall blonde: "Porter has so much dog-gone fun on stage he should be forced to buy a ticket to get in."

And when he tells an audience, "I am very glad to be here," he really means it. Porter Wagoner is liked by all.

Del Wood

Adelaide Hazelwood was employed as a secretary by the State of Tennessee in 1951 and played the piano solely for the enjoyment of friends and herself.



DEL WOOD

One late summer night at a neighborhood party, radio announcer Jim McKinney, heard Adelaide play the old ragtime hit, "Down Yonder."

McKinney persuaded a Nashville recording company executive to record the tune.



FARON YOUNG

The platter became an instant hit. It projected Adelaide Hazelwood into fame and fortune. It also revived the song-writing career of "Down Yonder" composer Wolfe Gilbert.

She had recorded under the nom-de-platter of "Del Wood" and so quickly did success result that disc-jockeys, introducing the tune, observed: "I don't know whether Del is a him or a her."

Thirty days after the release, Del was summoned to WSM for an audition. Guest appearances on radio and television followed.

Del, graduate of Nashville's East High School, made her debut on the Grand Ole Opry in February, 1952. She so captivated her audience that she was signed immediately as a regular.

Just as quickly she resigned her secretarial position to devote her entire time to the keyboard.

Today, Del Wood is one of the nation's most popular pianists and a valued member of the Opry cast.

Five feet, four inches tall, auburn-haired Del is married to Carson Hazelwood.

She records for RCA-Victor and has one of the most active fan clubs in existence.

Del's hits include, "Josephine," "Are You from Dixie," "Rocky Mountain Express," "Ivory Corn," and "After Five."

Faron Young

One of the bright young stars of the Grand Ole Opry is Faron Young, whose ascent has bordered on the sensational.

The handsome, dark-haired singer in less than 10 years had risen from a "hired hand" on his father's dairy farm to a regular performer on the Opry.

The ex-GI—who rose to the rank of sergeant in the U. S. Army—is also a promising actor. He has been featured in several movies and under contract for additional Hollywood western films. He is a top artist for Capitol Records, showing marked ability in singing sacred numbers as well as other type songs.

Faron's father operated a small farm near Shreveport, La., and it was while pitching hay and milking cows that young Faron Young sang his first tunes.

"I got up at 5 a.m. every day," he recalls. "And to keep from going back to sleep while in the barns, I would start humming and singing."

Young organized his first band while in high school. The combo played country and western music for charity shows, school plays and political meetings.

Young enrolled in college, but didn't stay long enough to get on the formal alumni listing.

He returned to his first love: music. He auditioned for the Louisiana Hayride with such success that he was signed for a morning show on Shreveport's KWKH.

Faron joined WSM's Opry in the early '50s, but de-

parted for the Army before becoming completely established. For the Army he became the start of a recruiting radio program and it became the basis for the country music shows used today to encourage young men to enter the military services.

Military service concluded, Young returned to the Opry and resumed, with greater energy, where he had left off.

Young is five feet eight inches tall and weighs 158 pounds. He has bluish-grey eyes and wavy black hair. Young lives in Nashville with wife Hilda and their two young sons.

Rusty and Doug

Grand Ole Opry's newest additions to its roster of stars are the Kershaw Brothers, Rusty and Doug. Rusty, who is 19, and Doug, age 21 are further proof of the outstanding amount of talent that is possessed by the younger generation.



RUSTY AND DOUG

The boys hail from Southwest Louisiana and have the dark good looks that is typical of their French Heritage. Aside from their good looks fine singing style, they are both considered accomplished musicians. Rusty is a real master of the Electric guitar and Doug

is not only a fine fiddler but plays a good rhythm guitar.

Their first experience with music was with Cajun French Music and a French band known as The Continental Playboys. They switched their style to Country Music and were soon asked to help out in recording sessions. Hickory Records discovered their talent as performers in their own right and immediately gave them a record contract. Their records have been consistent best sellers and their heavy personal appearance schedule has taken them over most of the Country.

Rusty and Doug were feature artists on the Worlds Original Jamboree over WWVA in Wheeling, W. Virginia before joining the Grand Ole Opry. They have appeared on several network television programs.

Cousin Jody

Cousin Jody in real life is James C. Summey, native of Possum Hollow, near Sevierville, Tenn.

James C. Summey, known to millions of Grand Ole Opry fans as "Cousin Jody," first saw the light of day in Possum Hollow, near Sevierville, Tenn. He is a



COUSIN JODY

pantomime artist who talks most eloquently with his steel guitar which he calls his "biscuit board."

Cousin Jody, like most of his contemporaries, has

played music since he was a small boy, his first job being with Hugh Cross at Radio Station WNOX in Knoxville, Tenn.

Jody worked with Pec Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys who were embarking on the famous Camel Caravan which played to the servicemen in the U. S. Army in 1943 for seven months.

Jody has appeared in motion pictures with Roy Rogers, Johnny Mack Brown, Andy Devine and Roy Acuff.

Since his many television appearances, including work on the Kate Smith Show, Ed Sullivan's Toast of the Town, Steve Allen's Show, Dave Garroway's Show and others, Jody has become a television favorite.

He has also appeared in many of the Grand Ole Opry films shown on television throughout the United States and in many parts of Canada.

Marty Robbins

Marty Robbins is constantly encountering people who want to know if he isn't a football player or prizefighter.

The Opry star, whose rugged masculine appearance typifies an athletic background, is known from coast-to-coast by the tender nickname of "Mr. Teardrop," a monicker entertainingly and genuinely earned.

Genial, personable Robbins was performing in an off-beat Arizona club, with an infrequent spot on radio, when he aimed high—for the Grand Ole Opry.

Robbins began his quest in the late '40s, after a stretch in Uncle Sam's Navy, and had breached the course by 1953, when he became a regular in the Opry lineup.

Marty gained a "triple-crown," when his disc of "Singing the Blues" placed tops in all charts by Billboard magazine.

It was a tune Robbins almost didn't record. He thought seriously of recommending it to his friend, Faron Young.

Robbins' road to stardom was rocky and included such non-artistic detours as truck driver, automobile mechanic, construction laborer, well-digger, electricians-apprentice—"and what sort of job do you have to offer?" (Boxer.)

It was a long way forward from Arizona for Marty—but it is characteristic of the road virtually all Opry stars travel.

Biggest break of his spectacular career came in the fall of 1956 when his recording of "Singing the Blues" was released by Columbia to sweep the nation, and win him a Golden Guitar for more than 250,000 sales. He followed with "Knee Deep in the Blues" then gained recognition in all fields of music with his original "White Sport Coat and a Pink Carnation." He became much in demand for nation-wide television shows, and has also played movie roles.

Marty and his wife, Marizona, and son, Ronnie, live in Nashville.



MARTY ROBBINS

Margie Bowes

5-foot-5 and 120 pounds—with sapphire blue eyes and wavy chestnut brown hair—pretty, vivacious, 17 year old Margie Bowes is fast on her way to becoming the pet of the Country Music Field . . . as well as grand winner of the Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry Talent Contest!



MARGIE BOWES

The story of the 1958 singing sensation discovered in Danville, Virginia, began March 18, 1941 on a farm in Person County, North Carolina. Next to the youngest of nine children, Margie was an enthusiastic member of a musical family whose tastes ran the gamut from country to classical. When her mother died in 1951, the family moved to Roxboro, North Carolina, where Margie was reared by her older sisters.

The singing career of the little girl with the big voice began three years ago when she won an amateur contest at the Palace Theatre in Roxboro. This led to a job on Radio Station WRXO at Roxboro and a guest appearance on WDVA's Virginia Barn Dance that resulted in her appearing there every Saturday night for 1½ years. During this period she also appeared on WRVA in Richmond, and on TV shows in Roanoke and in Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina.

Then came the Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry Talent Contest sponsored by the Key-Stone Network Stations. Margie took top honors at WDVA, Danville, moving on to the grand finals in Nashville where she unanimously was declared winner. Her prize was six weeks of appearances on the Grand Ole Opry and Pet Milk Show and a Hickory Record contract. Her first record release is the great ballad, "One Broken Heart" b/w Don Gibson's "Won'tcha Come Back to Me."

Now, although Margie spends a great amount of time in the whirl of rehearsals, record sessions and broadcasts in Music City, USA, back home she still sings in three church choirs (all in different towns) and is excited about beginning her senior year in Bethel Hill High School where she belongs to the Glee Club. Like most other young folks in Roxboro, she dotes on swimming, dancing, movies, bowling, roller skating—and spaghetti and meatballs.



MOST POPULAR MUSIC PROGRAM

TV RADIO MIRROR
Names the
GRAND OLE OPRY
America's

WSM is pleased that TV RADIO MIRROR, in the only nationwide poll of radio listeners, has selected the GRAND OLE OPRY as the "Favorite Popular Music Program" in America. WSM is proud to find the OPRY among such distinguished award winners as NBC's Monitor, ABC's Breakfast Club, CBS' Gunsmoke.

However, WSM is not surprised. As America's oldest commercial radio program, the GRAND OLE OPRY has not only given thousands of hours of pleasure to untold millions around the world, it has literally brought a new and deeper dimension to the music of an entire nation.



JOHN H. DeWITT, JR.
President, WSM, Inc.



GEORGE REYNOLDS
Vice-President and Technical Director

Grand Ole Opry Management

BOB COOPER
Manager, Station WSM



OTT DEVINE
Program Manager, WSM and Grand Ole Opry



Opry Executives and Announcers

John H. DeWitt, Jr.

John H. DeWitt, Jr., president of WSM, Inc., although still a young man, is a pioneer in radio; an enthusiastic fan and supporter of the Grand Ole Opry.

He first became interested in kilocycles and airwaves in 1919. Three years later he constructed the first broadcasting unit in Nashville, at the old Ward-Belmont College—a girls school.

He was on the scene for the first installation of WSM's equipment in 1925.

DeWitt later became a member of Bell Telephone's Technical Staff in New York, where he participated in the development of precise frequency control for broadcasting stations and other radio apparatus experiments.

He returned to WSM in 1932 as chief engineer and remained until 1942, during which span he also served as consultant engineer for other broadcasting stations.

DeWitt rejoined Bell Telephone early in World War II and worked exclusively in the designing and perfecting of radar equipment for the military services. He was also a consultant to the Office of the Chief Signal Officer on ground and airborne radar, an officer in the Army Signal Corps, executive officer at Evans Signal Laboratory in Belmar, N. J., and Director of the Evans Laboratory.

DeWitt—or Lieut. Col. DeWitt—was in charge of the famous first experiment which reached the moon with radar waves; a project that received world-wide publicity—and established DeWitt as one of America's foremost radio engineers. This project also earned for DeWitt the Legion of Merit award from the Army.

After the war, DeWitt established an office in Washington, D. C., as consultant for clear-channel broadcasting operations.

He came home again—to Nashville—in 1947 as president of WSM.

DeWitt, a graduate of Vanderbilt University, is a member of the American Physical Society, Sigma Xi fraternity, American Astronomical Society, a Fellow in the Institute of Radio Engineers and a member of the board of the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters.

He is an active participant in civic and charitable projects in his hometown. His hobby is sailing.

The father of John, Cary and Betsy Neas DeWitt, he, his wife Sykes, and their family live on the outskirts of Nashville.

George Reynolds

George Reynolds, Vice-President and Technical Director, was an old hand at radio by the time WSM opened its doors in 1925. Mr. Reynolds radio career had begun in 1921 when he started as a "ham" operator in Franklin, Tennessee. In 1925, he entered commercial radio at WNOX in Knoxville, Tennessee, and then in 1926 he came to Nashville to join the staff of WBAW.

Mr. Reynolds long history at WSM began in 1928—on September 5 to be exact—when he joined the WSM technical staff as radio engineer. In a short time he was promoted to Assistant Chief Engineer, which post he held until the war years came along and he was called upon to serve as Acting Chief Engineer during the absence of Lieutenant Colonel Jack DeWitt.

Reynolds is a graduate of the Engineering Department of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, and his background also includes an active interest in the mechanics of radio since the industry was in its infancy.

In 1947, Mr. Reynolds became WSM Chief engineer. 1950 found him the Technical Director of WSM and WSM-TV. And on December 23, 1952, he was elected to the position of Vice-President of WSM, Incorporated.

Robert Evans Cooper

Robert Evans (Bob) Cooper, as director of WSM radio, heads up nine departments of the Clear Channel station—including Grand Ole Opry and its artists and service bureau.

He joined WSM in 1955 as radio sales manager, and in the ensuing 12 months WSM recorded its largest sales in history.

Cooper's duties as director include the coordinating of national, regional and local sales, programming and promotion.

Cooper came to WSM from WMAK, where he had been phenomenally successful as station manager and vice-president.

Previously he had worked in various capacities at WONE in Dayton, Ohio; WIKY in Evansville, Ind., WKDA in Nashville and WHBQ in Memphis—where he began his career in 1941 as a script writer.

A strong booster of country and western music, Cooper may be best described as a Grand Ole Opry fan. Saturday nights throughout the year find him at Ryman Auditorium, either backstage mingling with the artists or out front with visitors.

Cooper and his wife Wanda—also an Opry fan—live just outside of Nashville in Williamson County.



RALPH EMERY
Announcer



GRANT TURNER
Announcer



DAVID COBB
Announcer

Grand Ole Opry Announcers

T-TOMMY CUTRER
Announcer



TOM HANSERD
Announcer



VITO PELLETTIERI
Stage Manager



Ott Devine

Ott Devine, Program Manager for WSM and the Grand Ole Opry, began his radio career at WJBY Gadsden, Alabama in the early '30s.

Following program director and announcing duties with WRGA in Rome, Georgia and WDOD in Chattanooga, he joined WSM in 1935 as staff announcer. He was named chief announcer in 1939.

In 1942 he moved into the program department; and in that capacity produced and presented more commercial and sustaining network programs than were originated by any radio station in the country with the exception of the network centers in New York, Hollywood and Chicago.

In his capacity of WSM program and Grand Ole Opry manager, he directs the selection of talent on the station's extensive schedule of live programming, including the Friday Night Frolic and the Grand Ole Opry. In his many years service with the Grand Ole Opry he has seen many of its performers develop into world-renowned stars. To name only a few are such country music luminaries as Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubbs, Minnie Pearl, Ray Price, Marty Robbins, the Everly Brothers and many more.

A native of Alabama, he is married to his high school sweetheart, the former Virginia Haynie of Anniston, and they are the parents of two daughters and a son.

Vito Pellettieri

One of the "vital secrets" in Grand Ole Opry production, often overlooked by the average spectator, is the behind-the-scenes role played by Vito Pellettieri—head of the WSM Music Library since 1935.

Vito's role is varied in scope, based upon an encyclopedic knowledge of country music over a long period of years.

He is known throughout the nation as the best-informed authority on music ownership and copyright, having in his head knowledge related to thousands of songs. Each must be "cleared" before it is used for radio broadcast, and Vito is in charge of this operation.

On stage at the Ryman he also serves as stage manager, constantly checking on the talent to make sure the scores of performers are at their proper places at the proper time.

Before coming to Station WSM and the Opry in 1935, Vito had for more than 20 years one of the outstanding dance bands in the South. He called it "Vito" and entertained at important society events throughout the region. His wife, the former Kathryn Guthrie, played piano for the band for 12 years.

Vito is a native of Nashville, attended Hume-Fogg High School and took violin lessons under some of the

outstanding private instructors of the day. He is an expert in classical and popular music—as well as an authority in the country field.

Long distance calls come to Vito from all over the nation, seeking his advice and knowledge on song clearance. Friendly, cooperative with all—he's a source of strength to the entire industry.

David Cobb

If some Saturday night, Grand Ole Opry fans at the Ryman Auditorium see announcer David Cobb pull a rabbit out of the microphone—it wouldn't surprise many of his friends.

Cobb, you see, is one of the most adept magicians, professional or amateur, in the South.

Curly-haired, handsome Dave, as he is better known, came to WSM's announcing staff in 1937 after work with stations in St. Louis, Houston and Memphis.

Cobb was working in Memphis when invited to WSM for an audition. He took the test, returned to Memphis and soon forgot about the tryout.

Three months later he was astonished, but pleased, when notified that WSM was ready to offer employment. He accepted immediately, and has been with the station ever since, with the exception of four years Naval service during World War II.

Cobb's interests are as varied as his talents. He enjoys equally symphonic and folk music and during his service with the Opry has been narrator with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

He was for several years active with a local Little Theater group.

The Cobbs—Dave, wife Jeanne and son Tony—in early 1957 purchased a farm near Nashville and supervised the construction of their home.

T. Tommy Cutrer

T. Tommy Cutrer is a multi-talented member of the Grand Ole Opry, nationally recognized as a top country music disc jockey and Opry announcer—as well as a soloist of merit.

He almost chose to be a cartoonist instead of a radio artist.

"I was fairly good at sketching in school—but once I became interested in country music it was "goodbye" to an art career," says T. Tommy.

Born in Osyke, Miss., where he attended elementary school, T. Tommy has had the unusual experience of attending a convent as a day student in Chatawa, Miss.

It was while a senior at the convent that T. Tommy landed his first announcing job—on WSKB at McComb, Miss.

He later shifted to Houston, Texas, where in the mid-40's he met his pretty-wife-to-be, Vicky.

"T" joined WSM in the autumn of 1955 and has become immensely popular with fellow-workers and the Opry stars.

Tom Hanserd

Tom Hanserd, who joined the Radio Station WSM announcing staff in 1949, became a Grand Ole Opry announcer two years later. His sincere, earthy style of speaking makes him a general favorite with Country Music followers.

Tall, sandy-haired, he is a native of Birmingham, Ala., but attended high school in Monroe, Ga., where he first developed interest in radio. His family moved to Columbia, Tenn. in 1936 and Hanserd got his first radio job with WKRM when it went on the air.

In July, 1947, he went to station WAPI in Birmingham for news and record shows, and a year later became program director for WBRC-FM in the same city.

Since coming to WSM in 1949 he has handled various types of radio shows, and also announced on television for WSM-TV.

Tom is married to the former Miss Martha Cooper, and they have two small daughters.

Ralph Emery

Ralph Emery is a name that rings a bell with practically every night owl throughout the nation and Canada. For he is the fellow who spins the discs when WSM's highly popular all-night Country Music Show—"Opry Star Spotlight" takes the air.

The mellow quality of Ralph's voice and his informal manner give him an appeal for all age brackets. So it's no surprise that everyone from Junior to Grandma among Country Music Fans manages to get into the act when he sits down for his nightly stint—well armed with the latest Country Music records and often backed up by an "assistant" DJ, the particular Opry Star who is in the spotlight for the evening. For although Ralph controls the mike, the fans manage to have their say-so by way of bushel baskets of mail and long distance phone calls placed from every spot on the map.

Ralph hails from McEwen, Tennessee, but he attended Nashville public schools and Belmont College. His radio career began six years ago at WTPR, Paris,

Tennessee, and he has been associated with WNAH, WSIX and WMAK, all in Nashville. Well-known both as a Pop and Country & Western Disc Jockey, he also has had experience in sportscasting.

During off hours, this vastly capable young man takes the proverbial busman's holiday by taping a disc jockey show which is used by eight Southeastern states in their local drive-in theatres at intermission time.

Grant Turner

Opry announcer Grant Turner helped assemble apparatus for the first radio station on which he was employed.

The affable fellow from the Lone Star State was living in his hometown of Abilene when he made his airway debut.

"After we opened for business I was hired as a handyman. The manager did all the announcing, programming and sold commercials," Turner recalls.

Turner declares that "sweeping out the studio" was part of his chores. He filled in as part-time announcer and entertained with a tenor guitar—and a "pretty corny voice."

One day a young student from Abilene Christian College visited the station for an audition.

Turner takes up the story from there: "Because this young man was a country and western singer and had several of his own compositions he was put on the air.

"He was introduced as 'Cowboy Joe'—today many of you know him as Stewart Hamblen."

During the late 30's, Turner worked as a newspaper reporter, advertising salesman—and cooked in an all-night hamburger stand.

He returned to his original love in 1940 and after service on several stations joined WSM on June 6, 1944—a date to remember. It was the day the U. S. Forces invaded Europe.

He is something of an "amateur" actor, having appeared in several institutional films—including "See the Harvest" a documentary about his adopted state—Tennessee.

The father of one daughter, Nancy, Turner's wife is the former Lorene McFerrin of Nashville, Tenn.



PORTER WAGONER



COWBOY COPAS



LONZO AND OSCAR





GRANDPA JONES



DON GIBSON

JUNE CARTER



RAY PRICE



FERLIN HUSKY



JOHNNIE AND JACK



CARL BUTLER



MARTY ROBBINS

FARON YOUNG

