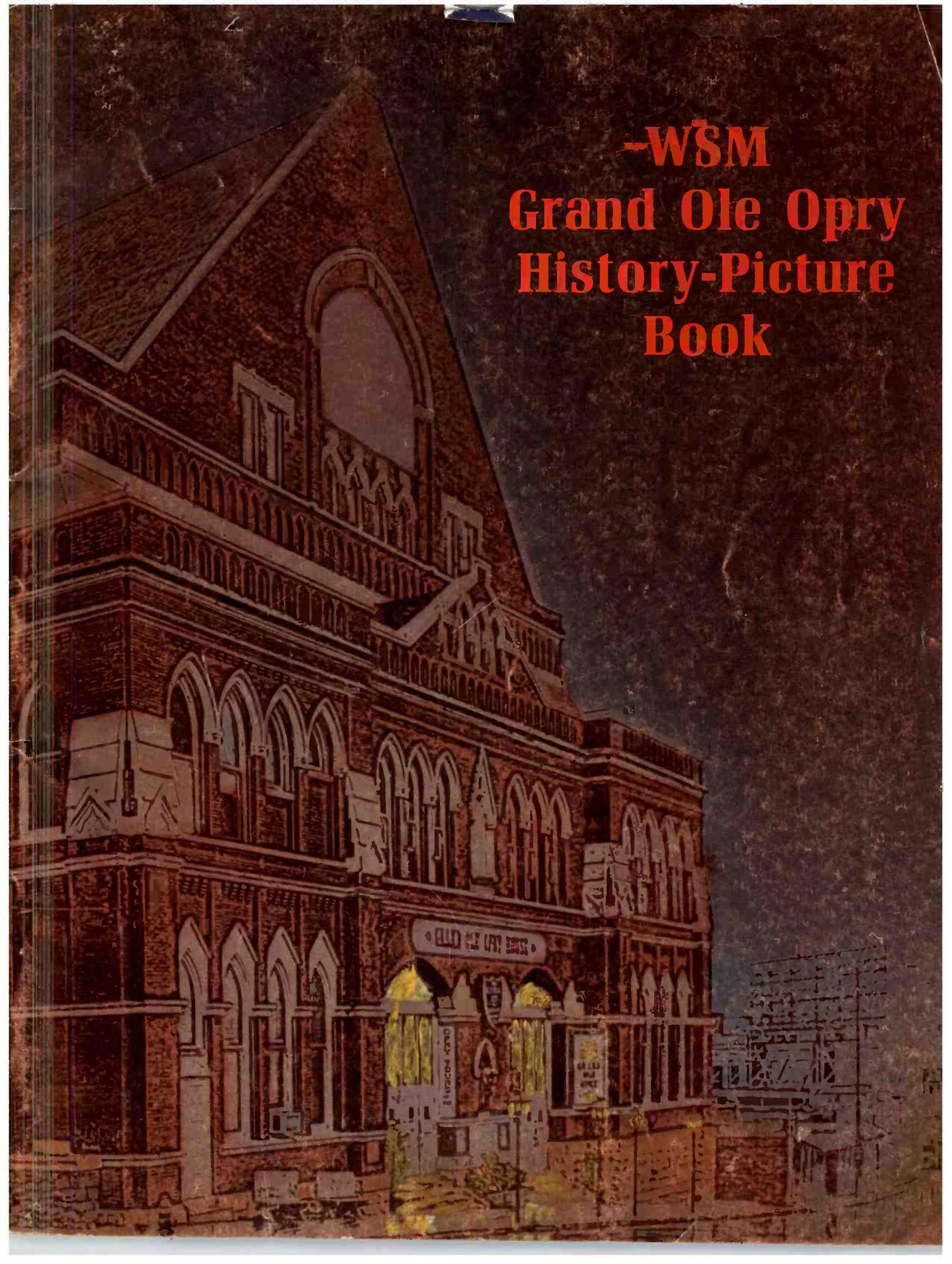


**-WSM**  
**Grand Ole Opry**  
**History-Picture**  
**Book**





# Official Opry History-Picture Book

Jerry Strobel, editor

## Photographs:

Les Leverett, Beverly LeCroy, Marvin Cartwright

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# The Grand Ole Opry

The Grand Ole Opry will stand as one of the outstanding attractions of all times in the field of entertainment.—Edwin W. Craig, founder of WSM.

It began in the early fall of 1925. The headlines in the Nashville papers read: "Construction of Radio Station Here is Begun. . . . Call Letters WSM Assigned to National Life."

In those days of crystal sets—and very few at that—it was hard to visualize that this event would have such a profound effect on the character and international image of the city it serves.

That Nashville should be known as "Music City, USA" is a result of WSM and the Grand Ole Opry, which have always been the nerve center of the country music industry.

For almost half a century, The Opry and the radio station have directly influenced the city's economic and physical growth. Without its dedication to country music and its nurturing of talent, it is doubtful the industry would have centered in Nashville.

The Opry had its beginning on November 28, 1925, in the fifth floor WSM Studio of the National Life and Accident Insurance Company. Two men shared the station's only microphone. The featured performer was Uncle Jimmy Thompson, an eighty-year-old fiddler who boasted that he could fiddle the "taters off the vine." His early appearance, however, was restricted to one hour. Not quite enough time to prove his reputation of knowing a thousand fiddle rounds.

The announcer was one of America's pioneer showmen. George D. Hay, a reporter for the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, started his radio career when he was appointed radio editor for the newspaper. He first went on the air over the *Commercial Appeal's* station, WMC, in June of 1923. A year later he went to Chicago and

was appointed chief announcer of Radio Station WLS. Here he was voted America's most popular radio announcer in a nationwide contest conducted by *The Radio Digest*. Here, also, he originated the WLS Barn Dance, later to become known as the National Barn Dance.

On October 5, 1925, Hay came to Nashville for the dedicatory ceremony inaugurating WSM. One month later he joined the station as its first director.

Then at 8:00 P.M. on November 28, 1925, he announced himself as "The Solemn Old Judge" (although he was only 30 years old) and launched the WSM Barn Dance. Two years later he gave it the title "The Grand Ole Opry."



THE BEGINNING—George D. Hay and Uncle Jimmy Thompson on the first Opry Show November 28, 1925

WSM, a member of the National Broadcasting Co. network, was also carrying on Saturday nights "The Music Appreciation Hour" conducted by a celebrated personality, Dr. Walter Damrosch. The Station followed that hour with three hours of "barn dance" music.

Hay later recalled the moment in a 1945 pamphlet. "Dr. Damrosch always signed off his concert a minute or so before we hit the air with our mountain minstrels and vocal trapeze performers. We must confess that the change in pace and quality was immense. But that is part of America—fine lace and homespun cloth.

"The monitor in our Studio B was turned on, so that we would have a rough idea of the time which was fast approaching. At about five minutes before eight, your reporter called for silence in the studio. Out of the loudspeaker came the very correct, but accented voice of Dr. Damrosch and his words were something like this: 'While most artists realize there is no place in the classics for realism, nevertheless I am going to break one of my rules and present a composition by a young composer from Iowa, who sent us his latest number, which depicts the onrush of a locomotive. . . .'

"After which announcement the good doctor directed the symphony orchestra through the number which carried many 'shooshes' depicting an engine trying to come to a full stop. Then he closed his program with his usual sign-off.

"Our control operator gave us the signal which indicated that we were on the air. We paid our respects to Dr. Damrosch and said something like this: 'Friends, the program which just came to a close was devoted to the classics. Dr. Damrosch told us that 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 locomotives, we will call on one of our performers—Deford Bailey, with his harmonica—to give us the country version of his 'Pan American Blues'.



DeFord Bailey

"Whereupon, Deford Bailey, a wizard with the harmonica, played the number. At the close of it, your reporter said: '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.'"



GRAND OLE OPRY CAST—1930

It wasn't long before the crowds clogged the corridors of the WSM studio to observe the performers. This led to a decision. Edwin W. Craig, a National Life official, was the man of early and continuous vision. A strong supporter of the station and the Opry, he suggested that all the observers be allowed to watch in a studio so their reactions could add to the program. His suggestion led to the construction of Studio "C", an acoustically-designed auditorium capable of holding five hundred enthusiastic fans.



EDWIN W. CRAIG  
Founder of WSM

Soon the auditorium-studio could no longer accommodate the throngs, so the search for an appropriate home began. The first move was to the rented Hillsboro Theatre, a former movie house in what was then the southwest part of the city. Two shows were performed nightly. When the audience continued to grow, Opry officials sought another hall.

A huge tabernacle across the Cumberland River in East Nashville was available. Although the floor was covered with sawdust and the splintery benches were crude, the audience outgrew the three-thousand seat capacity in two years.

In July, 1939, the show moved to the newly-constructed War Memorial Auditorium, an entrance fee of

twenty-five cents was imposed in an effort to curb the crowd. It didn't work, the weekly crowds averaged better than 3,000. The move to the Ryman Auditorium (now the Grand Ole Opry House) was a necessity.

The Ryman had been built in 1891 by riverboat captain Tom Ryman who came to a religious tent meeting to heckle the preacher, only to stay and be converted. He built the structure for the Reverend Sam Jones. The Confederate Veterans reunion was scheduled in 1897, and a balcony was added for the meeting.

It then could seat some 3,000 people. The church-like architecture and pews remain in the building although considerable reworking has made the Grand Ole Opry House one of the safest auditoriums in the mid-south.



The "Possum Hunters"—Front: Walter Leggett, Dr. Humphrey Bate, Buster Bate, Staley Walton. Standing: Oscar Stone and Aaron Albright

The first real band to appear on the Grand Ole Opry was headed by a genial country physician, Dr. Humphrey Bate. Dr. Bate was a graduate of Vanderbilt University Medical School, and played harmonica. He joined the Opry with six of his neighbors, and named them the "Possum Hunters." At the piano was Dr. Bate's 13 year old daughter, Alcyone, who still performs on Saturday night. Other outstanding string bands were: The "Gully Jumpers", "The Fruit Jar Drinkers", "The Crook Brothers", "Arthur Smith and his Dixie Liners", "The Binkley Brothers and their Clod Hoppers", "Uncle Ed Poplin and his Ole Timers", "The Delmore Brothers", and "Jack Jackson and the Bronco Busters."



"The Gully Jumpers"—From left: Bert Hutcherson, Roy Hardison, Charlie Arrington and Paul Warmack



"Fruit Jar Drinkers"—From left: George Wilkerson, Claude Lampley, Tommy Leffew and Howard Ragsdale



The Crook Brothers—Blythe Poteet, guitar; Kirk McGee, fiddle; Bill Etters, guitar; Herman Crook, harmonica; and Louis Crook, banjo.



Uncle Dave Macon picks a tune for George Hay, the Solemn Old Judge.

Uncle Dave Macon, "The Dixie Dewdrop", joined the Opry in 1926 after several years in Vaudeville. He remained its top star for many years.

Until 1938 the Grand Ole Opry placed virtually all emphasis on instruments. There were some singers, but they were subordinate to the band. Then came young Roy Acuff and the Smoky Mountain Boys. A short time later, one of the instrumentalists in the band of Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys stepped forward to sing. That was the start of the career of Eddy Arnold, "The Tennessee Plowboy." Arnold later formed his own group, and the rush was on. Red Foley became a hit, then Ernest Tubb, Cowboy Copas and Hank Williams.

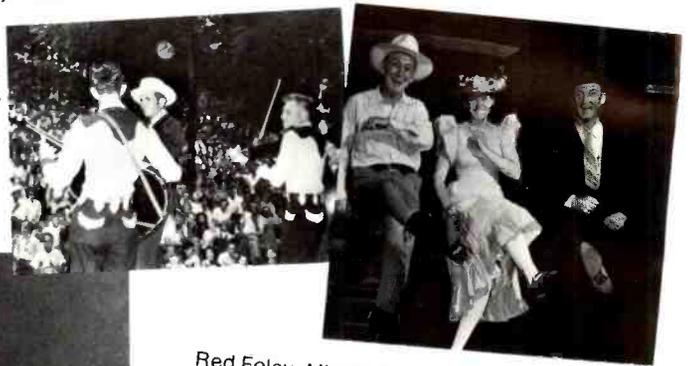


Roy Acuff, Oswald and Little Rachel. Judge Hay dances off stage at right.



Eddy Arnold, the Tennessee Plowboy.

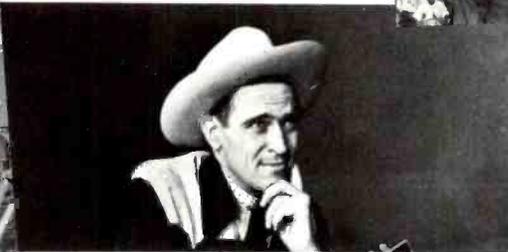
Hank Williams, a Country Music legend, played to capacity crowds everywhere.



Red Foley, Minnie Pearl and Rod Brasfield



COWBOY COPAS



ERNEST TUBB

On came the Duke of Paducah, Whitey Ford. He had been the star of a network radio show "Plantation Party". Then Minnie Pearl, and Rod Brasfield, Curly Fox, Texas Ruby and the Fox Hunters. Those were the days of minstrels, and the Opry produced Jamup and Honey. Bill Monroe arrived to introduce Blue Grass Music.



Whitey Ford, the Duke of Paducah with Smiley Burnett



Jamup and Honey

Others included Uncle Joe Mangrum and Fred Schriver, Asher Sizemore and Jimmy, the Vagabonds, Lew Childre, Zeke Clements, Paul Howard, Curly Williams and Clyde Moody.

In 1939, the Opry was carried on the NBC network for the first time. Sponsored by Prince Albert, the first show featured Uncle Dave Macon, Roy Acuff, Little Rachel, the Weaver Brothers and Elviry, and the Solemn Old Judge. This same group made the first Grand Ole Opry movie a year later. Vito Pellettieri, Opry stage manager since 1934, handled all the complicated stage traffic.



Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys



Little Jimmy and Asher Sizemore



The Grand Ole Opry Movie—left to right: Leon Weaver, June Weaver, Allan Lane (with cigar), Loretta Weaver (hand raised), Uncle Dave Macon, Frank Weaver, Rachel Veach, George Hay, Lois Ranson and Dorris Macon. Back Seat, Roy Acuff and the Smokey Mountain Boys.



Mother Maybelle and the Carter Family.

The 1940's and 1950's brought new stars to the Opry: Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, Lonzo and Oscar, Ray Price, Johnnie and Jack, the Carlisles, Mother Maybelle Carter, Ferlin Husky, the Jordanaires, Stringbean, Cousin Jody, Marty Robbins, Hank Snow, Don Gibson, The Stony Mountain Cloggers, the Ralph Sloan Dancers, Billy Grammer, Charlie Louvin, Jean Shepard, Justin Tubb, Kitty Wells, the Willis Brothers, Margie Bowes, George Morgan, Bobby Lord, Hank Locklin, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Del Wood, Faron Young, Jim Reeves, Jimmy Newman, Roy Drusky, Johnny Cash, Grandpa Jones, Archie Campbell, the Everly Brothers, Stonewall Jackson, Patsy Cline, Bill Anderson, The Wilburn Brothers, Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper, Porter Wagoner, George Hamilton IV, Skeeter Davis, and the list continues.



Patsy Cline



Hawkshaw Hawkins, Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper.

The 1960's brought no let-up in new and great talent. They include Marion Worth, LeRoy Van Dyke, Dottie West, Tex Ritter, Bobby Bare, Connie Smith, Bob Luman, Billy Walker, Sonny James, Ernie Ashworth, Loretta Lynn, the Osborne Brothers, Jim and Jesse, The Glaser Brothers, Jim Ed Brown, Jack Greene, Dolly Parton, Del Reeves, Mel Tillis, Jeannie Seely, Stu Phillips, Charlie Walker, The Four Guys, Ray Pillow and others.

Almost half a million fans see the Opry shows annually. It has been estimated that an additional seven to eight million see Opry stars perform in home-towns across the nation. The stars themselves journey three million miles a year in making these appearances. Today the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce proclaims the fact that the City's music industry, an off-shoot of the Opry, is a one-hundred-million dollar a year business. The statistics are impressive indeed. Nashvillians are employed by recording studios, record pressing plants, talent agencies, trade papers, recording companies and performing rights organizations.

**Program for Grand Ole Opry—Saturday, Sept. 6—8:00 to 12 P.M.**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Purina—8:30 to 9:00</b><br/>.....</p> <p><b>Studio—9:00 to 9:30</b><br/>.....</p> <p><b>Purina—9:30 to 9:55</b><br/>Oklahoma Wranglers—Lindy<br/>Hank Penny—To Be Selected<br/>Bill Monroe—Blue Moon of Kentucky<br/>Mae and Clyde—Gonna Lay Down My Old Guitar<br/>Hank Penny—To Be Selected<br/>Lenny and Henry—Jokes<br/>Bill Monroe—Little Community Church<br/>Lenny and Char—Take Them Out of My Back<br/>Cruik Brothers—Sally Goodin<br/>Oklahoma Wranglers—Lindy</p> <p><b>Warren Paint &amp; Color Co.—9:55 to 10:00</b><br/>Lew Childers—Biding on the Elevated<br/>Paul Howard—Breakin' It Off Tom Far<br/>Milton James—To Be Selected<br/>Clyde Moody—I Worship You<br/>Lew Childers and String Beans—Gone Old Mountain Dew<br/>Johns and Jack—Don't Monkey Around My Window When I Am Gone<br/>Pecos Hunters—Pull Out Your Overcoat<br/>Robert Lamm—More I Over<br/>Jimmy Scelpe—That's Why I Worry<br/>Lew Childers—Liza Up Sumner Tree</p> <p><b>Royal Crown—9:55 to 10:30</b><br/>Golden West Cowboys—Keep Those Ivy Fingers Off of My<br/>Fruit Jar Drinkers—Old Joe Clark<br/>Roy Acuff—Leaf of Love<br/>Bradley Kim and Red Light Ahead<br/>Dwain—Late Last Night My Willie Lame Home<br/>Cowboy Copas—If I Bring Home the Bacon<br/>Yark Brothers—New Mississippi Blues<br/>Roy Acuff—This World Is Not My Home<br/>Golden West Cowboys—Southland Polka<br/>Cherry—Spanish Dancin'</p> <p><b>Prince Albert—9:30 to 10:00</b><br/>Red Foley—Rocking Chair Miney<br/>Old Timers—Oh Month<br/>Jimmy Wakely—Somebody's Rose<br/>Red Bradford—Jokes<br/>Red Foley—What Are You Gonna Do<br/>Jimmy Wakely—You Can't Break the Chains of Love<br/>Mama Pearl—Jokes<br/>Grandpa Jones—Kitty Clyde<br/>Fowler Quartet—I'm on My Way to Cannon's Land<br/>Red Foley—Chained to a Memory<br/>Square Dance—Arkansas Traveler</p> | <p><b>Wall Rise—10:00 to 10:15</b><br/>Bill Monroe—Blue Grass Special<br/>Quartet—Shining Path<br/>Mae and Clyde—One Little Too Late<br/>Lester—Honey, Suckle Rose<br/>Bill and Lester—Mother's Child Sleeping</p> <p><b>Weather House—10:15 to 10:30</b><br/>Roy Acuff—The Long St. Train<br/>Jimmy Riddle—Dark Town Strutters Ball<br/>Jug Band—Detroit<br/>Clyde Moody—I Dreamed I Searched Heaven for You<br/>Poem—Roy</p> <p><b>O'Bryan Brothers—10:30 to 10:45</b><br/>Milton Estes—Sky Ball Poem<br/>Clyde Moody—If I Had My Life to Live Over<br/>Bradley Kim and Lightning Express<br/>Johns and Jack—The World Can't Stand Long<br/>Milton Estes—Foggy Mountain Top</p> <p><b>Open Magic—10:45 to 11:00</b><br/>Oklahoma Wranglers—Cowboy Has to Sing<br/>Wally Fowler—Let's Ride That Plane<br/>Lew and String Beans—Working on a Building<br/>Cruik Brothers—Craving My Heart Out for You<br/>Oklahoma Wranglers—Liza Your Saddle Horn and Blow</p> <p><b>Eddy Arnold Song Book—11:00 to 11:15</b><br/>Bradley Kim and The First Whippoorwill<br/>Lizy Belle—Tears on My Pillow<br/>Lenny and Char—Old McDonald Had a Farm<br/>Bradley Kim and Two Little Shoes</p> <p><b>Ernest Tubb Song Book—11:15 to 11:30</b><br/>Clyde Moody—Shenandoah Waltz<br/>Oklahoma Wranglers—Down Home Rag<br/>Oklahoma Jones—Let Them Ready for Me<br/>Clyde Moody—If You Seed Me I Will Be Around<br/>Oklahoma Wranglers—Take Me Back to Tulsa</p> <p><b>Mountain View Nursery—11:30 to 11:45</b><br/>Golden West Cowboys—Three Stripes and You Are Out<br/>Old Hickory Singers—Where Is My Prayer Meeting Time in the Hollow<br/>Lully Humphreys—Chinese Breakdown<br/>Yark Brothers—If I Know I'd Never Love You<br/>Golden West Cowboys—Keep Those Ivy Fingers Off of My Back</p> <p><b>Artist Service—11:45 to 12:00</b><br/>Paul Howard—Liza Morning<br/>Robert Lamm—New River Train<br/>Sam and Kirk—Trouble in Mind Today<br/>Paul Jar Drinkers—I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover<br/>Paul Howard—San Antonio Rose</p> |
|--|---|

**GRAND OLE OPRY PROGRAM—1947**



Radio Pioneers: Jack DeWitt, Jack Stapp, H. V. Kaltenborn and George Hay

Through the Opry, WSM has created a musical family that has in turn made Nashville "Music City, U.S.A." In fact David Cobb, veteran WSM personality, is responsible for dubbing the town "Music City" many years ago. The first recording studio, Castle, was put together by three WSM engineers: Aaron Shelton, George Reynolds and Carl Jenkins. And the man generally considered the father of Music Row's recording industry was Owen Bradley, former musical director of WSM. Bradley succeeded Beasley Smith who penned such famous songs as: "The Old Master Painter from the Faraway Hills" and "Lucky Old Sun."

Bradley was succeeded by Marvin Hughes, who later became a producer for Capitol. Hughes' successor was Bill McElhiney, whose most recent successes have included arranging for Danny Davis and the Nashville Brass. Roy Acuff and Fred Rose both worked at WSM. They teamed to form Acuff-Rose, the publishing and talent management empire. Chet Atkins, one of Nashville's musical giants and a key RCA executive, came to WSM as a sideman with the Carter Family. Jack Stapp, who had been program director and produced the old Opry network shows for NBC, formed Tree

Songwriter and recording star Tom T. Hall was the first artist to be signed in the 1970's. Facing the Grand Ole Opry audience when he made his debut as a regular member, Hall revealed, "I'd just like to say that I guess it's every country boy's dream to be a member of the Opry. I'm mighty proud you asked me."



Snooky Lanson and Dinah Shore



Chet Atkins

Publishing Company. Frances Preston, head of BMI in Nashville, had worked for the station in the promotion department. There was also Dinah Shore, Snooky Lanson, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Phil Harris, James Melton, Francis Craig, and Anita Kerr among others.

The body and soul of music is the musician. In Nashville he has prospered. WSM and the Grand Ole Opry have been patrons of music for more than four decades. Now there is a boon in Country Music. But during the long, lean, early years, music was always present in the studios and halls of WSM.

There are performers who have been members of the Grand Ole Opry or members of the WSM staff band for 20, 30, and even 40 years. The disbursement of weekly and monthly monies has not been confined to a few. Witness the hundreds of stars and thousands of "side-men" who have performed on the Opry, and the dozens of staff musicians employed by WSM in the pop field. The fact that WSM has possibly the last remaining studio staff orchestra in America speaks for itself. The station has recently formed its own record label, Opryland Records, to further the advancement of music and musicians.

Continuing in the traditional role of vanguard for new concepts in broadcasting, WSM gave America its first commercial frequency modulation radio station in 1941. Retired WSM President, John H. DeWitt, who manned the audio controls at the first Opry broadcast, was the principal force behind this new venture. W47NV is now a part of broadcast lore, partly because people were uninterested in buying a converter or receiver to pick up the station's signal. In the early sixties, interest in FM revived. WSM-FM (95.5) made its debut in 1968 with 100,000 watts. The station broadcasts in stereo with vertical and horizontal polarization. It covers a 100 mile radius surrounding Nashville.

In 1950, WSM brought Nashville its first television station. The video facility set up a series of five microwave relay stations between this city and Louisville, thereby becoming the first TV network affiliate in town.



GRAND OLE OPRY CAST—1965

The station also brought this area its first color programs and installed the first color film processor in Nashville.

WSM's latest influence on the growth and economy of Nashville is the construction of a \$28,000,000 family entertainment park and music center.



Roy Acuff blows the steamboat whistle used by George Hay to start Opry performances during the historical groundbreaking ceremonies at Opryland U.S.A. June 30, 1970.

Opryland U.S.A., a 110-acre complex, is designed to be "The Home of American Music." The park is divided into eight entertainment areas that combine live musical shows, trained animal shows, a puppet show, natural animal habitat areas and sensational thrill rides. The park is now open to the public.

The new Grand Ole Opry House will be the focal point of this project. It will be one of the world's most unique theaters. It will seat 4,400 people and provide perfect sight lines from anywhere in the house.

"The new Opry House will not change the stage presentation of the Opry in any way," according to E. W. "Bud" Wendell, general manager of the Opry. "But rather place it in a more comfortable surrounding."

The Grand Ole Opry is, and has always been, entertainment, pageantry, vaudeville and music of all the people packaged into one presentation. The rapport between the Opry artists and the audience is unlike anything else in the world. Whether the listener be at the Opry House or tuned to WSM's Clear Channel Frequency (650) that spans the United States.

The music is genuine, down-to-earth, and honest. It is realism. Judge Hay explained some of the Opry's charm when he related: "The Grand Ole Opry is as simple as sunshine. It has a universal appeal because it is built upon good will, and with folk music expresses the heart-beat of a large percentage of Americans who labor for a living."

"Let her go, boys. . . ."

—Jerry Strobel

# George D. Hay



GEORGE D. HAY—THE SOLEMN OLD JUDGE

On May 8, 1968, the Grand Ole Opry lost a long-time friend and benefactor with the passing of George Dewey Hay, known to Opry fans as “The Solemn Old Judge.” George Hay’s influence is still very much in evidence at every Opry broadcast and the stars he guided are legion.

On Saturday, May 11, 1968, the Grand Ole Opry paused to pay quiet homage to the man considered by historians as being as much a force in Country Music as any of the performers he introduced.

Opry announcer, Grant Turner, a long-time friend of the late Judge Hay, read a dedicatory message on behalf of the stars of the Grand Ole Opry to “The Solemn Old Judge’s” many friends in the radio audience:

“The songs we sing on this Grand Ole Opry stage will have a special meaning tonight because the men and women of the Opry stand in respect at the passing of a wise counselor and good friend, George D. Hay. George Hay not only created the Opry out of the fabric of his imagination, he nurtured and protected it during the formative years. A reporter-turned-impresario, Hay heard the heart-beat of a nation in the Country Music he loved. He taught us to measure our music by this golden yardstick; it must be eloquent in its simplicity. George Hay crusaded for Country Music from the Opry stage, in high school auditoriums, in tents, barns, and in the open from the beds of lumber-trucks. Country Music was his profession, hobby, and first love. He lived to see the Grand Ole Opry become an object of national pride and international interest. George



Irving Waugh, president of WSM, Inc., presents commemorative plaque to Mrs. Margaret Daugherty, daughter of George Hay, at the Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration. This memorial will hang in a place of honor at the new Grand Ole Opry House, Opryland U.S.A.

Hay’s love for this music from the land was surpassed only by his affection for the people who listened to, played, or sang it. Tonight, we’d like to return some of that love . . .

He called himself the “Solemn Old Judge.” If he was solemn, it was only in the face of those who sought to change or corrupt the purity of the barn-dance ballads he sought to preserve. We, the performers and friends of the Grand Ole Opry, salute the memory of one whose influence is felt on the stage of the Opry tonight . . . the Solemn Old Judge, George D. Hay!”

• • • • •

Judge Hay always closed the Grand Ole Opry shows with the following remarks:

“That’s all for now friends . . .

Because the tall pines pine

And the pawpaws pause

And the bumble bees bumble all around,

The grasshoppers hop

And the eavesdroppers drop

While, gently, the ole cow slips away . . .

George D. Hay saying, so long for now!”



# Roy Acuff

BIRTHDAY ..... September 15  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Maynardsville, Tn.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1937

Country Music Hall of Famer, King of Country Music, highly successful business man, philosopher, singer, fiddler, Roy Acuff is one of the most beloved men ever to walk on stage of WSM's Grand Ole Opry. Yet the man who is perhaps most famous for such monumentally important country song standards as "Wabash Cannonball" and "The Great Speckled Bird," never even sang professionally until he was almost 30 years old.

Born in Maynardsville, Union County, Tennessee, Roy grew up with sports very much on his mind both as recreation and as a potential career. A three-letter man in high school in Knoxville, Roy was a follower of the exploits of such baseball heroes as Ruth and Gehrig, and dreamed fondly of the day when he too would be running basepaths for pay. The day never came, for Roy, while on try-outs for a professional ball club, fell victim on three separate occasions to sunstroke.

"I had to pick me out a new career," he told an interviewer recently. The career was inspired by his father, a missionary Baptist minister, and local Knox and Union County lawyer, who also played fiddle and collected records of the great mountain fiddle songs. Roy began learning the fiddle himself by trying to play the songs on the records his father brought.

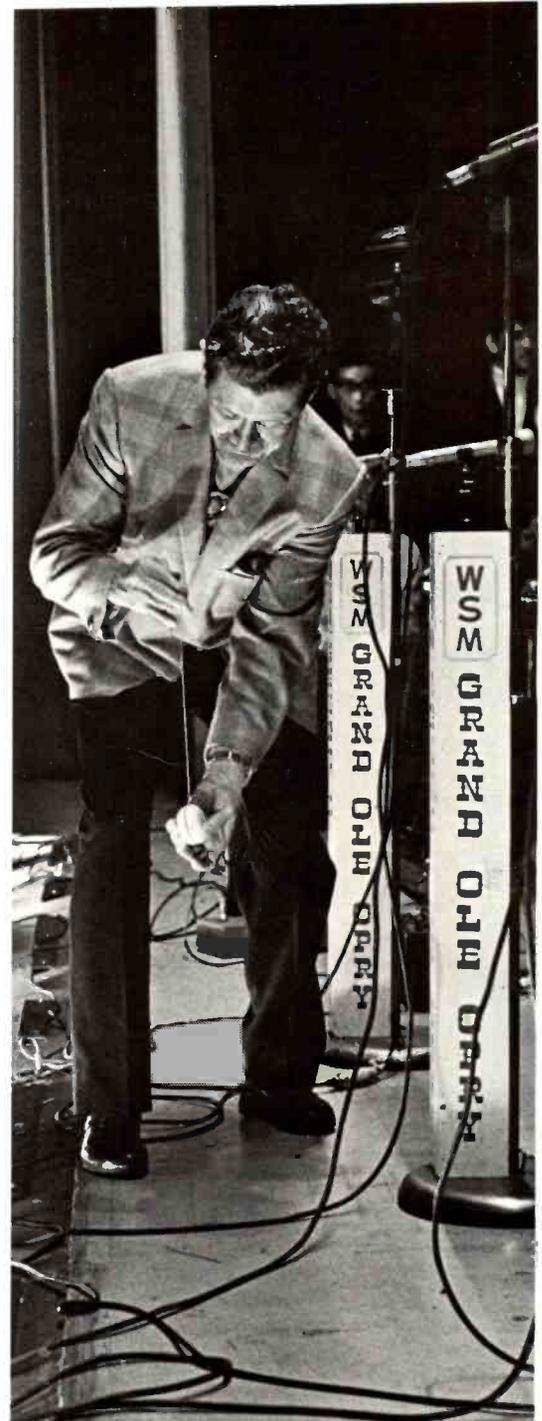
Roy joined a medicine show that was travelling through the mountains of Virginia and East Tennessee, where he did his first professional entertaining, as fiddler and singer. This, he vaguely remembers, was "about 1932".

The medicine show experience led to his first recording in 1934, about the same time he began singing on WNOX and WROL in Knoxville. Three years later, he moved to Nashville to join the Grand Ole Opry, where he's been a regular ever since.

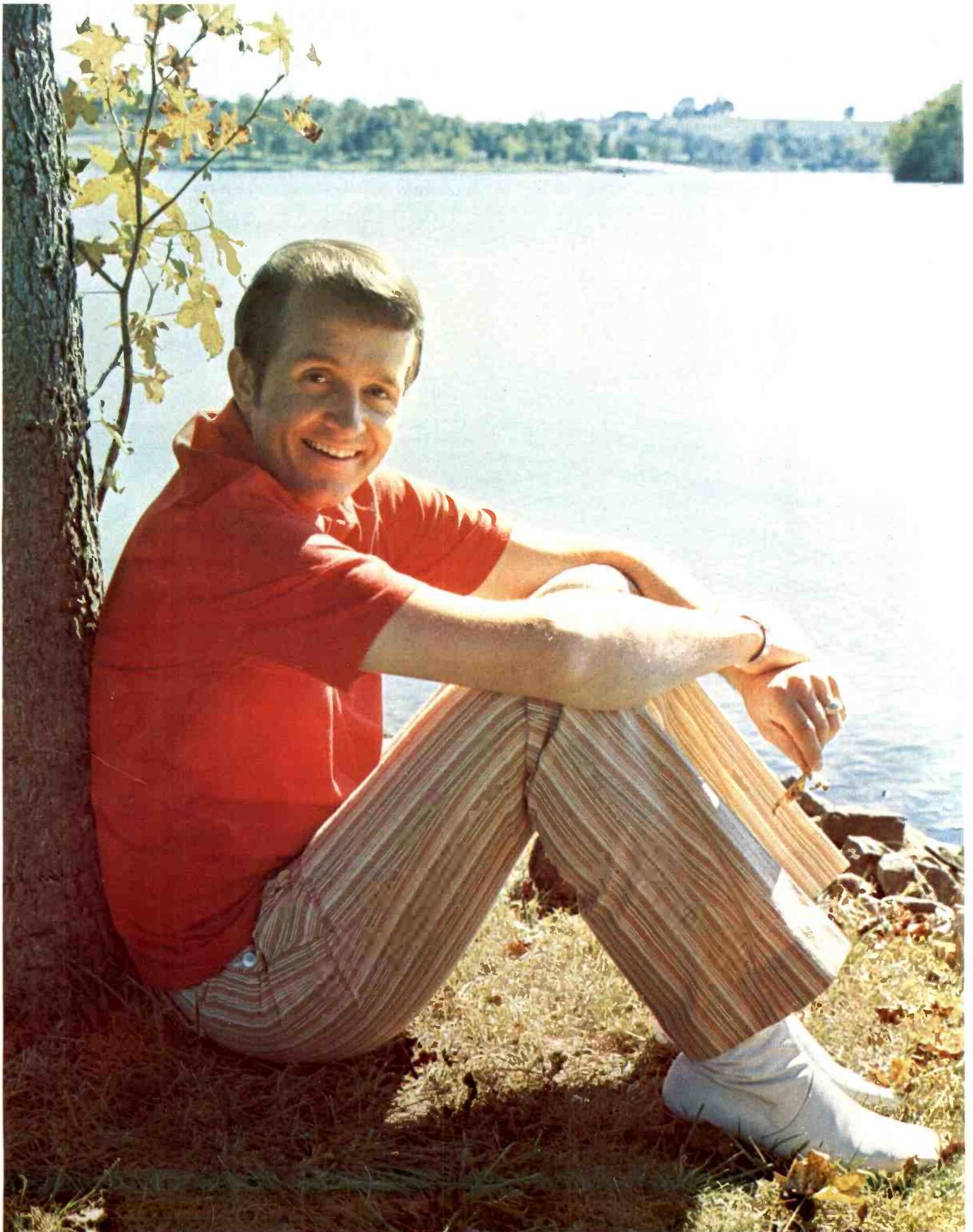
Several years later Acuff became acquainted with Fred Rose a featured singer on WSM Radio. In 1942, the pair formed Acuff-Rose Publications, one of the first and most successful publishing firms in Country Music.

The title, "King of Country Music," was bestowed on Roy by baseball-great and long-time friend, Dizzy Dean. Roy is married to the former Mildred Louis Douglas. The two were high school sweethearts. In fact, Mrs. Acuff used to do some duet singing with him, when Roy was first getting started. The Acuffs now live in a prosperous Nashville suburb.

The vision of Roy Acuff, cavorting on stage of the Grand Ole Opry House remains undimmed. There, the fans will find him on many many Saturday nights of the year, singing the great strains of "Wabash Cannonball," and the other country classics with which he is so closely identified.



"The King of Country Music" Delights the Opry audience with one of his Yo Yo tricks.



# Bill Anderson

BIRTHDAY ..... November 1  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Columbia, S.C.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1961

*Bill Anderson*  
SUITE 115, 806 16TH AVENUE, SOUTH-NASHVILLE, TENN. 37203



Hi . . .

Before I write and tell you a few things about Bill Anderson, may I first refute a few myths that seem to crop up about me from time to time:

First, I am not married to Jan Howard. Second, I am not Lynn Anderson's father (or brother or husband or aunt, uncle, or cousin) . . . we're just friends. And third, I do not have cancer of the throat. I just naturally sing this way!

Now that that's out of the way, here goes:

My full name is James William Anderson III, and I'm one of the lucky people in show business who hasn't had to change his name. I was born in Columbia, South Carolina, but left there when I was eight and moved to Georgia. I grew up in the greater Atlanta area where my parents and one sister still live. My birthday is November 1st, which makes me a Scorpio.

I am married to a pretty little North Carolina blonde named Becky, and I have two children, Terri Lee and Jennifer Lane.

With my band, The Po' Boys, I travel over 100,000 miles a year entertaining all over the globe, so naturally my hobby is "staying home!" I enjoy golf, boating, and songwriting in my spare time. As a spectator I'm an avid baseball and football fan.

In fact, it was while watching the All-Star baseball game on TV in 1961 that the call came inviting me to join the Grand Ole Opry. It was like asking me if I wanted to go to Heaven!

All my life my first love has been country music and it remains so even today. It's an honor and thrill to be included in this Opry book with such idols of mine as Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Tex Ritter, and all the rest.

They call me "Whispering Bill", "the Po' Boy", and lots of other things . . . but as long as they call me a member in good standing of the Grand Ole Opry and don't call me late for supper, I'll be happy. After all, what more could a country boy ask??

Sincerely,

Bill Anderson

One of Country Music's most famous duet teams entertains at the Country Music Association Awards Show.



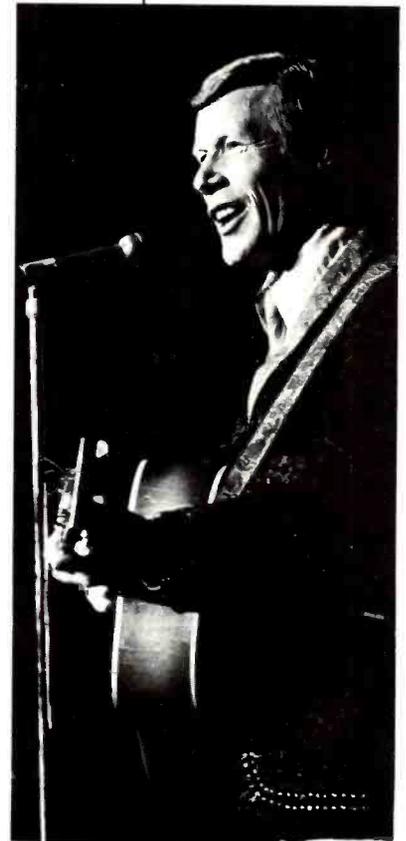
# Ernie Ashworth

BIRTHDAY ..... December 15  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Huntsville, Ala.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1964



## ERNIE ASHWORTH

230 BLACKMAN ROAD  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37211  
GRAND OLE OPRY — HICKORY RECORDS



Dear Country Music Fans,

I appreciate the nice letters from all of you fans regarding my career.

I joined the Opry in 1964, and have been a regular ever since. It has always been my ambition to entertain, so my career was decided earlier than most people.

When I am not performing my activities include operating the Empire Room, a night club about 40 miles from Nashville. Also, I am part owner of a 1,400 acre complex called Natural Bridge of Tennessee near Waynesboro, Tennessee. I perform there on Sunday during the summer months when I am not making personal appearances elsewhere.

As you can see, I keep pretty active. When I get some free time I like to spend it with my wife Bettye and our four children.

Thanks again for your interest and I hope to see you sometime during my travels.

Best wishes always,

Ernie and his "Trembling Lips" fill the auditorium



# Bobby Bare

BIRTHDAY ..... April 7  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Ironton, Ohio  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1965

Stressing an important lyric,  
Bobby performs at the mike.



When a young lad from the Mid-West is brought up listening to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio, country music records and a family that all played musical instruments and sang, it is quite likely that he will grow up to become a well known performer.

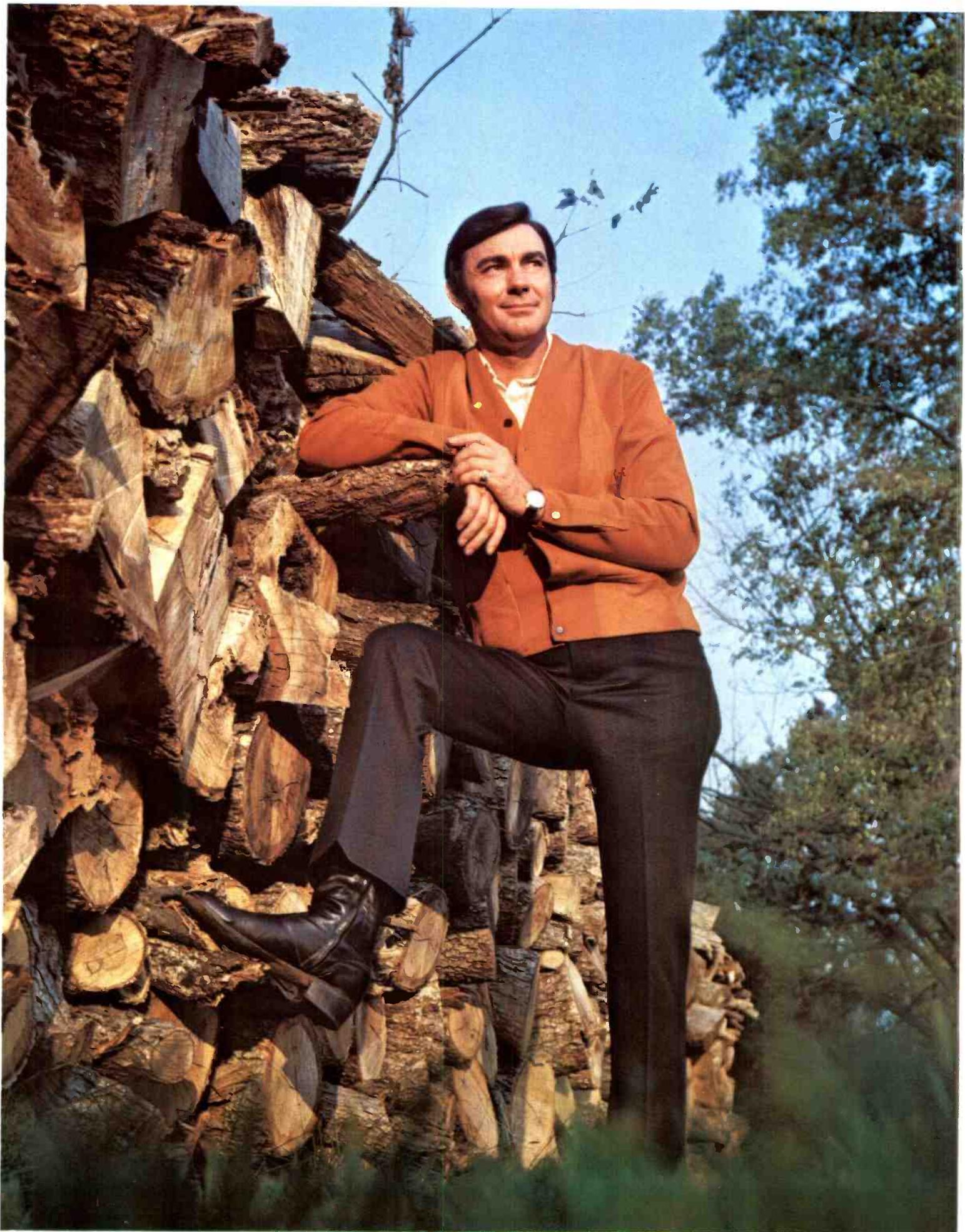
From his early days of listening and picking, Bobby Bare organized a band when he was in his late teens and gradually worked his way across the country to California.

After working club engagements in California, several months in Hawaii and even up to Alaska, Bobby started recording for Capitol Records. The army interrupted his career, but there he performed with the special services shows and did an Ed Sullivan Show. When he was discharged, Bobby stayed in California for several months before learning that Chet Atkins at RCA Records was interested in him.

Despite offers from movie and television studios to take up an acting career, Bobby moved from California to Nashville, got married, joined the Grand Ole Opry and has been there ever since.

Aside from being a favorite in the United States and Canada, Bobby tours Europe quite often and has several Gold Records from South Africa, and Silver Records from Norway. He also received a Grammy Award for "Detroit City."

When Bobby's not performing, he operates his own publishing firm. He spends most of his free time with two sons, a daughter and a pretty wife in a beautiful home on Old Hickory Lake or a fishing cabin and houseboat on Center Hill Lake near Nashville.





# Jim Ed Brown

BIRTHDAY ..... April 1  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Sparkman, Ark.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1963



Jim Ed sings a recent hit for the Opry audience.

Little did the people of Dallas County, Arkansas, know when Jim Ed Brown was born that he would become one of the nation's leading country and western singers.

Music has always been important in the life of Jim Ed. His grandmother called him "Jaybird" because he went around singing and whistling all the time. On Saturday nights the family listened to the Grand Ole Opry over a battery operated radio. Jim and his sister, Maxine, would order books advertised on the Opry "every time we had enough money" so they could sit and sing along with the Opry stars as the announcer called out the page.

In the 1950s, Jim Ed and sisters Maxine and Bonnie formed a trio. With the aid of Chet Atkins and the late

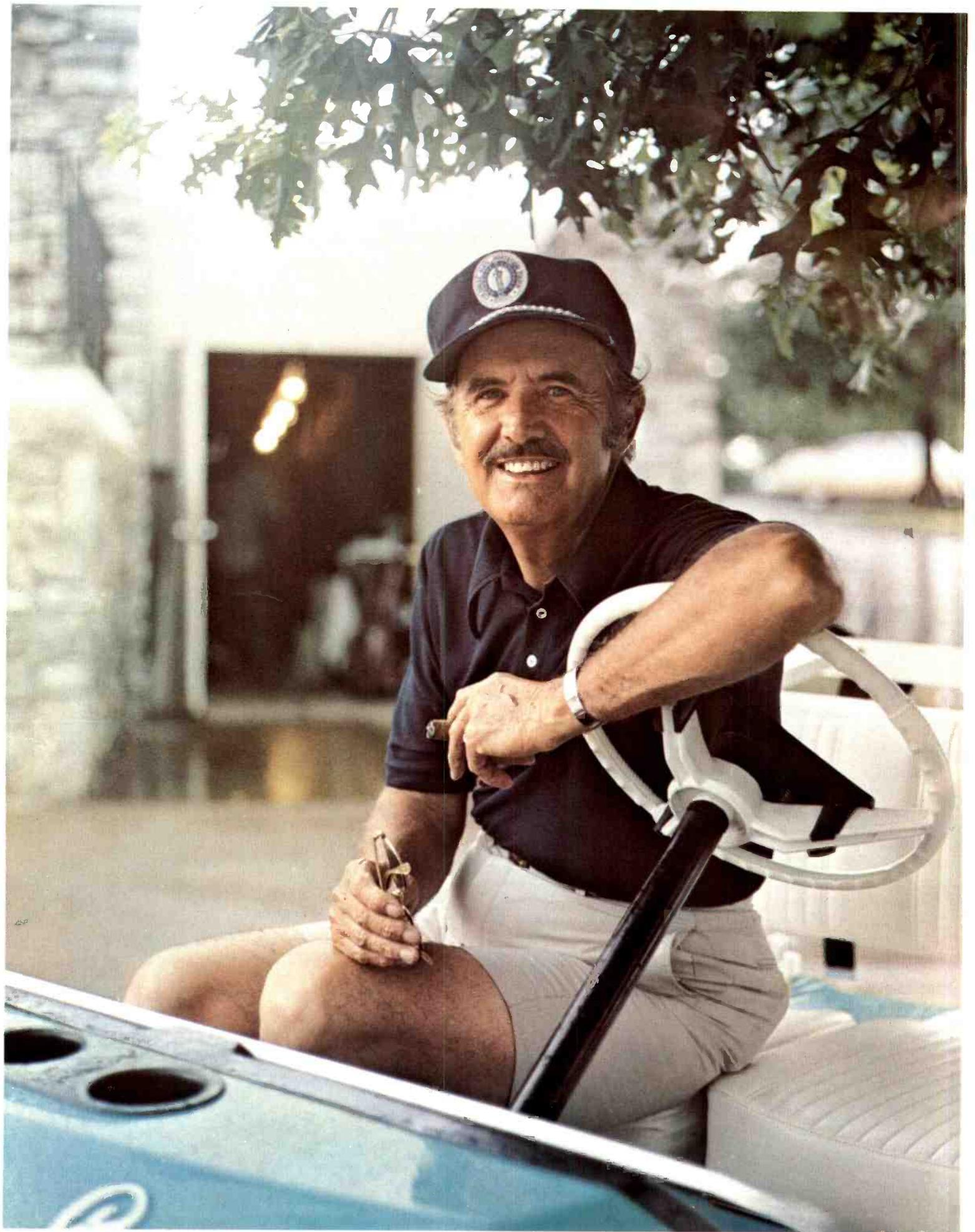
Jim Reeves, "The Browns" came to Nashville and have since won about all the awards a vocal group could win.

In 1965, Maxine and Bonnie persuaded Chet Atkins (head of RCA in Nashville) to record Jim Ed as a single. And when the two sisters retired in 1968, Jim Ed resolved to continue on his own.

Jim Ed and his wife Becky live in the Brentwood community outside of Nashville. They have two children, Buster and Kimberly.

Jim Ed is fast becoming a number one singer all over the world. He recently made Norway's Top Ten Chart in Billboard Magazine. "He not only will be a number one singer; he will be a great singer and will genuinely be the 'Prince of Country Music'" states Vito Pellettieri Grand Ole Opry stage manager since 1935. And Vito has seen the "royalty" of Country Music come and go.

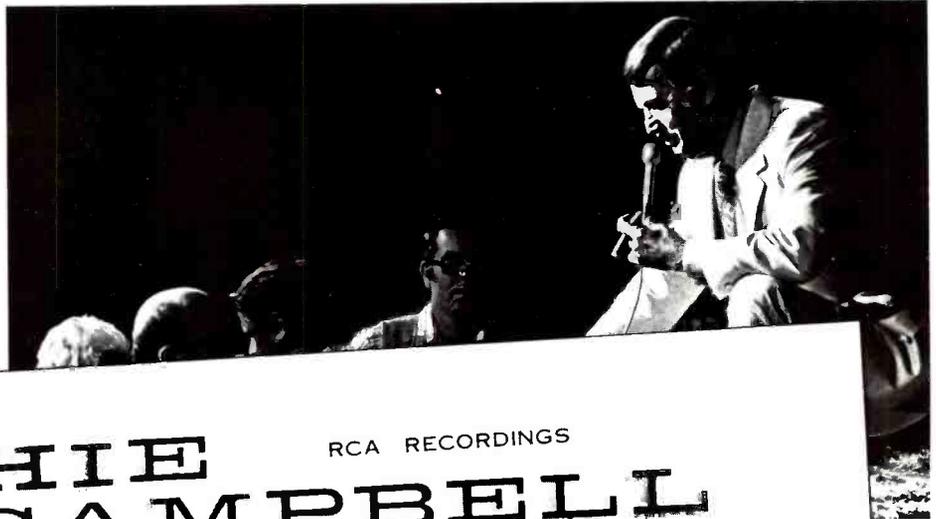




# Archie Campbell

BIRTHDAY ..... November 7  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Bulls Cap, Tn.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1959

Archie and his fans, a mutual admiration society.



## ARCHIE CAMPBELL

RCA RECORDINGS

Dear Friend,

Man, how lucky can you get! I've been in this business for thirty years and it seems that every year it gets better and better. I've never believed that I had a lot of talent, but I do have the desire to perform; and I love people, especially little kids. If I have anything going for me, I guess it's people like you saying, " Ole Arch is doin' his thing and enjoys it. " Yep, I guess I'm lucky.

*Archie Campbell*

- 806 SEVENTEENTH AVENUE, SOUTH • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37203 • TELEPHONE 615 254-3441
- P.O. BOX 10531 • KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE 37919 • TELEPHONE 615 584-2925





# Bill Carlisle

BIRTHDAY ..... December 19  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Wakefield, Ky.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1953

The Carlisles treat the audience to an old-time favorite.



Country Music, as any knowledgeable fan knows, its a lot more than just plain guitar-pickin' and singin'. It's a field also well-known for its comedy and good old-fashioned country humor. And when its the laugh department that's in the spotlight, the act most anybody remembers best of all is the famed Carlisles, led by Bill Carlisle.

Bill and his group have enjoyed many of the great fun-type record hits over the years, starting with "Rainbow at Midnight" which they recorded at their first radio engagement in Cincinnati, and including "No Help Wanted," "Too Old to Cut the Mustard," and Bill's own latest comedy recitation hit, "What Kinda Deal Is This?"

In the early '50s, the Carlisles closed out their highly successful radio stand in the Cincinnati area and moved on to Knoxville, Tennessee, which was a center of hot

country music activity. Working in the area were such legendary figures as Don Gibson, Chet Atkins, the Carter Family, Homer and Jethro, Archie Campbell and Carl Butler. Subsequently, the group heeded a call in 1953 to join the Grand Ole Opry.

Bill, who continues to be active in the recording field with Hickory Records, lives on his farm just outside the Nashville city limits with his wife, Leona, and their children, Sheila and Bill. His ambition has always been to be a musician and singer, an ambition that quite likely was fed by the years of Carlisle family Sunday sings, which Bill remembers so well as a child.

When he's not recording or working personal appearances, Bill likes to get away on hunting and fishing trips. In addition to listening to country records, particularly those of his own favorite, Roy Acuff, Bill's biggest enjoyment comes just from being with his family.





# Wilma Lee & Stoney Cooper



Wilma L. Cooper  
BIRTHDAY ..... February 7  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Valley Head, W. Va.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1957

Dale T. Cooper  
BIRTHDAY ..... October 16  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Harman, W. Va.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1957

The Coopers belting out "There's A Big Wheel."

To Our Many Friends and Fans Around The World:

We're happy to take this opportunity, in this edition of the Grand Ole Opry Picture-History Book, to express our gratitude and thanks to you who have made it all possible. And especially 15 years ago you made our dream come true when we became regular members of the Grand Ole Opry.

We note in particular young people by the hundreds as well as college professors who come up to us after our concerts and comment on the simplicity of our Mountain Style of music, which, as the old saying goes "we do what comes naturally". At any rate, it's a good feeling for whatever success we may have attained to

hear these sincere comments. And to use a quote from a great President of over one hundred years ago, Abraham Lincoln: "without the assistance of that Divine Being Who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail".

Thank you again for buying our records and coming to our performances.

God bless you, sincerely,

*Wilma Lee + Stoney Cooper*



# The Crook Brothers

Grand Ole Men of the Opry.



Herman and Lewis Crook—better known as the Crook Brothers—help make up one of the oldest groups on the Grand Ole Opry. They have been bringing their old time country style music to the Opry since its beginning in 1925.

“Back in the early days—before the Opry was actually started,” says Herman, a harmonica player, “we used to get two or three together and go around to different houses to play for folks. We didn’t charge anything. It was just for fun.

“We had gathered at a certain home one Sunday afternoon and the people told us about a young lady down the street who played the piano. I suggested they invite her to join the playing, and they did.” The young lady became Herman’s wife, and has since played with the Brothers on many occasions.

Groups such as this made up the original Grand Ole Opry. There were the Crook Brothers, the Possum Hunters, the Gully Jumpers, Sam and Kirk McGee and the Fruit Jar Drinkers. In those days most of the Opry people were instrumentalists. Singers were rare and the real heroes were the banjoists, guitarists and the fiddle players.

Since then many of the original groups have combined or swapped members until it is hard to tell who is who any more. Some of the Gully Jumpers and Possum Hunters have even become part of the Crook Brothers.

Every Saturday night these grand old men still bring their instruments to the Opry House and perform in the same fine tradition that built the Grand Ole Opry so many years ago. And they seem to be getting better with age.





# Skeeter Davis

BIRTHDAY ..... December 30  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Dry Ridge, Ky.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1959

Opry Stage Manager, Vito Pellettieri, congratulates Skeeter on her Opry performance.



Skeeter Davis has been entertaining people and making them happy for several years. Her career began in the early 1950's when she was half of the Davis Sisters. After a tragic accident took the life of her friend and singing partner, Skeeter decided to carry on alone.

She returned to show business and toured with Ernest Tubb and his Texas Troubadours. In 1959 Skeeter was made a permanent member of the Grand Ole Opry and named "Most Promising Female Country Vocalist."

Skeeter has been with RCA Records since her beginning and she has given them one hit after another. She is at home on any stage she appears on—from the Grand Ole Opry to Carnegie Hall, from Vanderbilt University to Potosi, Missouri. She not only sings, but she enter-

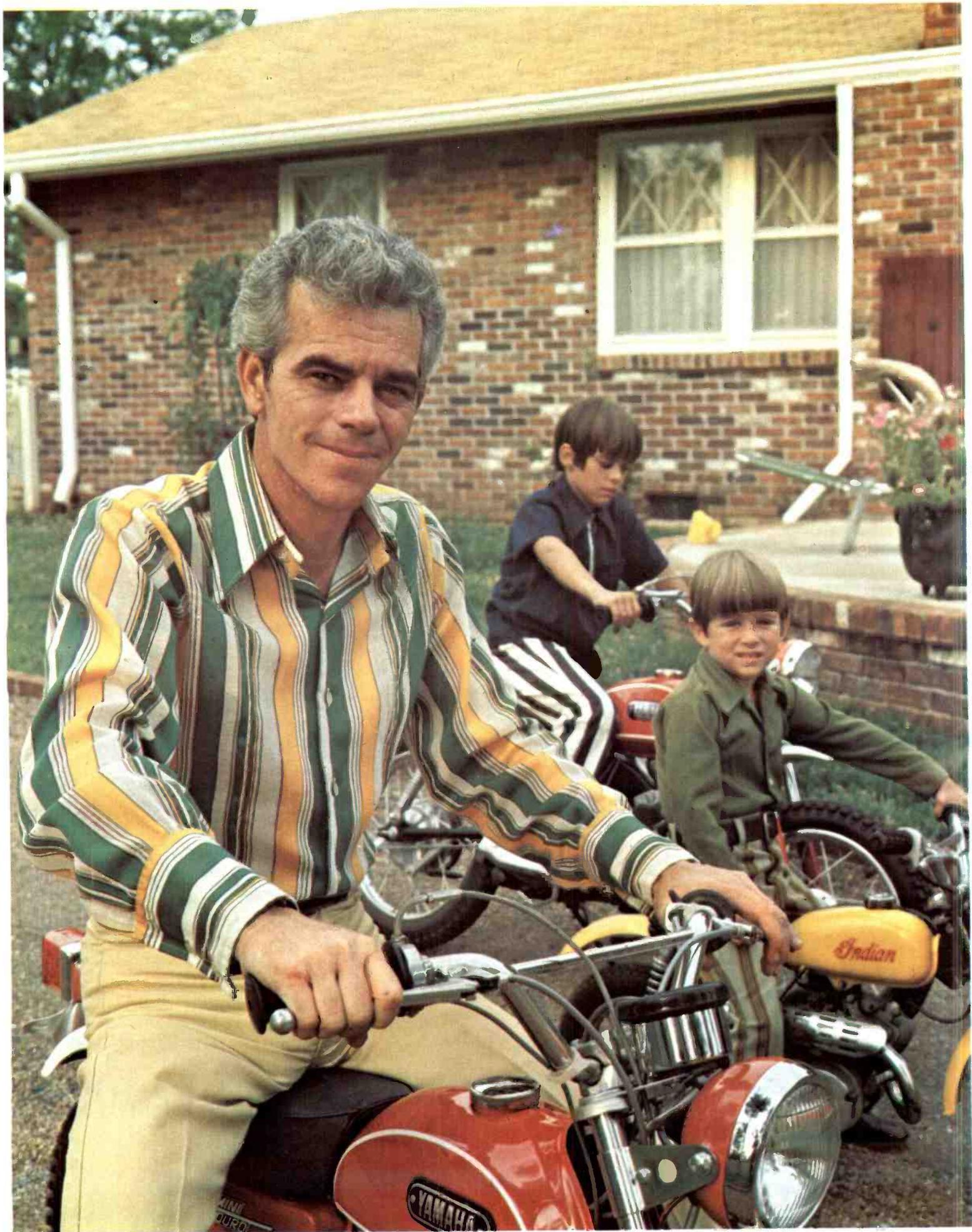
tains and spreads her message of love. And has tremendous appeal to people of all ages and types.

Skeeter has many awards to her credit, including a Grammy Award and BMI Awards for songwriting. She is also one of the top three singers in places like Madrid, Spain and Singapore.

Skeeter has appeared on many network television shows including The Steve Allen Show and the Mike Douglas Show. She has also appeared in two motion pictures.

Skeeter lives in Brentwood, Tennessee with a housefull of pet poodles, parakeets, doves and other exotic animals that she loves dearly.







# Roy Drusky

BIRTHDAY ..... June 22  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Atlanta, Ga.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1958

Roy Drusky was an outstanding baseball player as a youngster, and once was offered a professional contract. In fact, even now you might see him on some diamond playing with the Music Pickers baseball team. But it is to the everlasting satisfaction of his many followers that he eventually chose music as his profession.

Roy happens to be one of the finest singers in the business, and an outstanding song-writer as well, having several BMI Awards for his compositions.

This versatile artist, who plays guitar, clarinet and piano has guested on various TV network programs and has had roles in three Country Music films. Roy and his back-up group, The Loners, proved their versatility by entertaining "country folks" on Las Vegas' "Golden Strip" throughout Europe and all of the United States.

Maintaining a background in radio announcing and disc spinning, Roy's diversified interests include serving as a former executive with SECAC licensing organization, and producing records for various artists. He also holds a private pilot's license and is a member of Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

Always the sports buff, Roy, his wife, Bobbye and their three sons take to the sun whenever possible. Auto racing, water sports, baseball, hockey and the annual football bowl games are just a few of their favorite pastimes.



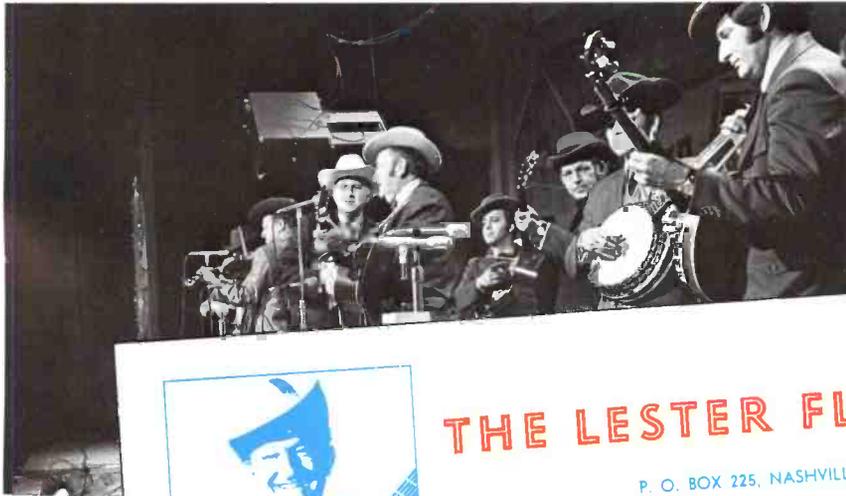
Roy Drusky entertains for the Opry Luncheon during the recent Birthday Celebration





# Lester Flatt

BIRTHDAY ..... June 28  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Sparta, Tn.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1944



Bill Monroe teams up with a famous protege, Lester Flatt, for a Bluegrass special.



## THE LESTER FLATT SHOW

P. O. BOX 225, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37202

Exclusively on **RCA**  
Records and Tapes



WSM'S GRAND OLE OPRY

It was during 1953 that I became a member of THE GRAND OLE OPRY, sponsored by the good folks at Martha White Mills. (now Martha White Foods, Inc.)

One of the two things I am most proud of is that Lester Flatt & The Nashville Grass still open the 8:00 O'Clock portion of the Saturday night GRAND OLE OPRY singing The Martha White Theme, which has incidentally become one of our most requested stage numbers and was released in January 1972 in an RCA album.

The other event that has meant the most to me is an exclusive recording contract with RCA VICTOR RECORDS. It is a most pleasant and refreshing association.

Gladys, Brenda, Tammy and myself now make our home on Old Hickory Lake near Nashville, having sold our homeplace and farm at Sparta, Tennessee.

My favorite hobby is fishing and it's real convenient to get in the boat and go out for awhile. Gladys enjoys fishing every bit as much as I do.

Lately though my work has interfered with my fishing as this has been our busiest year for a long time. But I must admit that I enjoy working the road. After a while it "gets in your blood" so to speak and our bus is comfortably equipped for the tours. Then too there's always a lot of joking and horseplay to pass away the time.

Especially I'd like to say a big "THANKS" to "Bud" Wendell and all his staff for carrying on the great GRAND OLE OPRY traditions of the past in the very finest way as it expands and goes forward.

Very sincerely,  
*Lester Flatt*  
Lester Flatt



Sponsored By **MARTHA WHITE FOODS, INC.**



# The Four Guys

The Four Guys' rich, close harmony fills the Opry House.



570 McMURRAY DRIVE  
SUITE E-16  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37211

To our many friends in Country Music,

What a thrill it has been, from the stage above,  
to see your faces light up with acceptance and love,  
What a thrill it has been to receive your applause,  
it's like Christmas morning, and you're Santa Claus

It's a thrill like no other when you call us back for more,  
for there is no other thrill like an Opry encore,  
The thrill of that moment never wavers or varies,  
It's unqualed excitement for Sam, Brent, Rich and Gary

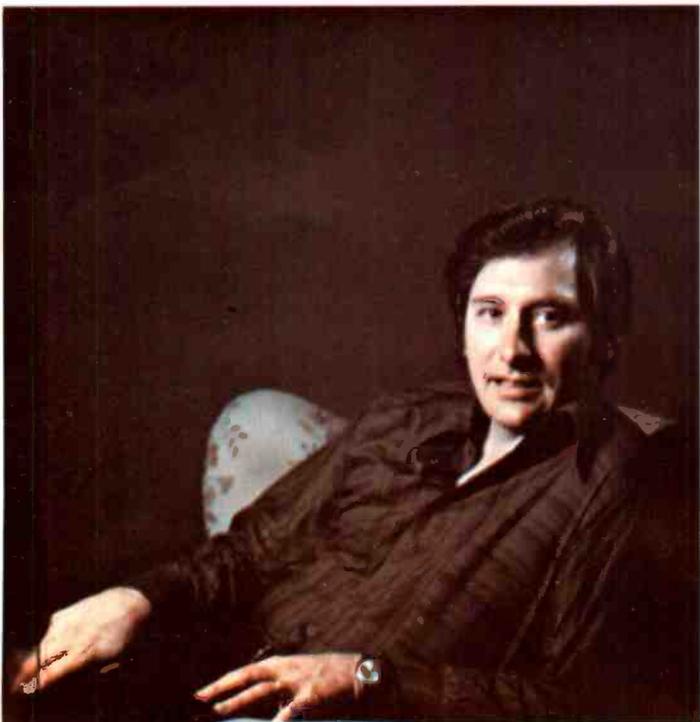
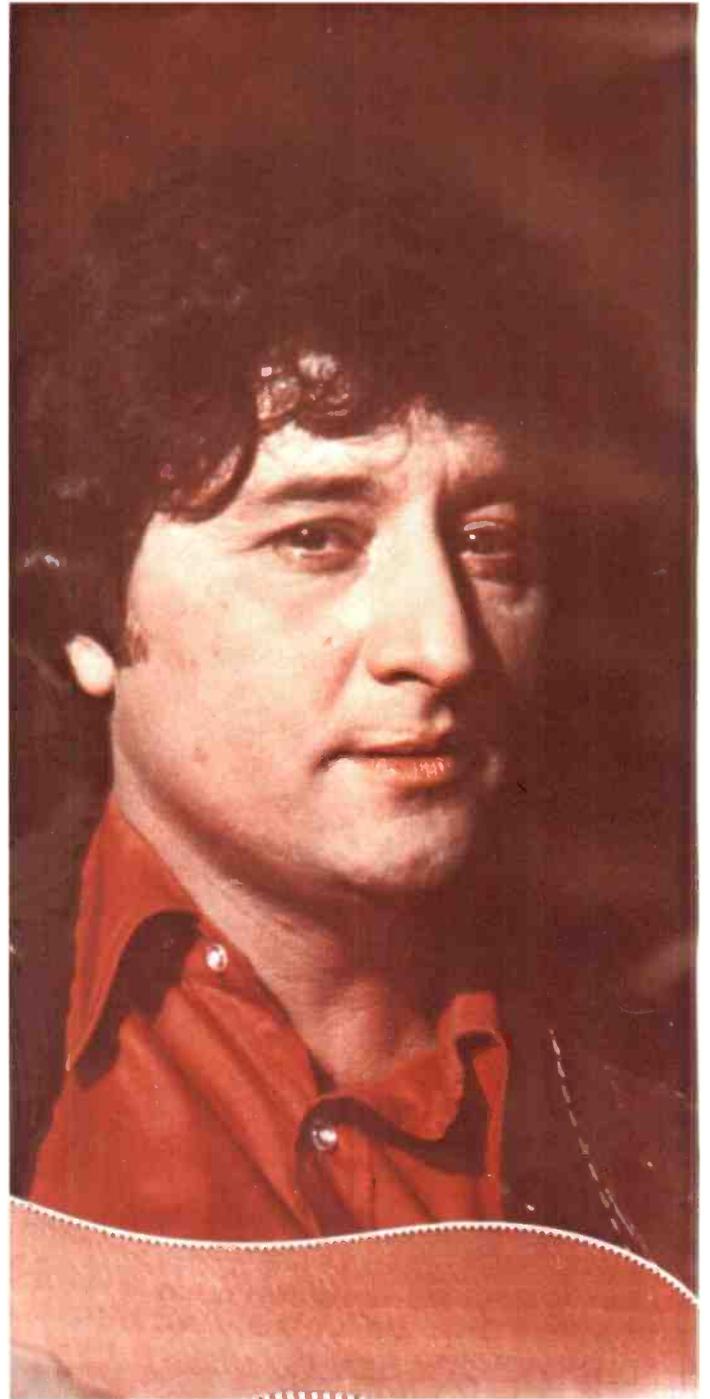
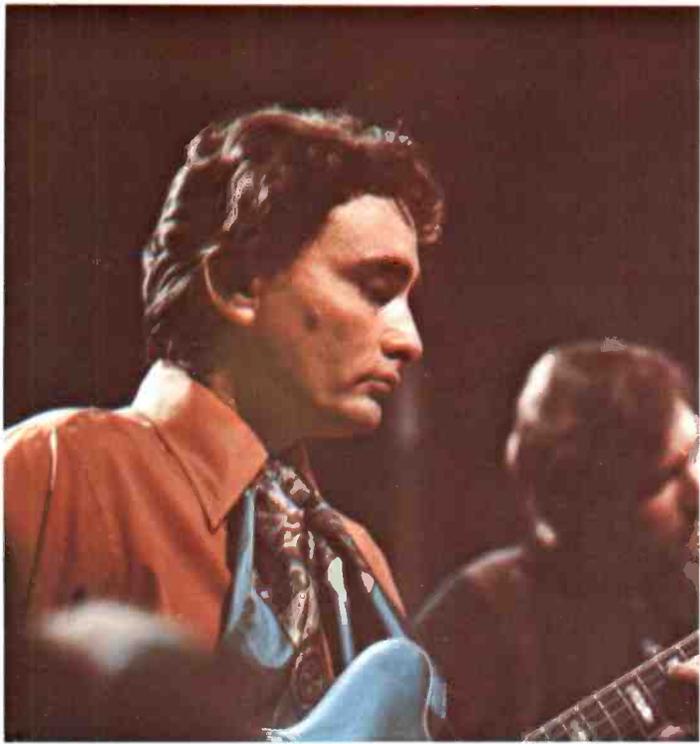
What a thrill it has been, you've given us a home,  
for the Opry is you, not us alone,  
What a thrill it has been meeting you after the show,  
To learn you're from Delaware, Texas, even Idaho

There's a thrill in the air, to each performance you bring,  
it breathes life and meaning into each song we sing,  
There's a thrill of delight, that we can't overlook,  
as we wish you the best in your autograph book

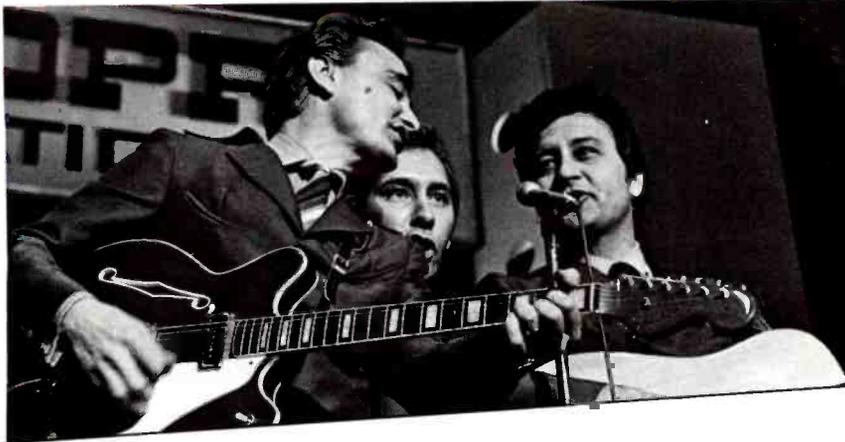
What a thrill it has been, to see your year 'round dedication,  
to our "MUSIC-OF-THE-LAND," now number one in the nation,  
But the thrill of it all, regardless of trends,  
is knowing you're not just our fans, **YOU'RE OUR DEAREST OF FRIENDS.**

Best wishes always,

The Four Guys  
Sam Wellington  
Brent Burkett  
Richard Garratt  
Gary Buck



# Tompall & The Glasers



TOMPALL GLASER  
BIRTHDAY ..... September 3  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Spalding, Neb.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1960

JIM GLASER  
BIRTHDAY ..... December 16  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Spalding, Neb.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1960

CHUCK GLASER  
BIRTHDAY ..... February 27  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Spalding, Neb.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1960

The Glaser Brothers provide the perfect blend for their songs.

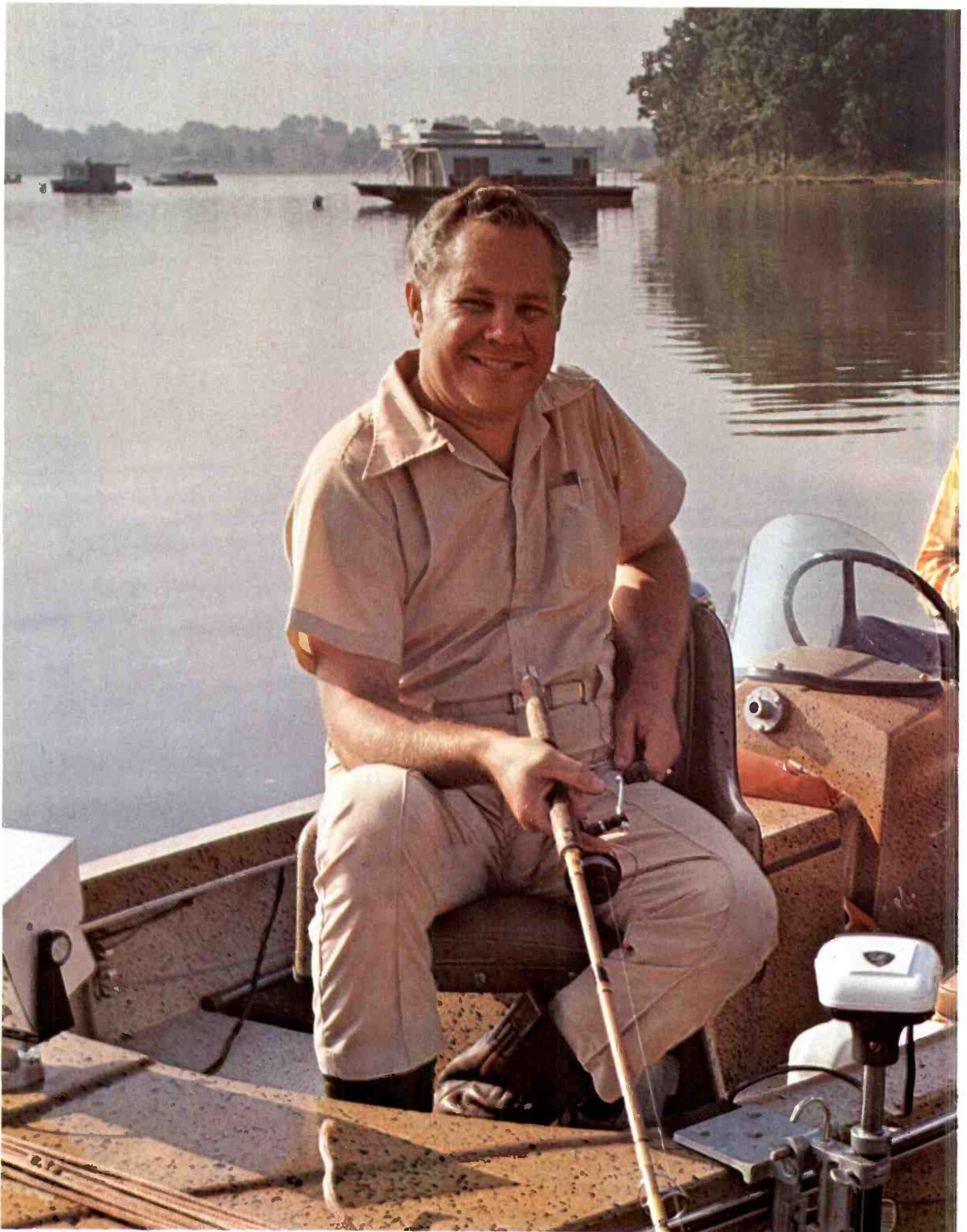


Dear Friends:

Since 1957 when we moved to Nashville from Nebraska, just kids fresh off the farm and a lucky win on the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scouts Show, those 15 years have proved to us we are only fans of this American Country Music, who by some strange quirk of creative imagination were allowed to write, perform, and be a small part of it's business.

Marty Robbins, Owen Bradley, Jack Clement, and Chuck and Jim helped me in the Country Music Business. But most of all it's been us doing for Country fans that has kept us here.

Thank you!





# Billy Grammer

BIRTHDAY ..... August 28  
BIRTHPLACE.. Franklin County, Ill.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1959

Veteran announcer Grant Turner confers with Billy before his Opry appearance.



USM PHOTO

*Billy Grammer*  
ROUTE 4, OLD HICKORY BLVD.  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37211

Hello Friends,

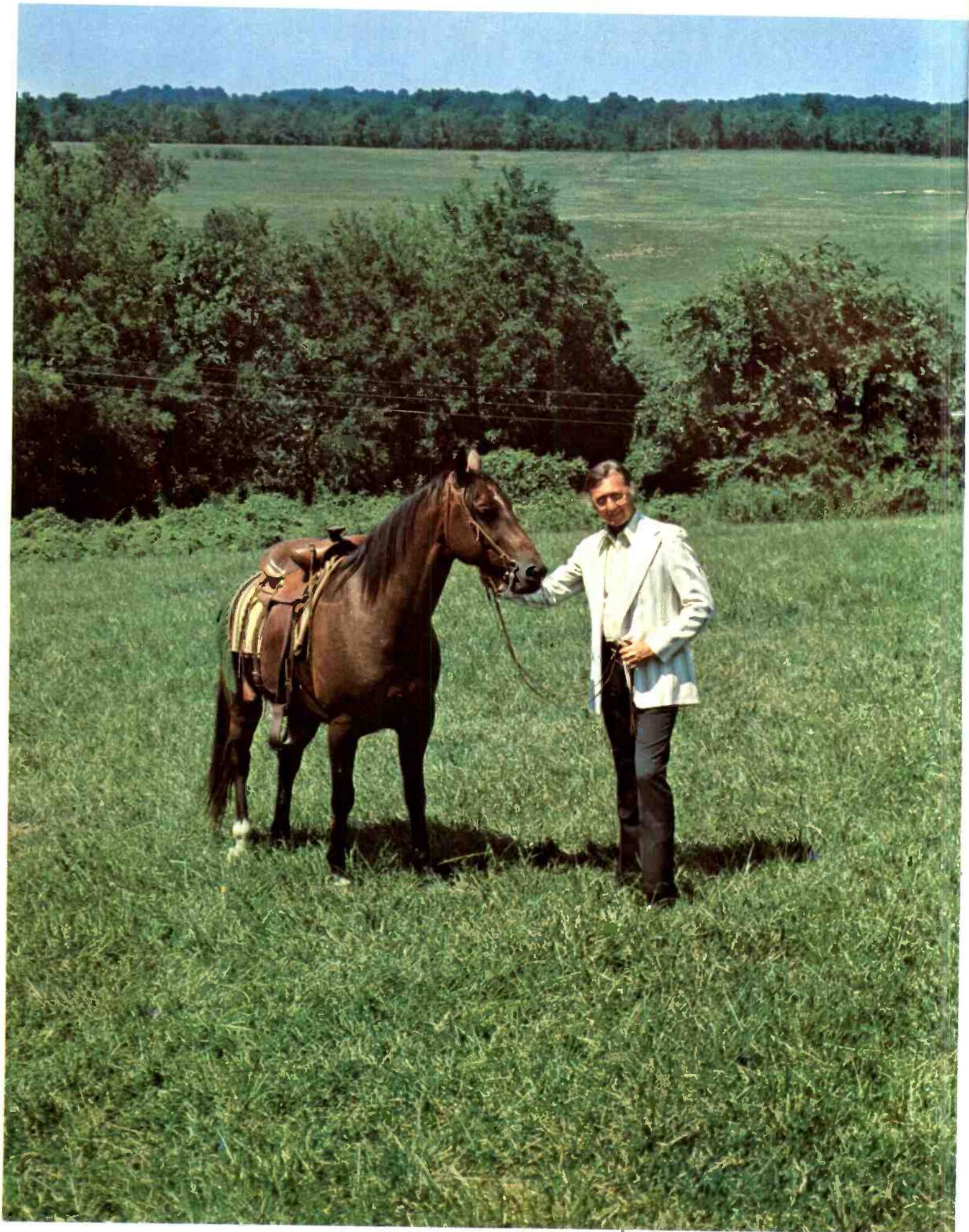
This short note will never be able to express my thanks to you for your loyalty to me and country music. You have supported the Grammers' in a wonderful way.

May you seek and receive God's richest blessings in your personal life.

In Christ,

*Billy Grammer*







# Jack Greene

BIRTHDAY ..... January 7  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Maryville, Tn.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1967

Jack unpacks his guitar in the Opry dressing room and awaits his cue.



## The Jack Greene Show

Box 630  
Madison, Tennessee 37115  
Telephone (615) 865-5573

JIMMY DRY  
THE JOLLY GIANTS

JACK GREENE  
JEANNIE SEELY

Dear Grand Ole Opry Fan,

It would be much more pleasant if I could visit with each of you in person, but since that is almost impossible, I hope we can get better acquainted through this letter.

This kind of a career can get to be a twenty-four hour a day job, and sometimes there's not much time left over for hobbies. We work approximately 180 days and travel about 100,000 miles a year on the road making personal appearances. Much of our time in town is spent looking for new songs to record, recording, taking pictures and doing television shows.

However, when I do manage to get away for a few hours, weather permitting, I usually sneak out to the nearest golf course. Knocking that little white ball around is the best way for me to completely get my mind off the business. And of course watching the football games is another way I like to relax while at the same time increasing my pocket money from the Jolly Giants!

I have five other hobbies and these are my favorites; Wayne, Lynn, Tony, Jan and Marty. And that's the way I spend most of my free time.

Hope you are enjoying our Grand Ole Opry book, and that you will find time to come and see our show the next time we visit your town.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Greene  
Decca Records

BOOKINGS:

HAZE JONES  
ATLAS ARTIST BUREAU  
119 Two-Mile Pike  
Gondlettsville, Tennessee 37072  
(615) 859-1343



PUBLICITY:

BARBARA STARLING  
JAULUS & SALIDOR, INC.  
806 18th Avenue, South  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 255-2649





# Tom T. Hall

BIRTHDAY ..... May 25  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Olive Hill, Kentucky  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1971

Tom T. Hall is a journalistic creator who writes of life with a lyrical and musical pen and sings of it with a personal knowledge.

Today, he is one of the most cited and sought after songwriters and entertainers in the field, having written more than 400 songs including the multimillion selling hit of "Harper Valley P.T.A.," and his own hits, "Ballad of Forty Dollars" and "The Year That Clayton Delaney Died." He's one of the few writers who can lay claim to having at least one of his songs in the national country charts consistently over the past few years.

Tom's variable and in-demand talents have garnered him appearances on several network TV shows, including "Hee Haw," "The Johnny Cash Show," and NBC's Special entitled "Harper Valley U.S.A., which he co-wrote and starred in.

Son of an Olive Hill, Kentucky minister, Tom was the sixth child in a family of ten. He wrote his first song at age nine after hearing a fight between a neighboring couple, but started writing seriously while in the Army.

Tom T. writes and sings of life as it is. Unlike most songwriters who write strictly on inspiration, he is well known as an "assignment writer." For instance, "Harper Valley P.T.A." was written on a request for a song on hypocrisy. He is generous with his time and aids other aspiring songwriters through his service on the board of directors for both the Nashville Songwriters' Association and the Country Music Association.

When not on the road with his band, Tom T. is an avid outdoorsmen who likes to fish, hunt, play golf, paint, read, spend time with his horses and "just plain get my hands dirty" on his farm in suburban Nashville.



Tom T. Hall lends his own special styling to one of his compositions.





# Jan Howard

BIRTHDAY ..... March 13  
BIRTHPLACE ..... West Plains, Missouri  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1971

Jan Howard signs as a regular Opry member while Bud Wendell, general manager, looks on approvingly.

*Jan Howard*  
HUBERT LONG TALENT AGENCY  
DECCA RECORDS  
1809 HILLMONT AVENUE ■ TOWNHOUSE B-2 ■ NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37215

As the story goes . . . I was born . . . but not "Jan Howard", on one Friday the thirteenth of March in West Plains, Missouri and if you think I'm going to tell you what year, you're crazy . . . that's a woman's prerogative, isn't it? Of course, most of you know that I have grown sons but don't go by that because they had to have been at least ten when they were born . . . either that or time has passed awfully fast. I'm joking, of course, because time only passes fast if you're happy and basically I'm a happy person (most of the time).

Back to the name business . . . I was named Lula Grace Johnson after a friend of my mother's, who promised to make me a lace dress. She did and later the house burned down along with the dress and I was stuck with the name . . . but only until I was old enough to change it . . . legally.

To continue with the story, I was married when I was a freshman in high school and God blessed me with three wonderful sons . . . Jimmy, Corky, and David, who are my life. The marriage ended in divorce and I moved to California where I worked as a waitress and later as a secretary. My boss took pity on me, I think, because I was really a terrible secretary . . . typing was strictly hunt and peck (and still is) and I couldn't take shorthand but I lasted three years, then quit and moved to Nashville.

In 1957, thru friends in the music business, I started making demonstration records of their songs and that led to a recording contract with Challenge Records. The first record was a duet with Wynn Stewart entitled "YANKEE GO HOME" followed by another duet and a single "THE ONE YOU SLIP AROUND WITH". I've been with Decca Records now for seven years and just hope they're as happy with me as I am with them.

In 1965 Bill Anderson and I recorded our first duet . . . "I KNOW YOU'RE MARRIED" which we followed later with "FOR LOVING YOU" and "IF ITS ALL THE SAME TO YOU" and albums of the same title. Later he asked me to be a regular on his syndicated TV show and I hope he agrees with me when I say it's been a great working relationship. He has helped me in so many ways as far as my career is concerned but most of all, he is my friend and I value that highly. Also, thru working with Bill, I work with the most talented and versatile group of musicians in country music . . . THE PO BOYS . . . and it's a honor each time I walk on stage with them . . . they can make anyone sound good.

Recently I was made a regular member of the GRAND OLE OPRY and it is and always will be an honor and a privilege each time I walk on that stage. There are so many wonderful people in country music and I'm very proud to be a part of it.

I don't know what else to say that you might be interested in . . . my favorite food is . . . food. I like almost everything.

My favorite color is . . . color . . . it depends on the mood I'm in.

I don't have a favorite entertainer . . . they're all great as far as I'm concerned.

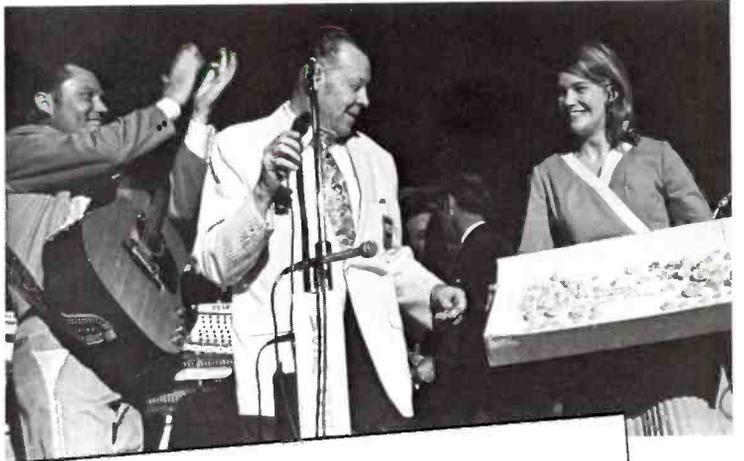
Thank you for supporting country music and the Grand Ole Opry. I mean it when I say . . . we sincerely appreciate it.



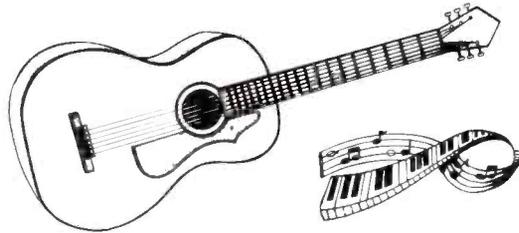
# Stonewall Jackson

BIRTHDAY ..... July 6  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Moultrie, Georgia  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1954

Stonewall Jackson leads the cheers as Nancy surprises her father Grant Turner with a birthday cake.



**STONEWALL JACKSON**  
**ENTERPRISES**



ROUTE 1 BRENTWOOD, TENNESSEE 37027

I have just celebrated my fifteenth year since I came to the Grand Ole Opry in 1956 and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you that has bought one of my records or come to one of my shows here at the Grand Ole Opry or on tour. Each of you helped to create those fifteen happy years. I will be trying my best to please you in the future. Yours for the Grand Ole Opry and Country Music.

*Stonewall Jackson*



# Jim & Jesse

|                   |              |                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| JIM McREYNOLDS    |              | JESSE McREYNOLDS  |              |
| BIRTHDAY .....    | February 13  | BIRTHDAY .....    | July 9       |
| BIRTHPLACE .....  | Coeburn, Va. | BIRTHPLACE .....  | Coeburn, Va. |
| JOINED OPRY ..... | 1964         | JOINED OPRY ..... | 1964         |



Jim and Jesse sing one of their hits during the Bluegrass Concert at the Country Music Fan Fair.

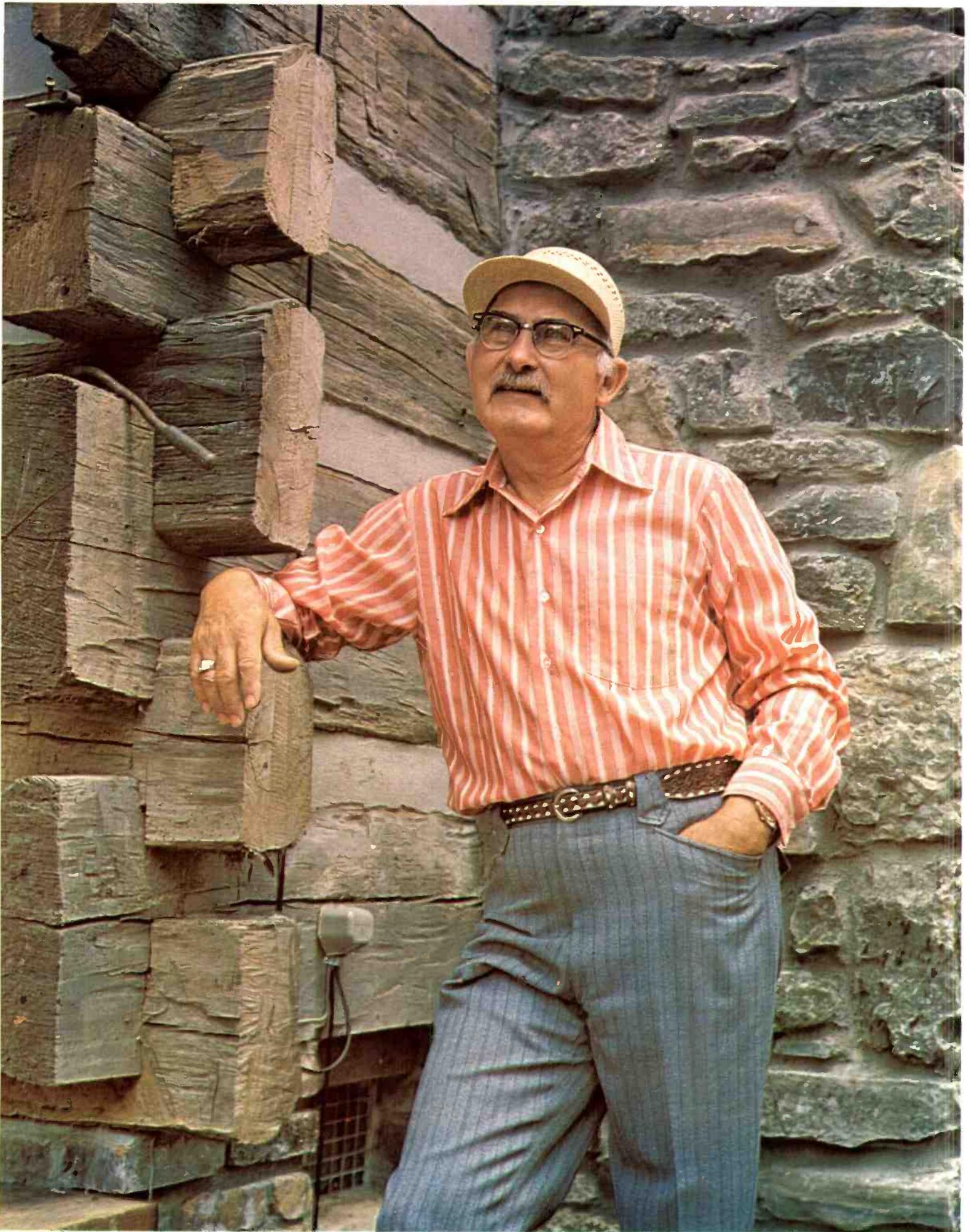
From the state of Virginia, birthplace of presidents, come two of the most popular entries in the field of modern Country Music, Jim and Jesse McReynolds.

Jim and Jesse are brothers from Coeburn, Virginia. Inspired by a grandfather who was a champion old time fiddler and a musical family, the two started their musical career when they both were just kids. Jim plays the guitar, while Jesse plays the mandolin, fiddle, guitar and bass. Music comes naturally to them.

They took their first step up the entertainment ladder by winning a talent contest, and got their first job in radio at WNVA in Norton, Virginia, not far from home. In 1952 they signed with Capitol Records, and for the past several years they have been making hit records for the Epic label.

Not only have these boys long performed together, but they have collaborated on most of the songs they have written. These tunes include "Cotton Mill Man," "Better Times Are Coming," "Diesel On My Tail," and "Memphis." Their current TV show, "The Jim and Jesse Show," presents the "now" sound in Country and Western music.

Jim (the taller one) and Jesse have many similar tastes—as a matter of fact they married sisters. Jim wed the former Arreta McCoy, while the former Darlene McCoy is Jesse's wife. Both families make their homes on a rambling farm near Old Hickory Lake at Gallatin, Tennessee. Spare moments are devoted to raising cattle on the farm.





# Grandpa Jones

BIRTHDAY ..... October 20  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Niagra, Kentucky  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1946

It was Bradley Kincaid who gave Grandpa Jones his name. He was not then, nor is he now, a “Grandpa,” but that title was to be his pseudonym for his professional career. His first act under that name was billed as “Grandpa Jones and his Grandchildren.” He was only 23 years old at the time.

Grandpa Jones may look and sound like a grandpa, but he moves and plays with a springy zest that could make a teenage combo envious.

One of ten children of a Niagra, Kentucky, farm family, Grandpa learned to play the banjo from old-time performer “Cousin Emmy.” He later learned to play the guitar himself.

Grandpa Jones started his professional career inauspiciously, doing a commercial for a dentist in Akron, Ohio. But any money was welcome in those days. His first radio job was with station WJW in Akron. While there, Grandpa used some of the musical tips passed on to him by his father. Mr. Jones was well-known around the Niagara community for his performances at local dances.

Grandpa, master of the five-string banjo, became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1946, just before his marriage to Ramona, who has made frequent appearances with him over the years.

The Jones family, Grandpa, Ramona, and the three children, Eleise, Mark, and Alisa, live on a farm near Ridgetop, Tennessee, a few miles north of Nashville.

He has written more than 200 songs and has recorded about seventy-five of them. Grandpa Jones is highly respected by his fellow performers and more popular than ever with the fans, thanks in part to his success on the celebrated “Hee Haw” series.



Grandpa Jones and his wife, Ramona, do some high stepping for the Opry audience.

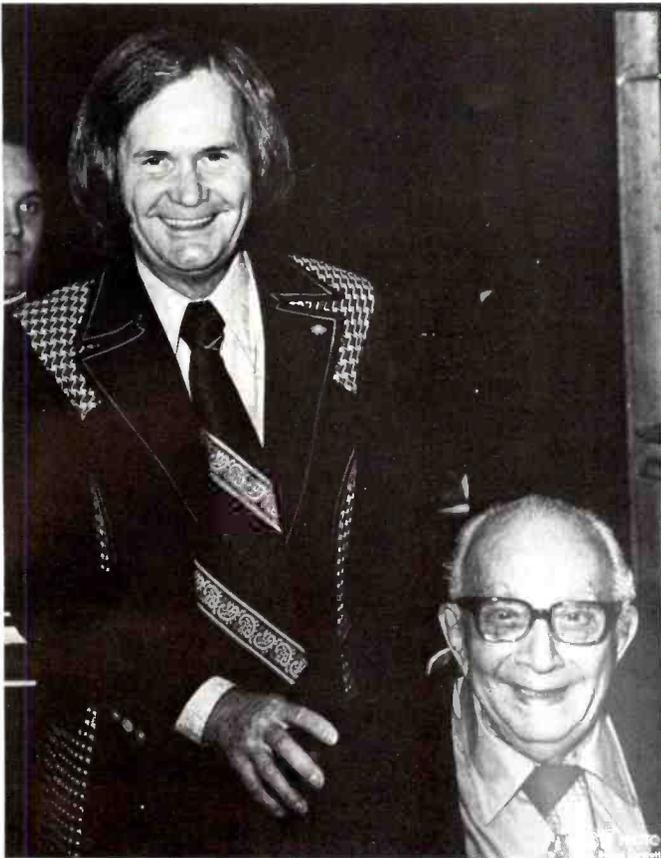






# Hank Locklin

BIRTHDAY ..... February 15  
BIRTHPLACE ..... McLellan, Florida  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1960



The happy Irishman and the crafty Italian, Vito Pellettieri, plot a backstage prank.

There's leprechauns, Londonderry, limerick, and then there's Locklin.

Hank Locklin is the lilt of country music. With a voice that sounds like "a little bit of Heaven," Hank has been the number one country singer in Ireland for the past five years.

"I've never kissed the Blarney Stone," he'll quickly admit; but Hank doesn't need that added luck of the Irish, for he is the Lucky Irishman.

"The Mayor of McLellan" is Hank's other title, and one that he wears proudly, especially when he's tending his McLellan, Florida, 350-acre farm. He raises beef cattle there.

Born into a family that usually reared doctors, Hank wanted to be an entertainer. Instead of attaching a Ph.D. to his name, he entered show business as a D.J. Radio led him to stages; and Hank became a professional, playing sometimes for \$2.00 a night with expenses of \$5.00. That was a losing course to take, so Hank picked up a guitar course book and headed for Nashville.

The luck was with Locklin, and he was asked to join the Grand Ole Opry in 1960. The success of Hank has become legend in a decade. In addition to his numerous awards for "Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On," Hank has awards from ASCAP, NARAS, and Cashbox.

This is the time for Hank Locklin, an aquarian singing in the "Age of Aquarius." The luck and signs are with him, but, especially, the beautiful tenor voice is there, and that is what his fans love.





# Lonzo & Oscar

DAVE HOOTEN (Lonzo)

BIRTHDAY ..... February 4

BIRTHPLACE ..... Camden, Tennessee

JOINED OPRY ..... 1967

ROLLIN SULLIVAN (Oscar)

BIRTHDAY ..... January 9

BIRTHPLACE ..... Edmonton, Ky.

JOINED OPRY ..... 1942



Lonzo and Oscar doing what they like best, poking fun at their colleagues.

One of the things that has made country music so great is the ability of those involved in it to kid themselves a little. Probably the two greatest “kidders” of all times have been Lonzo and Oscar.

For Rollin Sullivan and Dave Hooten, the road to stardom was rocky. Originally, the team was composed of Ken Marvin and Oscar (Rollin) and they made their debut on WTJS Radio in Jackson, Tennessee shortly before World War II. Shortly after this, Ken withdrew from the act and Rollin’s brother, Johnny Sullivan became a full-time member.

Oscar joined the Opry in 1942, and Lonzo became part of the cast two years later. Once they joined forces, they began to click.

Their first and biggest record was “I’m My Own Grandpa,” a song which they frankly admit they didn’t think would make it at all.

Tragedy struck in 1967 when Johnny (Lonzo) died of a heart-attack. As agreed before his death, “The show must go on,” thereby Dave Hooten was asked to replace the void left by Johnny’s death.

Columbia Records accepted the new Lonzo and Oscar team, and their first release, “Did You Have to Bring That Up While I Was Eating?” has started them on a new ladder of fame.

They continued on to new heights as a comedy team making hundreds of television films and records. They have appeared on numerous network telecasts and have worked extensively with many syndicated television shows originating in Nashville. In addition, their comic stylings have graced numerous transcriptions and Armed Forces radio shows.

The future looks bright for this duo, as their schedule is filled with personal appearances throughout the world.



# Bobby Lord

BIRTHDAY ..... January 6  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Sanford, Florida  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1960

Bobby explains the proper technique to an attentive Jimmy Riddle.



Bobby Lord is one of the most versatile performers in Country Music. He is a leading Grand Ole Opry star, television personality, recording artist, song writer, author and astute business executive.

Bobby, a native of Sanford, Florida, attended the University of Tampa, and once planned to pursue a psychology career. When he was offered a television show at the age of nineteen he succumbed to the lure of show business. His first appearance on radio was on a network program. Although Bobby didn't enjoy the benefits of learning his profession from the ground up, he has heeded the advice of some of Country Music's wisest teachers, and his casual polish on stage is an indication of this.

Bobby's records have been effective extensions of his talent. His recording of "Hawkeye" was one of the top in the nation, and he has written such tunes as "When

the Snow Falls," "Fascination", and "Baby Where Can You Be."

Bobby Lord represents the new generation of Country Music performers. Bobby seemed to grow up with the electronic medium of television. Perhaps that's the reason Bobby has been so successful in front of the cameras.

During the off hours, Bobby lives with Mozelle, who was named Mrs. Tennessee in 1966, and their three children, Robbie, Sara and Cabot, in sunny Florida where Bobby can keep a close eye on his business interests.

Bobby relaxes best outdoors. "We are ardent campers. We have a trailer . . . travel a great deal during the summer. It's the best way I know to keep my sanity."



# Charlie Louvin

BIRTHDAY ..... July 7  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Rainsville, Alabama  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1955

Charlie ponders a question during the Artist/D.J. Tape Session at the Opry Birthday Celebration



“Super Charlie” . . . that’s what someone started calling this powerhouse entertainer several years ago. For a guy that doesn’t weigh more than 130 pounds, that’s a heavy title. But Charlie Louvin carries his nickname with the vigor of a volcano and the innocence of a little freckle-faced boy who just discovered Christmas.

Charlie and Ira Louvin, two farm boys from Alabama, first tasted the sweet fruits of applause when they toppled the competition in a talent contest in Chattanooga. They made their mark in the country field with religious songs. Charlie’s walls are decorated with plaques and awards and gold records for such beloved songs as “Weapon Of Prayer,” and “Family Who Prays.”

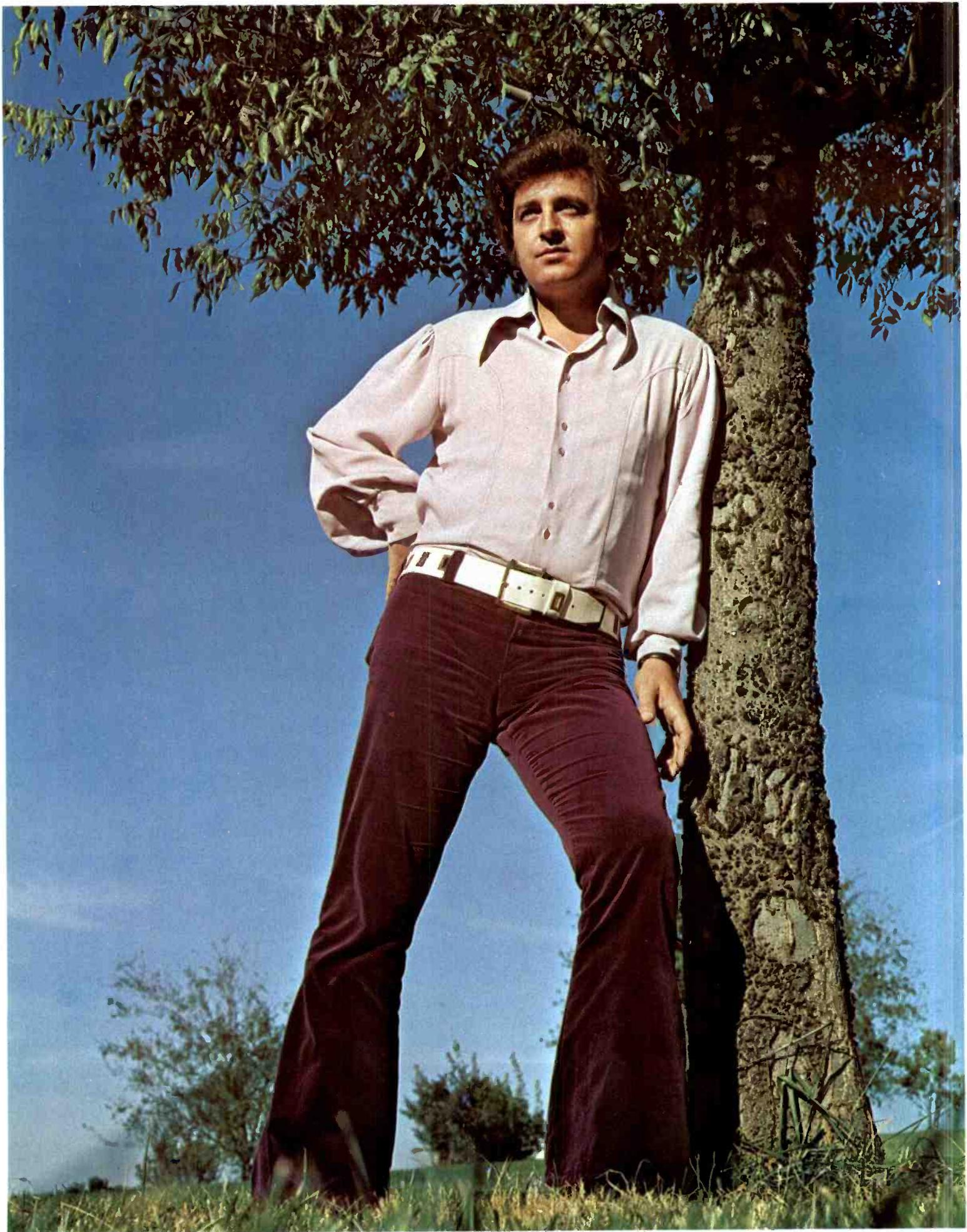
When Ira was killed in an accident in 1965, Charlie took strength from the years of Country Music training behind him to forge ahead as a solo performer. He soon

won thousands of new fans with his hard-driving, dynamic style.

The Louvin name has been inscribed on numerous music awards. The Brothers wrote over 400 songs and have won eighteen top song awards. Charlie can also lay claim to five BMI awards.

With three sons and two playful dogs, Charlie has a home of love and admiration to return to whenever he’s been on the road. When he’s home, the Louvin family occupies most of his time, whether it’s simply watching television or hunting or swimming together in the family pool.

Charlie’s boys like country music and it’s a good bet that another Louvin will be entering the field in the near future. If they do decide on a similar career, you’ll see one pretty proud papa.



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# Bob Luman

BIRTHDAY ..... April 15  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Nacogdoches, Texas  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1965



"Babe" Luman gets set to rip one in a game between the Nashville Pickers and Atlanta area All-Stars.

If his spark for performing had gone undeveloped, Bob Luman would probably be as equally successful in the ranks of major league baseball. At 17, he had been signed by the Pittsburgh Pirates and was on his way to their Florida training camp with the prospect of a lucrative major league contract.

With the lure of performing never far in Bob's background, the young singer entered—and won—an amateur talent contest after high school graduation. A series of performances soon earned him enough backing to win a spot on the Louisiana Hayride. The Hayride opened more doors, and soon young Luman was the star of a television show. His career really went into high gear when he recorded a song titled, "Let's Think About Living." A career in baseball was now officially relegated as a permanent chapter of Bob Luman's active past.

Joining the Grand Ole Opry as a regular in 1965, Bob Luman's appeal has since taken Country Music on an international whirl, with tours of England, Scotland, Germany, Ireland, and Japan. In 1971, Bob became the first major U. S. artist to bring live Country Music to Puerto Rico.

Raised a farmboy, Bob's acreage is now tucked comfortably near Old Hickory Lake in Hendersonville, Tennessee, just outside of Nashville.

It is home for Bob, his wife, Barbara, and the Lumans' small daughter, Melissa. Although "home" is still a word infrequently penned on Bob's hectic itinerary.

The handsome Texan, who describes himself as "happy-go-lucky," has the reputation among industry peers and fans alike as an "entertainer's entertainer."



# Loretta Lynn

BIRTHDAY ..... April 14  
BIRTHPLACE Van Lear, Kentucky  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1962



Three of Country Music's top duet teams perform at the Country Music Association Awards Show.

*Loretta Lynn* ENTERPRISES, Inc.  
P.O. BOX 12968 • 903 SIXTEENTH AVENUE SOUTH • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37212  
615/258-2021

Hi, there, friends and Opry fans----

I don't guess I'll ever forget the first time I appeared on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. That was as a guest, of course. Then after being a guest several times, I was made a member of the greatest show on earth, the Grand Ole Opry, and I'm proud to say I've been a member ever since.

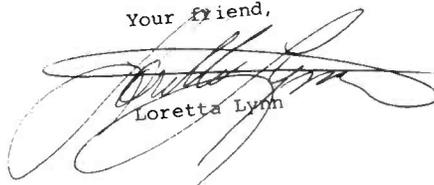
Even now, after working in all kinds of places all over the world, I get nervous every time I step on that stage. I can't help but think of all the country greats who worked there before me, and I love working with the ones on the Opry with me now.

There's something different and extra special about the people who come to the Opry to see me and all the others. I look out at the crowd and realize that many of them have come miles and miles just to see us, and the applause and acceptance from all the fans make you want to come back to perform on the Grand Ole Opry stage time after time.

I'm sure you all know that within the next year or two the Opry will be moved from the old Ryman Auditorium to the new Opryland, but no matter where it is situated, the Opry will always be the same. Anyway, the bricks from the old auditorium will be used to build a beautiful chapel at Opryland. I'm glad that the building that started out as a house of worship will be one again even if it does have to be moved brick by brick.

I imagine that most of you who read this have been to see the Opry. If so, please come back whenever you can. If not, you should make it a point to for we'd love to have you.

Your friend,

  
Loretta Lynn





# Barbara Mandrell

BIRTHDAY ..... December 25  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Houston, Texas  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1972

Barbara and friends, Ralph Emery, Connie Smith, Tom T. Hall and Jerry Clower.



## Barbara Mandrell Show

P.O. BOX 800  
HENDERSONVILLE, TENN. 37075  
July 10, 1972

Dear Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a few things about myself.

I have two younger sisters - Louise who is married and lives in Texas and Irlene who travels with me and plays drums in my band the Do-Rites. My father, Irby Mandrell, is my personal manager and also a member of my show. Even though my mother, Mary, is a fine musician, she no longer performs. However, she is an important part of our road show since she makes all of the costumes that I design for myself and Irlene. While we are performing, Mother can be found on our bus watching t.v. or playing cowboys and Indians with a very special little fellow - my son Matthew.

This brings me to a subject that I really enjoy talking about - the man in my life. I was married in 1967 to Kenneth Lee Dudney, a Navy carrier pilot. He is presently a professional pilot for the Governor's Staff in the State of Tennessee. He is on twenty-four hour call and seldom gets to see us perform even though he is one of our biggest fans.

My hobbies and interests are almost all shared with Ken and Matt since we try to spend all of our free time doing things together. We have a very large aquarium which brings us a lot of pleasure. Ken and I both enjoy spending the day together at Opryland U.S.A. since a day at Opryland is an outing that each of us really enjoys.

When I'm home I enjoy housekeeping and taking care of my family just like any other housewife. While I'm on the road I love making personal appearances and meeting as many country music fans as possible and I hope to meet you personally someday in the near future.

Love,

*Barbara Mandrell*

Barbara Mandrell





Sam and Kirk McGee



"The Fruit Jar Drinkers"

## KIRK McGEE

Country music has been the great love of Kirk McGee, ranking second in importance only to his family. All of my adult life, I have lived this music and the Grand Ole Opry.

David Kirkland McGee was born November 4, 1899 on a farm in Williamson County, Tennessee near Franklin.

At the early age of thirteen, I began learning to play the banjo.

In my twentieth year, I started out on my own and joined a medicine show which was traveling through Alabama.

In early 1925, I joined my brother Sam and that wonderful old man, Uncle Dave Macon, making personal appearances throughout the South. In May of the same year we recorded in New York City for Vocalion Record Company.

A band called "The Dixie Liners" was formed in 1927 and consisted of Kirk, Sam and fiddler-singer Arthur Smith. We became members of the Grand Ole Opry show. The Dixie Liners were the first act to be booked from WSM Radio Station for personal appearances. Their first act was in the small mining town of Clintwood, Virginia. For seven years, the Dixie Liners toured Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina; coming home only about every two weeks for a weekend visit with our families and to appear at the Grand Ole Opry.

When Arthur Smith left the group and went to the west coast, Sam and Kirk became known as "Sam and Kirk McGee, the Boys from Sunny Tennessee". "The Boys from Sunny Tennessee" traveled with Roy Acuff's tent show, Bill Monroe, Hank Williams, Grandpa Jones and Many other "greats" covering most of the forty-eight states, Canada and Nova Scotia.

One of the greatest honors which has been bestowed on Kirk and Sam was an invitation which came in 1968 from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C. to appear at the Folk Festival.

## SAM McGEE

I was born Sam Fleming McGee in 1894, the ninth of ten children of John and Mary Elizabeth Truett McGee, in the Peytonsville Community of Williamson County, Tennessee.

When I was about twelve years old I had been watching for sometime the colored folks play guitar with one finger and thumb. I figured if two fingers could pick that well, I would add another, so I began my own style finger pickin'.

In 1914 I married Elizabeth Pate and at that time was in the blacksmith business. I had heard Uncle Dave Macon play and admired him very much. A few years later he came to put on a program at the local auditorium and we went to hear it. I enjoyed it so much I asked Uncle Dave to spend the night in our home. He saw my Martin Guitar in the corner of the room and asked if I played. I told him "a little" and I'll never forget that I played the "Missouri Waltz". Uncle Dave asked me to join him for some personal appearances.

In 1925, three weeks after the beginning of the Grand Ole Opry, Kirk and I joined them.

I am the oldest man living still playing on the Grand Ole Opry in service and age and unless I'm out of town, making a personal appearance, I'm going to be there for our 11:00 P.M. show with my brother, Kirk.

I have a recent album called "Flat Top Pickin Sam McGee". My first recording label was Vocalion and I've recorded on about six others. Presently I am recording on M. B. A. Records.

I like music . . . any kind of music . . . as long as its played well. Sometimes when I am in the company of young folks I pick along with whatever type of music they like, gospel, rock, fast or slow.

I'm 78 years young and can still work on my farm, I was plowing my tobacco just before writing this story. I know I can't last forever but as long as I'm able and needed I'll continue to play. And Opryland U.S.A. is a mighty big step from the little Saturday Night Show we did 47 years ago.



# Bill Monroe

BIRTHDAY ..... September 13  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Rosine, Kentucky  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1939

Tennessee Congressman Richard Fulton shows Bill Monroe the proclamation appointing Bill "an Honorary Page in the House of Representatives."



Bill Monroe was searching for something different—a type of music “for country people”—when he first started playing Bluegrass Music 30 years ago.

In 1938 his style was different and few people had ever heard his type of music. Today his style is still different from any style played by anyone else, but it is now familiar to millions of Bluegrass fans all over the world.

Born the youngest of six boys and two girls of a family in Rosine, Kentucky, Bill and his brothers learned music from their mother, who played the fiddle, and their Uncle Pen Vanderver, who taught him the mandolin.

In 1927, Bill Monroe and two of his brothers (Charley and Birch) formed a band and played throughout several states. Three years later he began his professional radio career. In 1938 he left the group to form his own band, and originated his own Bluegrass style. A year later he joined the Grand Ole Opry.

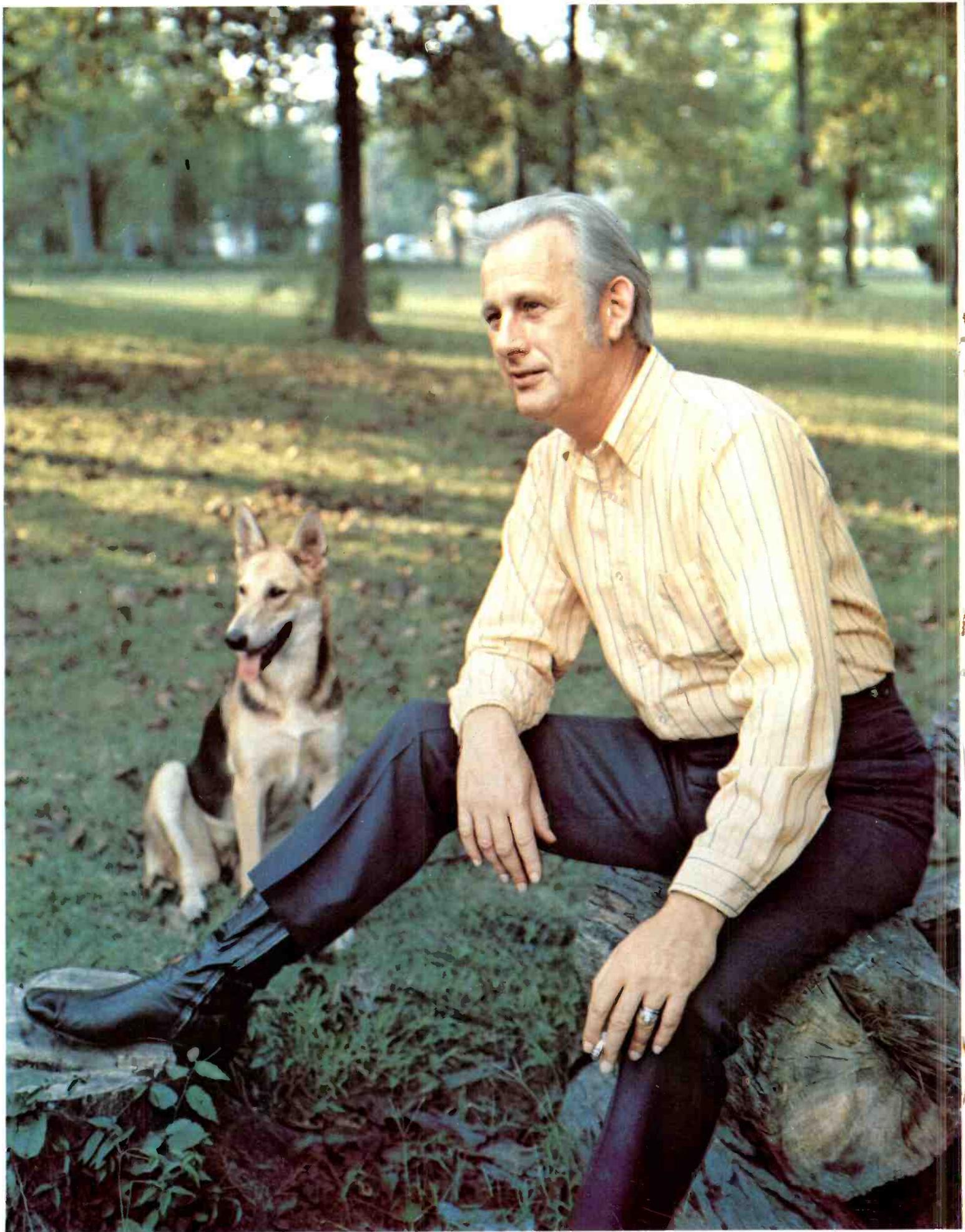
Bill, who claims to be a direct descendant of James Monroe, fifth President of the United States, began life as a choir boy, and credits this for his ability to hit the high notes.

Bill and the Blue Grass Boys have accumulated quite a few recorded hits. Their records have sold over 25,000,000 copies. Few can match this.

Numerous top Country Music artists have “gone to school” under Bill Monroe, including Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs and Mac Wiseman.

Within the last few years Monroe’s style of Bluegrass Music has experienced phenomenal growth throughout the United States. He and the Blue Grass Boys have been in great demand on major college campuses across the country, in addition to the numerous Bluegrass Festivals that dot the summer months.

Bill lives on a 280 acre farm in Goodlettsville, Tennessee. And he works it the old time way. Even today he does his farming with a horse and a plow.





# George Morgan

BIRTHDAY ..... June 28  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Waverly, Tenn.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1948



George Morgan backstage with Anne Cooper, checks the Opry schedule.

It is the opinion of dozens of top people in the Nashville Music Industry that George Morgan has the finest singing voice in Country Music. They point out that he can sing any type of song. But throughout an impressive career George Morgan has chosen to cling to the music he loves. He grew up with a Tennessee heritage and millions of Country Music fans are grateful.

Born in Waverly, Tennessee, his family migrated northward when he was three years old. Music was always a part of his life, and influenced George in learning to play the guitar and harmonica. The voice came naturally. He was writing songs by the time he was nine years old. He put all of his talents to good advantage at a New Year's Eve party at an Ohio restaurant when he was 19, and was rewarded by the grand sum of five-dollars. Shortly after that he went to work at WWST in Wooster, Ohio, and began the climb which would bring him back to Tennessee and the Grand Ole Opry.

It's a pretty well known story now that George couldn't find the Opry House when the big night came

in 1948. He asked directions and was told he was standing right behind it. The man who supplied the information was a pretty fair country singer named Eddy Arnold.

Like every other great talent, George Morgan is inescapably linked to one unforgettable hit song. That song, of course, is the brilliant standard, "Candy Kissess." It skyrocketed George to national fame and he still earns regular royalties as its author. It also won him a gold record. Since then he has recorded many hits and received numerous awards.

George is a devoted family man. He and his wife, Anna, are the parents of five children: Candy, Bethany, Liana, Marty and Loretta. They live in Madison, Tennessee, a suburb of Nashville.

George's hobbies include song writing, which is really more than a hobby since he has some 30 tunes published, hunting, fishing and softball.







# Jimmy Newman

BIRTHDAY ..... August 29  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Big Mamou, La.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1956



Jimmy's Cajun call, A-y-e-e-e identifies his robust song style.

When Jimmy Newman sings of the bayou country, he knows whereof he sings. He was born in Louisiana, right in the heart of the Cajun land. When he walks on the Opry stage, his famous Cajun yell A-Y-E-E-E gears up the audience for the robust song style that follows his grand entrance.

Jimmy's first job in music was at Big Mamou, Louisiana in 1946. Just a youngster at the time, he got his first real break through Dot Records, which took him to the Louisiana Hayride in 1954. Two years later he was a regular member of the Grand Ole Opry.

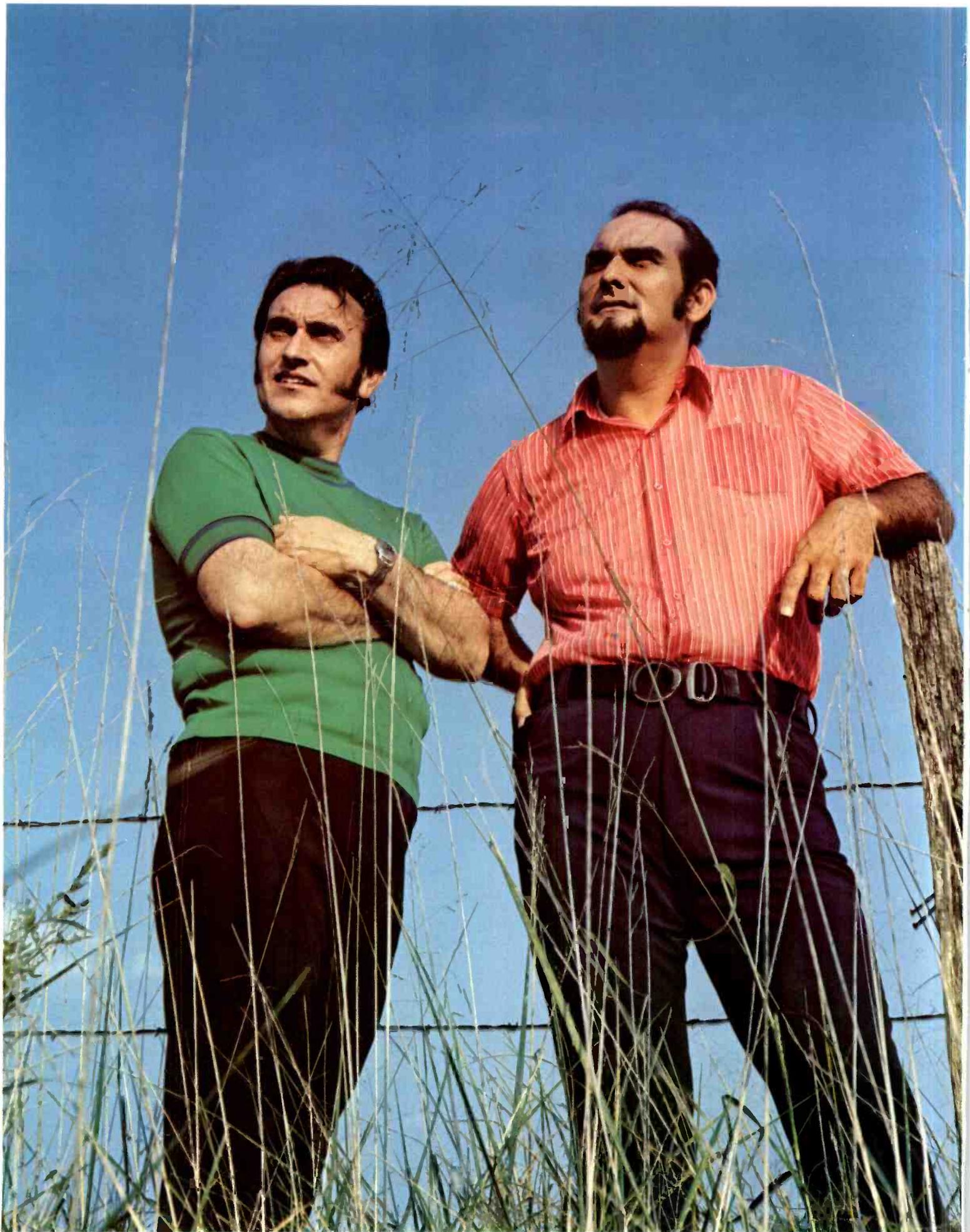
Jimmy's most popular record, of course, has been "A Fallen Star," which skyrocketed to the top of the charts. Other hits include "Cry, Cry Darling," "You're Making a Fool Out of Me," and "Just One More Night With You." He has written scores of songs . . . "blue songs when I'm in a good mood and sad songs when I'm happy."

Jimmy is a man with a wealth of Cajun stories and added them to his act several years ago. He said he just had the urge to tell them, just as he had the urge to take up music as a career. Fortunately, Jimmy has followed many of his urges.

Jimmy and his wife, Mae, were married in 1948 in Cajun country. They have one son, Gary. The Newmans now live in Nashville, but Mae still cooks some very fine Cajun dinners, and Jimmy couldn't be happier.

When Jimmy is not busy with personal appearances, he frequents the golf course, in addition to doing a little hunting and fishing.





# The Osborne Brothers

SONNY OSBORNE

BIRTHDAY ..... October 29

BIRTHPLACE ..... Hyden, Kentucky

JOINED OPRY ..... 1964

BOBBY OSBORNE

BIRTHDAY ..... December 7

BIRTHPLACE ..... Hyden, Kentucky

JOINED OPRY ..... 1964

## *The Osborne Brothers* *Grand Ole Opry* DECCA RECORDS

Dear Fans and Friends:

Very seldom do we ever get the chance to write about ourselves, but at this time, the Grand Ole Opry has granted us the opportunity as regular members to write to you personally.

One of the greatest thrills of our entire career, was when we were introduced as regular members of the Grand Ole Opry Saturday night August 8th, 1964. It was something both of us had always dreamed about. When we're kids, we all dream a lot, but this was a dream that came true for us. It didn't just happen. We had help from the Wilburn Brothers. It was kinda like a chain reaction type thing—"Decca Records, The Grand Ole Opry, Wilburn Brothers T. V. Show, etc. Of course you all "Our Fans and Friends" that have bought Osborne Brothers records, come to see us on our personal appearances, become familiar with us by coming to Nashville to visit the Grand Ole Opry.

*Best Wishes*  
*Bobby and Sonny*  
*The Osborne Brothers*

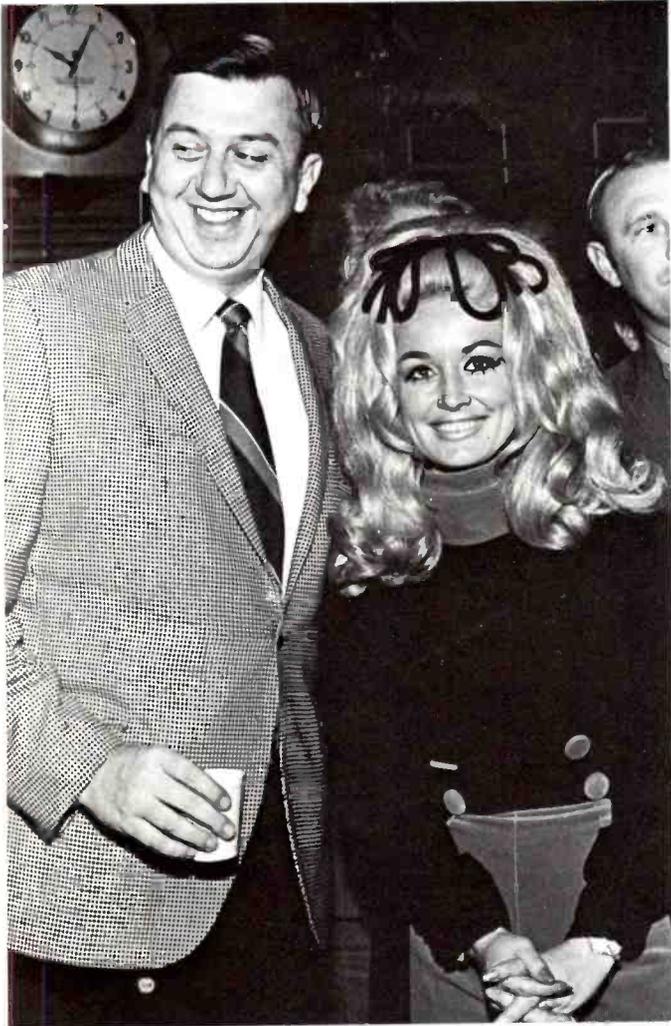


The Osborne Brothers team-up on a Blue Grass standard to the delight of the Opry audience.



# Dolly Parton

BIRTHDAY ..... January 19  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Sevierville, Tenn.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1969



Opry announcer, Hal Durham, and Dolly during a break in the Opry broadcast.

Her family says that Dolly Parton learned to sing as soon as she learned to talk. For Dolly was born into a family whose musical heritage goes back to maternal and paternal grandparents. Even before Dolly was old enough to go to school, she sang in country churches and schools, and her early attendance at revival meetings and rural social events provided a wellspring of long-remembered experiences evident in many of her compositions.

Dolly's childhood was spent in the hills of East Tennessee. But within hours of her 1964 high school gradua-

tion, Dolly boarded a bus bound for Nashville. Those in-between years had made certain facts quite clear: not only did she wish to pursue a career in country music, but Dolly clearly had all the ability and talent that she would need.

Dolly's first several years in Nashville were filled with hard work, and not too much financial reward. Then Porter Wagoner invited her to join his hugely successful television and roadshow operations. Now she would travel all over the country as a special featured star, and also would become part of the most successful syndicated country music television show in history.

The final result was her movement into the ranks of the superstars as well. In 1967, she began recording for RCA Records, and from the very beginning, she has had one hit single and album after another. She also is ranked as one of Nashville's most brilliant songwriters. She records many of her tunes herself, songs like "In The Good Old Days," "Joshua," and "Coat Of Many Colors."

Dolly has met with incredible success in yet another area as well, as half of the Porter Wagoner-Dolly Parton duet team. From their first release as a duet, their records have been fabulously popular.

And yet, in spite of her newly acquired fame, Dolly has never forgotten her rural heritage. She established the Dolly Parton Scholarship Foundation for deserving students of her hometown area. The fund, in addition to providing scholarships, will help procure instruments and equipment for the Sevier County High School Band, of which Dolly was a member during her high school days.



# Minnie Pearl

BIRTHDAY ..... October 25  
BIRTHPLACE Centerville, Tennessee  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1940

Minnie listens attentively as her next-door-neighbor, Governor Winfield Dunn, says "How-dee" to the Opry fans.



HOWDEE!

And a special greeting to all the readers of the new Grand Ole Opry History-Picture Book.

Things are fine at Grinder's Switch these days. Brother's been looking for a job and he's been real lucky—he ain't found one!

Uncle Nabob ain't drinkin' anymore—'course he ain't drinkin' any less. And my feller, Hezzie, comes over to see me real often . . . once or twice a month!!

Come to see our new "show-off place"—Opryland U.S.A. You and your entire family will love it.

Guess what one of the railroad stations is called there?? Grinder's Switch, of course.

Much love to you *all!*

*Minnie Pearl*



# Stu Phillips

BIRTHDAY ..... January 19  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Calgary, Canada  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1967

Stu Phillips and his close friend, Ernest Tubb.



When his name was added to the official roster of the Grand Ole Opry in 1967, Canadian born Stu Phillips achieved a lifelong ambition. His earliest memories of music are of tuning a crystal set in Calgary to the sounds of the Grand Ole Opry in faraway Nashville, and what he heard set his career and his goal.

Young Stu played guitar and sang, and had his own country band during his school days. Although he was self-taught, he was good enough on the guitar at 13 to enter a contest and win first prize. It was one of his first appearances on radio. Stu listened to Don Gibson, George Jones, Hank Williams, and Chet Atkins, and polished his singing and playing style. Radio looked like the most promising entre to show business, so Stu got a job as an announcer. This started him on a career which took him through just about every job in broadcasting.

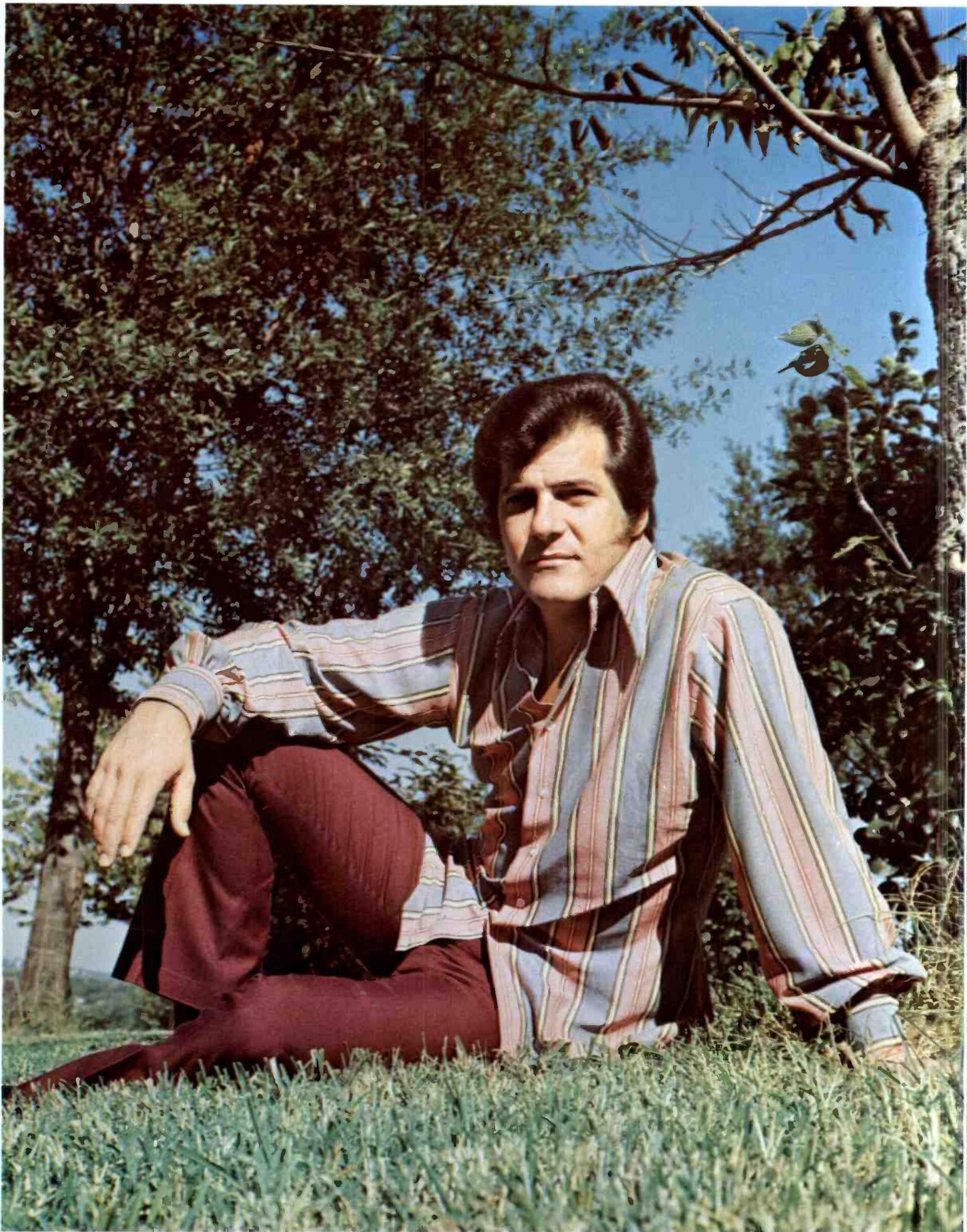
So when the Canadian came to Nashville, he had a healthy helping of network experience already under

his belt. Stu was a star on the CBC Network for four-and-a-half years, starting with a radio show as the "Travelling Balladeer," and climaxing his broadcast career as the star of "The Red River Jamboree" series.

One of the most important points in his life occurred when Stu signed with RCA Records and was lucky to get Chet Atkins as his producer. Chet also encouraged Stu to invest more time in songwriting.

Stu is married to a lovely Lithuanian girl named Aldona, whom he met when he was ushering for a radio show in Edmonton. They have two children and live in Brentwood, Tennessee, a suburb of Nashville.

Stu likes gardening, and looks forward to coming home and puttering around the house. When harvest time comes, the memory of the harvests in the wheat fields around Calgary is too much, so Stu often times goes to a friend's farm near Brentwood and helps shuck corn.



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# Ray Pillow

BIRTHDAY ..... July 4  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Lynchburg, Virginia  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1966



The sounds come smooth and easy for talented Ray Pillow

Ray Pillow is a study in contrasts. He's a country singer born in the city, and now lives on a one-hundred acre ranch in suburban Nashville. The picture of excitement and action on stage, but a man devoted to the quiet, good life after the spotlights go out.

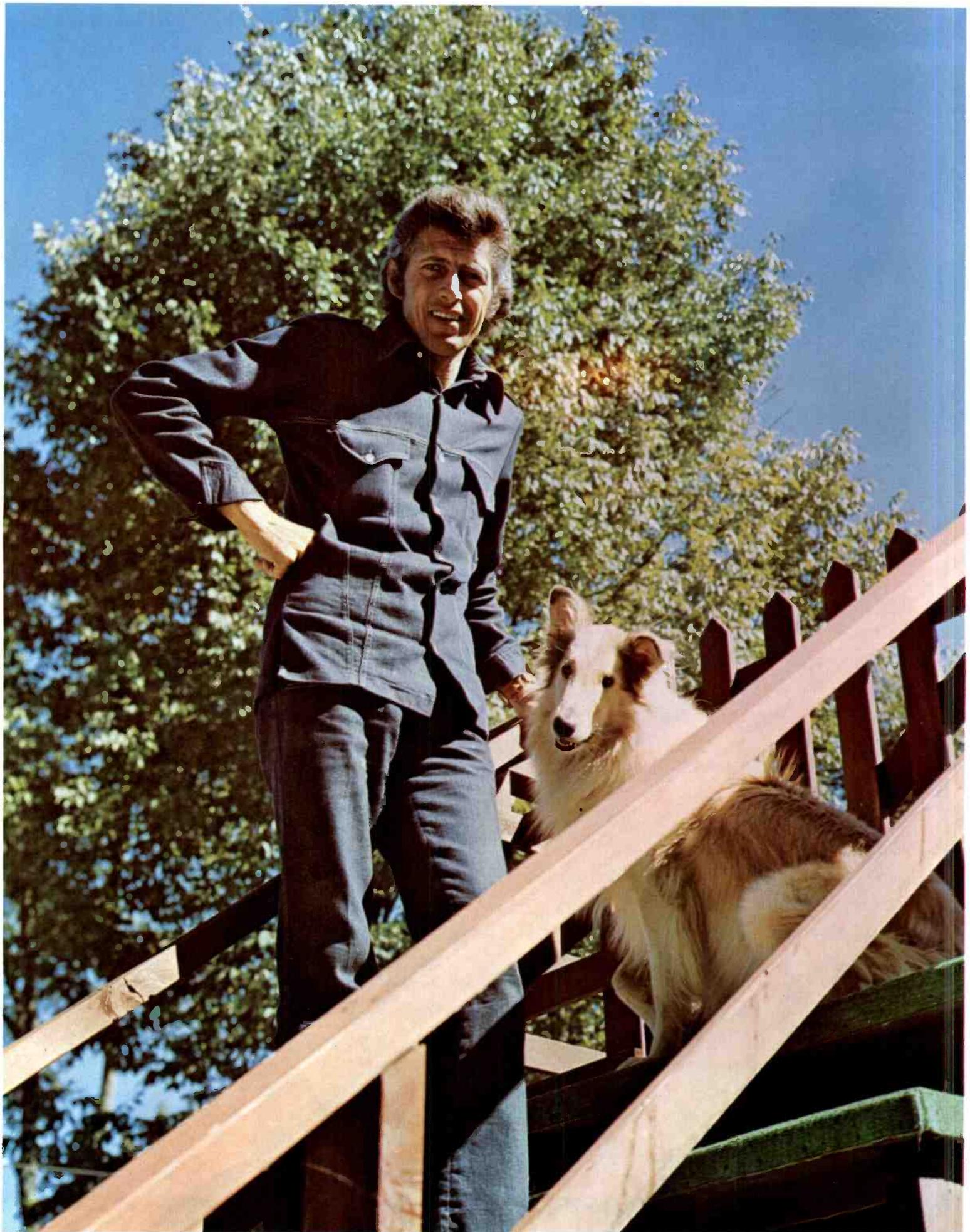
Ray is a good example of the so-called "new wave" of contemporary country artists. He is articulate, well in tune with current tastes, and is a college graduate. He attended Lynchburg College in his hometown and graduated with a degree in Business Administration.

In 1962 Ray entered the Pet Milk Talent Contest conducted by WSM. He was the local winner at Appomattox, Virginia and finished as runner-up to the national winner. This experience gave him enough encouragement to tackle Country Music as a full-time

professional. Since that time he has parlayed his natural talent, good looks, and winning personality into full-fledged stardom.

In 1966 he was voted "Most Programmed New Artist" by the National D.J. Polls as well as winning Billboard's Most Promising Male Artist Award and Cash Box's "Most Promising New Artist" prize. A leading recording artist, Ray performed on all the nationally syndicated television shows and appeared in a movie.

Ray's quick-witted charm, perfect timing and lively showmanship on stage, insure him an enthusiastic reception everywhere he goes. Maybe that's why the peace and quite of the country life appeals so much to him. Especially when he can spend it with his wife JoAnne and their three children.



# Del Reeves

BIRTHDAY ..... July 14  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Sparta, North Carolina  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1966

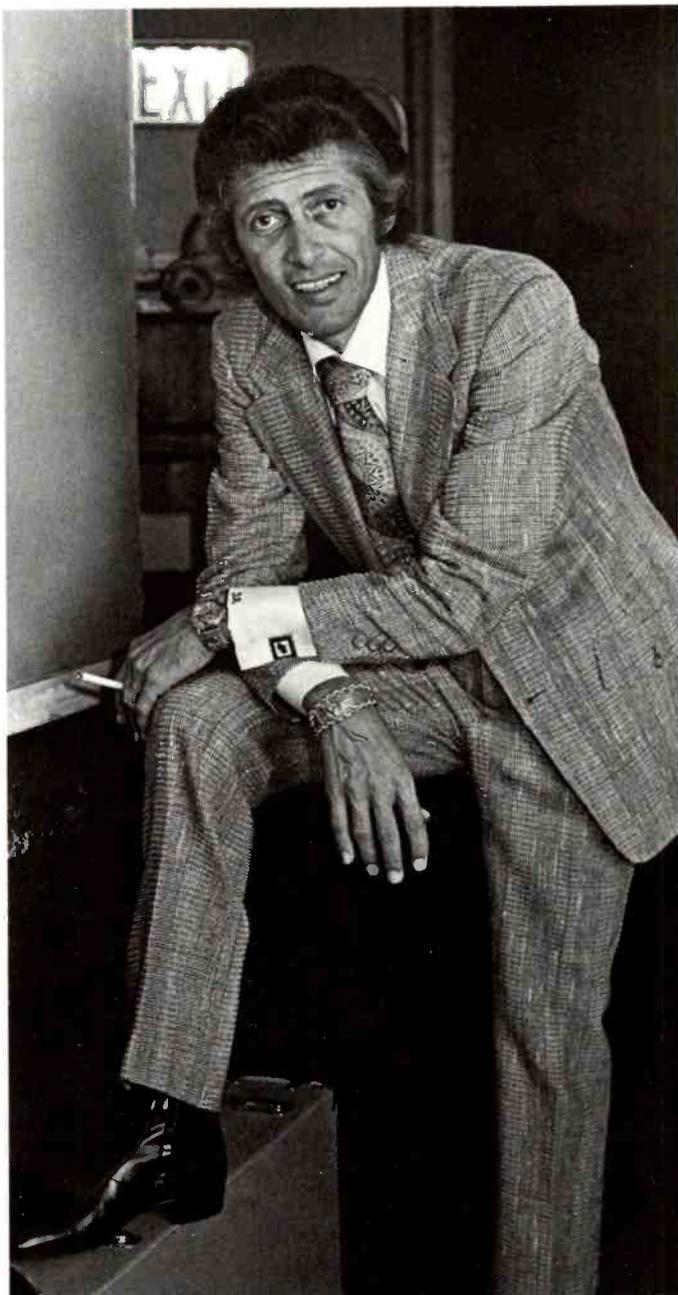
Sometimes it seems as if there are a whole bunch of people named Del Reeves. There's Del Reeves the recording star for United Artists with a list of hits that is almost unbelievable. Then there's Del Reeves the television personality. In addition to making numerous network guest appearances, Del is the star of his own weekly variety show, the "Del Reeves' Country Carnival," which is seen in major markets throughout the United States on 85 stations every week.

There's still another Del Reeves—the stage performer. When Del plays a show he is a master entertainer with a style that has led many reviewers to call him the Dean Martin of country music. And there's Del Reeves the motion picture actor. With major roles in eight recent pictures including, "Forty Acre Feud," "Whiskey's Renegades," and "Second Fiddle To A Steel Guitar."

Last, there is Del Reeves the family man. As a small boy Del had two ambitions: to go into show business and to marry "the prettiest girl in town." By the time he was 12 Del was already a radio performer. Then, after a year of college and four years in the Air Force he became a regular on the Chester Smith television program in California. This led to his own show on which he was starred for four years before coming to Nashville.

Del found his "prettiest girl" and married her at a country music show. With both childhood ambitions realized, he now lives with his wife Ellen and their three lovely girls on the outskirts of Nashville.

There are many different Del Reeves, but the public clamor for this fantastic artist is growing so rapidly that there is never enough of him to go around.



Del Reeves relaxes backstage following his Opry appearance.



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# Tex Ritter

BIRTHDAY ..... January 12  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Murvaul, Texas  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1965

Few names have sparked the imagination or permeated the entertainment industry as has that of Tex Ritter. His career spanning every major entertainment medium.

Born in Murvaul, Panola County, Texas, Tex learned the rawhide arts of ranching, riding, and roping from practical experience. Influenced by his father's knowledge of the cowboy and the old time community singings, Tex Ritter was destined to sing the story of the American cowboy. In fact, Tex Ritter has become the embodiment of the American West and the singing cowboy. Few personalities in the history of the American stage have attained the heights that Tex enjoys.

Early in his career, Tex moved to New York City. Signing a recording contract first with Columbia, then Decca, Tex brought the West to the East, and took the New York entertainment scene by storm. Immediately Tex starred in his own radio shows which included: "The Lone Star Rangers," "Tex Ritter's Campfire," and "Cowboy Tom's Roundup."

After starring in the Broadway production, "Green Grow The Lilacs," which was to become later the hit production, "Oklahoma," Tex moved to Hollywood. During his twelve years as a leading screen hero, he starred in seventy-eight films.

In 1941 when Capitol Records was created, Tex was one of the first to sign. He has appeared on numerous television shows and one of his most thrilling experiences came when he sang the title song and background music to the Academy Award winning movie "High Noon."

Tex is married to one of his film leading ladies, the former Dorothy Fay. They have two sons. Like the western cowboy which he has made so famous, Tex Ritter has become a living legend in his own time.

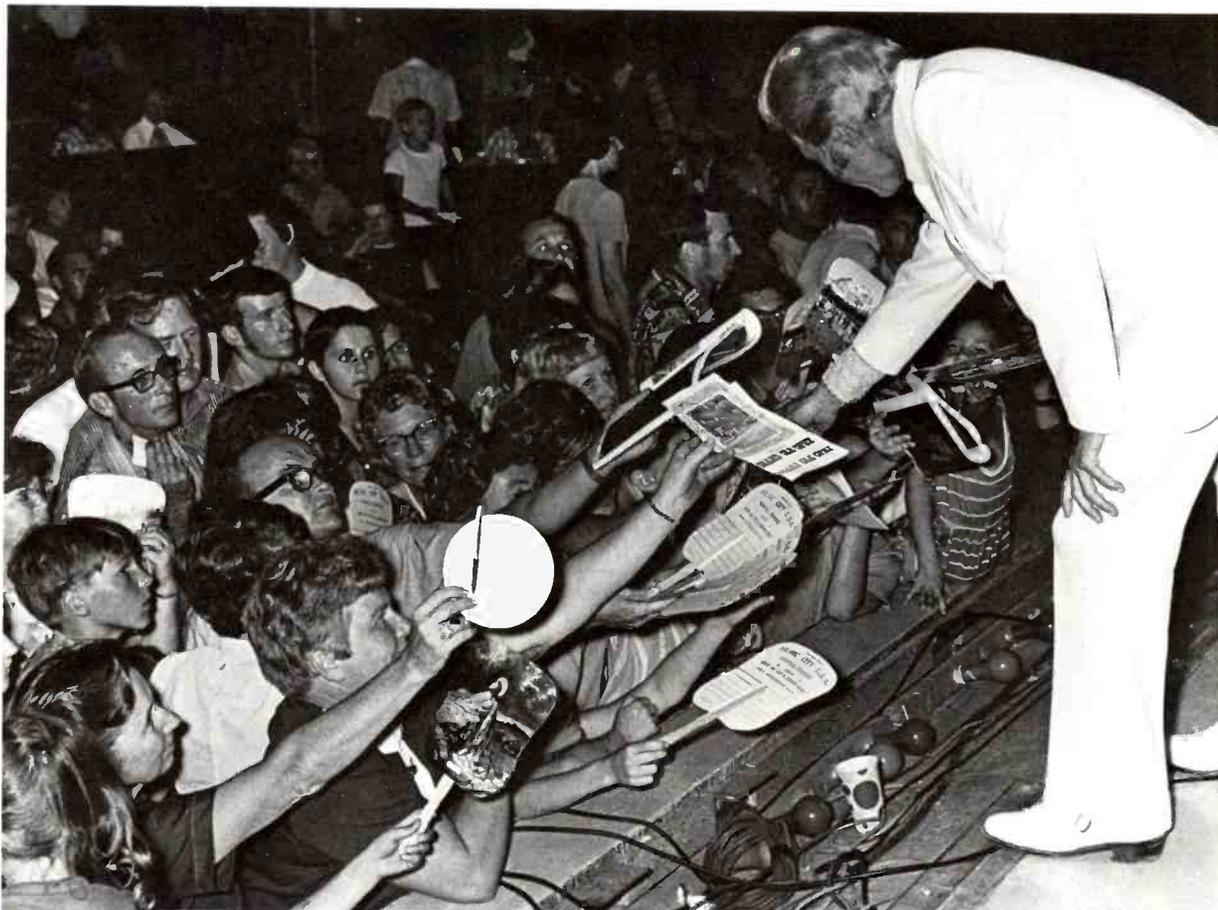


The friendly smile, the deep voice and the country philosophy all come through when Tex addresses his fans.



# Marty Robbins

BIRTHDAY ..... Sept. 26  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Glendale, Ariz.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1953



Marty Robbins signs autographs in front of the Opry stage for enthusiastic fans.

Many performers try their hand at a variety of styles—ballads, blues, Country and Western, Hawaiian, Spanish, and gospel—but few score as consistently in all categories as does Marty Robbins.

Marty was born in Arizona, not far from the town of Glendale. His family moved to Phoenix when he was twelve years old. At nineteen, he enlisted in the Navy and taught himself to play the guitar. He also began to compose songs.

Marty made his singing debut at a Phoenix nightclub performing with a friend's band. Soon Marty had his own radio show and a television program, "Western Caravan." His versatile style and growing popularity drew him to Nashville and the Grand Ole Opry in 1953.

In 1957, his first album, "The Song of Robbins," introduced the young singer whose single, "A White Sports

Coat," was soon to bring him his first Gold Record and national fame. Since then its been nothing but hits.

In addition to his fantastic success on records, the handsome and likeable artist has proved his universal appeal with highly acclaimed personal appearances at Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and Las Vegas.

Marty, who has appeared in several movies, just finished filming "Country Music" starring Marty Robbins and Sammy Jackson. He has recently signed a motion picture contract and plans to make at least two pictures a year.

Marty, his wife Marizona, and their two children live near Nashville. As almost everyone knows, this versatile entertainer is known as a keen competitor on the race track contending for the checkered flag in his Grand National Dodge Charger.



# Earl Scruggs

BIRTHDAY ..... January 6  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Flint Hill, N. C.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1944



Dennis Weaver, star of television's "McCloud" series, gets an autograph from his favorite banjo picker, Earl Scruggs.

Earl Scruggs gave Country Music a new sound when he decided to pick the strings of a banjo, instead of strumming chords. He is the unchallenged virtuoso of the five-string banjo. He did not invent it. Joel Sweeney did, in 1831. But Earl did invent a new style of picking, using three fingers in a new method which added versatility and brilliance to the instrument.

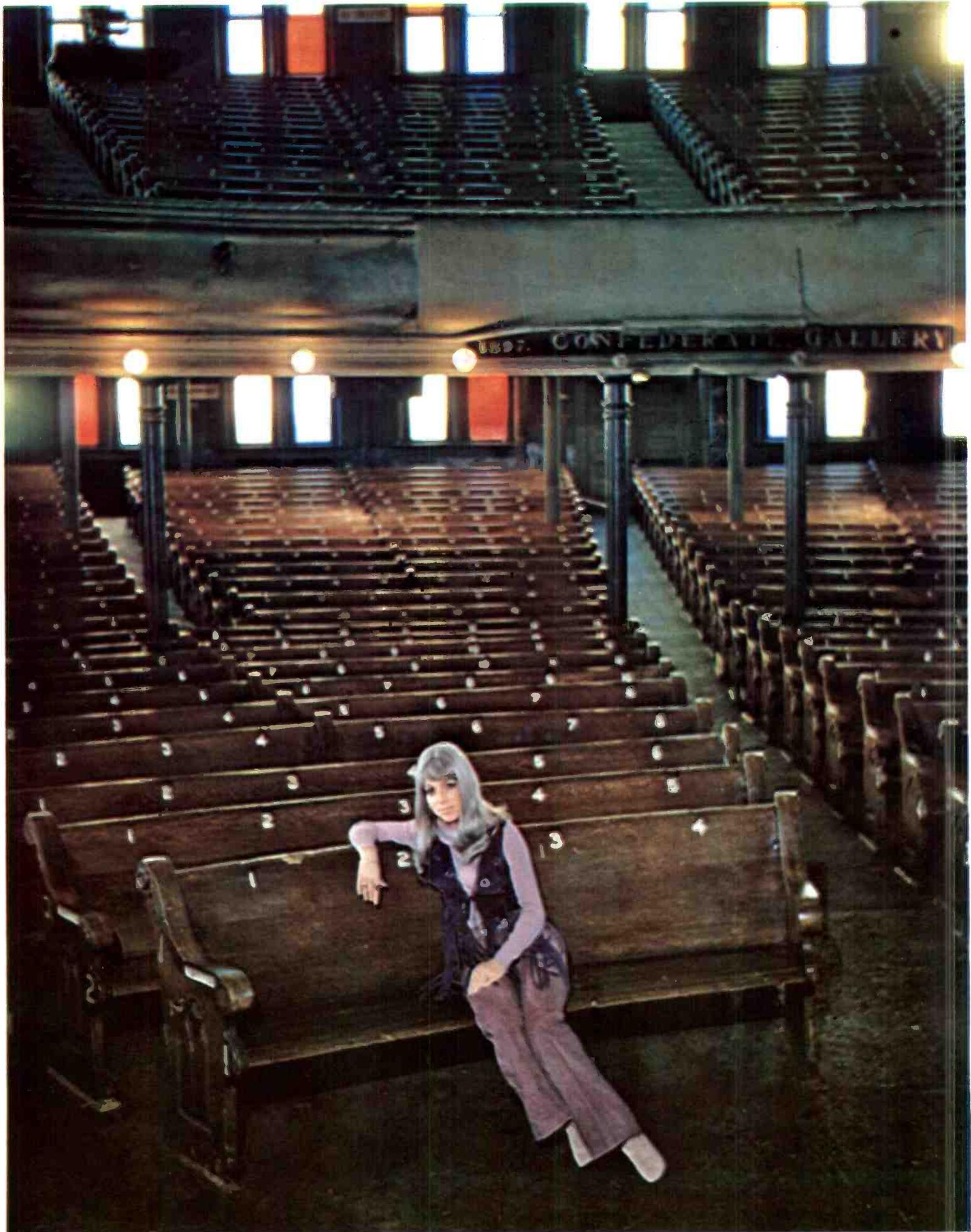
Young Scruggs learned to play the banjo before the age of six. He was born into a family of six children that loved bluegrass music. Earl had developed his famous style of picking by the age of ten.

Scruggs' first professional appearance was on a radio station in Spartanburg, South Carolina. In 1944, Scruggs introduced his new style of picking on the Grand Ole Opry. Three years later, he teamed up with a jovial guitar picker by the name of Lester Flatt. The two became one of the most famous acts in Country Music.

Earl now appears with his two sons, Gary and Randy, and the "Earl Scruggs Review." They have performed in concert at major colleges across the country, as well as, many television shows. Earl performed to the largest audience of his career in front of the Washington Monument at our nation's capitol. The crowd was estimated at half-a-million people. Earl is probably most famous for his first banjo instrumental, "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," which was used throughout the Bonnie and Clyde motion picture.

This versatile performer is also the author of a book: "Earl Scruggs and the Five String Banjo." Now in its second printing, orders have been filled in all 50 states, a number of foreign countries including Moscow, Russia.

Scruggs lives with his wife, Louise, and three sons in Madison, Tennessee near Nashville, Mrs. Scruggs also manages her family's busy career.



# Jeannie Seely

BIRTHDAY ..... July 6  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Townville, Pa.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1967

## Jeannie Seely

GRAND OLE OPRY Nashville, Tennessee 37219

Dear Grand Ole Opry Fan,

May I say that it is a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to visit with you through our new Grand Ole Opry book, and to talk about the personal side of Jeannie Seely.

One of the questions I am asked most often is what I enjoy doing and what I am interested in during my free time. Probably my favorite pastime is reading. I'll read almost anything handy, but I tend to lean toward historical novels or fictional novels which are based on events from the past. Of course all of my friends tease me at times because while I'm involved in a book, it's like I really know all the people in it and I worry about their problems as though they were my own!

Another hobby of mine is what I call "snooping". This is where I look through antique and junk shops for old and curious things. You can't really consider me an antique collector because I just buy things that are interesting to me, valuable or not. A few of my prizes include an antique infant sleigh, a rocking horse, and a real two-seat open carriage. My only problem with the carriage is that I don't have a horse trained to pull it! I do have a palomino quarter horse that I am very proud of and I try to spend as much time with him as possible.

As you have no doubt noticed from the picture, one of favorite places to spend some quiet moments is the Grand Ole Opry House when there is no one there except me . . . and the echo of the applause, excitement, love, laughter and tears that have filled the building every week for so many years, and will again this Saturday night. Will we see you there? I hope so, and thank you for letting me share a part of my life with you.

Warmest regards,

Jeannie Seely  
Decca Records

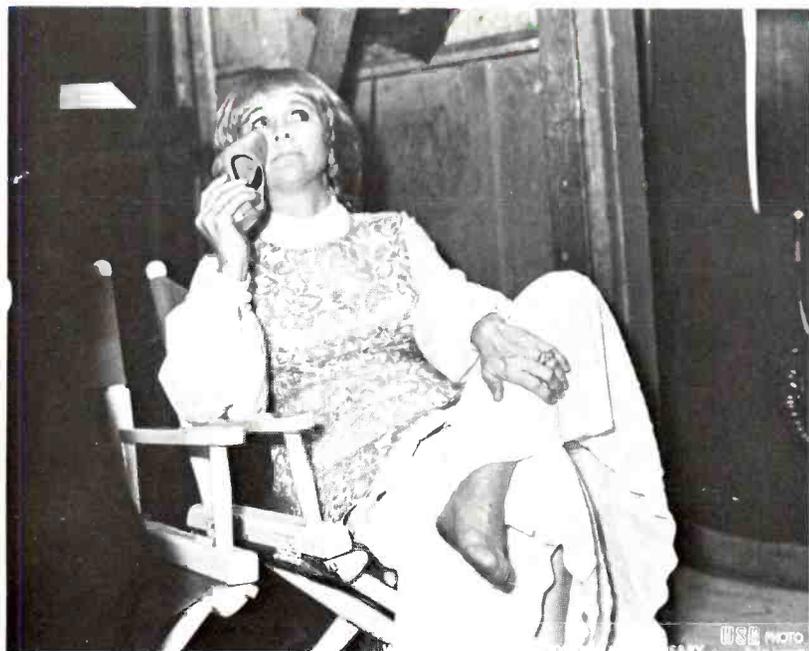


Jeannie Seely adds the finishing touches before going on stage.



# Jean Shepard

BIRTHDAY ..... November 21  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Paul's Valley, Okla.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1955



Jean Shepard gives her feet a little breather backstage at the Opry.

If you were allowed only two words to describe pretty, talented Jean Shepard, you'd have to say "consistently great." It describes Jean Shepard the performer and Jean the person.

Since 1952 she has been one of the most consistently successful artists on Capitol Records. Show business insiders will tell you its almost unheard of for a singer to stay with one label that long in today's volatile industry. You've got to be good to continue selling like that.

Since 1955 Jean has been one of the mainstays of the Grand Ole Opry. She's the kind of solid, gifted entertainer that the Opry and the industry are most proud of.

Jean was born in Paul's Valley, Oklahoma and she grew up in Visalia, California. She was one of 11 children, nine boys and two girls. Western swing was the popular sound on the West Coast as Jean was growing up. So, it was not surprising that she was the ringleader in the formation of an all girl western swing band called "The Melody Ranch Girls."

The girls were good, and soon they were playing for dances and radio programs. One night they found themselves on the same bill with an established star, Hank Thompson. Hank liked Jean's voice so well that he introduced her to some of the executives of his recording label, Capitol.

Her fame grew and in 1955 she moved to Nashville and joined the Opry. Jean was married for four years to another Opry Star, Hawkshaw Hawkins. They had two sons. Hawkshaw died in 1963 in a plane crash that also took the lives of Cowboy Copas and Patsy Cline.

Jean is re-married to Benny Birchfield, a singer, musician and prominent member of Nashville's music community.

Jean has always traveled extensively—as do most of the top country music names—but she saves time to spend with her family. Her hobbies include outdoor pleasures. For example, she is an excellent horsewoman and has also trained bird-dogs.



# Ralph Sloan Dancers



"The Tennessee Travelers" execute one of their intricate dance routines at the Opry House.

Ralph Sloan and his Tennessee Travelers have danced as a team since 1951. Ralph, who broke into the business as a doorman at a square dance in the early 1940's, now farms 700 acres of land in Wilson County in between his Opry appearances, which occur every other week.

Over the years this square dance team has performed at every sort of place, from roller skating rinks to network shows. He originally had 17 performers—16 dancers and a caller. The group has changed over the years, with some getting married, others devoting full-time to other business and the like. Now only about 6 or 8 appear with Ralph on the Opry, solely because of space limitations.

Ralph first became interested in country music when he got a ukulele for Christmas at the age of five. He recalls walking two miles to a home that had a radio to listen to Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb.

"The Tennessee Travelers," as the Sloan dancers are billed, have walked (or danced) away with first-place trophies in almost every Country Fair competition they have entered. Each member has to be in superb physical condition to maintain the fast pace of the dance and the rehearsals needed to perfect the complex choreography. The Dancers have never missed a scheduled appearance on the Opry.



# Connie Smith

BIRTHDAY ..... August 14  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Elkhart, Ind.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1971

Connie smiles at the audience during joke session with Hank Locklin.



The dictionary tells you that an artist is: "A person who is skilled in any of the fine arts, such as sculpture, music or literature; a person who performs with skill and taste. Either of these definitions apply beautifully to Connie Smith, as a skilled vocalist and tasteful performer.

When Connie talks to you, buzzing along, flitting from one topic to another, keeping you captivated with her smile, you get the feeling that she is pouring out to you right from the heart. The feeling is even stronger when you hear her sing.

Country Music has been a part of Connie Smith since the day she was born. "Daddy always listened to the Grand Ole Opry whenever we had a radio," she says. "When I was five years old I was saying I was going to be on the Grand Ole Opry someday."

Connie didn't think her dream could ever be fulfilled, but she kept singing with her brothers and sisters in church revivals, homecomings and other community events. In 1963 she won a talent contest, which led to appearances on local radio and television.

Grand Ole Opry Star, Bill Anderson heard her singing at a park near Columbus, Ohio, and asked her to come to Nashville to audition some new songs he had written for female vocalists. RCA executive, Chet Atkins, heard her tape, and immediately signed her to a long-term recording contract. Connie Smith literally became an overnight star when her first recording, "Once A Day," became the number one country song in America.

From that day of discovery, Connie has been a big hit. With her two young sons, Connie lives in Madison, Tennessee and spends a great deal of her free time involved in numerous religious activities.



# Hank Snow

BIRTHDAY ..... May 9  
BIRTHPLACE Liverpool, Nova Scotia, Can.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1950



RCA VICTOR  
RECORDS

## Hank Snow

POST OFFICE BOX 1084  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37202

WSM GRAND OLE OPRY  
AND TV

Howdy Friends.

This is your old friend Hank Snow. Thought I would drop by for a little chat with you in this our big new Grand Ole Opry souvenir picture book. It is always a great pleasure to visit with our many friends around the world who love and continue to support good Old Country Music, and who have been so loyal to us over the years.

As for myself I am still going strong as ever. And at this writing I am in my 23rd year with our world famous Grand Ole Opry, and celebrating 35 exclusive years of recording for RCA. This is one of the best times I can think of to say a very special and heartfelt thanks to all of you in so many parts of the world for the great contribution you have made to me in helping to make this possible, I shall be forever grateful.

Besides my regular recording schedules for R.C.A. Victor, my continued support and shows on the Grand Ole Opry, I still do many personal appearance dates around the world, as well as many radio and T.V. Shows, and love every minute of it believe me.

I cannot tell you how many people have asked me and continue to ask me the same question, do you think of retiring anyways soon? The word retire to me has but one meaning, GIVE UP THE THINGS YOU LOVE and I have always been a firm believer in the fact that only the idle die young. No I shall never retire from my work as long as I can bring you a little happiness as an artist, and I shall never cease striving to do just that.

A little about my private or home life away from the hustle and bustle of show business. I am actually a home man and love it. My wife, Mrs. Hank, as she is better known is still one of my greatest boosters as well as one of my greatest critics, and has been a great asset to me over the long years of my career. My son Jimmie, our only child, has been in the ministry for the past 14 years and pastors his own church which is about a mile from our homes here in Madison Tenn.

As for my hobbies, I love the outdoor life and love to hunt, fish, or do anything outside with Mother Nature. I also like to work with Color Photography, and one of my top hobbies is experimenting with sound. I have recently built new recording studios on one part of my home and have installed the most up to date and modern equipment. I love to strive for new sounds and gimmicks. Apart from being a hobby, it is a great help to me recording work for RCA Victor.

In any event you can rest assured that I love my work as an artist too much to ever think of retiring or letting you the public, who have done so much for the Snows, down. As for the Grand Ole Opry, I shall be with them as long as they want to keep me around.

Now in closing, again I want to extend to you all my most heartfelt thanks for your great support over the years and I shall continue to do my level best for you, be it on the Grand Ole Opry, R.C.A. Victor Records, Personal appearances, T.V. Radio, or in any form of entertaining. So for now, this is your grateful friend Hank Snow sayin good luck, good health, and may the Good Lord always be proud of ya. And above all don't ever forget to keep "Moving On." BYE.



Homer Haynes presents a plaque to Hank Snow commemorating over 35 years with RCA Records.



# The Stoney Mountain Cloggers

Ben Smathers leads the Stoney Mountain Cloggers during their appearance on the Country Music Association Awards Show.



Perhaps the most eloquent testimony that could be made to country music is exhibited in the large number of family acts in the business. Ben and Margaret Smathers have learned that a family approach comes naturally in their pursuit of the traditional art form of Western North Carolina square dancing. Son Mickey joined the Stoney Mountain Cloggers as soon as he became "as tall as his mama," according to the family agreement reached when he first asked to dance with his parents. In quick order the other Smathers' son, Hal, joined the act, as more recently did daughters Candy and Debbie. "All of our lives as well as the act revolve around 10-year-old Sally—she's the baby and our mascot," Ben beams proudly, re-affirming the place family participation still has in our society.

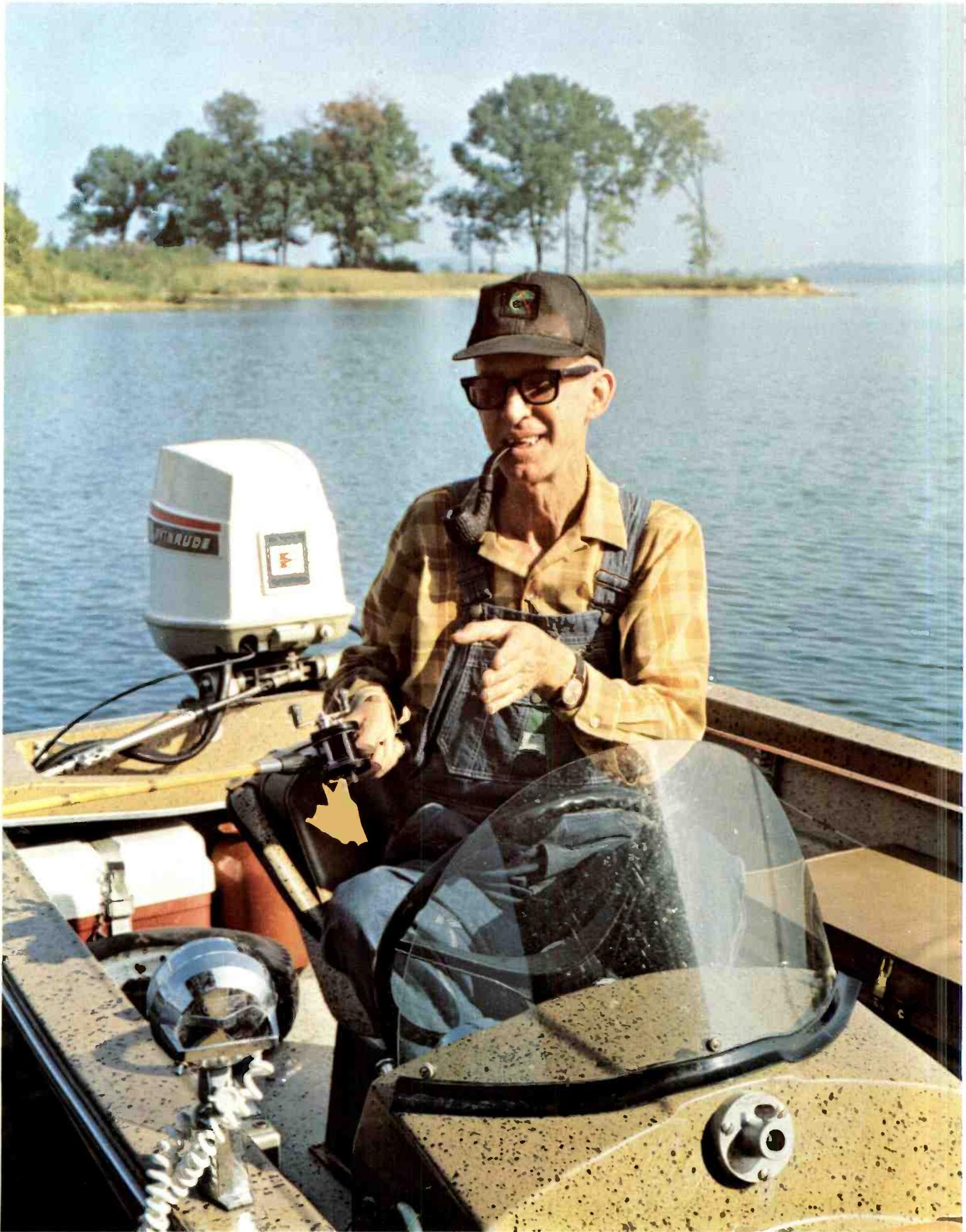
Listing credits for the Stoney Mountain Cloggers can be a formidable chore, one that takes a lot of paper. Fifteen years on the Grand Ole Opry; appearances in every province of Canada and all of the United States except Alaska and Hawaii; 123 network shows (as of this writing); six motion pictures; critical acclaim for performances in virtually every medium and type of showcase known to show business (an Amarillo, Texas, newspaper headed its account of a Cloggers performance

with "The Dance Master of Country Music Leads His Apostles of Dance on Stage"); and on and on it has gone.

Honors that Ben recalls with the deepest fondness have not always been of the "statuette and plaque" variety. "Just being able to work with people like Roy Acuff, Red Foley, Roy Rogers, Uncle Cyp Brasfield, and Meridith Wilson—all masters of their trade—has helped make this a rewarding business for us in many ways," asserts Smathers in the soft drawl that is as much a part of his North Carolina heritage as the traditional dancing. In 1961 the Cloggers introduced their dancing to Carnegie Hall and in 1972 Ben (along with fellow Opry member Stringbean) was named an "Honorary Convict for Life" by Warden Strickland at the South Carolina State Prison for excellence in entertaining the incarcerated.

Raising roses and fishing, both conducted close by at their home out on the lake at Hendersonville, Tennessee, are about the only hobbies Ben and Margaret have time for, because their BIG hobby is show business, and that takes a lot of time done Smathers style.

—Bill Littleton



# Stringbean

STRINGBEAN (David Akeman)

BIRTHDAY ..... June 17

BIRTHPLACE ..... Anneville, Ky.

JOINED OPRY ..... 1942

"How sweet it is!"



In a way, it's a shame that those who see the Grand Ole Opry star, Stringbean, for the first time are so amused by his comedy that they fail to note his sparkling banjo style. When actually, String's comic ability and musicianship are pretty much equal.

Stringbean's lifelong love affair with the five-string started when he was thirteen years old. He and another boy built a banjo, and String learned to play it. He planned to leave his Anneville, Kentucky, home only if called by a professional baseball team, but the invitation to become an entertainer proved sufficient. Stringbean was fortunate to have learned his trade from some Opry legends. He toured for three years with Lew Childre and was advised by the great Uncle Dave Macon. His early career also included stints with Charlie, and later, Bill Monroe.

Where did his name originate? Right where he did. Christened Dave Ackeman, he was raised on a Kentucky farm with four brothers and three sisters. Stringbeans were a common vegetable at their house, and one of

his favorites, so he picked the monicker as his stage name.

At the age of 18, Stringbean began his professional career in Lexington, Kentucky, joining the Opry a few years later in 1942. Through the years, Stringbean has sprouted into the image of what country comedians should be. His sadsack delivery, interspersed with raised eyebrow expressions and Chaplin-like stance, make him untouchable in his field. Combined with quick, old time tunes on his trusty banjo, String's comedy hits home like hot biscuits.

The familiar sound of Stringbean has put smiles on millions of Grand Ole Opry listeners. The personal appearances have pleased every audience, young and old alike. And, the familiar face of Stringbean with the "Old Crow" on the popular "Hee Haw" television show has made this country comedian a household word.

Unassuming and kind as a patriarch, Stringbean shyly admits that there are only three things that matter in his life: Estelle, his wife; banjo picking comedy; and fishing.



# Ernest Tubb

BIRTHDAY ..... February 9  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Crisp, Texas  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1943

Texas born Ernest Tubb is one of the most celebrated stars of Country Music. He is honored as one of the "All Time Greats" by the Country Music Association and the many performers who have been helped by Tubb applaud the tribute.

Ernest is truly a Texas Troubadour. Born in the town of Crisp, in Ellis County, Texas, Ernest wanted to be a Western movie star. But when he heard his first recording of a Jimmy Rodgers tune, he knew he wanted to sing.

His decision to follow Country Music was soon followed by an opportunity to use his deep baritone on radio when he was nineteen and auditioned for KONO Radio in San Antonio. He was able to call radio his full-time profession in 1941, when he moved to a program on KGKO Radio in Fort Worth.

Tubb's trip from the Texas Plains to the Hills of Tennessee followed the success of a song which he wrote entitled "I'm Walking the Floor Over You." The song, which soon became the theme-song for Ernest Tubb and his Texas Troubadours, has sold millions of records. He has written over one hundred songs, and has been on the Decca label for over twenty-five years.

Always ready to lend a helping hand to the new-comer, Ernest has helped many country singers to a big career in the field. His famous "Midnight Jamboree" radio show, which is broadcast over WSM from the Ernest Tubb Record Shop in Nashville, has been the proving grounds for countless young hopefuls.

Ernest and his wife, Olene, live near Nashville. They have seven children. His son, Justin, is also a successful entertainer.



Ernest Tubb presents Doc Severinsen, band leader for NBC's "Tonight Show," to the Opry audience.



# Justin Tubb

BIRTHDAY ..... August 20  
BIRTHPLACE ..... San Antonio, Texas  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1955

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HI EVERYBODY!

IT'S A PLEASURE TO HAVE THIS CHANCE TO WRITE A FEW LINES TO ALL OF YOU, AND MAYBE ANSWER SOME OF THE MAIL I NEVER SEEM TO HAVE THE TIME TO ANSWER INDIVIDUALLY.

I AM RECORDING AGAIN NOW, AND JUST FINISHED SOME NEW SIDES. A GROUP OF NASHVILLE'S FINEST MUSICIANS (KNOWN AS HILLTOP PRODUCTIONS) AND I, ARE PRODUCING MY SESSIONS NOW, FOR RELEASE ON THE OUTLASS LABEL; A NEW COMPANY ON THE NASHVILLE SCENE. I HOPE YOU LIKE WHAT WE'RE COMING UP WITH.

I ALSO PLAN TO GET BUSY WRITING SONGS AGAIN, AND HAVE JUST JOINED THE WILBURN BROTHERS' SURE-FIRE MUSIC, AS AN EXCLUSIVE WRITER. THIS REMINDS ME OF A COUPLE QUESTIONS I'M ASKED A LOT. MY FAVORITE SONGS I'VE WRITTEN ARE: "AS LONG AS THERE'S A SUNDAY", AND A NEW ONE: "TRAVELIN', SINGIN' MAN", WHICH I WROTE FOR MY WIFE, CAROLYN. THE BIGGEST SONG WAS "LONESOME 7-7203".

MANY OF YOU ASK ABOUT THE FAMILY. WELL, GARY JUSTIN IS TWO YEARS OLD NOW, AND IS HE SOMETHING! HE'S RIGHT AT THAT AGE WHERE LITTLE BOYS ARE THE CUTEST.....AND THE MEANEST! OF COURSE, CAROLYN AND I THINK HE'S SPECIAL, HAVING BEEN BORN ON HER BIRTHDAY, MARCH 29, 1970; WHICH WAS ALSO EASTER SUNDAY. AND HE CUT HIS FIRST TOOTH WHEN HE WAS THREE DAYS OLD. (BRAG DADDY!). AND LET'S NOT FORGET ABOUT MY DAUGHTER, LEAH-LISA. SHE RECENTLY TURNED FOURTEEN, AND IS REALLY QUITE THE GROWNUP LITTLE LADY NOW.

A FEW COMMENTS NOW ABOUT THE "NEW LOOK". I'VE GAINED FORTY TO FIFTY POUNDS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS; THANKS TO CAROLYN'S GOOD COOKING, AND GIVING UP SMOKING. THE ONLY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION I'VE EVER KEPT. AND YES...MY WIFE LIKES MY MOUSTACHE. I ACTUALLY GREW IT BECAUSE I SAW DENNIS WEAVER IN "McCLOUD", AND THOUGHT: "IF THAT COWBOY CAN GET BY WITH IT, I CAN TOO.". ALTHOUGHT I'M AFRAID, WITH THE WEIGHT I'VE GAINED, I LOOK MORE LIKE CANNON. BUT ARCHIE CAMPBELL TOLD ME, "ANYBODY WITH A MOUSTACHE CAN'T BE ALL BAD".

WELL, THANKS FOR YOUR TIME. DO LET ME HEAR FROM YOU. THOUGH I DON'T HAVE TIME TO ANSWER ALL THE MAIL, I ENJOY YOUR LETTERS, AND LOOK FORWARD TO THEM VERY MUCH. I'M ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING ALL OF YOU, SOMEWHERE AROUND THE COUNTRY, ON ONE OF OUR PERSONAL APPEARANCES.

MY BEST TO YOU AND YOURS.....

GRATEFULLY,  
  
JUSTIN TUBB



# Porter Wagoner

BIRTHDAY ..... August 12  
BIRTHPLACE ..... West Plains, Mo.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1957

Porter Wagoner officially declares  
Opry Manager, Bud Wendell, an  
"Honorary Wagonmaster."



In the twenty-plus years he's been in the "big time" entertainment business, Porter Wagoner has built an impressive musical career, a business and financial empire, and a superb personal reputation. Furthermore, he's done it with integrity and masterful artistic craftsmanship.

It all began in West Plains, Missouri. The Wagoner family lived on a farm, and they were far from being wealthy. By age 14, Porter helped out by working in a market. During slack business times, Porter would play for the customers and the owner. Because he enjoyed Porter's singing, the market owner sponsored a fifteen minute local radio show featuring his "market clerk."

This led to a job at KWTO in Springfield, Missouri, in 1951. There the Ozark Jubilee was born, and Red Foley, who directed the casting began teaching Porter the necessary "professional extras" that turn good entertainers into great showmen. Soon Porter was a featured star of that nationally televised show.

At about this time he was offered an RCA recording

contract, despite his relative lack of bigtime professional experience. His first hit was released in 1955—"A Satisfied Mind"—and it shot to the top. He's made literally hundreds of records for RCA since then, and virtually everything he releases becomes big-selling merchandise.

By 1961 Porter had become a successful in-person performer as well. This factor caused some Nashville advertising executives to think of Porter as a "natural" for television. He was signed to host his own television show, a syndicated series and a "first" for country music.

The Porter Wagoner Show was instantly accepted by the public. Today it is the most successful program of its type in television history, and it has inspired dozens of other syndicated country series.

Porter's idea of resting is to go to the lake. That means fishing, an activity he attacks with as much zeal as work. Other interests include playing golf, and he's one of Nashville's outstanding amateurs. If there's a golf tournament around and he has the time, Porter will be in it.



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# Billy Walker

BIRTHDAY ..... January 14  
BIRTHPLACE..... Ralls, Texas  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1960



Eyes closed to stress a lyric, Billy Walker captivates the audience.

When Billy Walker sings “Cross the Brazos at Waco” he is singing of places close to home. A native of Ralls, in Crosby County, Texas, Billy has the expected Texas tallness and wears a grin as wide as downtown Dallas.

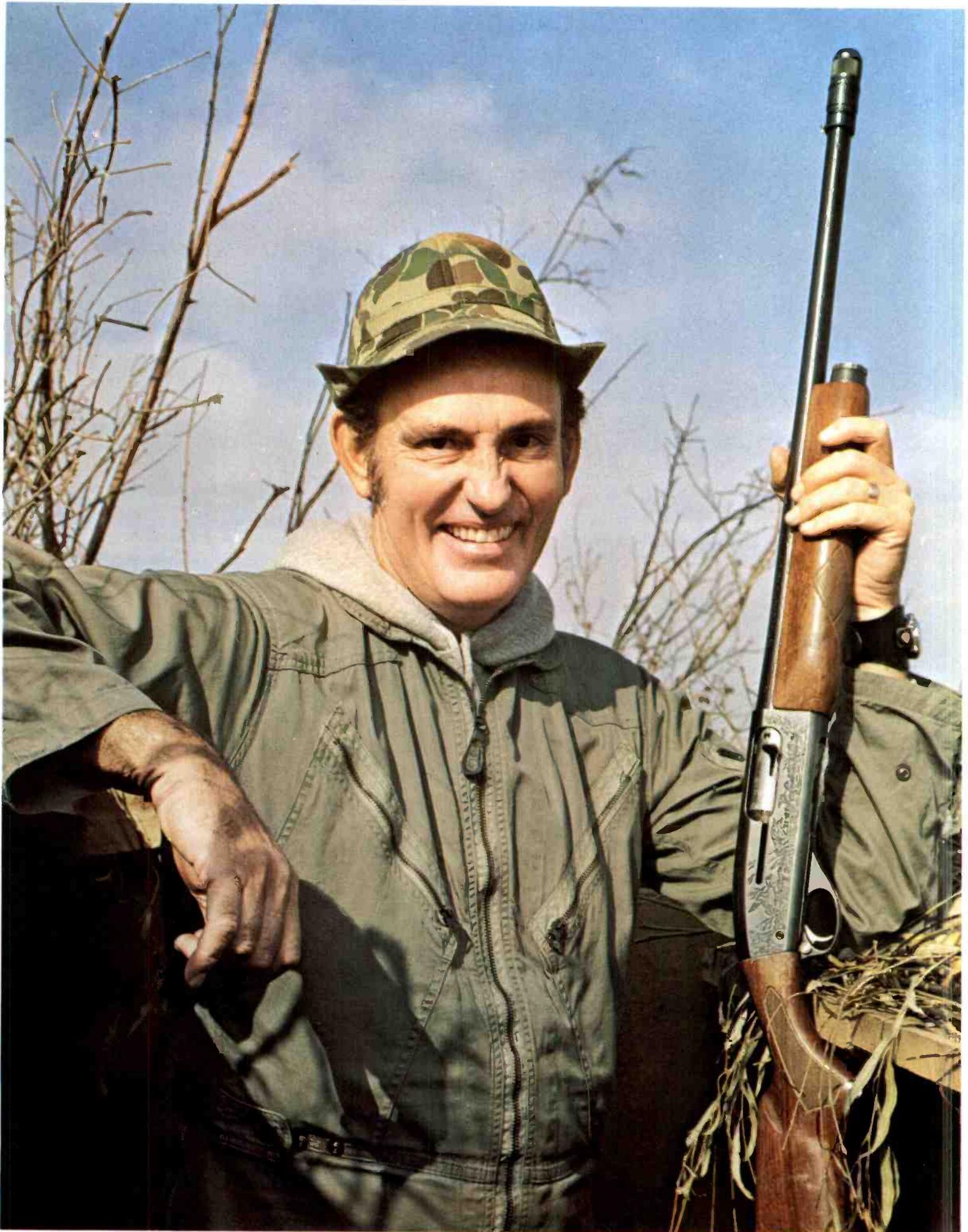
As a youngster, Billy alternately raced ranch horses, searched for arrowheads, and swam in the nearest watering hole. He did some singing, too, in those early days—as a member of a quartet in Lubbock, Texas.

At the age of 15 he branched off on his own, won a talent contest, and this led to a radio show at KICA in Clovis. He then joined a traveling band, played on the “Bid D” Jamboree in Dallas, and moved from there to the Louisiana Hayride and the Ozark Jubilee. In 1960 he became a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

Over the years, the tall Texan has had problems which would upset a lesser person. He once fell through a hole in the stage at Springfield, Missouri. And another time had to appear in blue jeans when a travel company sent his stage costume to another city by mistake. An early scheduled appearance was cancelled when the late Hank Williams interrupted Billy’s first number to announce he was going to be married on stage.

Billy Walker has managed to corral several music industry awards for his recordings, including citations from Billboard and Music Reporter magazines, and BMI.

He lives in a Nashville suburb with his wife, “Boots” and their four daughters, Judy Lynn, Deana Ann, Tina Kay, and Julie. “Almost next door to the golf course,” as Billy describes it. Golf and fishing are his hobbies.



# Charlie Walker

BIRTHDAY ..... November 2  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Collin City, Texas  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1967

Charlie and his friend, Tex Ritter, quietly await the ducks.



A man who is equally at home singing a song, calling a square dance, emceeing a show or announcing a rodeo is Charlie Walker. He is also the kind of personality called "nice guy," whose civic recognitions number almost as many as his entertainment citations.

Charlie, a native of the Lone Star State community of Collin County, actually started in Country Music in Dallas. He moved to San Antonio, where he climbed so high on the broadcasting ladder that he was rated as one of America's Top Ten Country Music Disc Jockeys for ten consecutive years by Billboard Magazine.

Charlie, who joined the Opry in 1967, has accumulated a healthy list of record hits, including "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down," "Close All Honky-Tonks," and "Don't Squeeze My Sharmon."

The Walker name has adorned the marquee at Las Vegas so many times that he is considered to be an Honorary Citizen of the city. Long considered a hard

nut to crack for country and western entertainers, Charlie worked the Golden Nugget for twenty-five weeks during a three-year period, a record stand for any artist. He has also chalked up numerous credits via guestings on scores of the leading syndicated shows.

Charlie, a keen observer of all sports activities, did the running commentary of the Texas Open Golf Tournament for four years on the CBS Radio Network. Charlie's knowledge in the field of golf came naturally. He has been a competitor in the Sahara Invitational Tournament in Las Vegas, and is a top competitor in the annual Music City Pro-Celebrity Golf Tournament in Nashville. He always makes it a point to participate in this event which precedes the Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration.

He's a fellow honored by the Texas Legislature, presented with the key to the city by San Diego's mayor in appreciation of the first song ever written about the California city, and is also an Honorary Admiral in the Texas Navy.



# Dottie West

BIRTHDAY ..... October 11  
BIRTHPLACE ..... McMinnville, Tenn.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1964



Dottie West leads the Opry's "Country Girls" in song during the birthday celebration.

As the story goes, a 96 year old farmer was asked if he had enjoyed life and the obvious hard work. He replied, "I made up my mind in my early twenties that since I had to work to eat, I might just as well enjoy it. I have loved being a country man." The same words would not have been misplaced if spoken by Dottie West.

Being one of ten children from the farm country around McMinnville, Tennessee, she learned early in her life that hard work went a long way toward building character. Her cheerful disposition had much to do with producing the same results. By modern standards her days on the farm were tough because her family had a comparatively low income.

In between her work at home, Dottie did her utmost to find odd jobs which gave her the money to get music lessons on the side while she was in elementary and high school. The same bits and pieces of work provided needed cash for the college tuition at Tennessee Tech at Cookeville.

Dottie worked for five years in a Cleveland, Ohio electronics lab. There she built up a reputation in entertainment and a little nest egg by playing nightclubs around the area. When the day arrived for the chance meeting with Starday Record Company officials, Dottie was ready to grab the opportunity. After a permanent move to Nashville and a brief stay with the firm, Dottie switched to the Atlantic label, and finally to RCA. "Here Comes My Baby" brought her a 1964 Grammy for Best Female Performance of the Year.

In 1965, her hometown honored her with "Dottie West Day," and saw that a baseball field for kids was built with the proceeds of the day. It's called the "Dottie West Diamond."

Dottie keeps very busy touring, writing songs, making records, and raising her family. But she is most famous for being just a "country girl."



# The Wilburn Brothers

**TEDDY WILBURN**

BIRTHDAY ..... November 30  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Hardy, Ark.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1953

**DOYLE WILBURN**

BIRTHDAY ..... July 7  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Hardy, Ark.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1953

Three Wilburns—Lester, Teddy and Doyle check their music



It was a cold Christmas Eve in 1938. Five frightened children were huddled together on a corner of the town square in Thayer, Missouri. They were there for a reason. After practicing all year at their farm home near Hardy, Arkansas, on the instruments their father had ordered for them from the Sears Catalog, the children had come to town to make their show business debut. And so began "The Singing Wilburn Children." And the two youngest—Teddy and Doyle—grew up to become one of the all-time best loved acts in Country Music.

The year following their street corner debut, the Wilburn Children toured the neighboring cities and states giving concerts wherever Pop Wilburn could gather a crowd. School-houses, churches, movie houses and even more street corners were among the dates played by this country "Partridge Family."

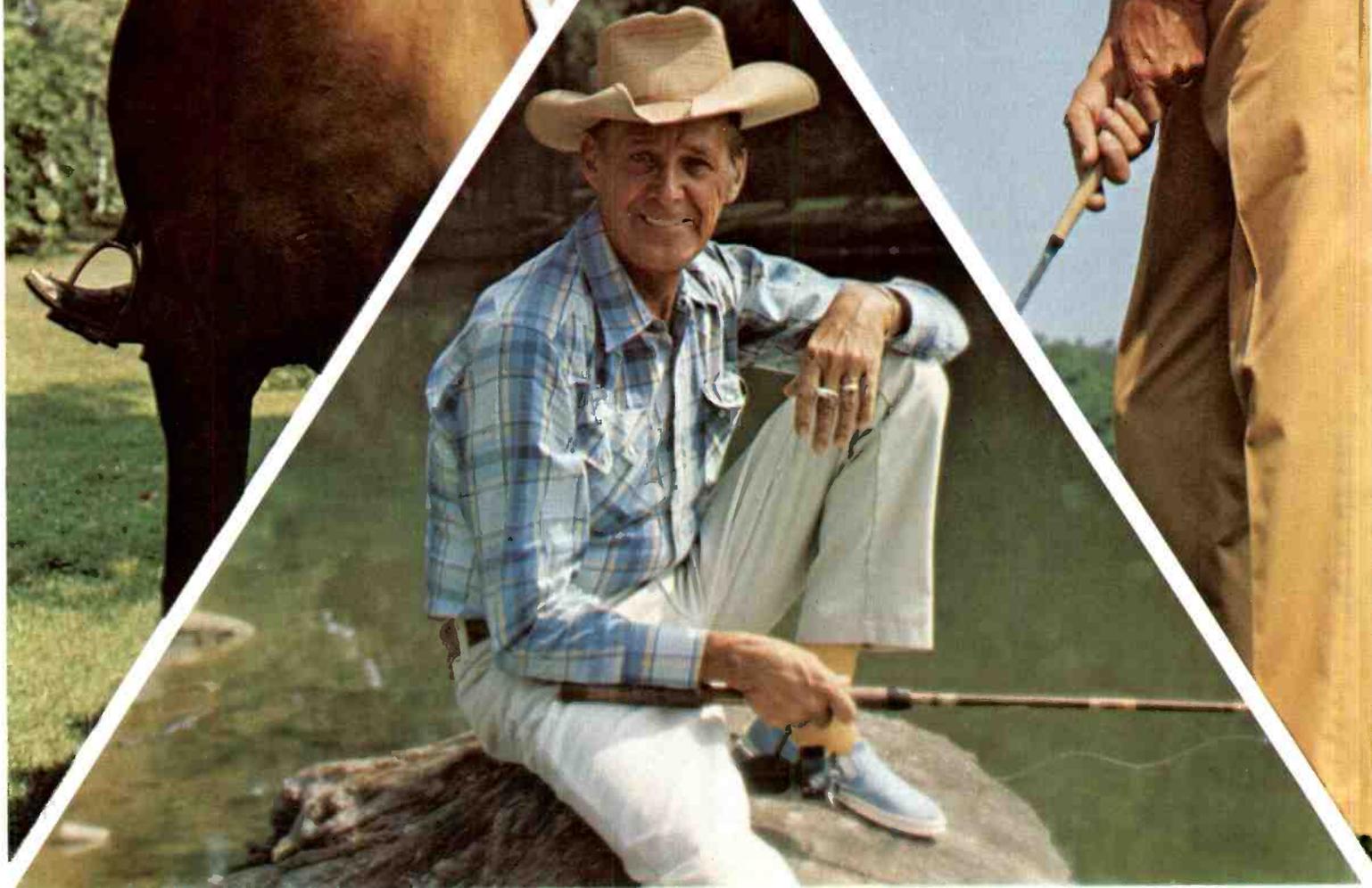
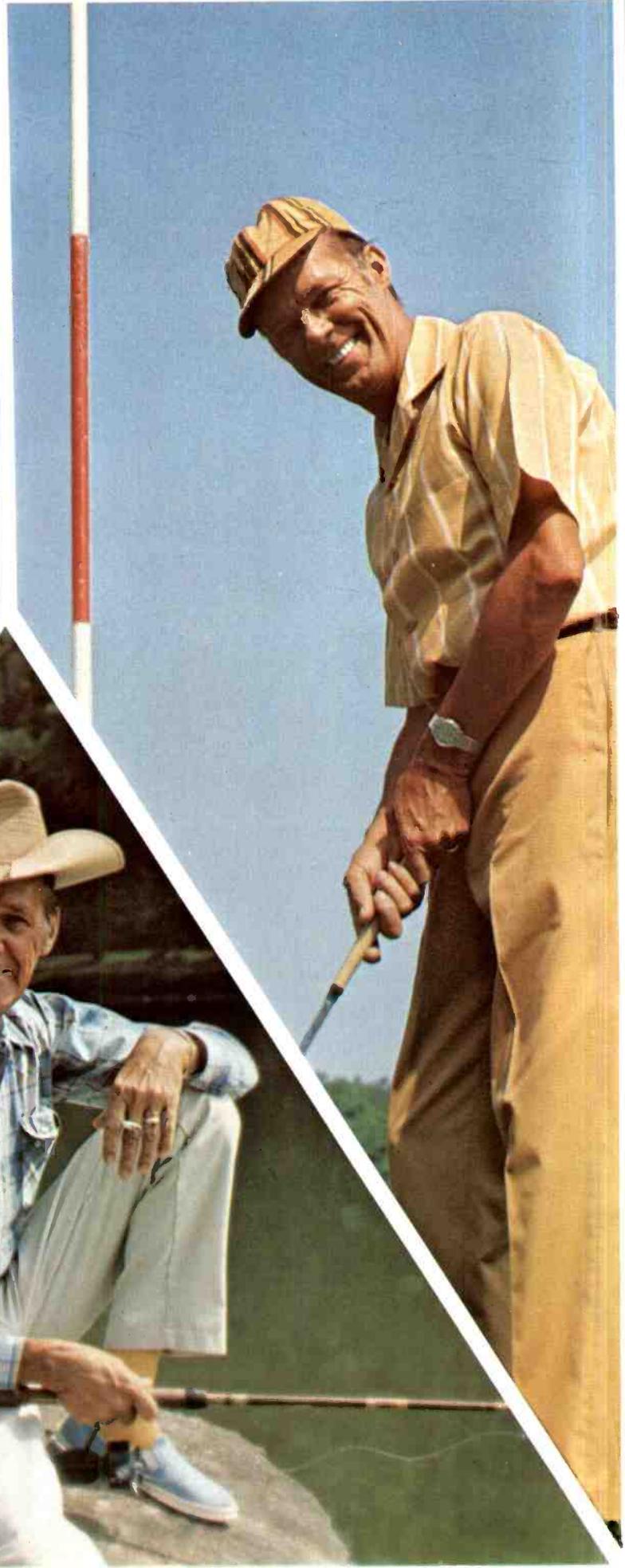
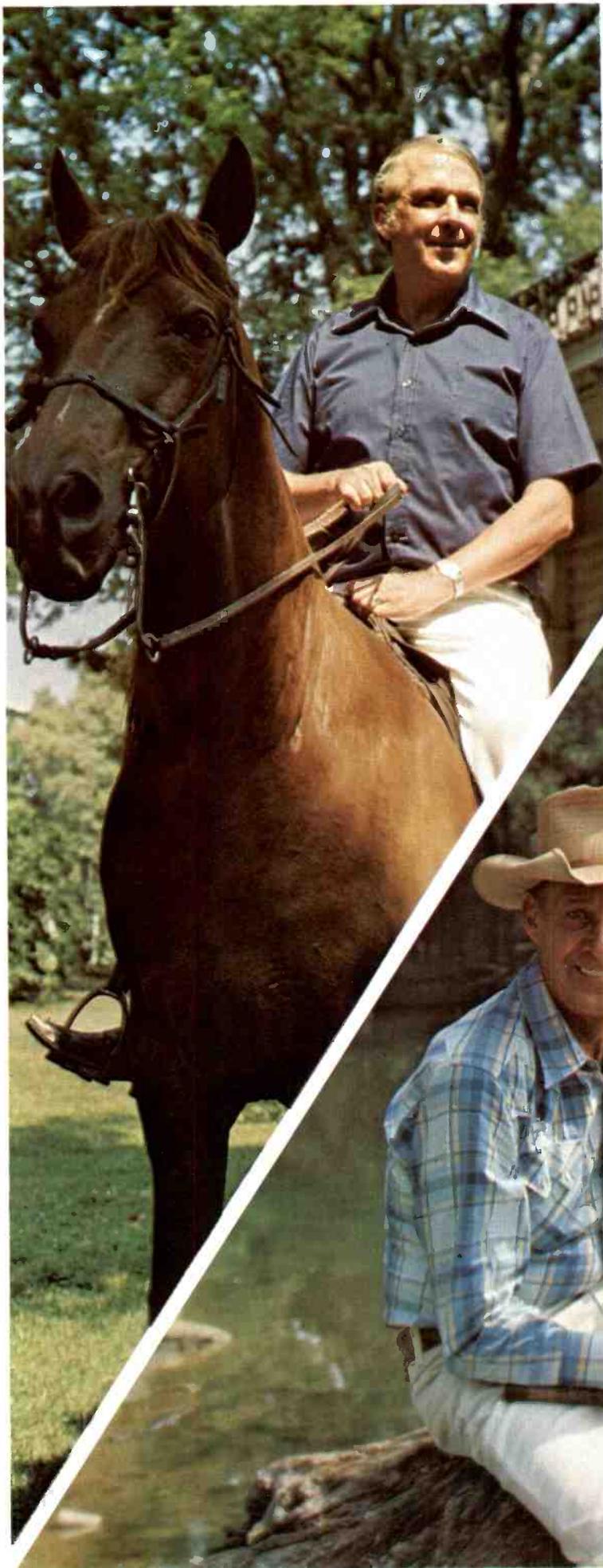
Their first break came in 1940, when Roy Acuff saw the youngsters perform and brought them to the Grand Ole Opry. They stayed on the Opry for six months but finally had to leave because of their youth and the show's late hours. Their star was still rising, though, and in 1948 they went on to become regulars for three years on "The Louisiana Hayride."

After serving in the Korean conflict, Teddy and Doyle worked on the Webb Pierce Show, and soon were back on center stage at the Opry. Webb Pierce also helped the boys get their recording contract in 1954. They were on their way. National and non-country recognition came from their appearances on such shows as Arthur Godfrey, American Bandstand, etc.

Today the Wilburn Brothers great harmony and talent covers the country spectrum—from "nickel-in-the-jukebox" tunes to modern country-folk ballads. Teddy and Doyle have recorded 26 albums for Decca-MCA.

They also have the second oldest syndicated Country/Western TV show out of Nashville (seen in over 100 cities weekly by over 4,000,000 people) and one of Nashville's most active publishing houses.

From the sidewalks of Arkansas to the star studded walkway of the Country Music Hall of Fame, through the hopes and the dreams—the good times and the bad—the Wilburn Brothers sum up what country music is all about.



# The Willis Brothers

GUY WILLIS  
 BIRTHDAY ..... July 15  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Alexter, Okla.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1946

VIC WILLIS  
 BIRTHDAY ..... December 31  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Shulter, Okla.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1946

SKEETER WILLIS  
 BIRTHDAY ..... December 20  
 BIRTHPLACE ..... Coalton, Okla.  
 JOINED OPRY ..... 1946



Commemorative plaques and a cake help celebrate The Willis Brothers' ten years with Starday Records.

The Willis Brothers, Guy, Skeeter and Vic, originally known as "The Oklahoma Wranglers," are recognized internationally as one of the top country and western entertainment groups.

Their colorful career began at KGEF in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and from there to "The Brush Creek Follies" show on KMBC in Kansas City, Missouri. Following World War II, they joined the Grand Ole Opry. They left to become the nucleus of Eddy Arnold's network radio and stage shows. They played the music on many of his early hit recordings, and also appeared in two movies with him. They pioneered "Jubilee, U.S.A." and later joined NBC's Midwestern Hayride. They were the first group to back the late Hank Williams, later becoming known as the original "Drifting Cowboys."

The Willis Brothers have appeared on over 1,400 television shows. In 1960, they rejoined the Grand Ole Opry,

and their renditions of some of the commercial jingles on the Opry draw as much applause as regular musical numbers.

The brothers have numerous record releases and personal appearances to their credit. Two of their most recent hit recordings are "Give Me Forty Acres" and "Bob". Personal tours have taken them to England, Holland, Germany, France, Ireland, Greenland, Newfoundland, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas and every state in the union.

The Willis Brothers have established themselves as a top act in every aspect of country show business. Guy, the oldest and emcee of the show, plays guitar. Skeeter is known as the "smilin' fiddler," and Vic is the accordionist who doubles on piano. All do solo or group-type work, including novelty numbers and impersonations of other artists.



# Del Wood

BIRTHDAY ..... February 22  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Nashville, Tenn.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1953



Del Wood listens attentively to a question during the Artist/D.J. Tape Session at the recent Opry Birthday Celebration.

Del Wood is distinctive in many ways. She is the only person regularly featured at the Grand Ole Opry keyboard and is the only native Nashvillian to appear as a star on the Opry.

Del was presented a piano on her fifth birthday by parents who recognized a definite leaning toward show business in their daughter. She enjoyed staging neighborhood "dramas" for her playmates while pursuing her piano lessons. By the time she was a Sophomore in Nashville's East High School she was an accomplished piano accompanist, but worked in the civil service for the State of Tennessee following high school until her talents began paying off. In 1950, as a substitute pianist at WLBK in Bowling Green, Kentucky, she played a tune called "Down Yonder" in her inimitable ragtime style. This song boosted Del into national acclaim.

Del (her real name is Adelaide Hazelwood) has been

dubbed the "Queen of the Ivories" by her co-stars at the Opry, and is frequently named "Best Female Instrumentalist" by music polls. Although her parents had visions of Del becoming a concert pianist, she set her sights on the Opry, and even refused a two-week engagement with Bob Crosby in 1952 to make her first guest appearance on the world famous show.

"Down Yonder" was only one of several big records for Del. With over twenty albums and sixty singles to her credit, her fame has spread internationally. She has appeared on numerous network TV shows, and spent a ten week tour of Viet Nam as the featured act in a group sent to entertain servicemen in 1968.

Del spends her spare time canning jams, jellies, and preserves for which she has won many cooking awards. She also enjoys gardening and flower arranging.



# Marion Worth

BIRTHDAY ..... July 4  
BIRTHPLACE ..... Birmingham, Ala.  
JOINED OPRY ..... 1963

Sonny Burnette and Marion Worth take a quick break backstage



When Country Music wants to “show off” a little for the big city broadcasting or music executives, one of the first names to come to mind in planning the show is that of lovely, “lady” Marion Worth. Marion has the uncanny ability to whisper sultry love ballads or belt out barn dance sing-alongs with scarcely a pause in between. Marion is a “singer’s singer,” and an extremely valuable member of the Opry cast.

Born Mary Ann Ward, on a Fourth of July in Birmingham, Alabama, she was one of five youngsters in a railroad family. Marion learned the piano from her father, but later adopted the guitar.

The petite vocalist first set her sights on becoming a nurse. After high school and business college, she went into medical training, but felt compelled to change the course of her life in midstream. Marion’s business training led her into a position as bookkeeper for a recording company. When she and her sister duetted their way into “first place” in a Birmingham Talent Contest,

Marion decided to channel all the energy of her five-foot-two-frame into becoming a professional singer.

The decision was a wise one for all concerned. Marion worked her way from her own radio show at WVOK Radio in Birmingham, into a series of jobs which led to the Grand Ole Opry in 1963.

Marion’s career has enjoyed some high moments. She was one of the first Country Music performers to appear at New York’s Carnegie Hall, and has been booked before some of the most sophisticated audiences to be found anywhere. Her vocal control and imaginative styling have won immediate acceptance in every case.

Marion’s records include many standouts. Her version of “Shake Me, I Rattle” was a national hit, and “Crazy Arms” also rated a high position in the charts. She is a prolific writer, and has penned such songs as “Are You Willing, Willie,” “That’s My King of Love,” “A Woman Needs Love,” and “Mama Says.” Her hobbies include knitting, tennis, cooking and football.

# E. W. (Bud) Wendell

Grand Ole Opry Manager



When you get to the end of a Saturday night, sometimes you feel a little scared. Because you know that starting Monday you have to put it together all over again.

—Opry Manager Bud Wendell

# Opry Shows

For almost 50 years now, the Grand Ole Opry's howl, whoop, holler and stomp has sprawled chaotically across one or another of Nashville's stages with its inexplicable power and dignity.

Born of fields and the work done in them, its music has retained in all its hybrids a power you cannot quite wipe the sweat off of.

In fact, its show has consciously been kept in harmony with that sort of lyrical tradition.

George D. Hay, the so-called "solemn old judge" who instead of being a jurist was rather an ex-newspaperman from Chicago who turned out to be one of the shrewdest entertainment pioneers in America, early laid down the Opry's first commandment:

"Keep her down to earth, boys."

She has been kept there, the warm loam of American tradition pushing up between her toes, ever since.

Her squaredancers dance and her singers sing, her collective "stars" a veritable constellation of entertainers flung out at the audience every Friday and Saturday night—a seemingly endless collection of rhinestones and string ties and even some long hair scattered across the wide expanse of stage.

That is the way it looks to the visitor, and that is probably the principal secret of its power.

It is a spontaneous, unpretentious and unashamed commingling of beholder and beheld. It is life telling you pieces of its earthy story while chewing its gum or scratching its behind.

Each week the Opry keeps up this illusion which its individual performers, no matter how talented they are, cannot quite duplicate on any other stage anywhere else you go to see them.

It is the illusion that what they are doing is just happening, and that the members of the audience are seeing it both the first and the final time it will be enacted.

It is literally true that any single Grand Ole Opry show will never happen again, but the illusion—very carefully nurtured and preserved—is that it has not been planned or programmed.

That is not true at all.

\* \* \*

The thing that ends in a seemingly endless procession of singers, bands and squaredancers on Saturday night begins Monday with the delivery of some advertising copy to the desk of a young woman named Cindy Wood at WSM Radio and Television Studios on Knob Hill, nearly 10 miles from the Grand Ole Opry House.

It comes from various advertising agencies, and it is the commercial guts around which the Opry is woven from week to week.

"Each commercial done on the Opry, whether it is done live by the announcers and performers or played on a tape cassette by one of the engineers, must be scheduled beforehand," Mrs. Wood said.

Making up the schedule of both the commercials and the entertainment for every Friday and Saturday night Opry show is the responsibility of the WSM Traffic Department in which Mrs. Wood works. Most weeks, that responsibility is hers.

"There are two commercials for a 15-minute segment of the Opry and three for a 30-minute segment," she said.

"A lot of them are done live from the Opry stage, and the copy from which they are read comes in here at WSM either at the first of the month—and covers the whole month—or at the first of each week. So the first thing that happens every week is the arrival of the weekly copy on Mondays."

While those sponsors' messages are coming to Mrs. Wood's desk on Knob Hill every Monday, Mrs. Wilma Briggs meanwhile is at work sorting and checking the passes of customers who already have reserved their seats for the following Friday or Saturday night.

"There are 1,797 reserved-seat tickets and 1,150 general admission tickets for every performance," Mrs. Briggs said.

"They have to be kept separately if we're going to keep up with them, of course. So, you have reserved seats for the first show and the second show, and the general admission tickets for both, and the tickets for the Friday night show, too."

On Mondays Mrs. Briggs is mainly occupied balancing the number of reserved-seat orders taken by the ticket office against the amount of money it already has deposited in the bank when the individual orders came in.

Of course, the money in the bank must tally with the number of tickets being reserved. Mondays, Mrs. Briggs goes over the seemingly endless catalogue of tickets which, during the previous week, have been put into envelopes so the work can begin on them on Mondays.

"Say a man named Jack Jones writes us and orders four tickets and encloses his check for them at \$3 apiece," she said.

"We put his tickets in an envelope which we mark 'Jack Jones' and we file it under J along with all the other reserved-seat tickets for that week. We write \$12 on the envelope to indicate the amount of money we have received for the tickets in the envelope."

These reservations most of the time have to be made many weeks in advance, because in all but the hardest of winter months the Saturday shows are sold out long before the night of the performances.

Whenever the checks, cash or money orders arrive at the ticket office, they are immediately deposited in the Opry's special account at a Nashville bank. It is against that account that Mrs. Briggs begins checking her tickets on Mondays.

For the Grand Ole Opry's scheduling purposes, Tuesday is really the first day of the week.

On that day, Cindy Wood begins typing the advertising copy that has arrived at WSM. Mrs. Briggs, meanwhile, journeys to the bank to verify the varied deposit accounts in the Grand Ole Opry account—often being required to stay all day, past the bank's closing hours, to finish the job.

At the same time the administrators of the Grand Ole Opry begin reaching out toward the members to gather in the required weekend shows.

An urbane Midwesterner who graduated from Wooster College in Ohio and spent a valuable part of his apprenticeship selling insurance in rural and mountainous West Virginia, WSM vice president E. W. (Bud) Wendell decides who appears when on the Grand Ole Opry.

In fact, Opry manager Wendell decides who is on the Opry at all.

"Opry membership is by invitation only, and you can't really say there is any one particular way to get yourself invited," Wendell says.

"We have to keep a number of things in mind. If the Opry is going to retain its variety, we have to try to keep a balance of representatives from all different kinds of country music. We're also looking for consistency of performance, ability to make records that are popular, and a real desire to be on the Opry. Not everybody wants to be, for one reason or another."

One way Wendell gets to look at a prospective new Opry star is to invite him to make a guest appearance on the show. In the Opry's recent history, most if not all new members have first done guest performances, and Wendell concedes they are important.

The process by which both guests and members get on the weekend shows each week begins on Tuesday in Wendell's office. The person in charge of its preliminary stages is secretary Anne Cooper.

After spending the morning working on the Opry payroll, making sure even the least-known sideman who played on the stage during the previous Friday or Saturday nights gets paid his due amount, in the early afternoon she begins calling the approximately 15 Nashville talent agents who represent Opry stars.

"I just use a copy of our talent roster, which lists the name of every Opry member in alphabetical order, and I just go down the list writing beside each name whether that person is going to be in town or out of town during the weekend," Miss Cooper says.

As she inquires about the Opry stars, she also takes down information concerning the availability of non-Opry acts also represented by the talent agents.

"In a normal week they'll give me information on about 50 different people who would be available as guests, and I write them down on the back of the list of Opry members," she said.

Two days—Tuesday and Wednesday—normally are required for her to get the necessary information on the members and guests.

"I average 450 telephone calls a week, according to a survey we ran here not too long ago," she added. "Almost every one of them is connected with lining up the weekend shows."

\* \* \*

Thursday begins the rush toward the weekend.

In Mrs. Briggs' ticket office, telephones are ringing with an insistent frequency which will be surpassed only by the tumult of Friday, when the Opry's thousands of weekend visitors begin descending on Nashville looking for their tickets. Between stints on the telephone, she and her four employees, 8 in the summertime, also must attend to an unwieldy stack of mail which, in a recent July, amounted to 8,000 pieces.

At Knob Hill, meanwhile, Cindy Wood is nearly finished with her typing of the advertising copy and her determination of which taped commercials the sponsors want used on the weekend shows. Having done that, she must wait for Friday, when she will receive from Wendell's office the schedule of acts for the Opry's Friday and Saturday shows.

Thursday is the day Wendell lines up his show.

"By then, Anne has completed her list of who's in town and who's out," the Opry manager says.

"She gives it to me and I sit down and first write out the schedule of sponsors in the order in which their segments come on the Opry shows. I write down whether the segment is 15 or 30 minutes long. Then I start filling in the names of the acts."

It is not, however, just a matter of writing down names. Some of the Opry's more historic members have, over the years, been accorded certain places on the show by tradition.

"We don't know why," Anne Cooper says, "but the Crook Brothers have always been on at 7:30 and 10:45 on Saturday nights, and the Fruit Jar Drinkers have always had the 8:30 and 11 o'clock slots."

Roy Acuff does not mind when he is on, as long as it is neither first nor last. Hank Snow traditionally does the 8:30 and 11 o'clock shows when he is in town. Ernest Tubb also likes 8:30, but lets himself be persuaded to take the 7:30 show when both he and Snow are appearing the same night.

Some of the scheduling is based on tradition, some on seniority, and some on the special circumstances which must inevitably develop in any organization of so many dozens of people.

Marty Robbins, for instance, traditionally does the 11:30 Saturday night show when he is in town because during the earlier hours of Saturday evening he likes to drive his race cars on Nashville tracks.

Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, famous bluegrass musicians who broke up their partnership after more than to decades, are not scheduled on the same segments of the Opry.

Sponsor commitments dictate when a few performers appear. Flatt, who has sung the theme for Martha White Flour's commercial advertisements since 1953, is always on the Martha White-sponsored portion of the Opry when he is in town. The Willis Brothers, who have recorded jingles advertising Kellogg's cereals, always do the Kellogg's segment.

After placing these specially-slotted performers in his show schedule, Wendell then picks the 13 headliners for the 13 Saturday night shows and seven more for the Friday night performance. Then he places a female act on each segment, and then distributes the rest of the member acts who are in town.

"If we have an awful lot of our members who are in town and a couple of them who've helped us a lot want to stay home with their wives that Saturday, Mr. Wendell usually tries to work with them," Anne Cooper says. "I remember a couple of weekends Roy Drusky flew back here from a date on two different Saturday nights just to help us out, so Mr. Wendell tried to give him the same consideration he gave us."

If there are vacant slots in the schedule after he has filled in all the Opry acts in town, Wendell then turns Anne Cooper's list over and looks at the list of available guests.

He first decides whether he needs women or men and how many of each, and then he consults the country music record popularity charts of the trade magazines. He picks the guests with records highest in the charts.

"That's the fairest way to do it," Anne Cooper says. "This way, Mr. Wendell is assured he's giving the audience the guests they most likely want to see, because he's picking the ones people have indicated they are listening to most on the radio."

When Wendell completes his penciled schedule of the Friday and Saturday shows, he returns it to Anne. Early Thursday afternoon she begins calling the homes of the singers.

She calls every one of those in town whom Wendell has scheduled to appear on the Opry during the weekend.

"I tell the star or his wife the times of the shows he is scheduled on," Miss Cooper says.

"They always like to know whether they're headlining one of the segments, but they don't like to ask, so if they're not I just tell them, 'You're on with So-And-So.' I don't like to make them ask."

She does not have the telephone numbers of the guests Wendell has selected, so she places calls back to the agencies which represent them, giving the agencies the times their guest stars are scheduled to appear.

"By the end of the afternoon all the calls have usually been made," Wendell says.

"Then, for nearly 24 hours, we just let it sit, to see whether anybody is going to have to cancel out or anything." Any family of 25-30 or more members will have sickness, accidents or unforeseen involvements that warrant changes in the schedule.

\* \* \*

It is Friday afternoon, and if it is summer they probably already are lining up outside, men in short-sleeved shirts and slacks or bluejeans, women in everything from gingham dresses to hot pants and maybe holding babies.

They're from north of Chicago or south of Macon, west of Little Rock or east of Asheville, having driven an average of more than 500 miles to see a show three generations of their forebears have listened to on the radio.

Anne Cooper calls them the "friends and neighbors."

For their benefit, Anne has typed up about a dozen copies of the tentative Friday and Saturday night schedules she and Wendell made up the afternoon before. By Friday morning she has them hanging in a few places where she knows the "friends and neighbors" will be, so they can get some idea of who they can expect to see perform this weekend on the Opry stage.

Because these schedules are typed Friday morning, before any time changes or cancellations that may have to be made, their forecast of the coming shows may not be completely accurate—which sometimes causes consternation among the friends and neighbors.

"They'll take their schedule to the Opry and maybe it will say that Marty Robbins is going to do the 11:30 p.m. show, and then Marty isn't on it," Anne says. "They say, 'Boy, I bet that really put the Opry between a rock and a hard place when Marty Robbins cancelled out on them.'"

"But really it doesn't. Maybe that night Marty couldn't get back in from a date somewhere in Minnesota or something. But we always know before the show who's going to be on it. I know of only four times in the years I've been here that any member of the Opry so much as got mixed up on the times he was supposed to be onstage."

After the tentative schedule comes out Friday morning, Wendell and his secretary still wait another couple of hours before they make up a firmer schedule to send to Cindy Wood in the WSM Traffic Department. It gets to her about 1:30 p.m. Friday.

While Anne and Wendell are waiting for any telephone calls from stars needing to change or cancel their appearance times, Mrs. Briggs and her staff are busy answering the often exasperating telephone calls that are so important to the friends and neighbors.

“They have every imaginable question about tickets, from how to get them to where they can be picked up after they are ordered,” she says.

“Friday is the busiest day of all, the day when everybody gets to town and wants to pick up his tickets. Noon Friday is also the deadline for cancellation of tickets—if they cancel by noon, they can get their money back.”

(The grounds for the refunding of ticket money are more liberal than Mrs. Briggs herself believes necessary. On a recent September 25th, she said, “there was a downpour, which of course we couldn’t control, but some people wrote and said they couldn’t get to the show in it because they didn’t have an umbrella, and we gave them their money back.”)

After the tentative schedule comes out Friday morning, about the time Mrs. Briggs is beginning to enforce the noon ticket cancellation deadline, Wendell and Anne Cooper make up a firmer schedule for Cindy Wood in the WSM Traffic Department. She gets it about 1:30 p.m. on Fridays.

“I’m usually through with everything else and am just waiting for the lineup,” Mrs. Wood says.

“When I get it, I usually work on it until about 3 p.m., unless there are changes after that. If they call, say, and tell me a live commercial is going to have to be changed to a taped commercial because some group has had to cancel out, I go back and do over again what I’ve already done—completely revising the schedule to reflect the change.”

She types up three copies of the Friday show, one each for the announcer onstage, the Opry House engineer and the engineer at WSM studios on Knob Hill. Five copies are made of the Saturday night lineup—two for the announcers, one for the performers, one for the Opry House engineer and one for the WSM engineer.

When a change occurs, she has to do everything over again.

“If you don’t make the change on all of your copies—say of a live commercial being changed to a taped one—an engineer at WSM is liable to wind up just sitting around daydreaming when he is supposed to be playing a taped commercial,” she says.

By noon Friday the Opry’s announcers—venerable Grant Turner, Hal Durham and Haril Hensley—have seen the tentative schedule and know which stars they are to be working with on the segments they are to work.

Durham says the announcers may be apprised of commercial spot changes throughout the weekdays leading up to the Opry. Mrs. Wood says that if Anne Cooper calls from the Opry House at 4 p.m. Friday to tell her about a last-minute change, she not only has to make the complete change in all the copies of the schedule, she has to run down the announcer on whose portion of the Opry it is to take place.

Durham says this is because the announcer has sort of the same

relation to the Opry as the producer does to a television stage show.

“You wave in the applause to increase the excitement, and you are responsible for watching the clock and trying to keep the show moving on schedule,” he says.

“Of course, the most important part of the announcer’s job is to be able to read the live commercials with the chaos going on around you the way it does on the Opry stage. You have to try to tune everything else out except the reverberation of what you’re saying in the auditorium.”

Durham says this is a skill that is acquired, just as newspapermen learn to work best under the noisiest conditions. He says Grant Turner, whose voice is probably one of the most easily recognizable in American radio, never seems to notice the trying circumstances under which Opry announcers work.

About 7:29 p.m. on Friday night, the pressure that has been building up throughout the week is about ready to burst onto the weekend stage for the first time.

The friends and neighbors have poured in the doors and are settling into their seats out front. The Opry member scheduled to open the first segment has finished his backstage rehearsal of his songs and now is chatting with the announcer who is handling the opening half-hour of the show.

Wendell is standing in the wings waiting to see how this next show he has constructed is going to get off with the audience. Anne Cooper is watching with a clipboard to keep a payroll record of which musicians play instruments on every song.

You and they are all waiting for the same thing—the beginning of the historic show which puts itself together before your eyes.

When that red curtain opens in another moment, all of you will begin to watch the most important step in the week-long process of resurrecting the Grand Ole Opry.

Whether it is like the 2,500 others that have been constructed so far—or whether it is the first bad one anybody can ever remember—is going to depend a lot on you, friend and neighbor.

You are at the Grand Ole Opry, and you are expected to holler if you feel like it.

—Jack Hurst

*Note:* For information concerning Grand Ole Opry Shows, Tickets, and Tours, write:

The Grand Ole Opry Ticket Bureau  
116 Opry Place  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Phone: (615) 747-9588

# Grand Ole Opry Tours

When you think of the White House your imagination immediately turns to Washington, D. C. The Liberty Bell reminds one of Philadelphia. And the Grand Ole Opry means Nashville, Tenn.—Music City U. S. A.

The Opry has and will continue to be a magnet drawing tourists to the city. But thousands of visitors who have taken WSM's Grand Ole Opry Tours discovered that Nashville isn't just the Opry, as New York is not simply the Statue of Liberty. These tourists have become enriched with a greater knowledge and understanding of the total community.

WSM operates two basic tours in harmony with the city's self-imposed titles: "Music City, U.S.A." and "Athens of the South."



Grand Ole Opry Tour visitors are taken on stage at the Grand Ole Opry House and briefed on the Opry's colorful history.

The Grand Ole Opry Tour is a colorful view of the Country Music Colony. It is only natural that devoted Country Music fans have a strong interest in the daily lives of this city's celebrities. And the Opry Tours allow visitors to see the homes of many of the stars while getting a capsule history of Nashville in the process.

The visitors see the home of the late Hank Williams, the estate of Eddy Arnold, homes of Johnny Cash, Tex Ritter, Webb Pierce and many more. Then to Music Row where the fans get their first glimpse of the publishing houses, talent agencies and recording studios which produce the famous Nashville Sound.

After a stop by the Country Music Hall of Fame, the bus returns to the Opry and the fans can stand on the stage where Opry favorites have performed through the years. Throughout the tour a continuous narration of the city's history and up-to-date information on the Grand Ole Opry Stars is related by the highly trained Opry Guides—who supply the heart and spirit of every trip.

The WSM Scenic Tours are tailored for those seeking an insight into the city's cultural and historical environment. They consist of stops at many spots associated with Nashville's rich heritage. Guests visit the Belle Meade Mansion, the Parthenon, Cheekwood, the Capi-

tol, the Hermitage, and other gracious homes of the past and present.



The "Ole Pea Picker," Tennessee Ernie Ford, chats with Grand Ole Opry Tour guests during a recent Nashville visit.

WSM's Civil War Tour is the newest addition to the tour collection. This tour emphasizes the decisive role the battle of Nashville played in the war. Tour guests will visit the actual forts and combat sites significant to the conflict. Highlights include a tour through famous Travellers' Rest and a visit to the battleground in Franklin, Tennessee.

In addition to the basic tours, WSM can arrange special tours for groups, clubs and organizations. The Tour Bureau also has a special service for groups of 14 or less. These personalized, custom tours are available daily with pick-ups by the "Fan-Van" at Nashville motels, hotels or the Grand Ole Opry House. WSM can also secure confirmed room reservations for your Nashville visit. In fact the Grand Ole Opry Tour Department is actually an entertainment bureau equipped to assist you or your group in coordinating any activities.



One of the stops on WSM's Civil War Tour is historic Travellers' Rest. The house was built around 1800 by Judge John Overton, a close friend of President Andrew Jackson. At the time of the Battle of Nashville, this house served as the headquarters of Confederate General John B. Hood.

Heretofore an outsider viewed the exciting world of Music City, U. S. A. through hearsay, imagination or literature. But now because of the Grand Ole Opry Tours a visitor can be guided through a city of grace, culture, history, warmth and music.

# The Grand Ole Opry House

The imposing structure in downtown Nashville that houses the famous Grand Ole Opry had its beginnings in 1885. At that time Nashville was a community approaching 100,000 people. With a reported 900 Manufacturing firms—mostly small—four cotton mills, woolen mills, extensive sawmills stretched along the Cumberland River, printing-publishing firms, railroads and steamboats, Nashville, like many American cities between 1880 and the end of the century, was moving rapidly into the industrial age. The city differed from other towns during this period because of its abundance of churches and schools. Since its founding in 1779, Nashville had been a religious city and leading regional educational center.

With a fruitful bed of theology already present, its not surprising Sam Jones and Tom Ryman would combine to create an auditorium here that is almost as famous as the city itself.

Jones was a Georgia preacher who regularly held tent meetings in the Nashville community. Among his converts was Tom Ryman. In a biography of her husband, Mrs. Sam Jones said of Ryman:

“He was an old steamboat captain, who owned a number of steamboats which plied the Cumberland River, and considerable property along the wharf, and in one of the large buildings he had a large saloon. He was brought to Christ by the preaching of Mr. Jones, and became a Christian in dead earnest. . . . His saloon was converted into a hall for religious and temperance meetings, and was christened “Sam Jones Hall”.\*”

Immediately after his conversion, Ryman began a campaign to build an auditorium where Jones could hold his revivals. Construction on the Tabernacle was started in 1889. That same year a Charter of Incorporation was registered in the State of Tennessee under the name

of the “Union Gospel Tabernacle,” stating its objects and purposes as “strictly religious, non-Sectarian and non-Denominational.” When Ryman died in 1904, the name was changed to the Ryman Auditorium.

The next 80 years brought many social, economic, and political changes to the community. And the famous building was influenced greatly by the turn of events. Gradually its programs were other than “strictly religious.” As a consequence the venerable building has welcomed everyone from Enrico Caruso, the New York Symphony, and Helen Hayes to Bob Hope, Doris Day and Ray Charles. In addition, almost every country music star you can imagine has performed on its stage.



The Grand Ole Opry moved to the Ryman Auditorium in 1941. In 1963, the building became the property of the National Life and Accident Insurance Company and was placed under the administration of WSM, Inc. Shortly afterward, the building officially became the “Grand Ole Opry House.”

The present Opry House will live on when the new Opry House is completed at Opryland U.S.A. in early 1974. WSM will memorialize the current structure by dismantling it and using the materials to build a non-denominational chapel at the entertainment complex.

The hand-made bricks which make up its structure will be reassembled piece by piece, the original pews will be moved and the plaque in front of the building, which identifies it as the “Union Gospel Tabernacle,” will go to the chapel.

The “Little Church of Opryland” will be a fitting tribute to a worthy building whose original purpose was “promoting religion, morality and the elevation of humanity to a higher plane and more usefulness.”

\*Laura McElwain Jones. *The Life and Sayings of Sam P. Jones.*

# The New Grand Ole Opry House



WSM's Grand Ole Opry, the most famous radio program in broadcasting annals, will be moving to its seventh and final home early in 1974. Construction is proceeding rapidly on this new structure which, when completed, will be the major attraction of Opryland U.S.A. The massive auditorium is the first built specifically for the Opry, and will be one of the world's most unique theaters.

The new Opry House will contain two studios. The Opry section itself will seat 4,400 (an increase of approximately 1,400 over the current seating capacity) making it the largest broadcasting studio in the world. The back area will include a 250-seat TV studio designed for both live and syndicated TV programming. The building will be air conditioned, and every facility will be modern.

The stage is 110-feet wide with a depth of 68 feet. This is increased to 91 feet by the use of a hydraulically operated thrust stage, suitable for television work. The larger area provides more space for the square-dancers and is designed to place the performer as close to the audience as possible. The stage at the existing Opry House will be removed, board-by-board, and it will become part of the flooring at the new building. After all, it's the very stage on which Hank Williams, Judge Hay, Jim Reeves and so many others performed.

The unique exterior design of the Opry House blends a rural, early American styling into the natural setting of the land and the entire

Opryland complex. Traditional warmth characterizes the bricks and the wood trim. The shed-roof design carries a shake shingle effect to enhance the rural charm. A large, two story portico covers the entrance way.

Inside, the warm brick and wood tones are enhanced by wooden pews, reminiscent of the current Opry House—Tabernacle. But they will be cushioned and comfortable. The house incorporates lobby and seating areas as one entity—a friendly, relaxed and comfortable atmosphere which encourages informality. Despite the increased seating, the plan never loses sight of the fact that the close relationship between artist and audience is the Opry's indispensable element. Therefore, the one balcony house is fan shaped with perfect sight lines from all seats.

Bricks from the current Opry House will be moved for wall facing inside the new structure where those who revere the old time things will be able to touch these walls and know from where they came. There are also plans to move the original pews at the existing Opry House to the stage of the new home for performers or their families to relax and enjoy the show.

Every effort has been made to make the new home spell pickin' and singing, country and western, and home folks welcome, which are Opry trademarks. Only the location will change.

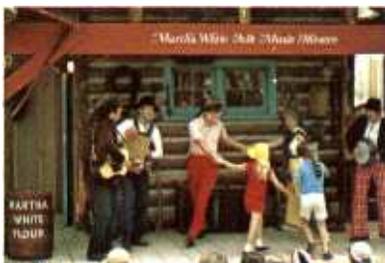


In 1969, the Grand Ole Opry History Picture Book announced plans for Opryland U. S. A. Now, it is no longer just on the drawing boards. The Tennessee woods and hills have come alive with music and fun in 1972.

With five, live musical shows, exciting thrill rides, specialty foods, animal exhibits and craftsmen, Opryland U. S. A. presents the greatest array of entertainment in this part of the country.

The 110-acre complex that will be the new home of the Grand Ole Opry House, is situated on 369 acres of wooded land bordered by the Cumberland River. Every effort was made in the construction of Opryland to preserve the natural surroundings that complement its heart and spirit—American music.

Every facet of the musical sounds that Americans claim as their own is represented here. Country music heads the list in the Opry Plaza, where a visitor is likely to meet Roy Acuff face-to-face, and there is the Folk Music area where the sounds of hill country are played in an open-air amphitheatre.





The New Orleans section presents Dixieland Music the way its played down on the wharf, and a short stroll will take you to the Western area where the Pageant of American Horses and the Cantina Show make you feel as if you have stepped into El Paso, Texas, in the 1880s.

The music of today has been captured in the Contemporary area, and the big show at Opryland, “I Hear America Singing,” is a musical tour of fifty years of American history. Parts of more than 170 songs are used in its production in a 1,000 seat amphitheatre.



Even the rides at Opryland are designed to blend with the scenery. The “Timber Topper” turns and twists through the treetops at a thrilling pace, while the “Flume Zoom” carries passengers in hollowed out logs up and around through the trees and down a 40-foot drop into a pond of water.

And, the fun doesn’t stop there, because there is still the Carousel on the Lake, the oldest operating ride in the country. It was imported from Europe, where it was built 100 years ago. The “Timber Topper,” the “Flume Zoom,” the “Carousel on the Lake” and all the other exciting thrill rides provide hours of entertainment for youngsters and oldsters alike. There are even genuine antique steam engines that take visitors through and around the park with stops at Grinders Switch and El Paso.



Everything is designed for total entertainment, including the animals. The Animal Opry provides musical numbers, barnyard style with a goose that plays the guitar, a pig that plays the piano, and a host of other talented animal entertainers. There are animals for petting and ferocious bears, lions and timber wolves in the Animal Ravine.

# Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration

Every autumn since 1951, WSM has held a birthday party in honor of the world's oldest radio show, now approaching one-half century of vigorous life.

From a humble beginning, when less than 100 radio men attended, the Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration and Disc Jockey Convention has grown in size and scope. Now over 6,000 D. J.'s, talent directors, publishers, musicians, record company executives and anyone else employed in the music industry attend the annual gathering.

The actual celebration begins on Wednesday with a Bluegrass Festival and ends with the cake-cutting finale at the Saturday Grand Ole Opry.

In between, conventioners see the Friday Night Opry, special stage shows, and luncheons and parties sponsored by participating organizations. RCA, Columbia, Capitol, Dot, Decca, and United Artists stage presentations. Several musical instrument companies also display their wares at hotels near the Municipal Auditorium, the hub of the celebration.

Although the luncheons, parties, and special shows add icing to the cake, the real attraction is the Opry itself, truly the "Mother Church of Country Music."

## The Opry Trust Fund

The Opry Trust Fund was incorporated in 1965 to provide financial assistance in time of need, emergency or catastrophe to country musicians or their families.

The Fund has distributed over \$200,000 since its inception. A board of 11 members, composed of Opry Stars and WSM representatives, approve all grants.

One half of the \$20.00 registration fee collected at the annual birthday celebration is channeled to the Fund. The other \$10.00 helps defray a portion of the convention expenses incurred by the participating firms.

WSM underwrites all administrative expenses. No salaries are charged to the Fund. And the money is not handled by WSM, but placed in the hands of a Nashville bank.

The Opry Trust Fund exemplifies the music industry helping its own less fortunate overcome financial and emotional crisis.



Performers at the Early Bird Bluegrass Concert display their wares during the grand finale. Leading the group at center mike is Bill Monroe, father of Bluegrass Music.



Bashful Brother Oswald and Grandpa Jones lead the crowd in singing "Happy Birthday to the Grand Ole Opry."



The WSM Spectacular and Luncheon entertains a capacity crowd.

# International Country Music Fan Fair

There is nothing quite like the harmony between the Country Music Stars and their fans. And there is no better place to witness this relationship than the International Country Music Fan Fair in Nashville, Tennessee.

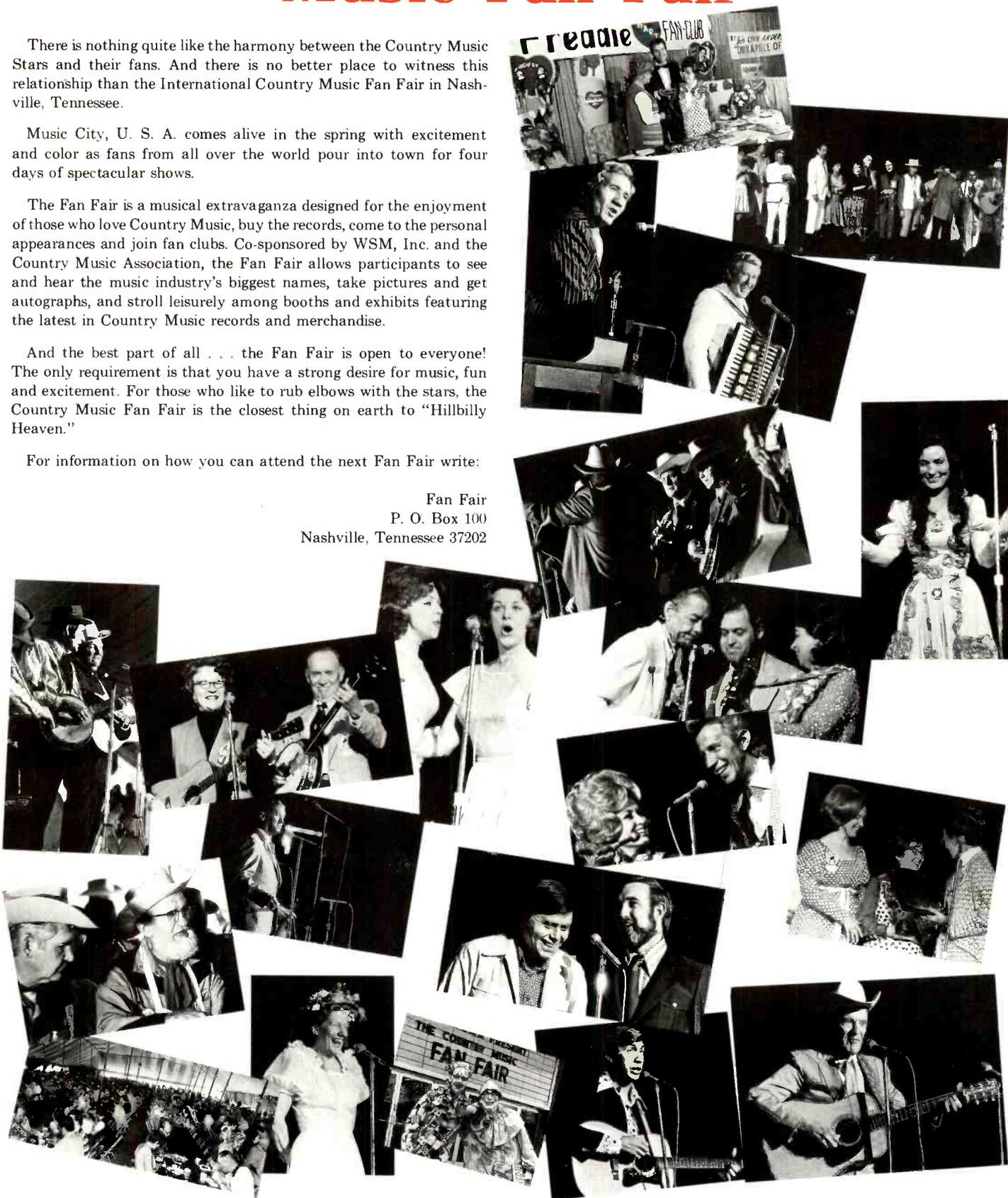
Music City, U. S. A. comes alive in the spring with excitement and color as fans from all over the world pour into town for four days of spectacular shows.

The Fan Fair is a musical extravaganza designed for the enjoyment of those who love Country Music, buy the records, come to the personal appearances and join fan clubs. Co-sponsored by WSM, Inc. and the Country Music Association, the Fan Fair allows participants to see and hear the music industry's biggest names, take pictures and get autographs, and stroll leisurely among booths and exhibits featuring the latest in Country Music records and merchandise.

And the best part of all . . . the Fan Fair is open to everyone! The only requirement is that you have a strong desire for music, fun and excitement. For those who like to rub elbows with the stars, the Country Music Fan Fair is the closest thing on earth to "Hillbilly Heaven."

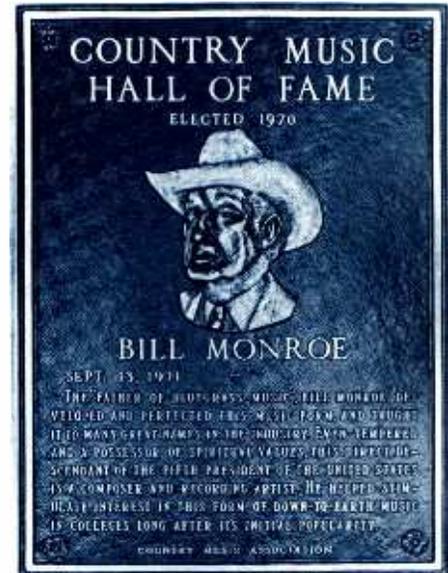
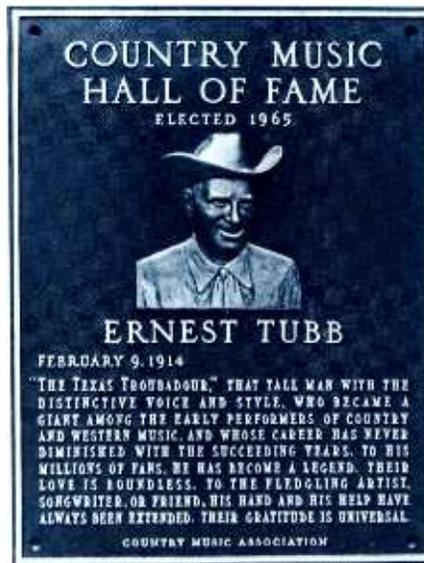
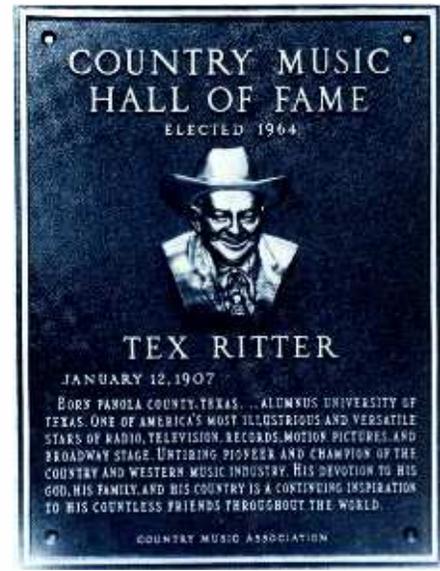
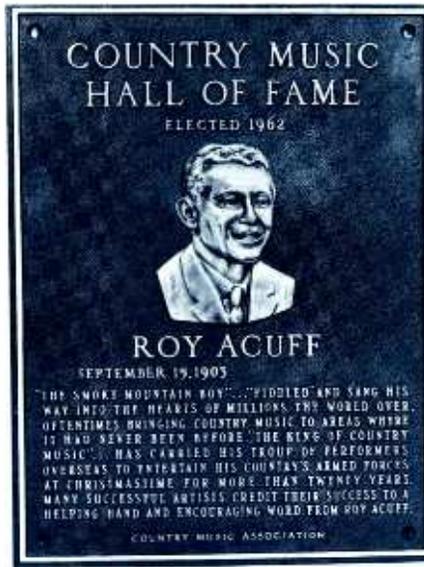
For information on how you can attend the next Fan Fair write:

Fan Fair  
P. O. Box 100  
Nashville, Tennessee 37202



# Hall of Fame

Present Grand Ole Opry  
Members Enshrined In The  
Country Music Hall Of Fame  
Nashville, Tennessee



# Grand Ole Gospel Time

The announcer begins: "Welcome to Grand Ole Gospel Time, coming to you live from the stage of the historic Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tennessee."

And instantly the venerable Opry House is filled with evangelistic melodies that recall another era some 80 years ago when this building was strictly a place of worship.

Grand Ole Gospel Time is a dream come true for Rev. Jimmy Snow, son of the Opry's Hank Snow. Rev. Snow, pastor of Nashville's Evangel Temple, hosts and performs on the gospel show that immediately follows the Friday Night Opry. This unique religious program began broadcasting in February 1972.

Rev. Snow has planned a well-paced, fast moving show with brief sermons and Bible messages, plus an abundance of gospel music furnished by the Evangel Temple Choir and famous guest artists. Some of the stars who have appeared include Johnny Cash and June Carter, Pat Boone, Kris Kristofferson, Connie Smith, the Blackwood Brothers, the Oak Ridge Boys and others.

Rev. Snow chose the Opry House for his gospel show because of its rich tradition and technical facilities. And there has always been a close association between country and gospel music.

The show has exceeded everyone's expectations. The crowds in attendance are extremely responsive, and mail from the radio audience denotes overwhelming approval.

Perhaps in the near future Grand Ole Gospel Time will become as popular as the Opry itself. Certainly the gospel show can boast of having the best "script" writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke. . . .



Rev. Jimmy Snow delivers Christ's message to a packed Opry House.



The Grand Ole Gospel audience is captivated by Johnny Cash's songs of love.



Pat Boone gives his public testimony.

# Opry Star Spotlight



Bill Anderson chats with Opry Star Spotlight host, Hairl Hensley.

WSM's Opry Star Spotlight is one of the most unique Disc Jockey shows in the world. It is a showcase for Country Music talent and an important factor in WSM having one of the largest nighttime radio audiences in the United States.

For the past 15 years the show has been hosted by Ralph Emery, one of the best-known late night voices in American radio. In August 1972, Ralph switched from the late night spot to the station's 6 to 10 p.m. slot.

Since that time, Opry Star Spotlight has been in the skillful hands of Hairl Hensley, veteran radio personality, former country musician, and present Grand Ole Opry announcer.

The show, a Monday through Friday feature, broadcasts from 10 pm until 5 am over WSM's Clear Channel (650). Hairl's guest list reads like a "Who's Who" of Country Music. They include everyone from record pro-

ducers, talent directors, and A & R men to the stars themselves.

The roster might feature the Grand Ole Opry Stars, other recording artists such as Jimmy Dean, Johnny Cash, Chet Atkins, Perry Como, Burl Ives, Roger Miller or 25 members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

The show is also one of the station's biggest "phone call" and "mail pulling" programs. In response to an offer for an autographed booklet on the State of Tennessee, 3,293 prepaid long distance calls were made to the show in a 10 hour period. Calls came from all 50 states, from Canada, Puerto Rico and from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. And there were calls from U. S. Navy ships, and two from Coast Guard Cutters.

Because of the nation-spanning nature of WSM's night-time signal, Hairl's show is especially popular with truckers who rely on Hensley's running commentary and music to keep them awake and on the road through several states and hundreds of miles.

HYY THIS IS WSM NSHV 14  
 GO AHEAD PLS  
 IS LD CRAIG OR HARRY STONE THERE THIS IS WHAS  
 NEITHER HR THIS IS DAVID STONE  
 DAVID THIS IS VITAL TEL COULSON TALKING  
 LOUISVILLE POWER GOING OFF AT EIGHT OCLOCK  
 WHAS STUDIOS MUST STAY ON AIR FOR RELIEF WORK  
 CAN U GIVE US THE ENTIRE FACILITIES OF WSM THRU THE MUTUAL UNTS  
 TO CARRY ON THIS WORK OVR YOUR TRANSMITTER  
 WE WILL GLADLY PAY FOR ALL COMMERCIALS YOU MISS  
 WE MUST SERVE THESE PEOPLE TONIGHT  
 PLEASE ADVISE RUSH AND WE WILL HOLD THIS WIRE  
 LHM WILL GE HARRY IN JUST A MINUTE AND CALL YOU QUITE SURE IT IS OK  
 OK WE WILL WAIT  
 END WSM DS WE ARE HOLDING ON  
 GODD FOR YOU WE LL DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP WILL HAVE HARRY CALL IN  
 WAIT HERE HE IS ON THE PHONE OK HARRY SAYS HE WILL JOIN YOU AT  
 EIGHT O CLOCK TONIGHT WILL YOU ORDER FACILITIES OR WILL WE HAVE TO  
 YES WE WILL GET IN TOUCH WITH TEL CO BUT U CONFIRM WITH THEM  
 FOR US WE ARE ORDERING CIRCUIT NOW  
 MIN  
 IF WE SHOULD HXXX GO OFF LARLIER THAN EIGHT CAN U PICK US UP  
 WHERE WE LEAVE OFF  
 YES WE WILL TAKE IT ANYTIME  
 WE ARE MAKING ANNOUNCMENTS ON AIR TO THAT EFFECT AND U MIGHT MAKE SIM  
 TS  
 SIMILAR ANNCTS  
 WE WILL BE GLAD AND SAY IF YOUR POWER FAILS CAN YOU SET UP BATTERY AMP  
 IN PHONE OFFICE YES WE SURE CAN AND WILL HAVE A BATTERY AMP AND MIKE AT  
 AT AT SHULD OUR LOOP FAIL  
 MR COULSON SAID GOD BLESS YOU  
 OK OM WE ARE REASY  
 ARE YOU THRU THATS ALL THANKS  
 ATAND I ARE SETTING UP CIRCUIT  
 FINIS  
 END WSM DSVV

“Mr. Coulson Said God Bless You”

Through the years WSM has constantly lent its Clear Channel (650) to community and regional undertakings. A good example was WSM's part in the Ohio River flood of 1937. High water eliminated WHAS Radio in Louisville from transmitting flood messages, warnings and directing rescue operations. All recovery orders and messages were phoned to WSM and broadcast from Nashville for 82 consecutive hours. It is estimated that WSM's efforts directly affected the lives of some 200,000 Louisville citizens. To this day the Louisville newspapers carry the WSM daily radio logs to show the city's gratitude.

The above teletype message discloses the exact communication between Lee Coulson, manager of WHAS in Louisville, and WSM's Harry Stone.

During the daylight hours most Americans receive excellent radio signals from anywhere in the country. But at night millions living and traveling in vast regions of the continental United States occupy what is termed a "radio desert" or "white area." These sections depend entirely on Clear Channel broadcasting for their only AM radio listening—supplying vital information, emergency data and entertainment.

When radio was in its infancy, before 1920, individuals and organizations could broadcast on any frequency. Although these stations were low-powered by modern standards, the lack of man-made interference enabled them to effectively blanket the United States. As the number of stations increased, interference between stations operating on or near the same frequency severely limited the area over which programs could be clearly transmitted. The National Radio Conference of 1923 was the beginning of the Clear Channel concept. It recommended 50 channels be assigned the exclusive use of one frequency. More conferences and various political pressures resulted in Congress

passing the Radio Act of 1927 forming the Federal Radio Commission. The Communications Act of 1934 established the present Federal Communications Commission, charged with the regulation of standard broadcasting stations. Shortly afterwards, the FCC assigned frequencies to the various classes of radio stations for the purpose of reducing mutual interference on the same or closely adjacent channels. Thus the birth of Clear Channels—designed to serve wide areas of the country day and night with no other station allowed to operate on this channel during the nighttime hours.

WSM entered the broadcasting field on October 5, 1925. On the first formal program, National Life and Accident Insurance Company President C. A. Craig declared: "It is my privilege and pleasure, on this our first night on the air, to dedicate this station to the public service." And WSM's history has been one of outstanding public service with world-wide popularity, thanks in large measure to its Clear Channel status.

Originally there were 40 1-A Clear Channels. Now there are only 12 providing listening service to over 25 million people in rural regions encompassing nearly 60 percent of the nation's land area. These Americans rely solely on Clear Channels at night and this will always be so. Adding more fulltime stations will never provide acceptable radio service to the "radio desert" because AM signals behave differently at night, and changes in the ionosphere reduces the coverage of regional and local stations.

In 1938, when there were 503 stations operating day and night, Clear Channel stations provided the only nighttime AM radio listening to 61.3% of the nation's land area. In 1961, 1919 stations had to rely on the Clear Channels to furnish nighttime AM listening to 58.3% of the nation's land area. Today, with over 4000 fulltime stations broadcasting, the picture remains largely unchanged.

WSM has applied to the Federal Communications Commission for permission to increase its power from 50 kilowatts to 750 kilowatts. Such an improvement would increase WSM's signal strength almost four times.

Today's complex and fluctuating society demands a well informed populace. More important, America's political heritage stresses the equal opportunity creed. This then is the pledge and responsibility of WSM and the remaining Clear Channels: to provide the thinly populated areas of the United States the same quality listening opportunity as urban residents.

# NLT Corporation



The National Life Center

The Grand Ole Opry is part of a corporate family that includes The National Life and Accident Insurance Company, WSM Radio and Television, and Opryland, USA—all affiliates of NLT Corporation.

