

Grand Ole Opry

WSM PICTURE - HISTORY BOOK



50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

THE



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 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.—George D. Hay, founder of the Grand Ole Opry.



George D. Hay and Uncle Jimmy Thompson—1925

The "Roaring Twenties" were turbulent and exciting years for America and the world. In 1920 the Versailles Treaty went into effect, and the doomed League of Nations was created. War broke out between Poland and Russia. It was a decade that saw Man O'War win the Belmont and Preak-



Kitty Cora Cline playing zither on one of the first barn dance programs.



George D. Hay—The Solemn Old Judge

ness Stakes, the beginning of air mail service between New York and San Francisco, and a young cornetist named Louis Armstrong came from New Orleans to Chicago, joined Joseph "King" Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and made musical history.

The early twenties also saw great developments in the radio field. Before the end of the decade this infant medium would have a profound influence on the social, economic, and entertaining life of the United States. And nowhere was this influence more felt than in Nashville, Tennessee.

It began in the early fall of 1925. The headlines in the local papers read: "Construction of Radio



DeFord Bailey



The "Possum Hunters"—Front: Walter Leggett, Dr. Humphrey Bate, Buster Bate, Staley Walton. Standing: Oscar Stone and Aaron Albright. The first country band to play on WSM 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 imagine this event having 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 over 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. Legend has it that the featured performer on that show was



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



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

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.



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



"Uncle Ed Poplin and His Ole Timers"—Standing left: Jack Woods and daughter, Louise, Ed Poplin. Seated: Frances Woods and Ed Poplin, Jr.

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."

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 correct, but



Grand Ole Opry Cast—1927.

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 harmonica to



Sam and Kirk McGee, "The Boys From Sunny Tennessee."



The Delmore Brothers—Rabon, left, and Alton.



*Son Dorris and Uncle Dave Macon,
"The Dixie Dewdrop"*

give us the country version of his 'Pan American Blues'.

"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.'"

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.

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



*Left to right, Robert Lunn, George Wilkerson,
Glen Stagner, and minstrel, Lasses White.*



*"Jack Shook and the Missouri Mountaineers"—From
left: Jack Shook, Dee Simmons, Bobby Castleman,
Arthur Smith, and Nap Bastian.*

what was then the southwest part of the city. 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 this location 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 in 1943 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



*Paul Howard, second from left, and his
"Arkansas Cottonpickers."*



Jamup and Honey

scheduled in 1897, and a balcony was added for the meeting. It then could seat over 3,000 people.

The first real country band to appear on WSM was headed by a genial physician, Dr. Humphrey Bate. At the time of Dr. Bate's death in 1936, Judge Hay wrote, "As a matter of fact, Dr. Bate played on the station even before the Barn Dance started." 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 has performed for 50 years each Saturday night. Other outstanding string bands were: The "Gully Jumpers", "The Fruit Jar Drinkers", "The Crook Brothers", "Arthur Smith and his Dixie Liner", "The Binkley Brothers and their Clod Hoppers", "Uncle Ed Poplin and his Ole Timers", "The Delmore Brothers", and "Jack Jackson and the Bronco Busters."

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



Roy Acuff, left, and his "Crazy Tennesseans."



The Bailes Brothers.

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.

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 Bluegrass Music.

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



One of the early Grand Ole Opry Tent Shows.



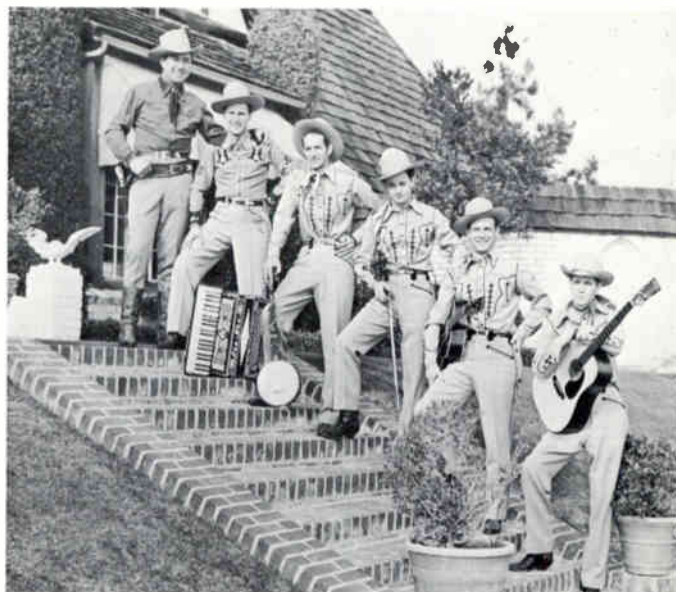
Bill Monroe, second from right, and one of his early "Bluegrass Boys" Band.

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.

The 1940's and 1950's brought new stars to the Opry: Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, Lonzo and Oscar, Ray Price, Johnny 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, Little Jimmy Dickens, 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 Stoney Cooper, Porter Wagoner,



Curly Fox and Texas Ruby before the present era of luxurious, custom made buses.



Left, Cowboy Star, Johnny Mack Brown, Pee Wee King and his "Golden West Cowboys."

George Hamilton IV, Skeeter Davis, and the list continues.

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. The Opry has since added: David Houston, Barbara Mandrell, Jerry Clower, Jeanne Pruett, George Jones, and Tammy Wynette.

The Grand Ole Opry family is unique. But like every other family it shares many human emotions.



Eddy Arnold sings to a large war time street crowd in downtown Nashville.



Whitey Ford, "The Duke of Paducah."

It has not always had the happiest of times. Tragedy has been a sad chapter in its history.

In 1953, at the age of twenty-nine, Hank Williams died in the back seat of a car somewhere between Knoxville, Tennessee and Oak Hill, West Virginia. Ten years later, Patsy Cline, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Cowboy Copas and his son-in-law, Randy Hughes were killed in an airplane crash. Then Jack Anglin, Betty Jack Davis, Texas Ruby Owens, Jim Reeves, Ira Louvin and Sam McGee were lost in tragic accidents. Probably the most publicized disaster occurred in 1973 when Stringbean and his wife, Estelle, were murdered at their farm after a Grand Ole Opry performance. The 1970's also claimed the lives of: Tex Ritter, George Morgan,



Left: Curly Fox, Zeke Clements and Roy Acuff.



L. to R.: Hank Williams, Milton Estes, Red Foley, Minnie Pearl, George Rosen—Radio Editor of Variety Magazine—Harry Stone, Eddy Arnold, Roy Acuff, Rod Brasfield, Lew Childre.

In front: Wally Fowler

Staley Walton, Ed Hyde, Claude Lampley, Jimmy Widener, and Cousin Jody.

From every state in the Union and many foreign countries 750,000 Opry fans annually travel an average of 470 miles one way to see the Friday and Saturday performances. It has been estimated that an additional seven to eight million see Opry 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 offshoot of the Opry, is a billion dollar a year business. The



Bradley Kincaid



Curley Williams and his "Georgia Peach Pickers."



Chet Atkins and Mother Maybelle, with guitars, and the Carter Family.

statistics are impressive indeed. Nashvillians are employed by recording studios, record pressing plants, talent agencies, trade papers, recording companies and performing rights organizations. Through the Opry, WSM has created a musical family that has in turn made Nashville "Music City, U.S.A." In fact David Cobb, retired WSM personality, is responsible for dubbing the town "Music City" many years ago. The first recording studio, Castle, was put together by three former 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 Capital. 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 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, Kitty Kallen, 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 five 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.



The York Brothers—George and Leslie.



Cousin Jody, left, with Lonzo and Oscar.



Hank Williams, a Country Music Legend.



Patsy Cline and Ernest Tubb.

There are performers who have been members of the Grand Ole Opry or members of the WSM staff band for 20, 30, and even 50 years. The disbursement of weekly and monthly monies has not been confined to a few. Witness the hundreds of stars and thousands of "sidemen" 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.



Gentleman Jim Reeves, Jack DeWitt and Del Wood.



Cowboy Copas and George Morgan



Hank Snow and Lew Childre performed for hundreds of servicemen in Korea.



The Louvin Brothers—Charlie, left, and Ira, right, with Faron Young.

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. 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 million family entertainment park and music center. Of course, the \$15 million Opry House is the focal point of this project.

In the summer of 1968, Irving Waugh, president of WSM, Inc., and National Life executives, Edwin Craig and Bill Weaver, talked of plans to build a new Opry House. When they began thinking in terms of space of parking and other considerations, the plan for a park was conceived.

At the 1968 Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebra-



Left to right: Johnny Wright, Carl Smith, Tex Ritter, Webb Pierce, Smilin' Eddie Hill, and Jack Anglin.



Edwin W. Craig, Dizzy Dean and Stringbean



*Lew Childre at the mike and "Mr. Guitar,"
Chet Atkins on drums.*



The Everly Brothers—Don & Phil.

tion, Waugh announced to the thousands of disc jockeys and music industry notables that a feasibility study would be undertaken to determine if such a complex were economically sound. At the 1969 birthday celebration, Waugh stated that all systems were go.

Opryland USA, a 369-acre complex, is designed to be "The Home of American Music." The park is divided into entertainment areas that combine live musical shows, natural animal habitat areas, restaurants, gift shops, and sensational thrill rides. Opryland opened its gates to the public in the

spring of 1972, and two years later the Grand Ole Opry show moved to the new 4,400 seat Opry House. In 1975, National Life and Accident Insurance Company officials announced plans for Oprytowne. Located adjacent to Opryland, it will be Tennessee's largest hotel-convention-exhibition center. The project will take two years to complete.

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



Hawkshaw Hawkins



Snooky Lanson and Dinah Shore



Johnny Cash.



Tex Ritter, "America's Most Beloved Cowboy."

Clear Channel Frequency (650) that spans the United States.

The music is genuine, down-to-earth, and honest. It is realism. And as Judge Hay explained once, "The principal appeal of the Opry is a homey one. It sends forth the aroma of bacon and eggs frying on the kitchen stove on a bright spring morning. That aroma is welcomed all the way from Maine to California."

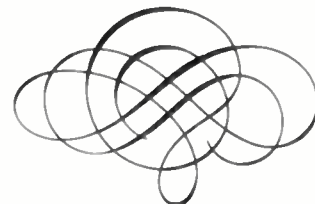
—Jerry Strobel



It's the early Fall of 1975. The curtain rises—followed by a fast fiddle tune, an enthusiastic crowd, intricate square dancing—and the Grand Ole Opry eagerly begins its second half century of entertaining America!



Fifty Years Later—The Annual "Ole Timers Show"—March 1975. From left: Herman Crook, Lewis Crook, Bert Hutcherson, the late Ed Hyde, DeFord Bailey and Kirk McGee.





Roy Acuff

"Roy Acuff" is a name well known to the students of Central High. He has been in school for five years, and in these years has shown one outstanding trait of character, that of loyalty. Besides being a good student he is an especially good athlete. Having played football, baseball, and basketball, he has won for himself twelve letters, a very enviable record.

When the Grand Ole Opry hit the air waves in 1925, Roy Acuff was enjoying an outstanding athletic career at Knoxville Central High School.

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, the late Dizzy Dean. Roy is married to the former Mildred Louis Douglas. The two were high school sweethearts. The Acuffs now live across the river from Opryland USA.

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.



BILL ANDERSON

Singer-composer Bill Anderson, is a major TV personality, top recording artist for MCA Records, and a concert performer whose name spells box-office success wherever he appears.

With country music's universal appeal today, Bill's admirers are small-towners and cosmopolitans, youngsters and adults, lovers of country, folk and contemporary music.

Bill also appears frequently as a guest star on TV's top variety shows, including the NBC-TV Today Show, the Mike Douglas Show, the Dinah Shore Show, Hee-Haw and others. In addition, Bill has been seen and heard throughout the world as a result of these appearances, and also through his performances on Armed Forces Radio and Television Service programs.

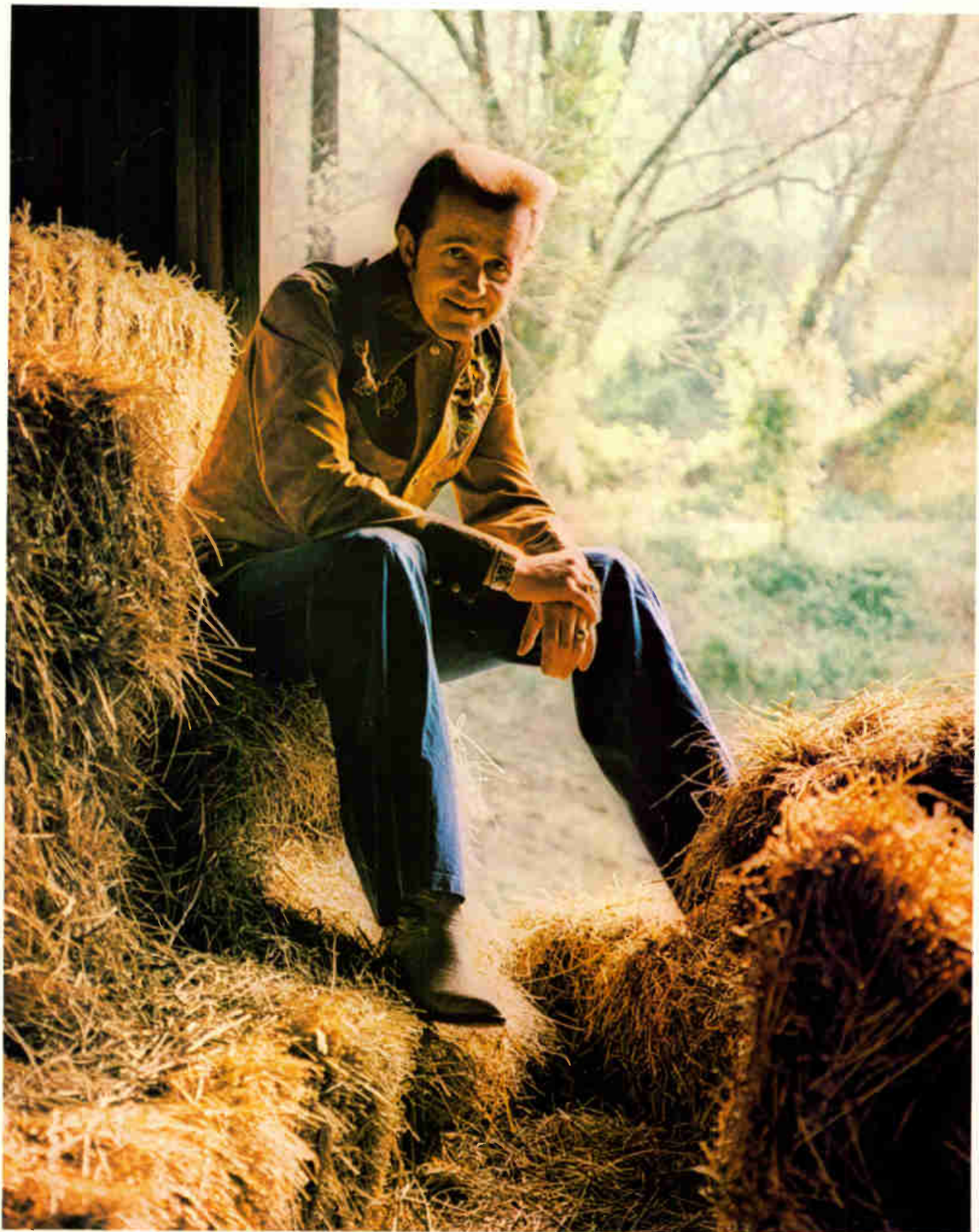
Bill has written hundreds of songs which have become hit records for himself and other country music stars. He has received over 40 B.M.I. awards, more than any other Country Music composer. He has been honored as Male Vocalist of the Year, Songwriter of the Year (three times) and, with Jan Howard, Top Duet of the Year. A Billboard Magazine poll named Bill as one of the "Three All-Time Greatest Country Music Songwriters." Among the hit songs he has composed and recorded are such popular favorites as "Where Have All Our Heroes Gone," "City Lights," "Still," "Tips of My Fingers," "Po' Folks," "I Love You Drops," "If You Can Live With It," "Quits," and scores of others.

The lanky, personable South Carolina-born entertainer is a former newspaperman who broke into show business when he became a disc jockey at a small radio station in Georgia. He later turned to singing and composing, landed a contract with MCA Records, and was on his way toward stardom.

Today, Bill lives in Nashville, the home of country music. When he tours, Bill and his group travel in a custom-built, luxurious bus that serves as a home and office on wheels. Bill's favorite hobby is playing first base on the talented Po' Boys softball team.



First baseman, Bill Anderson, smiles approvingly as the 1975 Fan Fair Championship Trophy is awarded to the Po' Boys.



ERNIE ASHWORTH

From Memorial Day through October, Ernie spends most of his time performing at the Coliseum in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Shown with Ole Ern are son Mike, who appears with his dad on the Opry; Bonnie Lou and Buster Moore, of the Smokey Mountain Hayride Show; and Morristown Mayor, "Z" Buda.



Ernie Ashworth was born and reared in Huntsville, Alabama, a town so near Nashville that his family was able to listen to the Grand Old Opry from the first, even before it became a radio fixture.

"I was always an Opry fan, even as a small child," Ernie recalls. "My relatives on both sides of the family were good musicians, though none of them were professionals. So I grew up with music and I always liked it. And the more I learned about it the better I liked it."

Ernie's greatest interest in the early days was song writing and from the first he had a flair for turning out good tunes.

"It was really the writing that got me started as a performer," he said.

He moved to Nashville in the early 1950's and formed his own band for night club work. He also played on some radio and television shows.

In 1957 Ernie decided to forgo the uncertainties of performing in favor of a job in guided missile work in Huntsville at Redstone Arsenal. He was talked into returning to show business in 1960 by his old friend Wesley Rose who was instrumental in seeing that Ernie signed a contract with Decca Records.

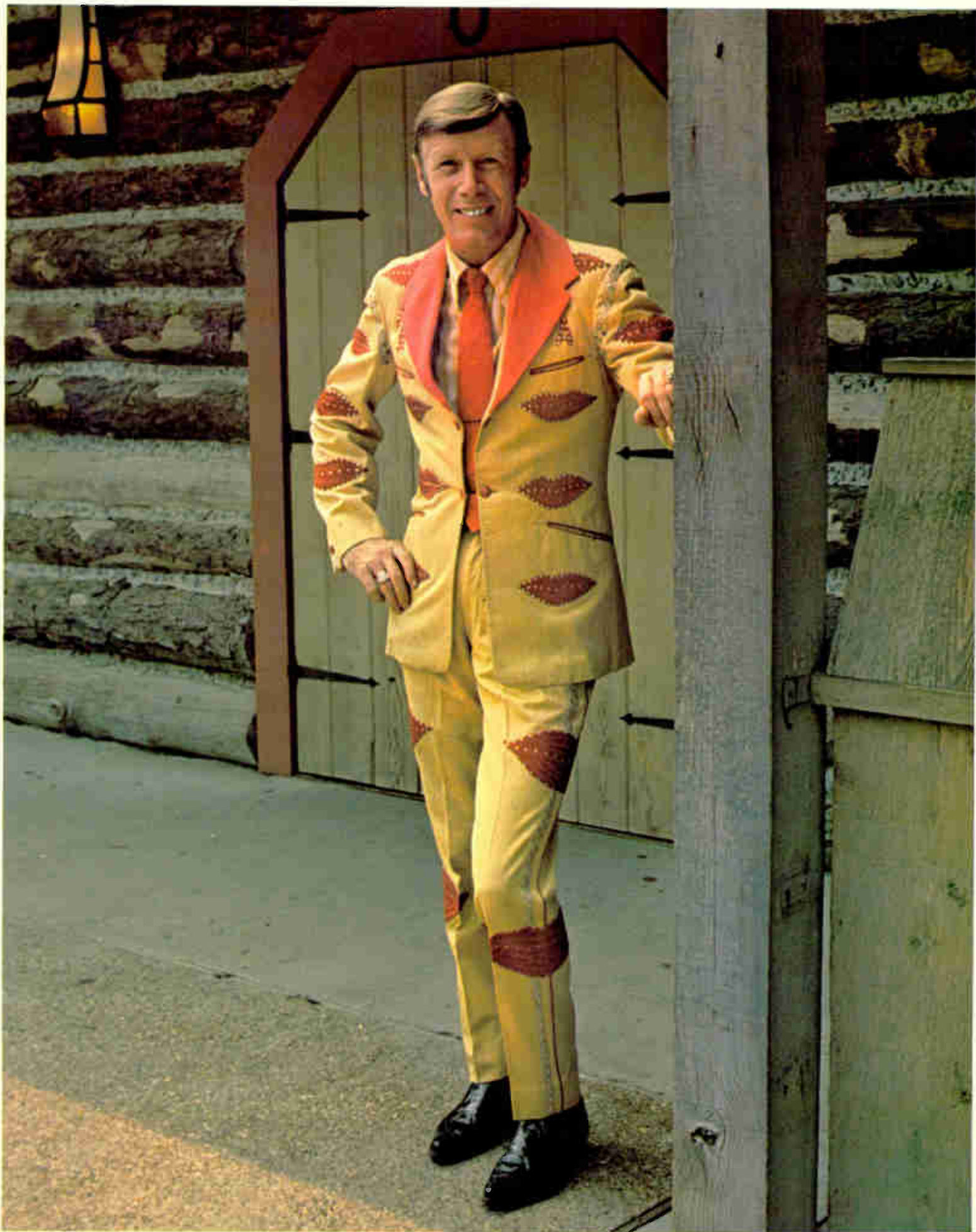
His first release, "Each Moment," jumped to number three in the popularity charts. His second, "You Can't Pick a Rose In December," was also a top-ten tune. He did two other Decca singles and both hit the top-twenty.

In 1962 Rose signed Ernie to a contract with his own Hickory Records and Ernie was really on his way. Each release did better than the last till his third Hickory single, "Talk Back Trembling Lips" rocketed to number one position in all the country-western charts. It stayed on the charts for 36 weeks and also did well in the pop charts.

In 1963 Billboard and Cashbox magazines voted him "Most Promising Country and Western Artist." The same year WMIL Radio in Milwaukee voted him "Most Promising Male Artist." In 1964 he was given the same awards by Cashbox and Record World magazines. The same year he joined the Grand Ole Opry.

He has traveled to all 50 states, Canada and Europe and he has fans everywhere. He has worked as co-writer on songs with many of the greatest songwriters in Nashville. Some of his tunes have been successes when recorded by pop artists. An example is "I Wish," which was recorded by Paul Anka. He has appeared in one Hollywood movie "The Farmer's Other Daughter," for United Productions, and has worked on scores of TV shows.

Ernie now lives in Lewisburg with his wife Bettye and their four children. His hobbies are hunting, fishing and camping and during the summer he and his family enjoy nothing more than a relaxing trip in their camper. Ernie travels thousands of miles every year but those miles with his family are the most fun.



JIM ED BROWN



Visitors to the Opry

come from far away. some even from outer space as in the case of Apollo Astronauts Pete Conrad and Stu Roosa with friend Jim Ed Brown.

James Edward Brown, born on April Fool's Day near Sparkman, Arkansas, might have been a third generation sawmill operator and logger. But he had a dream to be an entertainer. Today, that dream is a reality and Jim Ed Brown is a star of the Grand Ole Opry, a syndicated television show, and an internationally popular RCA recording artist.

Jim Ed catapulted to stardom with his sisters, Bonnie and Maxine, as The Browns, with a song he and Maxine wrote while he was in college, "Looking Back To See." "Three Bells," one of the first country music records to top the million mark, and "Scarlet Ribbons" clinched the trio's success in 1959. The next year they released another all-time favorite, "The Old Lamplighter."

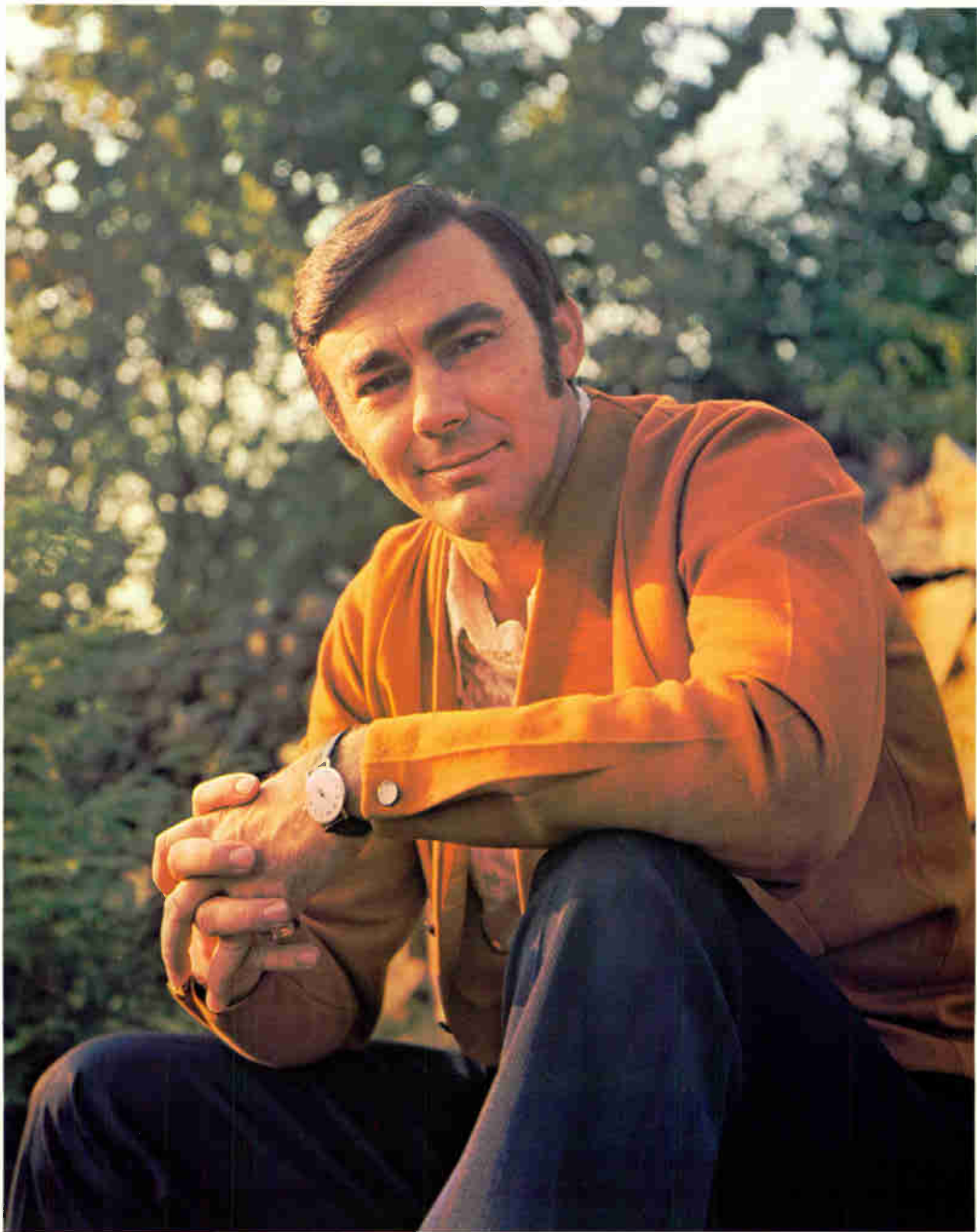
Bonnie and Maxine retired in 1966, but Jim Ed grew as a star in his own right with hits like "Pop-A-Top," "Morning," "Southern Loving," "Sometime Sunshine," and "It's That Time of Night."

Onstage and off, Jim Ed has a neighborly twinkle in his eyes that makes every member of his audience feel he's singing just to him or her. His

easy listening voice and professional poise come through wherever Jim Ed performs be it luxurious Las Vegas or a high school auditorium. With his brand of country music appealing to all types of folks, Jim Ed makes himself at home in Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall, network TV shows or the Grand Ole Opry.

Heavy in talent as well as looks, Jim Ed stars in his own road show, touring the United States in a custom-built bus. Versatility, style and unique musical combinations make The Jim Ed Brown Show a ticket full of talent. And the multi-talented Gems Band provides the best in modern country music as well as great country classics.

When Jim Ed isn't on the road, you'll find him at home near Nashville with his lovely wife, Becky and their boy and girl, Buster and Kim. Between recording sessions and working in his Music City office, Jim Ed fishes with his kids, water skis and enjoys any kind of hunting.



ARCHIE CAMPBELL

An artist can fall into one or more of many categories. Archie Campbell is an artist who fits several.

This native of Greene County in East Tennessee is first and foremost an entertainer excelling in both music and comedy. Secondly he is a songwriter, and authors virtually all of his material. Finally, he is a painter of note, a man capable of capturing on canvas anything from serious landscapes to humorous caricatures.

Perhaps Archie's earthy humor and love of mankind stems from his childhood days in Bulls Gap, Tenn. (Today, he's known as the "Mayor of Bulls Gap.") There, he, his brother and two sisters enjoyed a hilarious and happy rearing. He later studied art at Mars Hill College, (Mars Hill, N.C.), but found the entertainment field was more lucrative than art. He moved to near-by Knoxville and began concentrating on it.

After a Navy stint, Archie returned to Knoxville, where he had a radio show on WNOX, featuring guests like Chet Atkins and Carl Smith. "Would you believe that was so long ago, Chet was appearing as a fiddle player," quips Archie.

Moving to Nashville in 1958, he became a Grand Ole Opry member, signed an RCA recording contract and has spent the subsequent years wallowing in radio, TV, movie, personal appearances, hit records and script writing success.

Archie is well known as a comic and writer on the famous television series, "Hee Haw." The Campbell wit has also sparkled on several hit records, including "Rinderella," "Beeping Sleauty," "Pee Little Thrigs," "Trouble in the Amen Corner,"

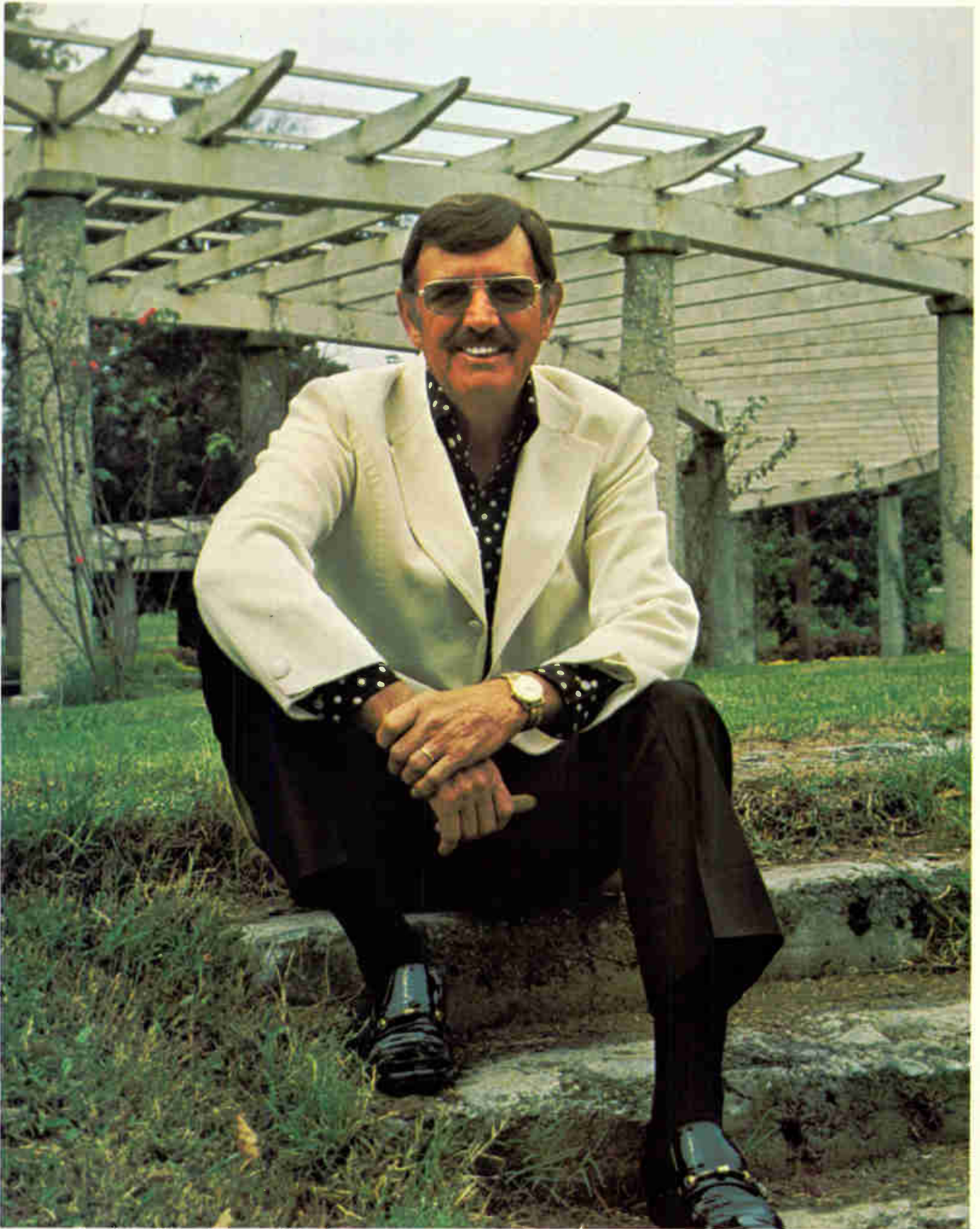


Archie chats with Mayf Nutter, left, and Jon Walmsley, of "The Waltons" fame, prior to their first Opry duo appearance.

and "Rojo." Archie has that rare ability to combine comedy with music, and he can handle the guitar, ukulele and bass with self-taught proficiency. In 1969 he was honored by the Country Music Association as "Comedian of the Year."

Warm, personable and always equipped with his familiar cigar, Archie devotes a tremendous amount of his time to worthy causes—like spearheading a statewide March of Dimes campaign, where he covered Tennessee in a helicopter in efforts to raise money for the unfortunate. He's been cited on many occasions by organizations like the American Cancer Society and is currently serving on the board of directors for the Southeastern Indian Antiquities Survey Inc., a research and educational project under construction near Nashville.

Archie is a man who doesn't sweat life or "get all ulcered up" as he puts it about making money. He's having too much fun.





A rose between two thorns. Ramona Jones delights in the antics of Grandpa and jumpin' Bill Carlisle.

When it comes to country comedy hit records, Bill Carlisle has always hit the right spot at the right time. Like an archer with his bow drawn and ready, Bill has shot to the top in country humor with such records as "Too Old To Cut The Mustard," "What Kinda Deal Is This?" and "Poke Salat Annie."

The story behind Bill Carlisle demonstrates the endurance of a solid musical background, a family background that spirited Bill on his way to the top.

"When I was growing up, our family'd get together for a good old-fashioned sing-along every Sunday," recalls Bill. "We had quite a chorus with Mom, Dad, my four brothers, two sisters and me. Those were great days back in Wakefield, Kentucky, and I'm sure they had a lot to do with my becoming a musician and entertainer."

Indeed they did, for Bill never once ventured away from his want to be a country star. He continued singing at home, and then organized his own group, The Carlises and headed for the big time.

On his first big radio engagement in Cincinnati, Bill and The Carlises recorded a song that brings memories to many country fans: "Rainbow At Midnight." That song was the initial success that started Bill and The Carlises on their long, highly-successful journey into the country music spotlight.

"Knoxville was the country music center in the early '50's," explains the broad-grinning Bill, "so

we packed up our show and moved from Ohio to Tennessee." The talented group joined such famed performers as Don Gibson, Chet Atkins, The Carter Family, Homer and Jethro, Carl Butler and Archie Campbell, and that is company enough to play to standing ovations for months on end.

Naturally, talent such as the Carlises was not left unnoticed and, in 1954, Bill and his group received an invitation to join the Grand Ole Opry. In addition to "Too Old To Cut The Mustard" and "What Kinda Deal Is This?", "No Help Wanted" and "Poke Salat Annie" have been such tremendous hits that numerous other artists have recorded them.

Some artists kick one foot up as they finish a song, some throw their guitar to their side, some wiggle, some bend way over their mike, and then there is Bill—he jumps. "I just do it, always have," Bill replies candidly. That is the end of a very important question.

Still, "jumping" is not the only adjective to pounce upon this beloved country star. Wise would be another. Bill was wise enough when he began his career to know that comic songs were his bag of tricks, and he has never disappointed his fans.

Another adjective for Bill Carlisle is enduring. His style, his manner, his personal touches in country music have carried on steadily through the years, and, with his children Sheila and Billy, no doubt he will remain a favorite for years to come.



JERRY CLOWER



Jerry entertains Dennis "McCloud" Weaver with his latest coon story.

Jerry Clower is his real name. The stories he tells really happened. The laughter that greets these stories is the real thing. Not canned. Jerry Clower is a humorist with albums which tickle the nation's funnybone. He's made guest appearances on top shows in television and radio, and requests pour in for engagements as speaker and professional entertainer. But there's more. Listening to Jerry is not merely listening, because Jerry does more than tell a story funny: he carries his audience along with him, on that coon hunt or whatever. The locale may be regional, but the humor is universal.

What is it that makes Jerry a good entertainer? What it is can be seen surfacing in his background: His mother says that he was always talking. It's as natural for Jerry to tell a story as it is for a politician to make a promise. And Jerry is not delivering material conjured up by a staff of writers. The basic part of every story is, to quote him, "something real that has happened to me or almost happened!"

Jerry's growing up was typical of country boys all over America. He loved sports and with his friends, sat glued to the battery radio listening to ballgames. His favorite food was french fries with molasses, but home-raised groceries included hog meat, biscuits, chicken, sweet potatoes, and don't knock it if you've never played tackle in the line.

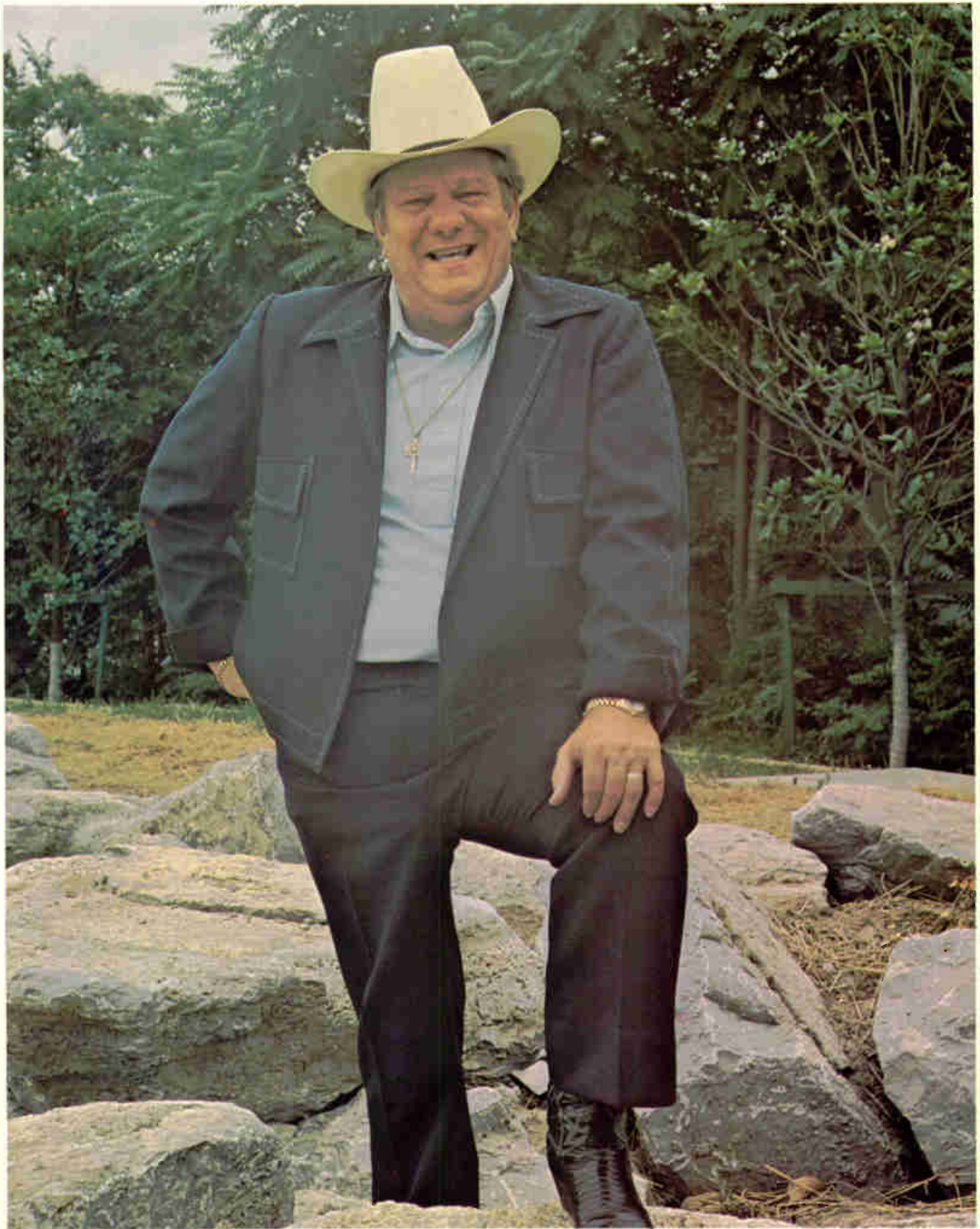
At home Jerry and an older brother, Bill (Sonny), shared the chores. Jerry did the milking and 'tended to the cattle and took his turn building

the fire each morning—one in the summertime (in the kitchen stove), two in the winter.

The fertile imagination received early cultivation: Jerry and his friends were resourceful at developing their own entertainment. A Saturday afternoon when they were not working would find them in the pasture having a rodeo, which meant rounding up a bunch of calves and riding them. Or down at the creek playing 'gator. Or Tarzan. Or they might go coon or rabbit hunting. They didn't sit around waiting for a recreation director to come and organize a game.

In addition to the staggering number of speaking engagements, guest spots include: the David Frost Show, the Charlie Pride personal appearances, Mike Douglas Show, Country Crossroads Radio Show, the Bill Anderson and Wilburn Brothers TV Shows, and as a regular member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1973. Jerry has sold millions of record albums, has taped radio and television commercials, both local and national, and his apt ad libs are the joy of all talk show hosts.

Jerry's show business career is based on one thing, being natural, being himself. Roy Clark has remarked, "he brought back some memories that I cherish, but I was about to forget them." Jerry Clower sells the really good life—laughter, remembering the fun you've had, the friends, the simple things you enjoyed, the humorous side of even the bad time.



WILMA LEE AND STONEY COOPER

When it comes to down-home country music, Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper are the forerunners of it all. Just as 'Release Me' is a country standard, the Coopers are a standard of country. Since 1947 they have set an example for country entertainment, and have continued to be specialists of the music that raised them.

As an integral part of the greatest country shows, Wilma Lee and Stoney have carried their incomparable sounds around the world. Their story is legend . . . a legend that lives today as an active part of the world of country music.

Wilma Lee began singing with her family, the famed Leary Family, in West Virginia. They were religious singers, and traveled quite a bit, using relatives as musicians. "My uncle played the fiddle for us," recalls Wilma Lee, "but, when he went back to teaching school . . . well, Daddy heard about a fiddle-player in Virginia and he hired him. That was how I met Stoney, when Mom and Daddy hired him."

That was in 1939 . . . and eight years later, Wilma Lee and Stoney began appearing as a team. They traveled together and appeared on radio stations all the way from Harrisonburg, Virginia, to Grand Island, Nebraska. They were radio stars at WJJD in Chicago before the station established itself as one of the country music giants.

The radio years of Wilma Lee and Stoney have set records for salesmanship. In three weeks they sold 10,000 books for Southern Farmer magazine in Blytheville, Arkansas. During their tenure at WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia, they were sponsored by Carter's Pills . . . a show that lasted for ten years and was transcribed over twenty 50,000-watt stations across the country three times a week. In addition, from 1954 to 1957, the American Tobacco Company sponsored their segment of the famed jamboree.

"Don Gibson wanted to write us a song about Wheeling," remembers Wilma Lee, "so, he wrote 'There's A Big Wheel' for us. We debated recording it because it referred to God as a 'Big Wheel' . . . in fact, we didn't record it until we came to Nashville."

"We finally cut 'There's a Big Wheel' along with two other songs in one session, and all of the three were big hits for us."

The other two songs were 'Come Walk With Me'



Stoney, Wilma Lee, Opryland Manager, Bud Wendell, Carol Cooper, and Opry Manager Hal Durham take a break during the Fan Fair's Grand Master Fiddling Championship.

and 'Walking My Lord Up Calvary Hill,' which has become a gospel standard.

The Coopers moved to Nashville as one of country music's most popular couples. They had been accepted by radio and live audiences everywhere, and their records were tops. Wilma Lee and Stoney became members of the Grand Ole Opry in 1957. In 1974 the Smithsonian honored Wilma Lee as one of the great women in Country Music.

Revered by fans and respected by their own popular band, 'The Clinch Mountain Clan,' as well as their associates, Wilma Lee and Stoney have never faltered in their chosen field of country music.

Through the years they have retained their down-home modesty and honesty, which has helped them retain their tremendous rapport with audiences from Music City to Germany and around the world. Always ready to help another artist . . . always at their best . . . Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper are, indeed, country standards.



THE CROOK BROTHERS

KIRK MCGEE

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.

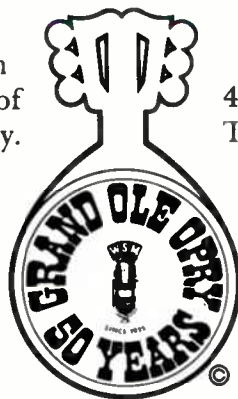
“Back in the early days—before the Opry was actually started,” says Herman, a harmonica player, “we used to get two or three together and go around to different houses to play for folks. We didn’t charge anything. It was just for fun.

“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.



David Kirkland McGee was born November 4, 1899 on a farm in Williamson County, Tennessee near Franklin. He is one of the oldest Opry members. At the age of thirteen he began learning to play the banjo. And by his twentieth year, Kirk started out on his own, joining a medicine show which was traveling through Alabama.

In early 1925, Kirk joined brother Sam and Uncle Dave Macon making personal appearances throughout the South. In May of the same year they 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. “The Dixie Liners” were the first act to be booked from WSM Radio Station for personal appearances. Their first booking 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 visit with their 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 highest honors bestowed on Kirk and Sam was an invitation in 1968 from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., to appear at their Folk Festival. Here they were acclaimed as true pioneers of Country Music.

Sam and Kirk performed as a duo until Sam’s accidental death in August 1975, while working on his Tennessee farm. Since then Kirk has continued to entertain with the “Fruit Jar Drinkers” each Saturday evening, bringing the Opry fans authentic ole time country music.



The Crook Brothers with Alcyone Beasley—a staff member of WSM Radio before the Grand Ole Opry was born.



Kirk McGee, center, and “The Fruit Jar Drinkers,” Goldie Stewart, left, and Hubert Gregory.



Skeeter Davis and Opryland General Manager, Bud Wendell, reminisce back stage at the Opry.

Skeeter Davis is a most unconventional young lady. She seems to defy classification. Although the Dry Ridge, Kentucky, native considers herself a Country Music performer, she has earned countless friends and fans in the so-called "pop" field.

Skeeter started out in conventional fashion by being half of a popular duet. She and Betty Jack Davis performed as "The Davis Sisters" until a tragic head-on auto collision claimed Betty's life and left Skeeter in critical condition. Although Skeeter had already accumulated valuable professional experience as an RCA Victor artist and on Cincinnati Radio Station WCPO, she decided to leave show business.

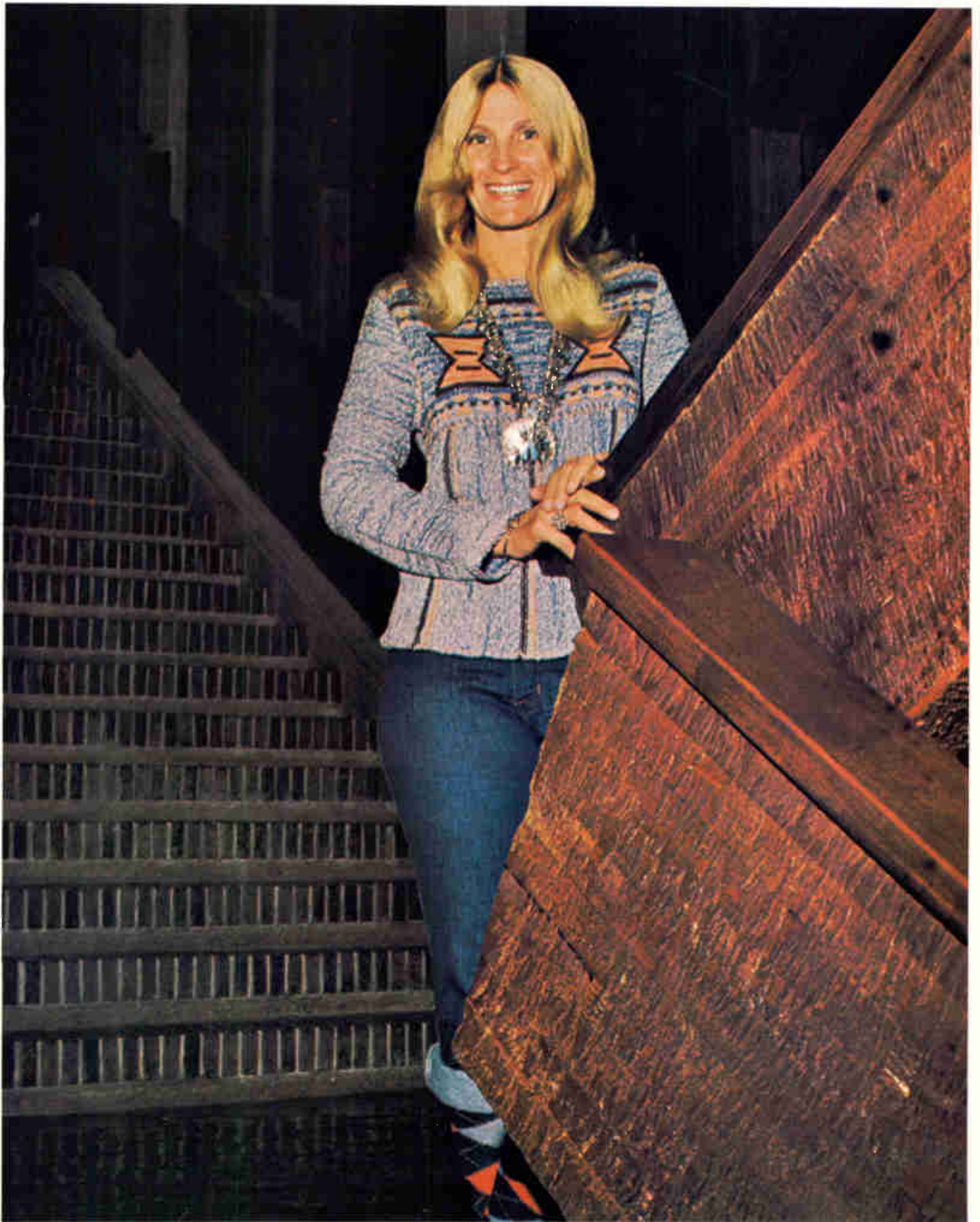
Long-time friends, Chet Atkins and the late Steve Sholes of RCA, joined forces with Ernest Tubb in persuading Skeeter to return to the stage. She consented to appearing with Tubb and the Troubadours. Although she appeared as part of the Tubb traveling unit, she wrote and recorded as

a single. In 1959, Skeeter joined the Grand Ole Opry.

Skeeter's career skyrocketed when she helped write lyrics for an instrumental song, and her rendition of "Last Date" blossomed into a king-sized hit. It was followed by "The End of the World," "Sunglasses," "I'm a Lover Not a Fighter," "Love Takes A Lot of My Time," and a steady procession of best sellers. Skeeter's road appearance set many house records.

Skeeter lives in Brentwood, Tennessee, with a house full of pet poodles, parakeets, a peacock, doves and an ocelot. She loves animals and owns a prosperous farm near Nashville. She has a special room in her spacious home reserved for mementoes and souvenirs given her by fans. It is said she values every article received.

Another pleasant attribute to Skeeter's colorful personality is her delightful "gift for gab." It is only natural that a multi-talented performer like Skeeter Davis should have much to tell the world.



JIMMY DICKENS



Little Jimmy checks his appearance, adjusts his hat and awaits his cue to go on stage.

Jimmy, the youngest of 12 children, was born in Bolt, West Virginia. His initial start in the entertainment business was with a local radio station, WOLS, at Beckley, West Virginia, where he opened the station's program "crowing like a rooster." Though he had to walk to and from the station, he loved being in radio and set his sights on the entertainment field.

After winning local acclaim, he moved to WIBC in Indianapolis, Indiana and then to WLW in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was later at Saginaw, Michigan that Roy Acuff offered "Little Jimmy" his big opportunity . . . to join the Grand Ole Opry.

Jimmy became the first Country Music artist to completely circle the globe on a world tour. This tour began in Nebraska, then went on to Califor-

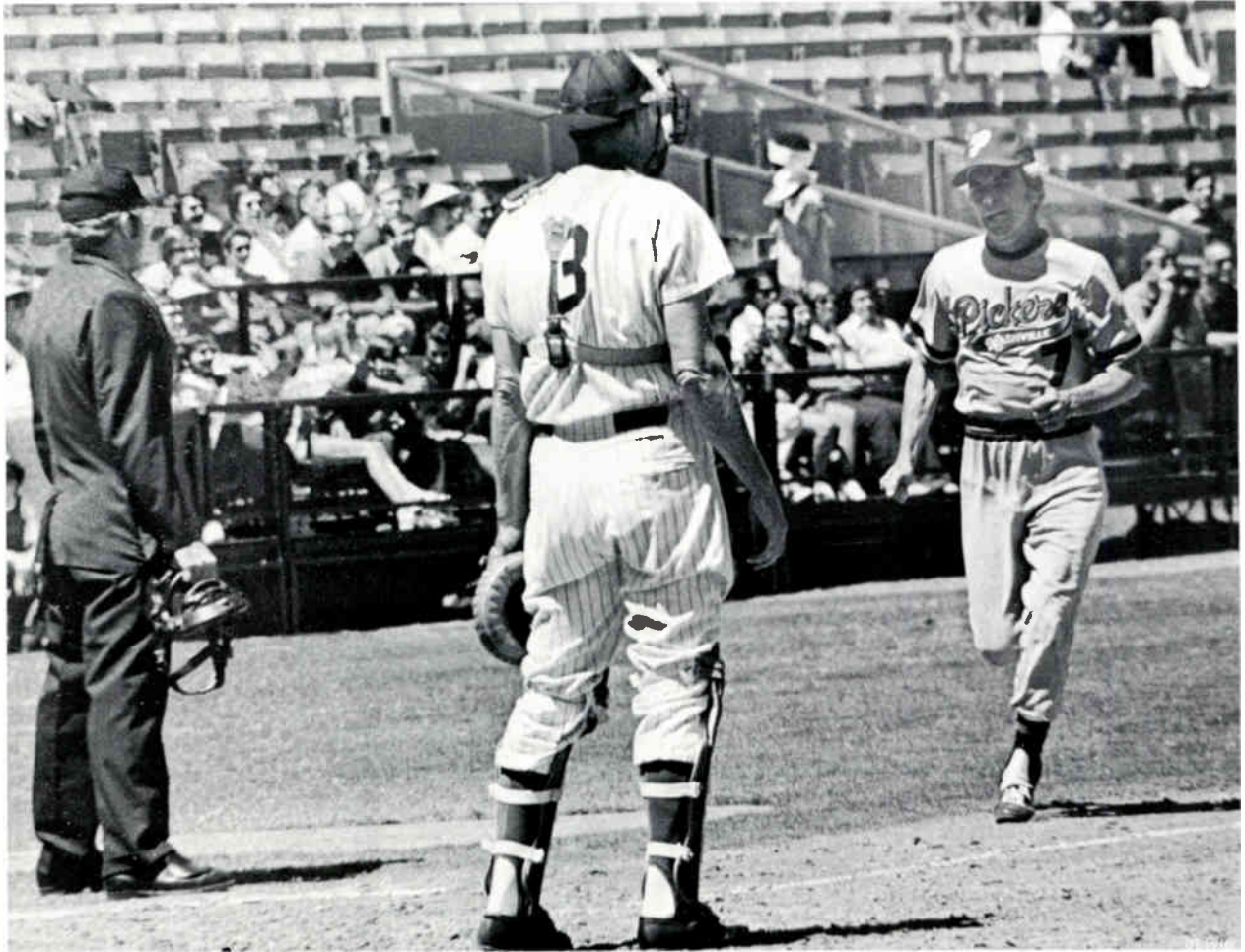
nia, Hawaii, and then a 12 week tour of the Far East. From the Far East, Jimmy spent two weeks in England, then on to Canada for one week followed by a week's engagement in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where his tour ended.

Jimmy has had many hit records such as: "May The Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose," "Old Cold Tater," "A-Sleepin' At The Foot Of The Bed," "Out Behind The Barn," "Life Turned Her That Way," plus many more.

Jimmy has done many major TV shows such as, The Tonight Show, The Jimmy Dean Show, Hullabaloo, Porter Wagoner Show, Bill Anderson Show, and many others.

Although small in stature, Little Jimmy Dickens is a giant among his fans and friends.





Streaking home . . . Roy scores another run for the "Pickers" baseball team.

Roy Drusky is a name known and recognized by music lovers everywhere and for good reason. Roy and his band "The Loners" have played all 50 states and over 15 foreign countries. So it can be truly stated that this show is world famous.

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 City Pickers baseball team. But it is to the everlasting satisfaction of his many followers that he eventually chose music as his profession.

Roy has been a member of the Grand Ole Opry since 1958, and happens to be one of the finest singers in the business. This versatile artist, who plays guitar, clarinet and piano has guested on various TV network programs and has had roles in five feature length motion pictures; the most recent being "Sporting Country."

To show the consistency of this artist, Roy has had over 50 chart records—10 of which were number one. He currently has 35 albums to his credit and over two dozen music awards.

Maintaining a background in radio announcing, Roy's diversified interests include serving as a former executive with SESAC 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.

Roy is a devoted family man who spends as much time as possible on his large farm near Nashville. Always the sports buff, Roy, his wife, Bobbye and their three sons take to the sun whenever possible. Baseball, water sports, football and just good old country living are but a few of their favorite pastimes.



LESTER FLATT



*Lester Flatt and The Nashville Grass
get set to board their custom bus for a show date somewhere in America.*

Lester Flatt is among the all-time great showmen ever to play and sing Country Music and his Nashville Grass troupe is considered one of the best.

Born in Overton County, Tennessee, Lester grew up in adjoining White County near Sparta on the vast and rugged Cumberland Mountain plateau that was also the home of the fabled Sergeant Alvin York.

His professional career began in 1944 when he was hired as lead singer with Bill Monroe's "Bluegrass Boys" on WSM's Grand Ole Opry. In April, 1948 Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs formed The Foggy Mountain Boys. Together they became one of the most famous teams in Country Music. When their partnership was terminated in February, in 1969 the band members elected to remain with Lester to form "The Nashville Grass," a name selected by fans in a nationwide contest conducted by longtime sponsor Martha White Foods, Inc. of Nashville.

College booking of The Lester Flatt Show average more than fifty a year. Campus concerts have included The University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point; Penn State at Erie; The University of Georgia; The University of Missouri; Guilford

College; New Mexico State; The University of Montana; North Carolina State; The University of Illinois at Champaign; Michigan State University, as well as Nashville's own Vanderbilt University where RCA Victor recorded a live album which re-creates the tremendous reception accorded Flatt and his compatriots.

Among the highlights of The Lester Flatt Show on stage at WSM's Grand Ole Opry or on personal appearances throughout the United States are "The Ballad of Jed Clampett" as featured in "The Beverly Hillbillies" television series and the Grammy award-winning "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" as also featured in the original sound track of the "Bonnie and Clyde" movie.

Long one of the best known names in Country Music, Lester Flatt is a legend within his own time to thousands of bluegrass musicians and fans throughout the world. Poise, professionalism and a fast-paced program of wholesome entertainment are trademarks of the group. The name Lester Flatt & The Nashville Grass carries with it a great deal of prestige on campuses, and at bluegrass festivals, state fairs, listening rooms and auditoriums.



THE FOUR GUYS



The Four Guys—Richard, Brent, Sam and Gary—get a quick fiddle lesson from John Hartford prior to his Opry appearance.

The Four Guys are one of the most popular groups on the Grand Ole Opry. And it's no wonder, because this quartet's vocal artistry appeals to all tastes.

Their repertoire ranges from Top Forty to Folk. In close, easy-on-the-ear harmony, they can produce any sophisticated pop sound. But frankly, The Four Guys prefer the country field, and their many loyal fans are glad they do.

This exceptionally versatile vocal group shares a rare distinction among Opry acts; they became regular members without having first established themselves as recording artists. The only other current act to receive an invitation without a previous recording contract was Stonewall Jackson a few years before.

Their first Grand Ole Opry guest spot in early 1967 was a result of appearances on Ralph Emery's WSM-TV Show. The Guys made 13 consecutive Opry appearances—having encored everytime—before they became regulars, just three months after they moved to Nashville.

The Guys began their career singing mostly on weekends, playing clubs in West Virginia. They came to Nashville to visit in 1966, and made a tape. Then things started to happen for them, including

Opry membership and a recording contract. A permanent move to Music City was inevitable.

Since that unusual beginning, the Four Guys have proved the wisdom of the Opry Manager's decision. They still rate frequent encores, have furnished background voices for hundreds of artists, and appear daily in the Grand Ole Opry House during Opryland's summer season. In addition, the Guys have made numerous TV appearances, and recently toured the country with super-star, Charley Pride.

The Four Guys' latest venture is the opening of their very own supper club. "The Four Guys' Harmony House" located just a few minutes from Opryland, is a dream come true for the group. In the past, they have performed at leading supper clubs in Las Vegas and around the country. This experience gave them first hand knowledge of the pros and cons connected with the restaurant business.

They feel their club is one of the best anywhere for entertainment and food. And it should be because The Four Guys are performing there most every evening—ready to help out in the kitchen if needed. Why not visit the "Harmony House" the next time you're in Nashville? There are four guys at this restaurant who would love to meet you.





Wesley Rose, president of Acuff-Rose Publications, left, and Hal Durham, Grand Ole Opry Manager, look on as Don signs his Opry contract.

Don Gibson is among the three or four greatest country music songwriters of all time on just about everybody's list. As a matter of fact Don could live comfortably for the rest of his life on the endless flow of royalties from just one song, the classic "I Can't Stop Loving You."

At last count more than 150 artists had recorded it (Elvis Presley three times, for example) and Don's dividends from the song even include a gold record for the Ray Charles version. And to prove that it wasn't a fluke Gibson also wrote "Oh, Lonesome Me," another country standard, "Blue Blue Day," "Legend in My Time," "Sweet Dreams," "Too Soon to Know," "Guess Away the Blues" and scores of others.

Yet you can't separate Don Gibson the songwriter and Don Gibson the singer and musician. In recent months Don Gibson the singer has taken center stage with a greatly expanded personal appearance schedule and a continuous flow of fine, hit recordings from Hickory. "The songwriting and the performing are entwined," Gibson said recently. "And I thoroughly enjoy both."

As a teenager he worked at a variety of jobs, in the textile mills in his native North Carolina, "hopping curbs and even delivering baby diapers," he recalled. And all to make enough money to finance his efforts to be an entertainer and songwriter. Don's father was a railroad man and there were three brothers and two sisters so at an early age Don was on his own.

He was still a youngster when he moved to Knoxville to perform on the WNOX "Tennessee

Barndance" and "Midday Merry-Go-Round." He soon organized his first band and a busy schedule of one-nighters and club dates in the area followed. And then he met Wesley Rose, president of Acuff-Rose Publications in Nashville. Rose heard some of Don's songs and sought him out. And just as Rose's father, Fred, discovered Hank Williams, Rose discovered Don Gibson.

Don signed a song writing contract with Rose and a recording contract with RCA Victor followed in short order. His first single was "Too Soon to Know," and it was a good recording. But the second one was the smash hit. It was "Oh, Lonesome Me," which swept every major award in the country music field in 1958. During this period Don joined The Grand Ole Opry as a regular. His recordings of "I Can't Stop Loving You," "Sea of Heartbreak" and "Blue Blue Day" added to his already impressive reputation.

But the nicest thing that ever happened to him, in his own words, "is her," his wife, Bobbi, a beautiful, charming girl from his home town, Shelby, N.C. Don's current hobby revolves around sport cars.

With all his many successes—including one movie, "From Nashville With Music"—what goals are there left for this giant of the country music industry? Don Gibson stops to think a moment when asked that sort of question. "To top myself," he will answer, finally. "I'd like to write another hit as big or bigger than, 'I Can't Stop Loving You,' and I think I can do it, too."





Billy Grammer welcomes one of America's favorite comics to the Opry Stage. Jerry Lewis was visiting Nashville for the Muscular Dystrophy fund raising effort.

Success did not come easy for the son of a farmer and coal miner who was one of 13 children born on a farm in Illinois. And it couldn't happen to a nicer guy. Billy's quiet but confident manner, whether it be a radio, TV or stage performance, is a refreshing experience.

Billy was born at Benton, Ill., and spent the most memorable part of his childhood fishing on a trot line in the Wabash River, where he dreamed of becoming a mechanical engineer. But he had developed a love for the guitar early in life. His father was an exceptionally fine fiddler and taught him to accompany him at playing for pie suppers and various local functions.

- Billy graduated from high school, was briefly in the Army, and spent an apprenticeship as a tool maker. Following the war, Billy, along with thousands of others, found himself without work. He got word of a possible opening with Connie B. Gay, at that time a Disc Jockey, with WARL, Arlington, Virginia, who was promoting Grand Ole

Opry acts in that three-state area. He hitchhiked to Arlington, auditioned, and got the job.

In 1958, shortly after "Gotta Travel On" crested as a million-seller, Billy was signed as a regular cast member on the Grand Ole Opry. Billy was an instant hit, due in part to his professional experience with Jimmy Dean, Grandpa Jones, and Hawkshaw Hawkins during his pre-Opry days.

Although he travels many miles a year, Billy says the most difficult part of his work is selecting the right song for recording sessions.

Billy and his wife, Ruth, who were married in 1944, live with their children in the Nashville area. As is the case with most Opry performers, Billy Grammer has very few free days. When they come though, he's out on some river or lake with the trot line, or checking over his guitars.

And he continues that painstaking search for great songs—such as "Gotta Travel On," and "Bonaparte Retreat."



JACK GREENE



Country gentleman, Jack Greene, has the right formula for this young'un.

Jack Greene is one of those stars who came up the hard way . . . through the ranks. And he stays up there the hard way, too . . . through hard, tedious work. For Greene, the way up started at a little radio station in his East Tennessee hometown of Maryville. He was 14 years old. He played guitar, bass and sang on a radio program with Clyde Grubbs and the "Tennessee Valley Boys." The trip ended up on stage at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. He played drums and sang with the Ernest Tubb Texas Troubadour band.

Ink on his Decca Records contract had barely dried before Jack Greene bore down on the business of being a star. He exploded into an almost unheard of streak that left a trail of nine straight No. 1 hit records. That's not counting the two No. 1 hit albums. It does count the No. 1 hit duet Jack recorded for Decca with Jeannie Seely. It does include the three Grammy Award nominations three years running. And those nine blockbuster hits that Jack Greene dropped on America, for openers, also count the powerhouse performance of "There Goes My Everything" that left the 1967 Country Music Awards show in shambles in the wake of the Jack Greene sweep. Country Music history books hold the box score: four CMA awards, four Billboard Magazine No. 2 Record Trophies, three national magazine Most Promising Male Vocalist Awards, and a Grammy nomination.

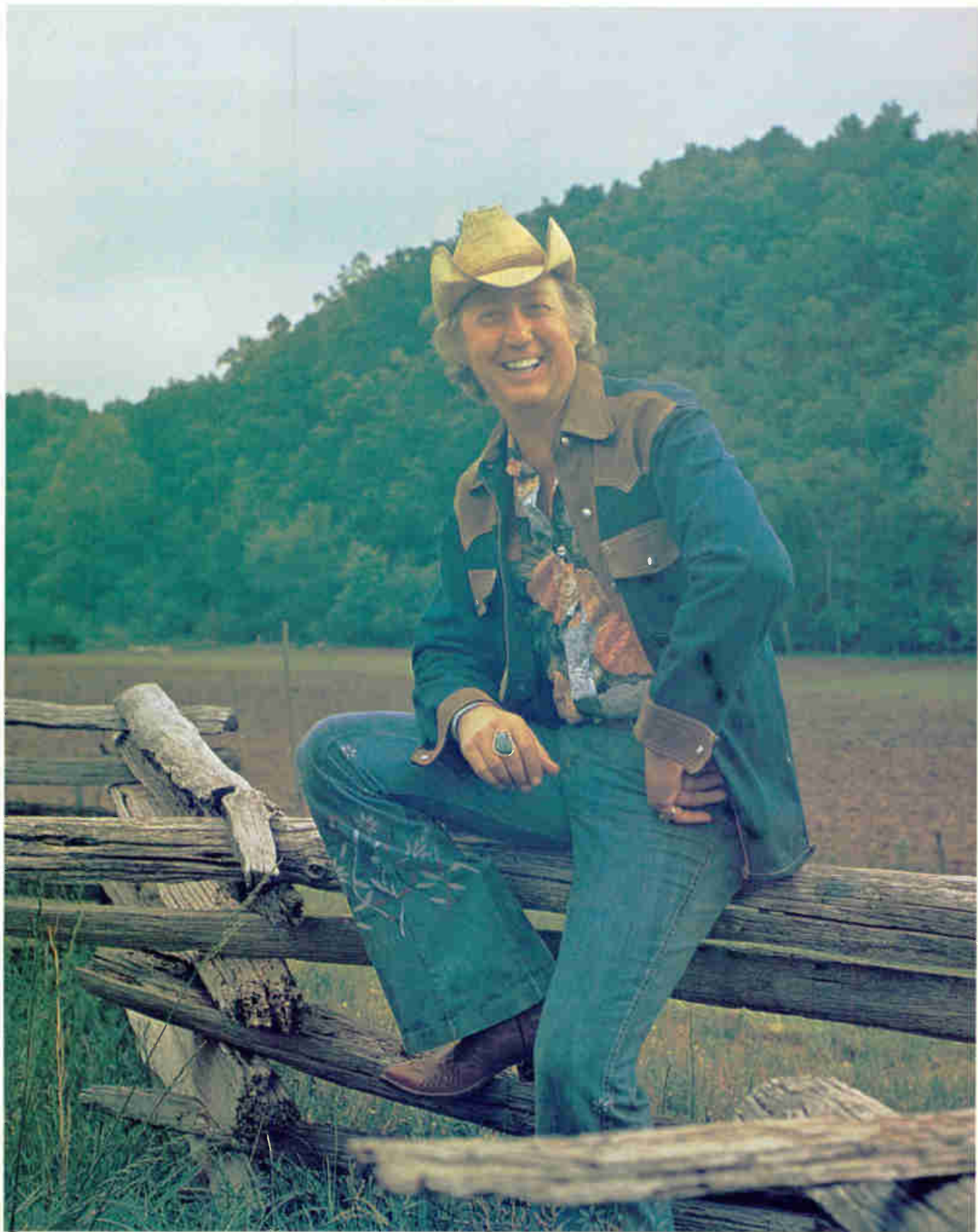
Once Jack Greene established his presence at the top, he really got serious about his craft. The hit records, the awards, and all the glory are not what makes Jack run. The brass ring Jack chases, if there is such a thing, is being the very best performer that Jack Greene has it in his power to be.

Jack tells everyone that the idea for the Jack Greene stage show excitement originated with Jeannie Seely. The petite blonde showstopper says the idea sort of grew between the two of them. No matter where the show came from, it has propelled the two of them into a wild, exciting brand of success that entertainers dreamed of when they were kids.

Jack & Jeannie put together a show that flows like an electric current. Everyone moves, but as a unit. And it cooks! Jack takes a turn. Jeannie is right there with her song. Right on her heels comes one of the "Green Giant" bandmen with a solo. Music rolls right on top of the final note as the cast wheels into a hard driving instrumental.

And Jack Greene keeps the show fresh and original, the hard way. Days off from the rugged road schedule and frequent recording studio dates find Jack on a scouting mission . . . out somewhere maybe two or three hundred miles from home base, just to watch other entertainers ply their trade.

Jack Greene, the guy who came up the hard way has got that special magic that no one can put a finger to. A special magic that stars are made of.



GEORGE HAMILTON IV

Appearances can be deceptive. Just imagine those undeserved reputations that some people are saddled with. The shady, suspicious character doesn't necessarily mean that he should be completely at home robbing banks; nor that a red faced individual keeps regular company with Jack Daniels or Blue Ribbon beer. Then there's the pop music entertainers—not every chart topper is a long haired type with a poverty stricken appearance.

There's also the case of George Hamilton IV, probably the most unlikely looking country singer that you're likely to find anywhere in the world. He mounts that concert or Opry stage attired in a dark pin-striped suit, a neat, short hair cut and an elegance that immediately sets you thinking that he's come in the wrong door. He should be more at ease seated behind a desk and advising clients of their current financial standing.

But George Hamilton IV is a country singer, a tremendous country singer and he's brought his music to audiences throughout the world. In fact George is so popular around the globe that he has earned the title: "International Ambassador of Country Music." Once again proving the point: appearances are deceptive.

Although George enjoys star status in the country music field today, he is one of the few artists who went "country" after having a major hit in the pop music field. "A Rose and A Baby Ruth" was recorded while he was a freshman at the University of North Carolina. It caught the ear of the nation, and the name George Hamilton IV caught the eye of Arthur Godfrey, who was something of a star-maker in the '50s. Godfrey introduced the engaging young singer to early-morning TV audiences, and George was soon in demand. He later became a regular on Jimmy Dean's afternoon CBS-TV show and subsequently was starred by ABC-TV on a show of his own.

As a kid, George had one ambition: to belong to the Grand Ole Opry. Raised in Winston-Salem, in the heart of tobacco country, and encouraged in music by both his mother and father, young George looked forward to the weekly Opry broadcasts even more than he did to the Gene Autry movies passing through town. When George finally moved to Nashville, after those successful early years in New York, he realized his ambition, and in 1960, he was made a regular on the Opry. After 12



The Hamilton Family—(sitting) Mary Dabney and Mrs. George Hamilton (Tinky); (standing) George V (Chipper), George IV and Peyton.

years with the radio show, George settled in Charlotte to become a regular on the Arthur Smith TV Show. He rejoined the Opry in February 1976.

Besides the influence of Arthur Smith, George likes to thank a number of people for helping his career. Chet Atkins would probably rank at the top of the list for directing his RCA recordings. He also credits singers Hank Williams, Carl Smith, Ernest Tubb, Perry Como, Eddy Arnold, Johnny Cash, Gordon Lightfoot and songwriter, John D. Loudermilk, for influencing his own singing style.

George Hamilton IV should actually be dubbed "The First" because he has as many "firsts" to his credit as any country artist around. George is the first American Country Singer to perform in Russia and Czechoslovakia; appeared at the 1st "International Festival of Country Music;" first American country artist to have his own British TV series; first to have his popular Canadian country music series shown on British screens; first American to have his own TV series in South Africa; first U.S. artist to receive the prestigious Juno Award for outstanding contributions to Canadian music; and probably the first and only artist to be featured in three different TV series in three different countries all at the same time.

Yes, this "International Ambassador of Country Music" is a definite trendsetter, first in lots of areas. But the greatest concern of George IV is that his music be first for his fans. And judging by his popularity around the world, he'll always be number one with them.



DAVID HOUSTON



Charlie Walker, David Houston, Connie Smith and WSM Radio/TV personality, Ralph Emery, are shown taping a recent TV show at the Opryland studio.

David Houston was destined to be a recording star from the time he was born. With a Godfather like Gene Austin, who sold over 88 million records himself, and David's natural born talent, he made his first major professional appearance at the age of twelve on the famous "Louisiana Hayride" out of Shreveport, Louisiana.

As a teenager, David took to the road with two other young hopefuls, Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley. Today the three of them can laughingly look back on the hard times of the past.

David had his first record on Imperial and in later years recorded for RCA Victor, National Recording Company, Phillips Records, Sun Records and finally Epic Records, his present employer.

His first big hit was "Mountain of Love," but it was the song "Almost Persuaded," recorded in the summer of 1966, that made him internationally famous. The year 1967, David virtually walked away with every award accorded a Country and Western artist, including: #1-Billboard, #1-Cash Box, #1-Record World and the #1 Country Record and #1 Performance awards at the Grammy Awards. An outstanding follow-up to his 1966 "Most Promising Artist" award in Billboard.

David has continued his number one success with every recording since. His recent big hits include "Baby, Baby," "I Do My Swinging At Home," "A Woman Always Knows," "After Closing Time" (with Barbara Mandrell), "Soft, Sweet & Warm" and "Good Things."

With Number One singles, it is natural that David's albums could continue year after year to be among the highest on the charts. A few of his most successful albums include "Almost Persuaded," "A Woman Always Knows," "Wonders Of The Wine" and "Baby, Baby."

The multi-talented, tall, good looking, Bossier City, Louisiana, man has appeared as an excellent representative of Country and Western Music on such top television shows as the Johnny Carson Show, Merv Griffin Show, Johnny Cash Show, Lawrence Welk Show, Donald O'Conner Show, Best On Record and a special tribute to the late Spade Cooley on the Huntley-Brinkley Show; in addition to the Orange Bowl Parade and The Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. David has also appeared in the movies "Cotton Pickin' Chicken Pickers" and "Horse Soldiers," starring John Wayne.

David joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1972. He travels with his show, which includes seven members, approximately 350,000 miles per year in his Silver Eagle bus, working 270 to 280 days per year. Apparently, from audiences reactions to David's appearance, he is welcome back anytime he wants to return.

Aside from the fact he can lay claim to such ancestors as Robert E. Lee and Sam Houston, no one can argue the point David Houston is indeed a uniquely diversified and talented individual.



Incredibly, somewhere in this world there is a successful country music singer who (1) never entered a talent contest; (2) never sang at school gatherings or in the church choir, and (3) never sang publicly until she recorded.

This alone makes her unique in the world of entertainment, but here are other points of uniqueness as well.

Jan Howard got a recording contract the first time a record producer heard her sing. She became an integral part of a syndicated television show almost from the beginning of her professional career. And there is a unique quality in her voice that sets her apart from all others, along with warmth and strength and compassion which come from having lived virtually all the experiences of life.

Jan started in Los Angeles; she developed friendships with acquaintances who were beginning to write songs, and because of her obviously cooperative attitude, she was asked to sing one of the demonstration records of a song co-written by Buck Owens, intended for Kitty Wells.

Jo Johnson, a record producer on the West Coast, now in Nashville, heard one of the demos, took the song, and this started Jan's recording career.

She was signed with Challenge Records and her first release was the song "Yankee Go Home" as a duet with Wynn Stewart. She moved to Nashville in 1960, at the urging of one of those close friends: June Carter Cash. June not only suggested the move, but went ahead on her own and rented a house for her. She signed with Decca (now MCA) and, in 1965, began cutting records with Owen Bradley.

One hit followed another. On her own she cut many singles including "Evil on Your Mind," "Bad Seed," "Rock Me Back to Little Rock," and "Spinning Wheel." She also recorded some #1 duets with Bill Anderson including "Dissatisfied," "If It's All the Same to You," and "For Loving You." She was a part of the Bill Anderson Television Show and also the road show. She joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1971.

Then tragedy struck, the first of two times. Such events cannot be glossed over, nor can they be dwelled upon. But Jan Howard lost two of her sons in a short period of time, and almost destroyed her



Jan Howard lends her own special styling to a song for the Opry audience.

life. (She credits the Johnny Cash's and a few others for helping her keep her own life and her sanity during that incredible time).

Jan Howard stopped singing. She felt her world was gone. No longer did she record; no longer did she make road trips. Her life was a void. John and June Cash, however, persisted. They took her with them on a tour of Australia and the Far East, and on an occasion or two, even persuaded her to vocalize. Slowly she was emerging.

Now Jan is back, stronger than ever, recording, making personal appearances and pouring herself into her career and into some work with rehabilitating children. She flies her own plane, rides her own trail bike, and operates her own boat. She is showing the strength that only someone who has struggled and suffered through adversity can produce. She is, in short, a most remarkable woman.



STONEWALL JACKSON



Stonewall Jackson greets Governor George Wallace and his friends during their Opry visit.

There is nothing phony or insincere about Stonewall Jackson and this natural modesty and desire to be liked somehow travels across the footlights to every audience. They love Stonewall.

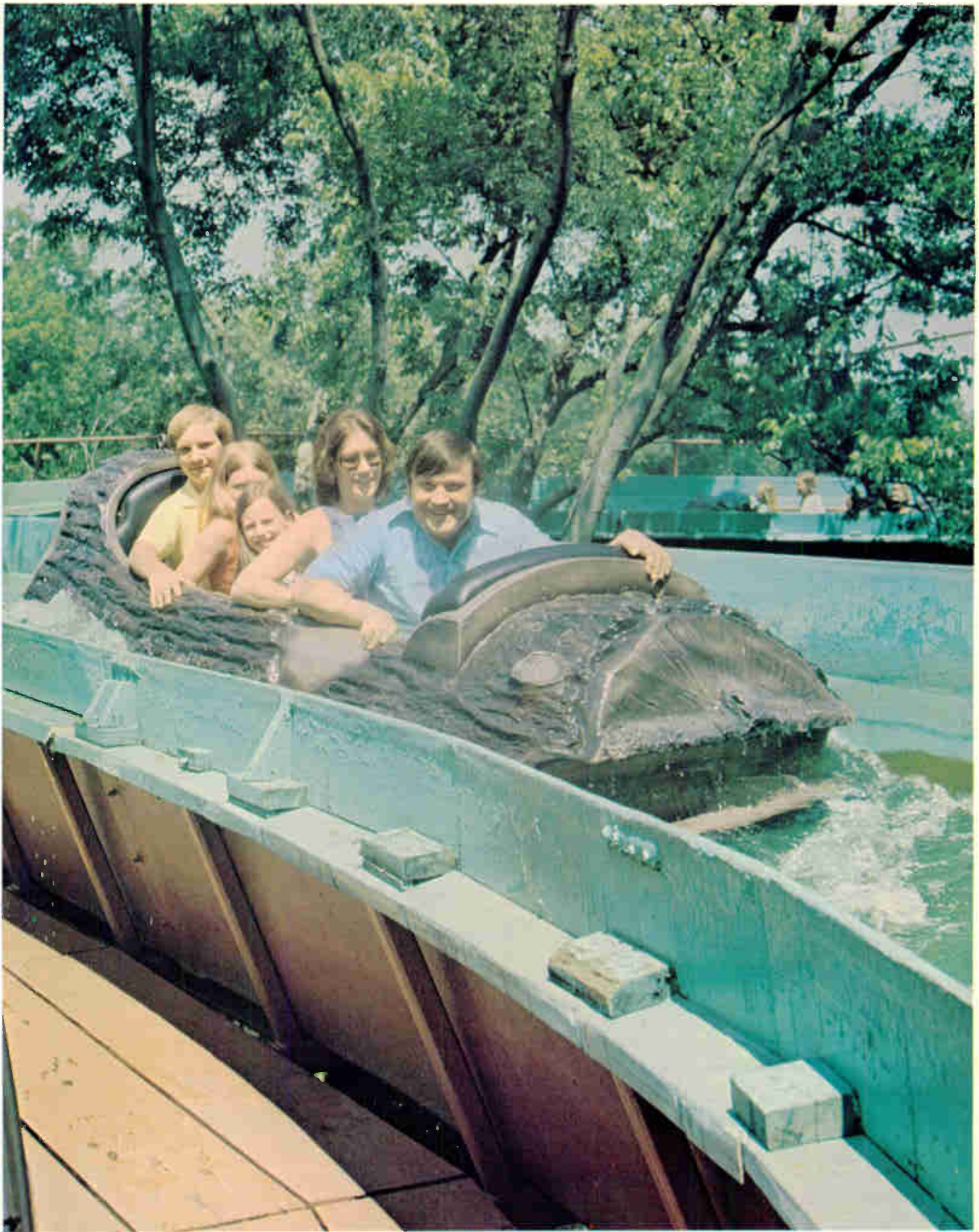
Born in Tabor City, North Carolina, he was the youngest of three children. His father died when he was only two. Already poor, the family faced a grim future. Mrs. Jackson decided to move to South Georgia to her brother-in-law's farm where the opportunities for work seemed better. "I was plowing at the age of eight and pulling a crosscut saw in the woods by nine," Stonewall recalls. "But with God's help we survived."

Stonewall joined the Navy at 17 and it was aboard ship that his lifelong love of music began to pay off. He had written several songs by now and he could pick a guitar. The captain of his ship, the U.S.S. Kittywake turned out to be a music lover and he encouraged Stonewall. He lent him a guitar and put him on stage before movies were shown to the crew each week. "By the time I got out of the Navy in 1954 I wanted to make music my career," Stonewall said.

That year he traveled to Nashville in his new pickup truck and visited Acuff-Rose Publishing

Company in an effort to sell some songs. Wesley Rose listened, liked the songs, and more important, he liked the singer. He called his friend "The Solemn Old Judge," George Hay at the Grand Ole Opry and sent Stonewall down to WSM Radio to see Judge Hay. Judge Hay listened to a couple of songs, and Stonewall was signed to an Opry contract. In 1958 his recording of "Life To Go" became his first number one chart record. And the next year he followed up with the classic "Waterloo."

Lots of fans ask if Stonewall is a nickname or Jackson's real name, and he proudly tells them it is his real name. He is descended from the famous Confederate General, Thomas J. Jackson, whose bravery in the face of enemy fire earned him the immortal nickname, Stonewall. There's a refreshing farm atmosphere to the Brentwood, Tennessee home of Stonewall Jackson and his family. Their comfortable home perches on a hill overlooking a nine-acre lake which Stonewall calls Lake Waterloo. It is a great spot for fishing and song writing, two of Stonewall's favorite activities. His other great hobby is treasure hunting with a metal detector.





Jim and Jesse join Bill Monroe for an old time standard during the annual Fan Fair Bluegrass Concert at the Opry House.

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 1974 they signed with Opryland Records, and have recorded the first album ever

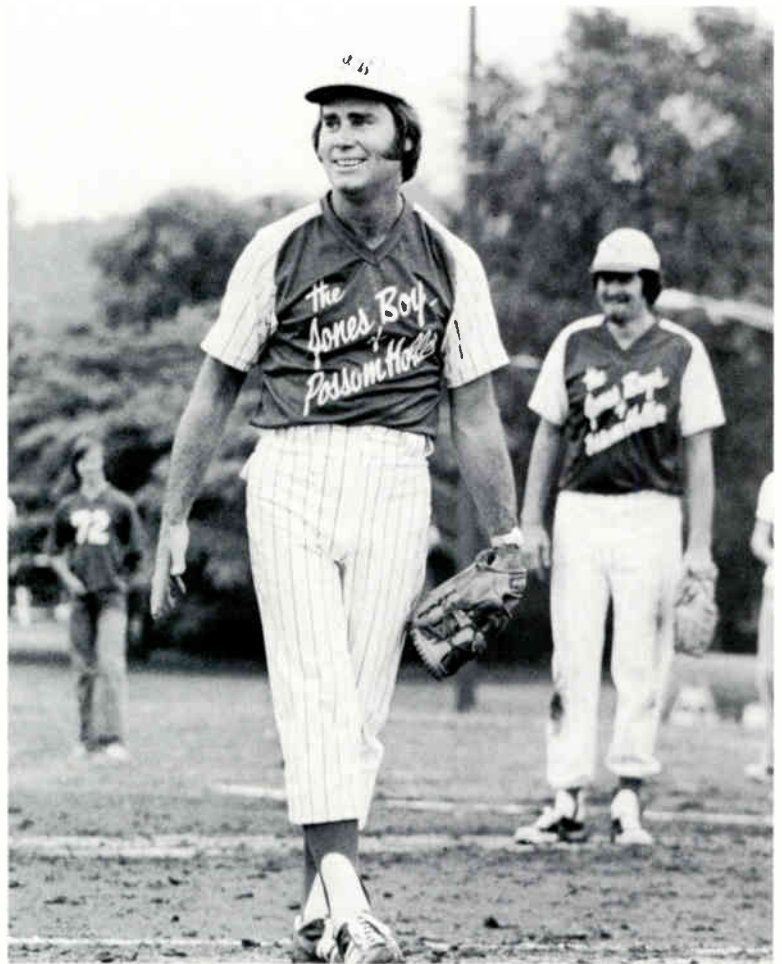
for this label titled: "Paradise." It's certain to become a collectors item. They joined the Opry in 1964.

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."

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.



GEORGE JONES



*Possum Jones, the
Grand Ole Opry's answer to Catfish Hunter.*

George Jones is one of Country Music's most prominent and consistent record sellers. George Glen Jones was born in Saratoga, Texas. He and his family moved to Beaumont, Texas a few years later and there George grew up singing, playing guitar and writing songs. After serving a stretch in the Marine Corps, George met H. W. "Pappy" Daily, a prominent Houston record distributor, who later became George's manager and producer. The two became an inseparable team.

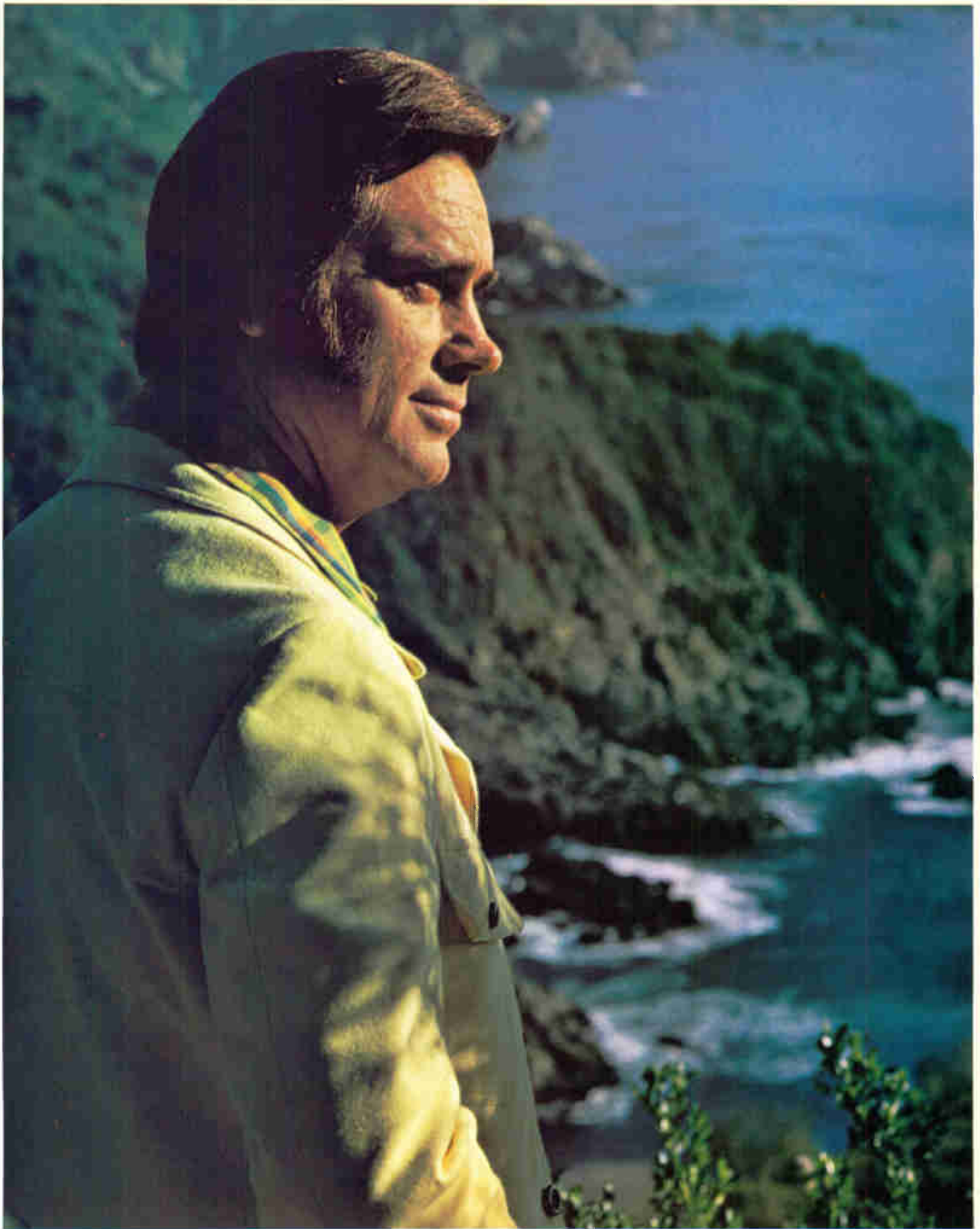
George, a 20-year country music recording artist veteran, has had more hit records than there is space here to tell. He has recorded more than 400 songs during his career and 82 albums are to his credit. These include albums on four different record labels and duets with such artists as Margie Singleton, Melba Montgomery, Gene Pitney, Brenda Carter and Tammy Wynette.

George has kept a record in the top ten of the national charts ever since he recorded "Why Baby

Why" in 1956. He has had numerous number one records. He was voted the number one male vocalist in 1962 and 1963 by Billboard and Cashbox magazines. Cashbox voted George and pop singer, Gene Pitney, as the best duet of 1965.

After "Why Baby Why," every song released was a hit. Some of his best known recorded tunes are: "White Lightning," "Who Shot Sam," "Window Up Above," "She Thinks I Still Care," "Good Year For The Roses," "Things Have Gone to Pieces," "A Girl I Used To Know," "If My Heart Had Windows," "I'll Share My World With You" and "Walk Through This World With Me."

George has begun to build a music empire. He travels to showdates in a \$100,000 bus, equipped with a kitchen and all the conveniences of home. He carries five band members, "The Jones Boys," formed his own music publishing company and has opened two new dinner clubs in Nashville. George rejoined the Opry in 1973 after a short absence.



GRANDPA JONES



Grandpa Jones and T.V. star Mike Douglas get together backstage prior to Mike's first Opry appearance.

Grandpa Jones, whose banjo pickin' and humor have made him a legend in his own time, has long been a mainstay in the hearts of young and old alike. Born Louis M. Jones in Niagra, Henderson County, Kentucky, he began playing mandolin and fiddle when he was a youngster. Next, he learned to play a 75-cent guitar, but it was his distinctive banjo playing that helped bring him fame. He uses the near forgotten drophthumb technique.

His family moved to Akron, Ohio, where in March 1929, Grandpa won first prize, topping more than 450 others in a contest put on by Wendell Hall, the old "Red Headed Music Maker," at the Keith Albee theatre. He used the \$50.00 he won to buy a better guitar, and began singing on radio, soon became a regular on WFJC & WJW in Akron.

Louis got a job with Bradley Kincaid in Clarksburg, West Virginia, in 1935. They played to packed houses up and down the East Coast. He began playing it straight without "Grandpa" makeup. The idea for the "Grandpa" image probably came when people began writing in asking his age. It seems he sounded older, especially on radio.

The next big stop was Wheeling, West Virginia, where he had his own radio show featuring his act, "Grandpa Jones and the Grandchildren." He entered the army in 1944, where, in addition to his regular duties, he played on the Armed Forces Network out of Munich, Germany, with a group called "The Munich Mountaineers."

He joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1946 when he returned to the United States. Grandpa also has gained wide recognition as a star on the CBS-TV "Hee-Haw," which he calls a "good show that's giving people the down-to-earth, clean and easy-to-associate-with type of entertainment that the typical TV watcher is looking for after a day of hard work.

Grandpa now makes about 200 appearances a year and is especially busy during the fall months playing state and county fairs, often sharing the stage with Roy Clark, co-star of "Hee-Haw." He has just recently started playing colleges all over the country. The college audiences seem to accept his kind of music enthusiastically. His wife, Ramona, sometimes joins him on stage, playing the fiddle, for old-time country duets. He treats audiences to his classic version of "Old Rattler" and his famous Jimmy Rodgers-style "Blue Yodeling." Since his great success on "Hee-Haw" audiences are accustomed to yelling, "What's For Supper, Grandpa?" to hear him give his rhymed recitation on the glories of ham-hocks and turnip-greens.

An institution in the world of country folk music and humor, Grandpa and family live on a farm outside Nashville where he raises registered Char-lais "white" cattle. But being an avid hunter and fisherman he always saves a few special days in the fall for the genuine, old-fashioned Grand Ole Opry Duck Hunt.





Jo Walker, executive director of the Country Music Association, and Dorothy Ritter, the Opry's good-will ambassador, help Hank get organized before going on stage.

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's the Lucky Irishman.

Hank Locklin is lucky, Irish and has made such a name for himself in Ireland, England and Germany that Pee Wee King calls him 'Europe's Ambassador of Country Music.'

'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 because, "You can't grow shamrocks anywhere but in Ireland."

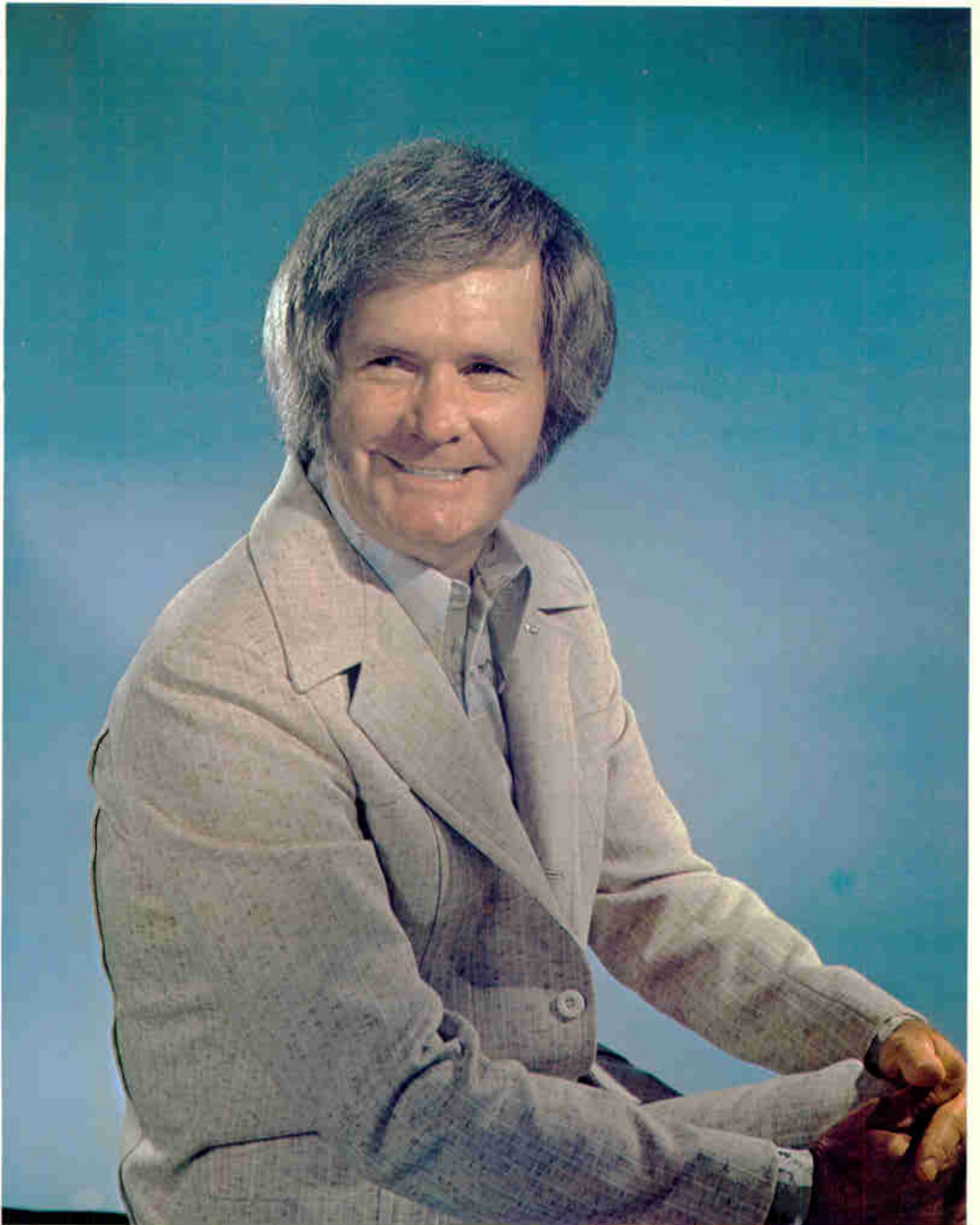
If Hank Locklin wears titles well, it's pride that makes him that way. Born into a family that usually reared doctors, Hank wanted to be an entertainer. Instead of attaching a PH.D. to his name, he

entered show business as a D.J. Radio naturally led him to stages; and Hank became a professional, playing sometimes for a meager \$2. a night, with expenses of \$5. 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 Locklin has become legend since then. In addition to his numerous awards for "Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On," Hank has an ASCAP Award for the LP 'Country Hall of Fame' and "Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day" plus Cash Box and Juke Box awards for "Please Help Me I'm Falling" and a NARAS Award for "Locklin Sings Hank Williams."

And Hank Locklin's success continues. It seems the luck and signs are with Locklin . . . but, mostly, the tremor-tenor voice is with him, and that's why Hank is loved by so many fans around the world.



LONZO AND OSCAR



No that's not Lonzo and Oscar . . . it's Oscar backstage with William Weaver, board chairman of the National Life and Accident Insurance Company—the firm that has presented the Opry to millions for over half a century.

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 time 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.





Suave, personable and talented, Bobby Lord, represents Country Music entertainers who have grown up with TV's electronic medium.

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."

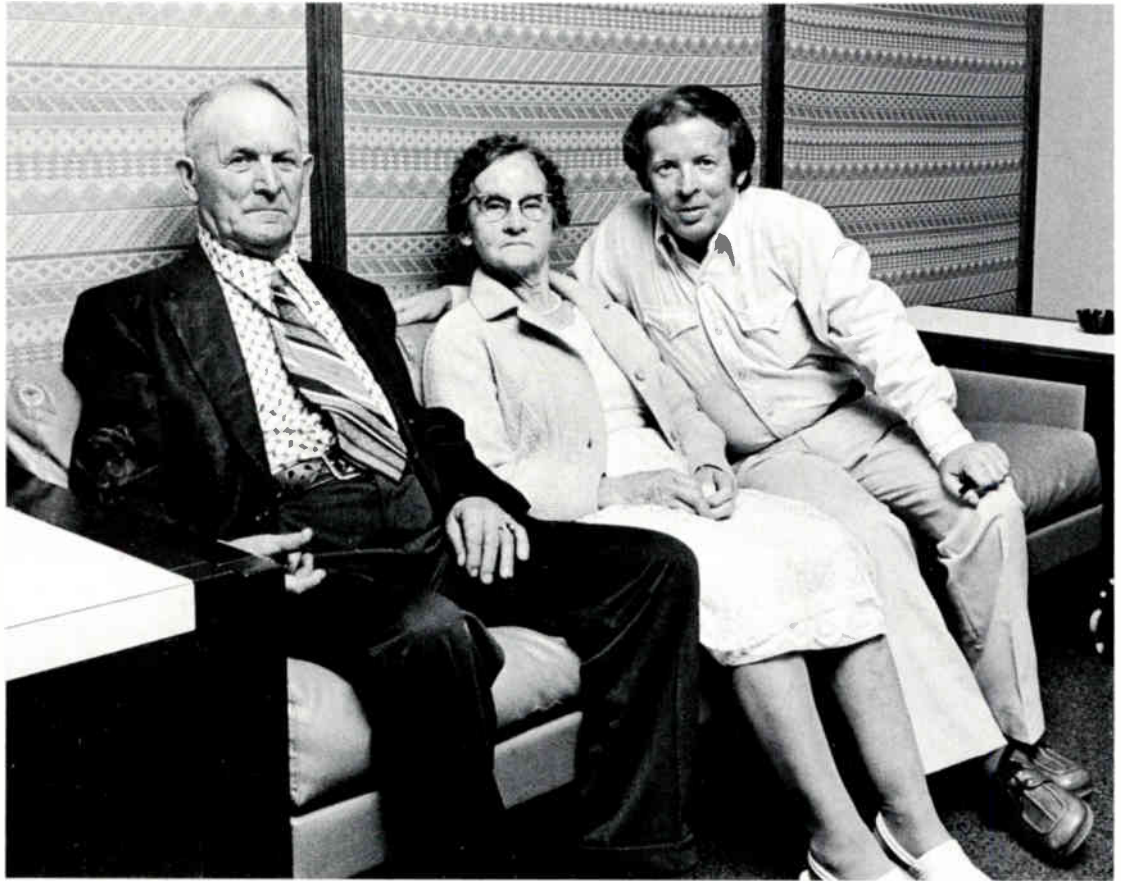
Bobby Lord represents the new generation of Country Music performers. Bobby seemed to grow up with the electronic medium of television. Perhaps that's the reason Bobby has been so successful in front of the cameras.

During the off hours, Bobby lives with his wife, 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 real estate and recreational business interests.

Bobby relaxes best outdoors. "We are ardent campers. We have a trailer . . . travel a great deal during the summer, stopping at every Outdoor Resorts of America campground along the way. In fact, when we're in town for the Opry, you'll find us at the Outdoor Resorts site near Opryland. It's the best way I know to keep my sanity."



CHARLIE LOUVIN



Mr. & Mrs. C. M. Loudermilk and their little boy Charlie pause backstage following the Colonel's first Opry appearance with his son. Charlie changed his name to "Louvin" years ago when he realized folks had trouble spelling and pronouncing "Loudermilk." But he has since discovered "Louvin" causes just as many problems.

"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. Whatever tears were to be shed were put into the words of such great top ten songs as "See The Big Man Cry," "Will You Visit Me On Sundays," "What Are Those Things," and "I Don't Love You Anymore," to name a few.

"Country Music is the only life I know," says Charlie with a proud grin. "I guess that's why I put so much more into my music and stage work."

If there were a book big enough for all the adjectives that describe Charlie Louvin and his kind of country music, it would read like the headlines for a movie spectacular. If only one adjective had to be used to describe him . . . after some consideration, "Super" would definitely be the best.





*In a style all his own,
Bob Luman performs to a packed house.*

An eight year old's broomstick microphone is a long way from a million-selling hit record; the Pittsburgh Pirates' training camp is too. In spite of both, and two Army stints for Uncle Sam, Bob Luman managed his first home run with a microphone—a million-selling smash called "Let's Think About Living," (1960) which has since become a rockabilly classic.

Bob's career began as an avid listener of The Grand Ole Opry on his battery radio. Shreveport's "Louisiana Hayride" was his launching ground and prompted Bob to the stage. Incredible audience response to the then seventeen year old talent sent him to Hollywood to film the movie, "Carnival Rock" and perform at Vegas' Showboat Hotel presentations with John Cash and Tex Ritter. Sell-out performances were many, but hits were tough to come by. Then one night during a performance Bob decided to give it up to pursue a Pirates' baseball offer . . . a decision he announced from the stage. In the audience the night of that

announcement were the Everly Brothers. Impressed by his performance they pitched Bob a Boudleaux Bryant tune, entitled, "Let's Think About Living." The combination of the song with the artist sent Bob Luman's name through the entire gamut of musical categories.

With millions of fans to his credit and gold records adorning his walls, Bob's appearances carry him in every direction, world-wide. Bob's style has been as consistent as his nationally-charted hits. A member of the Grand Ole Opry since 1965, he has a dynamic stage show, backed by, in Bob's own words, "the best four-piece band on the road."

Bob spends about 225 days a year on the road but always finds time for his family, golf game, and vegetable garden. We may never know how many home runs the Pittsburgh Pirates have lost over the years, but whether raising vegetables or releasing hits, we can rest assured of Bob Luman's continued success.



LORETTA LYNN

Loretta Lynn is like no one you've ever met or read about before. In a little more than a decade, she has risen from obscurity to the top of the country music world.

Loretta began singing in schoolroom socials at the age of 13, and today gives 200 concerts a year in cities all over the world. She grew up in a log cabin on the farm of her grandfather, and today owns a 3,500 acre ranch in Tennessee with an entire town on it, a seaside home in Mazatlan, Mexico, and a hunting lodge in British Columbia.

Loretta does not fit the stereotyped image of the typical show business star. Slender and vibrant, she still has a small-town charm and warmth about her despite the fame and wealth. The members of her band call her "Mom," and a real sincerity permeates her every word and action.

But things began to happen for Loretta at that school social when she was 13. Before the evening had ended, she had sung to the gathering, won a beauty contest, and sold a home-baked pie to the man who would soon become her husband. Loretta and her new-found beau dated for just one month, and a few weeks before her 14th birthday, she married Mooney (short for Moonshine) Lynn. Their family began to sprout almost immediately. By the time Loretta was 32 she was a grandmother.

In the midst of raising a family, Loretta continued singing at home. They had moved 3,000 miles west to Custer, Washington, and while Mooney was out working in logging camps and construction crews, Loretta was home caring for the children and writing songs to the accompaniment of her Sears-Roebuck guitar.

She got a job singing in a local hall, and before long, was putting some of her music on record for an obscure West Coast record company called Zero, her first release being "I'm A Honky Tonk Girl" which went "Top Ten" across the country. She joined the Opry in 1962.

Years have passed since then, and Loretta has released more than 20 albums for MCA that have crowded their way to the top of the bestseller charts. Many of her singles have been blockbusters, like "One's On The Way," "You Ain't Woman Enough To Take My Man," "Don't Come Home A'Drinking (With Lovin' On Your Mind)," and her autobiographical tune, "Coal Miner's Daughter."

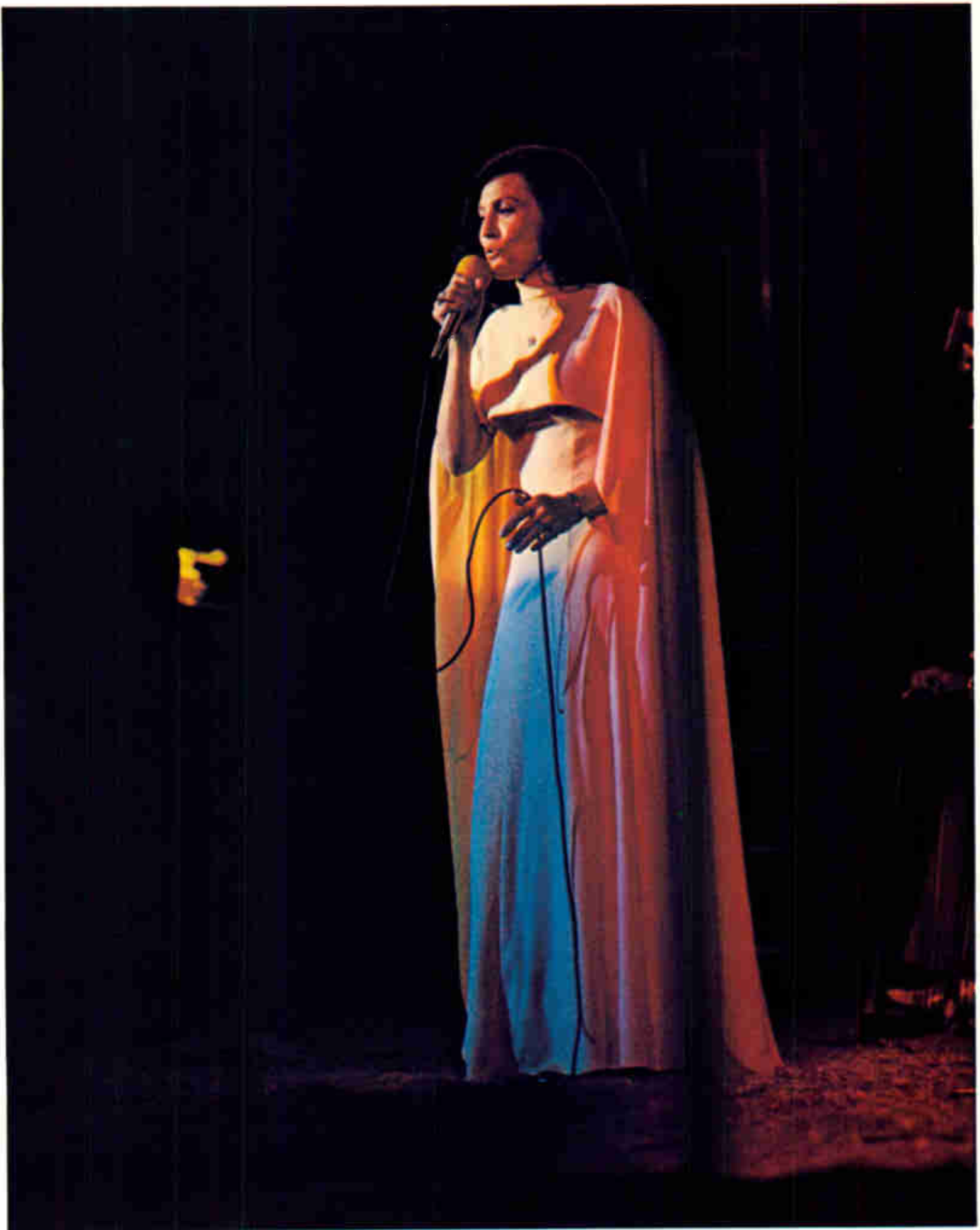
Nearly every major poll has selected her as the



Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn show why they're rated one of Country Music's top duets.

top female country singer. The Country Music Association has twice presented her with its top female vocalist award, plus a series of other honors.

There may be other performers who have been as successful as Loretta, but few who have handled their prosperity as well. She treats people with the same sincerity and open-heartedness as always, whether they be fans, friends or family.



BARBARA MANDRELL



Barbara poses for photos, answers questions and signs autographs for admirers during the recent Country Music Fan Fair.

She's pint-size and pert, yet she can belt an up-tempo number or croon a soft country ballad like no other. In between, she can hold her own on a 5-string guitar, steel guitar, bass and saxophone.

Barbara Mandrell is a country stylist who gives a song, and an audience, just the right mixture of zest and warmth. She's been doing just that since the age of five when she learned to read music before she could decipher English.

Performing during school vacations, Barbara was considered a show biz veteran by the age of 14. But on the other end of the spectrum, singing and playing were coupled with her record-setting 40 and 50 year dashes in a Los Angeles County junior high track meet. Even today, Barbara admits to being a "tomboy."

As the youngest member of Nashville's Grand Ole Opry, she joined in 1972, Barbara is unique among country greats. Starting out in a family band that included Mom, Dad and Barbara, the young aspirant set her sights on the country music profession before most kids reach junior high. Her close family ties are evidenced today when she performs with Irby Mandrell, her father, on board as road manager of the group.

Her first real job came at the age of 14 when she

appeared at the Showboat Hotel in Las Vegas with Joe Maphis, who discovered Barbara's talents at a Chicago musical trade convention where she was demonstrating the steel guitar.

Always trying to improve her own performance, Barbara learned to pick the 5-string banjo and began polishing her singing. During school vacations she returned to Las Vegas with the Red Foley Show and the Gordon Terry Show, appearing in the show capital six times before she was 21.

Now a successful Columbia Records artist, Barbara's releases include "Midnight Oil," "Treat Him Right," "Holdin' On To The Love I've Got," "Show Me," "Tonight My Baby's Coming Home," "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man," "Playing Around With Love" and "I've Been Loving You Too Long To Stop Now."

Born in Texas, raised in California and now residing outside Nashville with husband, Ken Dudley, and their young son and daughter, Barbara Mandrell is enjoying great rapport on cross country tours. The genuine appeal of Barbara Mandrell is the key to her success. Get to know her, for superstar status hasn't changed the incredible wholesomeness that she reflects both on stage and on record.



RONNIE MILSAP

"Overnight success" came for RCA recording artist Ronnie Milsap in early 1973. After performing in a combination of rock, blues, and country bands in Memphis and Atlanta for several years with only marginal success, Milsap decided to concentrate his musical energies on the development of his dormant country roots. A move to Nashville led to a stand at Nashville's King Of The Road Motor Inn, followed by an exclusive recording contract with RCA on the basis of three songs cut at his first studio session in Nashville in January 1973.

During that year, Ronnie joined Charley Pride's roadshow as Pride's opening act, and he also released his first single. "(All Together Now) Let's Fall Apart" was a double-barreled number one country hit and was followed by "That Girl Who Waits On Tables," "Pure Love," "Please Don't Tell Me How The Story Ends," and "Legend In My Time," all of which went to the top. In October 1974 the Country Music Association elected him to receive the Male Vocalist of the Year Award, and he also received a Grammy award for the Top Male Country Performer in the nation. Ronnie joined the Grand Ole Opry in February 1976.

In the course of his 30 years, Ronnie Milsap has experienced a wide range of musical influences, from the country music he listened to as a child prior to his kindergarten-through-high school education at the State School for the Blind in Raleigh, N. C. After testing at the school revealed an undeveloped musical aptitude, instructors at the school started him on violin before he was seven. In the following years, as a student of the classics, he mastered all string and reed instruments, and later piano.

Music took a temporary back seat as Ronnie enrolled in pre-law courses at Atlanta's Young-Harris Junior College; his scholastic performance there led to a full scholarship at Emory University's Law School. But music was the main force in Ronnie's life, and he decided to forego a career in law for a career in music; it was at that juncture ten years ago, that he met and married his wife. "I met Joyce in Atlanta," Ronnie recalls. "I met her through her brother who was going to college in South Georgia and he was playing a gig on the same bill as my band was. She's very special; Joyce and I hit it off pretty good from the start. There never was any uneasiness on her part about dating

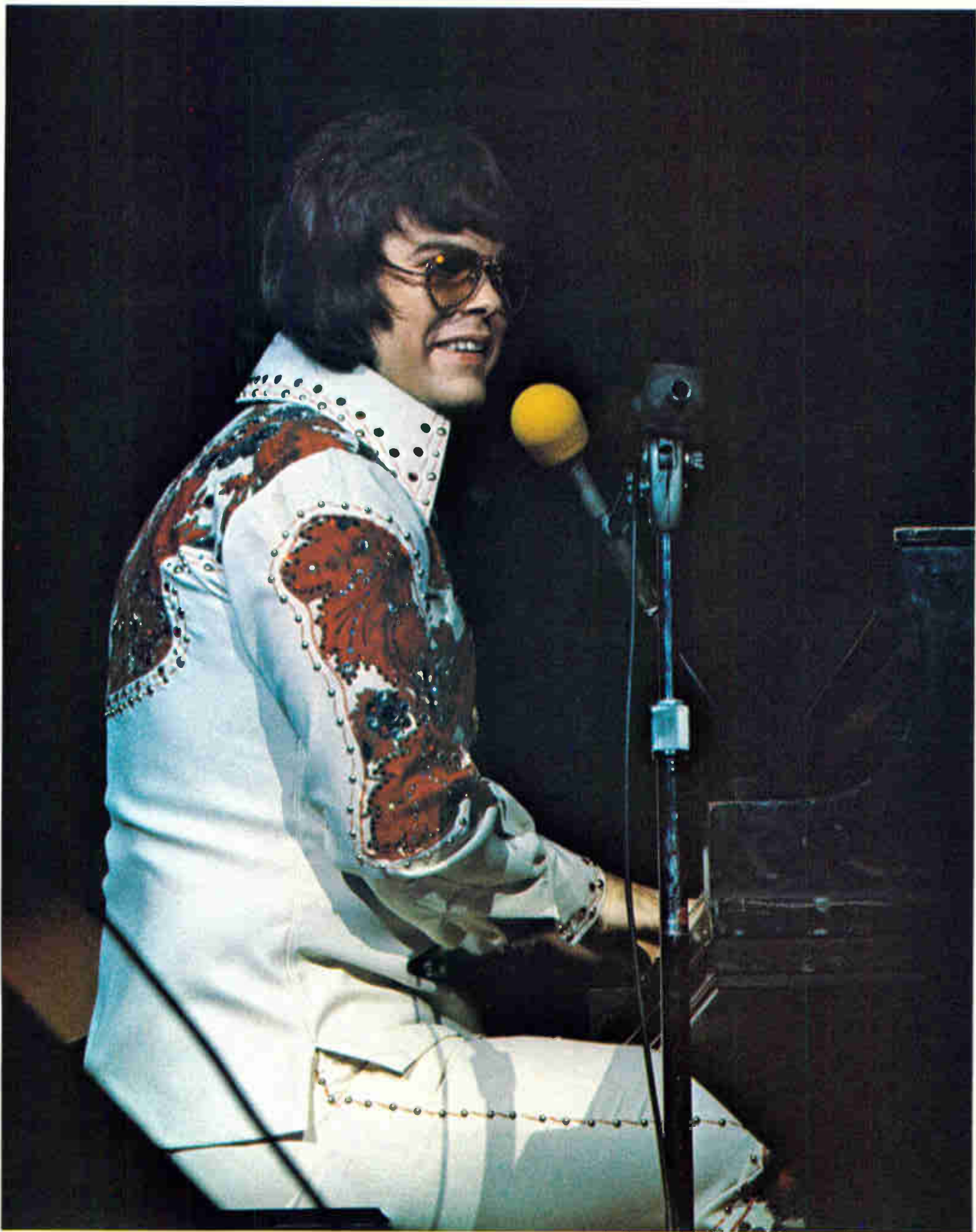


"I call 'em the way I see 'em," explains chief umpire Ronnie Milsap to Po' Bill Anderson during the annual Fan Fair Softball Tournament.

somebody who was blind. I've always known that if I was sensitive about it, other people would be too, so I never have been. I guess she figured if it's all right with me, it's all right with her."

The ten years between his decision to pursue music and his "overnight success" were long and hard, filled with the scents and noises of rock and roll-oriented clubs in Atlanta and Memphis. "You might say not a whole lot was happening," Ronnie recalls. For Ronnie Milsap, the decision to develop his country roots in the Nashvillian country music arena was the right decision, a decision his multitudes of fans are glad he made. "Country music speaks of life and shows emotion that other forms can't project. A country song has the power to make you laugh or cry; it relates more closely with the people than any other form of music." Among his musical interests are his family (son, Todd,) and electronics. Ham operator Milsap's call letters are WB4KCG.

Ronnie's attitude toward his blindness is an example for other sightless people. "What I have is congenital cataracts of the eyes," Ronnie says. "I've never been able to see anything, no light perception whatsoever, nothing. But since I've never seen anything, I don't reckon I've got anything to miss. Folks who have seen and lost their vision have had a lot of adjustments to make. I know for me," Ronnie continued, "I'm happy with my life and what I do. I don't have to see to play or sing and to feel the love of the people." Ronnie Milsap: a blind troubadour with untroubled vision.





Hal Durham, Opry manager, presents the “Father of Bluegrass Music” an engraved plaque commemorating Bill’s 35th Anniversary with the radio show.

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 Vandervir, who taught him the mandolin.

In 1927, Bill Monroe and two of his brothers (Charlie 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 Bluegrass 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 Bluegrass 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.





Roy Acuff and Opry Manager, Hal Durham, present Jimmy C. Newman a gold memento signifying record sales in Canada for Jimmy C.'s hit: "Lache Pas Le Patate" (Potato Song).

Jimmy C. Newman was born and reared in the Cajun Country near Big Mamou, Louisiana. That's a pretty good reason for the fact that many of Jimmy's hit songs have a definite Cajun influence. And his famous Cajun yell AA-YEE gears up the audience for the robust song style that follows his grand entrance.

Jimmy C's first job in music was in his home town 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.

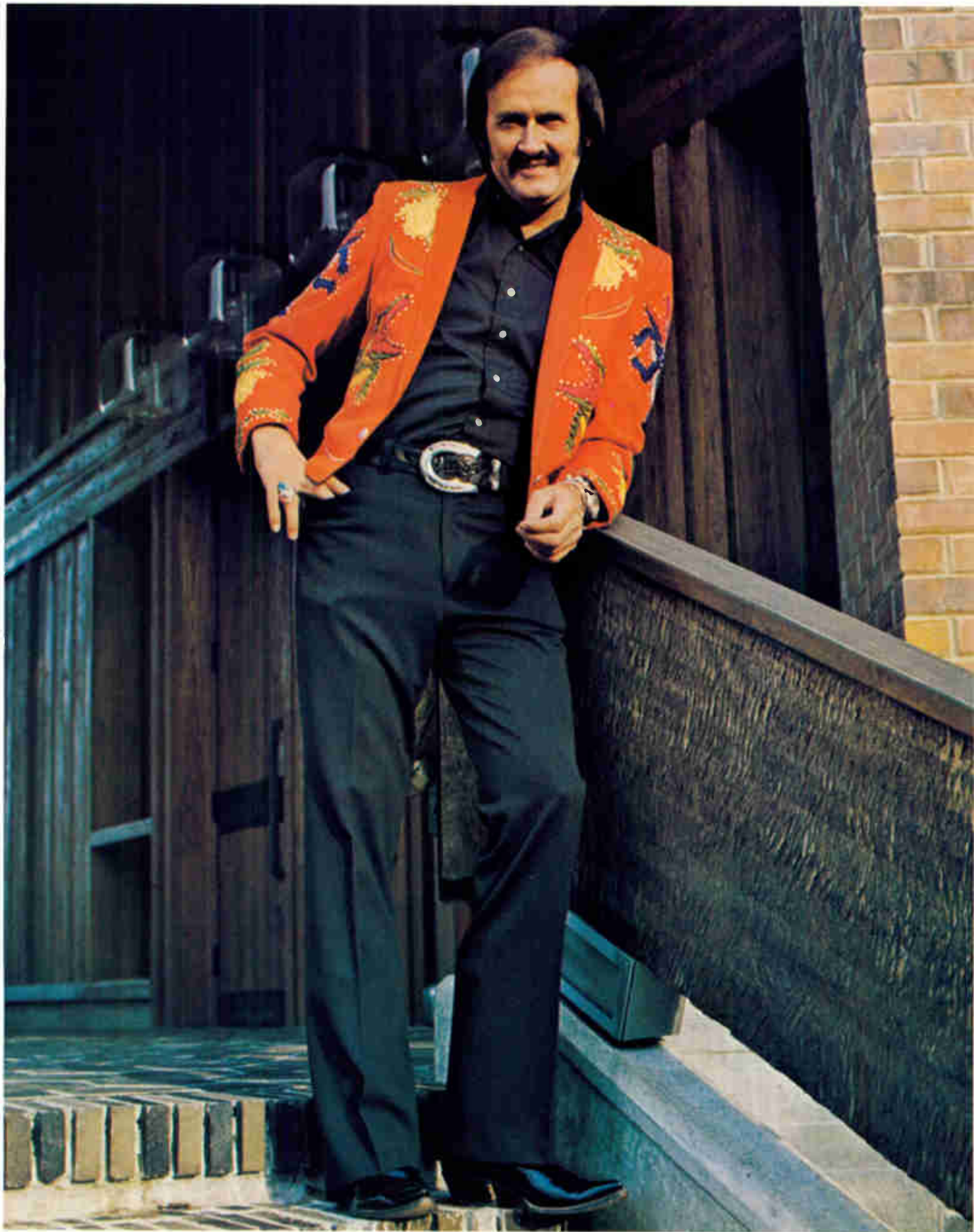
Among his hit recordings, to name a few, are "Cry, Cry, Darlin," "A Fallen Star," "Blue Lonely Winter," "Aligator Man," and "Lache Pas Le Patate" known in English as the "Potato Song," which is an international hit.

Jimmy C. spends his spare time on his 670-acre

ranch that he calls "The Singin' Hills Hereford Ranch," located near Music City, U.S.A. There he raises Appaloosa horses and Hereford cattle, with the help of his wife Mae and son Gary.

In many ways Jimmy is very much a real Cajun and tries to enjoy life to its fullest at all times, regardless of the situation. He has a wealth of Cajun stories and added them to his act several years ago.

Whenever he comes your way, drop by and say "Hi" to him. He'll greet you with a smile and leave you with an "AA-EEE!" and "I'll see you while ago!"



THE OSBORNE BROTHERS



Bobby and Sonny, "The Fastest Grass Alive."

Sonny & Bobby began their careers separately and at different times. The first to begin was Bobby in 1949 at Radio Station WPFB in Middletown, Ohio. Later in 1951 Sonny started at the same radio station.

Bobby's career was interrupted long enough to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps and in 1953 after his discharge, the brothers became a team and have played all over the world. In August of 1964, they became regular members of the Grand Ole Opry.

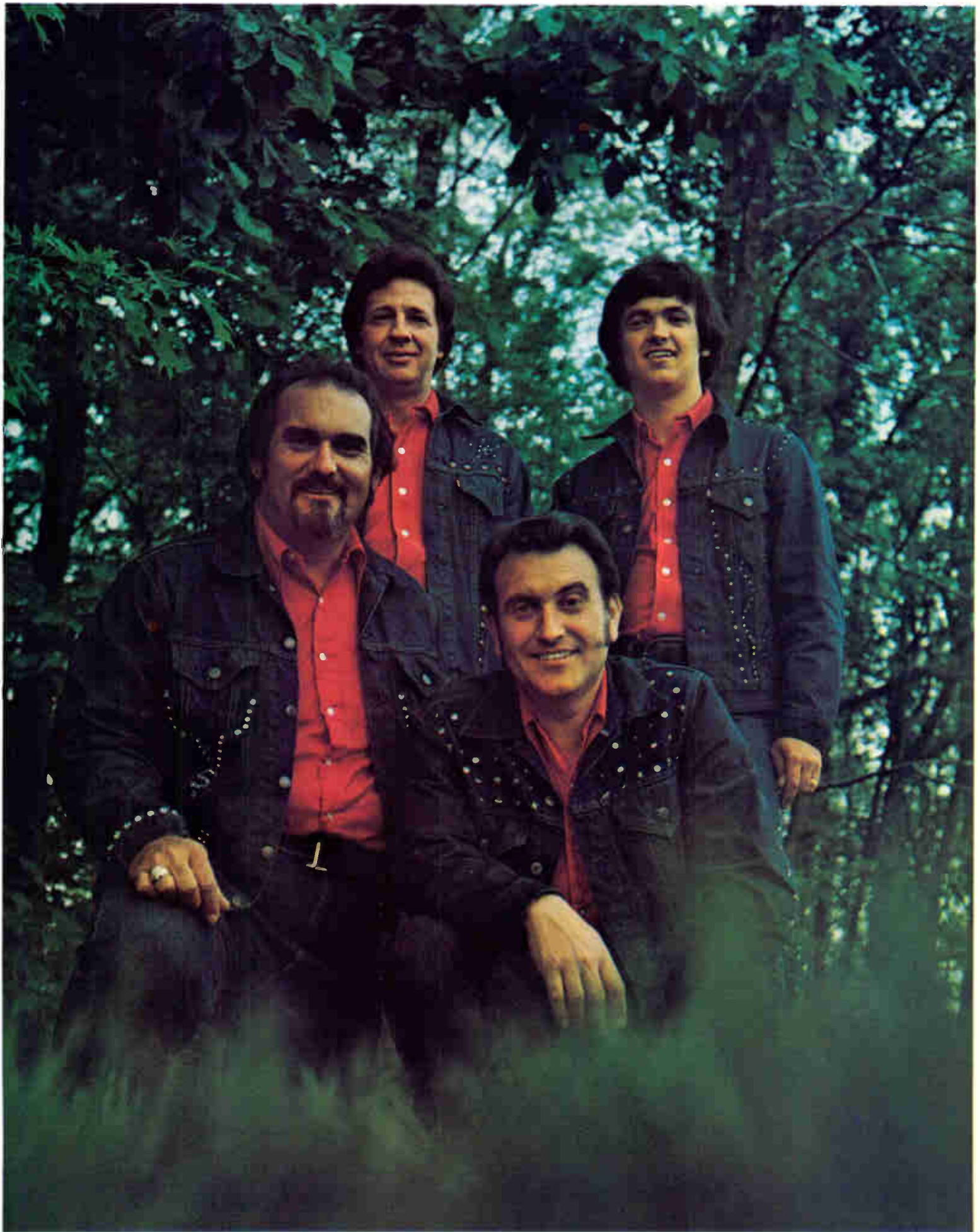
After recording for MGM for a period of seven years, they signed with MCA Records under the able direction of Owen Bradley in late 1963. Some of their most popular recordings are "Ruby," "Up This Hill and Down," "Making Plans," "Rocky Top," "Tennessee Hound Dog" and Georgia Pineywoods." Some of their great albums include "Yesterday, Today & The Osborne Brothers," "Favorite Hymns," "Up To Date and Down To Earth," "Rubeeee-eee," "Country Roads" and "Fastest Grass Alive."

On all their records and stage shows they feature

Sonny's six string banjo and Bobby's mandolin playing, as well as the close harmony singing. They have quite a few firsts to their credit—such as—the first group of their type to play a college engagement . . . using the big sound on all their recordings . . . and more recently—have added strings to some of their records.

Bobby carries the rank of having the best high lead and tenor voice in the business, and is featured on all their records. Sonny sings baritone in the group and is responsible for many of the wild arrangements on records they have recorded. He is tops on his own invention—The Six String Banjo.

The Osborne Brothers are noted for their distinctive and modern sound, and are recognized as one of the top groups in Country Music. To attest this, they were voted the Nation's #1 Vocal Group in 1971-72 by CMA, and Music City News awarded them for being the best Bluegrass Group. The unsurpassed quality and showmanship of their performance always makes them a hit at each appearance. . . . just ask any audience.





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

Mention the name Dolly Parton and one automatically conjures up visions of a beautiful blonde bombshell with twinkling blue eyes and a flashing infectious smile. But, there's more to Dolly Parton than just outward natural beauty and charm.

To other songwriters, Dolly Parton is a writer to be admired, respected and envied for her talent. Her writing isn't limited to one phase of living. The whole world is passing by her doorstep and she reaches out and embraces the best parts of it in her songs.

To other entertainers and vocalists, Dolly Parton is unique in her niche. She is as commercial as water and every bit as fresh. She radiates warmth to her audience coupled with love and a deep-seated desire to communicate. Dolly acts and the audience re-acts.

To the public, the ones who pay for show tickets and buy records, Dolly Parton writes and sings the secret feelings in their own hearts.

Dolly's childhood was spent in the hills of East

Tennessee. But within hours of her 1964 high school graduation, Dolly boarded a bus bound for Nashville. Her first several years in Music City were filled with hard work and not much financial reward. Then Porter Wagoner invited her to join 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 joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1969. Although Porter and Dolly have gone their separate ways professionally, they continue to record their fabulously popular duets.

Yet, in spite of her enormous fame, she has never forgotten her rural heritage. Dolly is also grateful for the people who have believed in her through the years. "Like my husband, Uncle Bill Owens, Porter, and my family. I can't understand folks saying they haven't seen one another in several years. Why, if I don't get home every six weeks or so to see my folks, I can't stand it. This closeness helps me."





Cousin Minnie Pearl shouts her famous greeting to the Opry faithful.

“How-dee! I’m just so proud to be here!” is a familiar greeting to millions of Americans, and immediately prompts the same number of “How-dee” answers from almost everyone within earshot of Minnie Pearl, Queen of Country Comedy.

With her 89 cent organdy dress, white cotton stockings, square black pocketbook, flat-heeled Mary Jane slippers, and wide brimmed straw hat trimmed with flowers and bits of fruit, Minnie Pearl has become a living symbol of the Grand Ole Opry.

For more than three decades, she has delighted audiences with her stories about everyday happenings in “Grinders Switch”, and her unrelenting efforts to “Ketch a feller.”

The lovable character, Minnie Pearl, of radio, television, and stage fame, was born out of the imagination of a young lady named Sarah Ophelia Colley. Sarah was born in Centerville, a small township about 50 miles southwest of Nashville. Possessing an intense interest in the legitimate “stage”, and a natural born “play actress”, Miss Colley tried teaching dramatics after graduating from Ward Belmont College, a fashionable girl’s finishing school in Nashville.

Although the character was well developed in Miss Colley’s mind, the name “Minnie Pearl” came later while playing an engagement at Aiken, South Carolina. She says she adopted the name because she thought it had a happy, country flavor. She chose Grinders Switch as Minnie’s hometown because there is actually a tiny crossroads community by that name near Centerville. From that point on, her gossip about Grinders Switch and her mythical family has evoked chuckles from fans everywhere. She eventually auditioned for and won a spot on the Grand Ole Opry in 1940. She was an immediate success and has become one of the greatest names in the entertainment world.

Although she is active in many ways, Minnie Pearl always admits, “My husband is my hobby. It took me 35 years to get him and I want to hang onto him.” The husband she refers to is Henry Cannon, who manages the business affairs of Minnie Pearl and, as an expert pilot, used to fly her to all show dates. The happy couple live in a large home next door to the Governor of Tennessee.



Stu Phillips was born in Montreal in Canada's French speaking province of Quebec. He ventured west at an early age and settled in Calgary, Alberta in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies, an ideal environment for this creative young man, who wrote many of his early songs in this setting.

Other than a very brief interest in becoming a lawyer, Stu's one goal all his life has been show business. From performing at social parties in church houses, school and community halls, he progressed to various radio shows: the "Noon Specials" and the typical "Town & Country" variety shows as well as the big "Saturday Night Jamborees," of radio fame just a few years ago. He soon progressed to television and his recordings became favorites. He became an immediate success on TV and has consistently had his own television show.

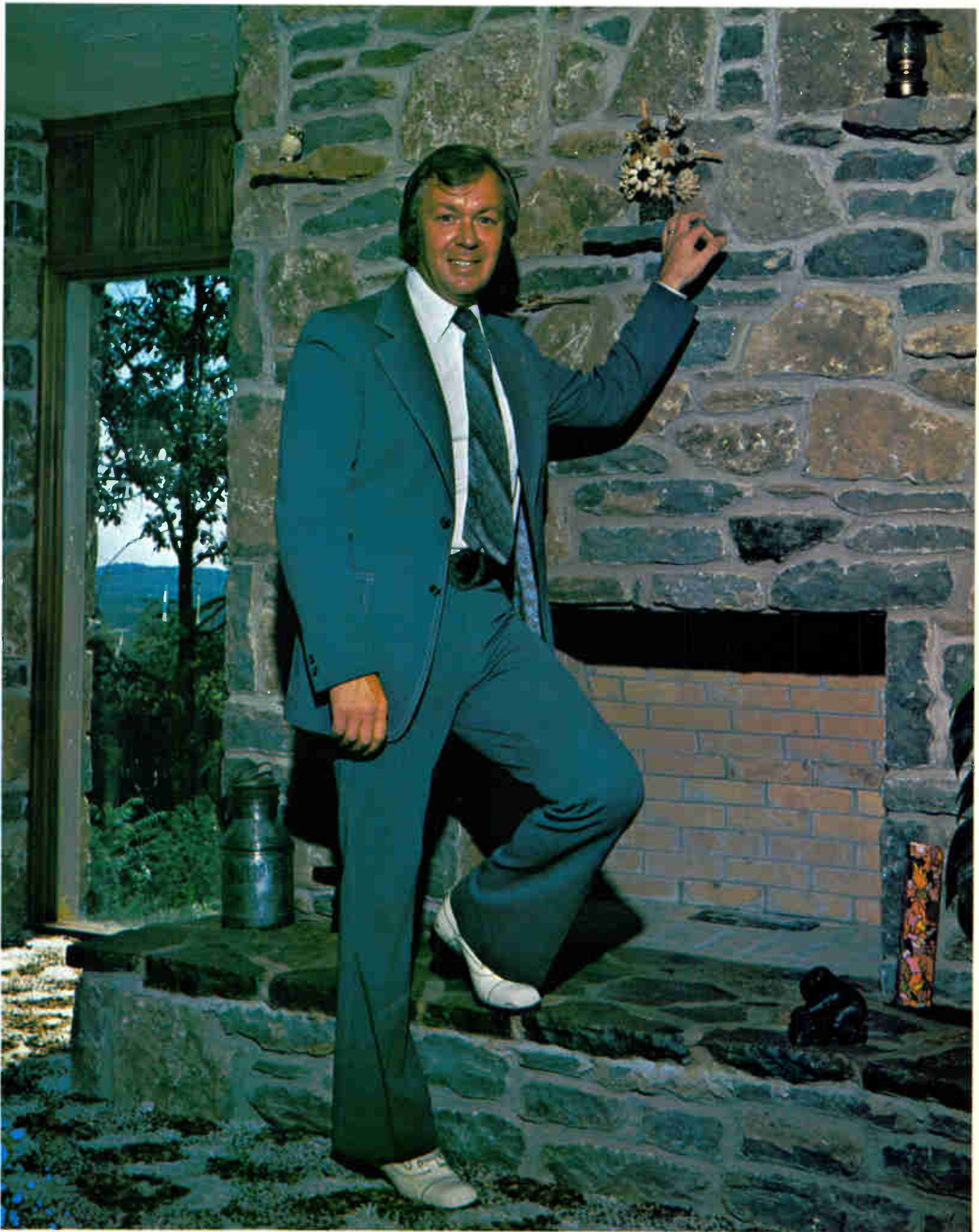
Stu was featured on prime time national television on the CBC Network, in Canada, for 5 years before moving to Nashville. He has appeared on most of the top syndicated television shows in America and on national NBC TV with stars such as Johnny Cash, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Carol Lawrence, Leslie Uggums and Danny Thomas, and various other Network shows. Stu Phillips is currently the star of his own syndicated TV'er, "Music Place," which he tapes in Louisville, Kentucky at WAVE-TV. It features a top drawer guest roster and on a per capita basis, is one of the best rated syndicated shows in America today.



Stu chats with the beautiful Patti Page while the Opry audience awaits an encore.

Stu has traveled extensively: to the Far East, the Middle East, Africa (where his records have received the equivalent of gold records), to Europe on three occasions, and the interstates and highways of the U.S. and Canada.

He is married to a beautiful Canadian girl, Aldona, and they have three children. A girl, Leigh, and boys Joel and Jasson. Being an active man he has many hobbies. He likes swimming, skiing, all spectator sports, boating, fishing, a little hunting and after finally bringing his golf game out of the "rough" onto the fairway, that sport is fast becoming his favorite.





*An enthusiastic outdoorsman,
Ray spends a lot of time with his quarter horses.*

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 near Nashville. And the picture of excitement and action on stage, but a man devoted to the quiet, good life after the spotlights go out.

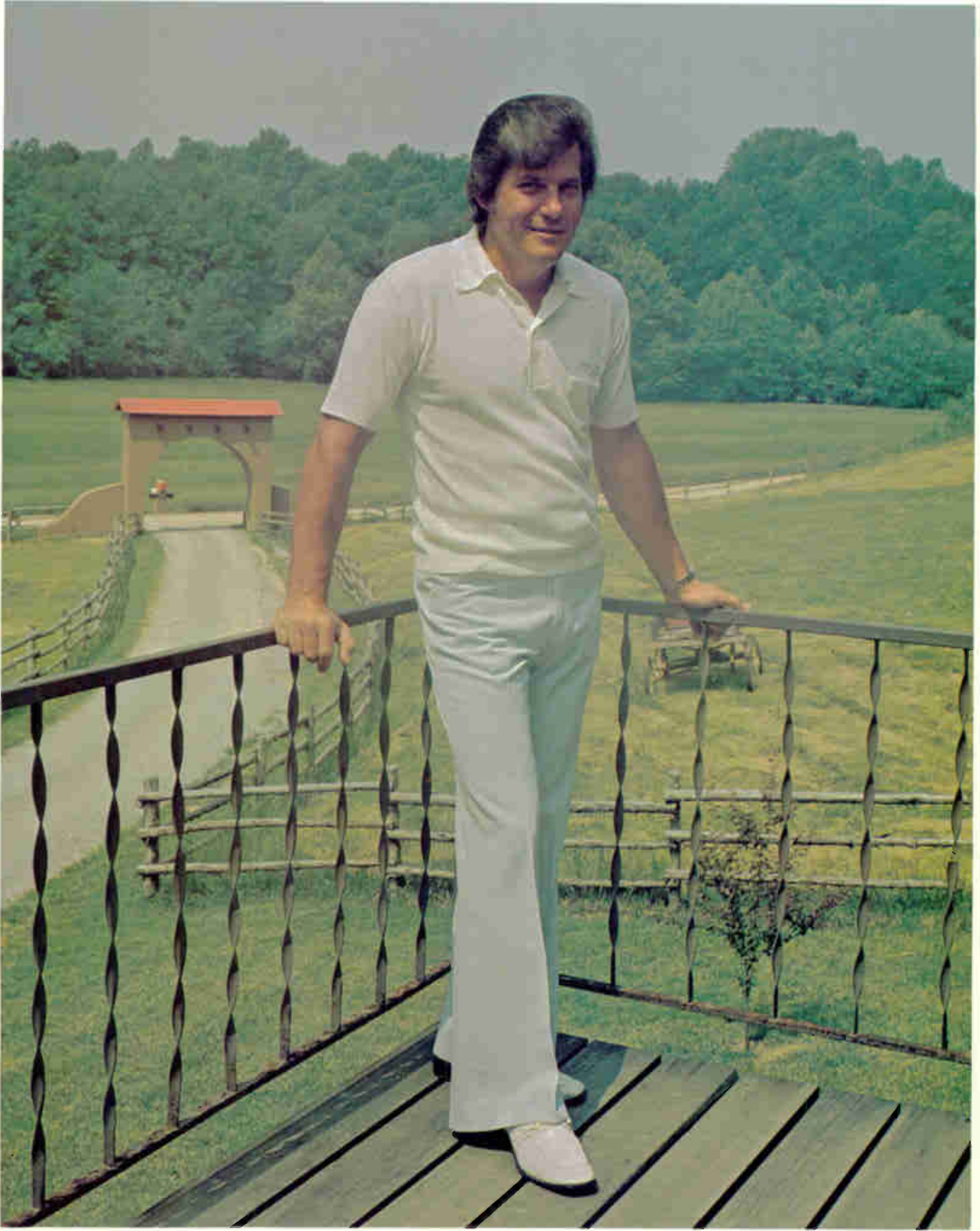
Ray is a good example of the so-called "new wave" of contemporary country artists. He is articulate, well in tune with current tastes, and is a college graduate. He attended Lynchburg College in his hometown and graduated with a degree in Business Administration.

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.





Jeanne Pruett and the famous Pointer Sisters form a musical quartet back stage during the Opry's Birthday Celebration.

MCA's Jeanne Pruett is "the best front porch tenor in these parts" . . . or so says her daddy. Raised in the small Alabama town of Pell City with her nine brothers and sisters, Jeanne recalls many long, warm summer nights on the front porch "pickin' and singin' country."

Even before Jeanne was one of MCA's top recording artists, she was a well-known writer. Writing for Marty Robbins Enterprises for seven years, Jeanne penned such noted hits as "Count Me Out," "Waiting In Reno," "Lily of The Valley," "Christmas Is For Kids" . . . and the list goes on. One of her most recent business successes has been the formation of her own publishing company, Jeanne Pruett Music, Inc. At the present time she is solely concentrating on her own writing with such recent releases as "Hopefully (I'll Be Out Of My Mind)," "One More Time" and others not yet released.

Many other artists have recorded her songs. Bill Phillips, Nat Stuckey, Conway Twitty, Marty Robbins, Tammy Wynette . . . and the list goes on. Some of her biggest hits included "Hold To My Unchanging Love," "Love Me," "Satin Sheets,"

"You Don't Need to Move A Mountain," "Welcome To the Sunshine (Sweet Baby Jane)" . . . and the list will go on.

Jeanne has performed at most of the American bases in Europe. She has also performed on all of the syndicated shows that originate from Nashville. She equally enjoys fairs, stage shows and park package shows . . . "dates where the family gets together for the entire day."

With the success of "Satin Sheets" for Jeanne in 1973, she is one of the most in-demand Female singers in the music business today. Jeanne joined the Opry in 1973.

Jeanne is probably one of Country Music's best cooks, and at one time or another all of the near greats and greats of Country Music have been her dinner guests—she loves feedin' her friends. She is a gracious hostess and a talented homemaker.

At home, or on stage, Jeanne radiates the same warmth and friendliness that acts as a magnet, drawing to her friends and fans . . . because to Jeanne her friends are her fans and her fans are her friends.





Country gentleman, Del Reeves, soaks in some warm sunshine on his farm.

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. In fact his last 21 records have reached the number one spot coast to coast. Del's biggest hits were "Girl On The Billboard," "Belles Of Southern Bell," "Landmark Tavern," "Philadelphia Phillies," "A Dozen Pair Of Boots," and "The Best Is Yet To Come."

Then there's Del Reeves the television personality. In addition to making numerous network guest appearances, Del is the star of his own variety show, "The Del Reeves' Country Carnival," which is seen weekly in major markets throughout the United States. Del's program is highly rated with an audience that research shows includes people from every walk of life and an age group running from children to senior citizens.

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. Warm and outgoing, he is always generous to his fellow performers, yet full of fun and the kind of vitality that rocks an audience. This year alone Del will play before hundreds of thousands of people at fairs, stage shows and in night club appearances throughout the U.S. and Canada, not to mention the Grand Ole Opry of which he's been a member since 1966.

And there's Del Reeves the motion picture actor. Like they say in show biz—he's fantastic with major roles in eight recent pictures including "Forty Acre Feud," "Whiskey's Renegades," and "Second Fiddle To A Steel Guitar."

Last—but certainly important in Del's mind, 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, he 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 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—TV star, stage show entertainer, big name recording star and motion picture hero. One thing for sure, is that the public clamor for this fantastic artist is growing so rapidly that there is never enough of him to go around.



MARTY ROBBINS



Enthusiastic fans gather around Marty for a picture or autograph in the National Life Hospitality Center at Opryland USA.

Most biographies start by giving the person's name, where he or she was born and then a lengthy story about their formative years. Not so with this one; we are simply going to write about Marty Robbins the man.

Marty is truly a man of many talents: Singer, Composer, Musician, Actor, Race Car Driver, and Businessman.

Marty has one of the most beautiful singing voices that a man could be blessed with. His range and variety know no bounds. He sings Polynesian, Mexican, Western, Country, and Pop with the authority that only a great singer knows he can do. He sings so well in fact that most people think of him only as a singer. Only a few people outside the music industry realize he is one of the most prolific writers of our time. Marty has written well over 400 songs such as: "White Sport Coat," "Devil Woman," "Don't Worry," "Big Iron," "You Gave Me A Mountain," "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife," and the classic "El Paso," and has a number of gold records and gold guitar awards to attest to his composing and singing ability.

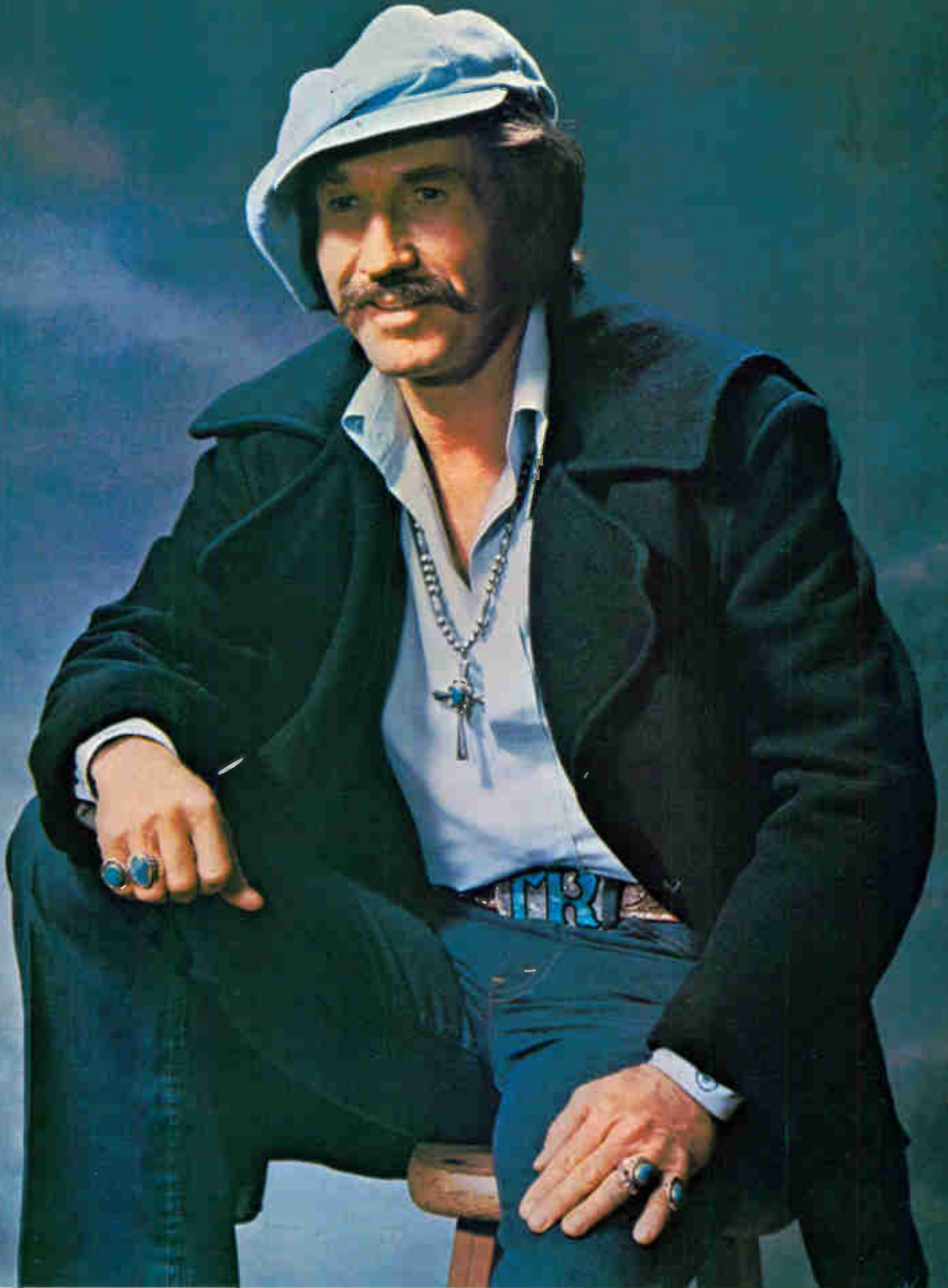
Marty has starred in about a dozen movies and has his own television and movie production

company with distribution through Universal Pictures of Hollywood. His television credits include most of the top shows in television. A few examples are: "The Dean Martin Show," "Kraft Music Hall," "The Johnny Cash Show," and has been the host on several of the "Midnight Special" shows. He joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1953.

Marty's concerts always draw capacity crowds and he is always a top attraction in Las Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe. He was the first so called Country act to ever play the main showrooms in Las Vegas and still holds the all time attendance record at one of the big hotels in that city.

And now to Marty the Race Car Driver. Although he only has time to run in about 4 or 5 of the big races a year and although he might tell you he only does it as a hobby, he is greatly respected by all the other drivers on the NASCAR circuit, both as a person and as a race driver.

Yes, Marty is a man of many talents, and when you add them all up, Singer, Composer, Musician, Actor, Race Driver, and Businessman, you come to realize that he has truly attained the right to be called "Marty Robbins, Superstar."



JEANNIE SEELY



A country road, wooden bridge, acres of farm land, and plenty of sunshine are great ways for Jeannie and Jack Greene to relax after a long tour.

Jeannie Seely probably won't get credit in Country Music history books, but she's the gal who crashed the Calico Curtain! In fact she literally demolished the out-dated calico and gingham image the public had concocted of the sweet but plain Jane female star in the world of Country Music.

Fans have long since accepted the hip style and mod manner Jeannie brought to Country Music when she exploded into the national spotlight on the wings of a monster hit record entitled "Don't Touch Me."

The record won Jeannie the 1966 Grammy award for the Best Country Female Vocalist. It also drew some hard looks from the hardcore Country crew. A slick, polished uptown sounding singer with a Country Music smash? Any doubts raised at the time were soon put out of mind by the tiny blonde with the mini-skirt manner. She was a perfect blending of Hollywood high society and down home honesty. She was exceptionally intelligent and had a keen mind. The only thing country about Jeannie is her soul. And it shows through every time she sings. And that's what won her case for a mod and modern image for girl stars in Country Music. All this would be enough for any one career. But not this little blonde who graduated from Townville High School in a tiny Pennsylvania town of 350.

She does everything. Besides performing and recording, Jeannie writes songs and knows music publishing. She has one of the masters in the field at home with her—being married to Hank Cochran

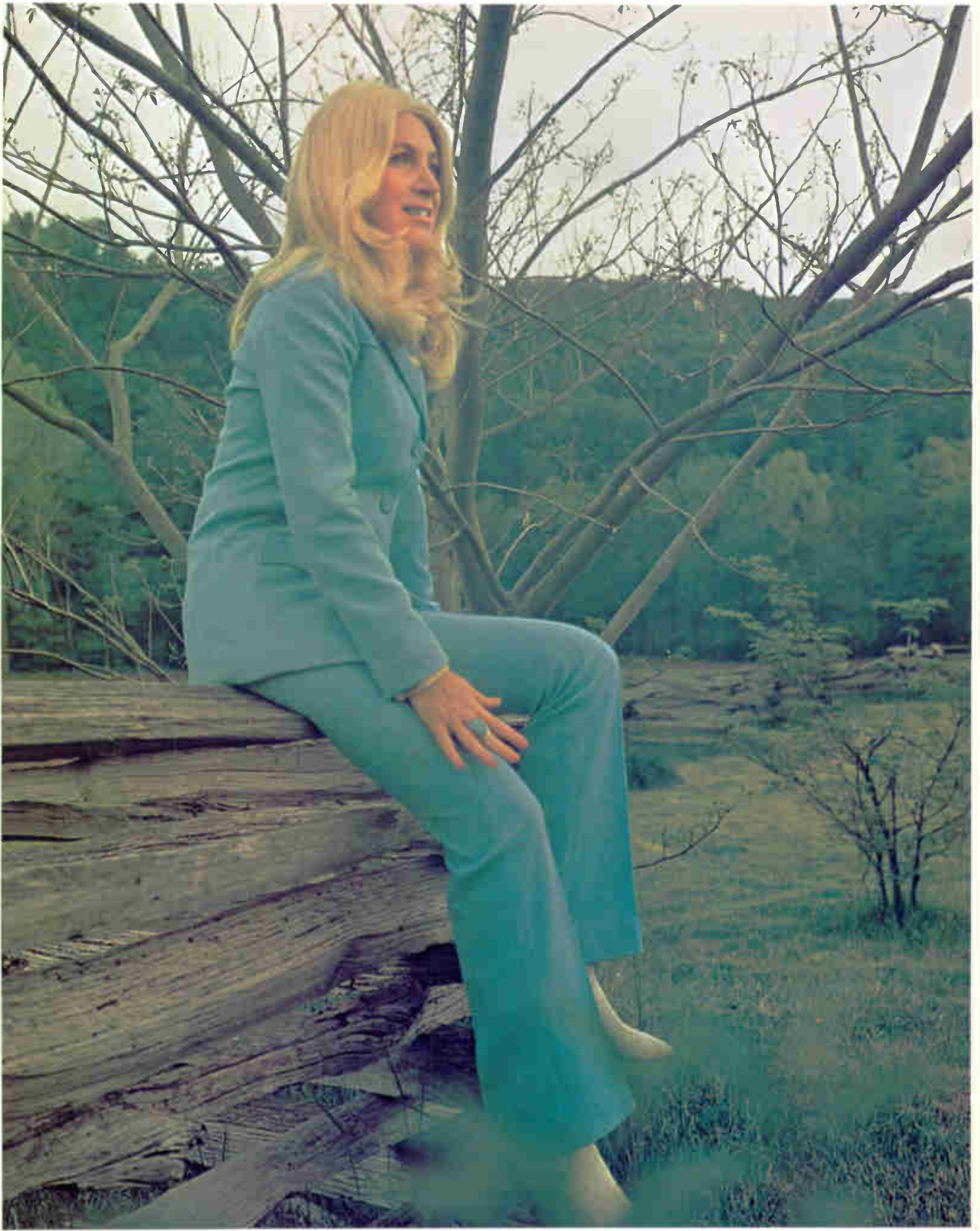
who wrote that first big hit "Don't Touch Me," just for her. Music business facts of life were learned first hand, when she worked as an executive secretary with Liberty and Imperial Records in Hollywood in the early 1960's.

And then she is an experienced gal deejay with two years behind her as hostess of her own show on the Armed Forces Radio Network. But her singing is not just a sideline. She has been studying and perfecting her style ever since she was eleven. That's when it officially started for her—on a weekly radio show in Meadville, Pa.

Since her debut broadcast, she has appeared on television and radio shows, auditoriums, clubs, and parks all over the world—including a command performance before the 11th Annual United Nations Concert and Banquet which was requested from the White House. Jeannie joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1967.

Jack Greene, whose duets with Jeannie on MCA have won them many honors including Grammy award nominations, credits her with originating the idea for their highly-polished and widely acclaimed stage show. It is a fast paced, tightly produced package that crackles with excitement as it smoothly showcases the individual talents of Jeannie, Jack, and the respective band members.

In her home in Hendersonville, Tenn., just outside of Nashville, there are plaques and awards lining the walls that are proof that Jeannie not only does an awful lot of things . . . but she does them 'awfully' well!





No, that's not Sarie and Sallie it's Sarie and Jean reminiscing backstage during the annual Old Timer's Show held in March at the Opry House.

As the sounds of the windup Victrola came across the valley, you could hear one small voice above all the others, singing along with some old Jimmie Rodgers records. That small voice has grown into a big one and they both belong to Jean Shepard. Jean was born in Paul's Valley, Oklahoma and spent most of her early life in Visalia, California. She was one of ten children, and Jean says that they were all musically inclined.

Music has always been a very important part of Jean's life and so it wasn't surprising that when she was fourteen years old she came up with the idea of forming an all girl western swing band that was called "The Melody Ranch Girls." Jean sang and played string bass and it didn't take the public long to recognize that this group was good. Soon they were playing for dances and making radio appearances.

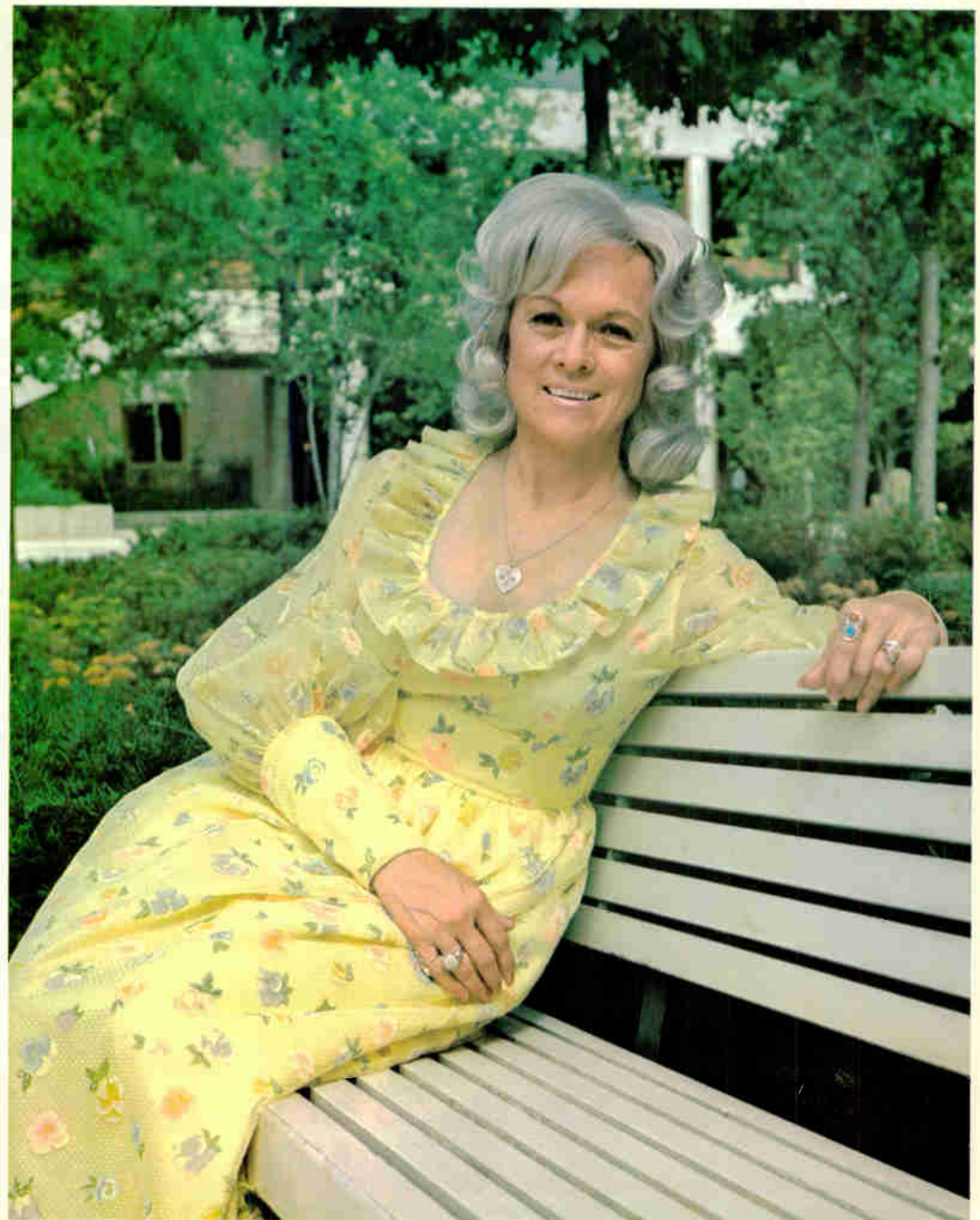
One night, "The Melody Ranch Girls" were playing on the same show with Hank Thompson and he was so impressed with Jean's talent that he introduced her to several record executives. Hank was personally responsible for Jean's receiving her first contract on a major recording label. Jean, at fifteen, had cut her first record and was well on her way to a professional music career. Later she moved to Springfield, Missouri to join Red Foley

and other stars on the Ozark Jubilee. As her fame grew she felt there was only one place for her to continue her career and she moved to Nashville and was asked to join the Grand Ole Opry in 1955.

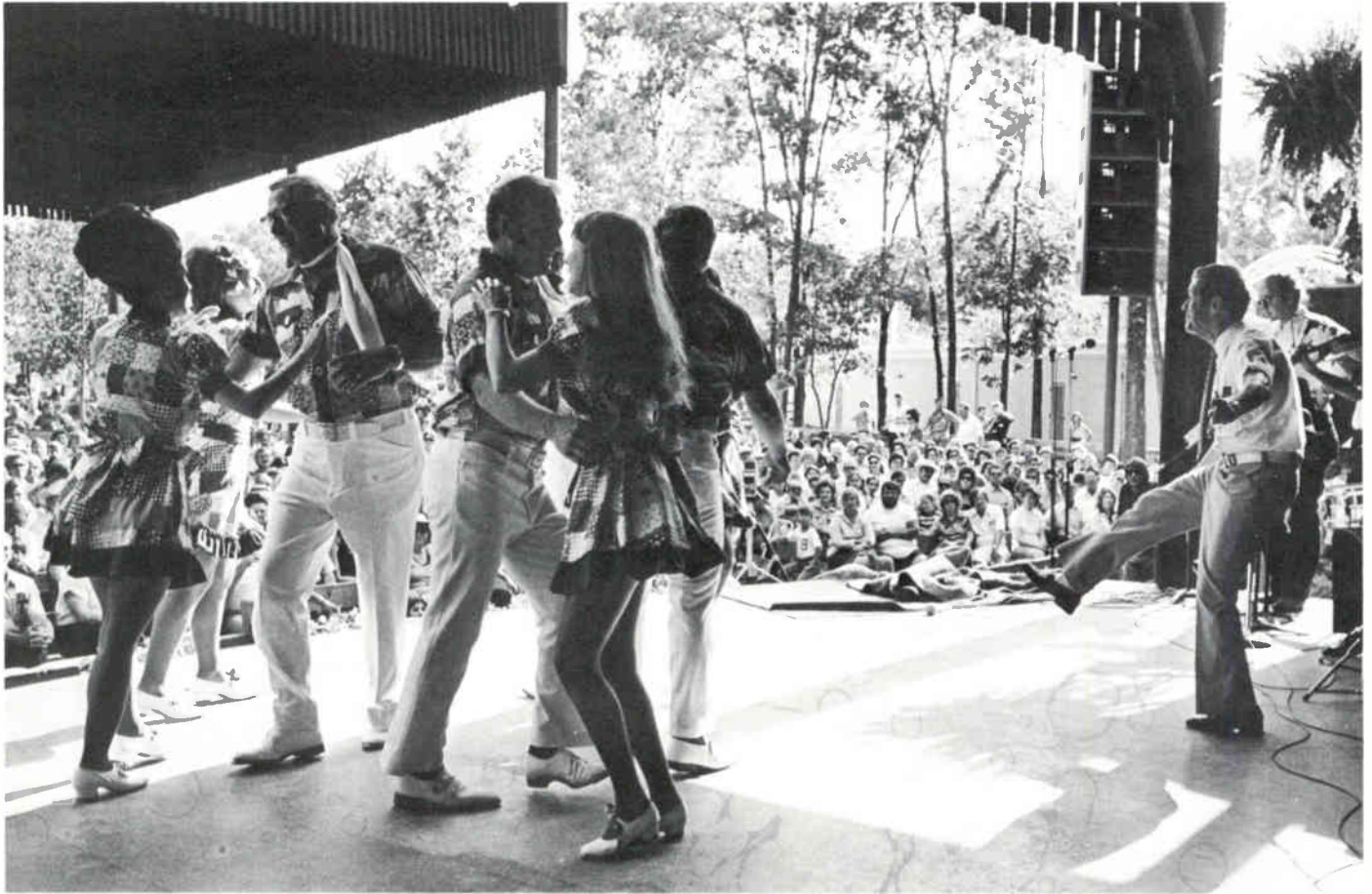
Now, many hits later, Jean is a true veteran in the country music business. She has recorded twenty-three albums. Some of the songs that made Jean famous are "Satisfied Mind," "A Dear John Letter," "Forgive Me John," (both million sellers on which she co-starred with Ferlin Husky), "My Name Is Woman," "Just Plain Lonely," "I Want You Free," "Then He Touched Me," "Seven Lovely Days," "Slipping Away," "At The Time," "I'll Do Anything," and her latest hit, "Tip Of My Fingers."

With so many hit records behind her, Jean's career is at its peak. Her recent nomination for the Grammy Award for the "Best Country Female Vocal Performance of the Year" showed the world that Jean Shepard's greatest successes are yet to come.

Jean is married to Benny Birchfield, a musician, singer, and prominent member of Nashville's music community. Together, Jean and Benny have revamped her act and organized her first full time band, "The Second Fiddles." They are traveling a great deal and Jean is showing her true colors as a professional.



RALPH SLOAN DANCERS



Ralph Sloan and the Tennessee Travelers get an extra kick from Roy Acuff while performing during the Fan Fair Fiddling Championship.

Ralph Sloan and his Tennessee Travelers represent one of the most lively acts on the Grand Ole Opry. Ralph developed his love for the exact art of square dancing when he worked as a doorman at a dance hall in the early 1940's. The group's colorful configurations have been a feature of the Opry since 1952.

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 just to listen to Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb.

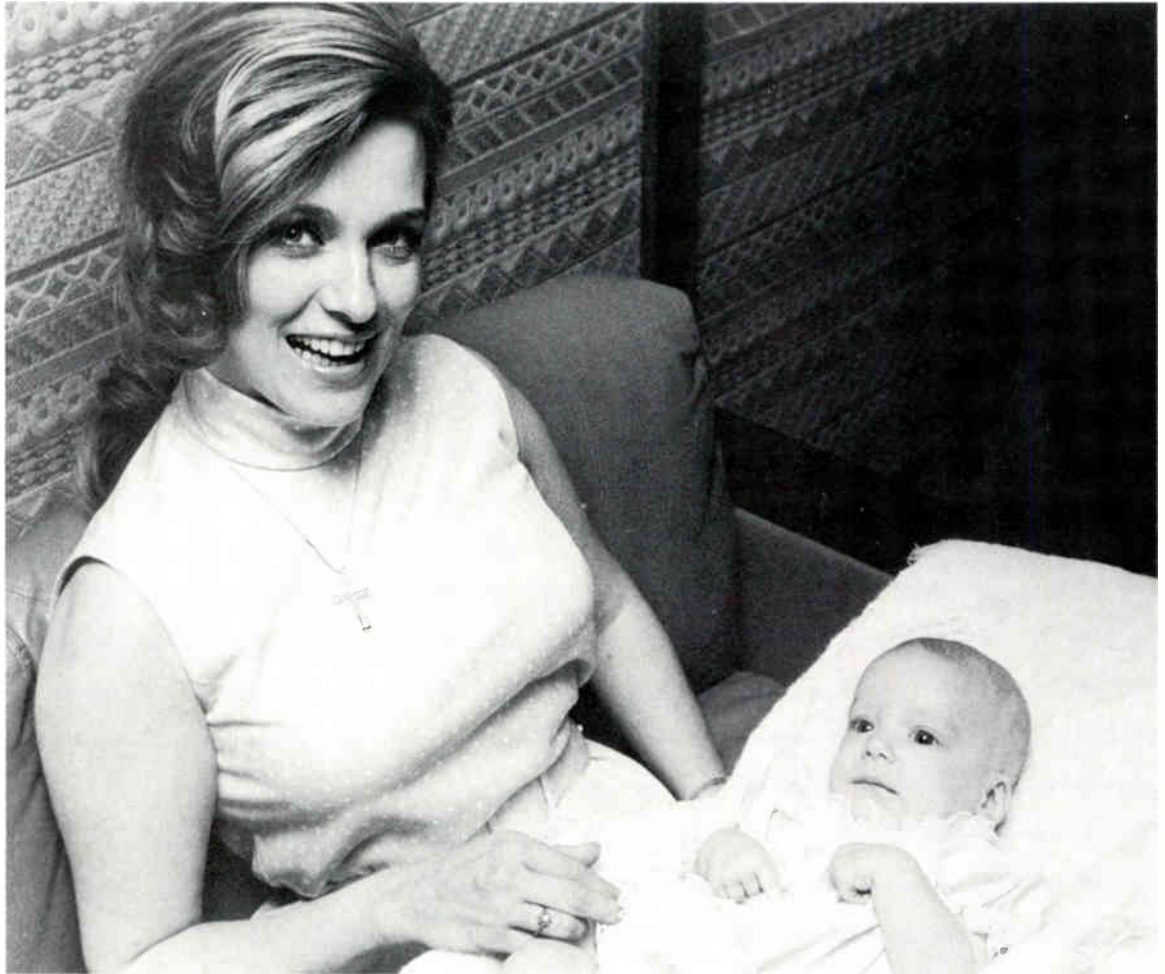
The Sloan Dancers perform the Appalachian style of square dance. It's a free lance step with each member doing their own thing. However, the intricate figures and patterns are carefully rehearsed before being shown to an audience. Ralph selects his dancers on the basis of rhythm and coordination. Obviously, they must be in superb physical condition to maintain the fast dance pace

and frequent rehearsals necessary to perfect the complex choreography. The Dancers have never missed a scheduled Opry appearance.

Over the years this dance team has earned the title: "World's Most Popular Square Dancers." In addition to their Opry performances, they have been featured at every sort of place, at practically every state in the Union, from roller skating rinks to network shows. Ralph and his dancers were the opening act when Ambassadors and Representatives to the United Nations made their historic visit to the Grand Ole Opry in June 1976.

Producers of "That Good Ole Nashville Music" syndicated TV show—which has an annual audience of over eight million—report that 90 percent of the show's fan mail concerns Ralph and the Dancers. And the feeling is mutual. "My greatest reward," says Ralph, "is to see people having fun, patting their feet, and smiling. Then I feel we have accomplished our goal."





Connie sits backstage with her latest pride and joy, Jeanne Lynn.

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. She joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1965.

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





Hank Snow receives a silver memento from Opry Manager, Hal Durham, on the occasion of his 25th Anniversary with the show.

It's a long way from the angry roar of the sea to the adoring roar of applause that greets every stage appearance, but Hank Snow made it—the hard way.

Hank was born in Brooklyn, Queens County, Nova Scotia, Canada. The lure of the sea drew the youngster into becoming a cabin boy at the age of 12. Once when the sea-going fellow returned from one of his trips, he learned his mother had obtained a cheap guitar from a mail order house. This gave the youngster his first try on a stringed instrument.

Not long after this, Hank learned that the late Jimmie Rodgers had been discovered by Ralph Peer, and was already recording for the RCA Victor Company. "The Singing Brakeman," as Jimmie was known, was not only to become Hank's idol, but would serve as his guiding star along the rough road to success. Although Hank worked at many jobs, including work on fish docks, as a stevedore, on farms, etc., he continued his practice on the guitar and often sang to entertain his friends and ward off loneliness. Finally he was encouraged by his friends to seek an audition at Radio Station CHNS in Halifax. He did his first radio show on the day of his audition.

Soon after acquiring his radio position, Hank decided to form the now famous Rainbow Ranch Boys and established himself as the "Singing Ranger." As Hank matured professionally, more important things came his way. Soon he was invited to become a featured act on the "Canadian Farm Hour." After much persuasion, he was signed to his first recording contract with RCA Victor, Canada, in October of 1936, under the recording supervision of Hugh Joseph. In 1974 Hank re-signed with RCA through 1987, which means he will be under contract with one label for 50 years—longer than any artist in any musical field.

In 1949 Hank made his first performing tour in the United States to coincide with the release of his first American record. Hank, who joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1950, has assembled an impressive file of hits, including, "I'm Moving On," "Rhumba Boogie," "Bluebird Island," "Golden Rocket," "Hello Love" and many more. He has recorded more than 80 albums, and more than 2,000 songs and instrumentals.

Hank has received many impressive awards in his lifetime, but still considers citizenship to the United States of America his greatest honor.



THE STONEY MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS



Roy Acuff supplies the dinner music while Ben munches away.

The history of country entertainment in America can well include the first settlers of Irish, German and Dutch descent, who arrived on horseback and covered wagons atop the Great Smokies and Stoney Mountains of North Carolina. In their spare time they gathered in homes, barns, and in the fields with their instruments to play and sing and exhibit their native folk dances.

Clogg dancing was handed down to the present, where here we introduce the most highly acclaimed of the cloggers of this generation, the celebrated and fabulous Smathers Family, better known to Grand Ole Opry fans as Ben Smathers and the Stoney Mountain Cloggers.

Of course, in these modern times, the Smathers have broadened their fascinating and fast moving performance with a conglomeration of country blue grass, pop, country and spiritual. The Smathers Family are Ben and pretty wife, Margaret, and their family: Hal, Tim, Candy, and Debbie. They are the only act of its kind in country music.

Numerous honorary mentions have been heaped upon the Smathers for their determined energies to keep clogg dancing alive. Their unique performances have been lauded by governors of the southern states, the most recent a proclamation by the former Tennessee Governor Winfield Dunn, who acclaimed them, "Dance Masters of Country Music."

Ben and Margaret have been clogg dancing since their early school days just as other children in the

Carolinas have been taught. It was traditional among hill people where clogging contests were highly competitive. The couple entered all the country festivals and contests where their popularity spread and they soon became regulars on television shows in both Asheville and Greenville, North Carolina.

Their popularity continued to grow and in 1958, they were given a guest spot for an appearance on the Grand Ole Opry. They were accepted with wild ovations and numerous encores and have been regulars on the Grand Ole Opry ever since. Extraordinary musicians as well as clogg dancers and singers, the entire family play guitar, bass, drums, banjo and tamborine. They are sometimes billed as "Country Music In Review."

Since entering the professional entertainment field, the Smathers have appeared on 127 network shows and six motion pictures. They have also been featured at 38 state fairs and numerous county fairs, and today hold the distinction of being the only group of its kind presented at Carnegie Hall.

Ben and Margaret hail from Hendersonville, North Carolina known as the heart of the clogg dance country, and billed by the Chamber of Commerce as, "The Dancingest Little Town In The World." They no longer reside in Hendersonville, North Carolina, but they have remained loyal to its name. They now live in Hendersonville, Tennessee, which is located on Old Hickory Lake 20 miles out of Nashville.





Tennessee Ernie Ford and Texas Ernest Tubb delight the crowd with a little old fashioned fun.

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 Jimmie 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. He joined the Opry in 1943.

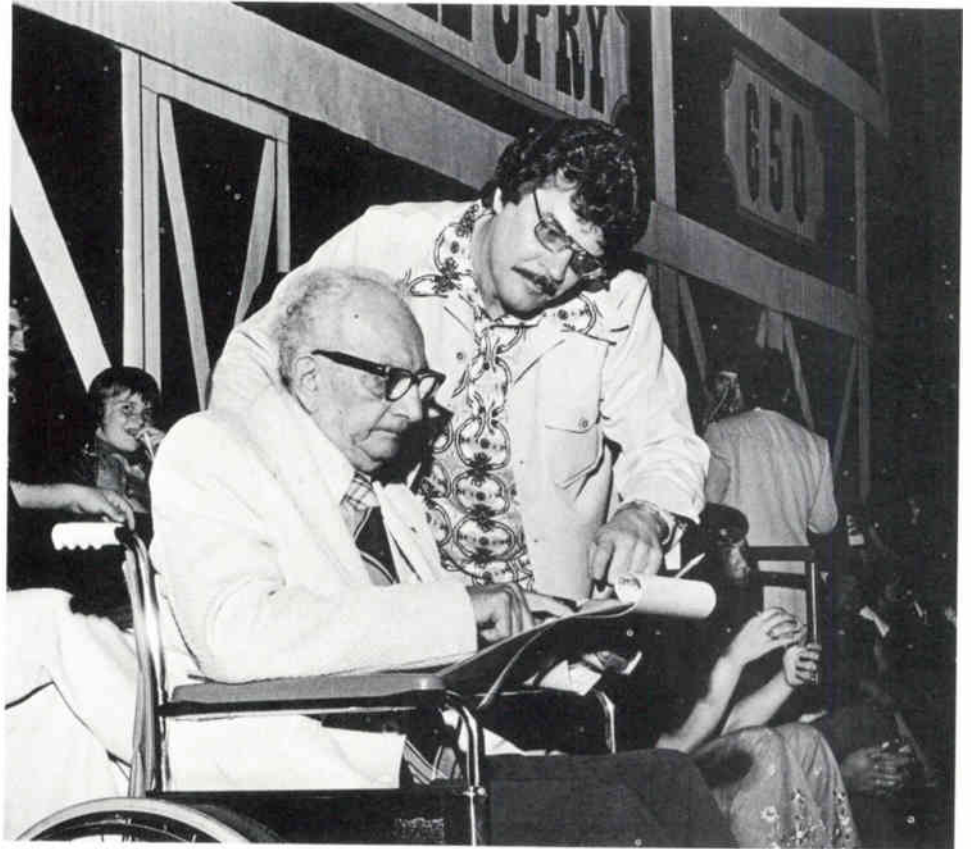
Tubb's trip from the Texas Plains to the Hills of Tennessee followed the success of a song which he wrote entitled "I'm Walking the Floor Over You."

The song, which soon became the theme-song for Ernest Tubb and his Texas Troubadours, has sold millions of records. He has also written over one hundred songs.

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 makes his home in Nashville where he is held in the highest regard among his friends and associates. His hobbies include home movies and golf. He travels about 90% of the time, with his versatile band known as "The Texas Troubadours," in a big comfortable bus. His fans number in the millions all over the world, and many of them have followed his long career closely.





Justin checks the Opry schedule with Vito Pellettieri—85 years young—the show's stage manager since 1934.

Justin Tubb is one of the most dynamic personalities in Country Music today, and we don't say that lightly. As a songwriter he has had songs recorded by such artists as Hawkshaw Hawkins, Ernest Tubb, George Jones, Burl Ives, Del Reeves, Kitty Wells, Patsy Cline, Ray Price . . . just to name a few. His own compositions such as "Lonesome 77203," "Love Is No Excuse," "Take A Letter Miss Gray," "Keeping Up With the Joneses," "Be Better To Your Baby," all won BMI Awards.

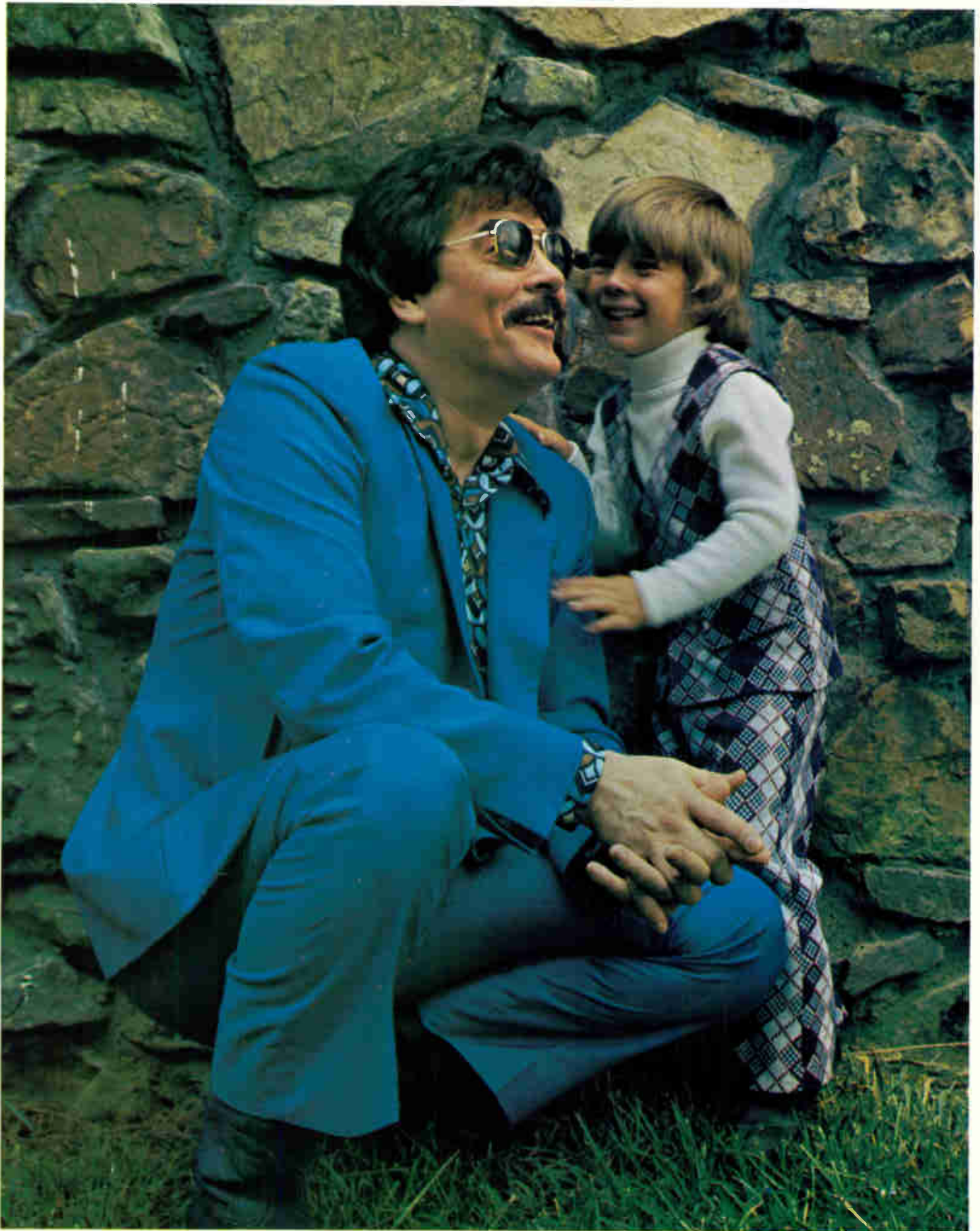
Justin was born in San Antonio, Texas and is the oldest son of one of the living legends in Country Music, Ernest Tubb. He just naturally grew up with a guitar in his hand, and an eye for a Country Music career. His first professional jobs in music were working the local clubs around Austin, Texas while attending the University of Texas in 1952.

Moving to Nashville in 1953, he became a Disc Jockey over WHIN in Gallatin, Tennessee for a year and a half, and recorded his first session that year for Decca Records. Some of his best known

recordings include "Looking Back to See," with Goldie Hill, "I Gotta Go Get My Baby," "Believing It Yourself," "Take A Letter Miss Gray," "As Long As There's A Sunday." All of this brought Justin the opportunity to join the Grand Ole Opry in 1955, and won him a permanent place in the hearts of every Country Music fan.

He has toured all but two of the fifty states, as well as Canada, Panama Canal Zone, Bermuda, The Philippines, Taiwan, Okinawa, South Korea, Japan, Spain, England and West Germany. He is considered one of the best showmen in Country Music. His recording of "Travelin' Singin' Man" and "Texas Dance Hall Girl" is sure to establish even more Justin Tubb fans along the road of his fantastic career.

If you have the opportunity to see Justin . . . you're just in time for one of the great entertainers/songwriters, that has helped make Country Music the most popular form of music throughout the world today.





Thirteen year old, Mike O'Connor of Washington, is crowned the 1975 Fan Fair Fiddling Champion by Roy Acuff and Porter.

Porter's been recording hits for RCA Records since the early 1950's. Today, he's one of the biggest selling artists on the label. Secondly, his syndicated television show has become the most popular program of its type and is seen weekly all over the nation (in over 100 markets) by over 45 million people, an audience surpassing that of many nighttime network shows. His roadshow unit has been booked into virtual "overwork" status for years and is considered among the top five country music attractions available.

Since 1957 he's been a member of the Grand Ole Opry and over the years he and the talented people working with him have won virtually every major award that can go to country music artists, including the celebrated "Grammy" Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

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 as a clerk. During slack business times, while accompanying himself on a guitar, Porter would play for the customers and the owner. Because he enjoyed Porter's singing so much, the market owner sponsored a 15-minute local radio show featuring Porter Wagoner, "market clerk."

This led to a job at KWTO in Springfield, Missouri, in the fall of 1951. There the Ozark Jubilee was born, and Red Foley, who directed the casting, began teaching Porter the necessary "pro-

fessional 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 experience. RCA's legendary Steve Sholes had so much faith in Porter's potential that he allowed Porter to experiment for four years until he found the right musical formula.

His first hit was released in 1955—"A Satisfied Mind"—and it shot to the top, with Porter soaring too. He's been there ever since. He's made literally hundreds of records for RCA, and virtually everything he releases becomes big-selling merchandise: hit singles and albums.

By 1961 Porter had become a successful in-person performer as well, and his personal charm easily captivated audiences at the Opry and wherever else he played. 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. 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.



BILLY WALKER

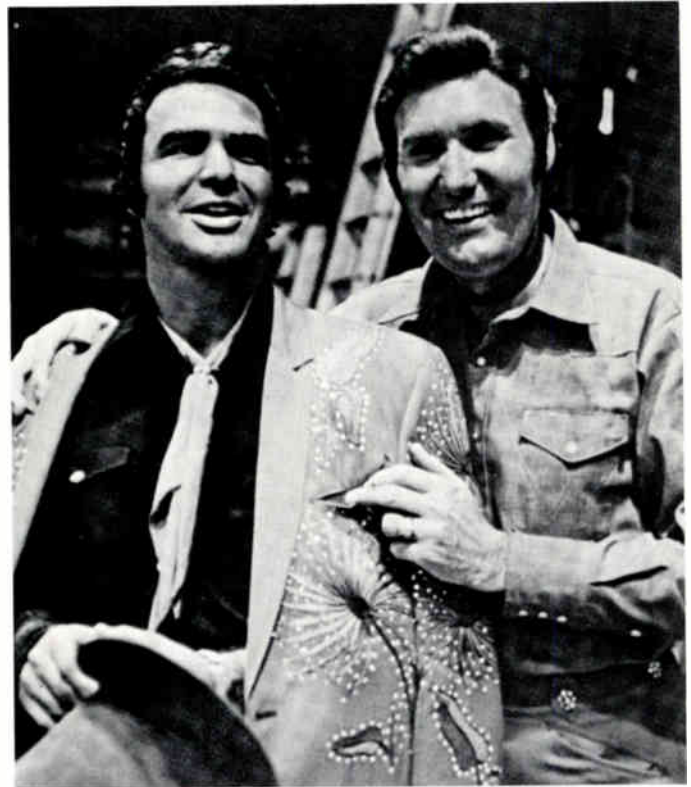
Billy Walker is a tall Texan. Six foot, three inches, to be exact. But, so far, he's never forgotten to duck. However, he's had some close calls and some mighty narrow doorways of life to get through . . . or, in his case, "under." But he has managed to survive with a never-say-die Texas spirit.

Even from the very beginning there was tragedy. At the age of four, his mother died and the Texas tot ended up at an orphans home in Waco. Then, when he was still in his teens the young Walker won a talent contest, which Billy claims consisted of "three dollars and a chocolate cake." But, even that brought him hardship. (And probably heartburn.)

Seems a 15-minute radio show, which also resulted from the contest, meant the lad would have to be in Clovis, New Mexico . . . 80 miles from his hometown of Ralls . . . every Saturday afternoon. It was simply the strength he received from his first love—the guitar—that enabled him to make the trip week after week. And he did it for three years running, literally "I'd hitchhike there and stay with my Uncle," Billy says, "then, do the show and head for home. Lots of times I wouldn't get long enough rides to make it home in time for school, and I'd end up running 10 or 12 miles."

But Billy Walker always knew that one day he would stop running, start entertaining and become a professional singer. Moving in that direction, Billy first decided to join Jimmy Lawson's band of "Foggy River" acclaim, and later he toured with Hank Thompson.

After that, the fields ahead unfolded some pretty high cotton. He became a regular on the "Big D Jamboree," signed with Columbia Records, scored his first hit with "Anything Your Heart Desires," moved up to the popular "Louisiana Hayride," and in three years found himself headlining the "Ozark Jubilee" on ABC-TV.



Burt Reynolds models Billy's coat during a break in the filming of Burt's movie, "W. W. and the Dixie Dancekings."

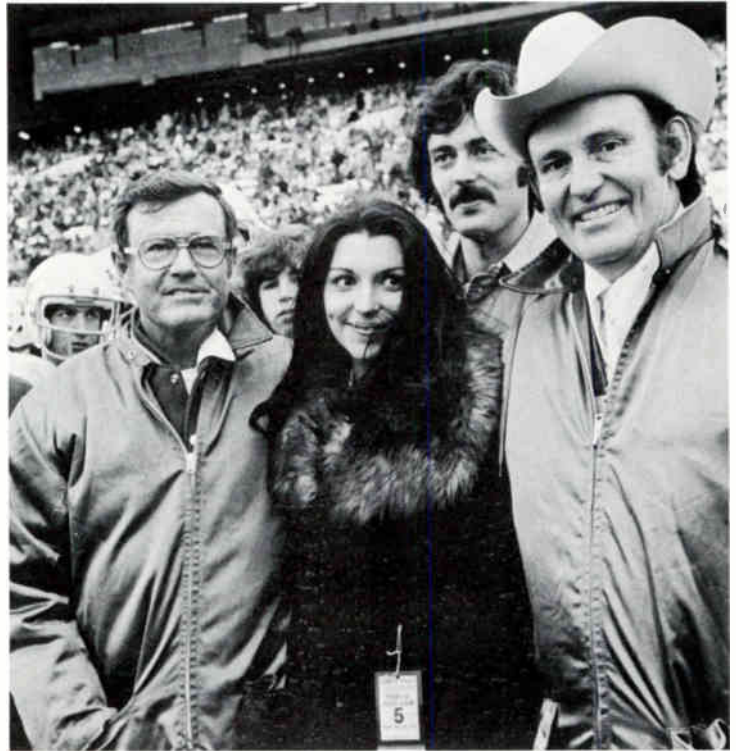
Then, it happened. The real glory train came to town whisking willowy Walker off to Nashville where he was to make his first appearance on The Grand Ole Opry. And an additional series of guest shots there soon led to his membership in 1960.

And almost before Billy knew it, the same glory train that had brought him to Tennessee, turned into the "gray" train, as the result of his first #1 hit—"Charlie's Shoes"—selling over a quarter of a million copies. There it was, "overnite success." After only 10 years of work. Billy went on to enjoy such hits as "Funny How Time Slips Away," "Cross The Brazos At Waco," "A Million and One," and "Circumstances." Through it all, he has recorded a total of 60 hits, with 38 of those making the national charts, and 26 of them ranking among the Top Ten.

Today, he has his own band "The Tennessee Walkers," his own bus, his own office, his own publishing companies, and his own house "next door to the golf course," as Billy puts it.



CHARLIE WALKER



"Guest Assistant Coach," Charlie Walker, plans a little strategy prior to the Texas-Texas A & M football game. Left to right with Charlie are Texas' head coach, Darrell Royal, and Charlie's children, Cindy and Ron.

Being a student of the oldest music school in the world—a father teaching his son at home—Charlie Walker has steadfastly strove toward his one big childhood dream and has realized both parts of it: which was to be a country recording artist and a member of the Grand Ole Opry—since 1967.

Charlie's first professional job—a Dallas night club when he was seventeen—was quite different from the auditorium and packed-house engagements he works today. But time has a way of bringing about changes. From the early influence of Jimmie Rodgers and his diligent practice at yodeling and playing guitar, mandolin, fiddle, bass and harmonica, Charlie has become the sum total of these and later influences as one of America's truly distinctive country singers.

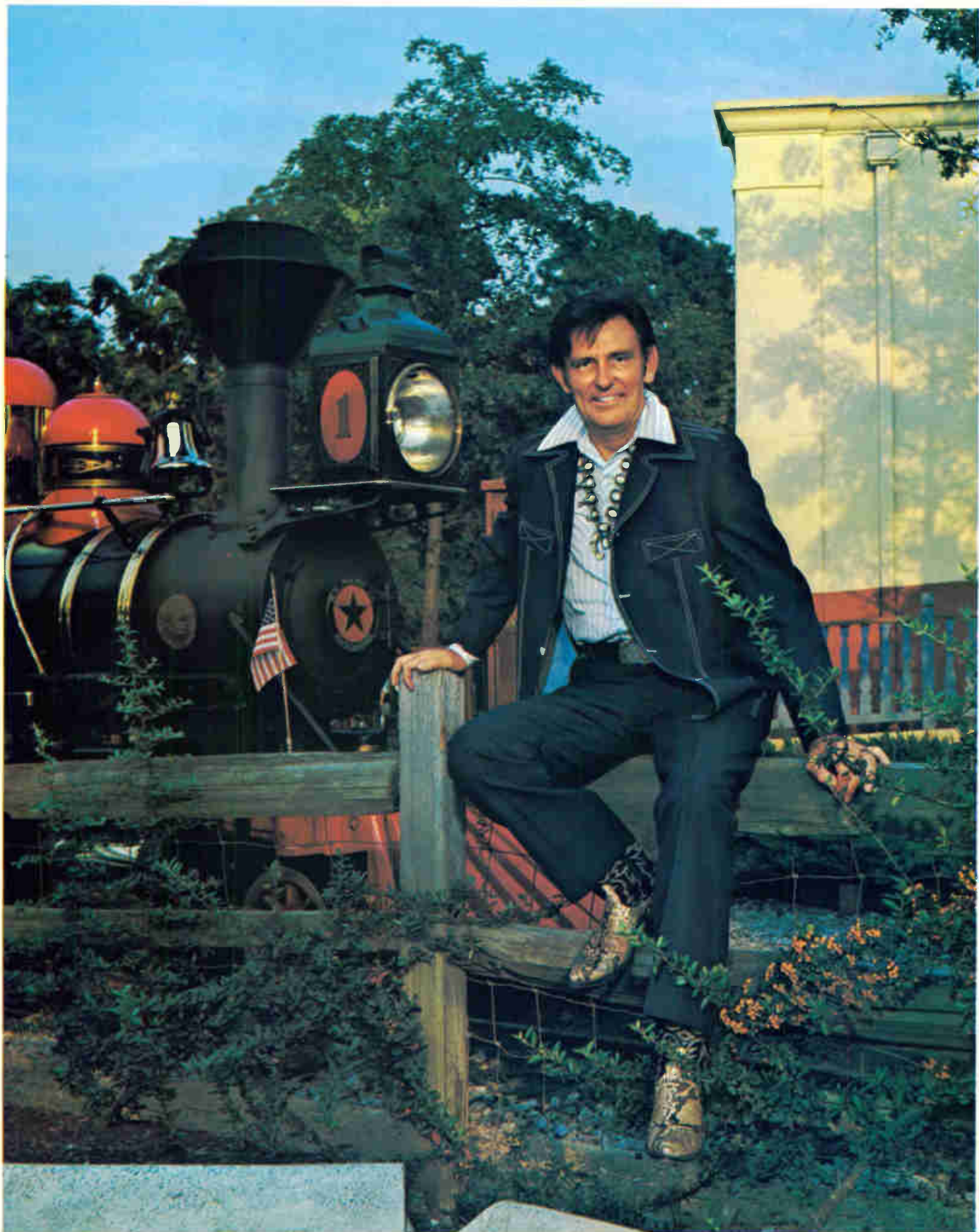
His first noise making record of "Tell Her Lies And Feed Her Candy" was soon followed by his #1 release of "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down," a near million selling record that netted him Columbia's Golden Guitar Award. Then came a long list of hits, including "Wild As A Wildcat," "Close All The Honky Tonks," "Don't Squeeze My Sharmon," "Moffet, Oklahoma" and "Little Ole Wine Drinker Me." Early 1974 found Charlie moving his singing talents to Capitol Records where you'll find the

balance of his country hits including "Odds & Ends, Bits & Pieces" and "The Last Supper."

Charlie has toured every state in the U. S., plus England, Germany and Japan. Long considered a hard nut to crack for C & W entertainers, Vegas' "Golden Nugget" recalled Charlie to the tune of 25 weeks of total appearances within a three-year period. He's also chalked up numerous credits via TV guestings on the Lloyd Thaxton Showcase, American Swingaround, Dean Martin's Music Country USA, and all the leading C & W syndicates. A role in a Universal International Movie called "Country Music" not only proved he could make the movie scene, but sparked enough "ham" in him to warrant the incentive to do more movie work.

Charlie's proficiency at golf has placed him on the invitation list for numerous pro-celebrity golf tournaments, providing valuable and varied contacts with the public.

As his friends and business associates already know—and as his fans find out wherever Charlie appears—the dark-haired, brown-eyed entertainer is a good natured, easy-moving, personable guy—who knows what country music is all about.



DOTTIE WEST



"Country Sunshine" shines bright when Dottie West takes the mike.

Being one of ten children from the farm country around McMinnville, Tennessee, Dottie West learned early in life that hard work and "country sunshine" go a long way toward building success.

Dottie majored in music at Tennessee Tech and after several years of working northern nightclubs, she cut her first record for Starday in 1959. Returning home from an engagement, she passed the studio, went in and said, "I want to record." The following weekend she returned with borrowed money to pay for the session. A contract with Atlantic Records followed. But on the recommendation of Jim Reeves, Chet Atkins asked her to sign with RCA in 1962. Jim Reeves had recorded the first song she wrote as an adult, "Is This Me?" It won her the BMI Writer's Award in 1961. In 1964 she joined the Grand Ole Opry.

In 1965 she became the first country music female artist to win a Grammy Award. The song she wrote, "Here Comes My Baby," was also recorded by Perry Como, Dean Martin and 50 other artists.

But 1974, was her banner year thus far. The Country Music RCA recording star was declared by Billboard Magazine the Number One Female Writer in the United States and the Number One Female Performer in England. She also won the title of Country Music Artist of the Year from the British Country Music Association. One of the country's largest ad agencies heard a song she wrote, "I Was A Country Girl," and asked her to make a commercial for Coca Cola. One number used, "Country Sunshine," became a record by

popular request. The final result of Dottie West's magnetic style is a lifetime contract as the "Coca Cola Country Girl." She will write and perform for six television and radio commercials a year, drawing from her own experience and memories as a Tennessee farm girl. "Country Sunshine" won her two Grammy nominations, in the categories of Country Female Performer and Writer (along with Billy Davis). The commercial came in first in the CLEO awards.

Dottie West now finds herself and her 5-piece band, "Cross-Country," on the road for engagements 200 days out of the year, putting 125,000 miles on her bus, "The Sunshine Express." National television shows taped include "The Eddy Arnold Special," "Country Hit Parade," two "Music Country U.S.A." and "Hee-Haw." Other credits include Glen Campbell, Jimmy Dean, Mike Douglas and "Good Ole Nashville" TV shows, and most famous clubs around the country. She has made two European tours and summers are spent playing fair dates. Not all of Dottie West's performances have been country-western billing. She opened the 1973 Memphis Symphony Orchestra's season and performed a week with the Kansas City Symphony.

"I can't remember when I didn't sing," says Dottie. "Mama said I got here singing, and I want to go out singing." With her vivacious and thoroughly appealing style, Dottie West will continue to be in demand for network shows and personal appearances throughout the world, spreading "Country Sunshine" wherever she goes.



THE WILBURN BROTHERS



*Teddy and Doyle Wilburn
began their Opry careers a little bit earlier than most.*

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, 6, and Doyle, 7,—grew up to become one of the all-time best loved acts in Country Music—The Wilburn Brothers.

The year following their street corner debut the Wilburn Children toured the neighboring cities and states, giving concerts wherever Pop Wilburn, who acted as agent, PR man and booker, could gather a crowd. Schoolhouses, 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," a popular country show out of Shreveport.

In 1951 the Korean conflict broke out and soon Teddy and Doyle received their bookings from Uncle Sam. After their release from the service, Teddy and Doyle went right back into the business of country music. They worked on the Webb Pierce Show, and soon were back on center stage at the Grand Ole Opry as regulars in 1953. In fact, it was Webb Pierce who helped get the boys 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 are one of Country Music's most honored acts. Their 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 MCA.

They also have the second oldest syndicated Country/Western TV show out of Nashville and one of the city'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.



DON WILLIAMS

Country music composers in Nashville refer to Don Williams as “the song doctor.” He has a knack for helping with the construction of a melody line, or lyric when the writer is stuck or the end product doesn’t seem to be working. And that’s some compliment from your peers.

Don Williams is thought of as songwriter to some, singer to others, a mellow, sure and atypical country entertainer to most. The lanky, laid-back performer says of himself, “Family and music make up my life. I love the music because it lets me really express myself. I could never walk up to all those people (in the audience) and say what I can say in song.”

An East coast writer says of Don’s style, “The sound is quite out of place with the main current of the times. It’s almost as if, in some unlikely circumstance, Jim Reeves had been raised again today, given a Texas accent and sent downtown in blue jeans to cut sweet country songs without the violins . . . the voice is slow and easy, a comfortable baritone devoid of flash or stress or edges . . . the sound is rare indeed. It features a complete lack of cuteness and a considerable portion of good taste . . . it is anything but commonplace.

But among his talents, Don leans towards writing. “It’s the most fulfilling for me,” he says. “I understand what is a good song and that’s just what I try to write. Finding the right combination and putting it all together is satisfying. It’s a projection, while performing, the song reinforces the initial idea; it’s almost an after-the-fact type thing.” Charley Pride was the first established country music artist to record a Don Williams song. Others to have followed suit include Sonny James, Jeanne Pruett, Johnny Cash, Lefty Frizzell and Lobo. Don figures he’s written close to 500 songs.

Born in the small Texas town of Floydada, Don’s family moved often, to Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Iowa and Missouri. While living in a small Missouri town Don latched onto the guitar and learned to play from his sole teacher, his mother. He was 12 at the time, but had a craving for an entertainment career already. Don’s first paid job in country music came during his sophomore year in high school in Gregory, Texas, when a band he headed played for the grand opening of a local service station. It was a start. He also played and sang with a group during Army basic training, and while he was in military school, then later when he was stationed in Japan.

Following his discharge from the Army, Don



Opry Manager, Hal Durham, enthusiastically welcomes Don Williams to the Grand Ole Opry cast.

took jobs here and there, until he decided to return to music. In 1964, while in Corpus Christi, Texas, Don formed the Pozo Seco Singers, a three member vocal group who sang a variety of popular music—folk, pop and country. Their first recorded single, “Time,” climbed to the top 10 on national music charts. The name Pozo Seco literally translates as “dry hole” from a colloquial term used by geologists in that part of the country, but Don had finally hit and the hole was anything but dry. The group clicked time and again with their records and personal appearances, and stayed together until 1970, during which time Don wrote several of their songs.

In April 1976, Don joined the Grand Ole Opry. He keeps his public appearances down to a comfortable amount per month, and divides the rest of his time between recording, songwriting, and tending his farm in Ashland City, Tenn. Don also had a prominent role with Burt Reynolds in the 20th Century Fox movie, “W.W. and the Dixie Dancekings.”

Don now records for ABC/DOT Records. Some of his hits include: “Shelter of Your Eyes,” “Come Early Morning,” “Amanda,” “The Ties That Bind,” “You’re My Best Friend,” “Love Me Tonight,” and “Til The Rivers All Run Dry.”

Don produces his own records because, “I want to do music the way it feels most honest to me.” And honest is a good description of the kind of music this Texan makes. His songs don’t rage with gimmicks but are quiet songs in an intimate, dignified style all his own. And that style has established Don as one of the most appreciated country singers in the world.



THE WILLIS BROTHERS



*Doctors Bill Carlisle, Kirk McGee
and a very concerned Vic Willis examine Alcyone Beasley's sprained wrist.*

The Willis Brothers, Guy and Vic, originally known as "The Oklahoma Wranglers" of radio, TV, screen and recording fame, are recognized internationally as one of the top Country and Western entertainment groups.

Their career began at KGEF in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and from there to "The Brush Creek Follies" show on KMBC in Kansas City, Missouri. World War II interrupted, and after four years in the service, they became regular members of the Grand Ole Opry in 1946.

The Willis Brothers have three important firsts in the world of Country Music . . . the first group to back the late Hank Williams, later becoming known as the original "Drifting Cowboys" . . . the first featured act on the "Jubilee, USA" shows at Springfield, Missouri . . . and they, along with other Grand Ole Opry acts, the first Country and Western musical entertainers to give a concert in

Constitution Hall in Washington, D. C., a place normally reserved for classical music.

The Willis Brothers have been seen in Columbia pictures, and have numerous record releases and personal appearances to their credit. They have also taken USO tours to our Armed Forces around the world, having played engagements in England, Holland, Germany, France, Ireland, Greenland, Newfoundland, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas.

They have established themselves as a top act in every aspect of Country show business. Guy, the oldest and emcee of the show, plays guitar while Vic is the accordeonist and doubles on piano. Both do solo or group-type work, including novelty numbers and impersonations of other artists. There are many recording stars, but there are only a few great Country Music entertainers. The Willis Brothers are both!





*Mrs. George Wallace, Del, and Alcyone Beasley
get together backstage during a break in the Opry action.*

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. A year later she joined as a regular.

"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. Her latest album is a bright and bouncy gospel release called: "Rag Time Glory Special." 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.



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



*Marion and sister, Dean,
treat the audience to an old-time duet favorite.*

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 Kind of Love," "A Woman Needs Love," and "Mama Says." Her hobbies include knitting, tennis, cooking and football. . . . Watching, not playing.



TAMMY WYNETTE

Tammy Wynette began developing her natural musical talents at an early age. Urged on by family and friends, she graduated from talent shows and charities to her own local radio show while still a teenager. It was during this time in her life that she began to truly perfect the heart-in-throat song styling that has carried her to the top of the country music world.

Tammy's first trip to Nashville was as a song plugger rather than a singer. She had come to Epic Records to try to interest them in some material a friend had written for one of Epic's top artists. It is not known what became of the songs or the friend, but for Tammy it was the beginning of an entire new life. Within a few weeks she had her first single out "Apartment No. 9" and country music fans, as well as pop fans were proclaiming her a new star. She rose to the top of the charts and polls so quickly that there was no time for her to be proclaimed as best new female vocalist or best upcoming this or that. She was instantly at the top of everyone's list and her unique talent was to know no restrictions. She was a favorite on country, pop and top 40 stations. Tammy Wynette had arrived.

Following her initial hit single, she has been at the top of the charts constantly with singles and albums. Her outstanding singles include, "Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad"—Grammy winner, 1967,—"I Don't Wanna Play House," "He Loves Me All The Way," "Run, Woman, Run," "Good Lovin'," "Bedtime Story," and her 1969 Grammy winner, "Stand By Your Man."

Not content to be known solely as a singer, Tammy has written or co-written several of her own hits, including "Stand By Your Man," which recently enjoyed an encore success as a rhythm and blues hit. Tammy's voice has been used for the soundtrack recording of two current contemporary films, "Run, Angel, Run," and "Five Easy Pieces."



Sultry Tammy captivates the crowd with a country style soul song.

Far more than being just another singer, Tammy Wynette had become a very "in" singer with all audiences. As can be expected, her popularity has begun to spread to Europe. Touched by the despair and plaintive sob in her voice, a top French critic was moved to call her "The Edith Piaf of Country America." She is internationally recognized as America's foremost singer of soul songs . . . country style.





Irving Waugh, president WSM, Inc.—AM-FM-TV-Grand Ole Opry & Opryland.

For over half a century, the Grand Ole Opry has been entertaining America with a kind of spontaneous, unpretentious, unabashed happening that is unique in broadcasting annals. The Opry music is telling you pieces of life's harsh story. And through it all she is being constantly reminded of Judge George D. Hay's first commandment: "Keep her down to earth, boys!"

One secret for the Opry's tremendous success is the fact that the show is performed live. Her squaredancers dance and her singers sing. A constellation of stars brighten the audience each Friday and Saturday evening right in front of your very eyes.

Another reason for the Opry's popularity is the illusion that the performance is just happening; that it has no rhyme or reason to it; that it is chaotic



Becky Jackson, left, and Cindy Wood of WSM radio traffic schedule each commercial announcement and prepare the radio log.

informality which somehow stumbles through each weekend.

It is literally true that any single Grand Ole Opry performance will never happen again, but the illusion that the show has not been programmed or planned is not true at all.

The Grand Ole Opry is fortunate to have a capable and dedicated staff responsible for seeing that the world's greatest country music show happens 52 weeks a year. This group spends long, exacting hours behind the scenes tending to the smallest detail required for a smooth flowing Opry production.

The principal person in charge of shows and



Hal Durham and Debbie Logue spend long hours and a lot of phone calls planning Opry shows. Then on Friday and Saturday, Hal directs the on stage activity of Opry stars such as Marty Robbins.





This staff cheerfully deals with thousands of annual ticket requests, phone calls, and letters.

other business related to the Opry and its artists is Manager Hal Durham, a native of nearby McMinnville, Tennessee, and a high school classmate of Dottie West. The oldest, most famous Country Music radio show in history appears, at first glance, a manager's nightmare. The Opry is unique in many ways, with its seemingly endless stream of singers and dancers doing their thing—and managing the Opry is a unique experience. There is no other job like it in existence, and there are no schools that teach courses in this business.

"I've thought many times if you sat down to design a successful show, you would probably do everything just the opposite of the way we do," Hal says. "I can't conceive of anybody setting out to pattern a show that has no rehearsals. And we don't know more than 48 hours in advance who is going to be here. We have no advance promotion of the artists you're going to see, and we interrupt the whole thing continually with commercial content." Yet, the Grand Ole Opry actually brings the equivalent of a major convention to Nashville each weekend. Over 750,000 attend the Opry shows annually.

"The Opry is the ultimate. It is synonymous with being at the top of the ladder, and we can't have off weeks. Each week has to be great," according to Hal Durham. "People plan their vacation around the

Opry knowing they are going to see the greatest show in Country Music, and we try not to disappoint them." Hal then adds, "And when you get to the end of a Saturday night, sometimes you feel a little apprehensive. Because you know that starting Monday you have to put it all together again."

The thing that ends in a continuous procession of singers, comics, bands, squaredancers and cloggers on Saturday night does indeed begin Monday morning 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 Road, nearly 20 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," Cindy says. And making up the schedule of the commercials for every Friday and Saturday night Opry show is the job of Cindy and the WSM Traffic Department.

The sale of commercial time on WSM Radio and the Opry is the responsibility of Sam Littleton, Mike Gallagher and their staff. Sam is involved with the national accounts, while Mike directs the



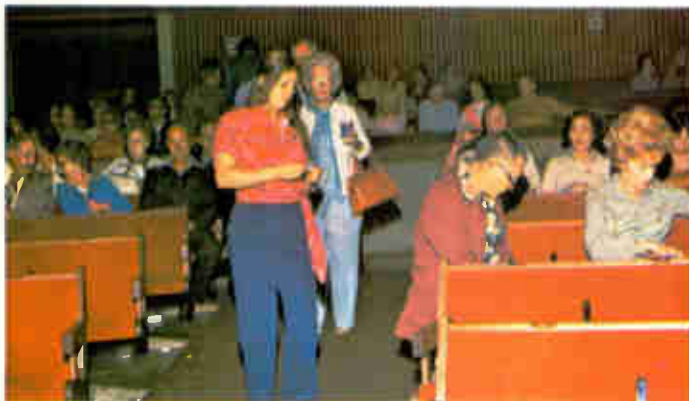
Salesmen Mike Gallagher, left, and Sam Littleton, right, meet with Len Hensel, general manager of WSM Radio to check some advertising copy from an Opry sponsor.



A prized possession—four tickets to the Grand Ole Opry!



Grand Ole Opry fans come from far and wide—from Washington, D. C. and outer space. Former President and Mrs. Richard Nixon attended the premiere performance at the Opry House March 16, 1974. They are shown dedicating the building with William C. Weaver, chairman of the board—The National Life and Accident Insurance Co., and Mrs. Dorothy Ritter. In October 1975, the joint U.S.-USSR Apollo-Soyuz Test Project crew docked on the Opry stage. Shown left to right, seated: Astronauts Donald K. Slayton, and Vance D. Brand, and Cosmonaut Valeriy N. Kubasov. Standing: Astronaut Thomas P. Stafford and Cosmonaut Aleksey A. Leonov.



It takes a large, friendly staff to insure the continued popularity of Opry shows—beginning with the colorful hostesses who assist those guests entering the front doors . . . while J. D. Bell and Norman Van Dame direct traffic at the back stage entrance.

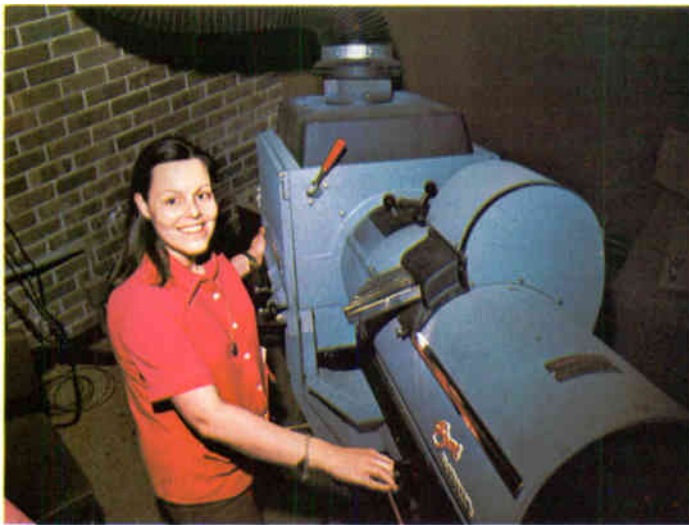
local sales efforts. The first Opry sponsor was Crazy Water Crystal which beamed its message in

1936. Most of the Opry advertisers have been with the show many years. Stephens Manufacturers and Martha White Mills can claim longevity awards as Opry sponsors. Other advertisers on the Friday and Saturday Shows include: Cracker Barrell, Varallos, Odom Sausage, U.S. Boraxo, Kroger, Sunbeam, Hermitage Landing, Schlitz Brewing, ACME Boot Co., P. Lorillard, Cee Bee Stores, Vietti, Mrs. Grissom Salads, Rudy's Sausage, Daner Foods, Standard Candy, Kelloggs, Fender Guitar, Union Oil Co., Trailblazer Dog Food, Coca Cola, and Elm Hill Meats.



Stage Director, Fred Frederick, controls the show's pulse from his station off stage.

While those sponsors' messages are coming to Cindy's desk at radio traffic every Monday, Wilma Briggs, ticket supervisor, and her staff are busy at Opryland reading the thousands of pieces of mail



Assistant Lighting Director, Susan Ray, and Wayne Pilkinton provide both sight and sound inside the Opry House.

received there, answering phones, handling Opry tickets requests, and balancing the books from the previous week.

A recent survey indicated that in one month the Opry Ticket Office received 14,375 requests for tickets/information from 49 states, D.C., Canada, and five foreign countries. This did not include the hundreds of pieces of miscellaneous and artists' fan mail. The Opry fan is a traveling man and comes an average distance of 940 miles—round trip—to see the show. Calculations reveal that forty-five percent of the guests come from: Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Tennessee and Wisconsin. For information on how you can attend an Opry show write: Grand Ole Opry Ticket Office, 2800 Opryland Drive, Nashville, Tenn. 37214.

For the Grand Ole Opry's scheduling purposes, Tuesday is really the first day of the week. On that day, Cindy begins typing the advertising copy that arrives at WSM. Wilma, meanwhile, is busy verifying the various deposits against the number of

tickets sold, and opens sale of general admission tickets to the waiting public. Most of the reserved seat tickets are sold out long before the night of the performance. At the same time the Opry Manager's office begins contacting the members for appearances on the weekend show.

The person in charge of the preliminary stages is secretary Debbie Logue. Debbie calls the talent agents who represent Opry stars. As she inquires about the Opry members, she also gathers information about non-Opry acts who could be available as guests. Normally, Tuesday and Wednesday are required for her to get the necessary information



This multi-channel broadcast-recording console keeps the Opry beaming to millions of listeners.



Stagehands Ken Demonbreun and Jerry Baker make sure the sponsors' visual messages project a colorful backdrop during the show.



The Opry announcers play a vital role on every show. They must introduce acts, wave in applause to increase the excitement, read live commercials, and keep a close eye on the clock so that the shows move on schedule. Thirty year veteran, Grant Turner, checks the Opry schedule with Vito Pellettieri, 85 years young, and the stage manager since 1934. And while Hairl Hensley observes the merriment off stage, Tony Lyons reads a sponsor's commercial message.



James Smith and Rosa Mae Hodge keep the backstage artists' lounge supplied with refreshments.



It's "Showtime" when the spirited "Promenadors" kick-off another Friday Night Opry.

on the members and guests. Debbie averages 450 telephone calls a week. And almost every one is connected with lining up the weekend shows.

Thursday is the day Hal Durham plans his show.



"Opry Anne" Boatman keeps a record on each musician who appears on stage.

By then, Debbie has completed her list of who's in town and who's out. "She gives it to me and I write out the schedule of sponsors in the order in which their segments come on the Opry shows," Hal explains. "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. 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 pm slots. Hank Snow normally does the 8:30 and 11 o'clock shows. Roy Acuff does not mind when he is on, as long as it is neither first nor last. Marty Robbins traditionally does the 11:30 Saturday night show when he is in town, because he used to drive his race cars on Nashville tracks and couldn't make the Opry before this period.

Sponsor commitments dictate when a few performers appear. Lester Flatt, who has sung the theme for Martha White Flour's commercial adver-



tisements since 1953, is always on the Martha White sponsored portion. The Willis Brothers, who have recorded jingles for Kellogg's cereals, always do that segment. If there are vacant slots in the schedule after he has filled in all the in-town Opry acts, Hal looks at Debbie's list of available guests.

After his tentative schedule is completed Thursday, Hal makes a firmer program on Friday morning to send to Cindy Wood in the WSM Traffic Department. It arrives about 1:30 pm Friday. Cindy types up copies for the personnel at the radio station. When a change occurs, she has to do everything over again. By early afternoon, the Opry's announcers—venerable Grant Turner, Hairl Hensley and Tony Lyons—have seen the schedule and know which stars they are to be working with on the segments they are to work.

It is now Friday evening. The Opry fans from around the world have picked up their tickets, poured in the doors and are settling into their seats. The stagehands, lighting director, stage manager, engineers, and staff band is poised, waiting for the opening curtain. The Opry star scheduled to MC the first segment has finished his backstage warmup and now is chatting with the announcer who is handling the first half-hour of the show.

Hal Durham is standing in the wings waiting to

see how the next show he has constructed is going to get off with the audience. Debbie Logue is watching with a clipboard to keep a payroll record of which musicians play instruments on every song—Anne Boatman handles this chore on Saturday evening.

Everyone is waiting for the same thing—the beginning of another historic show which puts itself together before your very eyes. Then that giant orange curtain rises and you watch the first step in the week-long process of resurrecting the Grand Ole Opry.

For the 4,400 in the Opry House and thousands listening on WSM Radio—it is once again, "Show-time!"

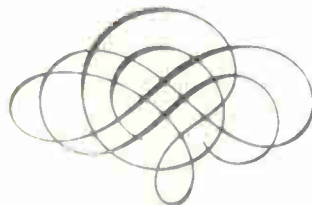


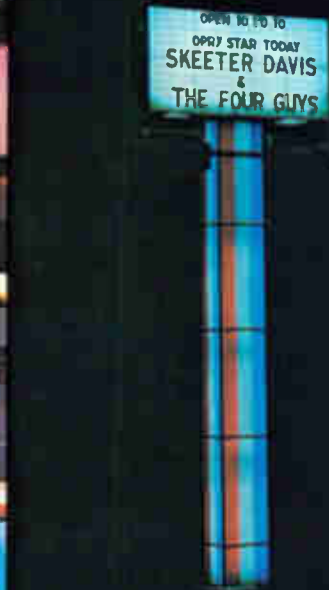
It is now a little past midnight—Sunday morning. The crowd has left the Opry House; some bound for the Ernest Tubb Midnight Jamboree, an early breakfast, or their hometowns throughout America. Reverberating melodies follow the Opry

stars into the cool darkness. The imposing Opry House is silent again.

But if one listens carefully he can almost hear the remarks Judge Hay delivered at each show's finale . . . echoing through the empty auditorium:

“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!”





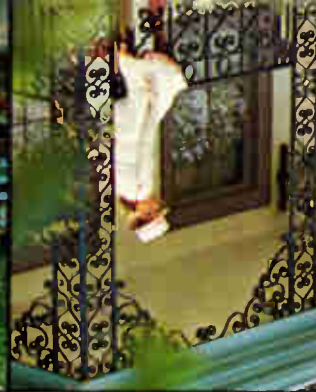


COME SHARE THE WONDER OF OPRYLAND U.S.A. where the best of country music blends with the strains of Bluegrass, Dixieland, Western, Rock, and all of the other exciting sounds of music from this great wide country of ours. "The Home of American Music"—a musical entertainment theme park full of live shows, thrilling rides, specialty shops, unique restaurants and enough sparkling live entertainment and fun to keep you busy for a vacation lifetime.

Five music areas, all designed and decorated like the section of America that sings these songs, are the settings for 10 live musical shows which offer everything from a full-fledged Broadway-styled musical production of our country's musical heritage, "I Hear America Singing," to a new show that turns into a giant birthday party for the Opry, "My Country."

Just inside the entrance gates, Oprylanders enter the world of country music where Smoky Mountain Boys, Bashful Brother Oswald and Charlie Collins are picking and singing and meeting visitors every day in the gazebo in front of the Roy Acuff Music Hall. Drop by the National Life Hospitality Center and watch a 20-minute film, "Great Moments from the Opry" before you travel over to Hill Country where the banjos ring out from the stage of a rustic out-door theatre straight out of the Tennessee Hills.

Down in the New Orleans Area, the Dixieland Band invites you to take a seat on the banks of the Cumberland River and listen to the blues of Bourbon Street. If you take the Opryland antique locomotive to El Paso, drop by La Cantina Theatre and catch a wild west drama where singers, dancers, prospectors and dance hall girls bring you all of the rip-roaring mining camp music of the Forty-Niners. Then take the sky ride over to the Stable Rock Theatre where you'll find two star-spangled, amplified, rock shows on stage in a 1000-seat outdoor theatre. There is also an animal show, a Clown Wagon, "Showboat," and during our summer season weekday performances Monday through Thursday by Grand Ole Opry stars in the fabulous Opry House. Top name artists like Loretta Lynn, Roy Acuff, and Bill Monroe in a live show that's covered by the price of your admission ticket to the park.



There is also the excitement of seeing your favorite television star doing a show from the park. Major TV producers from New York to Los Angeles are discovering that Opryland has just the talent, setting, and production facilities they need to tape a great show. Dennis Weaver, Sandy Duncan, Tanya Tucker, and Jim Stafford were our guests during the taping of the ABC special, "Timex Presents Opryland U.S.A.—A Circus of American Music"; talk show host Mike Douglas taped five of his shows here; Flip Wilson picked Opryland to do a country music segment of the series, "Travels With Flip"; Porter Wagoner taped 26 segments of his syndicated country music show from theatres in the park; and 13 of those funny half-hours of Candid Camera were shot right here at Opryland.

Opryland isn't all music and shows though. There are rides like the new giant thriller roller coaster, Wabash Cannonball. Rides to slow the pace like an antique carousel. A children's ride area. High rides, low rides, fast rides, slow rides—14 in all. And there are a lot of small wonders. Like seeing an African lion, feeding a baby deer, or winning a giant stuffed animal in the new "State Fair" area. Opryland is a showplace for all ages. Come share the wonder. See all the shows and ride all the rides as many times as you like. And its all yours for the price of admission alone.

Opryland is open for the weekends from mid-April through Memorial Day; seven days a week through the summer; and weekends from Labor Day through October. All rides and attractions, except Grand Ole Opry performances, are included in admission price. Located 9 miles from downtown Nashville; camping facilities and motels nearby; wheelchairs and strollers available; and there is a kennel near the front gate where you can board your pet.

Come visit Nashville and Opryland with other country music fans. WSM/Opryland Package Tours offer accommodations for two nights in one of Music City's newest motels . . . an entire day at Opryland . . . and then take your choice of one of our eight local tours where you can pick the sights to match your interest. Air Conditioned busses will take you to see the homes of the stars, the Hermitage—home of Andrew Jackson, Music Row, or try a cruise down the Cumberland River on the Riverboat, Captain Anne. If you want to rent a car, they will take care of that too. For more information on package tours write:

WSM/Opryland Package Tours
Box 100,
Nashville, Tenn. 37202



Nowhere in the world is there a more complete facility for the production of television and broadcast shows and commercials than the Opryland Production Center at Opryland USA.

Awesome in size with its 4400 seat auditorium (the Opry House) and separate 300 seat television studio, it is equally remarkable for the attention that has been given to the most minute detail.

In terms of television production equipment and facilities, it is unsurpassed . . . anywhere. It has no peer. It is unique.

For further information contact: Roy Smith, general manager, P. O. Box 2138, Nashville, Tenn. 37214.





Opryland Hotel, opening in the Fall of 1977, will be a unique place to stay!

Nothing else in all the world can quite compare with the Grand Ole Opry, the radio show that hasn't missed a Saturday night broadcast in over 50 years and continues to pack the Grand Ole Opry House for every Friday and Saturday performance.

Nothing else in all the world can quite compare with Opryland, the exciting theme park that, in season, offers more live musical entertainment every day than Broadway.

And, with its opening in the Fall of 1977, nothing else in all the world will quite compare with Opryland Hotel!

Here is where you'll want to stay whenever you visit Nashville . . . for the Grand Ole Opry, Opryland, business, or fun. You'll be able to walk to the Opry House or the Park in less than five

INCOME



minutes, or drive into downtown Nashville in less than 20 minutes. But Opryland Hotel will have special attractions all its own. Like live entertainment in the fabulous Stage Door Lounge, fine dining in your choice of several restaurants, and shopping in smart boutiques along a beautiful Galleria. You'll also be able to swim or play tennis in the Hotel's own facilities, or play golf on a challenging course no more than a five-iron shot from the front door!

We're going all out to make Opryland Hotel one of America's finest. Watch for our opening and then come stay with us . . . in a hotel that's unique in all the world!

OPRYLAND HOTEL

A property of
The National Life
and Accident
Insurance Company



Member of Krisam Group
Washington, D.C. 202-785-1035
New York City 212-661-1818
Chicago, Ill. 312-341-9600

PARADISE

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 celebrating its Golden Anniversary.

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 5,000 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 Concert and ends with the cake-cutting finale at the Saturday Grand Ole Opry.

In between, conventioners see special stage shows, and luncheons and parties sponsored by participating organizations. RCA, Columbia, Capitol, ABC, Dot, MCA, 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" for over one-half century.

THE OPRY TRUST FUND

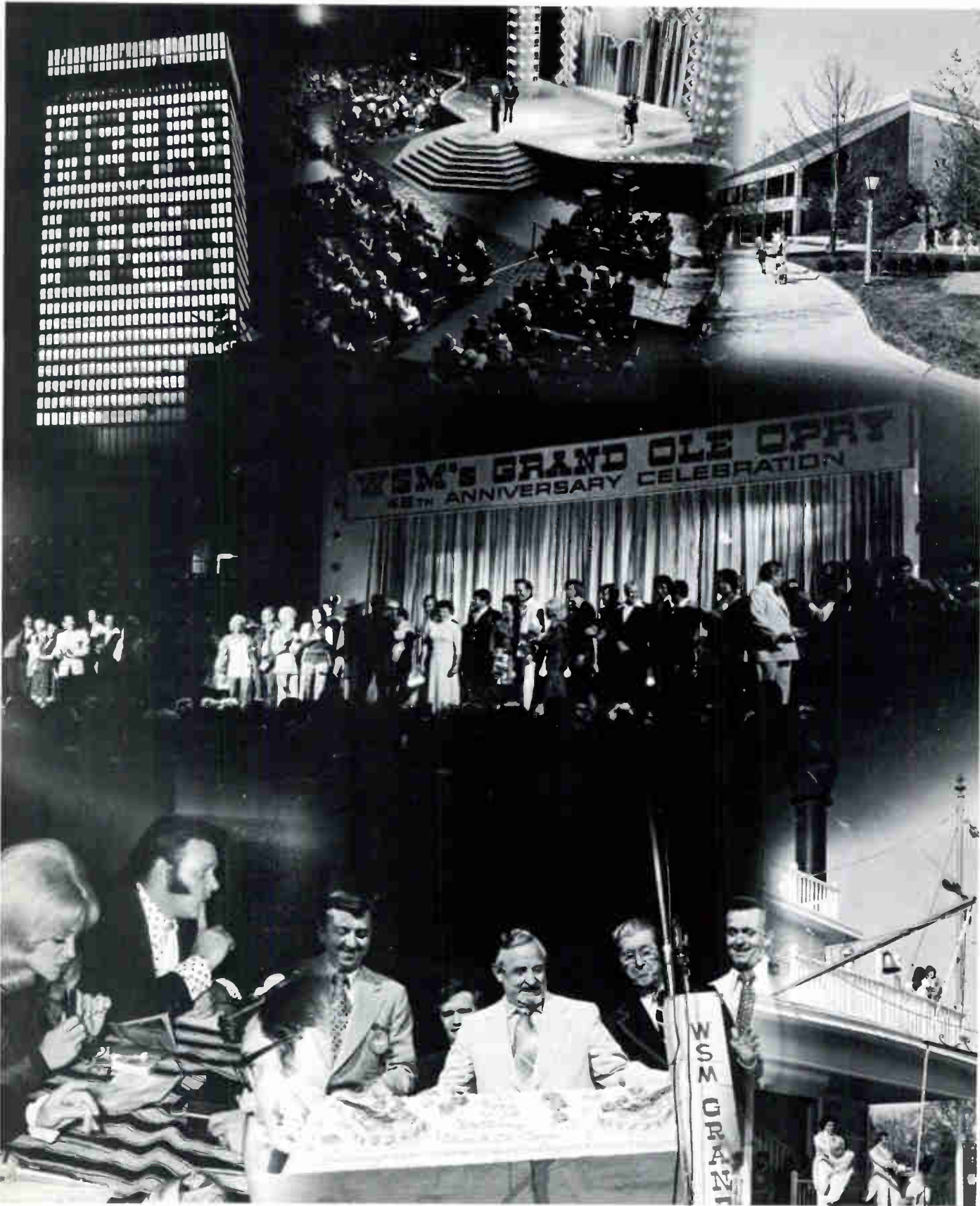
The Opry Trust Fund was incorporated in 1965 to provide financial assistance in time of need, emergency or catastrophe to country musicians or their families.

The Fund has distributed over \$500,000 since its inception. An 11 member board, composed of Opry Stars and WSM representatives, approves all grants.

Ten dollars of the \$30.00 registration fee collected at the annual birthday celebration is channeled to the Fund. The rest 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.





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 each June with excitement and color as fans from all over the world pour into town for five days of spectacular shows.

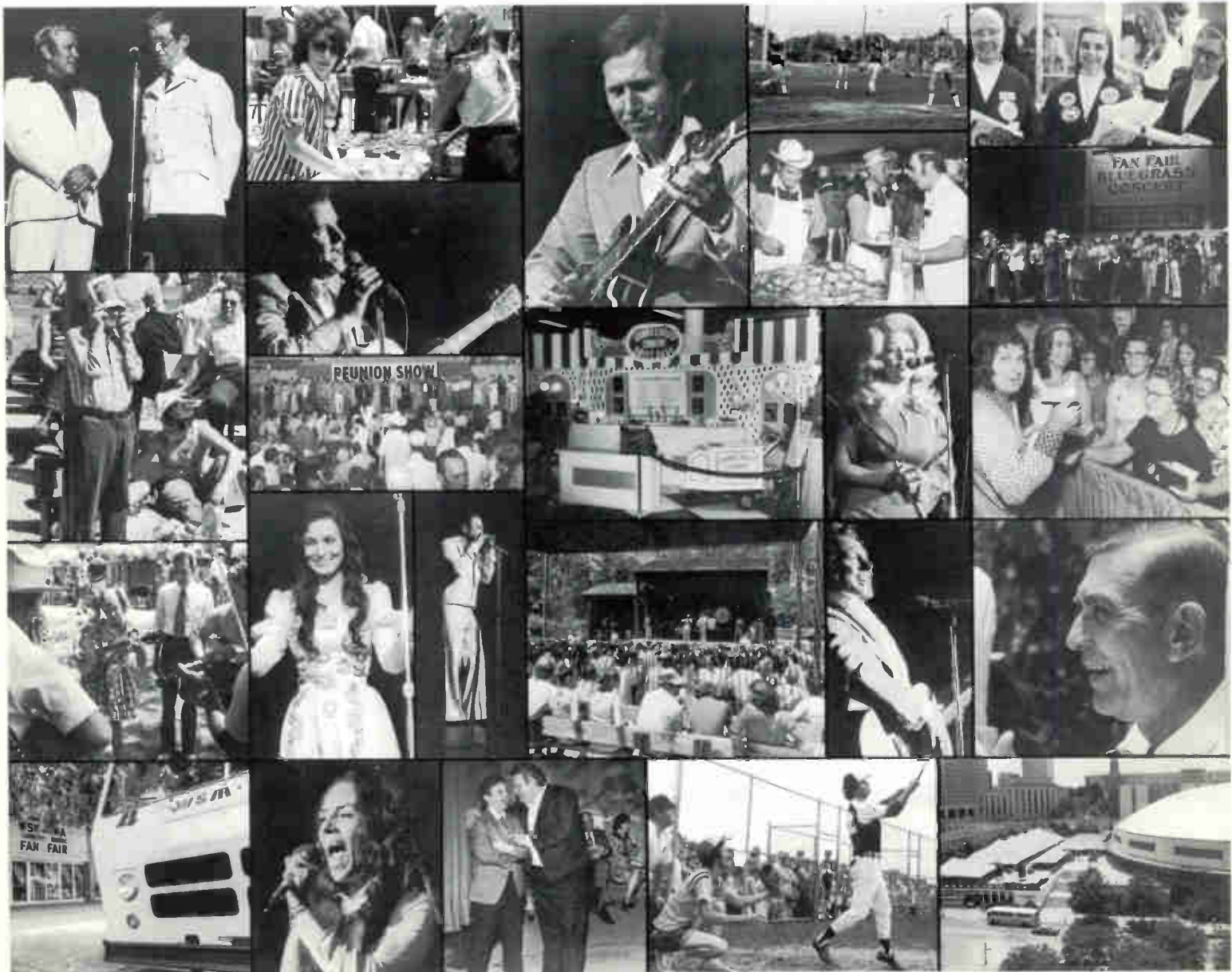
The Fan Fair is a musical extravaganza designed for the enjoyment of those who love Country Music, buy the records, come to the personal appearances and join fan clubs. Co-sponsored by WSM, Inc. and the Country Music Association, the Fan Fair allows participants to see and hear the music industry's biggest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

get autographs, attend a softball tournament, 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 2138
Nashville, Tennessee 37214



GRAND OLE OPRY TOURS



The Grand Ole Opry and Opryland will continue to be a magnet drawing tourists to Music City, U.S.A. But thousands of visitors who have taken Grand Ole Opry Tours discovered that Nashville isn't just the Opry, as New York is not simply the Statue of Liberty and Washington not just the White House. These tourists have become enriched with a greater knowledge and understanding of the total community.

Grand Ole Opry Tours operate daily sight-seeing excursions in harmony with the city's self-imposed titles: "Music City, U.S.A." and "Athens of the South."

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 homes of the late Hank Williams and Tex Ritter, the estate of Eddy Arnold, homes of Johnny Cash, 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 and Ryman Auditorium, the bus returns to the Opry House and the fans stand on the stage where Opry favorites have performed. 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.

Scenic Tours are tailored for those seeking an insight into the city's cultural and historic environment. They consist of stops at many spots associated with Nashville's rich heritage. Guests visit the Belle Meade Mansion, the Parthenon, Cheekwood, the Capitol, the Hermitage, and other gracious homes of the past and present.

In addition to the eight distinctive scheduled tours, Grand Ole Opry Tours can arrange special trips for groups, clubs and organizations. They also have a special service for groups of 19 or less. These personalized, custom tours are available daily with pick-ups by the "Fan Van" at Nashville motels, hotels or Opryland. In fact Grand Ole Opry Tours is actually an entertainment bureau equipped to assist you or your group in coordinating any activities.

While in Nashville may we suggest a visit to the Ryman Auditorium where the Grand Ole Opry performed for 30 years. This historic structure, built in 1891, is open daily from 8:30 to 4:30 pm. Of course the Ryman is a scheduled stop on every Grand Ole Opry Tour, but can be visited separately by those wanting to spend more time in the famous edifice.



"The Fan Van"

The Ryman Auditorium



The Opry House



GRAND OLE GOSPEL TIME



Pat Boone shares his faith.



The Rev. Jimmy Snow and the Evangel Temple Choir get Grand Ole Gospel off to a rousing start.



The Grand Ole Gospel audience is captivated by Mother Maybelle Carter's songs of love.

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

And suddenly the Opry House is filled with evangelistic melodies that merit instantaneous foot stomping and wild applause.

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. The show has included hundreds of famous guest artists. Some of the stars who have appeared are: Mother Maybelle, Pat Boone, Kris Kristofferson, Connie Smith, Hank Snow, Marty Robbins, Stu Phillips, the Blackwood Brothers, the Oaks and many others.

Of course the Evangel Temple Choir is the musical backbone for each performance.

The show has exceeded everyone's expectations. The crowds in attendance are extremely responsive, and mail from the radio audience denotes overwhelming approval. In addition, the show can be seen on the Christian Broadcasting Network.

Rev. Snow's church was organized with six members in the midsixties. Besides the Evangel Temple, there is now an Evangel School and an Evangel Bible College. And the church members have spread the word to millions of people all over the world, not only via the broadcast media, but also through personal trips to the Holy Land and Europe. It has all been accomplished through a lot of work, disappointments and prayer.

Some would predict Grand Ole Gospel Time becoming as popular as the Opry itself in the not to distant future. And possibly so. Certainly Rev. Snow and the gospel show can boast of having the best "script" writers . . . Matthew, Mark, Luke . . .

OPRY STAR SPOTLIGHT



WSM personality Hairl Hensley wears two hats with ease. During the week he hosts Opry Star Spotlight—shown here at the studio with guest Charlie Louvin—while on weekends, Hairl announces for the Friday and Saturday Opry shows, introducing such stars as his friend, Del Wood.

Many of the regular nine-to-five people in the United States never have a chance to get acquainted with Hairl Hensley. But to truckers, shiftworkers and insomniacs who love country music, Hairl's show, "Opry Star Spotlight" from 12 midnight til 4:00 a.m. on WSM Radio, ranks in importance right up there with their coffeepot. Fans love to call in their requests, and they frequently have the chance to call or write in for contest prizes. Truckers, on the other hand, are occasionally asked to call in, to report road conditions, so Hairl can warn the other truckers about problems to avoid. WSM's weather radar is also instrumental in predicting and pinpointing weather conditions for travelers.

On Friday and Saturday nights, Hairl announces on the Grand Ole Opry. To four thousand spectators watching each show and to the Opry listeners from coast to coast he reads commercials, interacts with the audience, and generally adds to the happy confusion on stage which makes the Opry the incredibly popular show it is.

Hairl started out picking a guitar around Madisonville, Tennessee, at watermelon slicin's and Saturday-night-gas-station jam sessions. In small east Tennessee towns during the Forties, if the group didn't gather at the gas station, it gathered at the truck stops. "We spent a lot of time talking with the truckers," he says, "because they were the only outsiders coming through town."

Hairl later became staff guitarist on the WNOX "Tennessee Barn Dance" in Knoxville and then moved to the CBS Radio Network. Archie Campbell was responsible for his move to Nashville in 1959. After working as an announcer and in station management at two other Nashville radio stations, he came to WSM in 1972.

Hairl Hensley is a big, easy kind of guy. He looks like he'd be comfortable in an open-collar shirt in the woods somewhere, but there's a strong sense of professionalism underneath . . . a solid kind of professionalism that comes from experience and knowledge plus a warm feeling for the industry.

WSM, at Nashville, "We Shield Millions"

WSM, "We Shield Millions," the 1,000-watt broadcasting station of the National Life and Accident Insurance company, Nashville, Tenn., which was dedicated with a magnificent continuous program Monday, October 5, 1925, which lasted from 7 p. m., till after 2 a. m., is the completed dream of the big insurance company executives who, when planning the erection of the National's beautiful home building, included in their plans the erection of one of the finest broadcasting stations in the country.

Following the completion of the National building first steps were taken toward the building of the powerful station and Vice-President Edwin W. Craig was commissioned with the task of gathering together the best ideas of the Radio stations then successfully broadcasting and incorporating them in the station that Nashville can boast of as one of the very finest in America.

As there were no exclusive class B wave lengths obtainable, through the courtesy and cooperation of Station WOAN, Lawrenceburg, Tenn., which was operating on 22.8 meters, arrangement was made by which Station WSM could divide time on the air. WSM subsequently operates for the present every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 6:30 to 7:30 p. m., with dinner music from one of the hotels, and from 10 to 11 with a studio concert, and on Sunday alternates with morning services from the First Presbyterian church one week, and the night service the next week.

An interesting point about WSM is the fact that, although the studio is situated on the top floor of the National building in the heart of Nashville, the transmitter and towers are located at an especially selected site some two miles distant from the business district. Here Thomas L. Parkes, engineer, and his bride of three months live and take care of the main portion of the equipment.

Jack DeWitt, operator, is stationed in the control room, which adjoins the studio, and operates the speech-input system. Three special lines connect the studio and control room, with the transmitting room. One is for regular programs, one for emergency programs and one a private telephone line between the

two technicians. WSM's studio is beautiful, with walls and ceiling draped in rich wine-colored velvet, a fitting setting for the handsome ebony Steinway grand piano. Floor lamps, a gorgeous crystal chandelier, and a lovely announcer's table, complete what is surely one of the most beautiful studios in the country. WSM's director is Miss Bonnie Barnhardt, nationally

known as the "Lady o' the Radio," who was formerly connected with Station WSB, Atlanta Journal, Atlanta, Ga., in the capacity of program director, bedtime story teller, staff musician and editorial writer. She is now executive head of the big Nashville station and also essays the jobs of program director and Radio editor. Jack Keefe, popular Nashvillean, is WSM's announcer and studio director, and is likewise a splendid entertainer.

One of the biggest features which marked WSM's debut into the Radio world was the daily broadcast of the play-by-play detail of the World Series. Every Saturday afternoon WSM also gives its vast daylight circle a minute account of the Vanderbilt football games, broadcast direct from the stadium. This feature is tremendously popular with the fans and congratulatory messages by the thousand pour into the station.

Every evening at about 7 o'clock, Miss Bonnie Barnhardt comes on with her famous "Hello Kiddies," and tells WSM little folk and grown-ups all about Peter Rabbit, and Reddy Fox, and all the other little creatures of the Green Forest and Green Meadows. Miss Bonnie's bedtime club was first organized at WSB, Atlanta, and has countless members. These and many more new ones are rapidly joining the new circle started at WSM, Nashville. Special songs for the kiddies, and other appropriate attractions feature the children's period, which comes during the intermission of the dinner hour from 6:30 to 7:30 each evening WSM is on the air. Reports from practically every state in the Union, and Canada and Cuba, were received on WSM's inaugural broadcast.

One of the biggest features of WSM's opening program Monday, October 5, was the presence of a group of Radio celebrities, including three of the world's most popular announcers, headed by Lambdin Kay, "the Little Colonel" of WSB, the "Voice of the South"; Leo Fitzpatrick, now of WJR, Detroit, Mich., the "Merry Old Chief" formerly of the Kansas City Nighthawks; George D. Hay, the "Solemn Old Judge" of WLS, Sears-Roebuck, Chicago; Major D. B. Carson, commissioner of navigation, of Washington, D. C., and Major Walter Van Nostrand, supervisor of Radio of the fourth district, Atlanta, Ga. The famous announcers trio were in full charge of WSM's inaugural program and alternated at the microphone, giving the Radio audience tuned in for the inaugural broadcast, a bill of superlative entertainment.



Above, Jack Keefe, cheerful announcer. Large photo, section of the studio with crystal pendant chandelier.



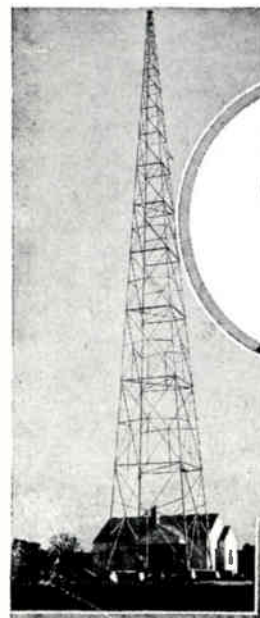
Bonnie Barnhardt, director of the station, is known from coast to coast as "the Lady of the Radio."



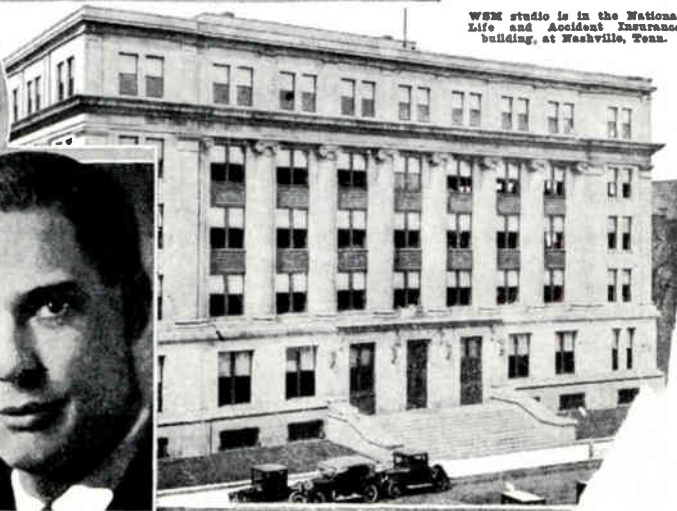
Edwin W. Craig, vice-president of the National Life and Accident, at the microphone is pictured to the left.



Right, famous Radio stars, guests at WSM. Lower left to right: Bonnie Barnhardt; Lambdin Kay, WSB; Leo Fitzpatrick, WFS; George D. Hay, WLS; Edwin Craig. Top, Mrs. Leo Fitzpatrick; Bill Gray, WSM; Jack Keefe; Major Walter Van Nostrand.



Above, Jack DeWitt, popular "ham" operator on the WSM board. Left, the transmitter house and towers. Right, Thomas Parkes, resident engineer.



WSM studio is in the National Life and Accident Insurance building, at Nashville, Tenn.

50 YEARS OF SERVICE



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.

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.

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.

A good example of how Clear Channel's aid communities 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.

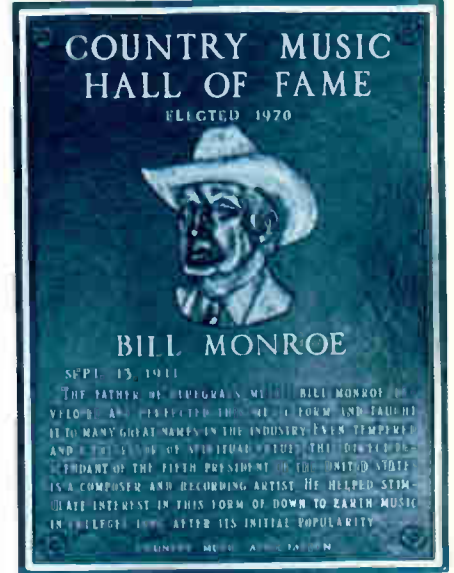
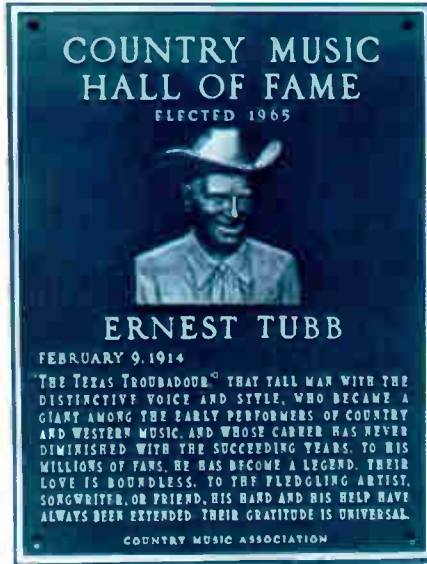
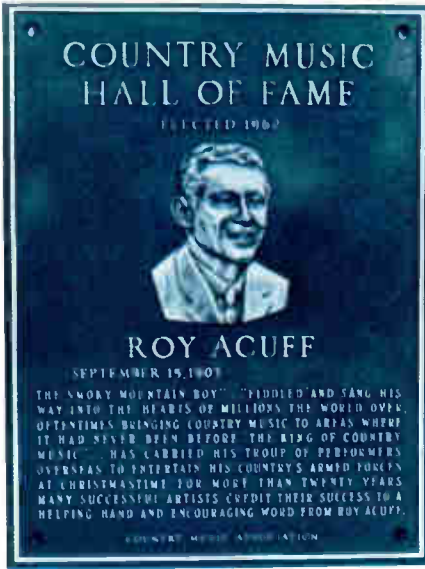
Originally there were 40 1-A Clear Channels. Now there are only 11 providing listening service to over 25 million people in rural regions encompassing nearly 60 percent of the nation's land area. These Americans rely solely on Clear Channels at night and this will always be so. Adding more full-time 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 504 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 for 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. Or as C. A. Craig proclaimed over 50 years ago—to serve the public interest.

HALL OF FAME



*Present Grand Ole Opry Members
Enshrined in the Country Music Hall of Fame Nashville, Tennessee*

