



KIKK SPONSORS a dance at the Astro-Hall, and 17,000 show up as Hank Thompson performs.

# Texas Country Radio—Mack & Bailey

On the Texas country music scene, two names come up repeatedly: In the northern half of the state the name is that of Bill Mack, the "Midnight Cowboy," aired over radio station WBAP, Fort Worth.

In the south it is Bill Bailey, of KIKK, of Pasadena, who entertains a morning audience and is totally involved in the community. The men are different, the stations are different, and even their music is a little different. But each, in his own way, is an instrumental force on the music scene.

Mack, who was just elected to the board of directors of the Country Music Association, has a show which is aired nightly to many corners of the nation and beyond. WBAP is a 50,000 watt clear channel station at 820 on the dial, and it beams its signals to millions of listeners. It is estimated from surveys that Mack's program is heard by about two-million truck drivers nightly, not to mention all the others.

Born in Shamrock, Tex., Bill has been a country disk jockey since his graduation from high school there, where he broadcast at KEVA. After attending West Texas State College at Canyon, Bill went to KWFT, Wichita Falls, where he remained for seven years. Then it was on to KENS, San Antonio, and a couple of others before he moved to WBAP two years ago.

During his varied career, he has authored 250 country songs, of which 75 have been recorded, the most notable of which was "Drinking Champagne," which he first recorded and released through Kapp Records in 1968. Since then there have been releases of the song by such artists as Ray Price, Jerry Lee Lewis, Faron Young, Billy Walker, Cal Smith and others.

Mack is now under contract to Hickory Records which has just released his latest recording, "Somewhere Between," a duet with Wanda Concklin. It's written by Merle Haggard.

Bill is a pioneer of contemporary country music, particularly in Texas. He has worked tirelessly to help build the wide acceptance and popularity of the music form.

Another believer in the Fort Worth-Dallas area as a "new Nashville," he has expanded his own Road Ahead Music Publishing Co., and his Mack Co. Pro-

ductions which specialize in producing and consulting on sessions. Through these operations Mack works closely with the new Sumet Sound Studios in Dallas.

He says that "between Sumet and Johnny Patterson's Delta Recordings in Fort Worth, we have as good a sound as can be found."

Mack recalls the early Dallas part in country music. "The late Jim Beck's studio put out some fine sounds. Hank Thompson, Lefty Frizzell, Marty Robbins, Carl Smith, Ray Price and a lot of others used to come in here for their sessions. Unfortunately for all of us, Jim Beck met an untimely death," he said.

Bill says that, after that, the Dallas sound was "misused." He says rhythm section control was not used, and booming basses and amplified fiddles all tended to give a tinny barroom quality to the music that was put out.

"Now that's a thing of the past," he says. "We have the contemporary country sound and a solid storehouse of back-up talent to produce the very best."



BILL MACK, the Midnight Cowboy, joins Roy Acuff, the King of Country Music, at an autograph party in Fort Worth.

Meanwhile, down in Pasadena, one has to travel over the freeway and over the loop southeast of Dallas, along the row of rich refineries, and there on Southmore street early in the morning is Bill Bailey, the pride of KIKK, and a man who has done much for country music generally.

Unlike the 50,000 watt giant of the North, KIKK is a 250-watt daytimer. But Pasadena, Bill will tell you, has the largest per capita income in the world. And he has the audience, too.

Bailey points with pride to a radio survey which shows him and his station on top of the adult market, and virtually on top of everything.

"First of all, we don't apologize for being country," Bailey says. "We're not real modern or Countryopolitan or anything like that—just country." And apparently it pays off.

Fourteen years ago Bill was with KTEM in Temple, then went to KELP, El Paso; KATR, Corpus Christi, then moved with Chris Lane from there, went to KOOA in Des Moines, WPEO, Peoria, then KTHT, Houston, and on to KIKK in 1962.

"Our secret is believing in our product," said a busy Bill Bailey, while operating the board and doing his show. "We do more promotion than all the other stations in this area combined. And I'll bet we're the only country station anywhere that has a sponsor like Nieman-Marcus Fur Storage." He may be right.

Promotion is the key word at KIKK. He says the station promoted the biggest country show ever staged anywhere, the 1966 package at the Astrodome, which included Roger Miller, Faron Young, Red Sovine, Kitty Wells and Jimmy Dickens. He claims the greatest dance ever promoted—17,000 for a gathering featuring Merle Haggard, Ernest Tubbs, Hank Thompson and Conway Twitty, and this was at the Astrodome, across the way. Bailey not only books country talent into the Astrodome, but hosts all the shows.

The station sponsors everything else—rodeos, livestock shows, surfing parties, etc. It has outdoor signs all over the city, and 200 taxi signs.

In the north and the south, Texas has winners. In the north it's Bill Mack, and—down south—Bill Bailey.