WSM
GRAND OLE OPRY

HISTORY PICTURE BOOK


GRAND OLE OPRY HOUSE
THE NATIONAL LIFE and ACCIDENT
GRAND OLE OPRY
OPRY

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Official Opry History-Picture Book

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ROY ACUFF

No single performer better personifies the straightforward honesty of Grand Ole Opry music than the man we call "The King of Country Music," Roy Acuff. Roy, as a Maynardville, Tennessee, youth, had aspirations of becoming a professional baseball player. When a sunstroke kept him off the playing field for a few weeks, he whiled away the time by learning to play the fiddle. It is a skill that has served him well.

Roy, one of five children of a minister-judge, first saw the limelight when he joined a medicine show in 1934. This led to an affiliation with a Knoxville, Tennessee, radio station the following year. The young fiddler-vocalist's career really went into high gear when he joined the Grand Ole Opry in February, 1938. It is fitting that one of his most requested songs is "The Great Speckled Bird," Roy's second-largest record hit. His biggest seller and all-time trademark is "The Wabash Cannonball."

Roy Acuff's progress since his medicine show days hasn't been confined to music. His political aspirations once prodded him into becoming a serious contender for the Governorship of Tennessee. Roy's prowess in business is exhibited by the growth of his publishing concern, Acuff-Rose, into the largest dispenser of Country songs in the world.

While accumulating a tidy nest egg for himself, Roy sold several million records for the Columbia label, and now records for the Hickory label, of which he is part-owner. Roy and the Smokey Mountain Boys have shattered attendance records all across the nation, but the thirty-year veteran of the Opry enjoys his overseas trips to entertain U. S. servicemen best of all. The title, "King of Country Music," was bestowed on Roy by baseball-great and long-time friend, Dizzy Dean. Roy and the "royal family" (his wife, Mildred, and one son, Roy Neill) live in a prosperous Nashville suburb. Roy's "subjects" are so loyal he will never have cause to worry about his throne.

The "King of Country Music" entertains WSM's guests at the Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration's Breakfast Spectacular.

BILL ANDERSON

Bill checks his appearance schedule with Opry statisticians, Ann Perry and Lynn Orr.

Bill Anderson could aptly be described as a bundle of energy wrapped up in solid-gold talent. He has scored so many successes in so many fields, he seems to know no bounds. As Bill's many personal friends will testify, it couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

Bill, a native of Georgia, graduated from the University of Georgia with a B.A. Degree in Journalism, but his writing abilities have been profitably turned toward song composition. Bill, a former disc jockey at WGAU Radio in Athens, Georgia and WJJC in Commerce, Georgia, has had over 400 songs recorded. Thirty of his compostiions have been awarded BMI Citations.

Although he is known as "The Man with the Golden Pen," Bill's major accomplishments lie in the performing and recording fields. A Grand Ole Opry star since 1961, Bill has his own television show and travels to his far-flung show dates in a custom-built bus. Bill's Decca hits include "Still," "Mama Sang a Song," "I Love You Drops," and "For Loving You." The artists who have recorded his compositions number in the dozens.

Bill, his wife Bette, and his daughters Terri and Jennifer, live in South Nashville in a home Bill whimsically titled "Still Hill," but the popular star's extensive travelling allows him less time at home than he would prefer. Young Anderson did a creditable acting job in "Las Vegas Hillbillies," his third movie, and performed the title song for the NBC movie, "Stranger on the Run."

Bill travels with a band titled the "Po' Boys," which was so-named for one of his big hits, "Po' Folks." The tall Georgian, honored in 1967 as one of his state's "Favorite Sons" by the Georgia Legislature, likes to play golf when his schedule permits and is an avid baseball fan. Bill Anderson is constantly on the look-out for new worlds to conquer. His batting average has been pretty good thus far.


TAU
BETA
TREMLIN
LIPS

ERNIE ASHWORTH

The Grand Ole Opry annuls contain many "Cinderella" stories of performers who won their big chance by being at the right place at the right time. Many other stars attained their positions by plain hard work and persistence. Ernie Ashworth fits in the latter category. Ernie set his sights on being an Opry star when many of his schoolmates in Huntsville, Alabama, were still undecided about their careers. Ernie's lifetime ambition was to be fulfilled on March 7, 1964.

Once the decision to become an Opry performer was made, Ernie undertook the task of self-improvement. He appeared before as many audiences as possible, listened to all the advice he could, and practiced relentlessly. During one early performance he even lost his voice but he didn't discourage easily.

In 1951, Ernie won his first real professional position when he became a vocalist for the Tennessee Drifters. He continued his climb, and in 1955 he was awarded an MGM recording contract. In 1957 the tall artist suffered a brief professional setback and rested his tonsils while working at the Redstone Arsenal. In 1960 Impresario Wesley Rose plucked Ernie from obscurity and helped him obtain a Decca recording contract. He recorded his first hit, "Each Moment," for Decca. In 1962 he switched to the Hickory label and scored with "Talk Back Trembling Lips." In 1963 and 1964 he was chosen as "The Most Promising Country and Western Vocalist" by the trade magazines. His 1964 appointment to the Opry climaxed the long trip upward.

Ernie, his wife Bettye, and their four children, Rebecca, Michael, Mark, and Paul Wesley, live near Nashville. Now a major attraction, Ernie remembers with pain the time he wrote thousands of disc jockeys in an effort to get an early record played. His present success is well worth a little writer's cramp.

Ernie puts a final shine on his show-boots in an Opry dressing room.

MARGIE BOWES

Margie Bowes is an animated, effervescent young singer whose lively presence has sparked the Grand Ole Opry for little more than a decade. Despite her comparative youth, Margie is an "old pro" when it comes to pleasing her audiences. In 1958, an extremely nervous teenaged Margie Bowes faced up to her first Opry House audience. The occasion was the Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry talent contest. Margie won, hands down.

The little gal from Roxboro, North Carolina, has parlayed that shaky beginning into stardom. She had prepared for her contest appearance by performing on WRXO Radio in Roxboro. She rehearsed her songs before the other eight members of her family, thereby getting a wide range of opinions on everything she did.

Margie is known for the wide variety of costumes in her wardrobe. She has a lively sense of humor, but has the ability to "sell" the tear-drop songs as well as the bouncier tunes. Margie was also a stand-out in her recent film appearance in "Cottonpickin' Chickenpickers." In addition to her performing talents, Margie is also an accomplished songwriter. Her "When Dreams Go Out of Style" was recorded by Loretta Lynn.

Margie's own recordings have steadily increased her nationwide audience. Her releases include "Understand Your Gal," "Big Girl," "Lost," "I Can't Love That Way," and "Funny How Time Slips Away."

The pretty North Carolinian manages to squeeze in an estimated one hundred thousand miles of date-to-date travelling each year, but she makes as many Opry performances as she can. If Margie's second decade with the Opry is as eventful as her first, she should set some impressive records in the future.

WSM Announcer, Hal Durham, and Margie check the musicial run-down for the next show.

JIM ED BROWN

Jim Ed Brown has managed to achieve a most unusual accomplishment. Jim used his membership in an award-winning vocal group as a launching pad for an even more illustrious career as a single artist. The tall baritone performed for several years as the only male member of "The Browns," then stood the music industry on its ear by starting a new and highly successful career on his own, when his sisters, Maxine and Bonnie, retired from the group.

The trio started singing together at their childhood home in Sparkman, Arkansas, and then, with the aid of Chet Atkins and the late Jim Reeves, came to Nashville. Their record successes included "The Three Bells," "Scarlet Ribbons," and "The Ole Lamplighter."

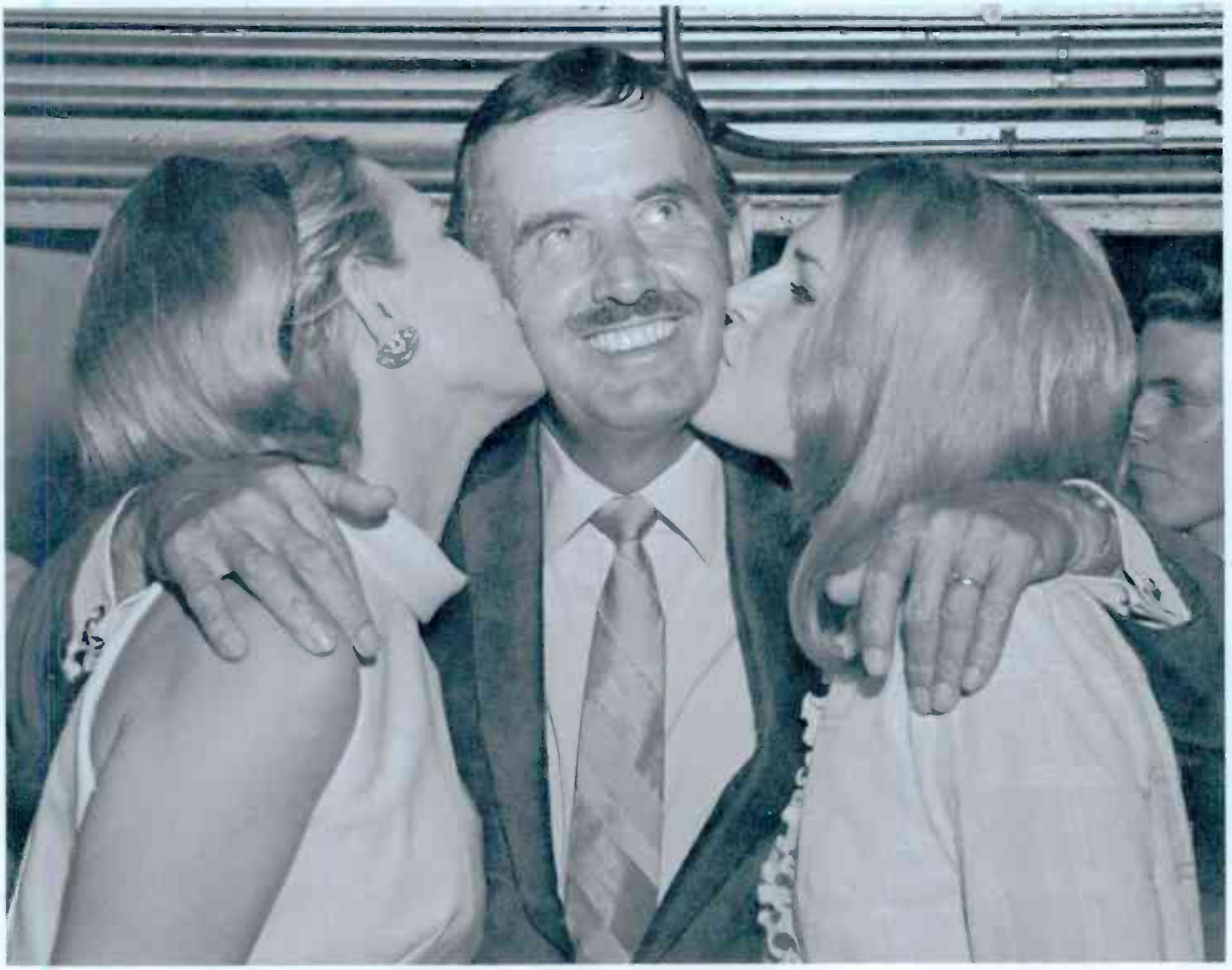
When Bonnie and Maxine packed away their show dresses in 1967, Jim Ed resolved to continue on his own. Although he was tempted to move back to Arkansas and help his father in the family's saw mill business, he decided to forge on, and it was a wise decision.

Jim Ed's RCA records started hitting in a big way. His version of "Regular on My Mind" was followed by "Pop a Top" and "Bottle, Bottle." His first solo trip to England was also a smashing success, and his second trip followed in a matter of weeks. During his second crossing, Jim was a guest on the BBC and several television shows.

Jim Ed and his lovely wife, Becky, live in the Brentwood community, outside of Nashville. They have two children, Buster who is five, and Kimberly who was born on July 4, 1968. In late 1967, Jim had to reacquaint himself with the sawmill business while his father recovered from an illness, but his first love is still Country Music. Jim realizes he must carry on the traditions of one of Country Music's finest musical families.

Jim Ed delivers a ballad in his inimitable style before a packed Opry audience.

ARCHIE CAMPBELL



Archie with two of his most ardent admirers, Norma Jean, left, and Jeannie Seely, right.

If the members of Nashville's music colony ever take a vote on which performer should be elected "Mayor of Music City," Archie Campbell should win on the first ballot. Archie won the respect of his fellow artists on two counts; his friendly, outgoing manner, and the fact that his variety of talents seems endless.

Archie, a native of Greene County, Tennessee, has a strong reputation for his comic and singing abilities which stretch back from his medicine show days. Archie broke into radio at WNOX in Knoxville, Tennessee, and joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1958. Archie's performing career was interrupted long enough for college, and a stint in the Navy.

An interesting sidelight of Archie's varied career is the fact that he is a superior amateur painter. His canvasses range from serious landscapes to caricature; but all reflect a considerable amount of technical skill.

Archie's best-known role, however, is that of the comic. He writes most of his own material and is an accomplished toastmaster. He is frequently called upon by RCA executives to emcee corporation functions. His singing has ranged from novelty to religious songs.

The Campbell wit has sparkled on several hit records, including "Rindercella," "Trouble in the Amen Corner," and his highly-successful "Rojo." Archie handles the guitar, ukulele, and bass, with self-taught proficiency, and is a consistently good golfer.

He and his wife, Mary, and sons Steve and Phillip live in Nashville. Archie is an excellent dresser, and could be mistaken as a style-conscious bank president. Beneath the trim mustache and "ivy league look," Archie is very much a son of the soil.

BILL CARLISLE

If "Bounding Billy" Carlisle had followed his childhood ambition and gone into the ministry, he probably would have been the only preacher on the circuit who could jump over his pulpit. The chain of circumstances which guided Bill's destiny has led him to the Grand Ole Opry instead. Bill, a former assembly-line painter at the Louisville, Kentucky, Ford Plant, started his musical career as one of the stars of the WLAP Carlisle Family Barn Dance. Bill was more earth-bound then, and appeared with his father and four brothers.

Bill's next stop was a similar broadcast in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he impersonated a character called "Hot Shot Elmer." Elmer jumped over chairs and launched Bill into his high-flying career. Later, when Bill became a Mercury recording artist, it seemed he naturally picked songs which required jumping, so his trade-mark was born.

Bill's natural exuberance seems to infect his whole group. He follows the family pattern in his backing unit. Bill, Jr. and his daughter, Sheila, often appear with their father, and the three seem determined to shake the stage apart with their movement. Naturally enough, no audience is immune to the Carlisle enthusiasm.

Bill Carlisle holds sixty-two music industry awards, and is certain to collect dozens more. His records include "No Help Wanted" which he wrote, "Too Old to Cut the Mustard," and "What Kinda Deal is This."

Bill joined the Opry in 1953, and likes to hunt and fish when he is in Nashville. The Carlisles, Bill, Jr., Sheila, and his wife, Leona, live near Goodlettsville. On one occasion, Bill split a new pair of trousers while jumping on stage. That was one of the few times "Bounding Billy" cut down on his choreography.

"Bounding Billy" exhibits his agility for an appreciative Opry crowd.

WILMA LEE & STONEY COOPER

The popular team of Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper is unique in several respects; not only is their man-and-wife status a rarity among singing groups, their apparent deep concern for their fellow men and strong personal bond is a refreshing and rare combination.

Wilma and Stoney came to the Grand Ole Opry in February, 1957, after performing on radio and television in Fairmont, West Virginia; Harrisonburg, Virginia; Wheeling, West Virginia; Grand Island, Nebraska; Indianapolis, Indiana; Chicago, Illinois; Blytheville, Arkansas; and Ashville, North Carolina. With such impressive credentials, there is little wonder they were so warmly received.

Wilma and Stoney have worked together as a group since 1945. They met when Stoney was hired as a solo performer with the Leary Family Singers, of which Wilma was a part. Prior to joining the family, Stoney was already the leader of his own band. Wilma and Stoney made their first records together in 1947. They now record on the Decca label.

Wilma and Stoney like to write much of the song material they perform. Some of their biggest hits are their compositions.

The Coopers have one daughter, Carolee. Carolee performed with her parents for several years, and is now the wife of Assembly of God Pastor, Jimmy Rogers Snow, son of the Singing Ranger. The Coopers are also known for their renditions of gospel songs.

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper have as their "professional family" the members of the Clinch Mountain Clan. Stoney has a national reputation as a collector and performer of the true Scotch-Irish "Mountain Music." Wilma's and Stoney's Grand Ole Opry appearances are famous for the pacing and intensity which mark them as seasoned professionals. They travel to their road engagements on a specially-furnished and decorated bus, and travel close to 100,000 miles a year in meeting their performing obligations.

Wilma and Stoney tune-up in preparation for an appearance on the Opry.

SKEETER DAVIS

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 and has appeared with Rock 'n Roll Czar, Dick Clark, on his teen music show.

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 travelling 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," and a steady procession of best-sellers. Skeeter's road appearances set many house records.

Skeeter lives near Brentwood, Tennessee, with a house-full of pet poodles, parakeets, and doves. She loves animals and owns a prosperous farm near Nashville. She has a special room in her spacious home reserved for momentoes and souvenirs given her by her fans. It is said she values every article given her. Another pleasant attribute to Skeeter's colorful personality is her delightful "gift for gab." It is only natural that a multi-talented perfomer like Skeeter Davis should have much to tell the world.

WSM Sales Manager, Len Hensel, meets Skeeter and her pet Maltese.

ROY DRUSKY

Roy and Opry Manager, Bud Wendell, greet some visiting D.J.'s backstage.

Roy Drusky is a man who takes his leisure time seriously. During the summer, Roy is an avid racing fan, and once owned and raced his own modified stock racer. During the cold months, Roy is a strong supporter of Nashville's Dixie Flyers, the local ice hockey team. Don't get the impression that Roy's principle activity is sports; he works harder than he plays.

Roy is a "triple threat" man. He is not only a popular performer and a highly successful writer, but has proven himself as a budding A & R man for the MTA Record label. His Country Music activities have all grown out of a fondness for the Nashville product, a fondness developed during Roy's term in the Navy. After his discharge, Drusky formed a band and worked as a performer-announcer at a Georgia radio station. His short broadcasting career also took him to Minneapolis.

Eventually, Roy's Atlanta upbringing drew him back to the South and a recording contract. His records include, "Yes, Mr. Peters," "Anymore," and "Three Hearts in a Tangle." One of his latest Mercury successes is titled "Weakness in a Man."

Roy, his wife, Bobbye, and three sons now live in a specially-designed home which resembles a barn. Roy also carried the rural theme into the construction of a kennel for his purebred poodles and designed the doghouse in the shape of a barn, also. Roy joined the Opry in 1958 and commutes from his suburban Nashville home. Drusky is a devoted family man, but manages to squeeze-in a heavy show schedule between Opry appearances and his hobbies. He writes with a great deal of imagination, and has won several awards with his compositions. In addition to his other creative activities, Roy has also managed to work in roles in two Country Music films.

LESTER FLATT

Lester Flatt needs no introduction to music lovers of any persuasion, much less to fans of country music. His lively chatter between songs has been entertaining Opry fans since 1944 when he joined the Opry as lead singer with Bill Monroe.

Flatt was born in Overton County, Tennessee, and grew up near Sparta in neighboring White County. Music was the family hobby. His father played the fiddle and the banjo. Young Lester experimented with several instruments before settling on the guitar. The family sang old time music together and, at the age of seven, Lester soloed in the church choir.

Flatt began his professional career with a radio station in Roanoke, Virginia, in 1939. He also made personal appearances in Virginia and the Carolinas for several years before joining the Opry.

Flatt spent four years with the Opry before teaming up with a banjo player named Earl Scruggs. The pair became probably the best known country music act in the world. Music historians credited them with the preservation of pure bluegrass music. They received rave reviews from such publications as the New York *Times* and *Esquire*. Along with the Foggy Mountain Boys, they played to such diverse audiences as the psychedelic set at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco and the symphony set at Carnegie Hall in New York. On one international tour, their bluegrass harmony started a minor riot in Tokyo, Japan. In 1969, by mutual agreement, the two decided to pursue their careers separately.

Since then, Flatt has produced a number of fine records with the mandolin added to that good ole bluegrass sound. He has a contract with Columbia Records. He continues to delight audiences with a weekly television show sponsored by Martha White Mills. The jingle, "You bake light with Martha White," is still a favorite with concert audiences.

In his few spare moments, Lester enjoys hunting and fishing. He still owns a home near Sparta and lived there year 'round until recently when he and his wife bought Roy Acuff's house in Hendersonville, Tennessee, near Nashville. They have one daughter who is grown and married and a 4-year old grandchild who has already appeared on a couple of Lester's TV shows.

Lester and his boys on stage at the Opry.

THE FOUR GUYS

Judging from their past professions, one might expect to find a quartet such as the Four Guys at a Junior Chamber of Commerce luncheon. One, Sam Wellington, formerly was the Manager of a West Virginia radio station, and Rich Garratt was his Program Director. The two left WEIR in Weirton, West Virginia, to form the most unusual new attraction on the Grand Ole Opry roster. Berl Lyons was a policeman for five years before joining the quartet. The fourth guy is Brent Burkett, who was, in fact, at one time a member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Rich plays the guitar and piano by ear, Brent plays the guitar, Sam is a drummer, and Berl is a specialist on all brass instruments.

The Four Guys are an exceptionally versatile vocal group and are able to handle all types of music. Their repertoire ranges from Top Forty to Folk Music, but they feel most at home with Country Music.

The Guys usually appear in collegiate dress, and are popular with teens. They have made frequent television appearances, and worked together for nine years before becoming regular members of the Opry.

Sam, Rich, Berl, and Brent share a rare distinction among Opry artists; they became regulars without having first established themselves as recording artists. On April 13, 1967, the Guys met in the Opry Manager's office and were granted Opry status after having encored on eleven consecutive weekends as Opry guests.

Since that unusual beginning, the Guys have proved the wisdom of the Opry Manager's decision; they not only rate frequent encores, but also double as backing voices for other stars. They have already walked away with one fan magazine award for their work, and are earning considerable professional respect from the other citizens of the Music Colony. Few groups have risen so far in such a short period of time.

Close harmony fills an Opry dressing-room as The Four Guys warm-up for their performance.

TOMPALL & THE GLASERS

The Glaser brothers brought a high degree of professionalism with them when they joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1959. Tompall, Chuck, and Jim were not only broadcast veterans, thanks to their stay on KHAS-TV in Hastings, Nebraska, but had studied at the feet of Old Master, Arthur Godfrey. The boys were chosen to appear with Godfrey after auditioning near their Spalding, Nebraska home.

The Glasers are able to sing ranch and cowboy songs with conviction, as they were raised on an actual working ranch. Louis Glaser taught his sons to play instruments and sing, as well as the rudiments of ranching. The Glasers haven't had much opportunity to practice ranching, but have had considerable practice in singing.

Tompall and his brothers established themselves in Music City circles by offering precision harmony and perfect blend as background voices, but the boys have definitely come to the foreground with their MGM recordings. Their hits have included, "Last Thing on My Mind," "Gone, on the Other Hand," and "Through the Eyes of Love."

A new and profitable phase of the Glaser's activities is their growing music publishing company. The boys are all accomplished writers themselves, and are guiding the efforts of a stable of composers. Tompall has collected a BMI Award for one of his efforts, and has written several hit tunes.

Tompall and his wife, Rosemarie, live in a comfortable suburban home in Nashville, within commuting distance to Music Row, his office, and the Grand Ole Opry House.

Chuck lives with his wife, Beverly Ann, and their five children, Denise, Kent, Karen, Louis, and Bruce, in the Nashville area.

Jim and his wife, Jane, live with their four, Lynn, Jeff, Connie, and James William, in the same neighborhood as his brothers.

Each brother has done some solo work, and each is a capable vocalist as a "single," but the Glasers prefer togetherness. It's not only friendly, but it makes for tremendous harmony.

Tompall Glaser confers with Opry Stage Manager, Vito Pellettieri.

BILLY GRAMMER

Billy attends to business interests at his Nashville office.

Billy Grammer obviously has a definite leaning toward engineering and technology. His technical training, however, doesn't seem to slow him down a bit in his chosen profession of playing and singing. Billy has utilized his mechanical and technical skill in building his own guitars. He is headman of the Grammer Guitar Company, located in Nashville.

Billy, the son of an Illinois coal miner had developed a love for the guitar early in life. His father was an exceptionally fine fiddler and taught him to "second," playing for pie suppers and various local functions.

Billy's grade school graduation was from McGlasson School, a one-room country institution in Franklin County, Illinois. He 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.

When Billy has time off the road, he enjoys the sport of bass fishing, a hobby he picked up while still a small boy. He seems to have adopted Center Hill Reservoir as a sort of second home.

Billy and his wife, Ruth, who were married in Franklin County, Illinois in 1944, live with their children, Donna, Dianne, and Bill, in the Nashville area. His travels in behalf of Country Music take him an estimated 100,000 miles a year.

JACK GREENE

Ernest Tubb introduces long-time friend and associate, Jack Greene, on his Opry debut.

When Jack Greene made his first appearance as a regular member of the Grand Ole Opry in late 1967, he had no trouble locating the dressing rooms. Jack, after all, was no stranger to the Opry stage as he had watched the Country Music "greats" in the Opry spotlight since June of 1962 when he joined Ernest Tubb's Troubadours.

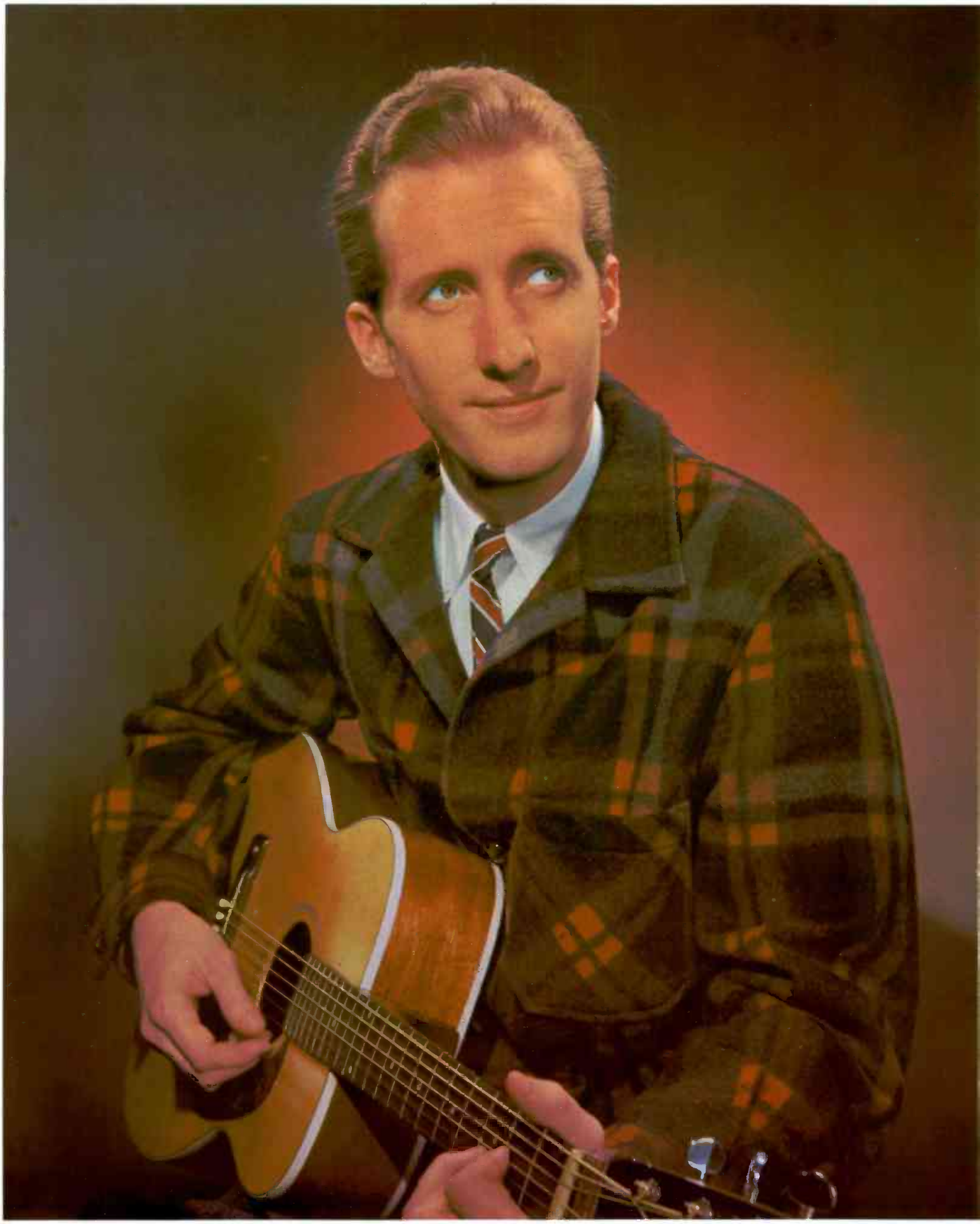
Jack, a native of Maryville, Tennessee, after a nine-year stint with the Peachtree Cowboys in Atlanta, moved to Nashville to join the tall Texan as a drummer. Jack laughingly says he developed his sense of rhythm during his military service. He spent much of his service time in Alaska where the inclement weather keep him indoors during his off-hours, time which he used for guitar practice.

Tubb, who recognized Jack's singing talents long before the lean young singer's public did, made use of his drummer's vocal abilities frequently while on tour. Jack's first records were cut while he was a member of the Troubdadours. "The Last Letter," "Don't You Ever Get Tired of Hurtin' Me," and "Ever Since My Baby Went Away," laid the groundwork for his later successes.

For his next release, Jack decided to record a tune written by Dallas Frazier. A copy of the song had been lying around the Greene household for two years before Jack's wife convinced him he should record it. The song was titled "There Goes My Everything."

The song's flash success kept Jack so busy he saw little of his five children during the following months. When the smoke cleared, Jack discovered he had won over twenty awards, including three coveted Country Music Association Awards. "There Goes My Everything" was declared the Country Song of the Year in almost every poll. Jack's popularity zoomed so rapidly that he was literally caught off guard. He regretted having to leave Tubb and the Troubadours, but in 1967 launched his own band, "The Jolly Giants."

Jack's hits have multiplied rapidly. "What Locks the Door" and "You Are My Treasure" added new stature to the Greene legend. Among Jack's many accomplishments is the fact that he is the only Opry star to have appeared in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.



GEORGE HAMILTON, IV

George Hamilton IV has many strong traits in his favor, but his persistent stubborn streak may be the strongest of all. George is too stubborn to be convinced that he has tremendous potential as a "pop" star. He chose Country Music years ago, and has stuck to it, despite some very attractive offers to move "uptown."

George always seemed to travel in unusual directions. One of his hobbies during his high schools days was snake collecting. When he wasn't rounding up reptiles, he developed his skill as an amateur magician and organized a Country Music band. His devotion to Country Music stayed with him during his college days at the University of North Carolina and at American University. He didn't realize, however, that when his childhood girlfriend entered him in the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout competition that he would see less and less of his Durham, North Carolina, home town.

Although "the fourth" finished a swift second, Godfrey took the tall youngster under his wing and kept him on the show for several additional performances. A few weeks later, George's new recording, "A Rose and a Baby Ruth" was released and quickly shot up the charts. Although many describe the song as a "pop" tune, the artist maintains he meant it to be country.

When George joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1960 he brought the "IV" at the end of his name along with him. It has been his constant companion ever since the release of his first record on the Colonial label.

George and his wife, Tinky, share some very serious thoughts about Country Music. They are quite concerned over the continued life of the "old" Country Music which is a part of the Scotch-Irish Southern Hillfolk heritage. George and a hard core of singers and writers want to perpetuate folk-country by keeping the originals fresh and creating new songs in the same vein. In view of George Hamilton IV's stubborn determination, the opposition doesn't stand a chance!

George brings a large quantity of North Carolina charm to the Grand Ole Opry stage.

STONEWALL JACKSON

It seems like Stonewall Jackson's life has been one historical happening after another. He was named for his great-great-grandfather who led the Confederate armies during the Civil War. His biggest record, "Waterloo," talked about the historic downfall of several famous military men. Stonewall himself made history by becoming an Opry regular without a hit record.

In 1956, Stonewall left Moultrie, Georgia, in his logging truck with the intention of getting some of his songs performed at the Opry. Instead, Stonewall ended up performing. He auditioned before Judge George D. Hay who promptly welcomed him into the Opry family.

Two years later, he had a hit record with the lament of a prison inmate, "Life To Go," one of the first folk songs popular among country fans. Its theme line goes, "I've been here 18 years and still got life to go." His other winners include "Don't Be Angry," "Mary Don't You Weep," "A Wound Time Can't Erase" and "I Washed My Hands in Muddy Water."

Stonewall started pickin' and singin' at the tender age of ten. He traded a tireless $5.00 bicycle for an old beat-up guitar and started watching the older boys play. A few years later, he was writing songs which are still part of his repertoire.

The Navy benefited from Stonewall's early start when they sent him to Norfolk, Virginia, in 1949. When the crew could not get passes, Stonewall would entertain. After he was discharged five years later, he farmed during the summer and logged in the winter until he had saved enough money to come to Nashville.

Stonewall is the first to say that his audition with Judge Hay was the biggest break of his career. He was an immediate success with the lively Opry audience. His Georgia accent and rich baritone voice can turn a simple folk song into an exciting sound experience.

Since moving to Nashville, Stonewall has bought a farm near Nashville where he fishes in "Lake Waterloo." He and his wife, Juanita, have one son, 8-year old Turp. Stonewall's son plays the drums and occasionally performs with his dad on personal appearances.

Stonewall teams up with other Opry regulars, The Four Guys.

JIM & JESSE

The knobby Blue Ridge Mountains around Coeburn and Norton, Virginia, are known for their yield of high-quality coal and for superior Country Music. It is the region Jim and Jesse McReynolds call "home." Music seems to be a McReynolds birthright; Jim and Jesse inherited a love for the traditional mountain melodies from their grandfather, an excellent old-time fiddler who recorded for RCA Victor back in the gramaphone days. The boys were skilled musicians in their teens, and seem to gain a greater mastery of the art with each performance.

Jim and Jesse list their first public appearance as a talent contest held near their Coeburn farm home. Their first broadcast experience and initial professional exposure came with a regular program on WNVA in Norton.

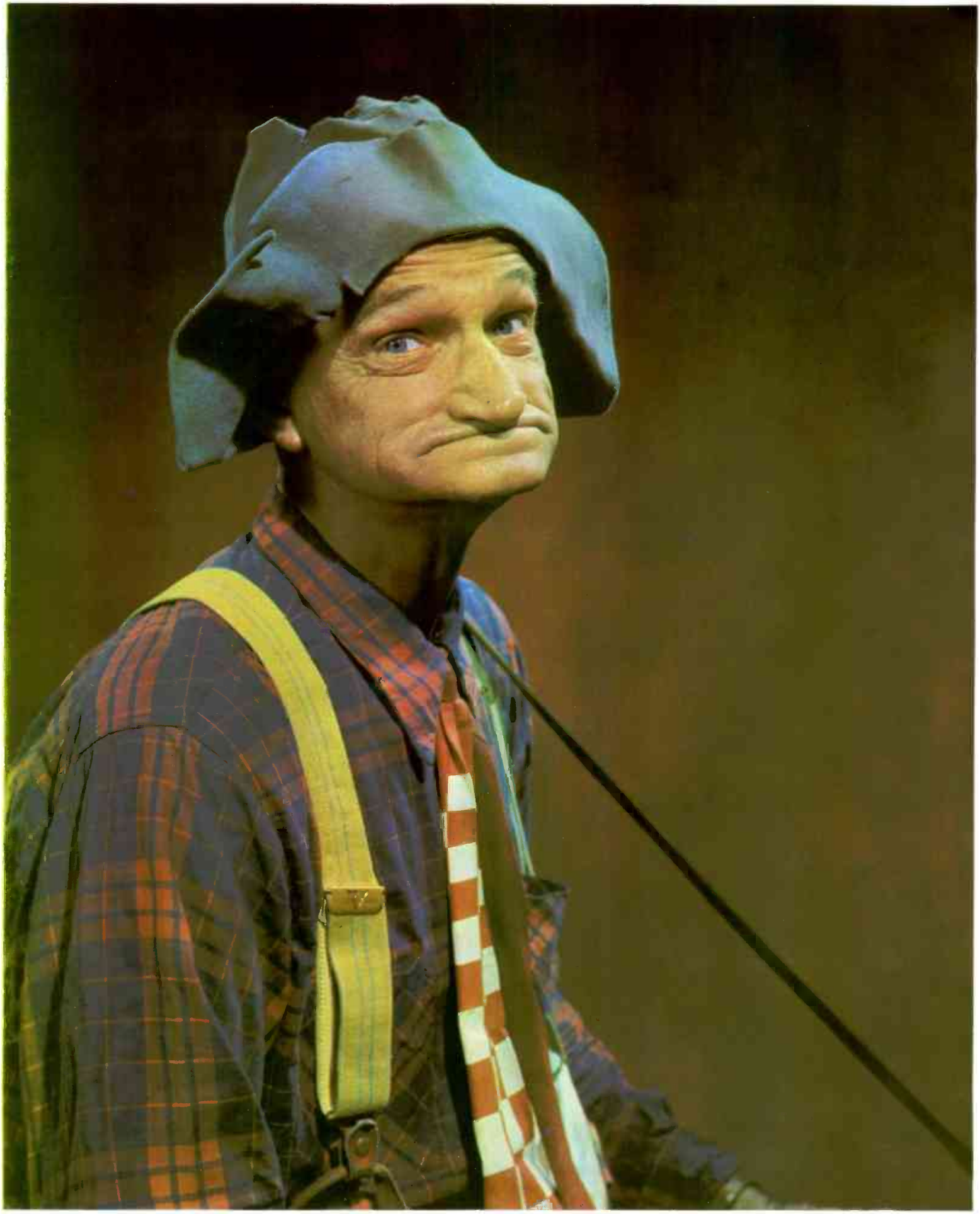
During the early years, the McReynolds boys billed themselves as "Jesse and James," an unfortunate combination of names that summoned up visions of a certain masked scourge of Missouri. Before their 1964 Grand Ole Opry debut, the boys switched to "Jim and Jesse."

The McReynolds passion for togetherness obviously played a part in Jim and Jesse's marriage plans as they married sisters. Jim and the former Arreta McCoy, and Jesse and the former Darlene McCoy live in the Nashville suburb of Gallatin.

Jim and Jesse are not only accomplished performers, but have been quite successful as composers. Among their original songs are, "Flame of Love," "Diesel Train," "Uncle Will Play the Fiddle," "Drifting and Dreaming of You," "Border Rider," "Nobody but You," and "The Voice of My Darling."

Jim and Jesse, accompanied by their backing unit, "The Virginia Boys," travel over 100,000 miles-a-year, meeting their show business commitments. They are known for their colorful renditions of the time-honored Mountain tunes, as well as their stylings of contemporary Country Music.

Veteran Opry Announcer, Grant Turner, spins a tall tale for Jim & Jesse.



COUSIN JODY

It has been said of many famous actors that their faces are their fortune. The same could be said about Cousin Jody. The lanky comic has more to thank than his "stage face" however, as he is gifted with a great sense of timing and is an outstanding steel guitarist. Jody, who started his professional career as a member of the Roy Acuff troupe, used to perform under the name of Tex Summey. He later joined the Pee Wee King Camel Caravan Band. Jody has been an Opry regular since 1937.

Cousin Jody's act is centered around his zany guitar style. He is able to coax sounds from his steel guitar which few other artists can achieve. Jody can make the electrified instrument produce a sound that has been described as a cross between a kazoo and a trombone. Although Jody plays for comic effect, his true artistry sometimes slips through.

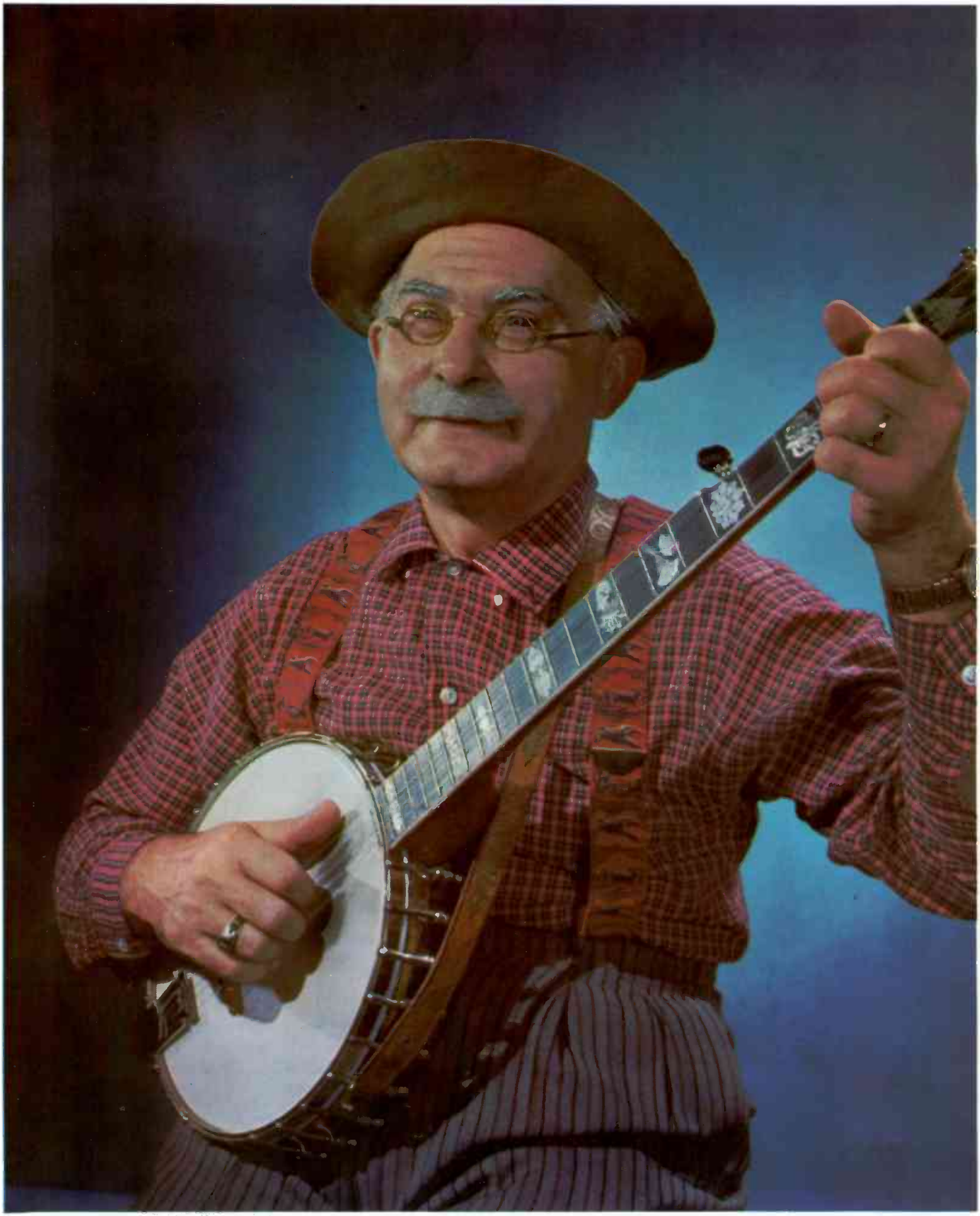
Jody now records for the TAG label, and has recently re-recorded his left-field version of "On Top of Old Smokie." His previous records include "Georgiana Waltz," and "Steel Guitar." He wrote "Television Set" himself, and it has proved to be his biggest hit.

Jody is a native of East Tennessee. His first experience as a radio performer came when he guested on a WNOX program in Knoxville. Jody credits long-time friend and fellow Opry star, Roy Acuff, with helping him along in the early days.

Like Acuff, Cousin Jody takes much delight in performing for American servicemen away from home. He was especially proud of the opportunity to visit with troops stationed in Alaska during the 1967-68 Christmas-New Year season. While in the far North, Jody also took time out to hunt and bag a caribou.

When his schedule allows, Jody likes to play the role of handyman around his suburban Nashville home, or hunt and fish. He does all three with the same enthusiasm which distinguishes him as a performer.

Cousin Jody models his new slacks before the Opry Celebration crowd.



GRANDPA JONES

It isn't uncommon to see a quiet man with the look of a bank vice-president go through the stage door at the Opry House. The same man will breeze onto the Opry stage a few minutes later in the make-up and clothes of Grandpa Jones. The "real" Grandpa Jones hasn't any grandchildren, but has worn the honorary title since he was twenty-three years old.

Grandpa Jones may look and sound like a grandpa, but he moves and plays with a springy zest that could make a teenage combo envious. Grandpa started his professional career doing a commercial for a dentist in Akron, Ohio, and has been rendering painless performances ever since.

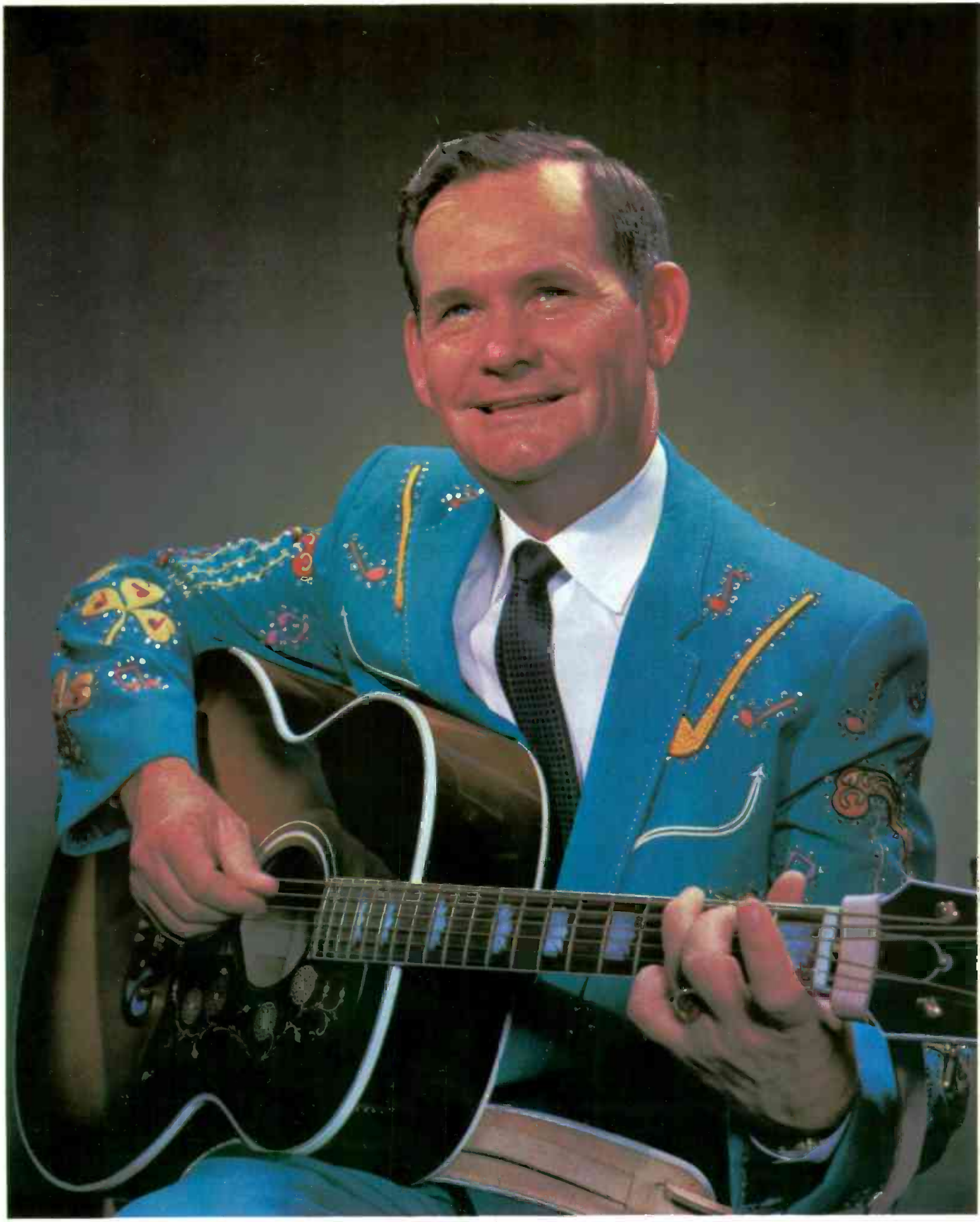
One of ten children of a Niagara, Kentucky, farm family, Grandpa learned to play the banjo from old-time performer "Cousin Emmy." He later learned to play the guitar himself. His first radio job was with station WJW in Akron. While there, Grandpa used some of the musical tips passed on to him by his father. Mr. Jones was well-known around the Niagara community for his performances at local dances.

Bradley Kincaid gave Grandpa the title that was to be his pseudonym for his professional career. The act was originally known as "Grandpa Jones and His Grandchildren." Grandpa's records and lightning banjo work have earned him many television credits, but he always performs in "character."

The Jones family, Grandpa, Ramona, and the three children, Eleise, Mark, and Alisa, live on a farm near Ridgetop, Tennessee, a few miles North of Nashville. Grandpa spends much of his free time writing songs. He has penned more than two hundred tunes and has recorded about seventy-five of them.

Grandpa's records have served him well. His biggest hits have been "Old Rattler," "Eight More Miles to Louisville," and "Mountain Dew," but nearly all his releases have chalked up healthy sales. Grandpa joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1946, and married Ramona one year later. She frequently appears on stage with her multi-talented husband. Grandpa Jones is highly respected by his fellow performers for retaining the strength and drive of "pure" Country Music.

Grandpa Jones undergoes a last minute inspection by his wife, Ramona, and daughter, prior to an Opry appearance.



HANK LOCKLIN

Folks drive into the tiny town of McLellan, Florida; stop at the only crossroads country store, and ask directions to the home of Hank Locklin. "Down that blacktop," townspeople sitting on the porch say, pointing, "first brick house on the right." Sometimes it is Hank Locklin, himself, giving the directions. "I like to see the people," he says, "who would like to see me."

This tells a lot about Hank, a singer who left this same McLellan homeplace (he is now Honorary Mayor) walking, a guitar slung over his shoulder, and sang his way into the hearts of millions, not only Americans, but in foreign capitols, too; especially in Ireland where his tenor voice has made Hank that nation's Number One Vocalist.

Hank didn't walk right out of McLellan and into the bigtime of Country stardom. He first sang in a road house honky-tonk for $2.00 a night until he went broke, as it cost him $5.00 nightly to get back and forth to the singing job. Success began with a song he had written and stuck in his back pocket, "Send Me the Pillow You Dream On," which was an immediate hit on both Country and "pop" charts across the nation. In 1960 he built further on his reputation as a songwriter with "Please Help Me, I'm Falling," which was a million-seller and destined to make a legend of Locklin. In 1960 he was also made an Opry regular on the strength of his native talents and his success in the field of writing, plus his ever-growing popularity with Country Music fans everywhere.

Now, Locklin is assured a permanent place among great Nashville names since singing the song which honors the heroes of the heart songs . . . the "Country Music Hall of Fame."

Hank holds tight to royalty checks, and spends the money from Country chart songs on his "Singin' L. Ranch," a 300-acre spread in McLellan, about a mile (down the blacktop) from the crossroads country store.

Billy Walker and Hank swap stories about their performing experiences.

LONZO & OSCAR

Bass-player, Lester Wilburn jokes with Lonzo and Oscar.

Rare are the performers who have been able to burlesque or satire Country musicians successfully as is the case of Lonzo and Oscar. Born Rollin Sullivan and Dave Hooten, they are the only duo on the Grand Ole Opry who can get by with poking fun at their colleagues and the music they sing seriously.

For Rollin and Dave, the road to stardom was rocky. Originally, the team was composed of Ken Marvin and Oscar (Rollin) and they made their debut on Radio WTJS, Jackson, Tennessee, shortly before World War II. At that time, they recorded the tune "I'm My Own Grandpa." Shortly after this, Ken withdrew from the act and Rollin's brother, Johnny Sullivan, became a full-time member. For several years they travelled throughout the world with Eddie Arnold's Show.

They continued on to new heights as a comedy team making hundreds of television films and records. They also appeared on Network telecasts such as "The Kate Smith Show," "Dave Garroway Show" and "Ed Sullivan's Show." They have also worked extensively with many syndicated television shows originating in Nashville. In addition, their comic stylings have graced numerous transcriptions and Armed Forces radio shows.

Tragedy struck in 1967 when Johnny (Lonzo) died of a heart-attack while driving a tractor on his farm near Goodlettsville, Tennessee. 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 have 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. The new combination exhibits the same sparkling style and intuitive sense of comedy that distinguished the "original" pairings. The fast-paced timing and instrumental skill which won the team international acclaim during its formative years is undimmed. The future looks bright for this duo, as their schedule is filled with personal appearances throughout the world.

BOBBY LORD

Bobby Lord represents the new generation of Country Music performers. While many of Bobby's predecessors started out in medicine shows or honkey-tonks, Bobby seemed to grow up with the electronic medium of television. Perhaps that's the reason Bobby has been so successful in the video medium.

Bobby, a native of Sanford, Florida, attended the University of Tampa, and once planned to pursue a medical 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 renditions of "Hawkeye," and "Life Can Have Meaning" earned him thousands of new fans, as did "Bring Your Bucket to the Well." Bobby's songwriting ability has been exhibited by the success of "When the Snow Falls," "Fascination," and "Baby Where Can You Be."

Bobby's television commitments and songwriting activities haven't allowed him as much time to go on performing tours as he would like, but his television and Grand Ole Opry performances have been good showcases for his abilities. Bobby joined the Opry in 1960.

Bobby and his wife, Mozelle, live in a Nashville Suburb with their three children. When he manages to take time off for a tour, he seeks out ways to reach as many people as possible. He once performed before a crowd of twenty-thousand at the Indiana State Fair. Bobby doesn't hog the spotlight from the rest of the family, and Mozelle was recently a leading contender for the Mrs. U.S.A. contest, as she was Mrs. Tennessee.

Bobby Lord signs autographs in front of the Opry stage for enthusiastic fans.

CHARLIE LOUVIN

Charlie Louvin gives Opry Manager, Bud Wendell, an impromptu guitar lesson.

Charlie and Ira Louvin, two farm boys from Henegar, Alabama, first tasted the sweet fruits of applause when they toppled the competition in a talent contest in Chattanooga. The Louvin Brothers were a little hesitant about stepping into show business with both feet, so they kept their hands in farming through their early radio days. Although they had seen their appeal proven again and again by response to their programs on WDOD in Chattanooga, and WNOX in Knoxville, they continued working at other jobs. The Louvin Brothers completed their military obligation, then worked at a Post Office before stepping into Country singing "full-time" around Chattanooga. They recorded for Capitol in 1951. At one point, Charlie even carried a barber license. The Brothers realized a lifetime ambition when, in 1955, they were invited to become Grand Ole Opry regulars.

When Ira Louvin 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. Charlie, a self-taught guitarist, soon won thousands of new fans with his hard-driving, dynamic style. He is now completing a quarter-century in Country Music and estimates his travelling at something over two million miles. Charlie's mileage, incidentally, doesn't include the miles he walked as a GI in World War II and the Korean conflict.

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

Charlie's Capitol recordings have always been large sellers. His largest hit was probably "I Don't Love You Anymore," with "See the Big Man Cry" running a close second. His version of "I Think I'll Go Somewhere and Cry Myself to Sleep" was also successful.

Charlie's hobbies are hunting and fishing, and he tries to take advantage of local sporting facilities when he is playing in an especially good hunting or fishing area. Married in 1949, Charlie and his wife, Betty, live with their children; Charlie Junior, Kenneth, and Glenn, near Nashville. Charlie also owns a prospering record shop in Franklin, Tennessee.

BOB LUMAN

Hundreds of better-than-average performers struggle for years without ever reaching the top. Bob Luman is one artist who was forced to make the upward trip twice. The fact that he reached a high plateau both times is a tribute to both his determination and talent.

Bob, a Tyler, Texas native, started his first career after winning a talent contest after high school graduation. A series of performances soon earned him enough backing to win a spot on the Louisiana Hayride. The Hayride opened more doors, and soon young Luman was the star of a television show. His career really went into high gear when he recorded a song titled, "Let's Think About Living." The song was an instant success and shot to the top of both the Country and "pop" charts.

As "Let's Think About Living" edged up to gold record status, Bob opened an envelope that was to vastly alter his immediate future. The letter was from Bob's draft board and informed him that his selective service number was up.

The Bob Luman story resumes after the young serviceman again donned civilian clothes two years later. Bob was faced with the prospect of starting over as a performer. Luckily, Bob's fans had not forgotten his name, and he found a ready berth with Hickory Records.

Bob's Hickory releases re-kindled the flame, and Bob Luman was back on the road as a performer. His recordings of "The File" and "Go Home Boy" started the trend. He followed up with "Interstate Forty," "You Can't Take the Boy From the Country," and others. Bob's career took an even sharper upward turn when, in 1965, he was signed on as a Grand Ole Opry regular. His recording of "Five Miles from Home" and "The Great Snowman" removed any doubt that Bob could recapture the magic that distinguished him in his pre-service days. Bob is now an Epic recording artist.

Bob is especially adept at television entertaining and has co-hosted a popular television show. He is well-liked by teens and adults alike, and shows great promise of becoming a Country Music "Super-star."

Vito Pelletieri, one of the first to welcome Bob Luman to the Opry cast, congratulates the young performer on his work.

LORETTA LYNN

If you asked lovely Loretta Lynn what she does for a living, she might be hard put for an answer. Loretta does so many things, and well, that it would be difficult to pin down her principal occupation. Loretta is an outstanding stage performer, a highly successful recording artist, a top-flight songwriter, and the power behind a championship-calibre rodeo. Loretta might brush all the aforementioned aside and simply describe herself as a wife and the mother of six children.

Loretta Lynn is a native of Van Lear, Kentucky, and describes herself as a "country girl." The fact that she can so capably weave a Country song or lilt a Country ballad is evidence that she knows the moods and ambitions of Country folk.

Loretta has won every trade press award worth having, and has pleased audiences everywhere from the Hollywood Bowl to the Grand Ole Opry. She credits much of her success to her husband, Mooney, and to the Wilburn Brothers.

Loretta has also been highly successful as a songwriter. Her compositions include such tunes as "You Ain't Woman Enough," "Don't Come Home A'drinking," "Fist City," "Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven," and "What Kind of a Girl." The long-haired brunette seems to convey her special way with a song on the grooves of every song she records. Loretta's hits include "Happy Birthday," "Standing Room Only," and her favorite, "Blue Kentucky Girl."

Loretta feels that her prime obligation is to her family, and she looks forward to every break in her busy schedule so she can care for those still in the nest. She takes great pride in cooking delicious southern meals, and her reputation as a home-maker and chef almost match her reputation as an entertainer. She makes it back to her middle Tennessee home for all special family occasions, despite her 150,000-mile-a-year travel schedule. Now her growing rodeo business makes even greater demands on Loretta's free time. Loretta always reserves time for her family, and looks forward to her life at home.

Loretta accepts the Best Female Vocalist Award from Country Song Round-Up's Representative.

MINNIE PEARL

Minnie Pearl views television star Jim Nabors as a prospective beau.

Had fate taken a few different turns at the crossroads in Sarah Ophelia Cannon's colorful life, the quick-witted bachelor-gal from Grinder's Switch might have been the toast of Broadway. Sarah Colley, one of several children of a Centerville, Tennessee, lumberman, was born near the Grinder's Switch railroad siding. The young Minnie Pearl showed an early flair for theatrics, and was a frequent performer in school functions. Following high school, Minnie was sent off to dramatic school at Ward Belmont College in Nashville.

Following college, Minnie returned to Centerville and taught dramatics at a local school. Her natural inclination toward the stage wouldn't let her settle too comfortably into education and she soon immersed herself in a theatrical job with the Wayne P. Sewell Producing Company, of Atlanta. Minnie toured the midsouth producing musical comedies at local schools. Minnie cast local talent in each production, rehearsed the actors, and presented the plays under the auspices of civic organizations.

Minnie's gift for mimicry cried out for release, and she eventually gave up directing for performing. She formed a composite character from several women she knew in school, in Grinder's Switch, and throughout the South. The hopeless, but happy, spinster she created was named Minnie Pearl.

Minnie, flowered hat, calico dress and all, became a member of the Grand Ole Opry cast in November, 1940. Minnie's long-standing and desperate manhunt has endeared her to all who respond to her "How-dee!" When Minnie says, "I'm so proud to be here!" she means it. Minnie travels far afield with her husband, Henry Cannon, who is her Manager and pilot of their private plane. She is a frequent guest on network television. She recently turned businesswoman when she and prominent Tennessean, John Jay Hooker, Jr., instituted a chain of "Minnie Pearl's Fried Chicken" Restaurants. Her chicken, her humor, and her Starday records, all reflect the good taste of the woman the Country Music Association voted the 1966 "Country Music Woman of the Year."

BILL MONROE

Bill rehearses with the Blue Grass Boys backstage at the Opry House.

The Bill Monroe "story" should actually begin a generation before Bill's, for his musical background actually dates back to his mother, Melissa Monroe, and his uncle, Pen Vandiver. Both were accomplished fiddlers. Bill inherited his love for the plaintive sound of country fiddling from his mother, but credits his skill on the mandolin to Uncle Pen.

As a youngster, Bill accompanied Uncle Pen to neighborhood dances where he backed the older man's fiddle with a guitar. With his uncle's help, Bill transferred his knowledge of the guitar to the "tater" mandolin, an instrument of Italian origin.

Much of what Bill Monroe learned from his mother and uncle cropped up later as an ingredient in what we now know as "Bluegrass" music. The name was invented by the Rosine, Kentucky musician, for the music which reminded him of his home country. The "trick" of having the fiddle, mandolin or banjo carry the lead, was the trademark of Bluegrass, which Bill originated in 1939.

In 1930 Bill started his radio career as a member of the Monroe Brothers. Eight years later, having developed Bluegrass Music into his personal trademark, Bill formed his own group. In 1939 Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys came to the Grand Ole Opry.

Another very important ingredient in Monroe's Bluegrass is Bill's unusual singing voice. He credits his experience singing in church as a youngster, with helping him develop his falsetto tenor. The combination of talents earned Bill the title of "King of Bluegrass Music."

Bill and the Blue Grass Boys have accumulated quite a few recorded hits. Some of these are "Blue Moon of Kentucky," "Kentucky Waltz," "Uncle Pen," "I Hear a Sweet Voice Calling," "Mule Skinner Blues," and "Footprints in the Snow." Bill's compositions include "Along About Daybreak," "Blue Moon of Kentucky," "Kentucky Waltz," "Uncle Pen," "I Hear a Sweet Voice Calling," and many more.

GEORGE MORGAN

Although George Morgan is known across the nation as being the owner of one of the most melodious voices in Country Music, he is known around Nashville's Music Colony for yet another asset; his sense of humor. George isn't above an occasional practical joke, and, in turn, is often on the receiving end of someone else's humor. As a matter of fact, about the only time George is dead serious is when he's entertaining. He has a craftsman's pride in doing the best possible job and this extra effort has paid off in keeping him in the front rank of his chosen profession.

George was born in Waverly, Tennessee, but moved a few years later to Barberton, Ohio, where he played the guitar (having learned the art at the age of eleven) and sang over radio station WAKR in nearby Akron. After brief stints at radio stations WWST, Wooster, Ohio, and WWVA, Wheeling, West Virginia, he joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1948.

George's early days at the Opry were highlighted by some incidents he remembers with less than fondness. For instance, George became dismally lost the night of his first Opry performance when he took a wrong turn after leaving his hotel. He searched for the Opry House for several minutes and was finally directed by Eddy Arnold. On another occasion, George forgot the name of the WSM Announcer who introduced his show.

Soon after his arrival in Nashville, George wrote and recorded the song which has become his trademark. At the last count, his version of "Candy Kisses" had sold over two million copies. Since then, his Columbia recordings have added even more to his professional stature. They include "Almost," "You're the Only Good Thing," and "Room Full of Roses."

George performs with a band called "The Candy Kids," and has travelled extensively overseas in addition to his crowded performance schedule in this country. He is married to the former Anastasia Paridon and has five children. Their oldest child is Candy Kay (after Candy Kisses), Bethany, Liana, Marty and Loretta fill out the rest of the Morgan's clan.

George Morgan's prime purpose in life seems to be to spread as much happiness around as he can, and a quick look at the faces around the Opry House while he is singing is evidence that he is succeeding in this aim.

George Morgan sings a medley of his biggest hits, to the delight of the Opry Birthday Celebration crowds.

JIMMY NEWMAN

When Jimmy Newman walks on the Opry stage, the audience gets an eyeful of sparkling alligators and an earful of Cajun wit. The jokes he translates from French, which he spoke as a boy in the swampy Bayou country of Louisiana. His famous Cajun yell A-Y-E-E gears up the audience for the robust song style that follows his grand entrance.

Jimmy says he started singing one day when he found himself alone with five bales of cotton ready to be picked. His mother and father had a store and a farm in Big Mamou, Louisiana, where Jimmy grew up. The first song he sang was lifted from a Gene Autry film, the favorite Saturday activity of Jimmy and his brother. Jimmie Rodgers was also an early hero.

Jimmy now brainstorms his own songs . . . "blue songs when I'm in a good mood and sad songs when I'm happy." But out of the Bayou background have come such hits as "Alligator Man," "Bayou Talk," "Big Mamou" and "Louisiana Saturday Nite."

However, rumor has it that his wife, Mae, is responsible for "Back Pocket Money Man" and "Back Pocket Money." Mae hails from Ville Platte, Louisiana, and cooks some very fine Cajun dinners, like "Boodan" which is now a Newman record. Jimmy and Mae now live in Nashville with their teenage son, Gary.

The Newmans came to Nashville in 1956, two years after Jimmy's first hit, "Cry, Cry Darling." Then came his second winner, "Fallen Star."

That was more than ten years after Jimmy started his professional career with his own band. He later developed his own radio show on Station KPLC in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Two years before coming to Nashville, he joined the Louisiana Hayride.

In 1958, with two big hits already, he moved to MGM Records and scored with "You're Making a Fool Out of Me." Two more hits and two years later, he wrote "Lovely Work of Art" which won an award from BMI. His other hits include "D.J. for a Day," "Blue Lonely Winter" and "Just One More Night With You."

Most recently, Jimmy is entertaining servicemen overseas. When he is not busy with personal appearances, he frequents the golf course. He has also been known to do a little hunting and fishing.

Jimmy relaxes offstage with his guitar.

VARIETY...
Trade Mark Registered

'WSM Stretched "Opry" A Country Mile, Catapulted Nashville As C & W Center'

The following is an article reprinted from the October 29 issue of Variety magazine, the Bible of the entertainment industry.

by Les Brown

It isn't rare for a tv or radio station to be a force in its community, but the influence of WSM on the city of Nashville is unique in the annals of broadcasting. Over a period of 44 years, dating from the first broadcast of "Grand Ole Opry", the radio station has had a profound effect on the character and international image of the city it serves, and in the course of things it has been an important factor in the city's economic and physical growth.

That Nashville should bill itself today as "Music City USA" stems directly from WSM and the Opry, which have always been the nerve center of the country music industry. Indeed they have in a real sense spawned the c&w industry and continue to populate its executive and creative ranks, in addition to incubating its talent. The rippling effect has been the advent of the burgeoning Music Row (tenanted by a score of recording companies, many of the nearly 300 publishing firms, talent agencies, pressing plants and various related businesses); tourism to the city of 300,000 persons a year for Opry performances alone; the development of a professional local talent pool of more than 2,000 musicians, performers and songwriters; and, as a result of these, an estimated annual gross for the city of about 100,000,000.

Without the promotional efforts of WSM, its dedication to the country music idiom and its nurturing of talent over more than four decades, it's doubtful that there would be a country music industry as it is known today. Or if the flowering of that music were inevitable, it's certainly doubtful that the industry would have centered in Nashville.

Actually, WSM is not really a c&w station. Its country music programs pretty much are relegated to the nighttime hours. By day it's an old-fashioned general audience station, of the sort that has disappeared from the current radio landscape. So far as is known, it's the last station in America to employ a staff orchestra for a daily live show. The 10-piece unit plays popular music on WSM's early morning show, which somewhat resembles the old "Don McNeill Breakfast Club" on ABC Radio. Otherwise the day's programming embraces pop record shows, a farm program, play-by-play sports (Vanderbilt U. football and basketball, and Atlanta Braves baseball) local news and NBC Radio service. It's an odd mix that's capped five nights a week by Ralph Emery's all-night country music and interview stanza, and on Fridays and Saturdays by the live performances of "Grand Ole Opry."

For most radio stations in the country, nighttime means thin audiences and low rates, but for WSM the "Opry" broadcasts command premium prices. In the five-hour Saturday marathon, a half hour sells for $512 and the minute breaks in between for $85 each. This compares with an open rate of $65 for the drivetime periods, which theoretically is the radio medium's primetime. The two-and-a-half-hour Friday night "Opry" goes for $400 a half hour and $75 for the minute breaks. For national advertisers like P&G and Kelloggs, the WSM "Opry" is their principal radio buy. Both are in their sixth year on a 52-week basis, as is Pure Oil. Coca-Cola has been a sponsor for 14 years, and two regional advertisers—Martha White Mills and Stephens Play Clothes and Work Clothes—have been clients for more than 30 years.

WSM never went into music publishing, recording or talent management, which have become lucrative businesses for those who took advantage of the talent pool the station cultivated and raised. But while WSM hasn't capitalized on country music as it might have, the Opry remains a highly profitable business on its own. Admissions to the live performances—a total of four a week (one Friday night, two Saturday night, and a Saturday matinee)—are $2 and $3 in the cavernous Ryman Auditorium, in addition of course to the program sponsorships. Then, as an offshoot, there are the WSM Country Music tours of the stars' homes, which do very well.

Some 50 acts are in the Opry family at any given time, and more than half that number take part in every broadcast. Under New York agreements, the nut for such an array of talent would be prohibitive, but that's not the case in Nashville, where the musicians local is lenient in the interest of keeping the sidemen busy. They are. In a year's time, WSM pays about 700 musicians, most of them accompanists to the featured acts over and above the resident band. As to the name acts, they don't ask large fees from the "Opry." They play the show for peanuts, cognizant tf the promotional value in some 30 states that the clear-channeler effectively beams into, and they make their money in recordings and personal appearances on the road.

Most of the big stars who command big dollars in other broadcast dates continue to play the "Opry" for token fees out of loyalty.

Of interest these days is that surveys of the "Opry's" paying customers indicate that large numbers of them

come down from such midwestern states as Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio as well as from the south. This is confirmed by various contests and giveaways, including a P&G record offer, which drew the majority of its responses from the aforementioned states and Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota.

Through the "Opry," WSM begat a musical family that in turn begat the industry which has made Nashville "Music City USA." Owen Bradley, who had been leader of the WSM staff orchestra, spun off into the recording biz and is generally considered the father of Music Row along 16th Ave. (which has spread to 15th and 17th Aves.). Roy Acuff and Fred Rose both worked at WSM, the former as the first big star of the Opry and the latter as a writer. They teamed up to form Acuff-Rose, the publishing and talent management empire, Rose becoming a legendary figure as the managing genius behind the late Hank Williams. After Rose's death, the firm continued to grow under the stewardship of his son, Wesley Rose.

Chet Atkins, one of Nashville's musical giants and a key exec of RCA Records, came to WSM as a sideman with the Carter Family, then went out on his own. Jack Stapp, who had been program director of the station, formed Tree Publishing, one of the most successful houses in the field and a power in Nashville's music industry. The late Jim Denny handled talent at the station, then went on to form Cedarwood Publishing. Frances Preston, now head of BMI in Nashville, had worked for the station as a receptionist when she was a single girl, Frances Williams. In recent times, the Glaser Bros., who joined WSM as an act, have gone on to become successful disk producers and publishers. But they still perform and still do their bit for the Opry.

Eddy Arnold, one of the performers who helped country music overlap the popular field, is a product of the Opry, and Tennessee Ernie Ford while not a regular was with WSM for a time. Outside the country field, incidentally, the station's popular music shows nourished such singers as Dinah Shore and Snooky Lanson in their early years.

One reason that WSM has been able to remain a general radio station and an incubator and promoter of live talent is that its parent company, National Life and Accident Insurance Co., has over the years given the station management carte blanche to run a radio station according to the dictates of its own conscience. Moreover, the insurance company (the station's call letters stand for its motto, We Shield Millions) has never pressured the WSM management for larger and larger profits every year.

WSM's latest influence on the growth and economy of Nashville is the staking out of a parcel of wooded land along the Cumberland River for the construction of a $20,000,000 family amusement park and music centre to be called Opryland USA. Its completion is projected for 1971, with a new Opry House as the centerpiece, and the project is expected to be another boon to tourism for the city.

National Life put the station on the air in 1925, stewarded by Ed Craig, son of the insurance company's founder. Searching for appropriate programming with which to build the outlet in those experimental days, Craig took the "Barn Dance" concept from Chicago's WLS and also hired away the man who ran the program there, George (Judge) Hay. It was launched in Nashville on Nov. 8, 1925 as "WSM Barn Dance."

The show acquired its present title a few years later through an on-air ad lib by Hay. In those days the WSM country music show came on after NBC's classical "Music Appreciation Hour" hosted by Dr. Walter Damrosch. It was bizarre juxtaposition, as Hay was all too well aware. He opened one night with the crack, "For the past hour you've been listening to Grand Opera. Now we will present Grand Ole Opry." The tag stuck.

The Johnny Cash Show

Last Spring, stage crews turned the Opry House into a television studio every Monday and Thursday nights for the taping of "The Johnny Cash Show," the first network television show to be produced in Music City, U.S.A.

The show mixed country music with folk music in a blend friendly to an audience of all ages and tastes. Johnny's guests included country favorites like Merle Haggard, Marty Robbins, Jeannie C. Riley and Minnie Pearl. For folk music fans, the climax of the series came when Cash and Bob Dylan sang "Girl from the North Country," the duet on Dylan's latest album.

Johnny's regulars included his wife, June Carter, and the rest of the Carter Family, the Statler Brothers and the Tennessee Three.

The aging Opry House had to undergo some traumatic alterations to accomodate the complicated television equipment. The stage was extended well into the first several rows of seats and then had to be dismantled every weekend for the Opry shows. But Cash himself insisted on the Opry House saying, "I wouldn't do it anywhere else . . ."


SONNY OSBORNE

OSBORNE BROTHERS

Apparently, good Bluegrass Music knows no geographical bounds, but two of the lively music form's most talented promoters are extremely proud of their Kentucky heritage. The Osborne Brothers have done as much as any group of performers to popularize Bluegrass among college audiences. Sonny and Bobby have won new recruits at some of the most cosmopolitan campuses in the nation, and played before 18,500 fans at the Newport Folk Festival in 1964. It's fitting that the Osbornes were signed as Grand Ole Opry regulars the same year.

Although Sonny learned to play the banjo by experimentation and trial and error, he has authored an instruction manual on the fine points of Bluegrass picking, Bobby also learned to play the guitar "by ear." Although both boys are self-taught, they have helped many youngsters who were trying to learn Bluegrass.

Although the Osbornes were born in Hyden, Kentucky, they found their first professional opportunity in front of the microphone at WPFB in Middletown, Ohio. By 1958 they had earned the title of "Most Promising Vocal Group."

The Osborne Brothers moved into the Nashville area in 1965 and settled in the Hendersonville community near a lake. Both families live in the same block. Sonny and his wife, Judy, have a son, Steve, and a daughter, Karen. Bobby and his wife, Patsy, have a son, Robby, and a daughter, Wynn.

The Osborne Brothers convey the Bluegrass message as well on records as they do on their personal appearances. Their discs include "Ruby, Are You Mad?," "Take This Hammer," "This Heart of Mine," and "Once More." The Osbornes also write much of the material they record. Sonny Osborne has also developed a characteristic sideline; he develops unusual, unique arrangements of traditional Bluegrass songs. It's another way the multi-talented Osborne Brothers use to advance the music they love so well.

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

DOLLY PARTON

DUMB BLONDE was the name of Dolly's first hit record, but it's far from a description of one of the newest and loveliest faces on the Opry Stage.

In addition to her successful singing career, Dolly is quite a business woman. She runs a music publishing company in Nashville and has just started a chain of beauty salons called Dolly Parton's Doll House. She also designs many of her own clothes.

On top of looks and brains, Dolly has a natural sense of tones and rhythms of country music. She was raised where country music flourishes . . . in the foothills of the Smoky mountains. Her voice was trained by years of singing at church services and community gatherings in rural Sevier County, Tennessee.

Unlike many who have struggled into stardom, Dolly was fortunate enough to have a relative already in the country music business. Her uncle, Bill Owens, often appeared on the Cas Walker show which is beamed from Knoxville to many stations in the East Tennessee area. He realized the blonde tyke had talent and arranged for her to appear with him.

These days, Dolly is most often seen with her tall and handsome partner, Porter Waggoner. Early in 1968, the Ozark cowboy invited her to become a permanent guest on his national television show. Porter and Dolly, plus "The Wagon Masters," have become a weekly treat in some five million homes across the country.

Porter and Dolly have made several albums together and became international favorites with a recent tour across Canada and the United States. The Country Music Association named them "Best Duet of the Year" in 1968.

Dolly is not only a talented performer, but she is also a successful songwriter. Her friends say she does her best work curled up on a fluffy pink rug in her studio-office on Music Row. She has written and recorded "Put It Off Until Tomorrow" and "Fuel to the Flame," as well as several hits for other artists.

Her latest successes are "Just Because I'm a Woman" and "Blue Ridge Mountain Boy." She recently signed a long-term contract with RCA Victor and reliable sources on Music Row say her glittering career is just beginning.

Dolly performs for Opry fans and visiting filmmaker.

STU PHILLIPS

It is paradoxical that Canada's newest gift to Country Music established himself as a recording artist with a pair of South-of-the-Border songs. Stu Phillips, a native of Calgary, lists as two of his biggest RCA hits "The Great El Tigre," and "Bracero." Of course, Stu hasn't followed the normal routine as a Country Star anyway.

Many stars establish themselves as "name" performers, then go on in search of network bookings, but the 6'1" Canadian came to Nashville with a healthy helping of network experience already under his belt. Stu was a star on the CBC Network for four-and-a-half years, starting with a radio show as the "Travelling Balladeer," and climaxing his broadcast career as the star of "The Red River Jamboree" series.

Stu's involvement with Country Music began in high school when he taught himself to play the guitar. He and a teenage band won top honors at local talent contests before he sought a show business opening in radio. His first broadcast job entailed an early morning County Music show called "Stu for Breakfast." Stu's ranch background enabled him to maintain an image as a performing as well as a microphone cowboy. His skill as a horseman made him a standout attraction at Canadian parades.

Stu fulfilled a longtime ambition when he was signed to an RCA Recording Contract under Victor A & R man, Chet Atkins. Chet also encouraged Stu to invest more time in songwriting. The tall Canadian was a frequent guest on the Grand Ole Opry before being added to the cast on June 1, 1967.

Stu, his wife Aldoa, and his two children live in the Nashville suburb of Brentwood. Stu likes living near farmland so he can keep up a speaking acquaintance with farmwork. He also keeps an Arabian stallion. The Phillips family lives near Skeeter Davis, Jim Ed Brown, Archie Campbell, Bobby Lord, and a former Governor of Tennessee. Stu's future plans include writing a light Opera about Country Music.

Stu Phillips works close to the Opry "mike" delivering an intimate ballad.

RAY PILLOW

Virginia has been the birthplace of several outstanding Country Music entertainers, including the legendary Patsy Cline. Lynchburg, Virginia, a lively little college town near Roanoke, gave the Grand Ole Opry a young man named Ray Pillow.

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. Although he is adequately equipped for executive status in the business world, the lure of show business eventually drew Ray to Nashville and the Pet Milk Talent Contest conducted by WSM.

Although Ray came in second, (no disgrace in view of the calibre of talent drawn by the contest), he received enough encouragement from the experience to tackle Country Music as a full-time professional. Since that 1962 contest, he has parlayed his tremendous natural talent, good looks, and winning personality into full-fledged stardom.

Ray's Capitol Records have added even more lustre to his professional image. He is a consistent visitor to the sales charts, and the fans who buy his releases and attend his stage performances now number in the millions. He now records for ABC.

Although Ray has long since relegated his business and bookkeeping talents to hobby status, he is one of the few artists capable of handling intricate business transactions without outside help. He is generous with his time in helping fellow artists past business pitfalls, and is one of the most popular men in the music community.

Ray and his wife, Jo Anne, have three children, Dale, Selena, and Darryl, and reside in Nashville.

Ray checks with his wife about Sunday's plans at the backstage Opry phone.

DEL REEVES

Del Reeves lends his special styling to a song on the Opry broadcast.

Life on a movie set isn't always sunshine and roses; ask Opry star Del Reeves. Del, whose angular good looks and fine sense of comedy timing have made him a frequent movie performer, has several stories about filming hardships.

For instance, Del had to balance on a ledge of an Atlanta building during the filming of one Country Music Epic. He not only had to look cheerful, he had to pretend to sing. The job was made more difficult by a stiff wind that threatened to sweep him off into the street below.

During another movie sequence, Del and his co-stars had to camp out in a Florida swamp. Del recalls several film crewmen had to clear the area of snakes each morning before shooting could begin.

So far the tall Sparta, North Carolina singer has taken it all in stride. Del's persistence has paid off through the years in many ways. He is the former star of a California Television series. He fronted the show for four years, then went on to play the famed Las Vegas "Golden Strip" for two years. Del's films include "Second Fiddle to a Steel Guitar," "Forty Acre Feud," "Gold Guitar," and "Cottonpickin' Chickenpickers."

Like most members of Country Music's New Wave, Del is a talented composer in his own right. Tunes written by Del and his Michigan-born wife Ellen, have been recorded by Roy Drusky, Carl Smith, Rose Maddux, Sheb Wooley, and many other artists.

Del won nationwide prominence with his United Artists recording of "Girl on the Billboard," then followed up with "Belles of Southern Bell," "'Women Do Funny Things to Me," "Do Wrong," and "A Dime at a Time." His personal appearances are highlighted by his band, "The Doodledoo's," and by Del's clever impersonations.

Del claims no special hobby, but friends say he enjoys collecting unusual, zany clothes. Del, Ellen and their three children live in a Nashville suburb, close to several other members of the Music Colony.

TEX RITTER

If the Country Music industry ever has the opportunity to choose a new addition to the faces on Mount Rushmore, Tex Ritter would probably be the candidate. Tex has probably done as much as any man living or dead to popularize Country Music in all areas of this nation. He has been a distinguished representative of his chosen music in all mediums.

Tex, native of Murvual, in Panola County, Texas, learned the rawhide arts of ranching, riding, and roping from practical experience. Despite his ranch background, Tex eyed a career in law when he enrolled at the University of Texas. He also continued his legal training at Northwestern. His natural acting ability, however, proved too strong an influence to be ignored, and he earned a role in the play, "Green Grow the Lilacs," on the New York stage.

Tex's acting flair drew him into films, and his deep voice reverberated from the sound tracks of seventy-eight movies during his twelve year film career. He also was sought-out for television roles, and performed on "The Rebel," "Shotgun Slade," and "The Zane Grey Theatre."

The tall Texan's Capitol records launched him into another career. His recordings of "High Noon," "Boll Weevil," "The Wayward Wind," and the classic, "Hillbilly Heaven," have firmly established Tex as one of Music City's hitmakers. Tex's winning ways with a Country song won him a berth on the Grand Ole Opry.

Tex is extremely popular among his fellow performers, and has served two terms as President of the Country Music Association. He is also honored in the Country Music Hall of Fame. Tex is married to one of his film leading ladies, and lives in Nashville, where he is active in many of the films produced in this area.

Tex and fellow-Texan Charlie Walker chat with a backstage visitor.

MARTY ROBBINS

Marty exhibits his skill with an instrument he usually isn't known for playing.

Many of us who long for the "good old days" probably wouldn't have fared too well during the rough, rugged days of the Old West. Those who know Marty Robbins well realize Marty's spirit and adventurous nature would have suited him perfectly for the six-gun era. Marty's energy seems to know no bounds; he has proven himself to be a top record seller ("El Paso," "Devil Woman," "A White Sport Coat," and "Don't Worry") and can sell pop ballads as well as Country standards or western sagas.

Marty's recent appearances in Country-Music-oriented films have revealed another side of his personality. His acting has been applauded by fans and professionals, alike. His stage appearances are distinguished by excellent timing, great balance, and high humor. Marty and his audiences strike up rapid friendships that make him new fans at every performance.

Marty, who keeps his athletic trim by regular exercise and abstinence from smoking and drinking, is known as a keen competitor on the race track. Marty's super-modified racer, "Devil Woman," is always a top contender for the checkered flag. Marty also takes an active interest in keeping the car finely tuned.

Marty was born in Glendale, Arizona, and spent his childhood helping his family earn a living from the arid soil. It is fitting that when he left his bone-dry homeland for military service, he chose the Navy. After his discharge, Marty decided to take advantage of the storehouse of song material he learned in Arizona and aboard ship by forming an entertainment unit. He and his group worked radio stations in the West and Midwest until his growing popularity drew him to Nashville and the Grand Ole Opry in 1953.

Marty writes much of his own material, and owns two publishing companies and a record label. His business activities are so varied that he must maintain a Nashville office to ride herd on his many successful interests. Marty, his wife Marizona, and their two children live near Nashville.

EARL SCRUGGS

Earl Scruggs gave country music a new sound when he decided to pick the strings of a banjo, instead of strumming chords. Before country music found Scruggs, the banjo was a forgotten sound at the back of a hillbilly band. Manufacturers had even stopped producing the instrument. Now in Scrugg's hands, it has become a solo instrument of concert stature.

Young Scruggs learned to play the banjo before the age of six. He was born into a family of six children that loved bluegrass music. Both his father and older brother played the banjo. Young Earl had developed his famous style of picking by the age of ten. When he was eleven, he and his brother played for square dances at a local recreation hall near their home of Shelby, North Carolina.

Scruggs' first professional appearance was on a radio station in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and he later joined "Lost" John Miller on WNOX in Knoxville, Tennessee.

In 1945, Scruggs introduced his new style of picking on the Grand Ole Opry. Three years later, he teamed up with a jovial guitar picker by the name of Lester Flatt. The pair became probably the most famous act in country music. In addition to radio, television and Opry appearances in Nashville, they delighted the hippies of San Francisco and, on one international tour, started a minor riot in Tokyo, Japan. In 1969, by mutual agreeemnt, Flatt and Scruggs decided to pursue separate careers.

Scruggs now often appears with his two sons, Gary, who is a college student, and Randy, who is in high school. Gary sings and plays the electric bass, rhythm guitar and harmonica. Randy is an expert guitarist, playing straight picking and finger style. Scruggs also has a third younger son, Steve. The older boys also perform with their father on his recordings for Columbia.

Scruggs has written a book on the banjo which was published in 1968. He has also designed two banjos now being manufactured by a company in Boston.

Scruggs lives with his wife, Louise, and three sons in their home in Madison, Tennessee, near Nashville. Mrs. Scruggs manages her husband's active career and, when he is not so active, he likes to hunt and fish.

Earl Scruggs with his two musical sons, Gary (left) and Randy (right).

JEANNIE SEELY

Jeannie poses with a winning family in the Bostrom Truck Seat Contest.

Jeannie Seely, the Townville, Pennsylvania, beauty who is one of the newest Grand Ole Opry cast members came to the top of the music business by an unusual "inside" route. Her good looks and persuasive singing style will keep her at the top.

Jeannie started her professional life as a secretary in Titusville, Pennsylvania. Jeannie developed her talent with amateur performances in her home town, and then, with a room-mate, moved to Los Angeles. Her first West Coast job was in a bank where she took advantage of her business training, but she soon found herself working in the offices of Liberty Records.

It was at Liberty that the blond beauty strengthened her childhood ties with Country Music. Her organizational knack and training soon gave her a "chief cook and bottle washer" status, in which she touched all phases of recording, from taking dictation, to promotion work, to actual producing.

The lure of the footlights eventually led Jeannie into quitting her position at Liberty in favor of a performing career. She worked clubs and stage shows on the Coast, and was a regular on the KCOP-TV "Country Music Time" show for two years.

When Jeannie came to Nashville at the urging of writer Hank Cochran, even more doors opened for her. She established herself as a member of the Porter Wagoner Road Show. Her biggest break came when she recorded Cochran's "Don't Touch Me." The tune not only netted her a NARAS Grammy, but also paved the way for her winning the "Most Promising Female Vocalist" title in all three leading trade magazines. Jeannie now records for Monument Records.

On September 16, 1967, Jeannie Seely became an official member of the Grand Ole Opry family. Her professional poise, enhanced by club work and personal appearances, gave her a special polish which insures her continued success. For Jeannie Seely, the trip from Pennsylvania, to California, to Nashville, became the route to stardom.

JEAN SHEPARD

Jean Shepard performs for the Opry Breakfast crowd during the recent Birthday Celebration.

Jean Shepard came up through the ranks of Country Music by an unusual route; she was once the leader of an all-girl band called "The Melody Ranch Girls." Jean's story actually started in Paul's Valley, Oklahoma. The small community was Jean's birthplace, but she spent most of her childhood in the city of Visalia in the San Juaquin Valley of California.

Jean's family made the westward move in 1943, and by the time Jean reached high school she had discovered her natural talent for music. During high school she was a member of the school Glee Club and sang with a group or as a soloist whenever she could. Her family, recognizing Jean's ability, urged her to seek out a career in music.

Jean's first professional work came about as a by-product of her association with the Melody Ranch Girls. Hank Thompson had occasion to hear Jean, and promptly decided to help her along. Thompson assisted by arranging a Capitol recording contract for the petite blonde songstress.

A turning point in Jean's personal life was her marriage to Grand Ole Opry star, Hawkshaw Hawkins. The tall, amiable artist died in a plane crash four years later. Jean now lives near Nashville.

Jean became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1955 and her talent seems to grow with each passing year. Her hit records include "A Dear John Letter," (with Ferlin Husky), and "Satisfied Mind." She has won several performing awards for her records and personal appearances.

Jean is an excellent horsewoman and has also trained bird-dogs. Although she seldom has the time to spend, she rides whenever she can. Jean maintains one of the busiest schedules in the Country Music Colony, but devotes a great deal of time to her children.


Home Of
GRAND OLE OPRY

THE RALPH SLOAN DANCERS

When the decision was made to televise some of the stars of the Grand Ole Opry for the National Life and Accident Insurance Company Television Opry, one of the first acts placed before the color camera was the Ralph Sloan Dancers. The colorful configurations executed by Ralph's dancers have been a feature of the regular Opry since 1955. Prior to the group's inclusion in the Opry cast, the dancers performed for the WSM-TV Country Junction Show.

Ralph developed his love for the exact art of square dancing when he worked as a doorman at a dance in the early 1940's. Although his group is a bi-weekly attraction on the Opry, Ralph's work day hours are invested in his seven hundred acre farm in Wilson County, Tennessee.

Although the Sloan dancers once numbered up to seventeen members, the need for more compact staging has slimmed the group down to eight in recent years. The smaller number has allowed the dancers to display their skills before audiences in skating rinks and before network cameras. The Ralph Sloan Dancers always travel with their own dance caller. Sloan dancers past and present come from all walks of life, but all share a great fondness for the intricate square dances.

The Sloan dancers now include Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Huffine, Robbie Gregory, Deborah Shrum, Joyce Sloan, and Jackie and Jerry Harper. Ralph is not only a square-dancing buff, but is also a dyed-in-the-wool Country Music fan. His early influences were Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb and his first instrument was a Ukulele.

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

The Sloan Dancers wait their turn at the edge of the Opry stage.

STONEY MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS

Ben Smathers leads the Cloggers in one of their intricate dance routines.

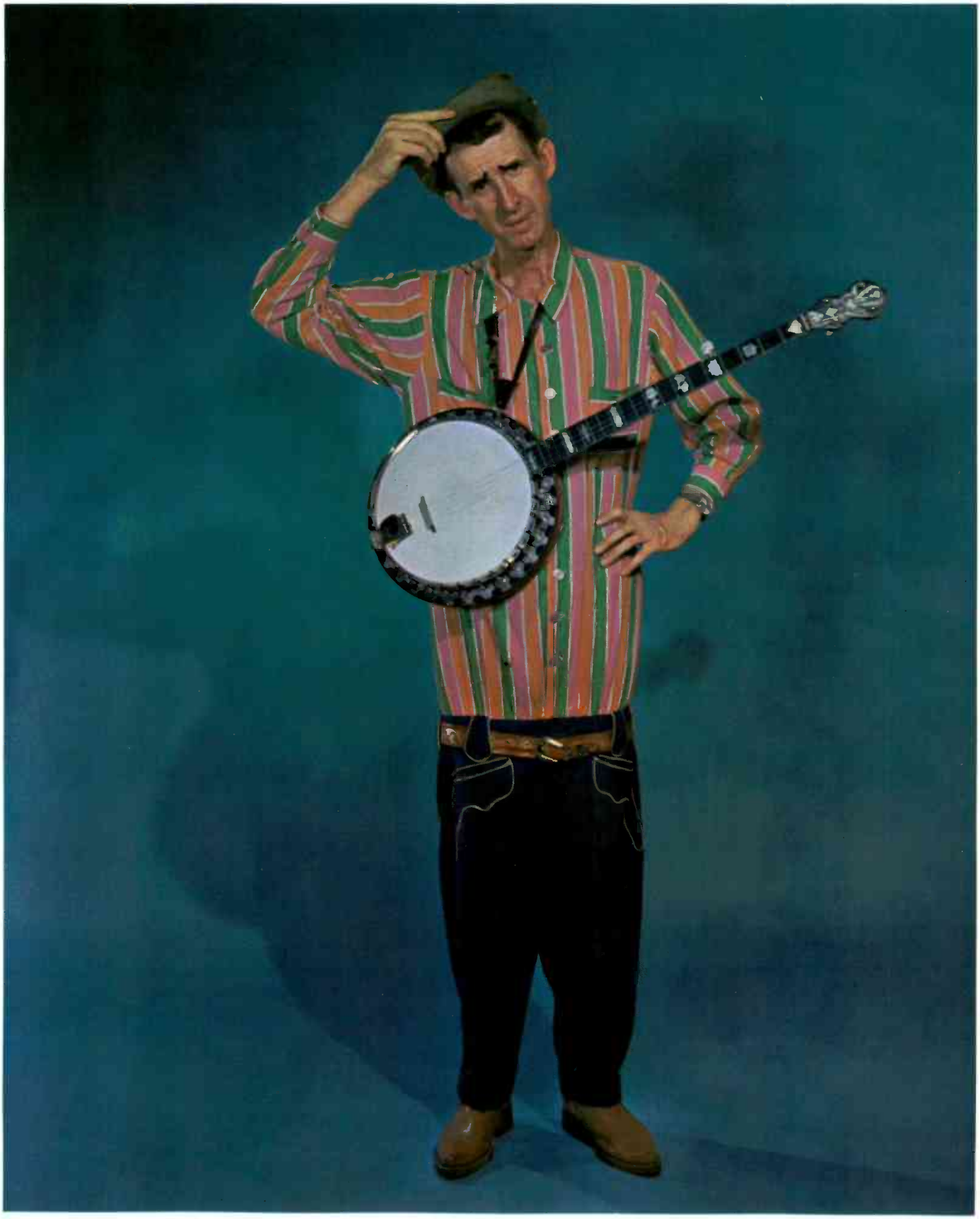
Although the Grand Ole Opry started out as a radio program, there is much to see as well as hear at the Opry House. One of the main attractions which add color and pageantry to the Opry is the precision dancing of the Stoney Mountain Cloggers. The group is the creation of Ben and Margaret Smathers, originally from Asheville, North Carolina.

Ben and Margaret were fans of square dancing even before their marriage, and frequently went to barn dances during their dating days. It was natural that eventually they turned their skill into a profession. The five Smathers children, Hal, Mickey, Candy, Debbie and Sally, created lapses in Margaret's dancing career. Their two sons, Hal and Mickey, are now performers with the group.

The Cloggers drew their name from the type of the shoe they wear while performing on the Opry stage. The Clog makes a sharp tapping sound on the boards. When all the dancers are going at full tilt, their rhythmic steps have a snare-drum precision.

The Cloggers, now living in Hendersonville, Tennessee, lived in North Carolina and made the trip to Nashville regularly for nine years. The Cloggers joined the Opry in 1957, after developing their exact routines at Square Dance Conventions throughout the nation.

In addition to their Opry performances, the Stoney Mountain Cloggers have appeared on thirty-two network television shows, among them the Kraft Music Hall and the Hollywood Palace, and have played the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago, Carnegie Hall in New York and Harrah's and The Nugget in Reno, Nevada. They have also been booked in several West Coast clubs, and worked a tour with the New Christy Minstrels. Ben and Margaret Smathers are credited with preserving and improving a very important folk art, and adding a new world of visual entertainment to the Grand Ole Opry.



STRINGBEAN

In a way, it's a shame that those who see Grand Ole Opry star "Stringbean" for the first time are so overwhelmed by his unusual costume that they fail to note his sparkling banjo style. Actually, String's comic ability and musicianship are pretty much equal; and whether his sports exploits outdistance his showmanship is an open question. Stringbean, or David Akeman if you prefer, is a dead-serious hunter and fisherman when he steps off-stage and spends as much time pursuing game as he can. In String's words, "A man who plays the five string banjo has got it made. It never interferes with any of the pleasures in his life."

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

It was during his duty with the Bluegrass Boys that String was given his stage name. He was first called "Stringbean" by an emcee who couldn't remember David Akeman. Later on, his low-belted stage costume accentuated his slender build.

Stringbean's success as a single performer has been impressive. He has won many honors over the years and his records reflect his skill. His biggest record (on Starday) has been "Barnyard Banjo Pickin,' " which was his own composition. String's other records include "Twenty Cent Cotton," "String and His Banjo," "Wake Up Little Betty," "String's Fishing," and "Goin' to the Grand Ole Opry To Make Myself a Name."

Dave and his wife, Estelle, live on a farm near the Nashville suburb of Goodlettsville. String's farming, like his entertaining, is carefully planned so it doesn't interfere with his fishing.

Stringbean demonstrates his unique one-handed banjo style.

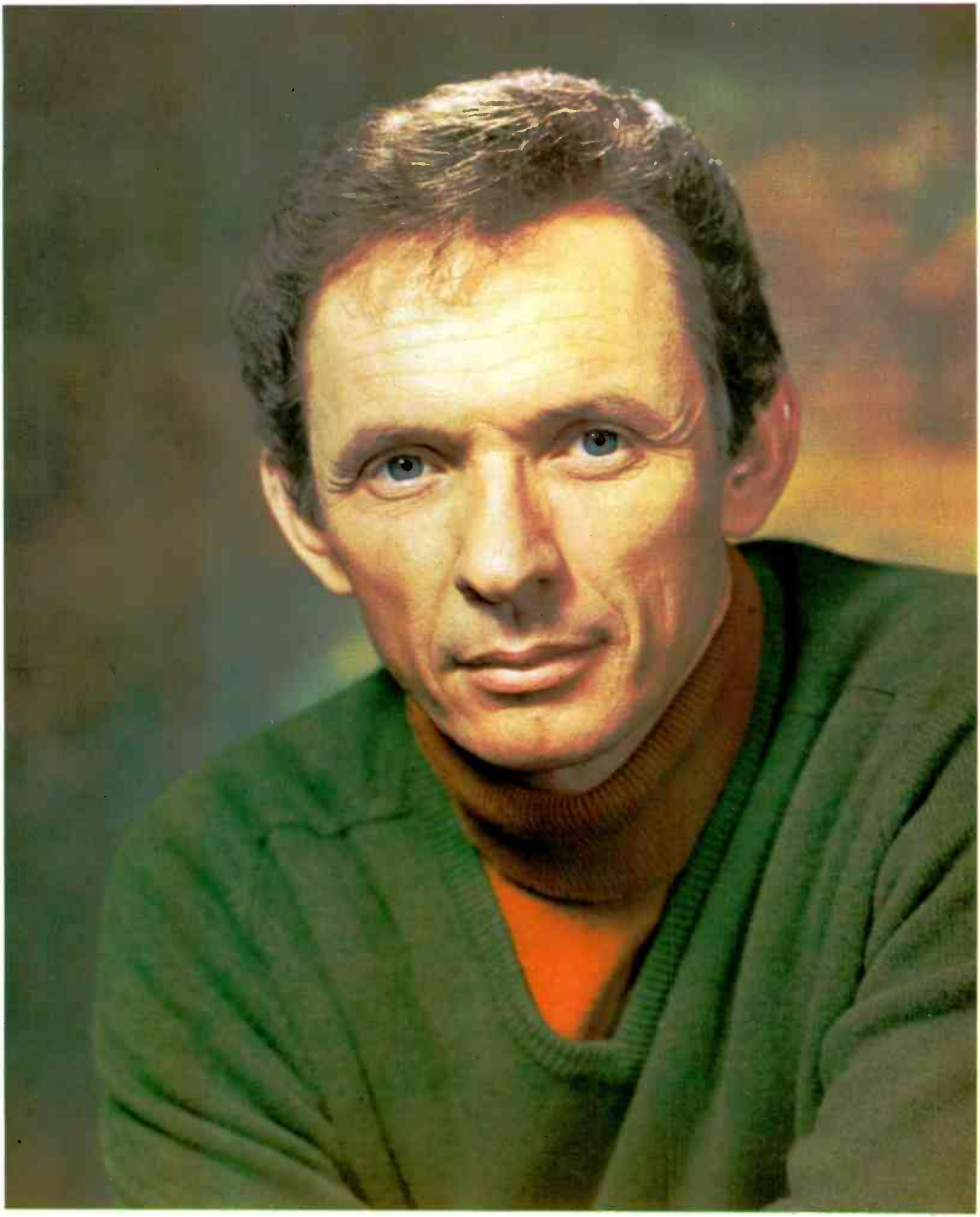


PHOTO BY RUSSELL RAY

MEL TILLIS

Mel Tillis has probably written more songs performed on the Opry stage than any other artist on the Nashville scene. He seems to turn out songs as fast presses can print notes and singers can learn the words.

His first success was "Tired" written in just that frame of mind after spending all day in a strawberry patch in his native Florida. Webb Pierce made a hit out of "Tired" and recorded more than thirty other Tillis tunes.

After he recuperated from the strawberry patch, Mel penned 350 songs which were recorded in the first six years of his career. In the process, he attracted an impressive list of singing clients, including Burl Ives, Brenda Lee, Jimmy Dean, Johnny Ray, Teresa Brewer and the Everly Brothers. Not to mention winning fifteen BMI awards.

It's hardly any wonder then that along Music Row in Nashville, he is called "the songwriter's songwriter." His biggest hit was probably "Detroit City," but he also wrote "Goodbye Wheeling," "Mental Revenge" and "Honky Tonk."

After his successes as a songwriter, the energetic Mr. Tillis decided he wanted to sing, too. He decided to "Ruby, don't take your love to town" soon became a smash hit both country and pop charts. Mel was on his way to becoming a top recording artist, too. He also hit high in the charts with "Wine," "Stateside," "Who's Julie" and "Old Faithful."

It wasn't long then before Mel, the writer, became Mel, the performer. On stage, he turns what some people call a speech defect into a comic asset. His stutter makes him sound like his mind is going faster than his mouth. It was quite an asset when Mel appeared in the film comedy, Cottonpickin' Chickenpickers. He also makes frequent personal appearances and has often been a guest on the Porter Waggoner television show.

Between all this frantic activity, Mel also finds time to relax with a fishing pole on Tennessee lakes or, sometimes, the Carribean ocean. One result has been his song "Green Turtle" now a Burl Ives recording.

Mel lives on a farm near Nashville with his wife, Doris, and four children, Pamela Yvonne, Connie Lynn, Cynthia Lee and Mel, Jr. All of the children sing, too.

Mel smiles at audience during joke session between songs at the Opry.

ERNEST TUBB

On the ground floor of the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, a series of spotlighted brass plaques honor the men who have guided and influenced Country Music down through the years. One of the plaques reflects the angular grin and rancher's hat of the tall Texas Troubadour, Ernest Tubb. The many performers on the Grand Ole Opry, who Tubb has helped in one way or another, applaud the Hall of Fame's decision.

Ernest grew up in the town of Crisp, in Ellis County, Texas. He held childhood dreams of being a screen cowboy until he heard and admired the records of the late Jimmie Rodgers. His decision to follow Country Music was soon followed by an opportunity to sing at a roadside stand. His first opportunity to use his deep baritone on radio didn't arrive until he was nineteen and auditioned at KONO Radio in San Antonio, Texas. He was able to call radio his full-time profession in 1941, when he moved to a program on KGKO Radio in Fort Worth.

Tubb's trip from the Texas Plains to the Hills of Tennessee followed the success of a song which he wrote entitled "I'm Walking the Floor Over You." The song, which soon became the theme-song for Ernest Tubb and his Texas Troubadours, has sold millions of copies. He has been under contract with Decca Records for over a quarter of a century and has accumulated an impressive list of hits. Ernest has personally written over one hundred songs, many of which have been large sellers. He joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1943.

Mrs. Jimmie Rodgers gave Ernest Tubb valuable assistance during his formative years, and he has returned the favor many times by assisting many youngsters. Ernest's flair for success is also reflected in the volume of sales at his "Ernest Tubb Record Shop" located near the Opry House.

Ernest and his wife, Olene, live near Nashville. They have seven children, some of whom still live at home. His son, Justin, is also a successful entertainer.

Ernest Tubb and The Texas Troubadors perform on the Decca Records Party during the Opry Birthday Celebration.

JUSTIN TUBB

It seems some family names pre-destine how a man is to earn a living. For instance, it seems all Rockefellers are business and political leaders, and Fords are compelled to make automobiles. The Tubbs seem duty-bound to stardom. Justin Tubb probably didn't resist following in his famous father's footsteps, and most likely couldn't have resisted the impulse, anyway.

Justin was born in Texas, near Ernest's birthplace, and attended schools in both Texas and Tennessee. He capped his education with a year at the University of Texas where he developed a taste for creative writing. Although he still has ambitions to write fiction when he has the time, he has become an excellent craftsman in constructing Country Music hits.

When Justin settled on the idea of making Country Music his career, Ernest suggested he gain mike experience by working as a radio announcer. Ernest's first-born worked at WHIN Radio in Gallatin, Tennessee, for one year and then gained Opry membership in 1955.

Justin's rich baritone isn't his only asset. Over a hundred of his compositions have been recorded, including "My Mother Must Have Been a Girl Like You," which his father recorded. He has also written tunes for Ray Price, George Jones, Patsy Cline, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Jim Reeves, Dottie West, Faron Young, Margie Singleton, and Johnny Wright, to name a few. His own recordings of "Looking Back to See," "I Gotta Go Get My Baby," and "But Wait—There's More," have also attained hit status. His RCA track record is an enviable one.

Justin's hobbies range all the way up the sports scale, but he is locally known as a championship bowler, having taken the Tennessee Handicap Doubles Championship in 1959. Justin, although appreciative of his legendary father's help in the early days, has built his career on the strength of his own talent. The odds are Justin's star would shine just as brightly if his name wasn't Tubb.

Justin introduces his new wife to the excitement of being backstage at the Opry.

PORTER WAGONER

Porter Wagoner followed a rather complex route from his West Plains, Missouri, home to the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. Porter was born deep in the hill country of the Ozarks and as a small child delighted his family with Sunday "parlor concerts," but his first brush with broadcasting at sixteen was a little unorthodox, even by usually colorful Opry standards. He had the unusual distinction of making his radio debut in a meat market. As Porter describes it: "I went to work in Vaughn's Market as a stockboy and apprentice butcher, and I always took my guitar along with me so I could practice during the lunch hours. Mr. Vaughn heard me singing, liked it, and asked if I would do a daily radio program from the store. I would go in and open up at five in the morning, sweep up, then get the microphone out and go on the air at six. I'd sing a few numbers and advertise the special of the day."

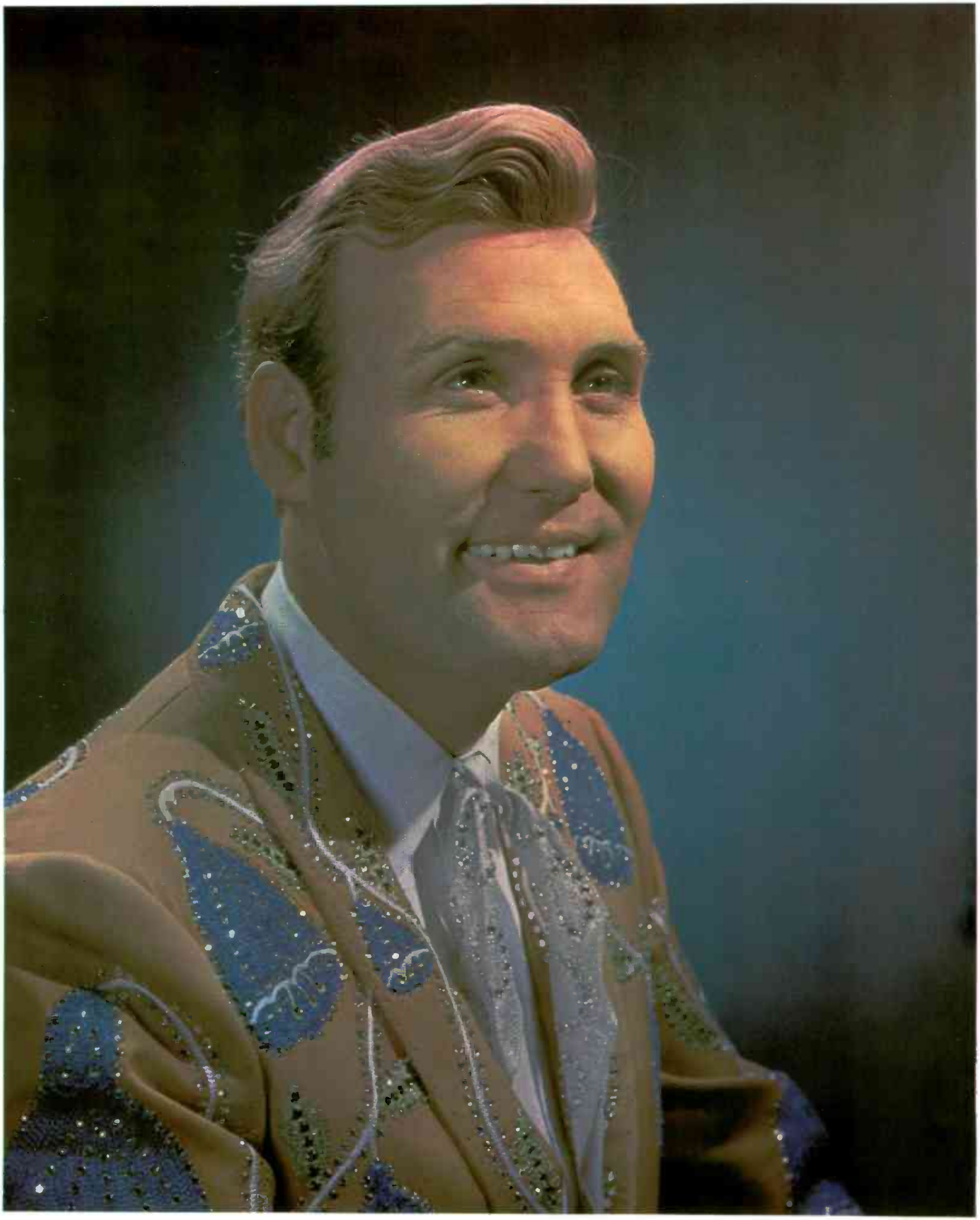
It wasn't long until Porter's talent became known in Springfield. One day in 1949 a Representative of a Springfield radio station came by the market and signed Wagoner up to do three shows a day. After that, things began to pick up. In 1950, Wagoner made an audition and signed a contract with RCA and then worked on the Ozark Jubilee with Red Foley. Porter joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1956.

Porter's schedule is one of the busiest in Nashville. He and "The Wagon Masters" travel over one hundred thousand miles a year meeting their public appearance commitments. He also stars in one of the most popular syndicated television shows, along with his band and vocalist, Dolly Parton. In between, he manages to squeeze in recording sessions and, somehow, finds time to write songs.

Porter's record hits are numerous. His first major success was "Satisfied Mind," and was followed by "Your Old Love Letters," "Green, Green Grass of Home," "Cold, Hard Facts of Life," and many, many more.

In Porter's spare time (a rapidly diminishing quantity these days) he polishes his golf game, fishes and swims. Despite the heady climate and packed schedule that goes with stardom, Porter remains one of the most down to earth and outgoing performers in musicdom.

Porter chats with Opry Security Officer, Mr. Norris.



BILLY WALKER

If an artist was asked to draw a picture of the "typical Texan," he probably would draw a fair resemblance of Opry star, Billy Walker. Billy, a native of Ralls, Texas, has the expected Texas tallness and wears a grin as wide as downtown Dallas. His physical appearance and Texas-sized talent have served him well.

Billy's first stage experience came about through his membership in a quartet in Lubbock. He "retired" from group work at the age of fifteen and conquered a talent contest audience which opened the door to a radio show on KICA in Clovis, New Mexico.

During the early years of Billy's career he suffered several embarrassing moments. During one performance, he fell through a hole in the stage. He once had to appear in blue jeans when a travel company sent his stage costume to another city by mistake. An early scheduled appearance was cancelled-out when the late Hank Williams interrupted Billy's first number to announce he was going to be married on stage.

The tall Texan's training ground has stretched from the stage of the Louisiana Hayride to the airwaves of the Ozark Jubilee. Billy knew he had really "arrived" in Country Music when, in 1960, he became a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

Billy enjoys as much popularity as a recording artist as he does as a stage performer. His string of hits, starting with the giant, "Charlie's Shoes," includes several memorable titles. Some of Billy's past hits are "Heart Be Careful," "Circumstances," and "Cross the Brazos at Waco."

Young Mr. Walker has managed to corral several music industry awards for his recordings, including citations from Billboard and Music Reporter magazines, and B.M.I. Billy recently purchased a small spread outside of Waco, but calls Nashville home. He lives in a Music City suburb with his wife, "Boots," and their four daughters, Judy Lynn, Deana Ann, Tina Kay, and Julie. It seems even his family is of Texas proportions.

WSM Announcer Bob Loflin searches for a "C" chord as Billy offers encouragement.

CHARLIE WALKER

Opry Engineer, Russ Edlin, explains the control console to Charlie.

There seems to be no end to Charlie Walker's versatility. He has proven his skill in so many fields there is hardly room enough to skim over his accomplishments. Charlie is living proof of the Texas legends.

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

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

The Talent Co-ordinator for Las Vegas' "Golden Nugget Club" apparently is one of Charlie's biggest fans. The Walker name has adorned the marquee so many times that he is considered to be an Honorary Citizen of the city. Charlie worked the Nugget for twenty-five weeks during a three-year period, a record stand for any artist.

Charlie, who joined the Opry in 1967, has accumulated a healthy list of record hits. His big ones include "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down," "Wild as a Wildcat," "Close All the Honky-Tonks," "Man in the Little White Suit," and "Don't Squeeze My Sharmon."

One indication of Walker's popularity is his growing list of civic awards. He was honored by a Texas Legislature's "Favorite Son" Award in 1962, and was named a Kentucky Colonel in 1967. He is also an Honorary Admiral in the Texas Navy.

DOTTIE WEST

If McMinnville, Tennessee, ever decides to change its name, the city fathers might come up with something like "Dottie Westville." The city hasn't gone to that extreme as yet, but McMinnville is justly proud of its lovely favorite daughter. Dottie is also the pride and joy of one of the strongest fan organizations in Country Music, a club that seems to grow with each appearance by the auburn-haired Tennessee beauty.

Dottie is a "serious" musician, by virtue of the fact that she began her musical studies through private lessons as a child, and majored in music in college. She met her husband, Bill, while attending Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee.

Dottie's hometown instituted an annual "Dottie West Homecoming" to honor their favorite gal-singer, but Dottie gets plenty of applause from her fellow professionals, too. Her awards include the coveted Grammy Award, the B.M.I. Award, Country Music Review Award, Music Business, and Record World Award. When more awards are invented, her friends will see that her name is at the top of the nominating sheet.

Dottie's musical skill goes far beyond her winning ways in delivering songs; she is also a gifted and versatile songwriter. "Here Comes My Baby," a Dottie West creation, became a number-one record, and was subsequently recorded by Perry Como, Dean Martin, Ray Price, Eddy Arnold, and many others. Dottie's songs have also been recorded by Jim Reeves, Skeeter Davis, Justin Tubb, Archie Campbell, Ray Pillow, and other top stars. Her compositions number in the hundreds.

Dottie, who joined the Grand Ole Opry on July 8, 1964, is one of the most widely-travelled stars in the Country Music World. Although her 150,000 mile-per-year schedule leaves her little time of her own, she treasures her hours with Morris, Kerry, Shelly, and Dale, the four West youngsters. Her hobbies include re-decorating the luxury land-yacht in which the Dottie West Show travels.

Dottie checks her future appearance schedule with Bud Wendell, Opry Manager.

THE WILBURN BROTHERS

Doyle and Teddy duo on some of their most popular hits.

Show business families are fairly common, and down through the years, the Grand Ole Opry has attracted several. One of the most successful and best known of the family units is the Wilburn Brothers.

The Wilburn Family (Geraldine, Leslie, Lester, Teddy and Doyle) became entertainers when disabled World War I veteran, "Pop" Wilburn, recognized musical talent in his five youngsters. He constructed a stage in the backyard of their Hardy, Arkansas, home, ordered an array of instruments from a mail-order firm, and launched a show business tradition.

The Wilburn's first professional appearance took place in Hardy, and netted the family $6.40. Teddy and Doyle made their radio debut on a program in Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1938. In 1940, Roy Acuff brought Teddy and Doyle, then ten and eleven, to Nashville for their first Opry guest appearance.

Over the years, the basic Wilburn act has changed quite a bit. Geraldine, now married, is no longer with the group. Older brothers, Leslie and Lester, have stepped back from the footlights, and the youngest Wilburns have earned a considerable reputation for their singing, rather than their instrumental stylings.

The family tradition is now capably carried on by Teddy and Doyle, but their musical activities range far beyond on-stage performances. The Wilburns operate Sure-Fire Music Company, one of Nashville's fastest-growing publishing firms, and the Wil-Helm Talent Agency. The boys also work closely with Loretta Lynn in her rodeo activities.

Teddy and Doyle have scored numerous hits with their recordings. Their top songs include "Trouble's Back in Town," and "Roll Muddy River" among others. The boys have also earned several trade publication awards as one of Country Music's leading groups.

The Wilburns joined the Grand Ole Opry as regulars in 1953, after military service in Korea. For most artists, the first performance as a cast member is a bewildering experience; for the Wilburn Brothers it was a homecoming.

MARION WORTH

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.

Marion Worth, born Mary Ann Ward, on a Fourth of July in Birmingham, Alabama, 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 Grand Ole Opry affiliation in 1963.

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

Marion's records include many standouts. Her version of "Shake Me, I Rattle" was a national hit, and "Crazy Arms" also rated a high position in the charts. She is a prolific writer, and has penned such songs as "That's My Kind of Love," and "I Lived a Lifetime in a Day." Everything about Marion is so exceptional that it isn't surprising that she has an unusual hobby; she studies world history.

Marion provides a one-girl audience for Oswald's jokes.

E. W. WENDELL, OPRY MANAGER

Opry Manager, E. W. Wendell.

E. W. "Bud" Wendell is the Manager of WSM's Grand Ole Opry, and as such, is the authority on the Opry's week-to-week activities, as well as the business aspects of staging the world's oldest continuous radio program. Bud has a strong rapport with the boys and girls of the Opry, and has made many fast friendships on Nashville's fabled Music Row as well. Bud follows the careers of the Opry stars closely and is a familiar figure at the edge of the Opry stage during every performance.

Prior to becoming Opry Manager, Bud was Administrative Assistant to the President of WSM, Incorporated. In this role he became expert in the intricacies of Clear Channel broadcasting.

Wendell was born in Akron, Ohio and attended both elementary and high school in Akron, and joined the Navy following high school graduation. After fulfilling his military obligation, Bud returned to Ohio and Wooster College. He graduated Magna Cum Laude as an Economics major in 1950. Following college, he decided to join the National Life and Accident Insurance Company. In 1962, Bud and his wife moved to Nashville and the National Life home office. He joined WSM in 1964.

The Wendells have four children, and reside in West Nashville. Bud lists his hobbies as hunting, fishing and camping, and is active in Scout work. The Wendells are members of the Presbyterian Church.

HOW OPRY SHOWS ARE BUILT

Part of the Grand Ole Opry's charm lies in the impression that the show is spontaneous and unplanned. Although much of the humor and incidental action is spur-of-the-moment, the framework of the show itself is the result of many man hours of advance work.

Opry Manager, E. W. "Bud" Wendell, and Anne Perry, Bud's Secretary, put in a full week's work on each week-end's Opry. Some artist commitments are obtained during the prior weeks performance. Bud and Anne note which Opry "regulars" will be on hand for the next performance from among the stars who can predict their whereabouts on the following Saturday.

The Opry office is usually quiet on Monday, but the work on the next Saturday's star line-up begins in earnest on Tuesday. Wendell is in touch with the Talent Directors representing Opry acts as to which regulars will be available for the Friday and Saturday shows. At the same time, he determines which non-Opry acts will be available for guest appearances to fill out the performances.

On Wednesday, Bud sets up the talent list for the Friday night performance. Usually, by Wednesday noon, the Opry office has a fairly concrete idea of how many of the thirty artist slots will be filled by regular cast members and how many guests, if any, will be needed to round out the shows. On Thursday, Bud selects guests from the availability lists provided by Talent Directors. By Friday, the talent roster is forwarded to the printer for the Saturday programs.

Although the Opry shows generally follow the pattern set up during the week, unforseen illnesses and last minute commitments often necessitate some delicate juggling up to, and during, the Opry show itself.

The task of lining up Opry talent is further complicated by the fact that some performers are closely identified with certain show sponsors; for example, for fifteen years Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs have always been scheduled on the Martha White portion, while the Willis Brothers are always featured on the Kellogg segment. Additionally, some artists driving straight in from road dates need to appear on late shows, while others, having to leave for week-end commitments, ask to appear on the early portion of both shows.

Bud Wendell's office also works up the talent line-up for the National Life and Accident Insurance Company TV Opry. Due to the nature of the show, the artists must be committed several weeks in advance.

Ironically, the Opry audience can sit back and enjoy the music and fun while the man who has wrought order out of potential chaos is so busy working on the next week's performance he scarcely has time to enjoy the world of talent he has assembled.

The Opry schedule is again altered, this time to include an awards presentation to a military unit. Grant Turner does the honors.

TYPICAL OPRY VISITOR

For the purpose of comparison, WSM's Sales Staff recently drew up the specifications for the composite or "typical" Opry visitor. Although all composites are essentially inaccurate, the statistically "average" Oprygoer is an interesting man indeed.

The "average" Opry visitor lives 476 miles away from Nashville, a distance he spans by personal automobile. When he visits the Opry, he brings at least three persons with him and spends three days in the city. He has made two trips to the Opry.

The composite Grand Ole Opry visitor checks into a motel or hotel and takes advantage of downtown restaurants for his meals. He frequently visits Nashville record shops for Country Music records and buys an estimated seventy-five to one-hundred dollars in Country records (mostly in albums) per year.

Our calculations reveal that about fifty percent of our Opry visitors come from Indiana, Illinois or Ohio. The odds are that he lives in a city of more than 10,000 people. Opry figures indicate that our composite visitor made his reservations two months in advance of his visit and that he comes to Nashville for the sole purpose of seeing the Opry. He is one of nearly eight million people who have made the trek. He is around twenty-nine years old.

The average visitor is no stranger to the Opry, he listens to the broadcast every Saturday night. Over the years, he has developed a strong tie with Opry-advertised products and is able to identify virtually any sponsor's product. Surveys indicate he is probably a factory worker of some sort.

Naturally, this composite is shot through with exceptions. Oprygoers range from college professors to milkmen and from professional athletes to Oriental fireworks manufacturers. All share in common a love for the Opry's simplicity and music.

Familiar summer scene on Opry Place.

OPRY HISTORY

In November, 1925, commercial radio was still very much in the experimental stage. Many of the transmitters and broadcasting facilities were hand-constructed by die-hards who refused to believe the telegraph and newspapers were the ultimate means of communications. Feeble radio voices reached out to each other across the hills and plains, voices carried by low-powered transmitters driven more by the dreams of the broadcasters than by actual wattage. On the night of November 8, 1925, a young innovater named John H. DeWitt, Jr., stood amid the wires, switches, tubes and condensers of a fledgling radio station, and witnessed the birth of a city and a tradition. The City, boundaried only by the tastes of Country Music fans the world over, is known today as "Music City, U.S.A.," the tradition is an ever-growing phenomenon titled "The Grand Ole Opry."

The program initiated at 8:00 P.M. the night of November 8th sprang into being under the title of the "WSM Barn Dance," but the steady procession of Country Music talent launched that night was to march into the second half of the twentieth century carrying the same traditions.

Two men shared the station's only microphone. A dapper master of ceremonies named George Hay, who had adopted the nickname "The Solemn Old Judge" was checking the validity of a personal theory. Hay believed in the future of a special blend of folk instruments and honest emotion we have come to call "Country Music." He first fell under its influence when he witnessed a barn dance while covering a story for the Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper. Later, when he pursued a career in the new field of radio broadcasting, he gave his audiences some samples of Country Music. He found a warm reception for his new love among the listeners at WGN in Chicago. After earning the reputation of being the nation's leading announcer in Chicago, Hay brought a bundle of enthusiasm and his affinity for Country Music to Nashville and WSM.

The featured performer introduced by Judge Hay that historic night was an eighty-year-old fiddler named Uncle Jimmy Thompson. Uncle Jimmy sported a flowing white beard and the reputation of knowing a thousand fiddle rounds. Uncle Jimmy launched into the program with a song entitled "Tennessee Waggoner" and hardly had dented his repertoire when Hay produced a steamboat whistle he picked up during his river days and tooted in the old man's ear, thus ending the program. The initial broadcast ran one hour, five minutes.

Uncle Jimmy's radio debut was a near accident. He had journeyed to Nashville a few days earlier to see the sights of the big city. One of the attractions on his agenda was the new one-thousand-watt radio station recently installed on the fifth floor of the National Life & Accident Insurance Company building at Seventh and Union. The elderly fiddler toured the station on Thursday. His tour guide also doubled as Program Manager. When Uncle Jimmy mentioned his musical accomplish-

Early Opry cast.

ments, George Hay invited him to participate in the new program to be broadcast on Saturday night; thus artist and impresario were united.

When Uncle Jimmy sawed his way into "Tennessee Waggoner," the sound carried to a seventy-five mile radius around Nashville. Transmitter Engineers, Thomas L. Parks and L. H. Montgomery, Jr., watched the dials in compliance with the Department of Commerce regulations as Uncle Jimmy fiddled his way into radio history.

Jimmy Thompson was the first member of a large and distinguished company of WSM performers. Within a few weeks, the cast of the WSM Barn Dance grew to twenty-five persons. Not all of them claimed Uncle Jimmy's rustic background. Doctor Humphrey Bates, a Vanderbilt School of Medicine graduate, played the harmonica. A woman, WSM chroniclers knew only as "Mrs. Cline," played the zither. Doctor Bates headed a group called "The Possum Hunters."

The early years of the Opry were enlivened by a brilliant procession of musicians and singers. The list provides a cross-section of Southern musical history. DeFord Bailey, a slight-built man who could wring an encyclopedia of sound from a harmonica, was one of the first. Bailey brought Basin Street to Nashville on the wings of his heart-felt blues renditions. He learned "Traveling Music" while working as an elevator operator at Nashville's Hermitage Hotel, then went on the Opry at George Hay's invitation. He was a regular fixture for fifteen years.

The magic of the Opry stage drew the best musical groups in the nation. The early programs were filled with outstanding string bands such as Paul Warmack and his Gully Jumpers; George Wilkerson and his Fruit Jar Drinkers; Arthur Smith and his Dixie Liners; Theron Hale and his Daughters; the Binkley Brothers and their Clod Hoppers; Uncle Ed Poplin and his Old Timers; Sam and Kirk McGee; the Delmore Brothers, Jack Jackson and the Bronco Busters.

One of the most colorful and most durable of the early stars was Uncle Dave Macon, the Dixie Dew-Drop. Uncle Dave joined the program in the early months of 1926 after several years as a professional banjoist and singer. He was born in October 1870 in Cannon County, Tennessee. The Macon family moved to Nashville when Dave was still a young boy and bought a hotel where theatre people and musicians congregated. The young farm boy was immediately attracted to the showpeople and was introduced to the banjo by one of the hotel's patrons. He went on the road as a professional musician at the age of forty eight, touring leading theatres of the South. Uncle Dave was frequently accompanied in Opry performances by his son Dorris who played the guitar.

Uncle Dave Macon and the Solemn Old Judge were firm and fast friends. Uncle Dave admired Hay's inquiring mind, friendliness and command of the language; Hay appreciated the older man's deep religious beliefs, showmanship and talent. At first WSM's engineers had trouble teaching Uncle Dave to stay close to the microphone. The jubilant old musician, who kicked out in time with his music, had the habit of pummeling the microphone with the toe of his boot.

Uncle Dave Macon's appearance on the Grand Ole Opry was preceded by a few weeks by the now historic incident which gave the Nashville phenomenon its copyrighted name. Judge Hay was in the habit of leaving a studio speaker "on" so he could monitor the closing moments of "The Music Appreciation Hour" being broadcast from the NBC network prior to the WSM Barn Dance. Hay heard master of ceremonies Doctor Walter Damrosh introduce a classic work in this fashion:

"While most artists realize that 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 on-rush of a locomotive."

Following the composition the eminent composer-conductor closed his program. Doctor Damrosh's remarks fell on receptive ears in the WSM studio and the Solemn Old Judge, not being above a barbed witticism opened his Country Music program with this introduction:

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

Opry immortal Uncle Dave Macon and his son, Dorris, render one of the veteran performer's famous numbers.

three hours we will present nothing but realism. It will be down to earth for the 'earthy'."

As if to demonstrate, Hay introduced DeFord Bailey, the crippled harmonica player, who executed a highly-descriptive train song called "The Pan American Blues." Judge Hay rubbed additional salt in Doctor Damrosh's wounds by adding, "For the past hour we have been listening to music largely from Grand Opera, but from now on we will present "The Grand Ole Opry."

The title "Grand Ole Opry" struck everyone present as being a fine name. It was applied to a program dedicated to some of the most descriptive music on earth, music often with more depth of feeling than the finest operas ever performed at La Scala. This panorama of the life, loves, disasters and high moments of America's Great Builders will be called "The Grand Ole Opry" as long as the program stands.

Although the basic format and universal appeal of the Grand Ole Opry has hardly changed since the early days, the physical plant and the length of the program has adapted to the changing times.

The studio from which Judge Hay and Uncle Jimmy carried out their first broadcast more closely resembled a victorian parlor than a radio studio. It was a small room graced by a green carpet, red velvet drapes, two picture windows and a chandelier. It was called Studio "A." When the first few broadcasts drew some would-be spectators to the seventh floor of the National Life building, station officials installed a sound-proof observation window in one wall. When the corridor became clogged with onlookers, the program was moved to the somewhat larger Studio "B" which was joined to a large room by an even larger observation window which seated several hundred people. Opry observers were also allowed in the studio with the performers. National Life official Edwin W. Craig, a strong supporter of the station and of the Opry, 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.

This arrangement lasted until one fateful Saturday night when two prominent National Life officials decided to return to their offices for some week-end work. The officials were surprised to find a long line jammed into the building lobby seeking admittance to the studio upstairs. The Country Music Fans, wise to the ways of line-breakers, refused to allow the officials through the line and into the building.

The following weeks cast an ominous cloud over the Opry. The officials, recognizing the fact that the broadcast had outgrown WSM's studios, seriously contemplated abolishing the program, but settled on the idea of closing the Opry to the public. It soon became obvious to the Opry's listeners that the human element of response to applause was a necessary ingredient to the shows' continued success. The search of an appropriate home began.

The first move was to the rented Hillsboro Theatre. Although no tickets were sold, the agents of the National Life were given complimentary passes to hand out to friends and customers. Two shows were performed nightly. When the audience continued to grow Opry officials secured a large tabernacle in East Nashville. Although the floor was covered with sawdust and the splintery benches were crude, the audience outgrew the three-thousand-seat capacity in two years. In July 1939 the show moved to the newly-constructed War Memorial auditorium, an entrance fee of twenty-five cents was imposed in an effort to curb the crowd. It didn't work. In

Paul Warmack and his "Gully Jumpers" pose in the old WSM studios.

1941 the WSM Grand Ole Opry moved to its permanent home, the Ryman Auditorium "Opry House."

The colorful history of the Opry is rivalled by the history of the Ryman auditorium and the man who built it. Captain Thomas Ryman was the owner and operator of a fleet of pleasure boats on the Cumberland River during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Captain Ryman's armada was dedicated to pleasure, music, dancing and gambling and he derived his trade from several ports of call including Nashville. It is said Ryman's boats rivalled the finest Mississippi wheelers in the sumptiousness of their gambling salons and the polish of their teakwood bars.

On one of his regular stops at the Nashville docks Captain Ryman was flagged down by a dock worker who relayed a challenge to the admiral of the pleasure flotilla. Tom Ryman's reputation had come to the attention of a barn-storming minister named Sam Jones who invited the Captain to come to Jones' tent meeting and review the wages of his sins.

Captain Ryman accepted the challenge but had something less than brotherhood in his heart as he led a gang of his toughest sailors to the evangelist's tent. Legend has it that the foul intentions of Ryman and his crew melted in the white-hot fervor of Preacher Jones' sermon. Before the night was out the minister's discourse on Motherhood and ungrateful, wayward sons touched Ryman and brought him to his knees. After the service the crew returned to the boat, threw the gaming tables and teakwood bars overboard and vowed to help their Captain build a grand tabernacle for Preacher Jones. The church-like architecture and pews remain in the building although considerable re-working has made Ryman auditorium one of the safest auditoriums in the mid-south. A balcony built in 1895 for a Confederate Veterans Reunion swelled the auditorium capacity to 3600 people.

The running time of the Opry has also widened across the years. There may have been something prophetic in Uncle Jimmy Thompson's remarks when he was told he had one hour in which to perform: "An hour? Fiddle-sticks! a man can't get warmed up in an hour. This program's got to be longer!"

The demands presented by a larger, more enthusiastic audience forced a longer and longer show until today the Grand Ole Opry occupies six hours of WSM air time. It is preceded each week by the two-and-a-half hour Friday Night Opry which is preceded by a special

An early group of musicians, on left, Cousin Jody, and second from right, Roy Acuff.

televised Opry sponsored by the National Life and Accident Insurance Company.

The changing tastes of the consumer have brought about one major change in the music broadcast on the Opry and one of the Opry's greatest stars pioneered the change. In the early days of the program the basic entertainment unit was the band. Instrumentals, fiddle rounds and banjo numbers predominated, and what singing took place was incidental to the band music. A talented fiddler with an infectious grin arrived on the Opry stage from the mountains of East Tennessee and changed the balance.

Roy Acuff and his Smokey Mountain Boys came to WSM in 1938. From the beginning there was no doubt that Roy was the principal attraction. His renditions of "The Great Speckled Bird" and "The Wabash Cannon Ball" brought out such strong audience reaction that more singers stepped out from the ranks and into the spotlight. Eddy Arnold, Cowboy Copas and Ernest Tubb were other pioneer vocalists. Each new singer searched out a distinctive style but each in his own way presented another side of Country Music.

The unusual combination of forces which created the Opry and the huge Country Music industry of Nashville which is its by-product can be attributed directly to the influence of several astute businessmen. Radio station WSM was created to be a public service to the citizens of the mid-south. It was formed and subsidized by the National Life and Accident Insurance Company. Following surveys by engineers for the Western Electric Company in 1925, the National Life Board of Directors authorized construction on a radio station. The April decision was the fruit of much planning and urging on the part of National Life Executive Edwin W. Craig.

The call letters, "W-S-M" (We Shield Millions) were authorized by the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, and broadcasting equipment was shipped on August 8, 1925. Regulations applying to all electronic mass media were later administered by the Federal Communications Commission. On October 5, 1925, the new radio station aired a dedicatory broadcast. Special guests included Tennessee Governor Austin Peay, Mayor Howse of Nashville and two Representatives of the Department of Commerce. WSM went on the air with a signal strength of one thousand watts. In later years, the station was alotted fifty thousand watts power and a clear channel designation. The two factors combined have given WSM an extremely wide coverage area. In addition, the station was assigned a low and therefore relatively interference-free frequency-designation of six-hundred-fifty kilocycles. WSM's nighttime signal has been monitored all across the United States and in some portions of Canada and Central America. WSM was allocated a clear channel in 1929. In 1932, WSM, under the technical guidance of John H. DeWitt, Jr., erected a new tower of radical design and increased to 50,000 watts power. The tower, still a Middle-Tennessee landmark, stands 878 feet tall. At the time of construction, it was the tallest radio tower in the nation.

Although WSM's Grand Ole Opry is now recognized as a magnet for talent and as a valuable asset to Nashville, it has not always been viewed so favorably. In past years, the city's fathers felt Nashville's reputation as "Music City, U.S.A." overshadowed the city's lesser-known claim to being "Athens of the South." Some of the city's prominent citizens felt the Opry gave Nashville a "hay-seed" image, and once were vocal in the desire that the Opry go elsewhere. Fortunately, that minority view didn't prevail. Today the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce loudly proclaims the fact that the city's music industry, an off-shoot of the Opry, is a one-hundred-million-dollar a year business. The financial statistics are very impressive indeed. One out of every two records now sold in the United States comes from a Nashville studio. Nashvillians are employed by four record pressing plants, ten talent agencies, ten recording studios, five major trade papers, twenty-six recording companies and three performing rights organizations.

The Opry, itself, brings an estimated two-hundred fifty thousand visitors to Nashville annually. It has been estimated that an additional seven to eight million fans see Opry stars perform in home-towns across the nation and the stars themselves journey three million miles a year in making appearances. Country Music has followed the American servicemen to every corner of the globe and Country Music is gaining popularity in Europe and Scandanavia. Although Judge Hay retired in 1956 and passed away on May 8, 1968, his guiding influence is still evidenced in each Opry show and the adherence to pure Country Music.

Throughout the years, and despite terrific pressures from without, the WSM Grand Ole Opry has faithfully served Country Music in this important capacity, as the Opry has examined and passed judgment on the perennial parade of musical innovators who have sought to change Country Music. The Opry has accepted some new ideas in moderation (percussion instruments, electric instruments) but has rejected others. The Opry's listeners have granted this, the world's oldest continuous radio program, the franchise to promote and protect the music they love best. All those connected with WSM's Grand Ole Opry, from the highest National Life officials, to the radio station personnel, to the artists and stage hands themselves, share one ambition for Country Music; that its main-stream remain pure and that it retains the universal qualities that made it great.

Judge Hay emcee's the Grand Ole Opry in its early days.

Judge Hay.

On Saturday, May 11, 1968, the bright procession of musical talent crossing the Grand Ole Opry stage paused to pay quiet homage to one of the Opry's warmest friends. Opry Announcer, Grant Turner, a long-time friend of the late George D. Hay, read a dedicatory message on behalf of the stars of The Grand Ole Opry to "The Solemn Old Judge's" many friends in the radio audience:

"The songs we sing on this Grand Old Opry stage will have a special meaning tonight because the men and women of the Opry stand in respect at the passing of a wise counselor and good friend, George D. Hay. George Hay not only created the Opry out of the fabric of his imagination, he nurtured and protected it during the formative years. A reporter-turned-impresario, Hay heard the heart-beat of a nation in the Country Music he loved. He taught us to measure our music by this golden yardstick; it must be eloquent in its simplicity.

George Hay crusaded for Country Music from the Opry stage, in high school auditoriums, in tents, barns, and in the open from the beds of lumbertrucks. Country Music was his profession, hobby, and first love. He lived to see the Grand Ole Opry become an object of national pride and international interest. George Hay's love for this music from the land was surpassed only by his affection for the people who listened to, played, or sang it. Tonight, we'd like to return some of that love. . . .

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

GEORGE D. HAY

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

When, on October 5, 1925, WSM Radio electrified the Tennessee skies with its first broadcast, one of the nationally-known radio personalities invited to aid in the festivities was a thirty-year-old ex-newspaperman named George Hay. Hay first caught the radio bug when he was working as a reporter for the Memphis Commercial Appeal. When the newspaper bought a radio station, Hay was signed over as its first announcer. From there, he progressed to WLS in Chicago. Hay represented WLS during his first appearance on WSM. A month following the inaugural broadcast, Hay was hired as WSM's first Director.

George Hay originated a program in the Chicago station called "The WLS Barn Dance." He was so impressed with the power of Country Music, he immediately laid plans for a similar program on WSM. The "WSM Barn Dance" soon evolved into the Grand Ole Opry.

As was the pattern with early radio announcers, Hay chose a nickname with which his listeners could identify. For reasons of his own, Hay chose to be called "The Solemn Old Judge." The title was to remain with Hay throughout his broadcasting career. Judge Hay, as he came to be known, opened each Grand Ole Opry program with a steamboat whistle. He served as the Opry's Master of Ceremonies until his retirement, and then moved to Norfolk, Virginia.

Judge Hay's career with the Opry spanned a time when legends were being made. Hay introduced Uncle Jimmy Thompson on the first program, and was a close friend of Uncle Dave Macon. Today, Country Music historians recognize George D. Hay as being as much a force in Country Music as any of the performers he introduced.

The Solemn Old Judge checks a deadline.

WSM OFFICERS

Irving Waugh

The combined WSM AM-TV-FM-CATV Operation is headed by Irving C. Waugh, Jr., President of WSM, Inc. Mr. Waugh's broadcast background is varied, qualifying him to head one of America's largest broadcast organizations. Mr. Waugh, a native of Norfolk, Virginia, shipped-out on a tramp steamer as a boy, satisfying his curiosity about Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific. He later studied at the College of William and Mary and at the Provincetown Playhouse. He received his first radio experience on CBS Radio's "March of Time." He worked as an Announcer in Norfolk and on NBC before joining WSM. During the latter portion of World War II he worked as an NBC Correspondent in the Pacific Theatre.

In 1947 Waugh returned to WSM's Commercial Department and was promoted to Commercial Manager the following year. In 1950 he became Commercial Manager for both Radio and Television. In 1957 he was named General Manager of WSM-TV and a year later was named Vice-President of WSM, Inc. In February of 1968, Mr. Waugh was named President of the Corporation.

Mr. Waugh has an active interest in the Grand Ole Opry, and is a frequent backstage visitor. His regard for Country Music goes back to his start with WSM. His first assignment was handling the early morning shows when WSM programmed live talent from 5:00 to 7:30 A.M. Later, he expanded the station's efforts in the Country field by lengthening the Saturday evening show, and starting the use of talent on Friday nights. He maintains a close association with the industry and serves as a member of the Board of the Country Music Association.

Robert Evans Cooper, Vice-President and General Manager of WSM Radio, began his radio work as a copywriter in Memphis. He joined WSM as Commercial Manager in 1955. Day-to-day duties involve sales, programming, promotion, news, and so forth. Like everyone at WSM, Mr. Cooper became enamored of the Grand Ole Opry and devotes much of his time and thought to it. He took the Grand Ole Opry to Carnegie Hall in 1961 when Country Music was more of an unknown quantity in those parts. He developed and operated the Delayed Grand Ole Opry Network from coast to coast and throughout Canada and also set up the Opry Trust Fund which he still administers along with the Beneficiary Committee. The Opry Trust Fund is a non-profit benevolent organization chartered by the State of Tennessee. Its operating funds are created by the individual registration fees at the Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration each year. The Beneficiary Committee, composed of Opry artists, has provided funds for Country Musicians throughout the United States when emergencies arose.

Robert E. Cooper

Tom Griscom

Tom Griscom is Vice-President and General Manager of WSM Television. In this capacity, he has a direct relationship with the numerous Country Music shows televised and recorded before Color Four's cameras. Mr. Griscom joined WSM Television in 1951 as a Sales Service Representative. He was appointed Local Sales Manager in 1958.

Mr. Griscom is a graduate of Sewanee Military Academy and Vanderbilt University. While at Vandy, he edited the campus humor magazine. He is active in several local organizations in the advertising and sales areas.

WSM STAFF

Dave Overton

Hal Durham's "basso profundo" is a regular Opry feature, as he moderates various portions and delivers the commercial messages. Hal is also WSM's Assistant Program Director. He is heard regularly on WSM's daily programs. Hal values his many friendships among the Opry cast and is noted for his "unflappability." Hal is also one of WSM's news voices.

Grant Turner

Dave Overton is known to Grand Ole Opry audiences as one of the voices introducing portions of the show, but the rest of his work week is taken up by his duties as WSM's Program Manager. Dave, an Alabama native, is also the host of the "Waking Crew" program, a live presentation heard each morning on WSM Radio. Dave's lively wit sparks dozens of club meetings and civic functions in the station's listening area, and he is much in demand as a master of ceremonies at beauty pageants.

Hal Durham

Grant Turner is the "Old Timer" of the Opry announcing staff. Grant was a member of the Opry during Judge Hay's retiring years and has taken pride in being able to introduce many of the stars on their premiere performances. Grant's daily air schedule is from 4:00 to 8:00 each morning. Grant's popularity among Opry-goers is so great that he is often considered to be as much a part of the show as the stars themselves.

WSM STAFF

Ralph Emery is undisputably the top Country Music Disc Jockey in the United States. He is the host of WSM's all-night "Opry Star Spotlight," a four hour, forty-five minute Country spectacular featuring the top records and guest interviews heard at 10:15 P.M. Monday through Thursday on the Clear Channel giant. Ralph's guests range from the top performers to the technicians at the Nashville recording studios and he often is given the new records before they are heard on other stations.

Ralph Emery

Bob Loflin

Bob Loflin is a man with a much-envied job. Bob is WSM's "Music Row Reporter," an assignment that takes him daily to Nashville's studios and publishing houses. His contacts include all the music industry leaders. Bob's daily taped reports are aired throughout the daytime schedule. He is a frequent backstage visitor at the Opry and brings many years of air experience to this challenging job.

Jerry Strobel is WSM Radio's Promotion and Public Relations Director. He maintains a wealth of information about the star's careers and activities. In this area he provides publicity material for the Opry and its members. Jerry's job also entails close cooperation with magazine and newspaper reporters and the many civic organizations. He also furnishes the thousands of Opry fans who write WSM with information, news, and historical knowledge of the station. Jerry follows the careers of the Opry stars closely and is a frequent backstage visitor during Opry performances.

Jerry Strobel

GRAND OLE OPRY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

In 1951, WSM officials decided to institute an Annual Birthday Celebration for the Grand Ole Opry. The decision was made to "liven up" the party by inviting Disc Jockeys playing Country Music so they could attend the Opry as "special guests" and meet the stars who make the music. Although the radio men had less than two days notice, over a hundred of them showed up for the festivities.

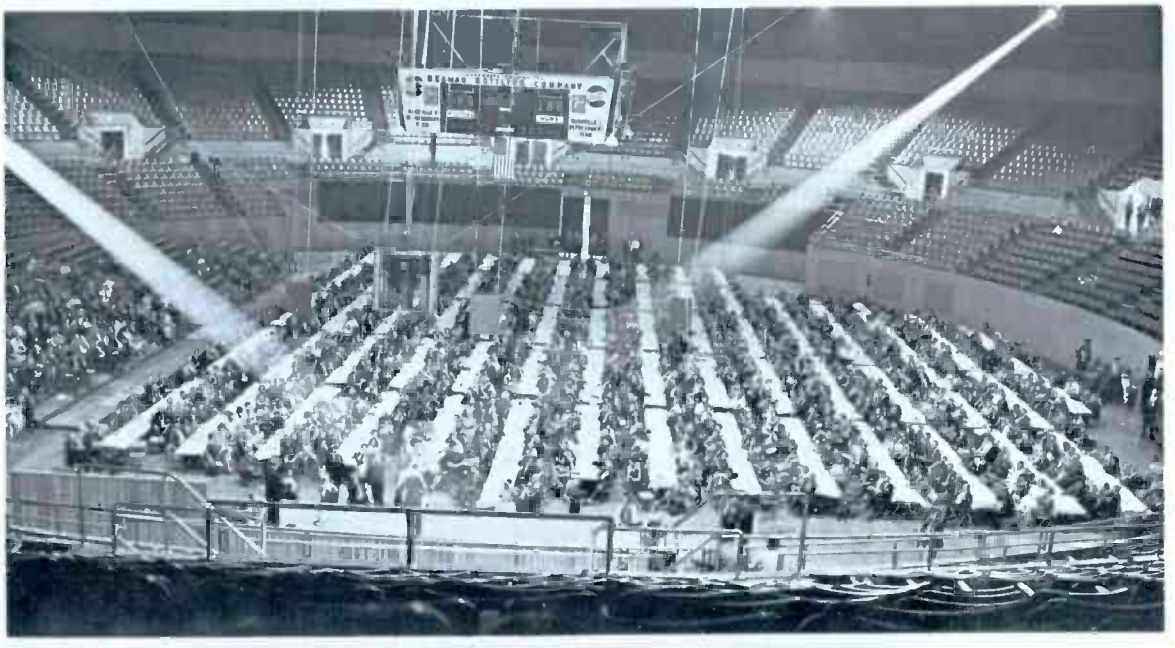
Since that initial 1951 gathering, the Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration has grown in size and scope. Now, over five thousand Disc Jockeys, Talent Directors, musicians, and record company executives attend the annual gathering. During the three-day celebration they also see The Friday Night Opry and the regular Saturday Night Show. Attendance is limited to those persons employed in Country Music, and the occasion gives the participants insight into all facets of the Country Music Industry.

In addition to the Opry shows, the registrants are treated to several "satellite" shows sponsored by participating organizations. Special presentations are staged by RCA, Columbia, Capitol, Dot, Decca, United Artists, CBS Musical Instruments, Pamper Publishing Company, and Minnie Pearl Chicken Systems. Several musical instrument companies also display their wares at hotels near the Nashville 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. A festive cake-cutting highlights the Saturday night finale; a finale that promises to become even more auspicious as the world's longest continuous radio program nears her first half-century of vigorous life.

National Life Honorary Chairman of the Board and Chairman of the Board of WSM, Edwin W. Craig, and Roy Acuff at the 42nd Anniversary.

Nashville Mayor Beverly Briley greets the Celebration's guests.



The WSM Breakfast and Spectacular entertains a capacity crowd.

Lester and Earl display their wares.

Minnie Pearl, on her portion of the Celebration agenda.

The WSM News Bureau, a special service to Celebration participants.

Tex Ritter performs on the CBS Musical Instrument segment.

OPRY TRUST FUND

Tragedy is no respecter of persons; misfortune strikes as frequently to the famous and talented as it does to the workman at his machine, or the farmer on his tractor. The performer "down on his luck" was once a common sight, and the bereaved family of an artist who has passed on sometimes faces insurmountable bills and obligations. WSM and the Grand Ole Opry moved to help ease the burden on past greats and their families when, in 1965, the Opry Trust Fund was established. A ten-dollar registration fee was imposed on those attending the Annual Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration, with the entire sum going into a special fund for the needy. A special board made up of Opry stars and WSM personnel was set up to investigate appeals and money from the fund is now being distributed all across the nation to those genuinely in need.

Many of those being helped never reached stardom, although the names of some might bring instant recognition if their names were mentioned. The fund is set up in such a way that all those helped receive their gifts in complete secrecy. With each passing Birthday Celebration, more and more money is being added to the fund, and the work of the Trust Fund Committee reaches broader proportions.

Lynn Orr presents ticket book number one to Mr. Edwin Craig, Sr.

OPRY STAR SPOTLIGHT

WSM's "Opry Star Spotlight" is one of the most popular showcases for Country Music in the world. The show, a Monday through Friday feature, broadcasts from 10:15 P.M. until 4:45 A.M., and is hosted by air-personality Ralph Emery. Ralph, who has been voted the nation's top Country Music Disc Jockey several times by numerous organizations, brings together the top Country records . and the interesting music personalities who create and perform them. Ralph's guest list reads like a "Who's Who" of Country Music. Those who share mikes with him include record producers, talent directors, and A & R men, as well as the stars and sidemen.

Because of the nation-spanning nature of WSM's night-time signal, Ralph's show is especially popular with truckers who rely on Emery's running commentary and music to "keep them on the road" during the long hauls.

The fact that the Ralph Emery "Opry Star Spotlight" plays to such a wide audience makes the program a "must" for artists trying to gain sales for their new records. As a result, Ralph frequently is able to play "advance" copies of new songs before other radio stations are mailed their promotional pressings.

Ralph Emery.

Ralph and a typical group of "Opry Spotlight" guests.

THE WAKING CREW

Not all the "live" musicians employed by WSM walk the boards of the Grand Ole Opry stage. An extremely lively collection of instrumentalists inhabit the wacky early-morning world of WSM's "Waking Crew" program. The Waking Crew is the only radio program in America that uses a studio orchestra for a non-network show. The thirteen members of the Waking Crew orchestra are veterans of the most unorthodox show in radio. The Waking Crew beams a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed seventy-five minutes of unscripted spontaneity to the vast number of midsouth listeners who regularly tune in the 7:45-9:00 A.M. show.

Dave Overton, who also serves as WSM Program Manager, directs the conversational traffic whirling around Studio "B" each weekday morning. Dave, a battle-scarred survivor of 17½ years on the Waking Crew, also has the pleasure of introducing the show's vocalists.

Terri Lynn and Claire Christie take turns beautifying the studio with their skillfully-styled vocals. In so doing, they follow in a WSM tradition for quality established by alumnae Dinah Shore, Kitty Kallen, Kay Armen, Dottie Dillard, and others.

Teddy Bart is the Waking Crew's male vocalist. Teddy is an all-around musician and is contracted to the prestigious Acuff-Rose Publishing Company as a songwriter. Teddy has composed songs for Brenda Lee, Al Hirt, Johnny Mathis, and many others. He is also much in demand for stage performances and emceed the 1968 NARAS "Grammy" Awards presentation in Nashville. Teddy, Terri, and Claire also appear on WSM-TV's "Noon Show."

The Waking Crew orchestra is under the direction of Bill McElhiney, one of the top arrangers in the music field and an outstanding trumpet player. Bill and Joe Lane execute most of the original arrangements heard on the show.

In addition to the good music, the Waking Crew program also prepares the listeners for the day's activities by offering two news programs and a complete area weather survey. The show also offers a "community bulletin board" service for local civic efforts. Sports-wit John Bibb is also a Waking Crew regular. The program also gets its share of the steady procession of sports and music figures who are drawn to Music City, U.S.A.

Dave Overton and the Waking Crew cast assemble for another early-morning show.

CLEAR CHANNEL

Local radio channels correspond to the residential streets of a community. Regional channels are similar to urban highway arteries. They are designed to carry radio signals to large metropolitan areas including the nearby countryside. Clear Channels are comparable to long distance express highways. Their purpose is to transport radio signals over an extended area, much of which cannot be reached from sunset to sunrise with listenable A.M. signals in any other way. A 1-A Clear Channel is used by only one station at night within the continental United States.

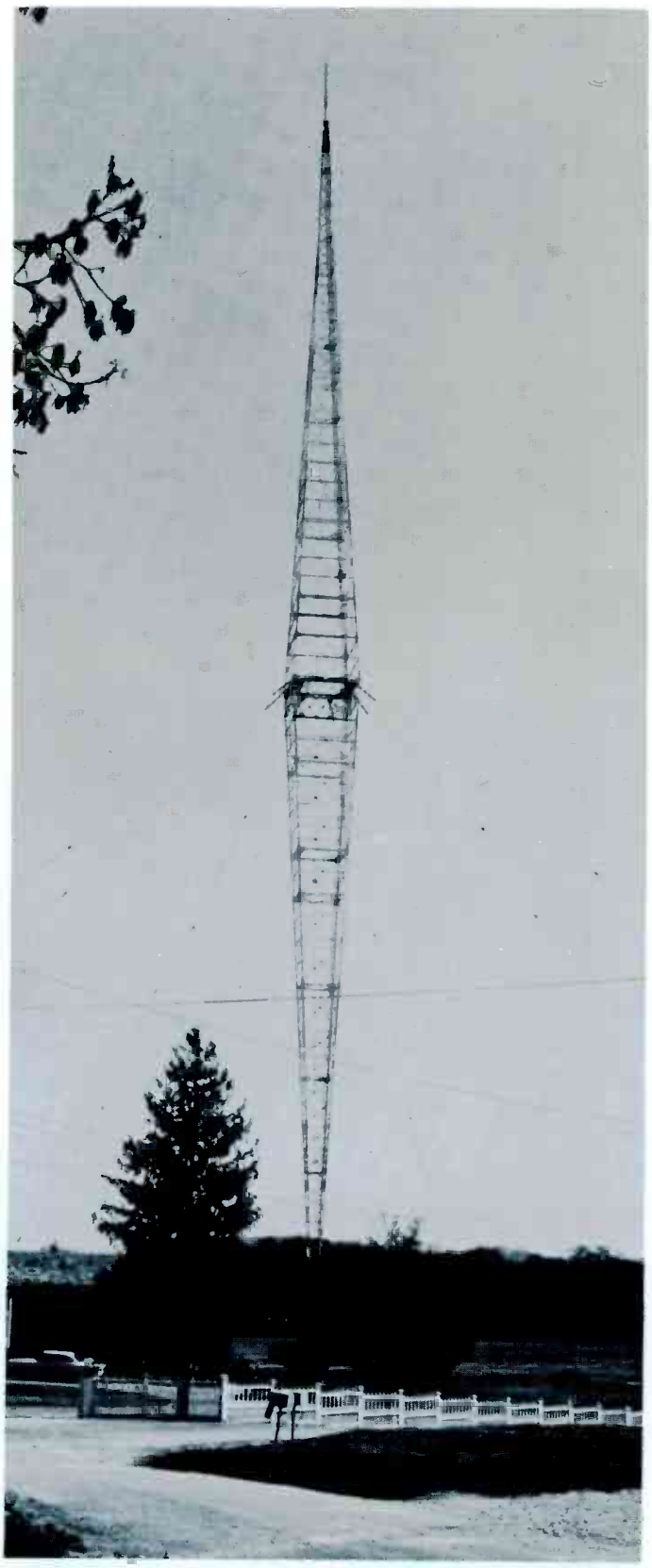
Originally, there were forty 1-A Clear Channels, designed to provide a choice of three or four nighttime radio signals throughout the continental United States. Many have been duplicated. Only a handful, including WSM, now remain which could utilize higher power to carry out the purpose for which they are intended.

During the hours of daylight, most Americans receive good ground-wave radio service. But at night, over twenty-five million people living in almost 60% of the continental U.S. land area do not receive one single primary or groundwave service. They live in a radio desert or "white area," and are entirely dependent upon clear channel stations for their only night-time A.M. radio service.

Signal strength of Clear Channel stations (the only stations that can reach these areas at night) is simply inadequate when only 50 kilowatts of power is used. Signal strength can easily be improved by removing the present 50 kilowatts power ceiling. Stronger signals are necessary to overcome interference from foreign stations operating on the channel, atmospheric static, the peculiar variancies of skywave service and to counteract growing levels of electrical interference. Rural consumption of electrical energy continues to double and re-double. The use of 500 to 1000 kilowatts power on Clear Channels is the only way most "white area" residents and travelers will ever receive more acceptable A.M. nighttime radio service. The use of adequate power on Clear Channels would also lead to better hemispheric understanding and neighborliness. High power A.M. radio stations have been operating in Europe for many years, and likewise in Mexico, and now many countries in the Caribbean area and throughout South America are now using power up to 500 kilowatts.

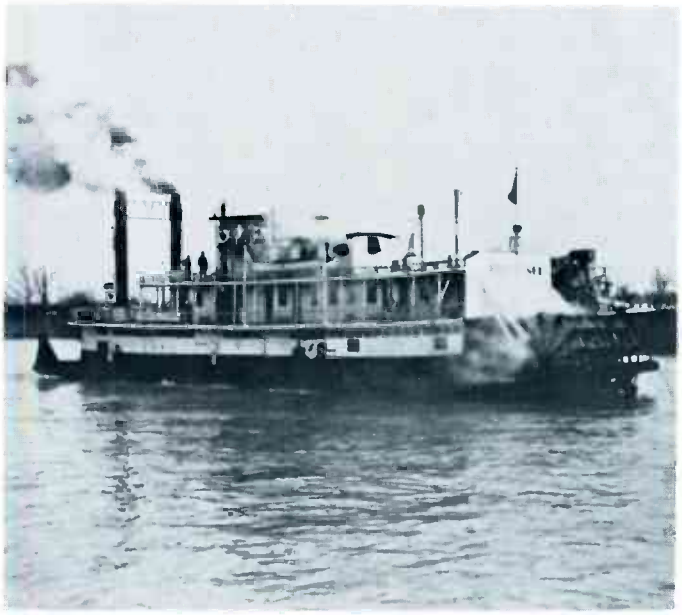
WSM has applied to the Federal Communications Commission for permission to increase its power from 50 kilowatts to 750 kilowats. Such an improvement would increase WSM's signal strength almost four times.

It would provide the only reliable nightime signal to millions of people now living in the "white areas." It would make a second service available to many more millions who now have only one radio signal to rely upon for entertainment or emergency communications.



The 878 foot tall WSM Radio Tower and Transmitter, a long-time landmark, located in Williamson County, Tennessee.

IT ALL STARTED WITH THE FLOOD



January of 1937 was unseasonably warm throughout the Ohio Valley, and unusually wet. The winter snows to the north were thawing, and the skies opened up to unleash some fifteen inches of rain throughout the region. The inevitable happened.

On January 22nd of that year, the Ohio River first went out of its banks, spreading out over the low valley countryside. As the crest moved downstream, massive areas of land became inundated. Tributaries poured more muddy, debris-filled water into the stream, and by early February the sometimes peaceful river was 30 miles wide. The crest, by then, was approaching Louisville, Kentucky.

Radio stations are geared for public service, and WSM was equal to the task. Without hesitation, WSM turned its entire broadcast facilities over to service, and performed one of the engineering feats which has made it famous.

The Chief Engineer at the time was John H. DeWitt, Jr., (past President of WSM, Inc.). His young assistant was a man named Battle Klyce (now with Time-Life, Inc.) and the Chief Announcer was Jack Harris (now Vice-President of KPRC, Houston, Texas). These three, equipped with a 20-watt transmitter and boxes full of spare parts to build a 250-watt amplifier, boarded a train in Nashville. Carrying a two-kilowatt generator, they rode to Johnsonville, Tennessee, where they met the steamboat Jayhawker, up from Florence, Alabama. Aboard the Jayhawker, DeWitt and Klyce built the more powerful amplifier, and had it operating before the vessel arrived at Evansville, Indiana. With special permission from the Federal Communications Commission, Harris broadcast flood reports for four days and nights back to the WSM Studios, and this information was relayed throughout the Ohio Valley. People were thus able to evacuate before the floods struck, and were kept informed as to the whereabouts and safety of loved ones.

When the water rose higher and higher in Louisville, Kentucky, the city power plant was submerged, and there was widespread power failure. Radio Station WHAS, ably serving its community, was in danger of going off the air, so it utilized WSM's facilities for broadcast purposes.

The WSM steamboat played a dual role during this tragic flood. It carried food to isolated areas, where people in rowboats came to meet it. At Gilbertsville, Kentucky, American Legionaires unloaded food from the boat and carried it ashore. Through it all, WSM continued to broadcast the life-saving information.

When the floods had subsided, and waters receded, DeWitt, Klyce, and Harris boarded a train at Evansville and hauled the equipment back home. All of the Ohio Valley was grateful for this service, but the Louisville *Courier-Journal* chose to show that gratitude in an unusual way. Beginning in February, 1937, and continuing through today, this outstanding newspaper has carried, daily, the WSM Radio Log. Along with the logs of the Louisville stations, it lists all the programs carried by WSM . . . the station which came to the rescue in the famous flood of 1937.

MUSIC CITY TOUR

It is only natural that devoted Country Music fans have a strong interest in the daily lives of Country Music's celebrities. WSM's Music City Tours allow visitors of Nashville and the Opry to see the homes of many of the stars while getting a capsule history of Nashville in the process.

Every Saturday of the year, buses depart from the front of the Opry House and fan out over one of America's most interesting cities. Well-informed tour guides point out the city's main attractions, such as the Parthenon, State Capitol, historic churches and battlefields. The real attractions, however, are the artists' homes. The buses drive out to the swank subdivision built by Eddy Arnold, then occupants of the tour bus are given the opportunity to take pictures of several stars' homes and estates. Often, a star can be seen out doing yard work or playing with pets.

Tourists are shown the childhood home of Pat Boone, the college Minnie Pearl attended, businesses owned by Opry stars, and the home of the late Hank Williams. The building where the Opry was born is pointed out, and the buses pass the high school attended by Dinah Shore.

One high point of the tour is the journey down Nashville's famous Music Row. Fans see the home bases of the publishing companies and talent agencies which handle the songs written by the stars and guide their personal appearances. The offices of several major record companies are shown, and tourists are given the opportunity to tour the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. The Music Row segment of the tour also includes an inside view of the ultra-modern Columbia Recording Studio. Fans are given an expert tour of the studio where dozens of Opry stars have recorded some of their biggest hits.

The climax of the tour comes when the tour returns to the Opry stage where Opry favorites have performed down through the years. The guide recounts the history of the enduring structure, relating it to the famous men who brought the building to reality.

The Music City Tour consists of a two-and-a-half hour survey of the area which earned Nashville the title of "Music City, U.S.A." The tour has become so popular in recent years that special bus runs are frequently made on Fridays and weekdays to contain the overflow.

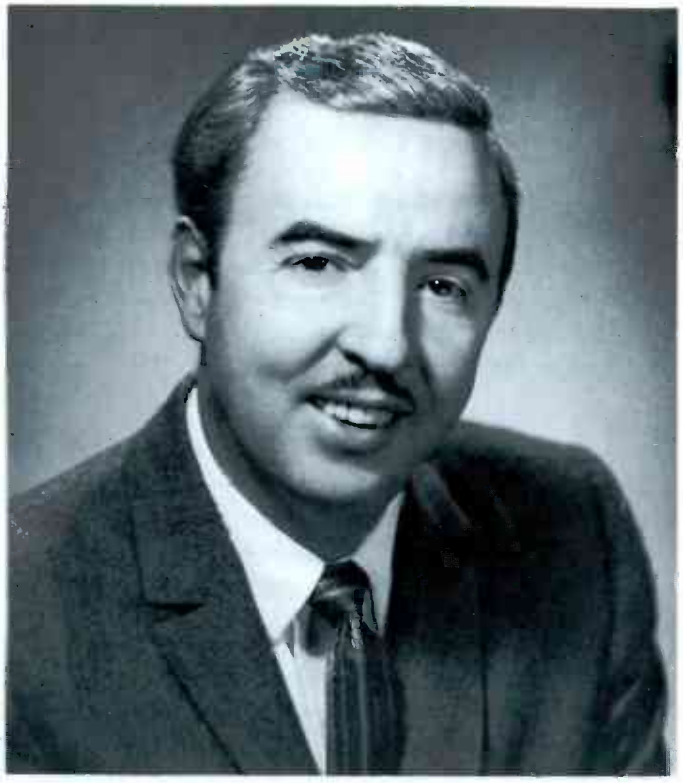
Opry visitors load for a tour including star's homes and Nashville sites.

SCENIC TOUR

WSM Scenic Tours, a recent addition to the WSM Tour Service, is tailored for Nashville visitors seeking an insight into the city's cultural and historical facilities. Scenic Tour buses leave the Opry House each Saturday and visit several spots associated with Nashville's rich heritage. Tour guests disembark and visit the Children's Museum, Travellers' Rest, Cheekwood Fine Arts Center, and Belle Meade Mansion. The itinerary includes Fort Nashboro, Fort Negley, the old City Cemetery, the famous Parthenon, plus dozens of other homes and attractions. Scenic Tours may also be prearranged for other days of the week than Saturday to accommodate groups and conventioneers.

Scenic Tour patrons disembark for a tour through the Belle Meade Mansion.

TALENT



Wesley Rose, Acuff-Rose

The Chief Executive of the huge Acuff-Rose complex of companies is Wesley Rose. Rose, who joined the company founded by his father and Roy Acuff, is a former Accountant. He has built Acuff-Rose into one of the largest and most respected publishing-representation firms in the country. In addition to its other activities, Acuff-Rose also owns and operates Hickory Records.

Key Talent, Inc. is one of the fastest-growing agencies in Country Music. The company, founded by Jimmy Key, now has branch offices in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, in addition to the main Nashville office. The firm plans expansion into Europe by 1970. In addition to the talent agency, Jimmy also heads a very successful music publishing firm known as Newkeys Music, Inc.

The Hubert Long Talent Agency, representing many major artists, is headed by Hubert Long. Long credits much of his success to an apprenticeship under the legendary "Colonel" Tom Parker. The Agency, founded in 1953, was joined in 1959 by Moss-Rose Publications,

From Left: "Bud" Brown, Bill Anderson, Hubert Long, Hubert Long Talent Agency.

DIRECTORS

Inc., a leading publisher of Country songs. H.L.T.A. books over thirty performers.

Hal Smith Artists Productions is only one segment of the entertainment factory founded and headed by J. Hal Smith. Smith, a former entertainer, also holds the reins to Pamper Music, Inc., a television production firm, and Boone Records. The talent agency guides the careers of Ernest Tubb, Jack Greene, Jeannie Seely, and several other prominent Country Music names. Hal Smith is one of the most dynamic men in the Music Industry.

Chuck Eastman, President of Circle Talent, is a Chicago native. He formed Circle Talent after gaining talent management experience by booking several jazz acts in the Windy City. His expertise in the Country Music field is evidenced by the fact that he was appointed Secretary of the Nashville Association of Talent Directors during the first year of Circle's existence. Eastman directs the activities of the Opry's Cousin Jody, Bill Monroe, The Four Guys and several other artists.

J. Hal Smith, Hal Smith Artists Productions

Chuck Eastman, Circle Talent

WSM TELEVISION

Pioneering has become a habit for WSM, and when the National Life and Accident Insurance Company decided to move into television, precedents were bound to be set. WSM-TV went on the air on September 30, 1950, thus becoming the first television station in Nashville. Channel Four became the first network affiliate. WSM-TV originated color in Nashville by feeding NBC color programs in 1954, then broadcast the first local colorcast in September, 1966.

The same flair for showcasing Country Music which led to the Grand Ole Opry also led Channel Four into TV Country Shows in a big way. WSM-TV's color videotape facilities are kept busy recording some of the most popular syndicated shows in television. In addition, WSM-TV offers two "live" Country-variety shows to midsouth viewers each day.

WSM-TV's crowning achievement is the "National Life Opry." This half-hour Country Music spectacular brings together favorite Opry stars plus outstanding guests for a weekly review of Music City's finest. The National Life Opry is shown in several major U.S. cities each week. As the name implies, the program is sponsored by the National Life and Accident Insurance Company.

Boyce Hawkins, Ralph Emery and Chet Atkins on WSM's "Afternoon" television variety show.

Boots Randolph visits with Master of Ceremonies Jud Collins on Channel Four's "Noon Show."

Dolly Parton and the star of the Porter Wagoner Show duet on one of Porter's hits.

The cast assembles for the grand finale of the National Life TV Opry.

THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

The Country Music Association, sometimes called "the world's most active trade organization," brings together the leaders in the Country Music recording, publishing, booking, and broadcast fields, as well as those involved in creating the music. During its relatively short life span, the C.M.A. has become a driving force in the music industry, acting as a cohesive element and a stabilizing factor.

The C.M.A., an outgrowth of the old Disc Jockey Association, compiles data on the growth of Country Music and makes the information available to industry spokesmen. The Association has "sold" Country Music to broadcast gatherings, sponsoring agencies, and individual advertisers with a great deal of success.

The C.M.A. has become a major influence on Music City activities. The most obvious C.M.A. project is the beautiful Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, located on Music Row. The Hall of Fame includes plaques of the artists and industry leaders nominated to the Hall of Fame roll. Each member is represented by a bronze plaque and commemorative display. The Museum section contains memorabilia and artifacts associated with Country Music's leading artists, past and present, films, and interesting displays illustrating record manufacture and recording.

The C.M.A. stages the Annual Music City, U.S.A., Pro-Celebrity Golf Invitational Tournament on the week prior to the Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration; bringing in top golf names as well as major personalities in sports, business, and the music worlds.

The C.M.A. honors outstanding achievement in recording at the C.M.A. Music Awards Banquet, held in conjunction with the Annual WSM Grand Ole Opry Birthday Celebration. The C.M.A. Award is rated as one of the highest honors open to Country performers.

Internationally famous Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum located in Nashville, on Sixteenth Avenue, South, known as Music Row, is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and until 5:30 p.m. on weekends.

OPRY HOSTESSES

The Opry visitor these days gets a friendly smile and plenty of attention for his ticket in addition to a fair share of good country music. Last March, the Opry replaced its several anonymous ushers with thirty homegrown gals hired to pamper its guests.

Most of the girls come from colleges around Nashville or from the offices of the National Life and Accident Insurance Company, Inc., parent company of WSM, Inc. Some are secretaries. Others are schoolteachers.

To them falls the unenviable task of getting 3,000 people out of the Opry House at 9:00 and 3,000 more back in by 9:30. And that's not to mention cleaning up after the first three-thousand.

"The worst is a busload of sixty people all with reserved seats," said one hostess. "They never seem to have tickets all in a row or two. It's scattered all over the front section and then five always want to sit together."

Cleaning up and seating people is only about half of the job. The red and white smock is an information center and a complaint department all rolled into one disarming smile. Sometimes the job requires a good deal of tact. Some fans think the hostesses can get them autographs or passes backstage. Other times the problems are nearly insoluble as in the case of a lady with a ticket for one seat and a figure for two.

The girls seem to like their jobs, however. Oddly enough, many of them were not country music fans when they started working at the Opry. That is fast changing, but at first it presented some problems.

"People always wanted to know some inside tidbit about the stars. So I read the Opry History Picture Book. But then I discovered that they already knew all of that. So now I tell them I saw Minnie Pearl buying some frozen chicken at the store the other day," said one girl.

There is a lot of laughter both onstage and off at the Opry House and that keeps the girls from their boyfriends every other Saturday night. Questions like "Is the balcony upstairs?" or "What time is the 6:30 show?" keep the Opry hostesses in silent chuckles.

But Opry fans themselves seem to be the main attraction for the curiosity of these college and career girls. Since everyone drives 600 miles to see the Opry, they never know who may be headed down their aisle next. One lively brunette gets a little misty-eyed over the honeymooners who picked the back row of her territory one Saturday night.

"They got married at 6:00 and just made it for the 6:30 show. I offered to get them better seats but they wanted to stay in the last row. She even had on her wedding dress."

Opry hostesses are all smiles for visiting country music fans.

OPRY LAND

By 1972, the Grand Ole Opry is scheduled to have a new and greatly enlarged home to greet its fans. According to present plans, WSM will then present not only the greatest show in country music but also a family oriented theme park with live entertainment at every turn.

The Opry's new home will be the focal point of the complex to be known as Opryland, U.S.A., hundreds of acres of woods and waters and Southern hospitality. WSM has already purchased a tract of rolling farmland on the banks of the historic Cumberland River, 5 miles from the present Opry House and easily accessible via the new interstates.

The Opry's future expansion was charted in September, 1969, when the Board of Directors of WSM Inc. decided to build the park after an exhaustive study.

To assist in the planning and the conceptual development and the management upon completion of Opryland, U.S.A., WSM has added to its staff Mike Downs, a former executive of the San Diego amusement area, Sea World. WSM has also retained two outstanding architectural firms which between them have designed Astroworld, Six Flags in Atlanta and Dallas, the Los Angeles Music Center, and Sports Arena and many other well-known structures. Both firms, Randall Duell and Associates and Welton Becket are acknowledged leaders in their respective fields.

WSM plans to design the park around the theme—"Music of America." The future visitor may find clog dancers between a candle shop and a country kitchen. A riverboat on the Cumberland may become the stage for old time banjo pickin'. The park itself will contain landscaped walks, eating places, trees, flowers, streams and all the elements that help folks have a good time.

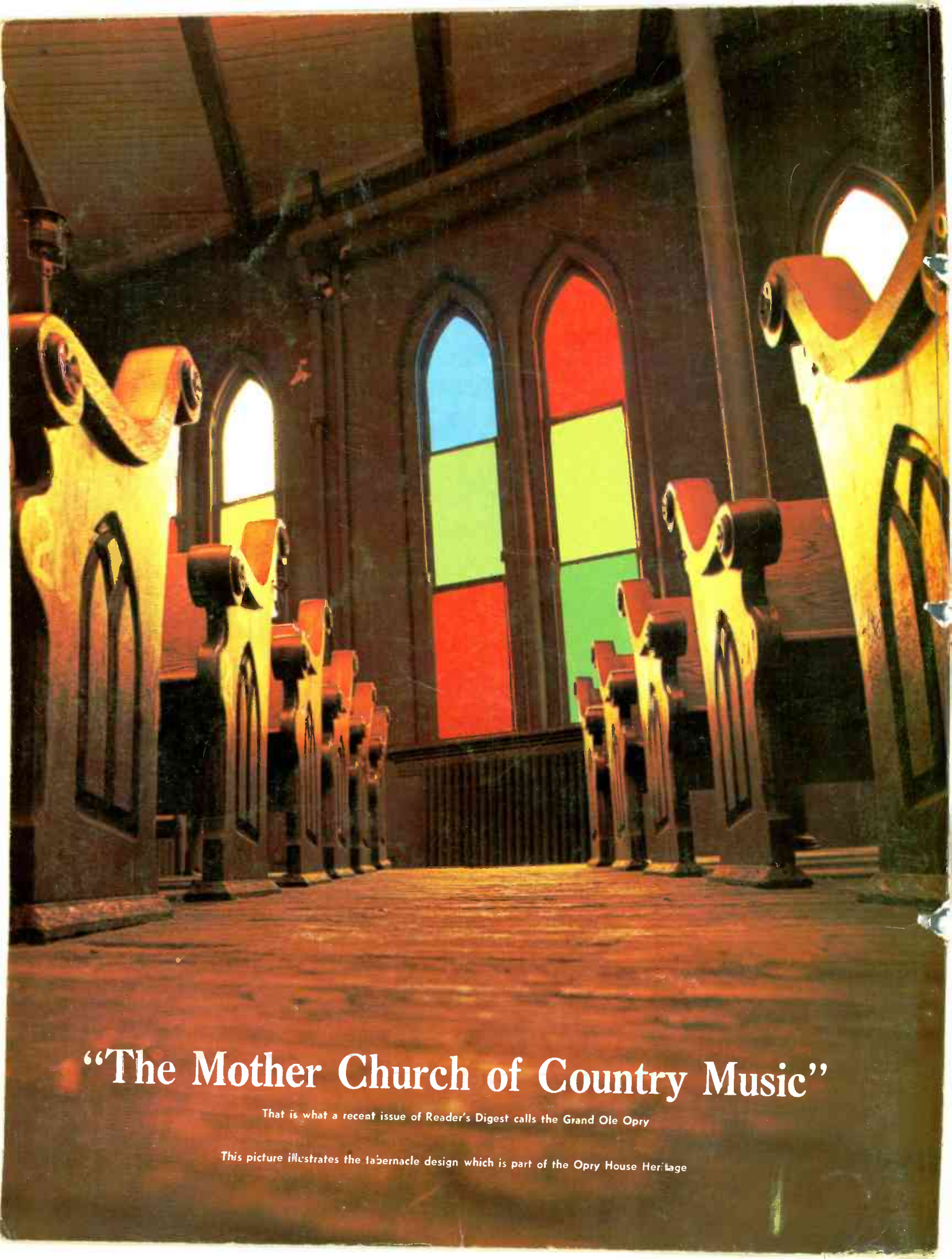
Mike Downs

Of course, the new Opry House will be the heart and soul of the park. We hope it will incorporate network television origination facilities while also offering taping facilities for country music syndicated shows which are so popular today. It will continue to be the Mother Church of Country Music by capturing the spirit of America and its music.

Site of Opryland is bounded on the east by Briley Parkway, a feeder to the new Interstates.

Three men who took an active part in the first broadcast of the Grand Ole Opry: John H. DeWitt, Jr., Board member and former President, WSM, Inc.; Edwin W. Craig, Honorary Chairman of the Board, National Life and Accident Insurance Company; L. H. "Pete" Montgomery, Chief Transmitter Engineer, WSM Radio.

The future home of the National Life and Accident Insurance Company, now nearing completion in downtown Nashville. The building, the tallest on the Nashville skyline, will house the firm that gave WSM and the Opry birth.



"The Mother Church of Country Music"

That is what a recent issue of Reader's Digest calls the Grand Ole Opry

This picture illustrates the tabernacle design which is part of the Opry House Heritage