

**COUNTRY MUSIC, AN  
EMOTIONAL CATHARSIS**

---

**MARY BENNETT BIGGS**

# COUNTRY MUSIC, AN EMOTIONAL CATHARSIS

---

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
Austin Peay State University

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
Mary Bennett Biggs  
July, 1979

## ABSTRACT

The growth of country music in the United States has been accomplished during one generation. Since I have been connected for some time with recording studios and have a considerable personal knowledge of the business, my curiosity was stirred as to why such growth was possible.

I propose to explore two aspects of country music. First, I propose to examine its growth from virtually nothing in the 1920's to its great success as a billion-dollar business in the 1970's. Second, I propose to ascertain where its appeal lay; why did it become so popular? Did its appeal lie in the emotions and feelings of the masses? Was it attuned to the feelings of the common people?

I propose to examine the literature on the subject -- the reminiscences of country entertainers and the writings of journalists and others on the subject. I also plan to interview country music entertainers to obtain their views. Hopefully, a better understanding will emerge of the need for country music. If so, this study will not have been in vain.



COUNTRY MUSIC, AN EMOTIONAL CATHARSIS

---

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
Austin Peay State University

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
Mary Bennett Biggs  
July, 1979



To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Mary Bennett Biggs entitled: "Country Music: An Emotional Catharsis." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in history.

W. S. Morris

Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:

Preston J. Hubbard

Second Committee Member

Thomas P. Dixon

Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Graduate  
Council:

William H. Ellis

Dean of the Graduate School

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Wentworth Morris and Dr. Preston Hubbard for their help with my thesis. Dr. Hubbard encouraged me to do preliminary exploratory research. Dr. Morris aided in the organization and the structuring of the final form of this work.

It has truly been a labor of love because of my associations in the country music field. My grateful acknowledgements go to all those who, by interviews or by writings helped me in my work.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PAGE

ABSTRACT . . . . .	i.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iv.
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	vi.
CHAPTER	
I. What is Country Music? . . . . .	1
II. Country Music Emerges from the Closet. . . . .	5
III. The Emotional Appeal of Early Country Music Artists. . . . .	15
IV. Country Music in the Depression Years. . . . .	23
V. Country Music Moves West . . . . .	37
VI. Acuff, Tubb, Monroe and Country Music. . . . .	47
VII. From World War II to the 1960's. . . . .	51
VIII. Country Music in the 1970's. . . . .	75
IX. Conclusions. . . . .	82
FOOTNOTES. . . . .	83
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	93



## COUNTRY MUSIC, AN EMOTIONAL CATHARSIS

by

Mary Bennett Biggs

## INTRODUCTION

This work is not a comprehensive history of country music nor an interpretive study of it. These have already been done very well by Bill C. Malone<sup>1</sup> and Doug Green<sup>2</sup> respectively. In addition, there are at least three good country music encyclopedias.

Although I have done office work in recording studios, I am not equipped to write about country music as a big business, although some qualified person will do it some day. Instead, I am concerned with the development and spread of country music as an American phenomenon that describes the social patterns in our society, forecasts changes in these patterns, and comments on the changes when they come.

My primary goal, however, is to show that country music provides an emotional catharsis for country singers and country music fans alike. A country musician is able to laugh with joy in a rollicking dance number, or cry out his

despair in a sad song about death or a lost love. Country music is feeling, according to Fred Rose.<sup>3</sup> An artist can weep or smile through his music, and country fans will empathize with him. This music offers an acceptable outlet for these people to release their pent-up emotions, and state their case to society. It is the pulse of an American subculture that is well acquainted with poverty and loneliness. Steeped in tradition and Christian fundamentalism, these people have felt the injustice of discrimination and ridicule because of their reluctance to change. This music is the voice of the plain folk of America.

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS COUNTRY MUSIC?

If country music is to be understood, it must be defined, and that is no easy task. Doug Green says that it is the hard living songs of a hard working people, and the cry of a downtrodden people. It is all of these things, and much more. It's feeling; it's sincerity; it is many things to many different kinds of people.<sup>4</sup>

I remember hearing the late Lew Childre, who performed on the Grand Ole Opry during the forties, say that country music is the kind of music that everybody likes, but some people don't admit it. Whether that is true or not, country music has grown from an obscure origin to a giant in the entertainment business.

Even though it has been vastly enriched by outside influences, country music is an American music. Anglo-Celtic ballads form its tap root, but it consists of many roots coming from many places and leading in many different directions.<sup>5</sup> Settlers from England, Ireland and Scotland came to this country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, bringing their customs, ballads and fiddles with them. They



filtered into the mountains of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee where they remained virtually isolated until the turn of the twentieth century. They sang their ballads in a high nasal whine without an accompaniment at first, but the violin which came into use in about 1550 in Europe was soon adopted by these singers. The violin or fiddle was easy to carry, so they brought it to America with them.<sup>6</sup> Many stringed instruments found their way into the mountains. The singers adopted the banjo, which is basically an African instrument, along with the mandolin from Italy, the steel guitar from Hawaii and finally the Spanish guitar from Mexico. A few entertainers played the dulcimer and auto harp. The guitar sounded very good with the fiddle, and was quickly adopted by white musicians after it was introduced to them by black men who came into the mountains to work for the railroad. These section hands played the blues on their guitars, and the mountain people imitated them.<sup>7</sup> The influence of the Negro blues singer and his guitar can still be felt in country music today. Some of the great guitar styles in country music can be traced either directly or indirectly to these section hands. These include the guitar styles of such great country artists as

Sam McGee, Ike Everly, Merle Travis and Chet Atkins. Even though most southerners would not think of socializing with the Negro, music has never been segregated. In fact, the strongest ethnic influence on country music is that exerted by the black man. The white southerners learned complex rhythms and guitar styles from him, and called them, "Nigger picking."<sup>8</sup>

Many outside groups left an impact on country music, the greatest being that made by the Negro with his intricate guitar rhythms and blues singing. In the West, the Mexican or Spanish mark is felt, especially in dance music. In Louisiana, the Cajuns have given a French flavor to country music with songs like "Jole Blon." Vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley have exerted an influence on country music. The popular songs of the day gradually filtered back into the hill country, and the mountain singers learned them and sang them in their untrained styles. These songs may have inspired some country entertainers to write songs of their own.<sup>9</sup>

Until about 1920 the wealth of music in the south was virtually untapped. In fact only European music was called excellent by the experts. Some of the other kinds were

acceptable; others were bad. There was a real prejudice against country music. Record producers believed that urban dwellers would be offended by the raw untrained voices of the Southern whites. Rural people bought records, but they were made by urban entertainers. It was seldom that they found a cylinder made by Fiddling Bob Haynes and his four aces, which was probably the first string band to be recorded on Edison Cylinders.<sup>10</sup>

Country musicians were not usually known outside their home towns. They played for local square dances and political campaigns. The old fiddle tunes were favorites. They lay at the very heart of country music. String bands were the order of the day. The country singing artist did not come into his own until much later. Even in those days, the music was filling a need for rural folk. Without it, their lives would have been drab indeed.



## CHAPTER II

### COUNTRY MUSIC EMERGES FROM THE CLOSET

It is difficult to say how long country music might have remained a remote and unrecognized phenomenon had it not been for the emergence of radio which revolutionized the entertainment business. It gave life to country music, and set it upon the high road to success.

WSB in Atlanta went on the air early in 1922;<sup>11</sup> and country musicians were heard by a large audience for the first time. Record sales dropped because of live talent, and persons who were connected with show business realized that radio was the coming thing. WBAP in Fort Worth was the first radio station to broadcast a barn dance show.<sup>12</sup> It took place January 4th, 1923, and it brought more audience response than any other program the station had aired during the few months it had operated. Before this time, so-called music experts had not believed that there was an audience for country music, and they certainly had not dreamed that rural folk with their nasal whine would ever be considered artists.

Country music was promoted throughout the twenties by such radio stations as WSB in Atlanta which was probably the

first one to feature country music, WBAP in Fort Worth, the first one to broadcast a barn dance show, WLS in Chicago, the home of the first national barn dance and WSM in Nashville, the home of the now famous Grand Ole Opry.<sup>13</sup>

Recording companies were only a step behind radio in the exploitation of country music in the South. This was partially due to the drop in record sales because of inroads made by radio into the entertainment field. In 1922, 100,000,000 commercial records were sold;<sup>14</sup> but a steady decline took place in the business during the next ten years. Between 1927 and 1932 sales decreased to one fortieth of what they had been in the peak year.<sup>15</sup>

A search for Negro blues artists brought the first interest in southern music by record men. When promoters learned that there was a black audience for black artists, they began to consider the possibility that there just might be a market for white country singers.

No one is really sure who made the first country record because early recordings of fiddle tunes are still being discovered. Perhaps we will never know who made the first recording on Edison Cylinders, but it is believed that the first disc recording of country music was made by Eck Robertson and Henry Gilliland in 1922. They left a fiddler's

convention in Virginia and went to New York where they persuaded Victor Records to record them. Robertson performed both sides of his record, "Sally Gooden" and "The Arkansas Traveler" on the WBAP Fort Worth barn dance in March, 1932. He is probably the first country musician to make a disc recording, and the first to plug his record on radio.<sup>16</sup>

The country music industry marks its beginning with the historic field trip made by Ralph Peer into the south for Okeh Records, June, 1923. He came to Atlanta to record southern country talent. In the early days, record men brought their equipment into the field, and made records wherever talent was found. Almost any building could be converted into a recording studio with very little trouble. At that time recording was done without the use of electricity. On June 14th, 1923, Peer recorded, "The Old Hen She Cackled" and "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane" by Fiddling John Carson, an acknowledged Georgia moonshiner.<sup>17</sup> Peer could not bear to hear the raw untrained voice of Carson, and insisted that his recordings be strictly instrumental. Polk Brockman, however, who managed a furniture store in Atlanta, realized that many of the Georgia natives enjoyed Fiddling



John's singing just as much as they did his fiddling. He persuaded Peer to press 500 records, vocal included, for him to sell in his furniture store. Peer agreed, but he did not give the record a label or number. When, by mid-July Brockman ordered another 500 records, Peer acknowledged his mistake. The record was given a number on the Okeh label and listed in the record catalogue. Thus Fiddling John Carson became the first country artist to have his records distributed and sold on the commercial market.<sup>18</sup> After this initial trip, record men set up recording sessions all over the south, recording indiscriminately just about anyone who could play or carry a tune. They took very little pains with the country or hillbilly records. The artists were ill prepared, and most records that were released were the results of one hasty recording.<sup>19</sup>

Gid Tanner and Riley Puckett made a record for Columbia in March of 1924. This was probably the first recording of a string band on disc. Tanner played the fiddle, and Puckett played the guitar. Puckett along with Mabelle Carter and Sam McGee were among the leading country guitary guitar stylists until the appearance of Merle Travis. Puckett sang "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane" and "Rock All Our Babies to Sleep." He yodeled on the second song, and was

the first country artist to do so, preceding Jimmy Rodgers of blue yodel fame by three years.<sup>20</sup>

A number of blind persons, finding other avenues of employment closed to them, joined the ever-growing throng of hillbilly musicians. Some of these included Riley Puckett, Leon Payne, Ernest Thompson, Pete Cassall, and Mack and Bob who performed for many years on the WLS barn dance.

Alongside country music in the south, there developed a rural black music which was designated as race music. A Negro guitarist named Blind Lemon Jefferson showed quite a number of southern white boys how to play the "hot licks" on the guitar.<sup>21</sup>

The term Hillbilly was first used commercially by a string band that made a record in January, 1925. It was composed of musicians from North Carolina and Virginia. Ralph Peer had recorded them, and Al Hopkins, one of the members of the group asked him to come up with a name for the band which consisted of four members. "Just call us anything you like," Hopkins said. "We're just a bunch of hillbillies from North Carolina and Virginia." They were called "The Hillbillies," and later the original "Hillbillies" because so many others had appropriated the name.<sup>22</sup>



Record producers were more interested in fiddlers than they were in vocalists. In 1926 Riley Puckett and Gid Tanner were joined by Clayton McMitchen, another fiddler and a banjo picker. This band became well known as Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers. They played and sang anything that pleased their fancies, whether it be hillbilly or pop.

There were so many instrumentalists who left an impact on country music, that I could never begin to mention all of them. Among them were such important names as Doc Boggs, Clarence Ashley, and Charley Pool. These were very talented five string banjo pickers. Pool played with a band called the North Carolina Ramblers. He is famous for the old country song, "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down."<sup>23</sup> Many of these old timers were recorded again by Folkways during the fifties and sixties. They were rediscovered by the Urban folk movement.

Barn dance shows featured string bands and old time fiddle tunes much more than they did country singers. The Grand Ole Opry did not have a real country solo vocalists until the thirties. Most bands were made up of a fiddle, guitar, banjo, the five string variety, sometimes a Hawaiian steel guitar (dobro). Al Hopkins played a piano which was very unusual.

In spite of the preference for fiddle tunes, there were a few singing stars who were successful. Among them were Vernon Dalhart and Bradley Kincaid.<sup>24</sup> Bradley Kincaid was a Kentucky mountain boy who acquired a college education. He resented being called a hillbilly singer. He preferred to be called a singer of mountain songs. He appeared on the WLS barn dance from 1926 to 1930. From there, he went to WLW in Cincinnati, and he appeared on the WSM Grand Ole Opry during the forties. He sang in a nasal tenor voice, and he preferred the sad ballads such as "Barbara Allen" and "The Legend of the Robin Red Breast." Like other early performers, he did not have a recording contract. His songs were released on various labels under his own and assumed names. His first recording session took place in an old warehouse. He never recorded in a studio until he made records for the Brunswick Company in 1930.

Southeastern performers were not the only ones to take advantage of the rising popularity of hillbilly music. Vernon Dalhart, whose real name was Marion Slaughter, was a popular singer of light opera. He gave hillbilly music a real boost in the mid twenties. He was a Texan, and therefore he was familiar with rural music.

By 1924 his popularity as an opera singer had begun to

wane. Attuned to the times, he persuaded R.C.A. Victor records to allow him to record a hillbilly session, and they reluctantly agreed. He sang "The Wreck of the Old 97," an event song that had been recorded before by other artists. This song tells the story of a train wreck that took place in Virginia in 1903. Almost as an afterthought, he sang a song called "The Prisoner's Song" which he claimed had been written by his cousin. Record sales were lagging everywhere, but this record sold more than 6,000,000 copies. Dalhart sang in the plaintive mountain style that rural people loved. "The Prisoner's Song" became Victor's most popular record. Dalhart remained a hillbilly singer throughout his recording career. Some of his big records were "The Death of Floyd Collins," "A Dying Girl's Message" and "Fatal Wedding." His songs were released on many different labels, and he used many pseudonyms. The Prisoner's Song alone brought him more than one million dollars in royalties.<sup>25</sup>

Carson Robison was an entertainer who was associated with Dalhart for about three years. He was a composer and performer who knew how to touch the hearts of rural people. He wrote event songs that dealt with the news stories of the day. He told the story, and ended the song with a moral. He was a popular entertainer until his death in 1957.<sup>26</sup>



One of his most popular songs was a World War II satire about the dictators.

Bob Miller, a Memphis boy became one of the most, if not the most, prolific event song writers of all times. Two of the most popular ones were "Eleven Cent Cotton and Forty Cent Meat" done by Uncle Dave Macon and "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere" recorded by Elton Britt.<sup>27</sup>

The Reverend Andrew Jenkins was also a very prolific song writer. He penned such favorites as the "Death of Floyd Collins," the story of a young man who was trapped in a cave in Kentucky and "The Story of Little Marian Parker," but the great bulk of his songs were religious "God Put a Rainbow in the Cloud" is an example. His family sang with him. They were Georgians, and they were some of the first country performers to broadcast on WSB in Atlanta. They were probably the first country music family to make records.<sup>28</sup>

These early performers sang many kinds of song, but the sad songs about death, dear old mother or a lost love were the favorites. Perhaps this was a reflection of the hard lives they lived. It gave them an outlet for their tears and frustrations.<sup>29</sup>

During this time two separate musical styles were being developed in the Southeast mountain music and country music.

Mountain music featured instrumental tunes as much if not more than it did lyrics. Country music leaned more toward solo singing, and was influenced more by Negro blues styles. Mountain music was played on stringed instruments, and sung with the high nasal whine. It was the forerunner of the blue grass music of today.<sup>30</sup>



### CHAPTER III

#### THE EMOTIONAL APPEAL OF EARLY COUNTRY MUSIC ARTISTS

The greatest of all of the early country music artists were discovered by Ralph Peer when he made his historic trip to Bristol, Tennessee for R.C.A. Victor Records in August, 1927. When record men came to these little southern towns, country musicians came from miles around to get in on the recording act. This was true of two acts that became country music giants, the Carter Family and Jimmy Rodgers.<sup>31</sup> Many acts were recorded that day, but these are the only two that are remembered.

The Carter Family consisted of Alvin Pleasant, A. P. Carter, his wife, Sarah Daugherty Carter and his sister-in-law, Mabelle Addington Carter. They were from the hills of Virginia, and steeped in fundamental Christian tradition. They were reared in homes where strict Christian discipline was practiced. A. P. loved the old gospel tunes, but he was also fond of fiddle music. The fiddle was considered the devil's own instrument; therefore, he had to wait until he had worked long enough as a fruit tree salesman to be able to afford one.<sup>32</sup>

The Carter Family entertained around Mesa Springs,

Virginia, and when Peer came to Bristol, they were ready to record. Sarah played the auto harp and sang lead. A. P. sang bass, and Mabelle played the guitar and sang alto. Her guitar style has influenced more musicians than I could possibly mention. Just about any country guitarist who can pick three chords can play "Wild Wood Flower" in a manner reminiscent of the Carter Family. Because of this unique style of singing and picking the guitar, the Carter Family became immediately recognizable to country music fans. Mabelle was also an accomplished banjoist. Their first record was "Wandering Boy" backed with "Poor Orphan Child."<sup>33</sup>

According to Sarah Carter, the Carter Family recorded more than 300 sides for various record labels during their recording career. Most of their records were on Victor and Columbia in the early years, and they were on Decca in the late thirties. Most of their songs are sad. Even the gospel songs deal with death. Their secular songs are akin to the sacred songs in that they speak of lost love and then many times the singer in the next line tells how he is longing for the grave. Perhaps this is a result of the drab lives that poor people had to lead, and they expressed their only hope in a better life in the world beyond the grave. These old ballads about death and poor orphan children give

credence to this distant dream to artists and fans alike. These old songs afford an acceptable outlet for their sorrows.

A. P. Carter is credited with writing many songs that he could not possibly have written.<sup>34</sup> They date back too far, but he collected a royalty on most of the tunes that were recorded by the Carter family. He is one of the first, if not the first, country musician to register the songs he performed. Many of them were old European ballads which were public domain.

The Carter family did very little traveling around. They gained their fame through records and radio performances, especially on the powerful radio stations on the Mexican border.<sup>35</sup> Their records sold into the millions, and their influence on the development of country music cannot be measured. Flatt and Scruggs did an album, A Tribute to the Carter Family in the sixties.<sup>36</sup>

The popularity of hillbilly music cannot be judged by record sales in the twenties because the music was produced for an audience that could ill afford to buy it. Most rural people received their entertainment through radio, and the barn dance shows became their favorite pastime. Even though WBAP in Fort Worth had featured a barn dance show as early as 1923, the first one to enjoy any longevity was the WLS barn dance in Chicago.<sup>37</sup> The World's Largest Store, which



was owned by Sears until September, 1928, when it was purchased by the Prairie Farmer magazine, began broadcasting April 12th, 1924. Its barn dance show went on the air the next week. The program featured some string music alongside a popular orchestra. The station never stopped this practice. Grace Wilson, a popular contralto appeared on the show from the late twenties until she retired in 1960. The audience response to the first WLS barn dance show was tremendous. The show grew. Many artists who became big names in country music performed on the WLS barn dance. Among them are Bradley Kincaid, Red Foley, Lulu Belle and Scotty, the sweethearts of country music, Gene Autry, the Cumberland Ridge Runners, the Prairie Ramblers and Patsy Montana.

WLS became the first radio station to construct a studio theater. By 1932 country music fans were obtaining reservations for the show seven months in advance. The station took over the Eighth Street theater in Chicago where the barn dance show was performed for the next twenty-five years.

In 1933 the makers of Alka-Seltzer agreed to sponsor a one hour segment of the barn dance each Saturday night on the N.B.C. network. This gave nation-wide coverage to country music, and soon the entertainers were playing personal appearances in an ever-widening arc.

Both the Grand Ole Opry, which is the giant country music show of today, and the WLS National barn dance, which was the prestige country show in the twenties and thirties, were the brain children of George D. Haye, a reporter for the Memphis Commercial Appeal. In 1922 his newspaper sent him to cover the funeral of a war hero. When the funeral was over, he attended a country hoedown in a log cabin, and while listening to the fiddle music, he conceived the idea for the barn dance shows.<sup>39</sup>

When the National Life and Accident Insurance Company established radio station WSM in Nashville, Tennessee, Haye was hired as director. The Grand Ole Opry dates back to November 28th, 1925, when Uncle Jimmy Thompson, accompanied on the piano by his niece, Mrs. Eva Thompson Jones, fiddled old time tunes for an hour. When Haye asked him if he were tired, he replied, "Ah shucks, you can't get warmed up in an hour."<sup>40</sup> In a few short weeks, the show had attracted hillbilly musicians from all over middle Tennessee who wanted to try their luck at broadcasting. The audience response to the show was overwhelming. The first string band to appear on the Grand Ole Opry was the Possom Hunters, led by Doctor Humphrey Bate, a middle Tennessee physician. In a short time this band was followed by the Fruit Jar Drinkers,<sup>41</sup> the Gulley Jumpers and the Crook Brothers.



Uncle Dave Macon joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1926. He became a favorite. He was followed by the Vagabonds, a smooth singing trio and the Delmore Brothers, who became a famous country duet. The McGee Brothers appeared on the Grand Ole Opry for many years. Sam had a unique guitar style which was akin to that of the rural Negro blues artists.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of the great influence that Negro blues has exerted on country artists, the music for the most part has remained lily white. The two best known exceptions are De Ford Bailey who played the harmonica on the Opry in the twenties and thirties, and Charley Pride, a black country singer who joined the Opry in the sixties. Country musicians are quick to admit their debt to these black guitarists, but they do not encourage Negroes to become country performers.<sup>43</sup> Black seem to be more interested in the rhythm and blues field and in jazz. They seldom venture into the country music world.

In the early years, the Grand Ole Opry featured string bands primarily. The only person who could be considered a singing star on the Opry before the coming of Roy Acuff was Uncle Dave Macon.<sup>44</sup> Uncle Dave was a native of middle Tennessee who was an accomplished banjo stylist. He was fifty-six years old when he joined the Opry in 1926. He was

a comedian, singer and musician. His songs came from all facets of life, and commented on the social system in Tennessee. He performed on the Opry, accompanied by his son, Doris until his death in 1953. Most of his records were made between 1924 and 1938.

The Grand Ole Opry Stars began playing before a live audience very early. WSM's studio B soon became too small to accommodate the fans. "The Opry has had six homes,"<sup>45</sup> Hal Durham said. He told of the moves it has made. When the studio became too small, WSM rented the Hillsboro theater, which soon proved to be inadequate. The Opry then moved to a tabernacle building, then to the War Memorial Building, then to the Ryman Auditorium and finally to the large new facility at Opryland. Some of the old benches from the old Ryman are used as a back drop in the new Opry House. The members of the audience who sit on these benches are a part of the show because they are practically on the stage.<sup>46</sup>

The Grand Ole Opry received its name in 1926 when George D. Haye, the "solemn old judge," in a good natured jest at Doctor Damrosch, who had hosted a classical music show on N.B.C. the hour previous, commented, "For the last hour, you have been listening to Grand Opera, and for the next three

hours, we will present the Grand Ole Opry."<sup>47</sup> The name caught on and became the official name of the show. Up until 1926, it had been called the WSM barn dance.

## CHAPTER IV

### COUNTRY MUSIC IN THE DEPRESSION YEARS

The first great country singing star was the Mississippi blues yodeler, Jimmy Rodgers. He has exerted more influence on country musicians than any other single artist.<sup>48</sup> Jimmy Rodgers was born in Meridian, Mississippi, September 8, 1897. His mother died when he was four years old, and his father was forced into the position of trying to make a living and caring for his son. He was a railroad man, and Jimmy traveled from place to place with him. The boy received very little formal education, and as soon as he was old enough he went to work for the railroad. He was in constant contact with the black section hands, and their influence on his music is very marked. He learned his guitar style from them, and their blues singing techniques live in his blue yodel. He was not the first country singer to yodel, but he perfected the blue yodel and made it famous.

He had to retire from railroad work when he was twenty-eight years old because of ill health. He moved to Asheville, North Carolina, where he hoped that the higher elevation would improve his condition. He was suffering from tuberculosis. He worked at a radio station in Asheville, and for a short



time, he was employed as a detective. When he heard that Ralph Peer was coming to Bristol, Tennessee to record country talent, he decided to give it a try.

On August 4th, 1927, Rodgers recorded two songs, "Soldier's Sweetheart" and an old lullaby, "Sleep, Baby, Sleep." He used the yodel in the lullaby. The record sold well enough that he was given a recording session at Victor's studio in Camden, New Jersey. He recorded his famous "Blue Yodel Number 1, or T. for Texas" on that session.<sup>49</sup> This record launched him on the road to fame.

He sang all kinds of songs. It seemed he wrote and sang songs for people in all walks of life, especially rural people, and they thought of him as one of them. He usually appeared publicly in a tan or white suit, and looked like a young man about town. He would put his foot upon a chair, cradle his guitar in his arm, and sing to his audience in a way that each person felt that the song was being sung exclusively for him or her.<sup>50</sup>

Rodgers did most of his entertaining in the South and Southwest. He never toured North of the Mason-Dixon line. A nation-wide tour was planned, but his health never permitted him to make it. His disease grew steadily worse, but he kept making records, and traveling when he could. He wrote and



recorded "TB Blues" ridiculing his ailment. He moved to Texas hoping that the dry climate might help him. He lived in San Antonio the last few years of his life.

After a stay in the hospital early in 1933, he was told to rest for at least six months before he tried to work again. In spite of his doctor's warning, he decided to go to New York for a recording session which he probably realized would be his last. He was accompanied by his sister-in-law, Elsie McWilliams, who helped write some of his songs, and played the piano for him at times. His recording session was a heartbreaking affair.<sup>51</sup> A cot was set up for him in the studio, and he lay down on it exhausted after each number was done. He would remain there until he gained enough strength to sing another song. He worked almost until the end. He died in a hotel room in New York on the night of May 26th, 1933.<sup>52</sup> When the train that carried his body pulled into Meridian, Mississippi, late at night, the whistle blew with a long lonesome moan which grew in intensity as the train approached the station.<sup>53</sup> This was how the railroad men said goodbye to the singing brakeman.<sup>54</sup>

Jimmy Rodgers did more than anyone else to orient country music toward the country singing star, and set it on the road to national acclaim. Performers who followed him did much to enhance country music, but he paved the way. He is

famous for the yodel, but he sang just about every kind of song except gospel. He was not a church going man. Some of his songs, however, are moralistic, and have a somewhat religious flavor. The yodel was his trademark, but his sentimental songs initiated a style that outlasted the blue yodel by many years. He sang popular songs when he felt like it, but he did them in his nasal tenor voice in a style that country people accepted. He sang for the hobo, the cowboy, and the soldier. He sang sad songs, love songs, rowdy songs, risqué songs and sentimental songs about Daddy and home. Daddy and home were his favorite subjects for song material. These songs portray his love for the only parent he ever knew.

Death was near, and he knew it, but instead of crying about it, he ridiculed it in song. He recorded 111 songs, and sold more than 20,000,000 records. In fact, his record sales topped that of almost all Victor artists between 1929 and 1935. According to Mrs. Jimmy Rodgers he earned \$2,000.00 a month the last few years of his life.<sup>55</sup> Country people bought his records and went to see his shows in the middle of the worst depression this nation has ever seen. It is claimed that many rural persons would tell their grocers to give them a sack of flour, a dozen eggs and the latest record by Jimmy Rodgers. I cannot vouch for the truth of

this claim, but it makes a good story, and they did buy his records.

Among the big country stars who one tried to imitate Jimmy Rodgers are Gene Autry, Jimmy Davis, Ernest Tubb and the two Canadian artists, Wilf Carter and Hank Snow. All of these yodeled at one time or another, but gave it up when their voices deepened. These imitations were a great tribute to the first country great, but an even greater tribute was given in the songs that were recorded about his life. Gene Autry sang most of them. Some examples are the "Life of Jimmy Rodgers," "The Death of Jimmy Rodgers," "Good Luck Old Pal" and "When Jimmy Rodgers Said Goodbye."

Rodgers is credited with setting country music on the path that led it to the pinnacle it enjoys in the music world today. He did this by utilizing the good qualities of many different kinds of music in his songs and style, and enhancing it by using many different instrumentations to give his performance the desired effect. He recorded with various accompaniments, but when he appeared on the stage he almost always accompanied himself on his guitar. There is no way accurately to assess his full impact on the course of country music.

The great depression may have curtailed record sales, but it did not stop them. Fans still bought records by the



Carter Family, Jimmy Rodgers and others. Their emotional needs were too great to be denied. Through record sales and live radio shows, country music expanded. Artists went out from WLS and WSM to play school houses and theaters. These shows provided a pleasant break in the drab lives of rural southerners, and westerners who could barely eat, and in spite of the hard times, they attended them. In the thirties country music grew and spread because it supplied a need for a depressed people that nothing else could fill. Southern people were backward, and led deprived lives in the best of times, but during the depression years the situation was even worse. Nevertheless they still were able to afford a few pennies for a record now and then.

57

The thirties was a transition period for country music. The performers were becoming more and more polished, and many of them were depending more and more on songs that were being written either by themselves or other country writers specifically for records. The old traditional ballads were still done, but not to the extent that had been true during the twenties. The songs were still sad for the most part, and still satisfied the emotional appetites of the listeners as well as the criterion to be qualified as folk songs. They were done by the folk for the folk about the folk.

58



Technology and urban culture were affecting events in the south, and the music reflected this influence. The traditional southerner was in the midst of the struggle that change always brings, and old customs and mores die hard. The first change to affect the mountains and their people very much was the coming of the railroad.<sup>59</sup> This was evidenced by the number of train songs that were written and sung. As time went on, the car wreck replaced the train wreck, and the truck driver replaced the brakeman, but the songs were still melancholy and filled with tragedy and disappointment.

Country songs commented on change and injustice, and there were some protest songs even though these made up only a small part of the bulk of country music.<sup>60</sup> In the south wages were low, and working conditions were bad. A number of people did protest. Among these was Aunt Molly Jackson who sang songs protesting the treatment of workers in the coal mines of Eastern Kentucky.<sup>61</sup> She went to New York where she became popular with those who were involved in the urban folk movement. One of the most famous (protesters) was an Oklahoman, Woodrow Wilson "Woody" Guthrie. Guthrie made his debut as a hillbilly singer in the early thirties, and wrote such favorite songs as "The Philadelphia Lawyer," "Those Oklahoma Hills," "So Long, It's Been Good

To Know You" and the standard, "This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land." He protested the plight of the migrant farmers who moved from Oklahoma and other southern states to California. He wrote such songs as "Dust Bowl Refugee" and "Dust Bowl Talking Blues."<sup>62</sup> He went to New York in 1938 where he became the darling of the urban folk movement. To these college students and other urban folk devotees, he was an authentic victim of discrimination, oppression and injustice. He remained in this circle lecturing, singing and protesting. He is seldom thought of today as a country entertainer. He became a part of a group that practically excluded hillbilly music from their repertoire of folk songs and drew farther and farther away from the real folk.

The thirties was a great decade for folk song lovers. Franklin Roosevelt's new deal included an agency that sent men into the south to gather folk songs.<sup>63</sup> I will not pursue this venture further because it is not the purpose of this work to trace the history of American folklore. Let it suffice to say that many of the songs written by country singers during the thirties were compiled with the old traditional European ballads, and accepted as folk songs as well they should have been.

Record sales in every music field declined during the depression. Hillbilly sales dropped most because the hillbilly record market was composed chiefly of buyers in the southeast and middle west.

The Decca Record Company came into prominence in 1935 as the result of the work of David Kamp who like Ralph Peer and Art Satherly went out into the field and recorded the talent he found.<sup>64</sup> More and more performers were filtering in from the west at that time, and Decca recorded them. Stewart Hamblen from Texas and Jimmy Davis, later governor of Louisiana, were among them. Hamblen is famous for such songs as "Little Old Rag Doll," and "My Mary." After his religious conversion later, he is known for his gospel songs, "It is No Secret" and "This Old House."<sup>65</sup> Jimmy Davis is the favorite singing star of numerous country music fans as well as being a prolific song writer. He is responsible for such country hits as "Be Nobody's Darling but Mine" and the national smash, "You Are My Sunshine" which was recorded by Bing Crosby.<sup>66</sup>

Decca did another thing in 1935 that turned the record world upside down. The price of Decca records was slashed to 35 cents a copy. Victor and Columbia had been charging 75 cents each for their records. A platter war ensued, and



record sales increased by leaps and bounds.<sup>67</sup>

It is radio, however, that can take the lion's share of credit for the survival and spread of country music during the depression years. It boomed out live from big stations like WLS, WSM, WSB, and WBAP. Artists made personal appearances that stemmed from their popularity. At first the performers handled the arrangements for shows themselves, but by the mid-thirties such stations as WLS and WSM had organized artist service bureaus that arranged public appearances for their artists. The independent booker was not prevalent at this time. Personal managers and independent booking agencies came later.<sup>68</sup>

The country music industry owes a great debt to the so-called X radio stations for aiding in the spread of country music throughout the thirties.<sup>69</sup> They were built on the border between Texas and Mexico, and boomed out with a power that doubled and sometimes tripled that which radio stations were allowed in the United States. Their transmitters faced the States, and the programming was made to please the tastes of southern whites. These stations were owned almost entirely by American businessmen who used them to exploit the working people of the south.<sup>70</sup> Doctor J. R. Brinkley owned XER and he used it to sell his cure alls. He advertised among other things a goat-gland product that



was supposed to increase the sexual potency of men. His station boomed into the United States and Canada at night with a power of about 150,000 watts. In fact, it is said that for a period of about six months in 1932 the station was broadcasting with a power of 500,000 watts.<sup>71</sup>

Listeners were fed a steady diet of hell fire preachers, sales pitches that advertised such things as Crazy Water Crystals, jewelry, Black Drought, Cardui and baby chicks. Occasionally they would hear a country song by one of their favorite artists. Most of the music was transcribed, but some live talent was featured. The Carter Family could be heard live on one of these X stations the last three years of its musical career.<sup>72</sup>

The Carters retired in 1941 which also signaled the end of the so called golden age of country music. Since that time they have been referred to as the old Carter Family. This distinguishes them from the later group which consisted of Mabelle Carter and her daughters. The X stations have been a subject for criticism and ridicule for many years because of some of the unethical methods they used in advertising, but all country fans and artists must admit that country music is indebted to these powerful outlets which enabled listeners as far away as Canada to enjoy it and to buy it.<sup>73</sup>

Brother groups and family groups were very popular with country fans in the thirties. The Shelton Brothers, Bob and Joe, with their recording of "Just Because" became country favorites. The Delmore Brothers, Alton and Reyburn were important because of their hybrid music.<sup>74</sup> They sang traditional songs and played guitars, but some of their novelty and blues numbers were marked by the rhythms learned from Negro guitarists such as Blind Lemon Jefferson and Blind Boy Fuller. The Delmore Brothers appeared on the Grand Ole Opry for a number of years.

Cliff and Bill, the Carlisle Brothers, were a talented duet, but they gained most of their success as separate acts.<sup>75</sup> Cliff was a yodeler who showed a marked resemblance to Jimmy Rodgers. He was one of the first to master the Hawaiian steel guitar, and to feature it as a lead instrument on his records. He sang hobo songs, risqué songs and sentimental love ballads. His recording career spanned the years between 1930 and 1947. Bill Carlisle made his first records with his brother, Cliff, but in the fifties he organized a group called the Carlisles, and recorded "Too Old to Cut the Mustard." It hit the top of the record charts and brought Bill and his group from the Mid-day Merry Go'round show on WNOK in Knoxville to the Grand Ole Opry where he still enjoys

a profitable career today. The Carlisle Brothers are two of the many country artists who have their roots in Kentucky.<sup>76</sup>

Bill and Joe Calahan were very popular in the thirties. They sang both the old standards and new songs many of which they wrote themselves. One of their most famous compositions was "The Wreck on the High Way" which was recorded by Roy Acuff. They recorded it under the title, "I didn't Hear Nobody Pray."<sup>77</sup>

Many old time groups adopted the mandolin as their lead instrument during this period. The five string banjo along with the fiddle had enjoyed this honor during the twenties and early thirties. It bowed in favor of other instruments during the forties and fifties, but it witnessed an unprecedented revival during the folk craze of the sixties.<sup>78</sup>

Mack and Bob were among those who favored the mandolin. They performed on the WLS National barn dance for many years. They are best remembered for the songs, "When the Roses Bloom Again" and "Twenty-one Years."<sup>79</sup>

The Blue Sky Boys, Bill and Earl Bolic were the most traditional of the brother groups. They would not bow to commercialism, and after World War II, the pressure became so great that they retired rather than add an electric guitar to their band.<sup>80</sup>



The most successful brother group to be organized in the thirties was probably the Monroe Brothers, Bill, Charlie and Birch. Bill played the mandolin and sang high nasal tenor, and Charlie played the guitar and sang lead. They broke up in 1938, and Bill and Charlie organized separate<sup>81</sup> bands. Bill joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1939 where he and his Blue Grass Boys became famous in the field of blue grass music.

Advertising through radio was one of the most significant factors in the promotion of country music during the thirties. Hillbilly shows were sponsored by products that would appeal to rural listeners. Some of these included Alka-Seltzer, Crazy water crystals, Light Crust Flour, Stephens Work Clothes, Jewel Shortening and numbers of<sup>82</sup> others. Country fans were loyal not only to their favorite artists, but to the products that sponsored them. Because of this loyalty country music not only survived during the depression years, but it expanded.



## CHAPTER V

### COUNTRY MUSIC MOVES WEST

In the early twenties promoters and record men had devoted their attention to the southeast in the search for country musicians but winds were blowing from the southwest that would alter the pattern of country music, and become the dominant influence in the years between 1935 and 1945. Many people who had become dissatisfied with their lives in the southeast had migrated to Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma taking their customs and musical tastes with them. Their music was similar to that heard in the southeast, but as time went on it changed. It picked up some of the characteristics of Mexican music, Cajun songs from Louisiana, Negro blues and cowboy songs and blended them with the mountain music of the south.

Two other factors that contributed to the development of western music were the oil boom and the industrialization and urbanization of Texas. Both the songs and the dance music reflected this influence.<sup>83</sup> Even though Western music did not come to the forefront until the thirties, cowboys had been recorded in the twenties. Karl Sprague

made records in 1925.<sup>84</sup> He was a graduate of Texas A&M who believed that cowboy songs could find a market equal to that of old time tunes. His best known record was "When the Work's All Done This Fall." Gobel Reeves, Harry McClintock are other examples of early cowboy talent. These men as well as Jimmy Tarlton, a famous early steel guitar virtuoso, had actually hoboed across the United States, and Reeves had worked on a ranch. He was an authentic cowboy. Jimmy Rodgers, who had spent his last years in Texas, exerted more influence on future singing cowboys, however, than any of the real cowboys did.<sup>85</sup> These cowboys copied his yodel as well as his singing style. The only Swiss strains found in the cowboy yodel can also be seen in that of Rodgers.

The man who deserves most of the credit for making the singing cowboy the most romantic figure in the United States during the thirties and forties is Gene Autry.<sup>86</sup> He was born in East Texas in 1907, and was brought up on country music. Jimmy Rodgers was his hero. While he was still in his teens, his family moved to Sepulpa, Oklahoma, where he obtained a job as a telegrapher. He gives Will Rogers the credit for interesting him in a career in country and western music.<sup>87</sup> He says that he amused himself

when work was slack by singing and playing his guitar. Will heard him and told him that he should try his luck at recording. In 1929 Autry lost his job, and decided to take his advice. He went to New York where he obtained a recording contract after walking the streets for days. He sang traditional country songs in a nasal tenor voice, and yodeled in the Rodgers style.

He had worked with medicine shows for a short time which had given him poise and taught him showmanship. Many country greats worked with medicine shows and performed in the vaudeville circuit early in their careers. Autry worked at some small radio stations for a brief period, but by 1930 his records had sold well enough to earn him a spot on the WLS barn dance. Because of his western origin, record companies billed him as a singing cowboy. At this time he had not begun recording western songs; a "Gangster's Warning" is an example. He was very popular on the barn dance, and in 1931 he recorded one of the greatest country hits of all times, "That Silver Haired Daddy of Mine."<sup>88</sup> This song was written by Autry and Jimmy Long, and they recorded it as a duet.

The big change came for Autry in 1934 when he signed a movie contract with Republic Pictures. In the next ten



years, he made more than 100 movies for Republic and Monogram studios.<sup>89</sup> His records became more western oriented at this time. He became identified with such songs as "The Call of the Canyon," "Riding Down the Canyon," "I'm Back in the Saddle Again," etc. He became America's favorite singing cowboy, and accumulated a fortune.<sup>90</sup> He never stopped writing ballads and novelty tunes, however. He was closely associated with Fred Rose, and wrote some songs for Acuff-Rose Publications. Acuff, Autry and Rose were close friends, and even when he became a very busy celebrity, and was hard pressed for time, he could always spare a few minutes to see his good friends, Fred Rose and Roy Acuff.<sup>91</sup>

Other cowboys followed Autry. Johnny Bond and Jimmy Wakley went to Hollywood as part of Autry's band. These cowboys used very nearly the same instrumentations in their bands as those used by the singers in the southeast.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps the steel guitar was more prevalent.

Tex Ritter was also from East Texas. He was another college graduate that had grown up on hillbilly music.<sup>93</sup> Ritter made his start in the northeast, the part of the nation where country music found it most difficult to make inroads. He went to New York and landed a part in a Broadway Play, "Green Grow the Lilacs." He was a big success



there during the early thirties. He was from Texas, therefore, New Yorkers decided he just had to be a cowboy. The cowboy had been romanticized by the dime novel as well as in western songs and movies, and people who would not accept hillbilly music found nothing to reject in a western song. Ritter became the darling of the college crowd. He lectured and sang about the cowboy. He obtained a movie contract in 1936 which was the ultimate dream of all singing cowboys.<sup>94</sup> He was a very successful movie star and recording artist. He is remembered for songs like "Green Grow the Lilacs," "High Noon," "Rye Whiskey" and "The Boll Weevil Song." He was very busy, but he never forgot his friends nor became puffed up with his own importance, according to Murray Nash, a veteran in the country music business.<sup>95</sup> Ritter spent the last years of his life as a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

Roy Rogers (Leonard Slye), who replaced Gene Autry as King of the Cowboys in the forties, was a native of Ohio. He was already well known as the lead singer with the Sons of the Pioneers when he signed a movie contract with Republic pictures.<sup>96</sup> He is also a recording star of note.

The Sons of the Pioneers were one of the many groups who were seen sitting around the campfire singing in western movies. Bob Nolen, a member of this group, is famous for writing such songs as "Tumbling Tumble Weed" and "Cool Water."

The honkytonk played an important part in the development of western music. Workers came from the oil fields and defense plants looking for entertainment, and songs about sweet mother and home and The Old Country Church were certainly out of place. This gave rise to the honkytonk song and the dance hall. No performer is linked closer to the honkytonk song than the Texas troubadour, Ernest Tubb, a worshipper of Jimmy Rodgers.<sup>97</sup> At first he tried to imitate Rodgers, but his career did not progress until he developed his own style. He was given a boost, however, when Mrs. Jimmy Rodgers took an interest in him and gave him one of Jimmy's guitars.<sup>98</sup> The success of his Decca record, "They'll Do It Every Time," brought him to the Grand Ole Opry, but not before he played his stint in the western honkytonks. This occupation some grew dangerous because when the customers got going with their dancing, drinking and gambling, fights often took place, and the performers had better be able to defend themselves. Many times they had to do just that. Tubb has been

one of the most popular entertainers on the Grand Ole Opry for many years, and his record shop sponsors an hour of country music every Saturday night immediately following the Opry.<sup>99</sup>

Some of the honkytonk songs that were made famous by Ernest Tubb and others are "Driving Nails in my Coffin," written by Floyd Tillman, "Born to Lose" by Ted Daphan, "It Makes No Difference Now" by Jimmy Davis and "I'm Walking the Floor Over You" written and sung by Ernest Tubb. These songs reflected the changing times in the south and southwest. Progress was catching up with southern people.<sup>100</sup> They were the last to feel the hurt of divorce and broken homes, and they wrote and sang about it. These songs did not dominate country music, but they did occupy a larger space in that musical field than they did in any other.

The whole country music world was affected in some way by western music. Hillbillies from everywhere dressed in gaudy western styles and called themselves cowboys. One of the most enduring of these groups was the prairie Ramblers, who were from Kentucky. They played on the WLS National barn dance for many years. This group included a



female singer from Hot Springs, Arkansas named Patsy Montana who became the first woman to sell a million records in the country music field with her recording of "I Want to be A Cowboy's Sweetheart" in 1936.<sup>101</sup>

This was a yodeling song, and Patsy was very good. I remember the record.

Song writers wrote both the old traditional type of songs and honkytonk songs in the thirties. The western song seemed to please people in all walks of life, however, and even writers in the northeast tried their luck at writing them. Billy Hill, who was an accomplished musician in both the classical and popular fields, wrote country and western songs. One of the most popular of them was the "Last Roundup." Tin Pan Alley reverberated with western music.<sup>102</sup> Northerners who would have turned their noses up at hill-billy music found nothing wrong with western songs.

Synonymous with the music which has come to be known as western swing is the name of Bob Wills.<sup>103</sup> Of course there are many people involved in the development of this unique music. There was a demand for music that was suitable for dancing. People who work hard usually play hard when they play, and dancing became one of the favorite distractions. Most honkytonks had dance floors, and



customers flocked to them at night. Later they were accommodated by large dance halls. The noise in these establishments forced musicians to use a heavier rhythm so that the beat could be heard by the dancers. Many country and western musicians used popular songs in their shows and they were greatly influenced by New Orleans jazz. The two most outstanding western swing band leaders, Bob Wills and Milton Brown, once worked together in a band called the Light Crust Dough Boys.<sup>104.</sup>

In 1935 they formed separate organizations. Brown organized a band called The Musical Brownies and Wills called his group the Texas Playboys. Bob Dunn, one of the first musicians to use a steel guitar with an electric pick up, worked with Brown's band. This group was very popular on records, radio and personal appearances until Milton Brown was killed in an automobile accident in 1936.<sup>105</sup>

Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys became the pace setters in western swing music. Bob played the fiddle which was always very prominent in the band. Leon McCauliff was featured on the steel guitar, and his recording of the "The Steel Guitar Rag" was imitated almost as often as "The Wild Wood Flower." Wills moved his headquarters to

Tulsa, Oklahoma, and from there he toured the west. His organization was the top western dance band during the war years. As Wills prospered, he increased the size of his band. Horns and drums were used on many occasions. Most western swing bands had featured singers, and Tommy Duncan filled this spot in the Wills group. In 1939 the Texas Playboys recorded a tune called "San Antonio Rose" as an instrumental number, and a year later it was recorded with lyrics. When Bing Crosby did a pop version of the song it sold more than a million records.<sup>106</sup>

Wills kept the music playing, and western fans came to hear it throughout the war years. The southern hillbillies sang western songs, adopted western clothes, but in this writer's opinion, western swing did not achieve the popularity that was enjoyed by the singing cowboys. Songs like "San Antonio Rose" and "Faded Love" caught on, but western swing appealed to a certain group of people at a certain time, and it filled their emotional needs.

CHAPTER VI  
ACUFF, TUBB, MONROE, AND COUNTRY MUSIC

If three artists could be given the lion's share of the credit for making the Grand Ole Opry the number one country music show in America, in the mid forties, my vote would go to Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb and Bill Monroe. Bill Monroe was a native of Rosene, Kentucky, who began his musical career as part of a brother act.<sup>107</sup> Bill and Charlie broke up in the late thirties, and each organized his own band. Bill called his organization The Blue Grass Boys, and they joined the Opry in 1939 where they gained quite a following. In 1946 the Blue Grass Boys were made up of members who were to go on to become country greats in the sixties when blue grass music became the rage on college campuses and among the urban folk.<sup>108</sup> Bill Monroe does not use any electric instruments in his band. He plays the mandolin, and is easily recognized by fans who love old time music. Such blue grass giants as Flatt and Scruggs, Don Reno and Red Smiley and many others were once a part of the Bill Monroe organization. Bill is still a member of the Grand Ole Opry. He saw his music almost supplanted by western and honkytonk songs during the post-war years, soar to great heights in the sixties in the



authentic folk music of North America and finally settle down into the main stream of country music in the seventies. The Bill Monroe sound has become the standard sound of blue grass music. His style is unmistakable. His high tenor voice and his intricate mandolin style are his trade mark, and his fans know his music no matter where they hear it. Because so many great country artists once belonged to his organization, he has gained the title, "The Father of Blue Grass Music."<sup>109</sup>

Roy Acuff was born in East Tennessee in 1903, and was reared on old time music and gospel songs.<sup>110</sup> He worked with a medicine show early in his career, as many other country artists did. He and Gene Autry are two of the big names in country music who were discovered by Arthur Satherly who recorded artists for Columbia and other record companies in much the same manner that Ralph Peer had in the twenties. Acuff played the fiddle and sang in a mournful emotional style that country fans loved. He does not use electrical instruments in his band. He is not critical of those who do, but he believes that the simple unelectrified music is better suited to his style.

Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys joined the Opry in 1938. He had obtained a record contract with Columbia by



then, and was on his way to becoming King of country music.<sup>111</sup>

His performance of "The Great Speckled Bird" and "The Wabash Cannonball" brought a sensation at the Opry. The dobro sound of Pete Kerby, (bashful brother Oswald) has become as intricate a part of the Roy Acuff style as the mournful songs and Roy's own voice.<sup>112</sup>

Even though Acuff remained traditional when pressure was on country singers to adopt western styles and electric instruments, he became the first real singing star of the Opry.<sup>113</sup>

He accumulated a fortune during the forties, and invested it wisely. He sang religious songs as well as tragic love ballads and songs about suffering and death.

He had whatever country fans needed because they flocked to see him whenever he played whether it be in an auditorium, a tent or a country music park.<sup>114</sup>

His name was known everywhere. It is rumored that when the Japanese attacked Okinawa, their battle cry was, "To hell with

Roosevelt, to hell with Babe Ruth, and to hell with Roy Acuff."<sup>115</sup> If this statement is true, it is probably the greatest tribute ever paid Roy Acuff.

The Grand Ole Opry supplanted the WLS National Barn Dance in popularity during the heyday of Roy Acuff. Shortly after he joined the Grand Ole Opry, the makers of Prince

Albert Smoking Tobacco bought a thirty minute segment on the show which was broadcast from coast to coast. This along with the nationwide portion of the WLS show widened the scope of country music as nothing else ever had.<sup>116</sup>

Country music parks were established as early as the mid thirties in the north, but the south had none until 1948 when Roy Acuff purchased the Dunbar Cave facility near Clarksville, Tennessee.<sup>117</sup> These were not all-purpose parks where country entertainers appeared occasionally. They were parks which were dedicated exclusively to country music. They featured country shows from the big barn dances, and did much to promote the music. Buck Lake in Indiana is one of these parks.

Even though the depression years were some of the most difficult that Americans have ever had to face, country music survived. As a matter of fact, it not only survived but it spread and widened its scope. Country songs said the things that rural people felt, and could not express, so they bought it even if they had to sacrifice in order to do so.<sup>118</sup> They danced, laughed and cried with this music, and forgot their troubles for a little while.

CHAPTER VII  
FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE 1960'S

In 1941 Americans in northern and eastern cities were dancing to music furnished by the big bands. In the west and southwest, western swing supplied the accompaniment for the throngs who gathered in the ballrooms and honky-tonks every night to dance and have fun for a while. Kids all over the nation, when they could scrape up a dime, were watching western movies featuring such singing cowboys as Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and Tex Ritter. Meanwhile, people in the southeast were listening to hillbilly songs performed by Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Bill Monroe, Red Foley and many others.

With the coming of World War II, hillbilly music began to change.<sup>119</sup> War songs appeared along with other country songs that dealt with more of the problems of the common people than had ever been true before. Country music spread; in fact, it outdistanced every other type of music during the forties. More than that, it achieved nationwide recognition.

It was given a big boost by the A.S.C.A.P. controversy in December, 1941.<sup>120</sup> The American Society of



Composers, Authors and Publishers is a licensing organization that protects its members by making certain that they are compensated by broadcasters for the use of their music. At that time the organization looked upon most country songs with scorn, and very few country song writers were admitted to its membership. To counteract this discrimination, BMI, Broadcast Music Incorporated, a rival company, was organized in 1939.<sup>121</sup> ASCAP owned about three-fourths of the music that was used by broadcasters, and the latter paid for the use of it. In December, 1940, ASCAP demanded 9,000,000 dollars for the use of its music by radio. This doubled the figure that had been paid formerly, and station managers refused to meet the demand. A.S.C.A.P. music was banned from radio. The bulk of popular music belonged to the organization, and only a few songs which were not controlled by it, and those which had become public domain, could be used. Country song writers and BMI were quick to take advantage of this made-to-order situation. The ban lasted only ten months, but by October, 1941, BMI had accumulated a catalogue of more than 600 songs.

In August, 1942, the American Federation of Musicians called for a strike against the recording companies. They were demanding better pay for record sessions, and more



benefits for their musicians from the companies.<sup>122</sup> The record men heard about the upcoming strike in July, and replenished their supply of new records by calling recording sessions that went non-stop around the clock for a month. In spite of these frantic efforts, record producers were soon driven to the wall by their need for new records. The Decca Record Company became so desperate that it capitulated and signed a contract with the union in September, 1943. Many smaller companies followed Decca's lead. Capital Records was one of these companies that went on to become a major label. R.C.A. Victor and Columbia fell into line, November, 1944.<sup>123</sup>

The ASCAP struggle and the musicians' strike hurt the big bands, but they had given country and race music a big lift.

Billboard, music's most influential trade magazine in those years began cautiously to mention country music in 1940.<sup>124</sup> In 1943 it carried a small write-up that lumped country and race music together. In 1944 it was calling country music American folk music, and by 1948, hillbilly music became country and western, and race music became rhythm and blues.

Country artists had resented the term hillbilly for a number of years, but it took some doing to get it changed.<sup>125</sup> They believed that this term caused popular musicians to look down on them and their product with scorn. They fought hard to change this concept, and they finally won their goal. Persons like Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb and Red Foley led the fight aided by Murray Nash who was a prominent figure in the music business at that time.

In spite of a shortage of shellac, records were produced throughout the war years, and it was evident that the music market was changing. Servicemen came from every part of the country, and their musical tastes mingled. Many of those from the big cities of the north and east heard country music for the first time when some southern country boy pulled out a beat-up guitar, and started singing. They learned that country songs had something to say, and they listened.<sup>126</sup> Early in the war, the armed forces showed a preference for country music, and the Grand Ole Opry stars benefitted the most. The Opry had replaced the national barn dance as the leading country show, and Nashville became Hillbilly Heaven.<sup>127</sup> WSM personnel organized the Camel Caravan in 1941, and its artists toured the army camps all over the nation. The men received the music enthusiastically-

cally because it dealt with real problems in a real world, broached subjects that popular music would not touch, such as divorce, infidelity, war and death. Performers sang of mother and home, and the lonely soldier loved it and bought it.<sup>128</sup> These men exercised a powerful influence on the music of the period.

Traditional country songs no longer satisfied the appetite of the public. Country singers added more instruments to their bands. Pee-wee King brought an accordion and drums to the Grand Ole Opry.<sup>129</sup> The old timers said that country music was becoming polluted, but most promoters realized that the art was flourishing as never before. The movies had brought country music into national focus with the singing cowboys in the thirties. Doug Green says that even though country fans and performers tend to ridicule the singing cowboy, country music might have remained an obscure art peculiar to the south for many more years without his contribution.<sup>130</sup> Whether or not this is true, country music has widened its scope to an extent that had not been thought possible. It was crossing barriers that had seldom been crossed. When the musicians' strike ended in 1944, one of the first and



most successful records to be released was "Pistol Packing Mamma," a country song performed by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters.<sup>131</sup>

When the war ended, country music boomed.<sup>132</sup> Eddy Arnold replaced Roy Acuff as the top ranking country artist. He is identified with such songs as "Bouquet of Roses," "How's the World Treating You," "The Cattle Call" and scores of others.<sup>133</sup>

Race music which had been performed for blacks by blacks became rhythm and blues, and a few white people began to experiment with it. Big time promoters came on the scene.<sup>134</sup>

Personal managers promoted country artists. Among these were Tom Parker, Oscar Davis, Hal Burns and J. L. Frank. Eddy Arnold led the pack of country singers, followed by Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb until the appearance of Hiram (Hank) Williams with "Love

Sick Blues" in 1949.<sup>135</sup> This song was a combination of the yodel and Negro blues. Its appeal brought Williams from the Louisiana Hay Ride to the Grand Ole Opry in June of 1949.

Hank Williams was a mournful singer, steeped in traditional country music. It is ironic that he did more to diversify country music than any other artist or writer before his

time.<sup>136</sup> He claimed that success as a showman in any kind of music could be summed up in one word, sincerity. He



believed that an audience could discern the real feelings of a performer when he appeared on the stage, and that it would respond accordingly. He was sincere in his singing. He was sad when he sang "Wedding Bells" or "Cold, Cold Heart," but when he sang, "Hey, Good Looking" or "Honky-tonking," his audience could see the fun-loving side of his nature. His never-ending battle with alcohol brought about his dismissal from the Grand Ole Opry in 1952, but his popularity did not wane. In October of that year, he signed a movie contract with MGM. Songs poured from his pen

until his untimely death January 1st, 1953. Many of his songs have been performed by popular singers.<sup>137</sup> Tony

Bennett sold 1,500,000 copies of "Cold, Cold Heart." Other Williams songs that hit the pop charts were "Your Cheating Heart" recorded by Joanie James, "Hey Good Looking" by Jo Stafford and Gordon McRae, and "I Can't Help It" by Guy Mitchell. People who would not listen to country music

found nothing wrong with a country song done up pop style by a popular artist accompanied by a big band. Mitch Miller promoted this trend.<sup>138</sup> Miller had not believed in this

combination, however, until Patty Paige, a popular performer, hit the charts with Tennessee Waltz in 1950.<sup>139</sup> This was

a country song written by Red Stewart and Pee-wee King. Murray Nash believed in the song. At that time he was the manager of Acuff-Rose Publications. He claims that he sent a copy of the sheet music of the song to Mitch Miller every month for almost a year. Tennessee Waltz became the top selling country song of all times, and Acuff-Rose became a giant in the publishing firms of the country music field.<sup>140</sup>

Another new trend was taking place in country music after World War II. Country and popular artists were being paired on records. Margaret Whiting and Jimmy Wakley, Kay Starr and Ernie Ford, Ernest Tubb and the Andrews Sisters are some examples.<sup>141</sup>

The cheating song became one of the dominant themes in country music during the late forties and early fifties.<sup>142</sup> Jukeboxes boomed out with "Slipping Around" by Floyd Tillman, "One has my Name, the Other has my Heart" recorded by Wakley and Whiting and "Back Street Affair," written by Billy Wallace and made popular by Webb Pierce. By this time, radio featured record shows as well as live talent.

There are many country artists who are quick to acknowledge their debt to Hank Williams. His influence is



evident in the performances of Ray Price, George Jones and Lefty Frizzell; while George Morgan, Marty Robbins and Leon Payne show adherence to the Arnold style.<sup>143</sup>

Webb Pearce followed Hank Williams as the most popular country artist. He boasts of twenty-one hits in succession. These include, "Wondering, Slowly, More and More" and "I'm in the Jail House Now."<sup>144</sup>

The post-war period saw the rise of the professional song writer.<sup>145</sup> Up to that time, many country artists had written their own tunes, or recorded traditional songs that had been handed down from one generation to another, but the demand for country songs became so great that song writing was recognized as another way to accumulate a fortune in the rapidly expanded country music world. Harlin Howard, Willie Nelson, Hank Cockrin, the Bryants, Bobby Russell and Mary John Wilkin became familiar names to the record producers on music row. Wilkin claims that she uses extra-sensory perception in writing songs. One of her most famous compositions is "P.T. 109."<sup>146</sup>

Even though Woody Guthrie was mentioned earlier as a protester (see Chapter IV) he deserves special attention as a prominent American song writer.<sup>147</sup> He wrote country songs

like "So Long It's Been Good to Know You," and "Those Oklahoma Hills" which were very successful, but his "This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land" has become an American standard. He received a tribute for his songs about America and its working people from Secretary of Interior, Stewart Udall, April 6, 1966. He was given the Department of Interior's Conservation Service Award, and a Bonneville power substation was named The Woody Guthrie<sup>148</sup> Power Substation. He was given credit for knowing and working the land, and making his countrymen aware of its potential and beauty through his songs.

Women were slow to make a place for themselves in country music. This was partially due to the fundamentalist Christian conception of show men, and a woman who chose this profession was an even worse disgrace to her family. With the exception of Patsy Montana,<sup>149</sup> who sold a million records in 1936, women appeared as a part of some country band on radio and country shows. There was usually a male relative in the band with her. Kitty Wells and Rose Maddox were the first female vocalists to gain real recognition in the country music field. Kitty worked with her husband, Johnny Wright of the Johnny and Jack team, and Rose appeared with her brothers.<sup>150</sup> In 1950 Kitty Wells



hit the charts with "It Wasn't God that made Honkytonk Angels," and she placed nineteen songs in the top ten between 1950 and 1963. She was followed by a number of female artists, but she has gained the title, Queen of country music.

Following the war, more barn dance shows became popular. Three of the most prominent were the Dallas Jamboree on KRLD, the Town House Party in Los Angeles and the Louisiana Hay Ride on KWKH, in Shreveport, Louisiana.<sup>151</sup> The Hay Ride gained the name Cradle of the Stars because many of the Opry performers acquired much of their poise and showmanship from their appearances on that show. Among these were Hank Williams, Jim Reeves, the Cajun duet, Rusty and Doug, and the alligator man himself, Jimmy Newman. He and his Cajun fiddler said that they might still be in Louisiana if Murray Nash had not taken an interest in them.<sup>152</sup> He helped Jimmy get to Nashville. Jimmy's biggest record up to this time was "A Fallen Star." Cajun music has made a real impact on country music, and is becoming more and more popular.

The death of Hank Williams came on the threshold of great changes in both country and popular music.<sup>153</sup> The teenage record market had grown steadily since the war, and because of their unprecedented affluence, the influence

of this group was greater than ever before. The "kids" began to rebel against traditional music of all kinds. Following the war, many of them had bought country records, but by the early fifties these no longer satisfied their appetites. They could not identify with the cheating country song nor the sentimental popular ballad. Their minds were occupied with such "vices" as pot, abortion, the pill and the danger of nuclear power. Many of them started buying rhythm and blues records, and in a short time they made their feelings felt in record productions all over America. The clamor for change grew too loud to be ignored. Record productions remained the same for about a year after Williams died, but early in 1954, Bill Haley, a country artist, becoming conscious of the demand for something different, recorded a rhythm song called "Rock Around the Clock."<sup>154</sup> It hit the charts immediately. He changed the name of his band to Bill Haley and the Comets, and rock and roll was born. This music combined country music and the blues with a heavy rhythm which was made to order for dancing, and the "kids" were quickly caught up in its appeal. It was exactly what they wanted. Television which had given a great boost to country music now did the same

for rock and roll. The channels saturated the public with dance shows which were called hops. On these programs the "kids" danced to music which was usually supplied by records. Guest artists appeared from time to time on the shows, and pantomimed their records.

In August, 1954, the Sun label released a record by Elvis Presley called "That's All Right, Mamma."<sup>155</sup>

According to Jerry Hopkins, Elvis came picking, singing, grinning and wagging his tail all over America, and the "kids" loved him.<sup>156</sup> Sun led all other labels in the production of rock and roll records for the first few years.

Early in the period they signed such giants as Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis. These four were known as "the million dollar quartet." Cash and Lewis are leaders in the country field today. In the field of rock and roll, Elvis Presley was the most successful. He became the "king" of rock and roll. He appeared on the Grand Ole Opry early in his career, and received very little, if any, encouragement.<sup>157</sup> Jerry Hopkins claims that this experience broke the singer's heart.

Tom Parker, one of the greatest promoters of all times, recognized Presley's potential, and became his personal



manager in 1956. Due to his influence Presley left Sun records, and became the leading artist on R.C.A. Victor. He has become the most popular singer of all times. He is the greatest recording star who ever sang a song, too, if record sales can be used as the criterion for judgment. By 1970 he had sold 250,000,000 records for Victor, and I have no figures from Sun.<sup>158</sup> Presley made a number of movies.

Some critics say they are good; but just as many or more call them mediocre or bad. He was making a comeback as a road artist in the seventies. He died August 16, 1977. His records climbed to the top of the charts once more in both the popular and country fields, and tributes were recorded before he was buried. The most famous of these was "The King is Gone" by Ronnie McDowell. It made him a star in country music.<sup>159</sup>

Black artists became prominent in the rock and roll field. Such names as Sam Cook, Chuck Berry and Little Richard became well known to many music lovers. Rock and roll took priority over all other types of music for about a decade. Radio stations were quick to jump aboard the rock band wagon, and many of them which had once played country music turned to rock and roll. One of these was the important country music station, WLS in Chicago. Both

popular and country music were hurt by this teenage onslaught of the music world. At first performers and promoters in both fields fought the change, but they soon conformed to the trend except for a few die hards like Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys,<sup>160</sup> and Ray Price, a honkytonk singer who resisted change.<sup>161</sup> He kept singing his honkytonk songs with his original band in which the steel guitar and fiddle were prominent instruments. Some of his hits were "Crazy Arms," "City Lights" and "Heartaches by the Numbers." Most country artists, however, recorded songs that could spill over into the rock or pop market. This happened so frequently that Charlie Lamb, editor of Country Music Reporter,<sup>162</sup> asked if he could list "A White Sport Coat" by Marty Robbins and "Young Love" by Sonny James in his charts. He was not only given a flat "No" by Don Law and Ken Nelson of Columbia and Capital Records respectively, but the artists themselves objected. They feared that the listing in a country chart would stop popular record buyers from purchasing their records. This took place in 1957. Lamb went home and changed the name of his magazine to Music Reporter.

Country-pop music was pushed by artists and record

men alike. There was never a greater promoter of country music than the Country Music Association which was organized in November, 1958.<sup>163</sup>

By the early sixties, country music had become a billion dollar business. The Country Music Hall of Fame was established by the C.M.A. in 1961.<sup>164</sup>

Its first members were Jimmy Rodgers, Hank Williams and Fred Rose. Roy Acuff became the first living member in 1962. The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum were<sup>165</sup> officially opened March 31st, 1967.

Nashville became the homes of talent agencies, promoters, publishing companies, and record men. Recording studios were built by R.C.A., Victor and Bradley. Bradley's was an independent studio that did recording sessions for many companies. Columbia and Decca were among them. In the early sixties fifty percent of all commercial records made in the United States were recorded in Nashville, and sixty percent of the hits were done there.<sup>166</sup> The Nashville sound became famous throughout America. Nashville became Music City, U.S.A., and record men such as Ken Nelson of Capital, Don Law of Columbia, Paul Dohen and Owen Bradley of Decca and Steve Sholes and Chet Atkins of Victor promoted the new country-pop styles. The steel guitar became taboo.



These record men were proud of the fact that country and popular music styles and songs were becoming so similar that even an expert could hardly distinguish one type from another. They admitted that they were glad that country artists had replaced the steel guitar and fiddle with a chorus and drums on their records. Commercialism was the main consideration.

Country entertainers were recognized everywhere. They had played at Carnegie Hall in New York and Jordan Hall in Boston.<sup>167</sup> Traditional music lovers complained, but the boom went on. Country songs still talked about the problems of the day, but they were dressed up in an entirely different style. Nashville became the country music center of the world. The Country Music Association gave a great number of its awards to those artists who were based in Nashville, and the same held true for the performers who were elected to the Hall of Fame.<sup>168</sup> Many of the old pioneers in country music had to stand by and wait while newer and younger artists and promoters were admitted. Eddy Arnold preceded Gene Autry, and James Denny, a big time promoter preceded Ralph Peer. This is not to say that Arnold and Denny don't belong in the Hall of Fame. They

both deserve their places there, but they had much more time to wait than these old timers. The C.M.A. has been criticized for all these things.

By the early sixties, country music had achieved world-wide acclaim. U.S. servicemen had taken their music overseas with them during World War II, and Grand Ole Opry stars such as Hank Snow and Roy Acuff had traveled to Europe and Japan to play shows for the American occupation forces, but the greatest promoters of country music overseas and especially in Europe was the Armed Forces Radio Network.<sup>169</sup>

Servicemen preferred the old traditional country music. It reminded them of home, therefore, the A.F.N. played it. It was picked up by fifty million Europeans who also showed a preference for the traditional music.<sup>170</sup> Jim Reeves, a country-pop singer became a favorite in Norway. His voice was smooth and pleasing, but his songs were country songs. "Four Walls" and "He'll Have to Go" are examples. With the European market, the servicemen and the urban folk movement giving adherence to more traditional music, the pendulum began to swing back. Country music stabilized. Some of the artists who sold in the pop field were Jim Reeves, Eddy Arnold, Jimmy Newman,

Marty Robbins, Sonny James, Lefty Frizell, and some blue grass records such as "The Ballad of Jed Clampett" by Flatt and Scruggs.<sup>171</sup>

The honkytonk songs and "tear jerkers" reasserted themselves with the rise of George Jones, Buck Owens and Merle Haggard. The rock and roll and that of the country pop era are still felt in country music today, but not to the exclusion of traditional country music as it had been in the late fifties and early sixties. The Country Music Association is the giant promoter in country music. Its awards are coveted by country performers everywhere. It sprang from a disc jockey organization which owes a great debt to Murray Nash for its conception.<sup>172</sup> Perhaps some day he will receive the credit he is due.

1963 and 1964 were tragic years for country music lovers. Four very popular entertainers were killed in a plane crash, March 5th, 1963. These included Cowboy Lloyd Copas, Randy Hughes, Hawkshaw Hawkins and Patsy Cline, who had received the top female vocalist of the year award the year before. Jack Anglin of the Johnny and Jack group was killed in a car wreck on his way to the funeral service of those who had died a few days earlier. Jim Reeves died in



a plane crash July 31, 1964.<sup>173</sup>

Tributes were written for these stars before they were buried. This had been true of Hank Williams in 1953.

Bakersfield, California, became the headquarters for country music on the west coast. Such country greats as Buck Owens, Merle Haggard and Glen Campbell received their experience in showmanship there, and it acquired the name "Little Nashville."<sup>174</sup>

The Louisiana Hay Ride has gained the name, "Cradle of the Stars," because many of its performers graduate to the Grand Ole Opry.<sup>175</sup> It has a great following. Elvis Presley appeared there for a few months.

Many traditionalists feared that country music would die because of the commercialism of the sixties. Of course, some of the additions of this period such as the drums, electric bass, piano, heavy rhythms and upbeat songs became a permanent part of country music, but there was a reaction to the amalgamation of pop and country music which is known as the traditional Renaissance.<sup>176</sup> The rebirth was noted by the resurgence of the honkytonk song, the appearance of the historical or the saga song, the interest in string music shown by the urban folk movement and most of all the revival of blue grass music. One of

the most popular of the saga songs was "The Battle of New Orleans" recorded by Johnny Horton.<sup>177</sup> It sold more than a million records. Running a close second was "El Paso" by Marty Robbins. These songs were reminiscent of the event songs of the twenties and thirties.

The honkytonk songs of the sixties indicated the social patterns of that time. Instead of commenting on rural problems they spoke of the problems of a rural people in an urban society.<sup>178</sup> The truck driver rather than the hobo was the hero of many of these songs. "Six Days on the Road" by Dave Dudley became a favorite. These songs supplied the emotional needs of country fans who had moved to the city to find work.

The steel guitar enjoyed a comeback with the revival of the honkytonk song. Names like Roy Wiggins, Jerry Byrd, Pete Drake, Buddy Immons, Buddy Charlton and Bud Isaacs were well known to steel guitar lovers.<sup>179</sup> The appeal of the honkytonk song, however, is its lyrics. Many writers have written this type of song, but Bill Anderson and Harlin Howard are probably the most prolific. Two of the more prolific new writers are Tom T. Hall and Eddy Rabbit.

Blue grass music enjoyed a tremendous revival in the sixties. Bill Monroe assembled a band in 1946 which developed the music that is recognized everywhere as blue grass music. Its name is derived from Monroe's band not from the blue grass region.<sup>180</sup> In fact, many more of the best known blue grass musicians come from the Carolinas, Virginia and Tennessee. In 1946 Monroe's band consisted of Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Chubby Wese, Cederick Rainwater and Bill Monroe. The three finger banjo-picking style used by Scruggs gave blue grass the distinctive sound that we recognize today. This band stayed together until 1947 when Flatt and Scruggs organized a band of their own called the Foggy Mountain Boys. Monroe's band had been the training ground for many well known blue grass musicians. Some of these are Flatt and Scruggs, Don Reno and Red Smiley and the Stanley Brothers. Bill Monroe is known as The Father of Blue Grass Music.<sup>181</sup> Flatt and Scruggs came back to the Opry with their band in 1955. They were identified with Martha White Flour for many years. They became popular with the college crowd and the urban folk movement even while most facets of country music were becoming more and more commercial. Blue grass had a fresh new sound, even though it is derived from many different



styles of old time tunes. Neither Bill Monroe nor Flatt and Scruggs used electric instruments. Bill can still be recognized by his distinctive mandolin style and his high tenor voice. Blue grass bands played all over the nation. Flatt and Scruggs played in Carnegie Hall and in Jordan Hall. They recorded the "Ballad of Jed Clampett" which was the first blue grass song to reach number one on the country music charts. It became the theme song of the popular television series, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, where Flatt and Scruggs appeared as guests from time to time.<sup>182</sup> Blue grass music has its own journal, Blue Grass Unlimited, and blue grass festivals are held annually.

The first festival was organized in honor of Bill Monroe in Berryville, Virginia, in 1975.<sup>183</sup> He has performed on the Grand Ole Opry since 1939, and he owns a country music park in Bean Blossom, Indiana, where he often appears. Some blue grass acts now use electric instruments and record honkytonk songs along with the old time tunes and gospel songs. This is an indication that blue grass is drifting back into the mainstream of country music rather than adhering to the urban folk development. The argument goes on in country music circles, with some saying that it was Bill Monroe, others claiming that it was Earl Scruggs

who popularized blue grass music, and made it palatable to city dwellers. I think I will just be evasive and say that it took both Monroe's mandolin and high nasal voice and Scruggs with his five stringed banjo to make blue grass music what it is today.

The sixties was a time of protests, and since music is one of the indicators of the social patterns in our society there were many songs of this nature written. They protested everything from racial discrimination, to the Vietnam War, to the assassination of prominent people in our society. Bob Dillon, Mac Davis and Kris Kristofferson are some of the writers who have written famous protest songs.

Paul Hemphill says that Tootsie's Orchid Lounge was the place to meet the country music stars in the sixties.<sup>184</sup> He comments on some of those who made the big time and some who didn't. Tootsie's was right next door to the old Opry house, and the artists ran back and forth between the two places when they were not on stage. Tootsie Best, who owned the established helped many of the performers before they received the big breaks. She died last year, (1977) and many of the Grand Ole Opry stars remembered her and paid tribute to her by attending her funeral in force.

CHAPTER VIII  
COUNTRY MUSIC IN THE 1970'S

The decade of the seventies has brought even greater expansion of country music. It has reached a position that might well be envied by other music fields. Bright new performers keep appearing in a never ending stream, and the old stars seem to grow brighter every year. Women have become more and more prominent in country music. Loretta Lynn, who followed Patsy Cline as the number one country female singer in 1964, was named entertainer of the year in 1972.<sup>185</sup> She was the first woman to achieve this goal. Such names as Tammy Wynette, Lynn Anderson, Dotty West, Dolly Parton, Anne Murray, Linda Ronstadt, Emmy Lou Harris, Barbara Mandrell and Crystal Gale are familiar to most music lovers. Dotty West received a Grammy for her performance of "Here Comes my Baby Back Again." She said she was very proud of this achievement but she covets the number one country female singer award which has eluded her up to this time.<sup>186</sup> She and Kenny Rogers received the C.M.A. award for the best country duet of the year in 1978, and they received the Music City news award for this achievement June 4th, 1979. The C.M.A. gave the entertainer



of the year award to Dolly Parton in 1978, and the award for the number one country female singer went to Crystal Gale. Music City News gave this award to Barbara Mandrell, June 4th, 1979.

New male stars come on the scene every year. Some of the most popular ones of today are Ronnie Milsap, Eddy Rabbit, Mac Davis, John Denver, Merle Haggard, Charlie Rich, Charlie Pride, Buck Owens, Don Williams, and Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings, the country outlaws. Don Williams received the C.M.A. award for the number one country male singer of the year, 1978. Kenny Rogers received this award from the Music City News in 1979. The old favorites such as Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Hank Snow, Eddy Arnold and Marty Robbins are still around.

The outlaw movement was another new development that took place in the country music field in the seventies.<sup>187</sup> Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings were the leaders in this movement. The Nashville elite considered them too far out at first, but they are becoming accustomed to the change. The Outlaw headquarters is located in Austin, Texas. Many country fans call the outlaw sound fresh and interesting.

A number of cities are gaining a reputation as record-

ing centers. Among these are Austin, Texas, Florence, Alabama, and Memphis, Tennessee. Ray Whitley believes that Nashville will keep up to date with its recording techniques and varieties in both musical arrangements and the latest in sound.<sup>188</sup> It will be challenged from time to time, but it will hold on to its unique status in the recording business.

There is an unbelievable number of musicians who are living and hoping to make a living in Nashville. Some of them are working; some are not. Among those who are working, there are those who travel on the road with big country artists, and those who remain in the city to work the recording sessions. Becoming a recording musician is the dream of every picker in the business according to Chet Atkins.<sup>189</sup> Traveling gets rough, and most of them live for the day when they will be able to stay at home and make a living in the music business. Many have done just that. These include Floyd Cramer, Boots Randolph, Hargus (Pig) Robbins and Chet Atkins who is now manager of the R.C.A. Victor studios in Nashville.

Fan clubs for country artists, country music magazines, and the increased number of country music shows on television leave no doubt that the country music field is getting bigger all the time. Its performers for the most

part, are sophisticated business men who know how to get around and make money, but the product still talks about the problems of the common people, and the fans love it. They flock to the new Opry House from all over the nation. The Opry House is a beautiful new facility set in an amusement park where a fan may choose any kind of musical entertainment that suits his fancy.

The Grand Ole Opry show is the goal of every country hopeful. Usually it takes a hit record to rate a guest appearance on the Opry,<sup>190</sup> but once in a while an unknown artist is given a chance.

Another indication of the tremendous growth of country music can be found in the increasing number of all country radio stations.<sup>191</sup> In 1961 there were only 81 stations in the United States that programmed nothing but country music. In 1977 there were 1150. There are more than 2000 that play some country music.

Country music reached another pinnacle when on February 25th, 1978, Public Television featured a three-hour segment of the Grand Ole Opry.

But they could not have made country music the giant it is today without the natural appeal it holds. It can talk to anyone regardless of his background because it



comments on the everyday problems of everyday people. The words and melodies are usually catchy enough that most people can sing along with a record the second or third time they hear it. When Fred Rose, a popular singer from Chicago stood back stage at the Grand Ole Opry and listened to Roy Acuff singing "The Great Speckled Bird" with so much emotion that tears ran down his face, Rose exclaimed, "Country Music is Feeling."<sup>192</sup> His interest was aroused, and he went on to write many country hits, and was instrumental in establishing the first country music publishing firm in Nashville.

Country music is many things to many people, and it continues to grow. It says the things that many fans want to say but can't find the words. Its repertoire boasts of songs to cry to and those that make you want to laugh or dance. There are even songs that help a person to dream or to escape to a far off place. An artist may use a song to cry in public about a secret grief, and a fan who suffers in the same manner has an outlet for his pain. They don't have to cry visibly. The song can do it for them. Jim Owen, in a portrayal of Hank Williams, made the comment, "Man, I don't just write those songs, I live them."<sup>193</sup> I asked Ray Whitley, an old time western star

and song writer, whether or not he believed that country music is an emotional catharsis. He replied, "Definitely."<sup>194</sup> I have talked to a number of country artists and country music devotees, and they agree with me.

The decade of the seventies has been another tragic one for country fans in that a number of bright stars are no longer with us. We have lost Tex Ritter, George Morgan, Stoney Cooper, Lefty Frizell, Mabelle and Sarah Carter, Bob Luman, Dave String Bean Akerman and Lester Flatt.

There are many commercial song writers who shop around for ideas and use their knowledge of country fans to help them write hit songs, but many composers still write according to their moods. I have tried my hand at composing, and I work according to my moods. When my life was colored by romance and happiness I wrote "Just as Sure as the World Turns," and "If You were a Dreamer," but when I felt doubt assail me I wrote "There's Always One who Loves a Lot and One who Loves Just a Little." In this way I could sing my joys or my sorrows in an acceptable way.

In my interviews with country music celebrities I asked them this question, "What does the future hold for

country music?" I received a variety of answers, but they all agreed on one thing. Country music is here to stay. It will continue to grow. It may falter at times as it did in the fifties during the rock and roll onslaught. It will change to meet the needs of the times. It will probably turn in many different directions, and absorb new trends and influences from various sources, but it will never die. From folk to hillbilly to country, what next? Nobody can say exactly, but when country fans have a need, country music will be there to supply it.



## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSIONS

Why has country music spread? There are various answers to this question. The music can be easily understood, and it contains songs that are relevant to people with all types of tastes. It has adopted good qualities from other fields of music which have enriched it and made it palatable to most Americans. Its performers are more polished, and have become better showmen. It has been exposed through personal appearances, records, radio, movies and television shows by big country artists. All of these things were certainly necessary if country music were to become a nationwide, and now worldwide, competitor in the entertainment field.

<sup>1</sup>Bill C. Malone, Country Music U.S.A., A Fifty Year History, University Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1968. This book is a comprehensive history of country music, and I have relied on it heavily.

<sup>2</sup>Douglas Green, Country Roots, On Casette.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Murray Nash, President of Ashna Music Corporation, and By Nash of Nashville Publications, Nashville, Tennessee, November 18, 1976.

<sup>4</sup>Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 1, Chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid

<sup>6</sup>Bill Malone, Op. Cit., p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, pp. 12-14.

<sup>8</sup>Alan Lomax, Folk Songs of North America, Doubleday and Company, 1960, p. 276.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Doug Green, Director of the Country Music Foundation, Nashville, Tennessee, November 18, 1976.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Shelton, The Country Music Story, The Bobbs-Meril Company, Inc., 1966, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 31.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, p. 68

<sup>14</sup>Leroy Hughbanks, Talking Wax, or The Story of the Phonograph, The Hobson Press, New York, 1945, p. 113.

<sup>15</sup>American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, Nothing Can Replace Music, New York, 1933, p. 1.

- <sup>16</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 34.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 38.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 39.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 40.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp. 49-50.
- <sup>21</sup> Doug Green, Interview, Op. Cit.
- <sup>22</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 1, Chapter 1.
- <sup>23</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 126.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 51.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 55.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 57.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 58.
- <sup>28</sup> A short biography of many of the early performers can be found in Bill C. Malone's Country Music, A Fifty Year History, pp. 38-60.
- <sup>29</sup> Doug Green, Interview, Op. Cit.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 62.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 63.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 64.
- <sup>34</sup> June Carter, I Remember the Carter Family, Country Music Round Up, XVII No. 90, July, 1965, pages 16-17 and 30-32, and XVII No. 91, Pages 16 to 20. This is a warm and personal biography of the Carter Family written by Mabelle Carter's daughter, June.



<sup>35</sup> Interview with Murray Nash, Lavergne, Tennessee, April 15, 1978.

<sup>36</sup> For an insight into the Carter Family's impact on the development of country music, see Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp. 63-68.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 68-72.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 72.

<sup>39</sup> George D. Haye, The Story of the Grand Ole Opry, Copyright by George D. Haye, 1953., p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 121.

<sup>43</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, Op. Cit., November 18, 1976.

<sup>44</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 75

<sup>45</sup> Taped Interview with Hal Durham, Manager of the Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, Tennessee, October 30, 1976.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 1.

<sup>48</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 79.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 83.

<sup>50</sup> Taped Interview with Grant Turner, Nashville, Tennessee, October 30, 1976.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 92.

<sup>53</sup> Mrs. Jimmy Rodgers, My Husband, Jimmy Rodgers, Ernest Tubb Publications, p. 261.

<sup>54</sup>For an idea of the influence that Jimmy Rodgers exerted on the development of country music see Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp 79-102.

<sup>55</sup>Mrs. Jimmy Rodgers, Op. Cit., p. 128.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Murray Nash, Interview, Op. Cit., November 18, 1976.

<sup>58</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp 131-132.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>62</sup>Woodrow Wilson (Woody) Guthrie, Bound for Glory, E. P. Dutton and Company, 1943, pp. 231-233.

<sup>63</sup>Murray Nash, Interview, Op. Cit., April 15, 1978.

<sup>64</sup>Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 4.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Taped interview with Ray Whitley and Murray Nash, Nashville, Tennessee, June 8, 1978.

<sup>68</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 115.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, p. 112.

<sup>70</sup>Gerald Carson, The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley, Rhinehart and Company, New York, 1960, p. 177.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid, p. 205.

<sup>72</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 113.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid, p. 124.

<sup>74</sup>For more about brother groups in the early years, see Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp 121-125.

<sup>75</sup>Taped Interview with Bill Carlisle, Nashville, Tennessee, October 30, 1976.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 124.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid, p. 126.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 1.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid, Side 3.

<sup>82</sup>Grant Turner, Interview, Op. Cit.

<sup>83</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op., Cit., p. 145.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>85</sup>Murray Nash, Interview, Op. Cit., November 18, 1976.

<sup>86</sup>Linnell Gentry, A History and Encyclopedia of Country, Western and Gospel Music, Mcquitty Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1961, p. 182.

<sup>87</sup>Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 3, Chapter 5.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp 151 to 154.

<sup>90</sup>Murray Nash, Interview, Op. Cit., November 18, 1976.

<sup>91</sup>Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 3, Chapter 5, Op. Cit.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 157.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>95</sup>Murray Nash, Interview, Nashville, Tennessee, November 18, 1976.



- <sup>96</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 3, Chapter 5.
- <sup>97</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 165.
- <sup>98</sup> Grant Turner, Interview, Op. Cit.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>100</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 162.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 176.
- <sup>102</sup> Doug Green, Interview, Op. Cit.
- <sup>103</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 3, Chapter 6.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>105</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 170.
- <sup>106</sup> Charles Townsend, Bob Wills, Stars of Country Music, pp. 157-179.
- <sup>107</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 3, Chapter 7.
- <sup>108</sup> Doug Green, Interview, Op. Cit.
- <sup>109</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 310
- <sup>110</sup> Elizabeth Schlappi, Roy Acuff, Stars of Country Music, pp. 179-202.
- <sup>111</sup> Doug Green, Interview, Op. Cit.
- <sup>112</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1976.
- <sup>113</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>115</sup> I have not been able to verify this story.

- <sup>116</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1976.
- <sup>117</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 196.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 183.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 184.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid, p. 187.
- <sup>121</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1976.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>123</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 188.
- <sup>124</sup> Ibid, p. 191.
- <sup>125</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1976.
- <sup>126</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, April 15, 1978.
- <sup>127</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>128</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp. 193-195.
- <sup>129</sup> Bill C. Malone, Judith McCulloh, Editors, Stars of Country Music, p. 401.
- <sup>130</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 4, Chapter 8.
- <sup>131</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 214.
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid, p. 209.
- <sup>133</sup> Bill C. Malone, Judith McCulloh, Editors, Op. Cit., pp. 402-405.
- <sup>134</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 212.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid, p. 232.
- <sup>136</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1976.
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid.

- 138 World of Country Music, Page 145.
- 139 Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1976.
- 140 Ibid.
- 141 Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 225.
- 142 Murray Nash, Interview, April 15, 1978.
- 143 Ibid.
- 144 Ibid.
- 145 Teddy Bart, Inside Music City U.S.A., pp. 1-3.
- 146 Ibid, pp. 109-123.
- 147 See Chapter IV.
- 148 Woody Guthrie, Op. Cit., Introduction.
- 149 See Chapter V.
- 150 Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 221.
- 151 Linnell Gentry, Op. Cit., pp. 168-175.
- 152 Interview with Jimmy Newman, Nashville, Tennessee,  
October 30, 1976.
- 153 Murray Nash, Interview, April 15, 1978.
- 154 Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 242.
- 155 Ibid, p. 243.
- 156 Herry Hopkins, Elvis T.B. 4581, side 1.
- 157 Ibid, Side 4.
- 158 Ibid, Side 20.
- 159 See Record Charts for August and September, 1977.



- <sup>160</sup> Interview with Hargus (Pig) Robbins, July 15, 1976, Telephone Interview.
- <sup>161</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>162</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1976.
- <sup>163</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 6.
- <sup>164</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>165</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>166</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp. 262-264.
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid, pp. 269-271.
- <sup>168</sup> Ibid, p. 268.
- <sup>169</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, April 15, 1978.
- <sup>170</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., pp. 272-273.
- <sup>171</sup> Bill Malone and Judith McCulloh, Editors, Op. Cit., pp. 419-424.
- <sup>172</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>173</sup> I was working in the music business at that time.
- <sup>174</sup> Paul Hemphill, The Nashville Sound, Bright Lights and Country Music T.B. 3326, Side 8.
- <sup>175</sup> Murray Nash, Interview, April 15, 1978.
- <sup>176</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 279.
- <sup>177</sup> Ibid, p. 281.
- <sup>178</sup> World of Country Music, Page 199.
- <sup>179</sup> Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 305.
- <sup>180</sup> Doug Green, Country Roots, Side 3, Chapter 7.
- <sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup>Murray Nash, Interview, April 15, 1978.

<sup>183</sup>Bill C. Malone, Op. Cit., p. 328.

<sup>184</sup>Paul Hemphill, Op. Cit., Side 1.

<sup>185</sup>Loretta Lynn, Coal Miner's Daughter, R.D. 9710, Introduction, Side 1.

<sup>186</sup>Taped interview with Dotty West, Nashville, Tennessee, October 30, 1976.

<sup>187</sup>Doug Green, Interview, November 18, 1976.

<sup>188</sup>Ray Whitley and Murray Nash, Interview, June 8, 1978.

<sup>189</sup>For a musician's view on the country music business, see Chet Atkins' book, Country Gentleman.

<sup>190</sup>Hal Durham, Interview, October 30, 1976.

<sup>191</sup>Telephone interview with Cindy Rose, Department of Statistics, Country Music Association, Nashville, Tennessee, June 8, 1978.

<sup>192</sup>Murray Nash, Interview, November 18, 1978.

<sup>193</sup>Jim Owen as Hank Williams in the W.D.C.N. production, Hank, February 26, 1977.

<sup>194</sup>Telephone interview with Ray Whitley, June 9, 1978.

## COUNTRY MUSIC, AN EMOTIONAL CATHARSIS

## Primary Sources

## Taped Interviews

Interview with Bill Carlisle, Nashville, Tennessee,  
October 30, 1976.

Interview with Hal Durham, Manager of the Grand Ole Opry,  
Nashville, Tennessee, October 30, 1976.

Interview with Doug Green, Director of the Country Music  
Foundation, Nashville, Tennessee, November 18, 1976.

Interview with Murray Nash, President of Ashna Music  
Corporation and By Nash of Nashville Publications,  
Nashville, Tennessee, November 18, 1976.

Interview with Murray Nash, Aavergne, Tennessee, April  
15, 1978.

Interview with Jimmy Newman, Nashville, Tennessee,  
October 30, 1976.

Interview with Grant Turner, A WSM Radio Announcer,  
Nashville, Tennessee, October 30, 1976.

Interview with Dotty West, Nashville, Tennessee,  
October 30, 1976.

Interview with Ray Whitley and Murray Nash, Nashville,  
Tennessee, June 8, 1978.

## Telephone Interviews

Hargus Robbins, July 15, 1976, Nashville, Tennessee.

Interview with Cindy Rose, Department of Statistics,  
Country Music Association, Nashville, Tennessee,  
June 9, 1978.



## Secondary Sources

## Books and Articles

American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers,  
Nothing Can Replace Music, New York, 1933.

Atkins, Chester with Neely, Bill, Country Gentleman, n.d.

Bart, Teddy, Inside Music City U.S.A., Aurora Publishing,

Billboard, The World of Country Music, 1963.

Carter, June, I Remember the Carter Family, XVII No. 90,  
July, 1965, pp. 16, 17, 30 to 20; XVII, No. 91,  
October, 1965, pp. 16-20.

Carson, Gerald, The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley,  
Rhinehart and Company, New York, 1960.

Gentry, Linnell, A History and Encyclopedia of Country,  
Western and Gospel Music, Mcquitty Press, Nashville,  
Tennessee, 1961. She is the editor.

Green, Douglas, Country Roots, Hawthorne Books, 1976.

Guthrie, Woodrow Wilson, Bound for Glory, E. P. Dutton  
and Company, 1943.

Haye, George D., The Story of the Grand Ole Opry, Copyright  
by George D. Haye, 1953.

Hemphill, Paul, The Nashville Sound, Bright Lights and  
Country Music, Simon and Schuster, 1970.

Hemphill, Paul, The Nashville Sound, Bright Lights and  
Country Music T.B. 3326, Published by Simon and Schuster,  
1970.

Hopkins, Jerry, Elvis T.B. 4581, Simon and Schuster, 1971.

Hughbanks, Leroy, Talking Wax; or The Story of the Phonograph,  
The Hobson Press, New York, 1945.

Lomax, Alan, Folk Songs of North America, Doubleday and Company, 1960.

Lynn, Loretta, Coal Miner's Daughter, R.D. 9710, Copyright 1976 by Loretta Lynn.

Malone, Bill C., Country Music U.S.A. a Fifty Year History University Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1968.

Malone, Bill C., and McCulloh, Judith, editors, Stars of Country Music, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1975.

Rodgers, Mrs. Jimmy, My Husband Jimmy Rodgers, Ernest Tubb Publications, n.d.

Shelton, Robert, The Country Music Story, The Bobbs-Meril Company, Inc., 1966.