



COMMERCIAL DISCS CUT IN KWKH RADIO STUDIOS

The next eighteen songs are examples of the commercial discs recorded by record companies in the KWKH radio studios during the early years of the Hayride.

Several of them were major country music hits, competing with music made in professional studios in Nashville, Dallas, and the big cities of the north, east and west. In part, this is as much testimony to the abilities of KWKH recording engineer Bob 'Sully' Sullivan as it is to the artists themselves. Sullivan was born in Shreveport and lived locally, working a full day shift on the station as well as taking charge of outside broadcasts such as the Hayride. He was also persuaded to stay on occasionally during the down-time of the early morning hours. While the station was off air, he would turn the insulated internal room

used for radio broadcasts, some thirty by fifteen feet in size with a twelve foot high ceiling, and an announcer's viewing area, into a recording studio with only a one-track control board but with five top quality microphones. In the main, the studio catered to the local artists who wanted to be able to record locally for the local PACEMAKER record label set up by singer Webb Pierce, but it also suited artists contracted to other labels including Slim Whitman who had a day job as a mail man and Mac Wiseman who was resident in Shreveport briefly and was unable to get back to Nashville on demand.

TEX GRIMSLEY & THE TEXAS PLAYBOYS

1-13 **Walking The Dog**
(Grimsley)
PACEMAKER 1001

Fiddle player **Marcel "Tex" Grimsley** was a mainstay of the KWKH radio schedules in the late '40s and he was the first to record on PACEMAKER with his band, the Texas Playboys. Their *Walking The Dog* featured Cliff Grimsley, Tex's brother, on vocals. Tex was born in Logan, Texas in 1917 and lived in Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas again before moving to West Virginia with a band supporting singer Molly O'Day. By 1941 the Grimsley brothers were both on WTJS in Beckley, West Virginia with pianist Sonny Harville and by 1946 they had gained musical experience in Idaho and and elsewhere as the Hollywood Rangers.

They relocated around Shreveport after that, playing local shows as the Red River Ramblers and holding down their own radio show as well as being early regulars on the Hayride. Tex Grimsley had a day job alongside Webb Pierce and provided Webb Pierce with several songs down the years. *Walking The Dog* was one Pierce would later make into a hit on DECCA. Grimsley did not stay long on the Hayride but he continued playing for some years and his fiddle is on display in the Louisiana State Capitol museum in Baton Rouge.

SHOT JACKSON (WEBB PIERCE VOCAL)

1-14 **I Need You Like A Hole In The Head** (Wayne - Franks - Jackson)

Pacemaker 1004

WEBB PIERCE

1-15 **I've Loved You Forever It Seems** (Pierce)

4-Star 1517

BUDDY ATTAWAY

1-16 **Freight Train Blues** (Buddy Attaway)

Pacemaker 1006

TILLMAN FRANKS (WEBB PIERCE VOCAL)

1-17 **California Blues** (Jimmie Rodgers)

Pacemaker 1011

1-18 **Hayride Boogie** (Webb Pierce - Buddy Attaway)

Pacemaker 1011

WEBB PIERCE

1-19 **I Got Religion Last Saturday Night** (Webb Pierce - Ted Daffan)

Pacemaker 1012

The next six discs are all about singer Webb Pierce though he was credited on very few of them. According to his friend and sometime manager and bass player, Tillman Franks, Webb Pierce was "smart and ambitious." It was an ambition that took him from the sales floors of Montgomery-Ward in Monroe and Sears Roe-

buck in Shreveport to the top of the tree as a country music hitmaker, despite his often-described inability to sing in tune. As a singer he had individuality, and as a businessman he had tenacity. Very few singers formed their own record labels and publishing companies back in his day, and his PACEMAKER RECORDS trod a pioneering path.



Webb Pierce was born in 1921 in West Monroe, Louisiana, moving to Shreveport in 1944 and taking a job as a salesman at Sears downtown while developing his interest in music. He was on Monroe radio KMLB as a fifteen year old and by 1946 he had formed a band to play over Shreveport's station KTBS along with his singer wife, Betty Jane Lewis, who he had met in 1942 during a stint in the Army. Tillman Franks described how, "I was playing with Webb and Betty Jane and the Southern Valley Boys when they broadcast every morning at seven on KTBS which had studios next door to KWKH on the second floor of the Commercial National Bank building in downtown Shreveport." Pierce sang duets with Betty and included many gospel songs but increasingly the show was focused on his ambitions as a lead singer in the country field. When the Louisiana Hayride started, though, Webb Pierce was not considered. He had earlier appeared on the station with Harmie Smith but later he made a complaint about KWKH not paying union scale to the local musicians' union and also disrupted a KWKH news program while looking for some KTBS equipment that had been moved from one studio to the other. His relationship with KWKH owner Henry Clay was such that he was effectively banned from the show.

Nevertheless, Pierce continued on KTBS into 1949 before switching his featured show and a disc jockey program, 'Sun-Up Serenade,' to rival station KENT. Before the year was out, Horace Logan, who often had the final say-so about Hayride performers, had been persuaded to take Pierce into one of the Hayride's backing bands. Tillman Franks said he got Pierce into the band by pretending regular member Buddy Attaway was ill, while Pierce said that ruse was his



(LEFT) Shot Jackson

idea and Logan remembered that it was he who recognised Pierce's talent and persistence and just felt it was right that he be included on the show. The fact that Pierce had attained a recording deal with Bill McCall's west coast label 4 STAR RECORDS, and was getting some success with the song *Heebie Jeebie Blues*, probably weighed in his favour with Logan. Either way, Pierce was on the Hayride by the end of 1949 and was making plans to form a song publishing company, Ark-La-Tex, and a record label, to be called PACEMAKER, with Logan and to use the KWKH studios to make master recordings.

It seems that 4 STAR's owner Bill McCall had already used the KWKH studios to make Pierce's first record sessions in August 1949, possibly organised by Texan record dealer Harold 'Pappy' Daily as part of a deal to feed recordings by new country artists to 4 Star on speculation. Daily would later form the STARDAY and D labels, among others, playing a part in the careers of many Hayride artists. Pierce's backing musicians were men who were all mainstays of the local club and radio scenes and who would help carry the Hayride's staff bands to success, people like Buddy Attaway, guitarist and singer, Tillman Franks, bass player and show booker/artist manager, and steel guitar star Shot Jackson. Betty Jane also starred as vocalist on one of the nine discs Pierce made for 4 STAR during 1949 and 1950, although she was divorced from Pierce shortly afterwards.

Because he was contracted to 4 STAR, Pierce's credited vocalising on his own label was limited and the discs were issued as by Tillman Franks or Buddy Attaway or Shot Jackson. It is thought that these men played bass, guitar and steel respectively on most of the PACEMAKER discs, along with Tex Grimsley who played fiddle. Steel player **Harold "Shot" Jackson** came from North Carolina and had been on the WSM Opry with Cousin Wilbur's band but

he arrived in Shreveport with Johnnie and Jack and stayed on after they left. He was always much in demand as a stage player and as a session musician, either on steel guitar or dobro. His first disc on PACEMAKER featured Webb Pierce's vocals on the engaging *I Need You Like A Hole In The Head* and other singers would appear on Jackson's other discs for PACEMAKER and later for SPECIALTY. For some reason, the vocal on *I've Loved You Forever It Seems* was actually credited to Pierce, while his duet with Buddy Attaway on *Freight Train Blues* had no vocalist, or artist, credited at all. Then, on the entertaining cousin to *I've Got Five Dollars And It's Saturday Night*, Pierce's *I Got Religion Last Saturday Night*, Pierce was back as credited singer with his Southern Valley Boys. Pacemaker was essentially a local label geared to getting artists and their songs onto records with the aim of selling some locally and drawing attention to their wares. As such, the label could get away with strange labelling practices.

Tillman Franks was the credited artist on several PACEMAKER discs, including three included here, *California Blues*, *Hayride Boogie*, and *Hi-Tone Poppa*, a tune Pierce leased to the GOTHAM label. Although he could sing and did perform a comedic stage role as Peach Seed Jones, Franks was principally a bass player and organiser and so the vocals on these first two songs were by Pierce and on the last by Faron Young, a local guitarist and singer who became part of the Pierce band. *California Blues* had been one of the classic songs of Jimmie Rodgers but still had legs after twenty years. *Hayride Boogie*, in contrast, would reappear later as a Webb Pierce hit, *Teenage Boogie*. In this form, it's an ad for the Hayride show set to a standard boogie tune with a call and response section. No one who heard it would be in any doubt that the Hayride was at 8 on a Saturday night.

TILLMAN FRANKS (FARON YOUNG VOCAL)

1-20 Hi Tone Poppa (Pierce) Gotham 412

Faron Young was born in Shreveport in 1932 and was first known in a band led by high school teacher 'Coach' Carroll Floyd. Tillman Franks heard him rehearsing with singer Wayne Walker and took him to Webb Pierce who added Young to his Southern Valley Boys as guitarist and second vocalist. KWKH announcer Frank Page remembered, "*Faron went to school just down the road. People remember him walking down the road with a guitar strapped to his back – bigger'n he was. His mother and dad had an ice cream parlor.*"

Tillman Franks was the glue that helped hold many of the Shreveport-based bands together, acting as their booker, manager and bass player all at once. The sometime manager of Webb Pierce, Johnny Horton, the Carlisles, Claude King, David Houston, Jimmy and Johnny, Jimmy Newman, Tony Douglas, Mitchell Torok, and Jerry Kennedy and writer of songs including *Honky Tonk Man*, *One Woman Man*, and *North To Alaska*, he was described by Shelby Singleton, himself no stranger to a good wheeze, as "*the nearest thing to a genius I've ever known. Tillman has an uncanny promotional foresight for an artist, a song or a musical sound.*" Born in September 1920 in Stamps, Arkansas, Franks's family moved to Shreveport when he was only two. He was interested in music from the start and he said he remembered folk blues singer Huddie Ledbetter, Lead Belly, playing his twelve string guitar on the streets of Shreveport singing *Bow Legged Women*. In country music he was a great fan of Roy Acuff but learned guitar playing at house parties and said he also learned from Buddy Jones who played guitar with the Pelican Wildcats on radio KRMD and who had recorded for DECCA on his own ac-

count and with Jimmie Davis. Tillman was influenced too by the Rice Brothers on KWKH who had *You Are My Sunshine* in their repertoire before selling it to Jimmie Davis. In 1939, Tillman met Claude King and Buddy Attaway and formed the Rainbow Boys of Cedar Grove, playing where they could for tips. In the Army while abroad he formed another Rainbow Boys and switched to bass in a band that included folk singer Pete Seeger. Back home in 1946, he formed another Rainbow Boys with Buddy Attaway, Claude King and Merle Clayton, playing also with Harmie Smith's band on KWKH's early morning shifts, with Pappy Covington's big band, and with Webb Pierce. By day, he took a job as a Shreveport policeman, interrupted by short tours with fiddler Dobber Johnson and with the Bailes Brothers. The latter, Homer and Johnny Bailes, had moved down from Nashville and needed a new bass man because, as Johnny told him, there were four brothers but "*I got one brother went to preaching and another went to drinking.*" Tillman Franks played with the Bailes brothers on the first ever Louisiana Hayride, then next day left Shreveport for KLEE in Houston. He, Buddy Attaway and Claude King all took car sales jobs with their show's sponsor, Elmer Laird. While there Franks and Laird apparently wrote the song *Poison Love*. Tillman said that the three musicians wrote it and credited it to Mrs. Elmer Laird after Elmer had been killed. By August 1948 Franks was back, working again with the Bailes brothers and also running a guitar school at J&S Music on Milam Street in Shreveport. He put his pupils onto KCIJ radio on Saturday mornings and so launched the careers of David Houston and Jerry Kennedy. By 1949 he

was a regular with Webb Pierce again, becoming his manager before managing the Carlisles, Jimmy and Johnny, Billy Walker, Johnny Horton, Jerry Kennedy, David Houston and Claude King among others. In September 1957 KWKH owner Henry Clay put Tillman in charge of the Artists Services organisation and the house bands at the Hayride, a role he fulfilled until he left the show with Johnny Horton in 1960.

MAC WISEMAN

1-21 **Tis Sweet To Be Remembered** (Mac Wiseman)
Dot 1062



Apart from the Shreveport-based artists on PACEMAKER, the first outside artist to make records at the KWKH studio was **Mac Wiseman** who joined the Hayride in March 1951 for some months. Contracted to DOT RECORDS in Gallatin near Nashville, and with a background in the mid-South, Wiseman was used to recording with other artists in Nashville. But for this, his first session as a leader, he found it easier to

stay put in Shreveport, and it was a session that gave him a big hit, *'Tis Sweet To Be Remembered*, a ballad with a bluegrass sound and a split-time feature. Wiseman was from Virginia and had worked with Molly O'Day, Flatt and Scruggs and Bill Monroe before joining the Hayride. He left Shreveport after one year with a long career still ahead of him, charting regularly from the late '50s into the 1970s.

CLAUDE KING

1-22 **She Knows Why** (Claude King)
Specialty 705

SHOT JACKSON

1-23 **If The Truth Was Known** (J. Wright - J. Anglin)
Specialty 706

After DOT, the KWKH studio facilities were taken up by the SPECIALTY label of California. Owned by Art Rupe and known for its R&B roster, SPECIALTY had a short but artistically successful country music period, recording Claude King, Shot Jackson and other members of the music community based around Shreveport. **Claude King** was a local man, born in south Shreveport in 1923 and working as a construction engineer when he recorded *She Knows Why* in 1952. Bass player on the disc, Tillman Franks said King, "my friend from the Rainbow Boys, was my favorite singer and he also played harmonica." King had already recorded for

PRESIDENT RECORDS in the KWKH studio in 1947 with Buddy Attaway, as Buddy and Claude, and also for PACEMAKER, and would go on to see real chart success some ten years later. Steel player Jackson had two excellent discs on SPECIALTY, including the sly message, *If The Truth Was Known*. Shot Jackson was still a member of Johnnie and Jack's Tennessee Mountain Boys at this time and their whole group features here. There is some debate about the singer on Jackson's discs, the favourite candidate being Jack Anglin if it is not Jackson himself.



SLIM WHITMAN

1-24 **Indian Love Call** (Harbach - Hammerstein - Friml)
Imperial 8156

There is no debate, though, about the sound of **Slim Whitman**, a locally-based singer and yodeller, working as a mailman, originally from Tampa, Florida, now relocated to Shreveport and working as a mailman, who recorded a hit in the country, pop and international charts with *Indian Love Call*. The song dated back to the 1920s when it was a Broadway hit and to 1936 when it was a hit movie song for Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald. Whitman's recording was memorable for his high-pitched elongated love calls and for the steel guitar part played by Thomas 'Hoot' Rains, linking with guitar work by Carnell 'Curley' Herndon. Having started as members of the Hayride staff band, as

Hoot and Curley these musicians soon gained a solo spot on the Hayride as well as a gig with Whitman. Rains apparently came across his Whitman lick by accident one night on the Hayride, a sound Whitman called "shooting arrows." Hayride band members Don Davis and Sonny Harville completed the musicians on *Indian Love Call*, which was issued early in 1952 on Lew Chudd's IMPERIAL RECORDS, another West Coast label trying its luck with a Louisiana-focused country series.

(BELOW) **Slim Whitman**

(BOTTOM RIGHT) **Slim Whitman** fronting his band comprising Hoot Rains (LEFT), Curley Herndon, and Tillman Franks (RIGHT).



JIM REEVES

1-25 **Mexican Joe** (M. Torok)
Abbott 116

MITCHELL TOROK

1-26 **Caribbean** (M. Torok)
Abbott 140

CAROLYN BRADSHAW

1-27 **A Man On The Loose** (Lyle Gaston - Bill McReynolds)
Abbott 153

THE BROWNS

1-28 **Looking Back To See** (J. Brown - M. Brown)
Fabor 107

From early 1953, the KWKH studio started to become a favourite location for another West Coast concern, the ABBOTT label of Fabor Robison. Born in Arkansas not too far from Shreveport, Robison was living in California in October 1951 when he worked out an agreement with a drugstore owner, Sid Abbott, and singer Johnny Horton to form ABBOTT RECORDS. Robison was managing Horton at the time and started the label initially to get his client away from his first label, CORMAC. Soon, Horton relocated to Shreveport and he and others alerted Fabor to the other artists the Hayride could offer

up to him. For several years ABBOTT and its sister label FAVOR took the music of Hayriders high onto the country charts. In particular, Fabor Robison released influential discs by Jim Reeves, Mitchell Torok, Carolyn Bradshaw, and The Browns.

Jim Reeves was an announcer and disc jockey on KWKH when his singing came to Robison's attention. Born in 1923 in Panola, Texas, James Travis Reeves had been a baseball player and insurance salesman as well as a would-be singer by the time he came to KWKH in Shreveport in December 1952. He'd worked in radio





(ABOVE) **Johnnie And Jack** and (ABOVE RIGHT) **Kitty Wells** on stage.

(RIGHT) **Tex Grimsley** performing with the Texas Playboys.

(BELOW LEFT) **Hank Williams** at the Louisiana Hayride.

(BELOW CENTER) **Webb Pierce** and duet partner Betty Jane.

(BELOW RIGHT) **Shot Jackson**





(LEFT) Carolyn Bradshaw

(RIGHT) Backstage at the Louisiana Hayride: (FROM LEFT) Slim Whitman, Ginny Wright, Jim Reeves, and the composer of *Mexican Joe*, Mitchell Torok.



since 1947, first for KGRI in Henderson, Texas and then for five years on KSIG in Gladewater. Frank Page remembered, "He had been working over in east Texas in radio and he and his wife were going to move to Houston, but he came into my office first to see if they could sing on the Hayride... [but] we were more interested in his announcing ability, which was good... Then, an artist failed to show up one night so I asked Jim to sing a couple to fill in, and the audience received him well and were surprised one of the emcees could sing." The audience obviously didn't recall that, as a twelve year old kid, Reeves had in fact sung on KRMD in Shreveport. In 1949, he'd recorded two discs for MACY'S RECORDS in Houston and in 1952 he had started to record for ABBOTT. On moving to Shreveport Reeves started to hold his ABBOTT sessions in the KWKH radio studio. He sang in a number of styles but the faster tunes sold the best. According to Page, "Jim liked to sing ballads, but we told him, and everybody told him, that he was going to get attention by singing the novelty songs [to start off]." *Mexican Joe* is a classic case in point, employing Reeves's clear diction and light vocal touch to ride above the scurrying rhythm with its Latin influence. *Mexican Joe* went to number one on the country charts in 1953. It was followed on ABBOTT by a number of other artists' discs taken from the same template, the most Latin being of course *Caribbean*, another tongue-twister from Mitchell Torok who had written *Mexican Joe*. Torok was a former college foot-

baller, born in Houston in 1929, who had recorded for FBC and ROYALTY records from 1949 before joining the Hayride briefly just after he had linked up with ABBOTT. He would go on to record for DECCA and CAPITOL over the next decade before returning to minor labels. *Caribbean* also made number one on the country charts in 1953. Later, in 1959, *Caribbean* made an unexpected appearance on JAMIE RECORDS of Philadelphia after Fabor Robison had sold part of his assets to them, and it went into the pop Top 30.

In 1954, Carolyn Bradshaw joined the ABBOTT hitmakers with her stories about *A Man On The Loose*. Bradshaw was from Arkansas, and next came **The Browns**, a family act from Sparkman, Arkansas who started their career on KLRA in Little Rock. Jim Edward Brown was born in 1934, two years after his sister Maxine. These two fronted the group although the personnel changed off and on due to Army service and pregnancy. Bonnie Brown was born in 1938 and appeared with the group in her teens. They featured on the Hayride from 1954 to 1957, travelling down every weekend from Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Their *Looking Back To See* was a top ten country hit on FAVOR in 1954. It's interesting that many of the ABBOTT recordings from Shreveport at this time featured a hurrying rhythm, with or without the Latin elements demanded by Mitchell Torok's songs, and it may be that the presence of Jim Reeves on rhythm guitar on all the sessions was of significance.

FRI. NIGHT JULY 9
COUNTY BARN DANCE
DOWNTOWN BALDWIN PARK

FABOR
ROBISON
presents

STRING MUSIC
SHOW DIRECT FROM LOUISIANA
HAYRIDE - KWKH
Shreveport

STARRING
ABBOTT and FABOR Recording ARTISTS
and his
JIM REEVES HAYRIDE
BAND
GINNY WRIGHT

JIM EDWARD BROWN & MAXINE BROWN - ALVADEAN & SANDY COKER
SHIRLEY BATES - JERRY ROWLEY - TOM TALL

JIM REEVES - ABBOTT RECORDS
116 "Mexican Joe" 143 "Simbo" 160 "I'll Stop
Loving You" 164 "Breathin' On The Ding Dong"
"My Rambling Heart"

GINNY WRIGHT - FABOR RECORDS
101 "I Love You" 105 "I Saw E' 'em"
110 "Your Eyes Peached Upon Her"
"Indian Moon" 192 "I'm In Heaven"

JIM EDWARD BROWN & MAXINE BROWN
FABOR RECORDS
107 "Looking Back To See"
"Rio De Janeiro"

JERRY ROWLEY
FABOR RECORDS
103 "Wah"
109 "Woe Willie"
"Mere Of The Wind"

SHIRLEY BATES
FABOR RECORDS
106 "Carlos Ybarra"
"The Eu-Cel-Y-Fi-Tus Tree"

TOM TALL
FABOR RECORDS
108 "Please Be Careful"
"I Give My Heart To Two
People"

ALVADEAN & SANDY COKER
ABBOTT RECORDS
163 "Sugar DOLL"
"Witch's Waltz"

Featuring Our
"LITTLE WOMEN"

GINNY WRIGHT ALVADEAN COKER MAXINE BROWN SHIRLEY BATES



(TOP, FROM LEFT) **Buddy Attaway, Claude King, Harmie Smith, Tillman Franks and Harry Todd** at the KWKH microphone.

(ABOVE LEFT) **Mac Wiseman**

(ABOVE CENTER) **Jim Reeves**

(ABOVE RIGHT) **Mitchell Torok**

(RIGHT) **Carolyn Bradshaw**

(FAR RIGHT) **Maxine and Jim Ed Brown**





JIMMY & JOHNNY

1-29 **If You Don't Somebody Else Will** (Johnny Mathis) Chess 4859

Finally, the KWKH radio studio was also used by Chess Records from Chicago, a primarily R&B label with short-lived ambitions to go into the country market. Their most successful hillbilly song was a remake of *If You Don't, Somebody Else Will* by the "brother" duo of **Jimmy and Johnny** who had first recorded the tune for Feature Records of Crowley, Louisiana in 1952. In July 1954 they remade the song for Chess in the KWKH studio with a Hayride staff band comprising fiddler Dobber Johnson, pianist Sonny Harville, steel player Sonny Trammell, bassman Tillman Franks and drummer A.J. Lewis. The disc made num-

ber three on the country charts late in 1954. Jimmy was the Hayride's precocious young guitarist, Jimmy Lee, full name Jimmy Lee Fautheree, born in Smackover, Arkansas in 1934, and Johnny was another Hayride vocalist, Johnny Mathis. Jimmy Lee lived in Dallas in the 1940s, picking up his guitar style from radio and records by Merle Travis and from bluesmen heard on the streets of the city. He was on Dallas's 'Big D Jamboree' show as early as age 16 in 1950, and he first recorded for Capitol in 1952. John Wesley Mathis was born in 1930 in Maud, Texas and recorded first in 1949 for the Talent label of Dallas where he



was becoming well known as a singer and songwriter, and then for the JB label of Nashville. He was working as a steel player with disabled singer Riley Crabtree when the Big D's boss Al Turner heard him and put him that show in 1950. He met Jimmy Lee there there, but soon a Nashville record man, Jim Bulleit, persuaded Jimmy and Johnny to transfer to the Hayride, where Bulleit was about to become manager of the Artists Service Bureau. The two young men played the Hayride as featured solo artists, staff musicians and writers, and as a vocal duet, remaining firm favourites there for many years.

SLIM WHITMAN

1-30 **Rose Marie** (Harbach - Hammerstein - Friml) Imperial 8236

We end this CD with **Slim Whitman's** second major hit on Imperial, another otherworldly sound, *Rose Marie*, complete with yodels, whistling, tinkling piano, and the trademark weird steel guitar sound originated by Hoot Rains but played here by Tinker Fry. It was another song from Broadway via the movies and Whitman made it a top five country hit in 1954 as well as an international favourite. Ottis Dewey Whitman was born near Tampa, Florida in 1923. A right-handed man who played guitar left-handed following the loss of part of a finger in an accident, he was a success in country music without ever being in its mainstream, preferring light, romantic songs to the hillbilly songs of the

South-east or the Texas bar-room music that flooded in from just west of Shreveport. He was known as 'the Smiling Starduster' during his years on the Hayride, in reference to a group called the Stardusters he was in prior to joining the show. They appeared on KENT radio in Shreveport from October 1949. Before that, in Florida, Whitman's bookings had for a time been organised by Tom Parker who took renewed interest in this maverick stylist after this hit disc, booking him onto shows that soon included another maverick "country" performer, Parker's newest managerial interest, Elvis Presley.



DISC 2

AT THE LOUISIANA HAYRIDE TONIGHT

This CD contains the first batch of extracts from the live radio shows recorded from the stage of the Municipal Auditorium in Shreveport or, where noted, other local venues.

Throughout this and the following 18 CDs, the recordings we have chosen are presented in chronological order, by show date. Sometimes we have included a continuous run lasting half an hour or more, but for other shows we have included just one song from a particular date. Mostly, the batches last somewhere inbetween, occasionally with the introductory or closing theme songs included and other times not.

According to a Hayride Souvenir book published in 1954, *"for the opening show Curley Kinsey and the Four Deacons wrote new words to an old traditional tune. That theme still identifies the show."* The new words to *Gonna Raise A Ruckus* were:

"Come along, everybody, come along
Come where the moon is shining
bright
We're gonna have a wonderful time
At the Louisiana Hayride tonight."

It remained true to the very end that the theme of the show was about having a wonderful time, a phrase the announcers and artists milked throughout each show.

Despite from the ever-changing lists of guest artists headlining the shows, and the gradual evolution among the Hayride's regular artists, there was a sense of continuity and of common purpose about the shows. They lasted three hours, normally starting and ending with local acts and featuring visiting stars midway. Most local artists and some visitors came on twice so that the live audience members arriving late or leaving early would get to see each act.

There were always at least two and sometimes three or four announcers to bring the acts on stage, and at least one and sometimes more staff bands on hand to back the regular artists and the visiting stars if they were appearing solo. It was a well-oiled machine that prided itself on professionalism in support of the three goals of selling advertising, plugging each artist's new records, and promoting station KWKH. Horace Logan said, *"The first sponsor of the Hayride was Southern Maid Donuts, and they continued to the end."*

The announcers or emcees were also celebrities on the show in their own right. The first was Horace Lee Logan from Mer Rouge, Louisiana who had grown up in Monroe until his family moved to Shreveport in 1926 when he was ten years old. He had been at KWKH since winning a competition for a new announcer sponsored by a coffee company in the early 1930s. He was involved with the 'Saturday Night Roundup' show during the '30s and early '40s and played some part in the planning of the Hayride show which, he told interviewer Earl Porter, the station was initially unsure

about. *"The Hayride began by everybody in it sharing in what was left over after expenses. After the first several weeks it was obvious the Hayride was going to be a monetary success, so KWKH then assumed the financial responsibility for the program and started paying the talent. The Union scale was \$24 for a band leader, \$18 for a soloist and \$12 for a band member."* Logan developed the theme that he was "your genial host" of the Hayride although he often came across on air as a slightly condescending patrician. A tall man, a collector of guns with a hobby of gun-repair, he often dressed in black and would appear on stage with two pearl-handled revolvers on his hips. It's noticeable that most of the artists called him "Mr. Logan" and he, in turn, cultivated the fact that he was in charge. He said, *"I was immediately besieged by people from all over the country wanting to get on the show. Every week, almost without exception, I would add one or two new acts and drop one or so... No-one else had any say so whatsoever about who would be on the show. I picked the material – after artists submitted a list to me – for the purposes of good programming. I would put girl singers on inbetween the male soloists or quartet groups or some variety group, to try to make each 15 or 30 minutes into a separate complete package. And I forced them to be competitive with each other... and they fought like fiends to get encores because encores were only decided by applause. The basic allotment apart from the star guests was that a male singer had two songs twice in each show, girls one song twice."* From the start, Logan was assisted by Ray Bartlett, another KWKH announcer, who apparently told him, *"Hoss, you're not going to make*



Louisiana Hayride announcers (FROM LEFT) Ray Bartlett, Frank Page, and Horace Logan.

many friends this way," to which Logan replied, "no, but I'm going to make stars, I'm going to force them to do their best." Another announcer, Frank Page, who became head announcer on the show when Logan left midway through 1957, said "Horace often dressed the part of the 'bad guy' but he had a big heart and helped a lot of folks up the ladder of success." Logan moved to California early in 1958 but returned South later in the year to take over as emcee of the rival Cowtown Hoedown on KCUL in Fort Worth and later the Big D Jamboree on KRLD in Dallas.

The reason the Hayride show always had more than one announcer was not just a question of workload, it was in order that "different sponsors of segments didn't hear their product read out by the same guy who read for their competitor." Ray Bartlett acted as second emcee in 1948 and Bill Cudabac, formerly of WLAY in Alabama, took the role in 1949 until Frank Page came onto the Hayride show in 1950. Page's assistant then was Hi Roberts. From 1948 to 1960 the show and the announcers were introduced by another colleague, Norm Bale, who occasionally took on portions of the emcee role. Bale came from Minneapolis but settled in Bossier City across the river from Shreveport and worked for local station KEEL before joining KWKH.

Ray Bartlett, a native of Wichita Falls, Texas came to Shreveport in 1947 to host two daily afternoon shows spinning rhythm and blues discs under the name 'Groovy Boy' in the then-in-vogue style of white DJs who

would adopt a black persona and voice to present black music. He also owned JOB RECORDS, not to be confused with a label of the same name in Chicago, recording Shreveport blues musicians such as Stick Horse Hammond. He recorded country music also, on a Delta label, one of several by that name, and was a link to IMPERIAL RECORDS for Slim Whitman, who Bartlett managed for a time, and others. On radio, Bartlett presented country shows as well as blues and he inspired singer Webb Pierce and Red Sovine to write the song *Groovy Boogie Woogie Boy*. Pierce recorded it in 1950 and then Red Sovine had it on MGM as *Groovy Boy*. On the Hayride, his colleagues remembered, Bartlett would dance with the curtain tassels or bring funny things on stage, none of which the radio audience could see. "They could hear people laughing and were intrigued about why, so they'd come to the show."

Frank Page was born in Malvern, Arkansas in 1925 and came to KWKH in 1947, aged 23, by way of a high school radio job in Little Rock followed by radio work in Pennsylvania and Texas and Armed Forces Radio in Berlin, another stint at KLRA in Little Rock and finally KWEM in West Memphis. As 'Gatemouth' Page, he spun R&B discs on the station in addition to running some early morning hillbilly shows and his general announcing duties. Page stayed at KWKH over a period of fifty years, eventually becoming "the" voice of the Hayride. He remembered that the Hayride show, "started on a large scale with a big bang.

We started the show as a vehicle for selling advertising. We weren't looking for big names so much as performers who could sell products." He underlined the professionalism of the live stage show. Although many performers, promoters, and songwriters would mill around backstage, and some fans if they could find themselves an angle, the stage area was tightly controlled. "We never let anyone walk on stage during a performance. Everything was regimented and scripted as far as the appearance of the acts. With commercials, we rehearsed. Everything was really up to snuff." He also explained why the Hayride would not always be broadcast from downtown Shreveport. "The 'Holiday in Dixie' festival in spring would run us out of the Municipal Auditorium for four or five Saturdays, and so we would take the Hayride on tour – and it was more popular out in Texas and south Louisiana than right in Shreveport. We'd go to Harlingen, Texas, San Angelo and Stanford, Texas, Houston, Little Rock, and New Orleans."

Hi Roberts was the chief announcer at KWKH generally, but he would help out on the Hayride sometimes. His background was as an actor and dancer and he took over Ray Bartlett's role in, as the 1954 souvenir album described, "always getting into the act, jumping around," encouraging the radio audience to want to come down next week to see what all the unexplained laughter and applause was about.

The announcers made big efforts to encourage folks from Texas and Arkansas to

attend the show, giving big introductions to artists from those states and reading out the names of visitors from there. Frank Page estimated that during the 1950s the average live crowd was 3,300 people, from a full-house some weeks depending on the stars down to 1500 on a very cold winter's Saturday. About 15% were local people, with the majority coming from the wider Ark-La-Tex area. In the 1954 Souvenir, KWKH brass Henry Clay was quoted saying, "we are proud of the Louisiana Hayride. It supplies wholesome entertainment to such a large and wide-spread audience – half the listeners in the city, thousands across the South, coast to coast on CBS, and to service personnel worldwide."

In 1948, the Hayride had aired just on KWKH but very quickly it was being taken by other stations and by February 1950 a regional network of 25 stations had been organised to air the show. In 1953 this regional net was replaced by the 50,000 watt station KTHS in Little Rock which broadcast the entire show for 3 hours as did KWKH. From January that year, transcribed edits from the Hayride were aired monthly on the national CBS show 'Saturday Night Country Style.' In June 1954, a special edited version was also made available on transcription for broadcast to forces overseas.

The music you hear on these CDs is sometimes taken from these transcription discs, though normally it originates from discs or tapes preserved for the purpose of reassuring advertisers or for playing to prospective advertisers.

(BELOW) **Hank Williams** at the Louisiana Hayride.

(BOTTOM) **Hank** with Hayride announcer Frank Page.



CD 2 | August 7, 1948

HANK WILLIAMS

2-1 **Mind Your Own Business** (Hank Williams)

The earliest audio that seems to have survived from the Hayride is this song by Hank Williams from August 1948. It is taken from a later retrospective show looking back to that day and to the very start of the Hayride on April 3 1948. Williams's performance is assured and engaging as he sings his classic take on domestic strife. It

is very close to his version of the song issued by MGM in July 1949, recorded in March, and so it may be that the compilers of the retrospective show had the date a year too early, or of course that Hank had the song in his pending repertoire back in 1948 and was treating the Hayride audience to a preview.



CD 2 | November 13, 1948

JOHNNIE & JACK AND PAUL WARREN

2-2 **Listen To The Mockingbird** (trad.)

HANK WILLIAMS

2-3 **I'm A Long Gone Daddy** (Hank Williams)

THE BAILES BROTHERS

2-4 **He Will Set Your Fields On Fire** (Brackett - Ballen)

ZEKE CLEMENTS

2-5 **Milk Cow Blues** (Kokomo Arnold)

CURLEY WILLIAMS

2-6 **Georgia Steel Guitar** (Boots Harris)

HARMIE SMITH

2-7 **I'll Step Aside** (Johnny Bond)

RED SOVINE

2-8 **Signed, Sealed, Delivered** (Copas - Mann)

COUSIN EMMY

2-9 **I Wish I Was A Single Girl Again** (trad.)

JOHNNIE & JACK

2-10 **Comedy Routine as Nimrod and his Duck**

PAUL WARREN

2-11 **Jolly Blacksmith** (trad.)

COUSIN EMMY

2-12 **Shortnin' Bread** (trad.)

COUSIN EMMY'S KINFOLKS STRING BAND

2-13 **Mountain Dew** (S. Wiseman)

CURLEY WILLIAMS' GEORGIA PEACH PICKERS

2-14 **One Sided Affair** (Fred Rose)

2-15 **China Boy** (P. Boutelje - D. Winfree)

2-16 **Game for audience members – Beat The Band**

BROTHER HOMER (BAILES BROTHERS)

2-17 **Sweeter Than The Flowers** (Mann - Rouse - Burns)

THE BAILES BROTHERS

2-18 **You Go To Your Church And I'll Go To Mine** (P.H. Lord)

2-19 **Station identification**



The Bailes Brothers (ABOVE, FROM LEFT): Homer Bailes, Shot Jackson, Ernest Ferguson and Johnnie Bailes, in front of their 1947 Packard Limousine.

(RIGHT) **Zeke Clements**



Starting with the first surviving recording of the introductory theme of the Hayride, we have this illuminating hour-long extract from the show recorded some seven months into its life and preserved on acetate disc. It soon became a tradition that all the regular local performers were on-stage to perform the intro, leaving the star guests to be revealed later. In this case, the intro music was played by members of Harmie Smith's Mountaineers and Curley Williams' Georgia Peach Pickers. The announcers this day were Horace Logan and Bill Cudabac.

The first of the regulars onstage were Johnnie and Jack and the Tennessee Mountain Boys, who at this time included Johnnie Wright and Jack Anglin on guitars, Ray Atkins on dobro, Clyde Baum on mandolin, and fiddler Paul Warren. Their act this night showcased Warren's fiddle playing on two tunes, calling to mind first a mockingbird and then a blacksmith, and included the comedy routine known as Nimrod and the Duck where Johnnie and Ray trade jokes and insults before singing comedic insults about their gals. Then comes "long lonesome" Hank Williams, introduced as a man everyone knows, but still just short of his big hit period. Although Williams had arrived in Shreveport

with a band of his own, they soon split up, and here Hank's *Long Gone Daddy* is notable for the backing by the Hayride band that features different guitar [[calls SMOKEY BOY?]] and fiddle solos from his MGM record version and a piano solo. Hank calls Jimmy Summey to provide a steel solo and then identifies the piano and guitar soloists as "Buddy boy" and "Smokey boy," meaning Buddy Harrell and Millard 'Smokey' Paul, all from the Georgia Peach Pickers. There's an unplanned comedic hiccup at the start where Horace Logan reads out a poignant dedication and Hank then chooses a song that is totally unfitting.

The Bailes Brothers were one of the best of the sibling duets in country music, starting on WSAZ in Huntingdon, West Virginia in the early 1940s. Unlike Johnnie and Jack, the Bailes really were brothers and in fact there were four of them rotating in and out over the years. By the time they came to Shreveport, the act comprised Johnny and Homer Bailes, born near Charleston, West Virginia in 1918 and 1922 respectively, supported by Shot Jackson on steel guitar, Ray Belcher on bass, and mandolinist Ernest Ferguson. Johnny Bailes had started out in local radio and became popular enough in Huntingdon to be spotted by

Roy Acuff and added to the Grand Ole Opry with his brother Walter. The Bailes' COLUMBIA records such as *Dust On The Bible* and *I Want To Be Loved* were both popular and influential in country and gospel music. Here we can understand something of the Bailes' abilities through an excellent gospel number, *He Will Set Your Fields On Fire*, a heartbreaking country song, *Sweeter Than The Flowers*, and an advisory message about the importance of church, wherever you go. Given all the war and misery religion has caused the world down the years, this was a pretty balanced view to take all in all.

Zeke Clements was one of the most experienced of the the early artists to try a spell on KWKH, but he was essentially just passing through. He'd been on WLS Chicago as early as 1929 and worked as the Alabama Cowboy and the Dixie Yodeler before joining the 'Hollywood Barn Dance' in 1937. He became the voice of Bashful in the Disney movie 'Snow White' and starred in B movies before joining the Opry. Back out west, he formed a short-lived record company, *Liberty*, and he joined KWKH in September 1948. He is heard here singing the blues of Kokomo Arnold about a milk cow, ostensibly, a favourite tune among western swing bands, but he was better

known for his wartime song *Smoke On The Water* and for many songs he penned for Eddy Arnold and others. Clements had a daily morning show on KWKH with his own musicians but on this Hayride show he was backed by Curley Williams and his Georgia Peach Pickers.

Dock "Curley" Williams was from Georgia and had been a star of the Grand Ole Opry in the early '40s with his brand of eastern country swing, known for keeping a classy band together and for his song-writing abilities. Recording for COLUMBIA he would enjoy some success with his song *Half As Much*, particularly when Hank Williams, no relation, took it high into the charts. In this Hayride show he typically offers his band members a chance to shine instrumentally. Jimmy Summey features on *Georgia Steel Guitar* while pianist Buddy Harrell stars on *China Boy* but the whole band, which included two of Curley's brothers, plays a strong part and there is a particularly fine piano solo by Smokey Paul. James Summey had played with the Roy Acuff band in the previous decade and later became known as 'Cousin Jody' on the Grand Ole Opry. Summey and Harrell had joined the band very recently, replacing steel guitarist Boots Harris and pianist Lee Pruvis who had been with the band on arrival at the Hayride in June. Two of Curley's

brothers, Joseph and Sanford, had been in the group but may have been replaced by this date by Sonny Harville on bass and Jack Ford on rhythm guitar. On vocal numbers Williams sings in an assured manner, emphasising the easy swing of songs like his hit, *One Sided Affair*, performed here.

Harmie Smith, an early regular on the Hayride and a pioneer performer on KWKH, offers the Hayride audience his version of *I'll Step Aside*, a popular song for its writer, Johnny Bond, who had success with it on COLUMBIA in the 1940s, and for Ernest Tubb in 1947. It is an example of the policy of the Hayride not only to showcase an artist's current hits and their best songs, but also to ensure that songs of great current popularity are included on the show, sung by somebody, usually a locally-based regular. Another example is *Signed Sealed And Delivered* by Red Sovine, a song associated with him but mainly a hit for Cowboy Copas. Woodrow Wilson 'Red' Sovine was from Charleston, West Virginia, born in 1918, and a member of the influential Carolina Tar Heels group, at one time working there with Johnny Bailes. He joined the Hayride briefly in August 1948, and moved to Montgomery, Alabama, and back again to KWKH within a year to host The Johnny Fair Syrup program on KWKH after Hank Williams left for Nashville. He was recording for MGM when this Hayride show was recorded. He would later join DECCA and also register duet hits in 1955 with Goldie Hill and Webb Pierce. In the following years he scored number one hits with his songs *Little Rosa*, *Giddyup Go* and *Teddy Bear*.

Cousin Emmy had been a star of radio in Kansas City, West Virginia and her native Kentucky since the 1930s. Born Cynthia May Carver in 1918 she was one of the first women to organise her own band and control her own show. Her confidence and sassiness is evident in her Hayride appearances. By the time she joined the show, on this very date, her boisterous persona and

loud comedic routine had been long-practiced and was something performers like June Carter would have taken note of. She stayed at the Hayride for a short time and you get the impression from her inability to remember the name of Ray Bartlett, who she calls 'Mr. Nouncer,' that she was not focused on staying in Louisiana for ever. She moved on to the West Coast, working at Disneyland and later becoming caught up in the 1960s folk revival. She is also known for having taught Grandpa Jones how to frail the banjo clawhammer-style. Here she treats the Hayride audience to three traditional-sounding tunes, though in fact *Mountain Dew* had been written not many years before by Scotty Wiseman on the Chicago Barn Dance adapting an earlier version by Bascom Lamar Lunsford. Emmy's version is actually led here by band members Sammy Barnhart and Jimmy Wilson who take the lead vocals. Emmy's other songs here were not originals but were very much associated with her, *I Wish I Was A Single Girl Again*, a song she'd recorded in 1947, and *Shortnin' Bread*.

Finally, and returning to Curley Williams, this show gives us a fascinating glimpse of the 'Beat The Band' competition that featured for many of the early years of the Hayride. Known worldwide as 'Name That Tune' among other descriptions, the idea was that audience members would compete to shout the title of a song played by the band. More than anything else in this boxed set, the competition gives a real sense of how long ago and far away those times really were. Announcer Horace Logan patronises the participants and audibly leers at the females to the point that would be unacceptable today. The prizes are in the main so mundane and tied in to post-war domestic recovery as to be hardly worth the cost today. And then there is the naming of the contestants. When asked her name one lady replies "Mrs Criss" and they



Cousin Emmy (LEFT) at KWKH with her gang (ABOVE, FROM LEFT:) ????



(BELOW) **Hamie Smith** (CENTER) and his gang.





(LEFT) **Red Sovine** at on stage at the Louisiana Hayride.

(RIGHT) Louisiana Hayride cast, date unknown. Starting in the center between microphones (FROM LEFT): unknown woman, prob. **Horace Logan** (host), **Johnnie Bailes**, unknown, Ray Belcher (bass), 2 unknown, Ray Atkins (Dobro), unknown, Paul Warren (fiddle), **Kitty Wells**, **Jack Anglin** (hidden guitar), Clyde Baum, **Johnnie Wright** (bass), unknown.

(BELOW) **Slim Whitman**



are all known by their husbands' names. There is also one genuinely perplexing moment when one of the volunteer contestants, a woman who says she is a war bride from Germany fails to identify a simple tune, and tells the announcer "I don't know no American songs." Logan recovers well, telling her she will, she will.

The Hayride show could not work without an organized group of musicians to play the theme, to support singers without their own band, and to stand in for band members when they were unavailable. At the very beginning the Hayride used Pappy Covington's band, of which no recordings have survived. Covington had been in the Sunshine Boys with the Shelton Brothers and in Harmie Smith's band after the war. At the time the Hayride started he had what was advertised as a "big band" playing something between western swing and popular jazz. It was an experiment that did not last and soon Covington took on a behind-the-scenes role as the booker of talent for KWKH while the house-band duties were taken on by Harmie Smith's Mountaineers and Curley Williams Georgia Peach Pickers. Smith's band included guitarist Buddy Attaway, steel player Felton Pruett, pianist and bass player Sonny Harville from Vivian, Louisiana who started out with Tex Grimsley, fiddler Dobber Johnson, and Tillman Franks on bass. After a while the house-band became known as the Lump Lump Boys, their personnel changing from week to week but often including Soko Sokolowsky on accordion, Jimmy Lee Fautheree on guitar, Don Davis on bass, Floyd Cramer on piano and drummer D.J. Fontana. Later, the band featured guitarist James Burton and others who went on to carve out careers during the rock 'n' roll era.

CD 2 | OCTOBER 13, 1951

SLIM WHITMAN

2-20 **Whipporwill Yodel** (trad.)

OKLAHOMA WRANGLERS

2-21 **Somebody's Been Beating My Time** (Zeke Clements)

2-22 **Wrangler Boogie** (Fowler)

T TEXAS TYLER

2-23 **Irma** (Preston - Cody)

WEBB PIERCE

2-24 **Wondering** (J. Werner)

LUCKY BOB DAVIS

2-25 **Water Baby Blues** (M. Lindsay)

FARON YOUNG

2-26 **The Good Lord Must Have Sent You** (W. Pierce - F. Young)



Jumping ahead over three years, we pick up another substantial segment from a Hayride show in October 1951 courtesy of a transcription made for the American Legion. In the intervening years, Hank Williams had moved on to Nashville and many of the Nashville-based artists who had moved south to help set the Hayride on its way had also departed. The stars now were locally-based men Webb Pierce and Slim Whitman, among others, and this extract reflects that.

Slim Whitman had already had two careers in music, first in his native Florida, and then in Texas where he worked briefly with a short-lived Dallas-based group of the Light Crust Doughboys who were originally based in Fort Worth. He had first recorded, for RCA, at the start of 1949 scoring some success with the song *Birmingham Jail*. Then he moved to Shreveport where he appeared on KENT radio from October 1949 while he took a day job at the Shreveport Post Office. He joined the Hayride in May 1950, aged 26, where he worked with Curly Herndon and Claude Rains among other members of the Hayride's staff bands. Here he sings, *Whippoorwill Yodel*, a song that seems ideally suited to him but which he didn't record commercially.

The Oklahoma Wranglers, also known as the Willis Brothers, were part of a second wave of known bands who joined the Hayride in the early 1950s. They had first appeared on the show in 1949 as part of a remote 30 minute broadcast from Hollywood sponsored by Jax Beer and slotted into the overall Hayride show at 9 p.m.. James Guy Willis was born in 1915 in Alex, Arkansas, Skeeter Willis was born two years later in Coalton, Oklahoma and Vic Willis was born in 1922 in Schuter, Oklahoma. They were on radio in Shawnee and Oklahoma City in the 1930s, moving to Tulsa then Gallup, New Mexico and Kansas City before joining the WSM Opry show in Nashville in 1946 and working regularly with top stars Eddy Arnold and Hank Williams. From 1946 on, they had recorded prolifically for STERLING RECORDS, where they also backed Hank Williams on his first session, and for MERCURY but by 1951 when these Hayride recordings were made they were on RCA. Here they perform *Somebody's Been Beating My Time*, a recent release by Eddy Arnold, and *Wrangler Boogie*, a tune they'd recorded in 1947 on MERCURY. And perform is the right word for this group, highly practiced as they were in the comedic arts as well as musicianship.

David Myrick was born in Mena, Arkansas in 1916 but was raised in Philadelphia before getting into folk music radio in West Virginia. He was briefly on KWKH in 1942, by which time he had taken on the persona of **T. Texas Tyler**. In California, he appeared on TV in Los Angeles' Range Round Up, specialising in folksy songs and recitations as well as honky tonk swing. He recorded for BLACK AND WHITE and 4 STAR, scoring a hit with *Filipino Baby* in 1946 and a monster hit with *Deck Of Cards* in 1948.

He returned to KWKH through 1950 and 1951. The song *Irma*, heard here, was first recorded by Smokey Rogers but was also a good seller for Tyler on 4-STAR at this time, with its jaunty rhythm, growled vocals and references to other hit song titles. Tyler hit again in 1953 on DECCA with *Bumming Around*, but his career stalled after that, an early victim of drink and drugs.

Wondering was a song with an interesting past and a strong future. It was written and recorded in 1928 by Jack Golding on GENNETT RECORDS and then streamlined in 1937 by Joe Werner, the son of German immigrants living in Rayne, Louisiana, who had joined a Cajun band, the Hackberry Ramblers, as their singer of songs in English. It was highly popular when the group recorded it for BLUEBIRD as the Riverside Ramblers, and a key benchmark in the story of Cajun music and the emergence of country Cajun. It was well-known all over Louisiana by the time Webb Pierce took to singing it. This Hayride version was performed a couple of months after Pierce recorded it for DECCA in Nashville and some three months before his disc hit the number one spot on the country charts. It stayed on the chart for half the year in 1952. Pierce had been signed by DECCA in 1951 before his 4 STAR contract ran out and when he realised that he needed to be on a bigger label than his own PACEMAKER outfit. Pierce guested on the Grand Ole Opry on the strength of *Wondering* and by September he became a regular, moving to Tennessee to start a phenomenally successful career there. His days scuffling around the Ark-La-Tex and hosting KWKH's morning 'Jamboree' show were over. He was regularly voted number one country singer in popularity polls because eighteen of his





(LEFT) **Webb Pierce** and his band visit Charlie Fitch's record store in Luling, Texas, 1951: (FROM LEFT) Jimmy Day, Floyd Cramer, Webb Pierce, Tillman Franks (known at this time as 'Radar'), Faron Young, Jimmy Burrage.

(BELOW LEFT) Beat The Band competition at the Louisiana Hayride in 1952.



first 22 songs released on DECCA hit the charts and 13 went to the top. Pierce continued to buy song copyrights as he had in Shreveport and he went into song publishing, founding Cedarwood with Jim Denny, the Opry's Artists Service Bureau manager in 1953. Pierce also acquired ownership of a number of radio stations.

The Hayride showcased a number of impressive young musicians in its staff bands down the years, including the little-known Bob Davis who they billed as the world's fastest guitar player. His dazzling take on the popular song of the Merle Lindsay western swing band, *Water Baby Blues*, was notable for the tones he achieved as well as his dexterity. Davis was from east Texas and worked with the Jack Rhodes band in the 1940s, appearing on some of Leon Payne's recordings for BULLET RECORDS. A little after this Hayride show, he recorded for ABBOTT RECORDS. He played with other western swing bands until he joined Ernest Tubb's Texas Troubadours.

Rounding out this portion of the October show was **Faron Young**, then known as much for his gospel singing or for popular tunes as for country despite being, as

Frank Page said, "*rather crude in his approach to things... but he was a nice guy.*" Young was still in high school when he joined Webb Pierce's Southern Valley Boys, singing, playing guitar and telling jokes alongside Jimmy Day or Sonny Trammell on steel, Floyd Cramer on piano, Tillman Franks on bass and drummer Jimmy Burrage. Young recorded first for PACEMAKER but the songs were leased to Gotham and credited to Tillman Franks as leader, including the impressive *You're Just Imagination* written by Johnny Mathis. Young wrote the song we hear here, *The Good Lord Must Have Sent You*, with Webb Pierce during his early days in the Pierce band and he recorded it in Nashville in March 1952 when he was signed to CAPITOL RECORDS. His first hit on CAPITOL soon came, *Goin' Steady*, although he famously didn't manage to do that long with Bille Jean Jones who was pinched from him by Hank Williams and then by Johnny Horton. By 1953, Young was on the Opry and after a brief stint in the Army he scored a number one hit in 1954 with *Live Fast, Love Hard, Die Young*, the first of 63 charted country hits and two later pop successes, *Hello Walls* and *It's Four In The Morning*.

DISC 3

NO MUSS, NO FUSS, NO BOTHER

CD 3 | APRIL 19, 1952

EDDY ARNOLD

3-1 **I'm Throwing Rice** (S. Nelson - E. Nelson - E. Arnold)

3-2 **Cattle Call** (T. Owens)

For most of April 1952, the Hayride was out of town while the Municipal Auditorium was booked for other events. It is unclear where the shows took place but from one of them, most likely April 19, there is a surviving recording by Eddy Arnold, one of the top-selling country singers of the era with a string of hits going back seven years. Here, to enthusiastic applause, he reprises *I'm Throwing Rice*, a major hit from 1949,

and *Cattle Call*, his first disc from 1944 which he re-made into a hit again in 1949 and which would come again in 1955, 1961, and even in 1996 as a duet with LeAnn Rimes. It was a song by Tex Owens, apparently written, to the tune of St. Paul Waltz, in a heavy snowfall in Kansas in 1934 while he wondered about the effect on his cattle.



CD 3 | SEPTEMBER 13, 1952

3-3 **Hayride ad sales pitch**

3-4 **Intro Theme**

JIMMY LEE

3-5 **Jimmy's Boogie** (J.L. Fautheree)

GOLDIE HILL

3-6 **Why Talk To Your Heart** (C. Bradley - L. Ulrich - W. Pierce)

RHYTHM HARMONEERS

3-7 **Mountain Dew** (S. Wiseman)

TOMMY TRENT

3-8 **No Muss, No Fuss, No Bother** (Innis - Tobias)

JERRY GREEN

3-9 **I Hate To Lose You Darlin'** (J.K. Green)

HANK WILLIAMS

3-10 **Jambalaya** (H. Williams)

3-11 **Outro theme and announcements**



On the Hayride stage – **Jimmy Lee** (LEFT), and (RIGHT) **Tommy and Goldie Hill**.

(BELOW) **The Rhythm Harmonizers** (FROM LEFT): Tom Bearden, Bryan Ritter, and Harry Liner.



Here is another extended excerpt from a single show, made in the form of an acetate disc to be pitched to prospective advertisers as is explained at the start by Horace Logan. He points out that hillbilly music, or "this kind of corn" as he calls it, may not be the advertiser's "thing" but it goes down well with many folks and it sells product. He was probably particularly hopeful of this sales pitch because at the end he makes it clear that a major star, Hank Williams, will be back on the show "for the foreseeable future." Unfortunately Hank's future was strictly limited, and he died at the year's end.

This show opens with the precocious guitar-picking talent of **Jimmy Lee Fautheree**, an 18 year old from Smackover, Arkansas, playing an electric boogie of the type he'd by now made known to audiences of the Big D Jamboree and the Hayride. He was already recording this kind of pre-rockabilly tune, being the guitarist on Webb Pierce's *Hayride Boogie* from disc one in this set. He made his first solo session for CAPITOL in 1951 as part of a deal engineered by Nashville record man Jim Bulleit who lured Jimmy to Spruce Pine for a few months while trying to set up a rival stage show there. Back on the Hayride when this show was recorded he was working as a featured artist, a member of

the staff band, and an occasional duet partner with Johnny Mathis who had also been lured to the Hayride by Jim Bulleit. Jimmy first recorded on a CAPITOL session with Johnny some six months before this show but their heyday as a duet, a stormy and almost very successful period, was still over a year away. Here Jimmy treats the Hayride fans to one of his trademark storming guitar instrumentals.

Algolda Hill, known as 'The Golden Hillbilly,' was from Coy City, Texas and joined the Hayride as a 19 year old after being seen by Webb Pierce in a club in Texas. Her brother, the later successful singer, songwriter and producer, Tommy Hill, came along too. **Goldie Hill** was a good singer although it seems that her role on the Hayride at first was to sing like Kitty Wells, recently departed from Shreveport. The song she sings here, *Why Talk To My Heart*, was one she had just recorded for DECCA as an answer disc to a Ray Price hit, *Talk To My Heart*. Within a year Goldie had left the Hayride for Nashville where she recorded several small hits before marrying singer Carl Smith.

There were a number of vocal groups on the Hayride down the years, and one of the first was the **Rhythm Harmonizers**, organised by Bryan Ritter, Harry Liner, and



HAYRIDE HARMONY



THE RHYTHM HARMONIZERS, Tom Bearden (guitar), Harry Liner (bass fiddle) and Bryan Ritter (steel guitar) recently joined the regular cast of the LOUISIANA HAYRIDE, KWKH's big folk music jamboree which is staged at and broadcast from the Municipal Auditorium every Saturday night.

Tom Bearden who also played steel, bass and guitar respectively. From West Monroe, Louisiana, at the time they joined the Hayride they had just signed with FLAIR RECORDS, based on the West Coast, and planned to record *Mountain Dew*, the tune we hear now in a spirited and engaging arrangement. In the event, they recorded a cover version of *Mexican Joe* instead, early in 1953. Despite competing with Jim Reeves on that song, and losing, the group backed Reeves on a number of local shows for a while and also backed Johnny Horton on a MERCURY session in January 1953. Then Tom Bearden went solo, recording for FABOR, before the Army claimed him. He said, "With Jim Reeves, I would play clubs

across Texas etc., and I would open the show for Jim, work the crowd up. I was just getting a bit of real action on some songs and records, but had to leave it all behind." He never did record *Mountain Dew*.

Tommy Trent was from Strawberry Plains, Tennessee, born in 1924, but spent most of his career in Arkansas. He joined KWKH in 1952 with his own band and soon became popular for his version of a Hank Penny disc from the year before, *No Muss, No Fuss, No Bother*. In 1952 Trent recorded in KWKH studios for CHECKER RECORDS but by 1953 he was in Little Rock running a hillbilly theme park. By 1954 he was working as program director for KTHS in Little

(RIGHT) **The Maddox Brothers & Rose**

(BOTTOM) **Jerry Green** and Betty Green with Tillman Franks (RIGHT), Shreveport 1961.

Rock, a station first formed in Hot Springs but bought by the 'Shreveport Times' in 1945 and which acted as a sister station to KWKH from 1952, broadcasting the Hayride in full each week.

Introduced by Horace Logan as a tall Texan and good-looking – every Texan was tall just as every girl singer was outstandingly pretty for the benefit of the radio audience – **Jerry Green** from Dallas was a 19 year old student in Austin, Texas at the time he joined the Hayride in 1952. He got himself a recording deal with SPECIALTY and he made several appearances on the Hayride but spent most of his career in Abilene, where he worked with Slim Willet, and in Austin where he sat in with Jesse James's band, then Arkansas where he was a radio announcer in the late '50s, moving to Nashville radio in the '60s when he also appeared on the Grand Ole Opry. Later still he became a TV presenter in Lubbock and a minor actor in movies. He wrote songs, too, including this one, *I Hate To Lose You Darlin'* where he sings with an easy manner reminiscent of Eddy Arnold but with a little more Texas edge.

To round out this show, Horace Logan introduced what he called a "*pleasant surprise*," and you can almost see the beam on his face as he pauses for effect before bringing out – **Hank Williams**. Hank was not in good shape but you'd never tell it from his vigorous version of his classic kinda-Cajun song, *Jambalaya*. The band pulls out the stops, too, and there are spirited fiddle solos and steel fills as well as an unusual tinkling piano part. The audience reacts enthusiastically to every line and every solo, little realising that this would be one of Hank's last appearances rather than a new dawn.



CD 3 | NOVEMBER 15, 1952

MADDOX BROTHERS & ROSE

3-12 **The Land Just Over The Stars** (Henry Maddox)



This song is taken from one of the appearances **Rose Maddox and her brothers** made as guests on the Hayride prior to their signing up for a year in January 1953. Born in 1925 in Boaz, Alabama, Rosalee Maddox had one of the most colourful careers in country music, and one of the toughest lives. She migrated with her family to California in a truth-stranger-than-fiction journey, riding the rails with her dirt-poor family and arriving in 1933 in California – a journey so newsworthy it appeared in the 'Oakland Tribune' that April in an article describing the classic Okie dust bowl journey: "*Family roams the US for work ... found living in drainage pipe.*" The



Maddoxes settled in Modesto in the San Joaquin valley, picking fruit and living in tents. It was their mother, singer and musician Lula, who drove the family to sing and perform as a means of bettering themselves and they were on radio KTRB in Modesto by 1939, also playing at rodeos and clubs from town to town. By 1946 Rose and her brothers – Henry, Cliff, Fred, Don and Cal – were signed to 4 STAR RECORDS and were widely heard over Mexican border radio station XERB. They joined COLUMBIA RECORDS in 1951, scoring a number of hits with the band's enthusiastic playing and Rose's dynamic and unpolished vocal style. Known for their jokes and all-round entertainment value including

their garish western suits, they became known as the Most Colorful Hillbilly Band in America and Rose was as well-known as any female country singer by the time she hit the Hayride on the back of songs like the *Philadelphia Lawyer*, *Alimony*, *Single Girl*, and *Hangover Blues*. Rose became known as 'the Queen of the Honky Tonks' and said later that "it makes me feel alright. It's better than being queen of nothing." Vocally, Rose was a brash and whole-hearted performer in her early days on a string of recordings for 4-STAR and COLUMBIA, and she sold well to the juke box market. This song, *Just Over The Stars*, highlights another of the group's strengths, stirring gospel numbers.

CD 3 | JANUARY 3, 1953

3-13 Jax beer ad and Logan talk

RED SOVINE

That's Me Without You (J.D. Miller)

TOMMY HILL

3-14 *I Ain't Sittin' Where I Was* (T. Hill)

JIMMY LEE

3-15 *Blowin' And Goin'* (J.L. Fautheree)

HILLBILLY BARTON

3-16 *No Interest* (Robison - Barton)

GOLDIE HILL

3-17 *Don't Send No More Roses* (W. Pierce - T. Hill)

BILL CARLISLE

3-18 *Too Old To Cut The Mustard* (Bill Carlisle)

This show, the first of 1953, was sponsored in part by Jax beer and the surviving extracts remind us that the live show was peppered with far more advertisements, normally sung live by members of the cast, than we have thought necessary to include here. Around this time, *That's Me Without You* was a favourite country song and particularly in the deep South where several singers vied to score the biggest hit with it. Written by Crowley record man J.D. Miller and recorded on Miller's FEATURE label by singer Lou Millet, it was soon recorded by Webb Pierce and a number of his associates including Red Sovine and Johnny Mathis. Here **Red Sovine** sings it with something of Roy Acuff's fervour while the band provides low-key support until David Young takes a classy steel solo. Another Hayride regular, **Jimmy Lee**, contributes one of his latest CAPITOL recordings, the enthusiastic, hurrying, *Blowin' And Goin'* complete with a ringing pre-rock 'n' roll guitar solo and a couple of double-entendre lines that may have escaped the show's producers. Both **Tommy and Goldie Hill** sing from their current repertoire too. Tommy had joined Webb Pierce's band as

fiddle player early in 1952 and was rewarded with a DECCA contract and an outlet for his songs, one of which was *Slowly*, one of the big hits of the era. Here he sings his fine reminder to his former girl that *I Ain't Sittin' Where I Was*, while sister Goldie showcases another of her brother's songs in her Kitty Wells style. *Don't Send No More Roses* was her debut single on DECCA from the autumn of 1952.

Billy Barton, often known as **Hillbilly Barton**, is little-remembered now but was quite successful in his day. Born John Grimes in Kentucky in 1929 he was on radio in Pasadena, California by 1950 as Hillbilly Barton. He signed to ABBOTT RECORDS where he was valued for his songwriting abilities, singing his songs both as a solo artist and as in duets with Johnny Horton and with Wanda Wayne, his wife. He later recorded for KING and other labels but at the time of this show he was about to register his biggest hit when Ferlin Husky and Jean Shepard would make his composition *A Dear John Letter* into a number one hit. Barton wrote hits for Jim Reeves, Ginny Wright and a number of

(RIGHT, FROM TOP:) **Tommy Hill,**
Bill Carlisle, and **Hillbilly Barton.**



other artists associated with the Hayride and penned hundreds of songs in all, moving to Nashville. Here he gave the audience one of his tongue-in-cheek songs about his having *No Interest* in anything but girls, inciting the band into a stirring performance that went down well with the crowd.

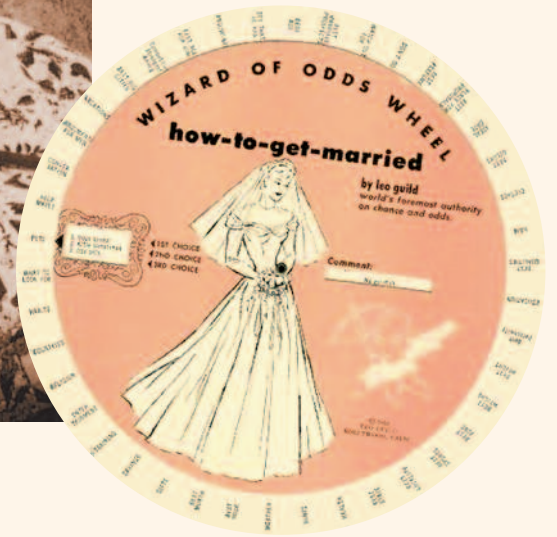
When **Bill Carlisle** arrived at the Hayride in September 1952 he brought with him singer and guitarist, Betty Amos, and lead picker Roy Sned. He also brought a successful dynamic singing and joking act honed over many years. Born in 1908 in Kentucky he had been on local radio there and in the Virginias with his brother Cliff in one of the best brother duets of the pre-war era. He had recorded for BLUEBIRD and MERCURY and was currently hot with this song, *Too Old To Cut The Mustard*, that allowed full reign for his vocal tricks and stage antics. Carlisle stayed in Shreveport for a year, managed by Tillman Franks who helped him promote another big hit, *No Help Wanted*, which got them on the cover of 'Cash Box' a few weeks after this show. Bill moved to Nashville and the Opry in 1954 but Betty Amos decided to stay on at the Hayride as a solo singer.



In January 1953, the Hayride became part of CBS network's Saturday Night Country Style show, one of four stations to feed a 30-minute segment for national broadcast, in rotation. Eighteen months later, in June 1954, a 30 minute segment of the Hayride started to be transcribed for broadcast by the Armed Forces Radio Service.



(LEFT) **Ginny Wright**, looking sultry – perhaps after consulting her marriage wheel.



CD 3 | OCTOBER 16, 1954

GINNY WRIGHT

3-19 **Tell Me How To Get Married** (B. Moody - L. Guild)

3-20 **Lucky Strike talk and intro**

ELVIS PRESLEY

That's All Right (A. Crudup)

3-21 **Blue Moon Of Kentucky** (B. Monroe)

DOBBER JOHNSON

3-22 **Black Mountain Rag** (B. Magness)

TIBBY EDWARDS

3-23 **Much Too Young To Die** (R. Gabbard)

JIMMY NEWMAN

3-24 **Cry Cry Darlin'** (J. Newman - J.D. Miller)

Unfortunately, very few of the Hayrides performed in 1953 and 1954 have survived as audio, but we do have part of a fascinating show from the end of 1954, a historic one because it captures the debut on the Hayride of Elvis Presley. It allows us to see how his rockabilly style was slotted into the Hayride formula, right between a hillbilly ballad and an old-time fiddle instrumental.

While Presley was waiting in the wings, **Ginny Wright**, only recently a new-

comer like Elvis but now a rising star, was on stage performing a ballad containing advice about *How To Get Married*. Wright was from Twin City, Georgia and had studied voice in Cleveland before joining the Hayride in December 1953 after being discovered by Fabor Robison and paired with Jim Reeves during a show in Detroit. She had just made a number of recordings in Shreveport for FABOR and ABBOTT, including a duet with Jim Reeves, *I Love You*, that

(RIGHT) **Tibby Edwards** on stage at the Louisiana Hayride.

(FAR RIGHT) Tibby Edwards meets **Elvis**.



made some good sales and became a number three country hit, and others with Tom Bearden, Tom Tall, and T. Tommy Cutrer that didn't. Several discs later, a month before this show, she recorded *How To Get Married* and was promoting it here as her new release, competing with a cover version on RCA by Hal 'Lone Pine' and Betty Cody on RCA. It's a pop-oriented song by Bob Moody and Leo Guild who may have had an eye on placing it in a movie. The song is about Ginny seeking advice from a fortune wheel, or wizard of odds, and it just so happened that Leo Guild had copyrighted and manufactured such a wheel the year before. You spun the cardboard circle and depending on where it stopped you could read advice about how to give yourself the best chance of getting married. Ginny's conclusion as she sings is that she should keep her disposition sunny, never argue over money, find a man who's wise and healthy, and make sure he's taller than her. It wasn't exactly standard hillbilly fare.

Leo Guild had a newspaper column where he promoted himself as *"the world's foremost authority on chance and odds."* The same year this song appeared he also wrote the 'Bachelor's Joke Book,' with a cover ad about vehicle sales promising "a free blonde with every car." He went on to write pulp-style Hollywood news, memoirs, screenplays and fiction.

It's in some contrast to Ginny Wright's pure vocal technique and pop-style lyrics that we hear **Elvis Presley's** Hayride debut singing his own record release, or rather one that had been causing some interest for over three months. His debut in Shreveport came just two weeks since Presley made his first appearance outside of Memphis, at the Grand Ole Opry and Ernest Tubb's Record Shop Show both on October 2 in Nashville. In fact, Presley had barely appeared before the public at large anywhere at all, his performing experience being limited to singing with country bands

at tiny night spots or daytime drug-store promotion events. He was raw, for sure, but the music trade paper, 'Cash Box,' had reported, contrary to subsequent myth, that on the Opry *"Presley turned in a terrific performance"* of *Blue Moon Of Kentucky*, one side of his first disc that had been issued by SUN RECORDS of Memphis in July. His only other show of any scale had been on July 30 when he was added at the last moment to the Slim Whitman Show that came through Memphis on tour. That show came and went in a blur but it was apparently the one where he developed his leg-shaking style, out of fright.

By the time SUN label boss, Sam Phillips, had booked Presley as a guest artist on the Louisiana Hayride of October 16, Presley and his band, just two men, Scotty Moore and Bill Black, had worked up some kind of polish to their still-limited stage show. The other side of the first disc, *That's All Right*, the blues number by Arthur Crudup, was selling well in Texas and singer Tibby Edwards had already performed both of Presley's songs on the Hayride to good response.

On the October 16 Hayride, Presley sang both sides of his record and spoke breathlessly to announcer Frank Page about his *"rhythm and blues style"* and how he *"just*

stumbled upon it." Page recalled, *"Sam Phillips accompanied Elvis, Scotty and Bill to the Hayride and looked on from the fourth row as his artist was introduced."* The younger part of the Hayride crowd was ready for Presley and his style, you can hear, though established regular Hayride artists like Merle Kilgore later said they thought he jumped around too much and that most of the crowd *"was stunned. They didn't know what to think."* Frank Page remembered how Sam Phillips had spoken first to Hayride bass player Tillman Franks and then floor manager and talent booker Pappy Covington who consulted Horace Logan and himself: *"Neither Elvis nor his two songs really fit the Hayride but it was the consensus to give the kid a shot... Horace Logan usually introduced the main attractions but since Elvis was an unknown, I was asked to do the honours."* Most of his fellow artists were unsure too, but most also reported being impressed by his knowledge of their own music when they met him and his deferential manner. The girl singers, of course, encountered another side of him, Betty Amos recalling that Presley told her, *"You're a little doll,"* to which she retorted, *"no, I'm a big doll."* Another little doll, singer Carolyn Bradshaw, was soon linked with him but she was just one of many as he started to sing his way



(LEFT) **Dobber Johnson** (2ND FROM LEFT) at the Hayride.

(BELOW) Advertisement for **Jimmy Newman**.

across the South in the months that followed, a new girl photographed with him each day.

Frank Page said he had been impressed that first day by the way Presley managed his first Hayride show. "When Elvis first came out and started singing he sorta rocked forward on his feet and looked like he was about to leap right into the audience... It was nerves...[but] all in all I'd say he showed restraint before the crowd of mostly older, married couples." On the strength of his first Hayride show and his unusual but popular style, Presley was booked as a regular, returning on October 30 with Sam Phillips and his parents to sign contracts. Both the booking manager for Hayride artists, Pappy Covington, and local bandleader Tillman Franks, booked Presley for shows. On November 17, Franks took a Hayride group featuring Jimmy and Johnny through Memphis en route to Ohio and four days later Presley arrived back in Shreveport to spend a week playing venues in Gladewater, Houston and Texarkana, with various Hayride acts including Johnny Horton and Tibby Edwards, and emerging local singer George Jones.

Back to this day in October at the Hayride, following Presley's two songs, and almost as if to say "nothing significant just hap-

pened here," fiddler **Dobber Johnson** took to the stage to fire off a traditional tune, *Black Mountain Rag*. Douglas Johnson, known as 'Dobber' because he liked to play with dirt dobbers, a species of wasp, as a kid, was a local boy who started fiddling aged six years and by the time he was ten was winning talent contests on KWKH and getting to play with The Shelton Brothers' Sunshine Boys. He had his own early morning show with school friends and when he graduated from high school in 1947 he toured with Harmie Smith and the Ozark Mountaineers in Texas and Arkansas, and with Tillman Franks and Frank Pruett as part of the Arkansas Cottonpickers on KARK Little Rock. He joined Hank Locklin in Houston on KLEE before taking a day job in 1949 with Kansas Southern Railroad, which he kept for many years. In November 1949 he joined the Hayride band with Franks and Pruett and stayed on and off to the end.

Edwin Thibodeaux was from Garland, Louisiana. As **Tibby Edwards** he carved out a career as a country Cajun singer after he met singer Lefty Frizzell as a mid-teenager and toured with Frizzell who, he said, "kinda halfway raised me." It was Frizzell's manager, Crowley record man Jay Miller, who first recorded him and

got him a contact with MERCURY in 1953 singing Miller's songs. Here he sings a hot Ray Price song from the summer of 1954, *Much Too Young To Die*. Edwards went into the Army but pursued a low-key career on D, TODD, JIM and other smaller record labels into the early 1960s.

Jimmy Newman had also started with Jay Miller's FEATURE label in Crowley, and it was he, not Tibby Edwards, who became synonymous with the success of Cajun country music, scoring a number of hits for DOT including this song, *Cry Cry Darlin'*, and later *A Fallen Star*. Born in 1927 in High Point, Louisiana, of which there are few, he started out in the Cajun lands of Ville Platte and Lake Charles. Moving to Nashville and to MGM and DECCA he later hit again with *Alligator Man* and *Bayou Talk*. By then he had become Jimmy C. Newman with the C. standing for Cajun. "A Cajun was two speeds, off and full-blast," he said and he brought that approach to his ballads and faster numbers. When he joined the Hayride, Newman was accompa-

NEWCOMER TO HAYRIDE



Newcomer **JIMMY NEWMAN** recently joined the cast of the LOUISIANA HAYRIDE and is now being featured on the show each Saturday night. Jimmy is a song writer as well as singer. His "CRY, CRY, DARLING" is one of the top ten tunes most played by disc jockeys according to National Polls. His latest release is "NIGHT TIME IS CRY TIME."

nied by Cajun fiddler Rufus Thibodeaux from Lafayette who stayed with him for many years apart from a stint with Bob Wills.

The Hayride was always keen to have virtuoso musicians on hand to help out with visiting singers but the show still maintained its own staff bands. By the end of 1954, this was the loose aggregation known as the Lump Lump Boys, but briefly they hired another band late in 1954, Hank Grant's Circle-6 Ranch Boys from the Texarkana area which featured steel player Jim Evans who had already become a Hayride regular and a member of Johnny Horton's band the year before. Evans remembered that they had a large dressing room that doubled as a rehearsal area, and that Elvis Presley would hide out there from the girls when there came to be too many to handle. By the summer of 1955 the band had decided to return home to make travelling easier but Presley was still, by turns, looking for and hiding out from the girls.



CD 3 | JANUARY 15, 1955

ELVIS PRESLEY

3-25 **Hearts Of Stone** (E. Ray - R. Jackson)

Through early 1955, Presley continued to tour mainly within reach of the Hayride where he appeared most Saturday nights, rooming at the Al-Ilda Motel or the Shirley Temple Courts on the strip in Bossier City on the north bank of the Red River opposite Shreveport. This show of January 15 was significant because it was when Tom Parker, the self-styled Colonel, first saw Presley perform, singing *That's All Right*, *Tweedlee Dee*, and this song, *Hearts Of*

Stone. It was an R&B vocal group number that Presley liked very much and hoped to record. It is notable that Presley's basic band of Scotty Moore and Bill Black was enhanced on this show by pianist Leon Post and steel player Sonny Trammel who was just back from a stint in the Army where he had played in the same service country band as singer and future Hayride regular Frankie Miller.

CD 3 | JANUARY 22, 1955

ELVIS PRESLEY

3-26 **Blue Moon Of Kentucky** (B. Monroe)

3-27 **I Don't Care If The Sun Don't Shine** (Mack David)

Although by January 1955 Presley now had two more discs out on SUN RECORDS, he continued to sing his first record on the Hayride as well. We've included this version of *Blue Moon Of Kentucky* as it shows an increasing assurance by Presley and features a prominent piano part. This day, Presley also sang *I Don't Care If The Sun Don't Shine*, from his second disc, and an R&B favourite, *Money Honey*. As usual he

was part of the Lucky Strike segment of the Hayride sponsored by Camel cigarettes, and he sang in front of a backdrop with the slogan 'Be Happy Go Lucky.' By now, Presley was touring regularly with Hayride artists Jim Ed and Maxine Brown, and he had taken to adding Hayride staff band members to his act, this time Sonny Trammel on steel and Floyd Cramer on piano.



(ABOVE) Elvis Presley on stage at the Hayride (FROM LEFT:) Scotty Moore, Elvis, Bill Black.

(TOP LEFT) Elvis Presley

From KWKH's
Louisiana Hayride
Tom Perryman of KSIJ
Presents
ELVIS
PRESLEY
SUN RECORDS: "That's
Alright Mama" — "Blue
Moon of Kentucky"
With
SCOTTY & BILL
Along With
J. E. and MAXINE
BROWN
TUESDAY NIGHT — JAN. 25th
MAYFAIR BUILDING FAIR
8:00 P.M. GROUND
ADULTS 1.00 — CHILDREN 50c
Monday, Jan. 24—Hawkins, Texas—Humble Camp Recreation Hall
\$1.00 Per Person—8 P.M.
Wednesday, Jan. 26—Gilmer, Texas—REA Bldg. 7:30 P.M.
Students 50c—Adults 1.00
Thursday, Jan. 27—Longview, Texas—Reo Palm Isle Club
1.00 Per Person
Friday, Jan. 28—Gaston HI School—8 P.M.
Students 50c—Adults 1.00

CD 3 | MARCH 5, 1955

ELVIS PRESLEY

3-28 **Little Mama** (Taylor - Carroll - Wexler - Ertegun)

3-29 **Shake Rattle And Roll** (Charles Calhoun)

As the year wore on, or tore on in Presley's case, he started to be booked further afield, and by March he had been in New Mexico and West Texas with a Grand Ole Opry touring show starring the Carter Family. His song choices were less and less country, though, and on March 5, as well as *Tweedlee Dee* and *Money Honey*, he added two more R&B songs to his Hayride act. *Little Mama* was a hectic version of the hit

for the Clovers vocal group, issued a year earlier on ATLANTIC and *Shake Rattle And Roll* was another ATLANTIC disc from the same period, Big Joe Turner's R&B hit, which had also been recorded by Bill Haley in 1954. Presley's version is characterised by the use of steel guitar to punctuate the little bumps and grinds that doubtless the audience could see.



(ABOVE) **Elvis** with Scotty and Bill, and announcer Frank Page.

CD 3 | APRIL 30, 1955

3-30 Gladewater Intro and history

JIMMY LEE & WAYNE WALKER

Lips That Kiss So Sweetly (T. Franks - B. Collie)

THE BROWNS

3-31 **Draggin' Main Street** (J.E. Brown - M. Brown)

Now we come to a four song extract from one of the shows the Hayride put on at venues other than the Municipal Auditorium in Shreveport. This April 30 show was one of several each spring where the Hayride had to find another stage and today it was in the small town of Gladewater, Texas, where Jim Reeves had once been a radio director for five years.

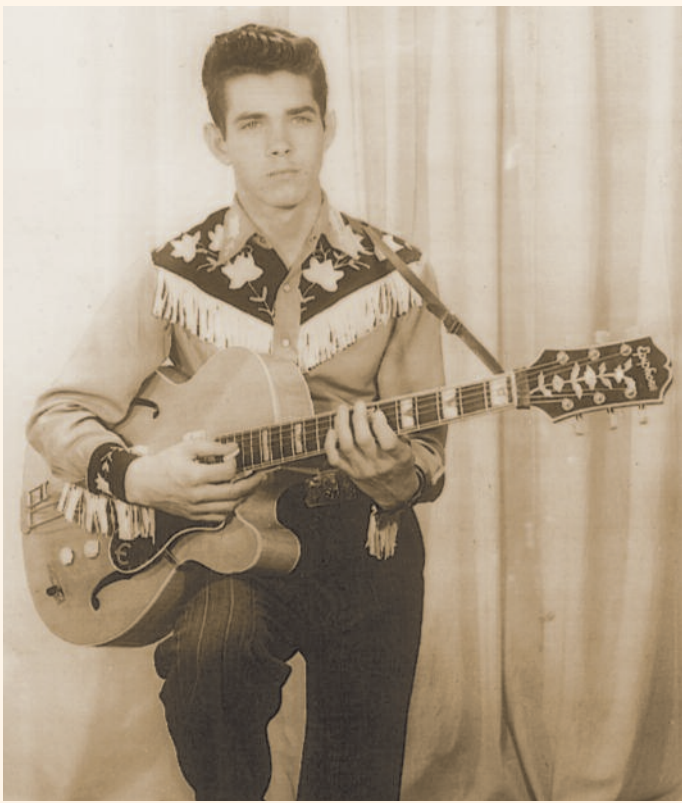
After some brief hesitation where the announcer has to cover while the band gets

ready, he introduces a new duo of **Jimmy Lee Fautheree and Wayne Walker**. Jimmy Lee had been a star on the show for some years but Walker was making one of his first appearances. Walker was from Oklahoma but had been singing and songwriting around Shreveport for some years, working with Faron Young and others, and doing a book-keeping job by day. This spring, he started to be pressed into service as duet partner for Lee

who had split with Johnny Mathis with whom he'd had success for some years. Lee and Mathis were very popular on live shows and records and could have gone on for years after their hit, *If You Don't Somebody Else Will*, but their manager Tillman Franks noted that they just couldn't get along. He had them on tours in Tennessee, Texas and New Mexico, and on the Pee Wee King TV show in Cincinnati but the split came in January 1955. Mathis was a great singer and songwriter, selling more songs than he kept, but he was disorderly and disruptive in his private life. He later confirmed, *"I didn't care. Just give me a drink and let me go where the girls are. That's how I was."* Wayne Walker stood in for one recording session for Chess and for a number of shows until he moved to Nashville a month after this excellent vocal and instru-

mental performance of their Chess record, *Lips That Kiss So Sweetly*. Jimmy Lee had a third option though, restarting Jimmy and Johnny with his younger brother Lynn Fautheree playing the part of 'Johnny.' They toured for some time with Elvis Presley, Tibby Edwards, Johnny Horton, David Houston, and Charline Arthur.

By the spring of 1955 the other sibling act of **Jim Ed and Maxine Brown** were becoming very popular after their hit *Looking Back To See*, and here they travelled over from Pine Bluff to sing their new disc on FABOR. Their uptempo song *Draggin' Main Street* was as close as they got to the rock 'n' roll lifestyle, though that wasn't very close. They were still a year shy of their transfer to RCA and to greater success still on records and the Opry.



(RIGHT)
Jim Ed and Maxine Brown

(LEFT) **Jimmy Lee**

(BELOW) **Wayne Walker**



KWKH'S
Louisiana Hayride
 Tonight
 8:00 till 11:30 P.M.
MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM

featuring

Elvis Presley
 Jimmie Newman ★ Wirly Fairburn
 J. E. and Maxine Brown
 David Houston ★ Buddy Attaway
 Jeanette Hicks
 Billy Walker ★ Floyd Cramer
 Jimmy and Lenny Lee
 Betty Amos ★ Jimmie Day
 AND MANY OTHERS

General Admission
 Adults 60c Children 30c

Tickets on Sale at
HARBUCK & WOMACK

Reserve Section
 Adults \$1.00 Children 50c
 Tax Included

DISC 4

RED EYED AND ROWDY

CD 4 | APRIL 30, 1955 CONTINUED

JIM REEVES

4-1 **Red Eyed And Rowdy** (J. Reeves - T. Perryman)

ELVIS PRESLEY

4-2 **Tweedlee Dee** (W. Scott)

Talk and outro

Jim Reeves was coming back to Gladewater as something of a star with hits like *Mexican Joe* and *Bimbo*. Certainly, he felt confident enough to joke that the Gladewater venue was cooler than the usual auditorium in Shreveport and might be used regularly. Reeves was on what he called "indefinite leave of absence" from his KWKH announcing job and was focusing on his singing career, so much so that Tillman Franks observed, "Jim was a perfectionist. He really worked on his music." Here he sings his current ABBOTT disc, the evocative, swinging *Red Eyed And Rowdy*, after inviting steel player Sonny Trammell to kick off the song. Within a few months he would move to Nashville and RCA and even greater success.

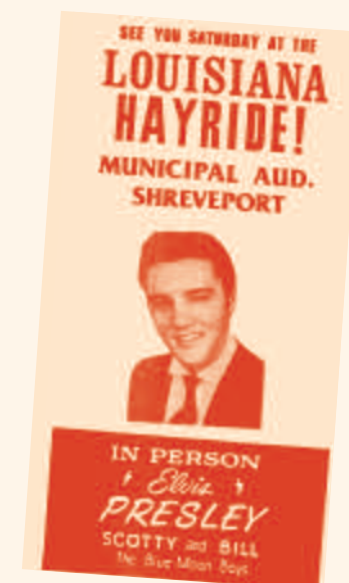
By now, **Elvis Presley** was getting to be a bigger and bigger attraction. He'd appeared on the rival Big D Jamboree show in Dallas, billed as "from the Louisiana Hayride," and he'd headlined a Hayride tour with Slim Whitman, Jimmy Newman, Jim Reeves and others. He headlined because, although these artists all had solid local followings, no-one wanted to go on after him.

Sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce, this Gladewater show was reported in the 'Gladewater Daily Mirror': "Approximately 3000 persons jammed the new

*Gladewater high School gymnasium for the three and a half hour show, and hundreds were turned away. Visitors from all over the Ark-La-Tex came to the Hayride... Elvis Presley closed the show with 'Tweedlee Dee,' following Floyd Cramer and Jimmy Day doing their 'Fancy Pants' and staying on stage to play with Elvis and his band." They also reported that 3 year old Royce Hanson was on the show as "Elvis Presley jnr, using a peewee-sized guiter." Pre-show newspaper coverage had listed Presley as "the bopping hillbilly" starring over Jim Reeves, Johnny Horton, Jimmy Newman, Jim and Maxine Brown, Jimmy and Wayne, Billy Walker, Buddy Ataway and the rest of the cast. In fact, Presley arrived late for the show and was forced to limit his time on stage. Here we can hear his compliant but slightly annoyed response to Horace Logan's request that he sing a two minute version of *Tweedlee Dee*, a song he didn't record but favoured on stage.*

Frank Page observed Presley becoming more and more confident as time went on. By now, "he would often tell off-colour jokes or make flippant remarks as he sought to find a level of comfort with his increasing audience of teenage fans." He continued to make his mark on the female

performers, too, though some had mixed memories. Betty Amos described how, "Elvis was forever busting guitar strings. He'd run up to me and say, 'Betty, quick, can I borrow your guitar?' And he'd take my guitar and absolutely thrash it to death." Jeanette Hicks found that, "Elvis used to sneak up behind me backstage, cover my eyes, and say 'Guess Who?' in a funny voice... then Elvis would poke his head out from behind the curtain and look out, and the audience were just looking for him and the girls would just scream. You can imagine that whoever was on stage didn't care for that, and so Horace had to put a stop to that."



(ABOVE) **Jim Reeves** at the Louisiana Hayride.



(LEFT) **Jeanette Hicks**

(RIGHT) **Betty Amos**

(BELOW RIGHT) **Jimmy Newman** (LEFT) with Johnny Horton.



CD 4 | July 16, 1955

JIMMY NEWMAN

4-3 **Blue Darling** (L. Lyle)

JEANETTE HICKS

4-4 **Just Like In The Movies** (W. Walker)

BETTY AMOS

4-5 **Yes Ma'am, Mama** (Hy Heath)

ELVIS PRESLEY

4-6 **I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone** (S. Kesler - W. Taylor)

BILL PETERS

4-7 **Ida Red** (trad.)

BILLY WALKER & JEANETTE HICKS

4-8 **Which One Of Us Is To Blame** (Sonny Dull - Redd Stewart)

In this substantial extract from a show in the summer of 1955, we can again see how Elvis Presley's music was scheduled among other, rather different, Hayride attractions, starting with Jimmy Newman and his pure heartache style on *Blue Darling*, a song that would sell well for him on records.

Jeanette Hicks was from Texarkana and had been on the show for two years, moving at age 20 from the Texarkana Hayloft Jamboree. She picked up a recording contract with OKEH RECORDS and had

just moved over to COLUMBIA for her fifth disc, a rollicking number written by Wayne Walker with a clever lyric about life turning into make believe, *Just Like In The Movies*. Here she sings with gusto while Sonny Trammell and the band take fine solos midway. **Betty Amos** started her solo recording career while still with the Carlises, and she had seen five singles out before this song, *Yes Mam, Mama*. Backed by Cheater Cheater it was her best-selling disc of the eight she made for MERCURY and though she continued to record for STARDAY

and other labels into the '70s it remained her most successful. Here she sings in her full-throated style, typically giving the song everything.

Issued at the end of April, **Elvis Presley's** fourth SUN disc coupled the R&B song *Baby, Let's Play House* with this clever country number, *I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone*, written by SUN session players Stan Kesler and Bill Taylor. He had been touring extensively in Florida in May followed by Virginia and the Carolinas, then Texas, Florida again and Texas again. Pres-

ley had a week's vacation in the Memphis area and then came straight back to the Hayride for July 16. His performance was assured and the musicians do a fine job of recreating the SUN sound. Horace Logan notes at the end that he has "*quite a unique style, there's no doubt about that.*"

Bill Peters was playing fiddle with the Hayride staff band when he briefly took the spotlight as a featured artist, performing *Ida Red* and other popular tunes in his breakdown style. Peters often toured in the



(LEFT) **Billy Walker** at the Louisiana Hayride.

CD 4 | August 6, 1955

JOHNNY HORTON

4-9 **Gone With The Wind This Morning** (F. Hart)

bands of local artists, including Hank Thompson and Lefty Frizzell, and currently played with **Billy Walker**. William Walker was born in Ralls, Texas in 1929 and was known as 'The Traveling Texan' since a period on the Big D Jamboree when the management decided to put him in a mask and give him a mystery persona. He'd started on KICA in Clovis, New Mexico and went from the Big D to WACO in Waco. He sang with Hank Thompson's popular country band before trying out at the Hayride. He'd already seen twenty-one discs issued on CAPITOL and COLUMBIA before he was teamed with Jeanette Hicks on *Which One Of Us Is To Blame*. It's a stylish ballad with the singers exchanging thoughts as they explore their illicit relationship, an engaging contribution to the slipping around theme that had been popular for some years. Walker was known as the Tall Texan by the time he left Shreveport for the Ozark Jubilee and then the Opry in Nashville. After a disc on the 'D' label under the name of the Travelin' Texans, he started to make his COLUMBIA discs count. He made the first version of the hit song *Funny How Time Slips Away*, and then in 1961 he scored his only number one chart hit with *Charlie's Shoes*.

Johnny Horton was associated with the Shreveport music scene and the Hayride for many years and he'd made his first appearance in May 1952, returning regularly to plug his latest MERCURY recordings. He'd been recording since 1950 though, for the West Coast labels CORMAC and ABBOTT, and had seen a dozen discs out before he joined MERCURY in 1952 and started recording in Dallas and then Nashville. His family was from northern Texas but John Gale Horton was born in Los Angeles in 1925. He spent most of the next thirty years moving from place to place, either to study, to work in construction, to undertake some adventure or other, and always to go fishing, at which he was an expert. At various points he was in Tyler and Jacksonville in Texas, or California, Florida, Alaska and points inbetween. Among his interests were singing and entertaining, inspired by his mother Claudia who taught piano, and he took part in the local folk music scenes wherever he went, though never so much as to interfere with his fishing. At the age of 25, Horton decided to learn guitar while staying with his mother in Longview, Texas. They'd listen to local disc jockey Jim Reeves's morning program, the the Hill-William Roundup as he sometimes called it. Reeves played a lot of Hank Williams's songs and Williams was

Horton's idol. They'd tune in Jim Reeves and wait for a song that Johnny could strum along to. Around this Horton entered and won a talent contest hosted by Reeves. He decided to make a go of music and within a year he was making records. He was back in California for parts of 1950, hanging around with a band called Johnny Reeves and the Homesteaders who acted as the house band for CORMAC RECORDS in Santa Anna, and late that year he saw his first record issued as vocalist with the group. The following year he had a TV show on KLAC called Fishing Fun, with a theme song *Done Rovin'* that he soon recorded to some local acclaim. He then became a star of the Hometown Jamboree TV show on KLAC and was persuaded by record man Fabor Robison to come in with drugstore owner Sid Abbott as third partner in new record labels to be called ABBOTT and FABOR. Horton made eight new records for ABBOTT in a relaxed style at the folksy end of country music, to some local acclaim, but agreed with Robison that he needed to move back to east Texas to record in Dallas for a bigger label. In 1952 he joined MERCURY and by June he had moved to Shreveport so as to become a regular on the Hayride. Weeknights he worked with the Rowley Trio, another Hayride act, and weekdays he fished. By

November he had broken up with his wife and given up his stake in ABBOTT. Times became hard but he stuck with the Hayride and a Saturday morning radio show on KWKH plus a daily pre-recorded show on the KWKH affiliate station, KTHS, in Little Rock. He had such an easy personality that somehow he got by thanks to the goodwill of others and to a number of scams and con deals such as taking money upfront for work he didn't turn up for. He earned a little from MERCURY and his *All For The Love Of A Girl* sold quite well, but he was still scuffling when he met and married Billie Jean, the widow of Hank Williams. She said, *"He needed a family. He wasn't hung up on music like Hank. He'd rather fish and hunt. He certainly wasn't into working all day, either. He would have quit music. He was tired of all that crap out on the road – the pills and so on. He didn't like to be around drunks either. I got him out of debt when I married him. He owed the world, and it took everything I had."* This fits with what Tillman Franks said about the day he became Horton's manager in 1954. Franks had temporarily split from the Hayride and from his clients Jimmy and Johnny. *"I hadn't worked in four or five weeks when Johnny Horton come to the door,"* remembered Tillman. *"He was broke too. He and Billie Jean had spent the money they got after Hank died, and she'd told him to get his ass out and make some more. He said, 'If I can get Tillman Franks to manage me, I'll get to number one.' He came out to my house on Summers Street, and I told him that I just didn't like the way he sang. He said, 'No problem. I'll sing any way you want me to.' And he was serious!"* Tillman called Webb Pierce and they managed to get Horton a deal with COLUMBIA, the start of a sharp rise in his fortunes. This Hayride performance of Wayne Raney's new single *Gone With The Wind This Morning* was a typical Horton song of the ABBOTT/MERCURY years, lighter and more folksy than most, though he never did record it.

The Louisiana Hayride on TV
 (FROM LEFT): Tillman Franks, **Betty
 Amos**, **Johnny Horton**, Tommy
 Tomlinson, Sonny Trammell, **Dob-
 ber Johnson**, Hoot Rains, Charlie
 Waller, Curley Herndon.



CD 4 | August 20, 1955

4/10 Talk about future shows

HOOT & CURLEY

You Get What You Pay For (Wayne Walker)

JEANETTE HICKS AND HOOT & CURLEY

4-11 Lucky Strike Ad

JEANETTE HICKS

4-12 **Ain't That A Shame** (Domino - Bartholomew)

ELVIS PRESLEY

4-13 **Baby Let's Play House** (Arthur Gunter)

4/14 **Maybellene** (Chuck Berry)

FLOYD CRAMER & JIMMY DAY

4-15 **Floyd And Jimmy Boogie** (Jimmy Day)

Hoot Rains & Curley Herndon

had started with the Hayride band in 1950 before signing up as Slim Whitman's backing musicians. By 1953 they had separated from Whitman to work as a double act and they made recordings for IMPERIAL and Star-DAY, but when the Hayride ended they both focused on the day jobs they'd never really left, Rains a car salesman in Bossier City and Herndon a civil engineer in Shreveport. *You Get What You Pay For* was a fine and funny piece of philosophising from the pen of local writer Wayne Walker and at the time of this show they had just issued it as their fourth of five records for STAR-DAY.

Next, **Jeanette Hicks** performed the Fats Domino hit *Ain't That A Shame*, illustrating the developing theme on the Hayride where singers, particularly the girl

NEW HAYRIDE DISCOVERY



JEANETTE HICKS, recently discovered folk singer, is one of more than 40 radio and recording stars featured on the LOUISIANA HAY-RIDE which is staged at the Municipal Auditorium every Saturday night. The big three and a half hour hillbilly variety show is broadcast over KWKH and is featured on CBS Radio's "Saturday Night, Country Style."



(LEFT) **Elvis Presley** on stage at the Hayride with Scotty Moore on guitar and Bill Black on bass.

singers, would provide country versions of songs that were popular with the increasing number of younger members in the audience. Often this meant singing an R&B song rather than a pop tune. As well as the now standard *That's All Right*, **Elvis Presley** performed two other R&B songs on August 20. The first was *Baby, Let's Play House*, a slightly adapted version of a number 12 R&B hit by Nashville-based bluesman Arthur Gunter who had a rhythmic, almost rockabilly feel to his music. Presley's version of the song had entered the 'Cash Box' country chart at number 15 in July. Next, *Maybelline* was a version of the emerging hit by Chuck Berry, released only a month before this show. Berry had always been keen on playing country songs, though he would change the words often to update them, in this case *Ida Red*.

Following Presley, two of the show's top session men gave the audience a jazzy steel

guitar and piano boogie, supported by Bill Peters on fiddle and Chuck Wigginton on bass. **Jimmy Day** was from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, born in 1934, and took up the steel after seeing Shot Jackson playing with the Bailes Brothers. Moving to Shreveport he joined Webb Pierce's band before working with many star singers in Nashville and Texas. Later, his partner in a guitar firm, Buddy Emmons, said "*Jimmy Day is the only steel guitarist I've heard who no-one has been able to copy. He captures his feelings on the fly.*" **Floyd Cramer** was a Shreveport native, born in 1933, who also first came to the Hayride as a member of Webb Pierce's band. He would soon move to Nashville to become a session musician and soloist, recording with Elvis Presley and scoring his own gold record for the pop hit *Last Date* in 1960. Like Jimmy Day, he became one of the most popular session men in Nashville for many years.

CD 4 | August 27, 1955

JIM REEVES

4-16 **Yonder Comes A Sucker** (Jim Reeves)

DAVID HOUSTON

4-17 **Squaws Along The Yukon** (Cam Smith)

BILLY WALKER

4-18 **I Can't Keep The Girls Away** (L.J. Butler)

By August 1955, **Jim Reeves** was well on his way to stardom and about to join the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, but his Hayride performances were always well-received. He was on RCA RECORDS now and *Yonder Comes A Sucker* was his first big song for them. Described by Reeves as "*a foolish kind of thing*," it still had something of the ABBOTT style to it, a fast-paced number with rapid lyrics that Reeves sang effortlessly, as always. To this point, when the Opry management approached him,

Reeves had worked almost a decade in country music without much involvement with Nashville. He had never recorded there, and had only played a few guest spots on the Opry, but his Hayride contract was up on July 3, 1955. His last appearance was on September 10 and his debut as an Opry member was on October 19, 1955. He moved to Nashville that month.

David Houston was a 26 year old from Bossier City, across the Red River from the



ELVIS PRESLEY

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and Famous "Louisiana Hayride!"



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With a cast of
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and recording
stars including

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Hayride, when he sang this version of *Squaws Along The Yukon*, a ten year old song recorded by western movie actor and western swing bandleader, Texas Jim Lewis, for CORAL. Houston started out as a fan of Slim Whitman and apparently his idol organised for him to record for IMPERIAL RECORDS in 1955. Within a year he was on RCA but he never really took off and he was still working in an insurance office in

Bossier City in 1963 when he started to make hits.

Billy Walker here reprises one of his COLUMBIA discs from 1953, the modest *Can't Keep The Girls Away*, a favourite at the Hayride.

(TOP) **Jim Reeves** (LEFT) with **Billy Walker**.

(TOP RIGHT) **David Houston** (CENTER) with Sonny Trammel on steel guitar, James Kirkland on bass and James Burton on guitar.

(RIGHT) **Johnny Cash** on the Hayride stage in 1958.



CD 4 | DECEMBER 3, 1955

JOHNNY CASH

4-19 **Hey Porter** (Johnny Cash)

4-20 **Luther Played The Boogie** (Johnny Cash)

With Elvis Presley on his way onto RCA RECORDS and his time on the Hayride running out, it was natural that the show would be open to other artists from SUN RECORDS, and natural that label boss Sam Phillips and his booking agent Bob Neal

would send their new artists into the Deep South. Carl Perkins and **Johnny Cash** both appeared on the Hayride and the Big D Jamboree but Cash was more often on the Hayride while Perkins mostly headed to Dallas. On this early show, where he appeared together with Elvis Presley, Cash sang a commanding version of his first hit, *Hey Porter*, which had been out for six months, plus a song he'd recorded that summer but which would not appear on disc until some years later. It was *Luther Played The Boogie*, a tune that played a big part in Cash's stage show from the start, where he both showcased and acknowledged the "strangeness" of his lead guitarist's style. Luther Perkins, for his part, developed a dead-pan look, staying above all the apparent concern about his picking.





(LEFT) Werly Fairburn

(RIGHT) Gary Bryant



CD 4 | APRIL 28, 1956

4-21 Theme and Logan 'genial' talk

WERLY FAIRBURN

Stay Close To Me (W. Fairburn)

BETTY AMOS

4-22 *Ivory Tower* (J. Fulton - Lois Steele)

4-23 Talk about state fair

JOHNNY HORTON

Honky Tonk Man (Horton - Franks - Hausey)

HOOT & CURLEY AND JACK FORD

4-24 *Standing At The Station* (B. Bryant)

GARY BRYANT

4-25 *Loose Talk* (Freddie Hart - Ann Lucas)

JEANETTE HICKS

4-26 *Slippin' And Slidin'* (R. Penniman)

4-27 Talk and Outro

In this extended excerpt from April 1956, performed at the Youth Building at the State Fairgrounds in Shreveport and preserved for national broadcast over the CBS show, *Saturday Night Country Style*, "genial" Horace Logan introduces a singer from New Orleans who made many appearances on the show in the mid-1950s, singing both aching hillbilly numbers and a raw kind of rockabilly. Born in 1924, Lewi **Werly Fairburn** had been on WJBW and WWEZ radio in New Orleans billed as the "Singing Barber" in acknowledgement of his day job and had made excellent country records for TRUMPET in Jackson, Mississippi from 1953, then CAPITOL, and then COLUMBIA starting in 1955. He'd recorded this song, *Stay Close To Me*, for COLUMBIA in the summer of 1955 backed by Nashville's finest session players and his keen voice held up well in that company as it always did. Fairburn played mostly in the New Orleans area but he guested on the Hayride in March 1955 and became a regular that May.

In some contrast, **Betty Amos** sang *Ivory Tower*, a song written by Jack Fulton and Lois Steele which made the R&B charts for Otis Williams and the Charms and the pop Top Ten for both Cathy Carr and Gale Storm in 1956. The Big D Jam-

boree's local singer Nancy Castleberry sang it regularly there, and it proved equally as popular in Shreveport.

Next, **Johnny Horton** brought his new, tougher, COLUMBIA RECORDS sound to the Hayride. A popular man on the show for some years, and a good recording artist, he had just never managed to put everything together. Now, he had, with *Honky Tonk Man*. Credit for *Honky Tonk Man* and for the success that Horton enjoyed for the remainder of his career is due in great measure to Tillman Franks, who gave focus to Horton's talent, and even supplied some of the ambition that he lacked. As Colin Escott describes at length in the BEAR FAMILY boxed set of Horton's music (BCD 16222) Tillman directed Horton's career moves, played bass alongside him on stage, and co-wrote some of his biggest hits. *Honky Tonk Man* had been written by Howard Hausey, who later made records as Howard Crockett, who gave one-third of the song to Horton as an incentive to record it and another third to Franks who amended the melody because it started out too close to *Why Baby Why*. Franks was also apparently responsible for the decision to visit Elvis Presley who was in Nashville prior to their January 1956 session there and to see whether they could borrow Bill Black, Pres-



(FROM LEFT) **Hoot Rains**, **David Houston**, **Faron Young**, **King Sterling**, **Curly Herndon**, and (KNEELING) **Tony Douglas**.

ley's bass player. Black gave the session an urgency that was picked up by guitarists Harold Bradley and Grady Martin, who played the growling lead. Franks said, "*We was after bear on that first session. We was hungry.*" The results were a quantum leap from the MERCURY and ABBOTT sessions. Horton suddenly found a commanding presence that had barely been hinted at in any of his previous work. And Tillman brought a single-minded devotion to his artist. "*If you ever went into a restaurant with Tillman,*" recalled Howard Hausey, "*There'd always be a Johnny Horton record playing on the jukebox when you left.*"

Many of the Hayride's local regulars were used to mixing and matching with one another on the show, duetting to provide va-

riety and getting together on familiar songs to fill any sudden gap that might appear in the timing. **Hoot and Curley** often backed up Shreveport policeman Jack Ford in this way. Their *Standing At The Station* was introduced by Logan as "a novelty number" because it featured Dobber Johnson and the band making train noises but in truth it was a clever mix of honky tonk, hillbilly and bluegrass influences and a fascinating take on the theme of a train taking a girl away, in this case a girl glimpsed only through the train window. Before he became a policeman in 1950 and before he joined the Hayride in 1953, Nathaniel **"Jack" Ford** had toured with Tex Ritter and worked as rhythm guitarist for Curley Williams' Georgia Peach Pickers in 1948 and 1949. In 1954 he made two records for

CHESS at the same time as Jimmy and Johnny without seeing their level of success but he was a regular in local clubs and toured in the area with Jim Reeves, Elvis Presley and others. He had a good voice and was capable of performing a wide range of songs. He was one of several local artists now managed by Horace Logan in the sense that Logan had revamped the KWKH Artists Bureau and taken a big ad in 'Billboard' to announce that he was now booking all the regular Louisiana Hayride acts. This ran counter to an ad in the same edition that had Tillman Franks booking Johnny Horton and others. One of Logan's advertised acts was **Gary Bryant** who had only just come south from the state of Washington to become a regular on the Hayride in 1956. Logan announces that he

may be a Yankee but they were going to make a southerner out of him. To this end, Bryant launched into a Carl Smith hit from a couple of years earlier, *Loose Talk*, another take on the slipping around theme. Bryant was one of many artists who pitched themselves to the Hayride but one of the few who made it as a regular on the show. Eventually, Bryant went back to Washington and had a long career as a broadcaster there. Finally, **Jeanette Hicks** often sang rock 'n' roll songs, really R&B songs, on the Hayride and today it was the turn of Little Richard's *Slippin' And Slidin'* to get the countrified treatment. This was surprisingly successful even though some of the lyrics made little sense when sung by a female.

(RIGHT) **Buffalo Yount** on fiddle with **Lucy Lynn** and **Martha Lynn** (FAR RIGHT) on stage at the Louisiana Hayride.



CD 4 | MAY 12, 1956

4/28 **Talk about fiddle tunes**

DOBBER JOHNSON

Bill Cheatham (trad.)

JIMMY NEWMAN

4-29 **I Want To Tell All The World** (J. Newman)

As Horace Logan announces a little way into this show, it was one of several being broadcast from the State Fairgrounds in Shreveport while the normal venue, the Municipal Auditorium, was being renovated. This extract begins with Dobber Johnson and the Hayride band, as always anchoring the show to the traditional roots of country music through a traditional fid-

dle tune. Next up, Jimmy Newman was getting hotter and hotter as a recording artist, after eighteen discs and eight years of trying, and his Dot label recording of *I Want To Tell All The World* was coming off the presses just this week. Newman sings it here with his characteristic passion and Cajun inflection, and the band weighs in with appropriate support.

DISC 5

POOR MAN'S RICHES

Continuing the May 12 show, here is a familiar instrumental tune powerfully played by the staff band led by **Sonny Trammell**, a regular Hayrider and a sought-after sideman for local clubs and tours. Born in Doddridge, Arkansas, James 'Sonny' Trammell was already a music fan by the time the family moved to Bossier City. As a budding musician he would go to KWKH to watch musicians perform their early morning shows and soon he was playing, too, in Texarkana with the band of Paul Howard. He started on the Hayride with Webb Pierce in 1952 and rejoined when backing Jim Reeves in 1954. He stayed in the staff band to 1960 when he asked Jimmie Davis, for whom he'd provided music at public appearances during a governorship campaign, to get him a day job that he kept for 37 years. His version of the classic western swing tune associated with the Bob Wills band is played fairly straight but with much quality and panache. Announcer Horace Logan describes Trammell as one of the finest steel players in the country, and he then reels off the names of former Hayride stars while reminding national listeners of the show's pedigree. He appears to miscount the number of years the show had been running, saying they were into their tenth year while really it was only just the ninth. Making sure the radio audience knew what **Betty Amos** was wearing, and that she was cute tonight, Logan then introduces her excellent version of *I Want To Be Loved*, a song written and recorded by the Bailes Brothers

(LEFT) **Sonny Trammell** on steel guitar (CENTER) with Tillman Franks on bass (LEFT), **Betty Amos** in the background, and Tommy Tomlinson on guitar.

CD 5 | MAY 12, 1956 CONTINUED

SONNY TRAMMELL

5-1 **San Antonio Rose** (B. Wills)

5-2 **Talk about Louisiana Hayride and state fair**

BETTY AMOS

I Want To Be Loved (J. Bailes - W. Bailes)

JOHNNY CASH

5-3 **So Doggone Lonesome** (J. Cash)

ten years before. As always, Amos sings with enthusiasm and power while Sonny Trammell and the staff band do justice to the arrangement. Finally, making one of his ever more eagerly awaited visits to the Hayride, **Johnny Cash** sang *So Dog-*

gone Lonesome, a clever song that conveys a doomy mood while somehow rocking along at a fast pace. It was the flipside of *I Walk The Line*, his major hit on Sun released earlier in the year, and still selling at this point.





(LEFT) **George Jones** on stage at the Louisiana Hayride.

(BELOW) **Hoot Rains** with **Slim Whitman** (RIGHT).



CD 5 | JUNE 23, 1956

5-4 **Theme and Frank Page**

GEORGE JONES

You Gotta Be My Baby (G. Jones)

JEANETTE HICKS

5-5 **My Blue Heaven** (W. Donaldson - G. Whiting)

JOHNNY CASH

5-6 **I Walk The Line** (J. Cash)

SLIM WHITMAN

5-7 **Dear Mary** (D. Bartholomew - P. King)

HOOT & CURLEY AND JACK FORD

5-8 **Old Time Religion** (trad.)

JIMMY NEWMAN

5-9 **Come Back To Me** (J. Newman)

As we hear at the start, Horace Logan was on holiday this June 23, and Frank Page took charge. This show contained the usual mix of country standards, R&B covers, gospel songs and instrumentals, but it also launched **George Jones**'s latest record, a week before it was released, *You Gotta Be My Baby*. Jones was a 25 year old from Saratoga, Texas who had started performing in the late 1940s on KTXJ in Jasper, Texas and then become quite well-known on KTRM in Beaumont, Texas and the

KNYZ Houston Jamboree. He had started to make records for STARDAY in 1954, channeling his admiration for Hank Williams and Lefty Frizzell, both of whom he had met in his early career, and developing his own hybrid style that would become the heir to their styles. Unfortunately, he also developed their ability to drink and get into trouble of one kind or another and he was already gaining a reputation for unreliability. From mid-1955 to mid-1956, though, he had turned up regularly at the Hayride,

making some 25 appearances promoting his early hits, *Why Baby Why*, *Ragged But Right*, *Yearning*, a duet with Jeanette Hicks, and now this new one. On *You Gotta Be My Baby* he shows that all the hallmarks of his vocal style that would dominate country music for many years were in place. Jones continued to appear on the Hayride, and he made over forty Hayride shows in all, but as his success built up and his career became more and more focused on Nashville he signed up with the Opry on August 4.

Jeanette Hicks performed a Shreveport classic on this show, *My Blue Heaven*, a tune associated with Gene Austin in the late 1920s and recorded since by many a pop, country and R&B singer. Hicks brings her clear diction and a light, scudding style to the song and really makes it seem as country as pop while the band provides a jazzy backing. She is followed by **Johnny Cash** singing *I Walk The Line* which was still at the top of the country charts and rising on the pop charts. It's easy to forget how different and original Cash and his band sounded back at the start of his career.

In July 1955, **Slim Whitman** had left his home in Bossier City and moved to WSM and the Grand Ole Opry but he, too, continued to make occasional appearances on the Hayride. This day, he was plugging one side of his new single, *Dear Mary*, his umpteenth for the IMPERIAL label. He performs the song with his usual full-throated high tenor but displays a road-worn lack of interest in who wrote the song. Actually it was R&B bandleader and leader of Fats Domino's IMPERIAL band, Dave Bartholomew, along with Pearl King who had pitched the song to IMPERIAL's black vocal group the Spiders earlier in the year. Whitman had just returned from an unprecedented tour in Europe following the success there of *Indian Love Call* and *Rose Marie* as pop records. Whitman had split with his former musicians, **Hoot and Curley**, but it is likely they who help the band back him up here. They stayed on stage with Jack Ford to essay a notably fine trio vocal on *Old Time Religion*. Finally, we hear one side of **Jimmy Newman**'s latest single, *Come Back To Me*, featuring Rufus Thibodeaux on fiddle.



CD 5 | JUNE, 1956 (UNDATED)

BENNY BARNES

5-10 **The Waltz Of The Angels** (J. Rhodes - D. Reynolds)

5-11 **The Next Voice You Hear** (Cindy Walker)

In the summer of 1956, the Hayride offered a spot to one of the most memorable singers and songwriters in country music. **Benny Barnes** was born in Beaumont, Texas in 1934, though some sources give 1936, and he learned his art in the bars and honky tonks of east Texas. At some point in his late teens he met George Jones there and played and sang with his band. Early in 1956, Jones took Barnes along to one of his STARDAY recording sessions to play rhythm guitar and to try to get him a shot at a vocal audition with Pappy Daily. Daily duly recorded and issued Barnes' first disc, *No Fault Of Mine* in the spring of 1956 and this was received well enough to lead to the Hayride that June. We are not absolutely certain when these two Hayride performances were recorded. Most likely it was June 16, when he was first listed to appear on the show in the Hayride's ad in the local newspaper, but it could have been in the weeks either side of that date. Barnes's first song this day, *The Waltz Of The Angels*, was composed by C.A. Hussey back in

1879 and rewritten by Jack Rhodes and Dick Reynolds for the country market in the 1950s. It was recorded by Wynn Stewart in the spring of 1956 and Barnes picked it up from him to sing at shows that summer. It was new on the market from Lefty Frizzell too and would go on to be a hit for Kitty Wells and a bigger hit for George Jones and Margie Singleton, but it is just fine in the hands of Barnes and the Hayride band. Barnes's keen and edgy country voice was as good as any before or since and the Hayride must have thought they had a real star in the making. Then Barnes sang *The Next Voice You Hear*, his take on a Cindy Walker song best known when recorded by Hank Snow in 1954. He overlays his own vocal style with little hints of Snow's style here and there and the Hayride band seem as energised by Barnes as the audience.

CD 5 | JUNE 30, 1956

GEORGE JONES

5-12 **Why Baby Why** (G. Jones - D. Edwards)

This song had been **George Jones's** seventh single on STARDAY, and his first real hit. It was a song written by Darrell Edwards, adapted slightly by Jones in the studio, and one of which he was proud. He felt it had something of the real-life style of his hero. "I couldn't think or eat nothin' unless it was Hank Williams," Jones said, "and I couldn't wait for his next record to come out. He had to be, really, the greatest." When Williams passed on, Jones was among scores of country singers out there on the radio struggling to find the winning combination that would make them into the next Hank. Most tried to sound just like Hank, but Jones managed to imply Hank while sounding just like Jones. In this version, the Hayride band does a good job of sounding like George's disc and Hank's band too.

ROSE OF LOUISIANA HAYRIDE



ROSE MADDOX and a cast of more than forty, including some of the nation's foremost folk artists, is seen on the LOUISIANA HAYRIDE at the Municipal Auditorium every Saturday night. A member of the comedy team of MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE, she is now recording for Columbia as a soloist.

CD 5 | JULY 7, 1956 (PROBABLY)

ROSE MADDOX

5-13 **Tall Men** (Ken Darby)

When the Maddox brothers and Rose gave up their regular Hayride slot in 1955, they moved to Los Angeles and the Hometown Jamboree for a couple of years before Rose went out as a solo artist. Rose guested back on the Hayride very occasionally, and would also appear on the Ozark Jubilee and the WSM Opry. *Tall Men* is a song adapted from the 1955 Raoul Walsh movie 'The Tall Men' starring Clark Gable and Jane Russell. It was written by Ken Darby, a quartet singer who had backed Bing Crosby on his recording of *White Christmas*, worked for Disney as a writer and composed *How The West Was Won* among other soundtracks and songs. Darby also wrote the main song and the score for Elvis Presley's movie

'Love Me Tender,' under his wife's name of Matson. In **Rose Maddox's** hands, *Tall Men* is a classic, both on her record issued the same month as this live recording. Here she lends her travel-worn, impossibly country voice enthusiastically to the tale of why her man is all man. Rose Maddox stayed on COLUMBIA until 1958 before recording for CAPITOL into the mid-60s, making three top ten country hits of which two were duets with Buck Owens. Songs like *Loose Talk* saw her voted the top female country singer of 1963, some twenty years after she had pioneered the place of girl singers in the more raucous end of the folk music spectrum.



(ABOVE LEFT) **Werly Fairburn** on the Hayride stage.

(ABOVE) **Buddy Attaway** with Claude King (RIGHT).

CD 5 | July 14, 1956

5-14 Theme and talk about Arklatex show

WERLY FAIRBURN

It's Heaven (W. Fairburn - A Hillard)

BETTY AMOS

5-15 **As Long As I'm Moving** (Charles Calhoun)

HOOT & CURLEY AND JACK FORD

5-16 **Mansion In The Sky** (trad.)

JOHNNY HORTON

5-17 **One Woman Man** (J. Horton - T. Franks)

JEANETTE HICKS AND JACK FORD

5-18 **Beautiful Brown Eyes** (A. Smith - A. Delmore - J. Capehart)

BUDDY ATTAWAY

5-19 **Y'All Come** (Arlie Duff)

First up on this July show was **Werly Fairburn** with *It's Heaven*, a song just released that was recorded in Dallas a few months earlier with a Hayride staff band featuring Sonny Trammell on steel and Tommy Tomlinson on guitar. Here, the same two musicians provide spirited but sympathetic backing to Fairburn's gentle song, and to much audience applause. Using Fairburn's base in New Orleans as an excuse to describe the geography of Louisiana, Horace Logan goes on to ex-

plain that Shreveport is the capital of the Ark-La-Tex region. Then he introduces **Betty Amos**, from Virginia. It's clear from these shows that while she often sang pop songs Betty Amos was a country girl and a character, one of the few to answer back to 'Mr. Logan' whom she called 'Hras' in her back country accent. Amos was born near Roanoke, Virginia in 1934 and was playing guitar in a family band, the Buck Mountain Ramblers, in her teens before she joined Bill Carlisle as a replacement for

Martha Carson in The Carlises. She was billed as the bandleader's niece, Betty Carlisle, for a couple of years but reclaimed the name Amos when she first went solo on the Hayride. On this song, *As Long As I'm Moving*, she picks up the geographic theme from R&B singer Ruth Brown who had recorded the rather bawdy song on ATLANTIC the year before. Later, in 1960, Betty Amos would form a trio, Betty, Judy and Jean, with her sister and a friend and started to play bluegrass banjo to a high standard, recording for STARDAY. Amos also wrote songs, including the Jean Shepard hit *Second Fiddle To An Old Guitar*.

Singing policeman **Jack Ford** pops up twice on this show, as support to **Jeanette Hicks** on the old song rewritten by Alton Delmore for the Delmore Brothers, *Beautiful Brown Eyes*, which became a pop hit for Rosemary Clooney, and with **Hoot and Curley** at gospel time, this day's theme being *Mansion In The Sky*.

Johnny Horton had recorded *I'm A One Woman Man* at the same session as *Honky Tonk Man*, the two songs being a

classic case of hedging your bets, and it was released now as his follow-up disc. It was a song Horton and Franks had written to the melody of *Scottische In Texas*, and would peak at number seven on the country charts in the fall.

Buddy Attaway pops up all through this show, as guitarist in the band, and as soloist on the very popular number, *Y'All Come*. His performance is exhilarating on this call and response number with stirring country fiddle passages that soon became a classic of the genre. *Y'All Come* was written by Texan schoolteacher Arlie Duff whose STARDAY recording made the country top ten in 1953 and inspired the Houston Hometown Jamboree to take it as their theme song. Buddy Attaway had first popped up on the Hayride in 1948 with Claude King, singing duets. A local boy, Attaway said he learned guitar in part from brother Utah Smith who played at rousing bluesy guitar at local revival gatherings. Attaway was also keen on the style of Jerry Byrd, but he was able to play fiddle and other instruments too. He got his start with Harmie Smith after he, Claude King and Tillman Franks had formed their own local band in their teens. This day, he was introduced as "the one and only original Lump Lump Boy himself" who'd featured on nearly every Hayride show to date.



Performing on the Hayride, **David Houston** (FAR LEFT) and **Martha Lynn** (LEFT).

CD 5 | July 28, 1956

JEANETTE HICKS

5-20 **Searching** (Murphy Maddux)

DAVID HOUSTON

5-21 **Hasta Luego** (Johnny Hicks)

MARTHA LYNN

5-22 **I'm Goin' Huntin' Tonight** (M. Lynn)

This July, **Jeanette Hicks** sang *Searching* a song she'd just recorded at the Gold Star studio in Houston for STARDAY, and she would soon record other themed songs, *Yearning And Repenting*. Perhaps she thought *Searching* was going to be the hit, and in this live version Hicks sings persuasively about her restraint in love and her hopes for the success of her new relationship, but in the event it was never issued as a single. *Yearning*, on the other hand, would be recorded by her as a duet with George Jones and that song would soon be on record. Hicks had been on COLUMBIA since 1953 and it may be that STARDAY recorded her before that contract had run out and had to hold her records back for a while.

After one disc on IMPERIAL, **David Houston** had moved to RCA records by 1956 and came to this Hayride show hot from a recording session in New York. This song, *Hasta Luego*, would be released within a couple of weeks as his first disc on RCA. It had something of Slim Whitman about it but was closer to the country mainstream even with the Mexican theme and could have been a breakthrough disc. *Hasta Luego* was written by one of the managers of the Big D Jamboree, Johnny Hicks, who is described with tongue in cheek by Horace Logan as "one of the finest composers the music world has ever known." Hicks was formerly a disc jockey and singer responsible for popularising songs such as *Butane Blues* (previously written and

recorded by Dewey Groom on IMPERIAL) and *Booger Red*, and his deep, smooth vocal style was a million miles away from Houston's virtuoso performance here. The big story in Houston's biography is that he was descended from Sam Houston, first president of the Texas republic, and Robert E. Lee, the Confederate leader, and that his Godfather and encourager of his talent was Gene Austin, popular singer of the 1920s and '30s. Be that as it may, it would take a few more years for Houston to break through as a major charting artist.

Introduced as a former guest but now a regular Hayrider, **Martha Lynn** Nesrsta was born in 1934 in Fayette County, Texas and grew up in Hallettsville in the heyday of the western movie, the singing cowboy, and the rodeo circuit. She started out as a rodeo trick rider as a child and made a name for herself in that way throughout her teens, designing her own clothes and training her horses. By the time she was thirteen Martha had added singing to her repertoire and she had her own radio show on KCTI in Gonzales, Texas by 1947. In the early '50s, she was on TV in San Antonio and Houston. She formed a band, The

Westerners, to tour right across the southwestern states and got ready to make records. Her first was for the BUCKSHOT BLASE label of Rosenberg, Texas, coupling a sassy western song with a Korean War ballad. She appeared on ever bigger shows to promote her music, including the Big D Jamboree on KRLD in Dallas and the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. In mid-1955, Martha was signed to RCA VICTOR and had a small hit with *Learning To Love* written by John Harper, emcee of the the Big D Jamboree, who frequently wrote or bought songs. Then Martha recorded an update of her BUCKSHOT BLASE single, *I'm Goin' Huntin' Tonight*, a brashly-sung, part-yodelled, description of her intended flirting trip – "goin' stag tonight, I'll maybe start a fight" – designed to pay back her cheating man. RCA made a concerted effort to promote her across the South in 1956 with the result that she made many appearances on the Hayride. As heard here, she had a classy and adult voice but with a sassiness that elevated her performances above the normal. Nevertheless, after the Hayride, Martha Lynn's career flattened out. She recorded once for J.E. Swarr's PEP RECORDS of Pico Rivera, California, then married Frank Head, a furniture dealer, in 1961. She was on TV in Corpus Christi in the '70s and when the first Texas State Championship Fiddlers' Frolics' show was held there, the star singer was Martha Lynn Head.

(RIGHT) **Buzz Busby** (ON THE LEFT) with his band.

(BOTTOM) Hayride announcer **Horace Logan** on stage.

CD 5 | August 18, 1956

5-23 Intro about 9th year

JIMMY NEWMAN

Seasons Of My Heart (G. Jones - D. Edwards)

JEANETTE HICKS

5-24 *Bo Weevil* (trad.)

BUZZ BUSBY

5-25 *Muleskinner Blues* (Jimmie Rodgers)

This show starts with Horace Logan still slightly unsure how long the show had been running – it was eight and a third years – but very sure that the combination of a song written by George Jones and sung by **Jimmy Newman** was a winner. *Seasons Of My Heart* has since become a country standard but it was rarely better performed than here by Newman and the Hayride band. The band plays a big part in **Jeanette Hicks's** energetic version of what Logan calls a rock 'n' roll tune but which was in fact a traditional folk song. Next, we hear from **Buzz Busby**, Bernarr Busbice, from Eros, Louisiana, born in 1933, where his ear was taken

more by Bill Monroe than by the Ark-La-Tex sound. He got a job in Washington, D.C., playing mandolin in a band with Jack Clement, Scotty Stoneman and Roy Clark. Turning pro as a musician, he toured with Mac Wiseman and Hawkshaw Hawkins before forming the Bayou Boys in 1954 and taking a regular slot on the Hayride in 1955. Known for his intense style of singing and playing, as demonstrated here on *Muleskinner Blues*, he recorded for STARDAY and other labels with mixed success. Following an accident in 1956, Busby left the Hayride where his bluegrass duties were taken on by Jimmy Martin, another product of the Washington scene.



CD 5 | SEPTEMBER 29, 1956 (PROBABLY)

BENNY BARNES

5-26 *Poor Man's Riches* (B. Barnes)

Some few weeks after we last heard him, probably on September 29, **Benny Barnes** was back to sing a song that was just out and becoming popular on the STAR-
DAY label and would become not only his biggest hit but STAR-
DAY's best seller to date also, leading to a formal deal between STAR-
DAY-MERCURY at the end of the year. *Poor Man's Riches* was issued on MERCURY after it became a hit on STAR-
DAY, making the number two spot on the national country charts. Deservedly so, because apart from Barnes's distinctive voice, the song was a good new take on the philosophical question of whether a man's his biggest hit when it was switched onto the larger MER-
CURY label. *Poor Man's Riches* would go on to make the number two spot on the national country charts and deservedly so be-

cause it was a good new take on the philo-
sophical question of whether a man's girl
girl makes him richer than gold. The band
excels itself on this high-spirited number
too. Bill Carlisle and the Carlises recorded
the song as soon as former-Carlisle Betty
Amos heard Barnes sing it and alerted Bill
whose version was issued in August 1956.
Barnes continued to record for MERCURY/
STAR-
DAY and MERCURY for some years, with
one release on D Records too, but he only
saw one more hit when his version of
Yearning almost broke into the top twenty.
He ran a number of music venues in Texas
for over twenty years after that, recording
sporadically for another half dozen labels
but never attaining quite the recognition he
deserved as a singer and writer.



DISC 6

MY HEART'S ON FIRE

CD 6 | SEPTEMBER 29, 1956

WERLY FAIRBURN

6-1 **Everybody's Rocking** (W. Fairburn)

6-2 **Outro and theme**

Werly Fairburn was one of several singers who employed a fine lead guitarist, Hayride staff band member, Tommy Tomlinson. Born in 1930 in Arkansas Tomlinson moved to Minden, Louisiana and in the late '40s he worked with Jim Reeves, Paul Howard and even Hank Williams. Returning from three years in the Army in 1954 he came to the Hayride band and by 1956 he

was providing the deep lead sounds for Johnny Horton, based on Grady Martin's guitar part on Horton's recordings, and the rockabilly solos for Fairburn. He was on the SAVOY RECORDS session in 1956 when Werly recorded the iconic *Everybody's Rocking*, a song that is taken at a slightly less intense pace here on the Hayride.



(TOP RIGHT) Werly Fairburn

(RIGHT) Betty Amos

SINGING COP ON HAYRIDE



SINGING COP—**JACK FORD**, a Shreveport boy and member of the local police department, is featured each week on the **LOUISIANA HAYRIDE**. Jack is widely-known, having appeared all over the country with the late Hank Williams and with Curley Williams and his Georgia Peach Pickers. His records are released under the Dot label.



DANCE
TONITE
•
RUSTY
CARSON

with NITA and the
BUFFALO
VALLEY BOYS

With Columbia Guest Star
LEON PAYNE

Next Week
LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS
and his Country Boys Band

FREE
Parking at
Merchants
Lot, Grand
and Dewey

NEW
TRIANON
BEST WESTERN BANDS
15 S. WALKER

CD 6 | NOVEMBER 17, 1956

6-3 Intro Logan

JACK FORD

Since I Met You Baby (J. Hunter)

BETTY AMOS

6-4 I Dreamed (Moore - Grean)

THE GEEZINSLAW BROTHERS

6-5 Billboard Song (Allred - Smith)

6-6 Singin' The Blues (M. Endsley)

JEANETTE HICKS & JAMES O'GWYNN

6-7 Yearning (Norman Eddings - George Jones)

RUSTY & LITA CARSON

6-8 I'm Tired (R. Price - A. Peddy - M. Tillis)

WERLY FAIRBURN

6-9 My Heart's On Fire (E. Myers)

6-10 Speak To Me Baby (E. Myers)

BOB GALLION

6-11 We'll Never Say Goodbye, Just So Long (H. McAuliffe)

6-12 Hey Mr. Bartender (B. Gallion - L. McDaniel)

TIBBY EDWARDS

6-13 Walking And Crying With The Blues (J.D. Miller - Al Theriot)

JOHNNY MATHIS

6-14 Live And Let Live (W. Walker - G. Sullivan)

KING STERLING

6-15 What Will Your Answer Be? (King Sterling - Samuel Jennings)

JACK FORD

6-16 You're Still Mine (F. Young - E. Thorpe)

6-17 Not Sure Of You (C. King)

JAMES O'GWYNN

6-18 Playing Dominoes And Shooting Dice (Tex Wood - O. Dobbs)

WERLY FAIRBURN

6-19 I Guess I'm Crazy (W. Fairburn)

JIMMY & JOHNNY

6-20 Sweet Love On My Mind (W. Walker)

JOHNNY HORTON

6-21 I'm Coming Home (Horton - Franks)

6-22 Not Like I Did Before (Claude King)

BOB GALLION

6-23 You Gotta Have A Heartbreak (Mattie O'Neal)

Outro



(ABOVE) The Geezinslaw Brothers on stage with Betty Amos (CENTER).

We've included twenty-one songs from the show on November 17, 1956 and they give us a real glimpse of the depth of the talent that assembled for the Hayride weekly. Half of these artists have not been mentioned until now, but were nevertheless regulars just like the rest. The only real guests were Rusty and Lita Carson from Oklahoma City.

Jack Ford opens up with an indication of his versatility, singing the R&B ballad hit *Since I Met You Baby*, written by 'Ivory Joe' Hunter who lived in Monroe, Louisiana and whose blues songs were often recorded by country and popular singers. Later, Ford returns with two songs written by local men, Faron Young and Claude King respectively. *You're Still Mine* is a ballad but with an interesting change of pace and it was a fine vehicle for the band to shine, as was *Not Sure Of You* with its fiddle and piano solos.

On this show, **Betty Amos** sang a current pop song, *I Dreamed*, recorded by Betty Johnson. The song was hot off the presses this month and would go on to be

a number 12 hit on BALLY RECORDS early in 1957. Johnson came from a North Carolinian family gospel group and her background was not so different from that of Amos though Amos always retained that real country accent, here joking with Logan in her back-country Virginian style about her inability to sing anything that wouldn't come out sounding "hillybilly."

The Geezinslaws were not actually brothers, but Sammy Allred, a singer and mandolin player born in Austin, Texas in 1938, and singer and guitarist Raymond 'Son' Smith from Bertram, Texas. Both were young but Smith was still in his early teens when they brought their comedic duets to the Hayride. They start with a 'Billboard' Song that strung together names and phrases from ads they'd seen on roadside hoardings. They soon became known for rewriting hit songs, and here they give an alternative account of why they're *Singing The Blues* – "when you hit me, the



stars did shine/ the teeth is gone I thought was mine." The two front men were joined in their group by a bass player named 'Elvis' and a banjoist named 'Elmo,' who in reality were Mickey Rumsey and Ron Teofan. At one point in 1957 Teofan formed a Hayride group with Dobber Johnson, the Louisiana Bluegrass Boys. The Geezinslaws recorded for CAPITOL and COLUMBIA in later years with limited success, but developed a fifty year plus career based on their comedy TV appearances..

Jeanette Hicks had recorded *Yearning* for STARDAY in 1956 as a duet with George Jones, just two years after the label had issued the original version by Eddie Eddings. Hicks had a far superior version, and this live take on the song is good, too, featuring **James O'Gwynn** as the other half of the duo. O'Gwynn, a Texan known as the Smiling Irishman, had just joined the Hayride and would be a major star there for some years, becoming known as the 'Smiling Irishman.' O'Gwynn also contributes to this show a fine solo version of the honky tonk song, a talking, swinging number, *Playing Dominoes And Shooting Dice*, that had been written by Tex Wood and recorded by Jimmie Dolan, Arkie Shibley and others and was popularised by Red Foley. O'Gwynn had started recording in 1954, for the NUCRAFT label in Houston, and

he continued recording at the Goldstar studio there when he switched to STARDAY and then MERCURY. Born in Winchester, Mississippi in 1928, as James Aucoin, O'Gwynn lived in Hattiesburg in the mid-'30s and started singing after that on shows with local star Jimmy Swan. After the Marines, O'Gwynn went to Texas and joined the Houston Jamboree in the middle of 1954, working local shows with George Jones. After three records on NUCRAFT and AZALEA, Pappy Daily signed him to STARDAY in 1956, and it was on the strength of the first STARDAY record that he was offered this spot on the Hayride in November.

Visiting guest **Rusty Carson** had been a mainstay of the country radio world in the mid-West for some years, working in Kansas, Oklahoma and elsewhere as a disc jockey and singer. By the time he and his wife **Lita** pitched up for a guest slot on the Hayride, they were regulars at their own Trianon Ballroom in Oklahoma City. Horace Logan talks to him about this but doesn't listen closely enough as Rusty explains that he's on TV as well as radio. Logan hopes "you aren't on that squint-eyed medium are you?" and Carson tactfully keeps silent. This song, *I'm Tired*, was a new one written by Mel Tillis and just starting on its way to becoming a number 3 country hit for Webb Pierce.



(ABOVE LEFT) **Jeanette Hicks** and **James O'Gwynn**

(ABOVE) **Tibby Edwards** singing, accompanied by (FROM LEFT) Jimmy Day, Dobber Johnson, unknown, Soko Sokolowski, and Don Davis, with announcers Frank Page and Horace Logan, 1954.

Werly Fairburn has three songs from this date, both sides of his latest SAVOY rockabilly release, *My Heart's On Fire* and *Speak To Me Baby*, plus a reprise of his heartbreaking country song from the year before, *I Guess I'm Crazy*. A version of *I Guess I'm Crazy* by Tommy Collins had been a number 13 hit in 1955 and the song would live again as a posthumous number one country hit for Jim Reeves in 1964. SAVOY was a New Jersey R&B and jazz label, but Werly recorded for them at Cosimo Matassa's studio on Governor Nicholls Street in New Orleans. The recordings were known for the prominent slap bass and guitar solos, which the band led by guitarist Fred Carter tries to recreate here, incorporating a piano solo as well.

Bob Gallion was from Ashland, Kentucky, born in 1929 and had worked in Ohio and West Virginia before joining the band of Stoney Cooper on WWVA in 1955. Recording for MGM in 1956, he became a disc jockey on WKAB in Mobile, Alabama and forged a songwriting team with singer Luke McDaniel. Gallion briefly became a member of the Hayride to promote their honky tonk songs like *Hey, Mr. Bartender*, a song he'd only just recorded. Gallion reached back to the early 1940s for a song written by Big Slim McAuliffe and recorded

by Hank Snow, *We'll Never Say Goodbye, Just So Long*. He gives a commanding performance supported by an understated piano-led backing. Later in the show, Gallion returned to sing a Mattie O'Neal song about how *You've Gotta Have A Heartbreak* to know how to love, one of his recent recordings. Gallion went on to record for HICKORY in the 1960s and for UA before settling back in Wheeling at the WWVA Jamboree.

The diminutive, young-looking **Tibby Edwards** was capable of sounding more world-weary than he should and he treated the Hayride audience to a reprise of his MERCURY recording from 1953 of *Walking And Crying With The Blues*. Edwards was no Hank Williams but this song by Jay Miller had something of Hank's style and Edwards sings it to good applause. He's followed by another long-time regular, **Johnny Mathis**, one of the finest singers on the show and one of the most adaptable. Here he sings *Live And Let Live*, written and recorded by the honky tonk duo of Wiley Walker and Gene Sullivan, based



(ABOVE) **Dobber Johnson** and **Buddy Attaway** on twin fiddles, **Bob Gallion** (with guitar)

(ABOVE RIGHT) **James O'Gwynn** (RIGHT) on stage.

(RIGHT) **Country Johnny Mathis** at the Louisiana Hayride.

in Oklahoma. Walker and Sullivan had both worked on KWKH with the Shelton Brothers in the 1940s and Sullivan, who had even earlier appeared with Leon Chapplear, reappeared as a member of the Hayride in 1957 and again in 1959.

Robert Sterling Blythe from Lexington, Kentucky eked out a living on the periphery of the music business for several decades. As **King Sterling** he had custom-recorded a slipping-around country tune on GIBSON RECORDS in May 1956 and that soon led to a full commercial release on STARDAY, *What Will Your Answer Be?*, which Sterling promotes here. His song is a cliff-hanger – will she leave or not – sung with great feeling and well supported by steel guitar solos, and much appreciated by the audience. Within a few months, Sterling was on a station in Arkansas and then disappeared from view until 1959 when, as Sterling Blythe, he recorded for the West Coast label SAGE AND SAND. He worked in Las Vegas, Nashville and California into the 1980s and claimed to have been in the movies, but if so it was under another dif-





ferent name. He also claimed to have written and sold the rights to Freddy Fender's 1974 hit *Before The Next Teardrop Falls*, but if so there is no evidence.

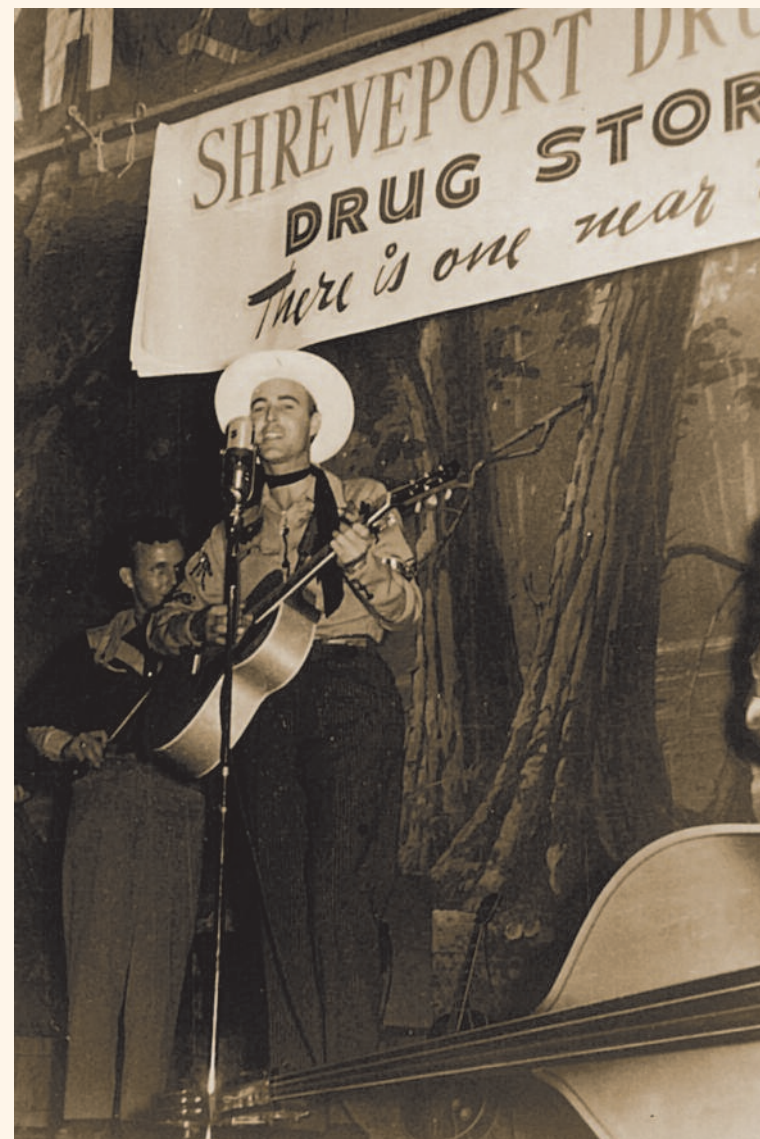
Jimmy and Johnny's rockabilly version of Wayne Walker's country song *Sweet Love On My Mind* owes a lot to the Elvis Presley sound on *SUN*, both vocally and musically and that's not surprising because they had been on more than one tour through the South with Presley.

Finally on this day the audience heard twice from **Johnny Horton**, first with the rockabilly sound of *I'm Coming Home* that features Tommy Tomlinson and Tillman Franks supporting Horton's hurrying vocals, and then with *I Don't Like I Did*, a similarly-paced number about a man coming to terms with losing his woman and ready to cut her loose. Horton had been on the Hayride for some years but it is evident from the audience reaction that his change of style and several hits in 1956 were building him into a genuine star.



(THIS PAGE) **Johnny Horton** at the Louisiana Hayride.

(ABOVE) Kids selling refreshments, with Johnny Horton performing in the background.





CD 6 | DECEMBER 15, 1956

THE JORDANAIREs

6-24 **Working On A Building** (W. Hoyle - L. Bowles)

ELVIS PRESLEY

6-25 **Heartbreak Hotel** (Axton - Durden - Presley)

6-26 **I Was The One** (Schroeder - deMetrius - Blair - Pepper)

This December date in 1956 was at once a regular Hayride show – all the usual stars were there just as they had the weeks before – but also a highly unusual one, both for its venue and for the impact it had at the time and later. It marked both the high point in the Hayride's profile and the beginning of the end.

The show was a benefit performance at the State Fairgrounds in Shreveport, a venue over three times the size of the Municipal Auditorium, and it was sold out because it contained within it the homecoming of **Elvis Presley**, a performer everyone knew had outgrown the Hayride. The country regulars had performed for over an hour, and would do so again at the end, but the meat of the show was Presley's section, opened by his vocal group, the Jordanaires. All hillbilly stage shows contained a gospel music slot and professional gospel groups were no strangers to such

shows. **The Jordanaires** – Hoyt Hawkins, Neal Matthews, Gordon Stoker, and Ray Walker – had been on the Opry since 1949, but now they were reinvented by Presley as his vocal group. Their performance of the gospel classic *Working On A Building* was a real tour de force, combining quartet singing with a rocking band and setting the scene for their new young boss who spent his life wishing he could be in a gospel group.

Elvis Presley had become the undoubted star attraction of the Hayride in 1955 while he was still on SUN RECORDS, but early in 1956 he saw his first record out on a national label, RCA, and made his first appearances on national TV shows hosted by the Dorsey Brothers, Milton Berle, Steve Allen and Ed Sullivan. Now under the management of Tom Parker he was more in demand than ever and this meant fewer and fewer appearances on the Hayride. By the

time of this benefit show, he had not made an appearance in Shreveport for many months and this one was in lieu of the ones he'd missed. On December 15 1956, tickets at the ten thousand seat Hirsch Youth Building at the State Fairgrounds were over doubled to \$2 to reflect his popularity and the fact that the show was a benefit for the YMCA. From staying in small motels in Bossier City, Presley had now upgraded to the Captain Shreve Hotel in downtown Shreveport but complained about the noise from the fans outside. He had to be smuggled to the venue while the police created a diversion with an alternative pink Cadillac. Frank Page recalled: *"When Elvis finally came on stage, thousands of Brownie Reflex cameras went off simultaneously. Photographs taken that night show me off to one side, and I look terrified. I was. I had never had ten thousand teenagers screaming at the top of their lungs before."*

(ABOVE LEFT) **Elvis Presley with the Jordanaires** on stage at the Louisiana Hayride, December 15, 1956.

(ABOVE) **The Jordanaires** (FROM LEFT): Hoyt Hawkins, Gordon Stoker, Neal Matthews, and Hugh Jarrett.

It's difficult to describe Presley's performance that night; the microphones mainly captured the screaming that accompanied him. But we know the songs. And we can just about make out that he was singing his new RCA songbook pretty much to the letter. Among the more interesting and listenable titles were the five included in this CD set, starting with both sides of Presley's first RCA record. *Heartbreak Hotel* had been on the pop charts for most of 1956 and was Presley's first number one hit. *I Was The One* had charted too, making the top 25 in its own right. Introducing the songs, Presley remembers the mantra of the Hayride's announcers and he welcomes everyone from Texas and Arkansas as well as Louisiana *"and everything."* He also asks whether they are on the radio, and we'll never know what he might have said if the answer had been 'no.'

DISC 7

ELVIS HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

CD 7 | DECEMBER 15, 1956 CONTINUED

ELVIS PRESLEY

7-1 **Don't Be Cruel** (O. Blackwell - E. Presley)

7-2 **When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again** (Sullivan - Walker)

7-3 **Long Tall Sally** (Johnson - Penniman - Blackwell)

7-4 **Horace Logan announcements (and Elvis has left the building)**

During these three further numbers from **Elvis Presley's** final Hayride performance, it is possible to judge the scale of excitement and confusion going on in the venue. While introducing his latest number one hit, *Don't Be Cruel*, still in the midst of its 27 weeks on the charts, he has to shout "wait, wait" in annoyance to someone apparently rushing the stage. We can just hear two things taking place here on songs like *Don't Be Cruel*, with its vocal group sweetening and mannered vocals; first, Presley was making the "Nashville Sound" before Nashville did, and second, rock 'n' roll was part of a continuum, an evolution and not a revolution. This is reinforced when he introduces album tracks like *When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold*, an old time country song written and first recorded by Wiley Walker and Gene Sullivan, and *Long Tall Sally*, a fairly current R&B rocker from Little Richard.

As Presley finished his show, Horace Logan said, "the kids just went berserk trying to find where Elvis had gone, but we still had an hour plus to go, so I spoke to try to regain some order." What he said has become a catchphrase worldwide – "Elvis has left the building." Or, in more detail, "I've told you absolutely straight up to this point, you know that. He has left the building, he left the stage and went out the back

with the policemen, and he is now gone from the building." Logan then praised the behaviour of the younger members of the audience and invited everyone to stay to hear all the regular country artists of the Hayride who would return to the stage.

The show indeed went on for the remainder of the night, and the Hayride itself went on in high gear for several more years before succumbing to the lure of television and alternative entertainments. The feeling

among those involved was, generally, that the audiences looked and acted differently after Presley had left. He and others had brought a younger crowd in, but then some of them left and the original core audience didn't all come back. Some observers, like Jim Ed Brown, were of the opinion that, following scenes such as those at the Fairgrounds, "Elvis was the one that all but killed the Hayride, because if he was on it was a full house. If he was not there, it wasn't."

