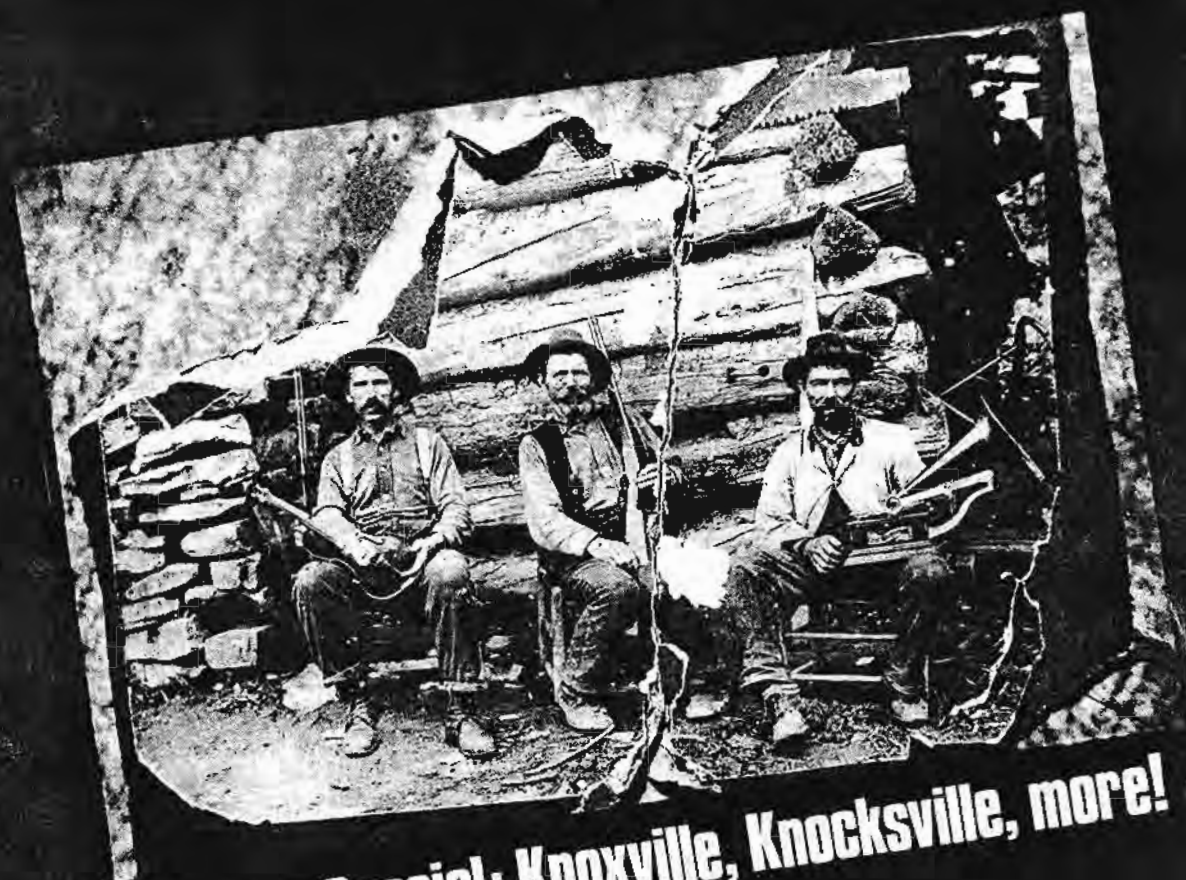


OLD TIME MUSIC



48-page Special: Knoxville, Knoxville, more!

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12

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EARLY COUNTRY MUSIC IN KNOXVILLE

THE BRUNSWICK SESSIONS & THE END OF AN ERA

by CHARLES WOLFE



AS THE DEPRESSION deepened in the 1930s, the once-flourishing market for race and hillbilly records dwindled to almost nothing; records that were once pressed in editions of 15,000-20,000 copies were now pressed in editions of as few as 400, and some titles were issued in pressings as low as 45 copies. Across the South people who listened to old time music found themselves unable often to afford even the dime-store prices of cut-rate labels. Though the record industry was to survive the Depression and come out relatively unchanged, the music itself was not to fare so well. Some of the wild, reckless spirit of old time music was missing from the later product that came out of the mid-1930s, and, it has been argued, the form and substance of the music also changed. Field recording certainly declined after 1930, and a lot of the heterogeneous quality of the music vanished. Two of the last great field sessions of the 1920s, and two of the last great sessions of the stringband era, took place in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1929 and 1930 when the Brunswick-Balke-Collender company came to record over 150 sides of blues and old time music. This session produced some of the finest old time music on record, including tunes by such famous musicians as Uncle Jimmie Thompson, Uncle Dave Macon, McFarland and Gardner, Hugh Cross and the Tennessee Ramblers, but it also produced some of the rarest and most obscure music; many of the bands and musicians are still unknown. In line with our continuing studies of field recording of old time music, we present the following sketch of these two sessions, and in doing so help to reconstruct some of the social, economic and cultural context within which these recordings were made. ▶

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Radio and Phonograph Department Amounting
to \$1.50 or More—A Package of 50 Ten Record
Brass, Dance Tone "Gilt Edge" Needles Free!

VICTOR

- 21922—Good Little Bad Little You
Love Me, or Leave Me
—Vocals—Chick Endor
21920—I Kiss Your Hand, Madame
Josephita
—Fox Trots—Leo Reisman and His Orch.
21921—Mean To Me
That's What I Call Heaven
—Fox Trots—Leo Reisman and His Orch.
40088—My Clinch Mountain Home
The Foggy Mountain Top
—Yodeling With Guitars by Carter Family

COLUMBIA

- 1762—I'm Still Caring
Love Me, or Leave Me
—Fox Trots—Guy Lombardo and His Orch.
1779—Wake Up, Children, Wake Up
Old Fashioned Lady
—Fox Trots—Ipapa Troubadours
16382—Nancy' Rollin
Old Dan Tucker
—Old Tanner and His Skillet Lickers
16383—I Ain't a Bit Drunk
My Old Coon Dog
—George Roark

BRUNSWICK

- 4300—Sylvia
Little Cotton Dolly
—"Famous Forty" Ella Chrome
4310—A Night in May
The Dream Girl of P. K. A.
—Bob Harting and His Orch.
4294—Why Don't You Love Me
True Blue
—Colonial Club Orch.

Vocalion Records

- 5399—The Eastern Gate
Go By Way of the Cross
—McGhee and Welling
1256—How Long, How Long Blues
It's Tight Like That
—Gunter Solo—Tampa Red
1259—Think of Me Thinking of You
How About Me
—Leroy Carr
3301—Be Home Early Tonight My Dear Boy
Your Mother Still Prays For You, Jack
—Otto Gray and His Cowboy Band

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114-18 S. Gay St.—1822 Vestal Ave.

The Knoxville Brunswick sessions were held within seven months of each other, just at the start of the Depression. The first session (August 27-31, 1929) produced 67 sides by at least 17 different groups; the second session (March 29-April 7, 1930) produced around 92 sides (the exact number is uncertain - see session list notes) by at least 19 different groups.

All records were made at the broadcasting studios of station WNOX, which was then located in the old St James Hotel in downtown Knoxville. On one of the records from the 1930 session, the Smoky Mountain Ramblers' "No Business Of Mine" (Vo 5437), one of the singers mentions that they are "up at the St James on Central Street", though the old hotel was on Wall Street. The old St James was still standing as late as October 1973, but as this article was being written word came that the hotel was being torn down. Explained a city spokesman, "It was only a shell of its former self, was unsafe, and had become a haven for derelicts."

It is unclear exactly who was in charge of the session for Brunswick. One account credits R.F. Lyons of Chicago; others indicate the man in charge was Richard (or Ricardo) Voynow of Chicago. Little is known about Voynow's career as a record producer, but photographs indicate that he was the same "Dick Voynow" who played piano in Bix Beiderbecke's original Wolverines jazz band in 1923-24, and later Jimmy McPartland's similar group in 1927. It is quite possible that Voynow could have gotten into the production end of recording either through his association with Gemett (the company Bix recorded for in 1924) or later as a pianist/arranger in and around Chicago. As a matter of fact, some excellent jazz by Maynard Baird was recorded during the Knoxville sessions, and Voynow might well represent a figure from the age of classic jazz moving into the world of classic old time music. (This would not have been unusual in the 1920s; Frank Walker, Ralph Peer and Art Satherly, and other early A&R men, recorded jazz, blues and old time music indiscriminately.)

With Voynow was Bill Brown, a little man who had formerly worked with Columbia in Atlanta as a sort of artist-liaison man; his job was to work with the artists, loosen them up, help them with tunes and ideas, and occasionally provide them with a bottle if one was needed. He also helped in rounding up musicians for the sessions, and gained a certain amount of fame by appearing in a number of the Skillet-Licker skits for Columbia. (Bert Layne has said that some of the Skillet-Lickers didn't especially like Bill, and considered him something of a rip-off artist; on "A Corn Licker Still In Georgia" Bill is cast as something of a betrayer who is responsible for the boys getting caught and thrown in jail; other musicians who worked with him, however, speak highly of him.) Apparently by 1929 Bill Brown was working for

Brunswick as an artist-liaison man; he would have been familiar with the East Tennessee area, since he had helped out Frank Walker at the Columbia Johnson City session in 1928. (See OTMS for an advertisement of the session featuring Brown's name.)

The two technicians who worked with Voynow and Brown were H.C. Bradshaw, who controlled amplification and volume, and R. Chelf, who worked the recording machine itself. Most of the field sessions apparently required two technicians and an overseer; Ralph Peer worked with a team of three, Frank Walker with four.

The city Voynow and his Brunswick crew moved into was a bustling centre for old time music in the late '20s. The factories around and in Knoxville attracted many people from the nearby hills and provided steady employment for many amateur musicians. Radio stations WNOX and WROL programmed a good deal of live music, and many of the local bands that recorded were part of the regular WNOX broadcasting crews. WNOX was owned by the Sterchi Brothers, famous Tennessee furniture dealers who had earlier shown their commitment to the cause of old time music by sponsoring Uncle Dave Macon's first recording session, as well as later ones. (Sterchi Brothers were also jobbers for the records in the East Tennessee area.)

Down at Market Hall giant fiddling conventions were staged twice a year, in April and then again in the fall. Cherokee Indians from the nearby Smoky Mountains would come to fiddle, as would Al Hopkins and his Hill Billies with wild, fiddling Charlie Bowman from Washington County, Tennessee. (As one witness recalled, it was "the fastest moving act that had ever been seen in Knoxville.") Hugh Cross would ride down from Oliver Springs, and Jimmy McCarroll and the Roane County Ramblers would wander in; Push Pushinska and his John Jazz Band fit into the scene somehow, often sharing the stage with the more traditional groups.

The big conventions were staged by Frank "Squire" Murphy, the grandpappy of old time music in Knoxville in the '20s, who has been called "one of the originators of the old time fiddlers organisation idea." Squire Murphy was an accomplished old time fiddler himself (once when the circus came through in 1929 he played an old circus tune he had picked up in 1868 and won a free pass to the show), and had a 30-piece orchestra that played for many of Knoxville's special occasions and, of course, for Squire's own conventions. It was probably a pretty straight band, but it included, like Paul Whiteman's aggregation, many accomplished soloists and small-group performers. The band was on the road a good deal of the time; it was scheduled to make records at the 1929 session, but did not, or at least none were released. But Squire was perhaps best known as an entrepreneur. He had a regular office in the Empire building where he held forth and furthered the cause of good music; often the people who worked in the nearby factories would drop by and play a few tunes with Squire when they got off work. He was very popular, and all the veteran Knoxville musicians speak well of him even today.

The Knoxville area was also known for a number of exceptional old time singers as well as instrumentalists. Hugh Cross was one of the first great country singers



for Columbia in the '20s; George Reneau, "The Blind Musician of the Smoky Mountains," who sang and harped and hooted his way through a long series of Vocalions, wandered around the town singing at fairs and outings; Charlie Oaks continued to sing his classics about William Jennings Bryan and talk about his best-selling Vocalion releases on Knoxville street-corners. The famous team of McFarland and Gardner (Mac and Bob) located in Knoxville, playing on WNOX 1925-31 before moving on to the National Barn Dance; they recorded prolifically for Brunswick, and McFarland teamed with Reneau for several records under the name Collins Brothers.

Taking all of this in, when he wasn't playing baseball, was young Roy Acuff, the man who was to have a lot to say about the direction post-Depression country music would take. (See below.) The extent to which Acuff was listening can be demonstrated by comparing his early vocal style with that of Charlie Oaks, or contrasting his version of "Wabash Cannon Ball" with Hugh Cross's Columbia and Vocalion versions of 1928 and 1929.

Knoxville was also important in even more traditional types of country singing. George Pullen Jackson, famous for his pioneering studies in white spirituals, admitted in 1929 that "his best clues kept leading him to Knoxville." "The Knoxville Harmony," published in 1938 and one of the first books published in the South using four-shaped notes, was, in fact, being researched by Jackson in Knoxville only days after the 1929 sessions ended. Jackson had also written a series of articles on Southern musicians for the Knoxville papers, and continued to interview leaders of old harp singing during his 1929 trip. Jackson's local contact in Knoxville was Mary Rothrock, a Lawson-McGhee librarian.

Somehow it all worked together: the genuine folk musicians, the Sacred Harp singers, the newer commercial country artists, the jazz bands, the Push Pushinskas, Squire Murphy's big band - they all provided a unique and interesting *Zeitgeist* for Voynow and his boys to explore and document.▷

ROY ACUFF Recalls His Early Days in Knoxville

"I graduated /from Central High of Knoxville/ in 1924 . . . and I played baseball around Knoxville and tried out for the Knoxville Smokies. I did not make it . . . I had a sunstroke, which knocked me out of a baseball career . . . and it took me three years then to recuperate, and I couldn't stand any sunshine at all. I would sit on the porch at Arlington - that was a little suburb right between Fountain City and Knoxville - and I would play my fiddle in the afternoons, and sit on the porch. My father would bring home recordings of some of the old fiddlers - I wish I could think of their names right now, I can later maybe, but right off they don't come to me, because they were real old back then, there were not too many of them - Fiddlin' John Carson was one of them, and Gid Tanner and the Skillet-Lickers, and he would bring me those records home, and I would listen to them and I would learn them. But it's hard to find out what key they were playing in, because you had the wind-up Victrola, and the faster it played the higher it was pitched, and I could never know whether I was in standard or what they were doing."

Roy soon joined Dr Hauer's medicine show and began to act out skits and appear with his fiddle on stage. "Well, in high school I'd been in every play they had . . . so I'd had a certain amount of stage training, so I went on the med show with Dr Hauer, and I can truthfully say I thoroughly enjoyed it. There was three of us that had to do all the entertainment and got to play every type of character! I got to play the black-



face part back then, and got to play the little girl's part . . . and I'd play the Toby part . . . plus play music - yeah, I'd play the fiddle and sing. And I'd sing real loud on the med show, sing where they could hear me a long ways. . . .

"And with my fiddle and my voice and the show business and what I knew about it, and what I learned off the med show, and after that season I went to WROL in Knoxville, and I tried out with a group of boys and we did right well. . . . They were just a group of boys. No name - we were not known as any name at all. . . . We was getting nothing out of this at all - it was all in fun. . . . We got on a noonday show, and then WNOX started what they called the Noonday Merry-Go-Round - I was there at the

time when it started and then came several of the groups, and we made up the noonday show. But I left the noonday show . . . and I moved back to WROL and I stayed there approximately five years, and when we stayed there, I didn't start the name of the Crazy Tennesseans that I first recorded under, it was started by a boy by the name of Alan Stout. Alan later went to Cincinnati and was later on the show up there for years, as an announcer. But we were in the studio tuning up one day, fixing to go on the noonday show . . . and Alan, when they switched the sound into us, Alan just stepped up to the microphone, he said, 'You're listening to a group of Crazy Tennesseans,' and we carried the name from that."□

The above remarks were edited by Charles Wolfe from an interview done with Acuff by Doug Green for the Oral History Program at the Country Music Foundation Library at Nashville, and are printed with their permission.

Photograph from Acuff folio of 1943.

This article should be considered only a sketchy outline of the Knoxville sessions; it is only a brief survey of the musical climate and musicians in a diverse and complex small city of the late '20s; to do full justice to Knoxville's role in country music development would take a volume in itself. Besides that, several other factors complicate research in the area. Foremost is the fact that many of the records themselves, most of which were issued in the Vocalion 5300s and 5400s, are among some of the rarest of old time discs; it is hard to find the records to listen to, and some of them (such as Vo 5378) may exist in unique copies. The records were made just at the start of the Depression, before the extent of the financial calamity had manifested itself throughout the whole economy, and by the time they were ready for sale and distribution, few had the money to buy them. (There was as much as a five- to six-month lag between recording and full distribution of some of these sides; for instance, Vo 5402 by "Ballard Cross" was recorded on August 31, 1929, but did not appear in the catalogue supplement until March 15, 1930.)

To further complicate issues, some of the obscure groups that recorded were not from the Knoxville area, and thus were unknown to most of the informants around Knoxville; some groups apparently came down from Kentucky, and one informant (Mack Sievers) said that he thought "a bunch of them came down from Cincinnati." Even round Cincinnati, though, some groups are unknown. Finally, there is the disturbing fact that some groups who were known to record did not see any of their records released; until the old Brunswick files become available to scholars, we can only guess at the scope of this unreleased activity.

Like Ralph Peer in Bristol, the Brunswick recording crew seems not to have specifically advertised its presence in Knoxville, but rather depended on the local papers to run stories about their activities. At least no advertisements appeared in the Knoxville papers immediately before the session, though Don Nelson reports that a member of Ridgel's Fountain Citizens recalls an advertisement coming out in the papers in the spring of 1928. It wouldn't be unusual for the company to have advertised in the spring of 1929, but 1928 seems stretching things a little far. We do have evidence that F.M. Gadsby was touring the South for Brunswick on a talent hunt in the spring of 1929; we know he was in Tennessee in April 1929, and he might well have advertised for auditions. However, some of Gadsby's discoveries were sent to New York to record, and not told to wait for a field unit. Whatever the case, my research in the spring 1929 issues of the Knoxville papers has failed to yield any advertisement. The first account of the session to appear in the news columns appeared in the August 27 issue of the Knoxville Journal:

LOCAL ARTISTS MAKE RECORDS

First Phonograph Recording Is Started Here

Phonograph records are to be made in Knoxville for the first time, and by local talent. / Recording of a number of Vocalion records will start today at Sterchi Brothers broadcasting studio in the St. James Hotel and will continue all week. The records will be made by the Brunswick-Balke-Collender company. / The records made by Knoxville and East Tennessee artists will be distributed nationally, and those artists proving to be the most popular will probably be put under contract by a phonograph recording firm. / Sterchi Brothers is a jobber for the Vocalion records. / R.F. Lyons, of Chicago, has come to Knoxville to have charge of the making of the records by the following well known artists. University of Tennessee Trio, Maynard Baird and His Southern Serenaders, Tennessee Ramblers, Euclid Quartet, Will Bennett, negro, of Loudon; Hugh Ballard Cross, Oliver Springs; Haskell Wolfenbarger, Cal Davenport and His Gang,

Mountain Melodies Are Preserved On Machine

Tunes Recorded at Sterchi Brothers Station; Tennessee Ramblers First to Face Machine; Use Sound-Proof Room

Southern mountain tunes band ed down from fiddler to fiddler since the days of the early settlers were the first sounds to be recorded yesterday on the records being made by Sterchi Brothers at their St. James hotel broadcasting station of WNOX.

The Tennessee Ramblers, old time orchestra, faced the micro-

phone first. Someone walked into the sound proof room while they were performing and the creak of the door ruined the record. It was taken over.

Records of people's voices, children's prattle, speeches, anything will be made, Richard Voynow of Chicago, who is in charge of the record, announced. But thus far only musicians have made the recordings.

Maynard Baird's orchestra were to record today. The U-T trio, Misses Frances Elmore, Marie Parrette and Mrs. Mildred Martin Patterson will make records tomorrow. The Southern Moonlight Entertainers came to town from Coal Creek to record some of their old time music.

To make the records the musicians go into the soundless broadcasting room and face the microphone. Voynow sits just outside the room looks thru a glass window and directs them by means of lights.

The music is carried outside the room to the recording instrument where it is picked up on a soft wax record. It is also broadcast thru a speaker by the director's aid so that he may know just what is being recorded.

At the signal of a red light the musicians get ready. The yellow light means all quiet and the green flash means begin.

In the Chicago laboratory the Brunswick-Balke-Collender people are using the recording machine to make records of their own conversations and speeches. Voynow said.

One man had a speech to his children made. "After I am gone," he said, "I want you to have these words from me," and he asked his children to live peaceably together and gave them some fatherly advice.

Mothers have had records made of their children's baby talk.

People who stutter and lisp are using the records to see if they show any improvement from week to week.

"One of the greatest uses we have found for the records is for speeches," Voynow tells. "Many of the big executives have sales talks taken and ship the records to their organizations."

"We have even made these sales talks in foreign languages to be shipped abroad."

Ridgel's Fountain Citizens, Wise String Orchestra, Southern Moonlight Entertainers, Frank Murphy, Harry Van Gilder, Ruth Pippin, Thelma Davenport, Senior Chapel Quartet (negro), and others.

It is interesting that much of the talent was already lined up when this story was written, and by the time the session started on August 27; this means either that the Brunswick field scouts had already lined up talent, or that there had been some earlier advertising. Also curious is the inclusion, in the list of performers scheduled to record, of the names of several artists whose records were never released (see notes to session lists).

The next day, Wednesday, the Knoxville News-Sentinel, the evening paper, reported in detail an account of the first day's recording session. (The article, "Mountain Melodies Are Preserved On Machine," is reproduced on the facing page.) When I read this clipping to Mack Sievers of the Tennessee Ramblers, he remembered well the incident of someone coming in the door. "That person was Luther Luallen, one of the members of the Southern Moonlight Entertainers. They were scheduled to record right after us, and he came in late that morning and shut the door too hard and ruined the record. We all had a big laugh out of it, but we had to do the record over."

The first Brunswick Knoxville session ended that same week, on Saturday, August 31, 1929. All the numbers from this session that were released were on the Vocalion label. Though 23 of the 67 sides recorded were not released (possibly because some of them were by artists in the popular, rather than hillbilly or blues, tradition), the session on the whole must have been considered successful by the Brunswick brass. The next spring they scheduled a mammoth session in Knoxville, and concentrated on hillbilly recordings.

The second session began on March 29 and ran through April 7, 1930. Here again, no formal advertising to attract artists has been discovered. In fact, it was not until a week after the session ended that the Knoxville News-Sentinel covered the session, but they covered it in wonderful detail. In the Sunday magazine section of the paper appeared a full page full of photos and stories about the session and the artists, under the collective title "Perpetuating Our 'Hill-Billy' Harmonies." (Reproduced on pp. 24-25.) The articles included an interview with Voynow, an explanation of how records were made, and shorter stories about Uncle Dave Macon and the Tennessee Ramblers. Aside from the photographs, the stories are important in several aspects. The details on recording methods make one of the few cogent statements we have about the nature and mechanics of field recordings, and it seems to have been a good deal more complicated than has been hitherto thought. The interview with Uncle Dave is one of his earliest, and has been hitherto unknown. (It does not appear in the bibliography of the JEMP's Special Series booklet on Uncle Dave.) It contains about the only reflection of the deepening Depression in the whole coverage of this session, and Uncle Dave's statement that "there were always more people saved by the music, tho, than by the preachin'" strikes home as one of his more sincere pronouncements.

Since many of the bands and musicians recorded at both 1929 and 1930 sessions, the simplest way to discuss them seems to be through an informal directory. What follows is a tentative compilation of what information we have been able to gather about the various old time musicians who participated in these sessions. (To p. 26.)



- "(You Made Me Love You) Why Did You?"
"You Belong to Me, I Belong to You"
192718. FOX TROT—O'Y LOMBARDO AND HIS ROYAL CANADIANS.
- "Tip-Toe Thru' the Tulips With Me"
"Wishing and Waiting For Love" (from "Broadway Babies")
193419. FOX TROT—FRED RICH AND HIS ORCH.
- "Lovable and Sweet"
"Red Hair and Freckles"
192721. FOX TROT—THE CHARLESTON CHASERS.
- "Sleepy Valley"
"Recollections"
192719. WALTZ—THE CALAVERS WALTZ ARTISTS.
- "I Love You"
"Lewisada Blues"
191619. FOX TROT—TED LEWIS AND HIS BAND.
- "Little Pal"
"I'm In Seventh Heaven"
192723. FOX TROT—PAUL WHITEMAN AND HIS ORCH.
- "Am I Blue?"
"Birmingham Bertha"
192719. VOCALS—ETHEL WATERS.
- "Foolishments"
"Esau Buck"
192819. COMEDY SKETCHES—MORAN AND MACK. "THE TWO BLACK TROUSERS."
- "Beautiful"
"Smiling Irish Eyes" (from "Smiling Irish Eyes")
192721. VOCALS—Pete Woolery.
- "Where the Sweet Forget-Me-Nots Remember"
"It Don't Mean a Thing Without You"
192721. VOCAL DUETS—FORD AND GLENN.
- "True Blue"
"Two Little Rooms"
191619. VOCALS—ART GILHAM THE WHISPERING PIANIST.
- "If You Believe In Me"
"Sing a Little Love Song"
191619. VOCALS—MAURICE GUNSKY.
- "Henry's Ford's Model A"
"Married Life Blues"
192721. VOCALS—OSCAR FORIA.
- "Green River March"
"McCartoll's Breakdown"
192721. INSTRUMENTAL—ROANE COUNTY RAMBLERS.
- "I'll Climb the Blue Ridge Mountains Back to You"
"Wabash Cannon Ball"
191619. VOCALS—HUGH CROSBY.

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"East Tennessee's Largest Exclusive
Furniture House."

Main Store—418-420 Gay St.
COMMUNITY STORE Western and Garrick. COMMUNITY STORE Burlington.

Over page: the Knoxville News-Sentinel (Sunday, April 13, 1930; section C, p. 1) reports the Brunswick session of that year. (Traced by the author; reproduction supplied by the Tennessee State Library & Archives. Every effort has been made to improve the quality of reproduction, but only so much can be done with microfilm. We apologise to readers for any illegibility. Ed.)

Perpetuating Our 'Hill-Billy' Harmonies

Process Of Recording Described

By ROBERT BROWN

RECORDS were made and broken—in Knoxville last week.

No artful battles were fought, no pugilistic champions were born, no race track openings to the front page, no airplanes reached new heights or made new distance records. The records made here were war, and in a few weeks will be in Knoxville homes.

There was bustling activity at the St. James Hotel, an old-time fiddlers, banjo picker, guitar players, and songsters treated up the steps, in the WNOX broadcasting studio. The Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co. was there catching the voices and instruments of this part of the South's distinctive musical product—the mountain song.

Maynard Baird had his orchestra recorded two dance numbers, an orchestra from Nashville recorded one, there was some negro music, and a Kentucky feud was acted and the dialing spoken, taking up four records. All the rest—over a hundred—were of the type known to the trade as mountain songs or old-time tunes, and to the recording companies as "hill billy music."

Cumbersome equipment—\$28,000 worth of it weighing 1500 pounds and requiring 11 special trucks and large boxes for its shipment—was brought from Muskegon, Mich., the Brunswick record factory, for the work, and set up in the St. James Hotel studio of WNOX, by arrangement with the owners, Sterchi Brothers, who are distributors for the records.

Let us see together how the recording is done.

The artist sings or plays before a microphone in the treated studio. The sound, carried by electrical impulses to the microphone, travels down the cable to another room, where amplifiers, similar in principle to radio amplifiers, increase it to the required power.

They then go to the recorder. The machine has a turntable, like a phonograph, on which the wax is spun. An electric needle runs on the wax, and as it turns, cuts into the groove that will carry the sound.

A tiny room, adjoining the studio, is connected to it by a sound-proof glass window. In this room the musical director of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co. hears the recording in progress, and listens by means of a loud-speaker for any musical error. If he hears one, he immediately stops the wax, and it is played over again, while the faulty recording is discarded.

1—R. Chaff, who starts and stops the recording machine, working crossword puzzles between times. He is showing us the "wax" after the music has been "cut" into it.

2—"Playing" the fiddler before the microphone, Bradshaw, left, is playing the artist in the best position. Brown sits at the right, while Vaynaw looks on behind the sound-proof window between the curtains. Iowa Stokes is the fiddler.



3—The recording machine. The stylus is directly under the lamp base, the suction pipe to its right. At the extreme right is the microscope used for gauging the "cut" of the wax.

4—Maynard Vaynaw, musical director of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co.

5—The faulty recording is discarded. H. C. Bradshaw sits before the amplifier panel, listening with head phones. It is his job to hear the wax, and if he hears one, he immediately stops the wax, and it is played over again, while the faulty recording is discarded.



The wax is as unsatisfactory as too little, when the finished records are played on the ordinary phonograph in the home. Often two or three recordings are necessary to get the perfect record that is wanted.

R. Chaff operates the recorder. Taking the wax, and wax from the turntable, he places it into the turntable, and the wax is as unsatisfactory as too little, when the finished records are played on the ordinary phonograph in the home.

The wax is broken away after the copper has been deposited to the necessary thickness. The copper is called the "mother," and it is this "mother" that is kept and guarded carefully in the room.

This "mother" plate is really a matrix of new life of the record. It is an electroplating bath, and a layer of copper deposited on them.

Improvements have been made in the finished record. The wax is broken away after the copper has been deposited to the necessary thickness. The copper is called the "mother," and it is this "mother" that is kept and guarded carefully in the room.

Making Records Similar To Photography Since Negative Is Made

needle testing in the process, and that the needle may come from ground to a fit, the process to make a record is made in a few seconds, and the record is made in a few seconds.

After the record is made, the record is made in a few seconds, and the record is made in a few seconds. The record is made in a few seconds, and the record is made in a few seconds. The record is made in a few seconds, and the record is made in a few seconds.

Liquor Ratio Is Applied To Dress

So long as the modern standard has one-half of one per cent of the lower half of the anatomy duly covered with clothing of some denomination, she is to be regarded as being sufficiently well and properly dressed to escape the denunciation of our laws, directed at such state of undress as would tend to corrupt the morals of youth.

Such is the opinion of Attorney General Fred H. Davis of Florida, in deciding whether or not the display of a lower portion of the anatomy is an offense under state laws. The opinion is reported in The Doctor, a legal magazine.

Gen. Davis' opinion is that moral standards change. For instance, Isaiah, the prophet, quoted by the Rev. Mr. Johnson, is cited as saying that the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with stretch-forth necks and swollen eyes, walking and plinking as they go, and making a hissing with their feet.

If some arbitrary rule must be fixed, it might as well be the same as that used to determine local alcoholic content—namely, the local content of the record.

Uncle Dave Laments State

Fiddling A Family Affair

into electrical impulse to the microphone travels from the studio to another room, where amplifiers similar in principle to radio amplifiers, increase them to the required power.

They then go to the recorder. This machine has a turntable, like a phonograph, on which the wax disk turns. An electric needle rests on the soft wax, and as it turns, this sets in the grooves that will reproduce the sounds.

A tiny room adjoins the studio proper, connected to it by a sound-proof glass window. In this room sits Richard Voznow, musical director of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co.

His window looks out on the studio. He watches the window, and listens by means of a loud-speaker for any musical notes. If he hears one, he immediately stops the piece, and it is played over again, while

the wax recording is discarded.

R. C. Bradshaw sits before the amplifier panel, listening with headphones. It is his job to see that the right amount of volume goes into the record.

Too much is as unsatisfactory as too little, when the finished records are played on the ordinary phonograph to the home.

Often two or three recordings are necessary to get the perfect record that is needed.

As the wax is broken away deposited in the necessary thickness, the copper is called the "mother," and it is this "mother" that is kept and guarded carefully in our files.

These "mothers" are really a matrix or negative of the record. The wax disk contains grooves like those of the finished record. The electroplated metal, however, fills up these grooves so that it has ridges instead of grooves and is the reverse of the original impression.

The "stamper," explained later, is just a duplicate of this negative record so that when it stamps the finished record its ridges produce grooves corresponding to the original record.

"A way has been found for treating this copper 'mother' so that metal may be electroplated on it for two or three times. The second metal is an exact duplicate of the original wax. Three or four of them are usually made.

Uncle Dave Laments State Of Morals And Music



"Fiddlin' Sid" Harkreader, left; "Uncle Dave" Macon, center; and Uncle Dave's son, Doris Macon, below, in action while in the city making records.

W. J. Brown, the little man in the picture with the fiddler, looks on his face, sits near the artist while the recording is going on, giving suggestions and making changes. It is he who finds the artists and gets them in for a try-out.



There, I remember seeing barrels and barrels of 'banded' apple brandy just lying about. Anybody could get it for

10c. I remember seeing barrels and barrels of 'banded' apple brandy just lying about. Anybody could get it for

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Fiddling A Family Affair With The Ramblers

William Sievers, at right; Willie Sievers Wiggins, daughter, center; and, below, Mack Sievers, his son. This trio from Clinton harmonized some of the "Hill-Billy" songs for phonograph recording in Knoxville last week. Here they are at their job as The News-Sentinel photographer found them.



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TENNESSEE RAMBLERS

The band recorded six released numbers in 1929, and also recorded in the 1930 session, though no sides were released. Earlier had recorded for Brunswick in Ashland, Ky. in 1928. Not the group that later recorded for Bluebird. Personnel: William (Fiddlin' Bill) Sievers (fiddle), James "Mack" Sievers (banjo), Willie Sievers (guitar) and Walt McKinney (Hawaiian guitar). (A full-length article on the Ramblers will appear soon in OTM.)

SOUTHERN MOONLIGHT ENTERTAINERS

Recorded six songs in 1929 and two in 1930. The group was composed of the Rainey Family and Luther Luallen: George Rainey, the father, was the leader and played fiddle; Albert Rainey played guitar and sang the vocals; Willie Rainey played banjo; and Marvin ("Dude") played guitar and mandolin. Luther Luallen usually played the second fiddle parts. Albert Rainey told me that the group joined forces with Warren Caplinger and Andy Patterson to record "12 records" as the Cumberland Mountain Entertainers, for Brunswick. (Ashland, Ky., 1928 - presumably without Luallen.)



The band also possibly recorded for Columbia as the Rainey Old Time Band (e.g. "Engineer Frank Hawk") and the Gatwood Square Dance Band, but I have been unable to confirm this. "Dude", considered one of the most talented of the group, was killed in a car crash in 1950 on his way to a radio tryout. Three of the Rainey sons still live in the old Coal Creek area (now Lake City) north of Knoxville, though Albert is very ill and hospitalized at this writing. When George Rainey's house burned several years ago, all of the group's documents and photographs and records were lost. The band stayed together for a few years after the Knoxville Brunswick sessions, eventually playing with "Kentucky Slim" before disbanding. (For "Kentucky Slim" see the notes on Cal Davenport.)

RIDGEL'S FOUNTAIN CITIANS

One of the most exciting bands to record; it did four numbers in 1929, four in 1930, all very influential stringband renditions. Personnel: Leroy Ridgel (fiddle), Charles Ancil Ridgel (mandolin or guitar, vocal), Carthal Ridgel (guitar or mandolin), Millard Whitehead (12-string guitar, vocal). The band has been discussed by Malcolm Blackard in several old issues of BLUE YODELER and more recently by Donald Lee Nelson in JEMFQ 29. (Nelson's date for the first session is wrong; see session lists.)

1929

The session began on Tuesday, August 27. The day-to-day recording schedule is uncertain, but it is known that K-123/4 were recorded on Wednesday the 28th, and K-162/3 on Saturday the 31st.

K-100	TENNESSEE RAMBLERS	Garbage Can Blues	5378
K-101		Tennessee Traveler	5378
K-102		Ramblers March	5362
K-103		In My Dear Old Sunny South	5398
K-104	?		
K-105	TENNESSEE RAMBLERS	Hawaiian Medley	5394
K-106		Give The Fiddlers A Dram	5362
K-107	SOUTHERN MOONLIGHT ENTERTAINERS	My Carolina Girl	5388
K-108		Are You Happy Or Lonesome	5372
K-109	?		
K-110	?		
K-111	SOUTHERN MOONLIGHT ENTERTAINERS	My Blue Ridge Mountain Queen	5372
K-112		Dream Waltz	5388
K-113		Sister Liz	5407
K-114		Buckin' Mule	5407
K-115	RIDGEL'S FOUNTAIN CITIANS	Hallelujah To The Lamb	5363
K-116		Be Ready	5363
K-117		Free Little Bird	5389
K-118		Little Bonnie	5389
K-119	?		
K-120	?		
K-121	WISE STRING ORCHESTRA	Yellow Dog Blues	5360
K-122		How Dry I Am	5360
K-123	MAYNARD BAIRD & HIS SOUTHERN SERENADERS	I Can't Keep From Loving That Gal	rej
K-124		I'm Sorry I Said Goodbye	rej
K-125	?		
K-126	?		
K-127	WILL BENNETT	Railroad Bill	1464
K-128		Real Estate Blues	1464
K-129	HASKELL WOLFENBARGER	My Little Girl	5390
K-130		Sailing Out On The Ocean	5390
K-131	LEOLA MANNING	He Cares For Me	1446
K-132		He Fans Me	1446
K-133	?		
K-134	?		
K-135	?		
K-136	?		
K-137	?		
K-138	?		
K-139	?		
K-140	?		
K-141	?		
K-142	BALLARD CROSS	Old Black Crow In The Hickory Nut Tree	5359
K-143		My Poodle Dog	5359
K-144	?		
K-145	?		
K-146	BALLARD CROSS	The Wabash Cannon Ball	5377
K-147		Lorraine	5377
K-148	?		
K-149	?		

(continued opposite)

K-150	CAL DAVENPORT & HIS GANG	Double Eagle March	5394
K-151		Broken Hearted Lover	5371
K-152		Little Rosewood Casket	5371
K-153		Blue Ridge Mountain Blues	5398
K-154	BALLARD CROSS	Down Where The Swanee River Flows	5402
K-155		Won't You Waltz Home Sweet Home With Me	5402
K-156	SENIOR CHAPEL QUARTETTE		
K-157		In My Saviour's Care	1475
K-158	?	The Great Judgment	1475
K-159	?		
K-160	SENIOR CHAPEL QUARTETTE		
K-161		Lonesome Road	1437
K-162	MAYNARD BAIRD & HIS SOUTHERN SERENADERS	Way Down Home	1437
K-163		Sorry	15834
K-164	?	Just For You	15834
K-165	CAL WEST	Cal West's Yodel Blues - Part 1	5361
K-166		Cal West's Yodel Blues - Part 2	5361

NOTE:- about 23 sides from this session were not issued and information is thus not available on them. Some unreleased sides were probably by artists listed above. However, the Knoxville Journal mentioned the following artists as scheduled to record at this session, and none of their names shows up in the released items that we have: Euclid Quartet, Frank Murphy (probably Squire Murphy and/or his orchestra), Harry Van Gilder, U-T Trio, Ruth Pippin and Thelma Davenport (a relative of Cal Davenport). Some of the missing numbers are probably by them, and are probably popular music as opposed to hillbilly, jazz or blues.

NEW RECORDS

Here Each Week—Come In—Phone or Write

308	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Sourwood Mountain" "Sally Goodie" 	Knoxville Southern.
211	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Just Plain Talk" "You're Going to Leave the Old Home" "Jim" 	McFarland and Gardner
4283	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Because I Know You're Mine" "When I'm Walkin' With My Sweetie" 	Bessie Evans
4291	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Kansas City Kitty" "My Kinde Love" 	Bessie Evans
7064	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Boo! D Boy" "She Is Hot" 	Thomas Dorsey
7065	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Gee-Wha Stomp"—Fox Trot "Let's Get Together" 	James Smith and His Rhythm Aces
40058	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Foggy Mountain Top" "My Ol' Blue Mountain Home" 	Carter Family
40059	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Save My Mother's Picture From the Sale" "Up In Dixie" 	Dr. Smith's Champagne Fiddlers
40060	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Angeline, The Baker" "Old Rhyme and Leggins" 	Wade Mark Davenport
21822	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Good Little Bad Little You" "Lover Come Back to Me" 	Chick Carter

Knoxville Outfitting Co.

108-210 GAY ST.



Ridgel's Fountain Citizens: at back, Leroy Ridgel; seated, Charles Ridgel, Millard Whitehead, Carthel Ridgel.

WISE STRING ORCHESTRA

Had two released numbers in the 1929 session, "Yellow Dog Blues" and "How Dry I Am," both gutsy, hard-driving numbers. This band was yet another family group, being composed of George Wise (guitar) and his two sons, Newman (fiddle) and C.J. (banjo, guitar). The boys worked at the factories in Knoxville and played music on the side. The Wise trio were also members of Squire Murphy's orchestra that frequently played at the Market Hall. The Wise band often placed high in the stringband category at the Knoxville fiddling conventions, and their name often appears in news accounts of the contests. As far as I can determine, these Wise musicians were not the same Wises that recorded with Clarence Greene in Johnson City (see JEMFQ 24).

WILL BENNETT

A remarkable blues singer from Loudon, Tenn., outside Knoxville. Apparently the two sides he recorded in 1929 are his sole recorded output. ("Railroad Bill" has been reissued on Roots RL-318, 'The East Coast States Vol. 1' and "Real Estate Blues" on Roots RL-334, 'Country Blues Obscurities Vol. 1.' A very brief check in Loudon in October 1973 failed to uncover the whereabouts of Bennett or relatives. Ed.)

HASKELL WOLFENBARGER

Singer with guitar, recorded two numbers in 1929. Local informants recall a Jesse Wolfenbarger who played guitar and sang and feel this may be the same person.

Recorded six numbers for the 1929 session; more commonly known as Hugh Cross, a very popular singer for Columbia in the late '20s. Cross made records with Riley Puckett and the Skillet-Lickers in addition to those under his own name.

Cross was born in the mountains of East Tennessee in 1904 and played with a travelling show before beginning his radio career at WNOX in 1926. He first recorded for Columbia in Atlanta in 1927, and in 1929 joined the WLS Barn Dance as a member of John Lair's Cumberland Ridge Runners. In 1934 he became, with Shug Fisher, the "Radio Pals". From 1938-43 he was master of ceremonies for the Boone County Jamboree over WLW, Cincinnati. His wife Mary (who died in 1945) sang with him on some records, and Cross himself died only recently.



Cross had been discovered by Columbia in Oliver Springs, a suburb north of Knoxville, by Bob Crates, a record salesman. Cross's recording of "Wabash Cannonball" on Vocalion is very similar to the Columbia version he recorded earlier (in April 1929, on Co 15439-D - Ed.), except that the Vocalion omits his attempts to yodel. Days after the Brunswick session was concluded, the Knoxville record stores were running ads in the paper for Hugh Cross's Columbia version of "Wabash Cannonball." (See reproduction on p. 23.) This suggests Cross's regional popularity, as well as ample reason why he disguised his name as "Ballard Cross" for the Brunswick session. (Brunswick and Columbia were highly competitive for artists, and one would not record artists who had recorded for the other.)

The other numbers recorded are not unusual; "Old Black Crow" is associated with the Allen Brothers and "Poodle Dog" with Riley Puckett. But Cross's role in the transmission of "Wabash Cannonball" is important and needs further study.

CAL DAVENPORT & HIS GANG

A very popular group around Knoxville throughout the '30s. The leader was Cal Davenport, a banjo player; with him was his cousin Hubert Davenport (harmonica and guitar) and, at various times, Malcolm Davenport, Hubert's brother, on guitar, and two cousins, Henry and Bill Brown, who played mandolin and guitar respectively. Later, after the recordings, the group picked up a fiddler, Ben Hutchens. Most of the singing was done by Henry, Bill, Malcolm and Hubert - Cal himself didn't sing much.

Most of the band worked full-time at Fulton's, a factory

1930

The session - which definitely began with K-8022; 8021 was the last master used at the preceding Brunswick session in Atlanta - commenced on Saturday, March 29. As before, the daily schedule is uncertain, but the sides cut on Monday the 31st definitely included K-8048-57, and probably began with K-8037. K-8100/1 were made on Monday, April 7, and the session probably ended on that day.

K-8022	SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS	San Antonio	5422
K-8023		Back To Old Smoky Mountain	5422
K-8024		Ain't It Hell, Boys	5451
K-8025		Down In Tennessee	5451
K-8026	PERRY COUNTY MUSIC MAKERS		
		I'm Sad And Blue	5425
K-8027		Maudaline	5425
K-8028		Got A Buddy I Must See	5443
K-8029		By The Cottage Door	5443
K-8030	KENTUCKY HOLINESS SINGERS		
		I'm On My Way	5439
K-8031		I Will Not Be Removed	5439
K-8032	SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS		
		No Business Of Mine	5437
K-8033		No Business Of Mine	5437
K-8034		Bear Mountain Rag	5437
K-8035	THE APPALACHIA VAGABOND		
		Hard For To Love	5450
K-8036		Peddler And His Wife	5450
K-8037	?		
K-8038	?		
K-8039	?		
K-8040	?		
K-8041	?		
K-8042	?		
K-8043	?		
K-8044	?		
K-8045	?		
K-8046	LESTER McFARLAND & ROBERT A. GARDNER		
		Where The Sweet Magnolias Bloom	426
K-8047		My Little Georgia Rose	426
K-8048	UNCLE DAVE MACON	Little Sally Waters	rej
K-8049		Let's All Go Home	rej
K-8050	?		
K-8051	?		
K-8052	UNCLE DAVE MACON	Trade With Your Home Man	rej
K-8053	UNCLE DAVE MACON & SON		rej
		I Wish I Had My Whiskey Back	
K-8054		Going To The Mill	rej
K-8055		Possum Pie	rej
K-8056		Leave The Old Sheep Alone	rej
K-8057		I Used To Love Somebody	rej
K-8058	GIBBS BROTHERS with CLAUDE DAVIS		
		Goodbye Dixie Dear	5469
K-8059		Do You Think That You Could Love Me	5469
K-8060		You Left Me Last Night Broken Hearted	5464
K-8061		Strolling Home With Jenny	5464
K-8062		I Love My Toodlum-Doo	5447
K-8063		I Wandered Away From Home	5447
K-8064	CLAYTON & HIS MELODY MOUNTAINEERS		
		Lookout Valley Waltz	5434
K-8065		June Wedding Waltz	5434

K-8066	TENNESSEE TRIO	Knox County Stomp	1517/5472
K-8067		Vine Street Rag	1517/5472
K-8068	?		
K-8069	?		
K-8070	?		
K-8071	?		
K-8072	LESTER McFARLAND & ROBERT A. GARDNER		
		The Unmarked Grave	548
K-8073		The Mansion Of Aching Hearts	548
K-8074		Will The Roses Bloom In Heaven	461
K-8075		Asleep At The Switch	461
K-8076	?		
K-8077	?		
K-8078	RIDGEL'S FOUNTAIN CITIANS		
		The Bald Headed End Of The Broom	5455
K-8079		The Nick Nack Song	5455
K-8080		Baby Call Your Dog Off	5427
K-8081		Gittin' Upstairs	5427
K-8082	LOUIS BIRD	It's Funny What Whiskey Will Do	5428
K-8083		Nothing Goes Hard With Me	5428
K-8084	SOUTHERN MOONLIGHT ENTERTAINERS		
		Then I'll Move To Town	5440
K-8085		How To Make Love	5440
K-8086	LEOLA MANNING	The Arcade Building Moan	1492
K-8087		Satan Is Busy In Knoxville	1492
K-8088		Laying In The Graveyard	1529
K-8089		The Blues Is All Wrong	1529
K-8090	BESS PENNINGTON	If You Think I'm Not Worthy	5423
K-8091		Jack And May	5423
K-8092	?		
K-8093	UNCLE JIMMY THOMPSON	Lynchburg	5456
K-8094		Uncle Jimmy's Favorite Fiddling Pieces	5456
K-8095	?		
K-8096	ETOWAH QUARTET	Walking With My Lord	5466
K-8097		Back In The Years	5466
K-8098	?		
K-8099	?		
K-8100	MAYNARD BAIRD & ORCHESTRA		
		Postage Stomp	1516
K-8101		I Can't Stop Lovin' You	1516
K-8102	?		
K-8103	?		
K-8104	?		
K-8105	?		
K-8106	LOWE STOKES, HOMER MILLER, WALT McKINNEY, HEAVY MARTIN, ROGER WILLIAMS, BILL BROWN		
		The Great Hatfield-McCoy Feud - Part 1	422
K-8107	?		
K-8108	ALEX HOOD & HIS RAILROAD BOYS		
		L. And N. Rag	5463
K-8109		Corbin Slide	5463
K-8110	?		
K-8111	LOWE STOKES a.o. /as above/		
		The Great Hatfield-McCoy Feud - Part 2	422
K-8112		/do./ - Part 3	423
K-8113		/do./ - Part 4	423

NOTE:- some of the unreleased sides are by the Tennessee Ramblers, probably some of the block K-8037-45. At least one of the Ramblers' numbers was "Southern Train 111."



Standing: Cass Walker, "Kentucky Slim" (in blackface), Henry Brown, unknown; seated: Hubert Davenport, Bob Darnell, Cal Davenport. Knoxville, ca. 1937.

in Knoxville. Hubert worked there for over 40 years. For a time the band travelled for the JFG coffee company under the leadership of a man named "Pay Cash" Taylor, and also played and travelled as Cass Walker's Novelty Band; Cass Walker was the owner of a grocery chain in Knoxville. (The "Kentucky Slim" they worked with in this band is presumably not the same Kentucky Slim who later made records with Harry Choates for the Humming Bird label.) The band broke up as the boys began to marry and settle down. Cal died in August 1972 and Hubert died five years ago. Both played music with friends until the end.

According to Mrs Hubert Davenport, "Some of their specialties were 'Smoky Mountain Blues,' 'Lost Train,' 'Under The Double Eagle,' and 'Three O'Clock In The Morning.' Hubert himself was in his time considered one of the two best harp players, right up there with - what's his name, De Ford Bailey. In fact, I think Hubert told me they once played together on that station WQAD in Nashville - not really as a duet, but at the same time on that station. And the boys played with Uncle Dave Macon - one time when Uncle Dave and his son Dorris came through, Uncle Dave borrowed Cal's banjo and played with them."

Cal and his gang recorded four selections in 1929, all of which were released.

SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS

A regular band that played on Knoxville radio for a dentist named Hamilton; Hugh Cross occasionally sang with them. Personnel: Homer "Slim" Miller (fiddle), Ray Gully, from Indianapolis (tenor banjo), Walt McKinney (Hawaiian guitar). Billy Lamb of Chattanooga was an off-and-on member of the group, playing second fiddle. Any second-fiddle work on the records may be by him or by Lowe Stokes. Miller, McKinney and Stokes all participated in the "Hatfield-McCoy Feud" skits. Otis Elder often sang with the band, and may have been on the records. (This is possibly the Odis Elder who later recorded by himself and with Ray Whitley for ARC. Ed.) Clayton McMichen and Bert Layne of the Skillet-Lickers occasionally played with the group.

"Slim" Miller later played at the Renfro Valley Barn Dance for many years.

PERRY COUNTY MUSIC MAKERS

An unusual group that recorded with a zither. When their "I'm Sad And Blue" was reissued on 'Echoes Of The Ozarks, Vol. 3' (County 520), they were tentatively located in Perry County, Arkansas, but in fact they came from Perry County, Tennessee. Personnel: Nonnie Smith (zither, vocal), Bulow Smith (guitar, vocal), Henry Bone (harmonica, manager). Nonnie and Bulow Smith are sister and brother, and today live in Pine View, Tenn., near Linden; Nonnie is 77, Bulow 65.

Nonnie Smith wrote and copyrighted all four selections the band recorded. The instrument she played was an old German zither. Henry Bone is said to have played on the records - and Vocalion adverts for them list zither, guitar and harmonica - but no harmonica is audible. Bone was from Bakersville, Tenn.

The Smiths claim they received \$8.00 in royalties on their records, but possibly this does not include an advance payment. Sister and brother both still play. (A more detailed feature on the Perry County Music Makers will follow in OTM later.)

KENTUCKY HOLINESS SINGERS

This seems to be a traditional stringband doing gospel numbers. The style is definitely not that of Ernest Phipps, and no one seems to know much about them. Line-up: singing with mandolin, banjo, guitars.

THE APPALACHIA VAGABOND

Has been identified as Hayes Shepherd, a singer from Kentucky. He sings in a high classic style and accompanies himself on the banjo.

McFARLAND & GARDNER

Recorded some of the most commercially successful numbers at the session; they are well known, and their careers are well documented elsewhere.



UNCLE DAVE MACON

Several people remember seeing Uncle Dave at the session, and the JEMF discography lists a number of sides by "Uncle Dave Macon and Son" and a couple by "Uncle Dave Macon" alone. None were released, and there is no mention in the JEMF disco of Sid Harkreader being along, as he obviously was. To clear up the mystery, I went to the two people most directly involved and asked about the Knoxville session.

Sid Harkreader: "Yes, we had an engagement to go there, but the equipment was not working right that

day. We weren't the first to record - there were others in there before us that day, none that I knew, they had some other people that I never had heard of - but we made just a few tests - it wasn't many. We recorded for about an hour, it seems, then they said the audio was bad on them, and they cancelled the whole thing. We went right on home afterwards. Uncle Dave was kind of disgusted about the whole thing; we were out all the travel expenses up there and didn't get a penny, and we had passed up an engagement to go there in the first place. The session was held in the St James hotel, I think. I didn't record any by myself, just with Uncle Dave. They worked with equipment and worked but they couldn't get it right."

Dorris Macon: "Yeah, I remember making the records. They were the first I made with Dad, I think. We made 'em in some hotel - in the Farragut Hotel, I think. Me and Sid and Dad; we all three played on the records most of the time, Sid playing fiddle and me guitar. I have no idea why they were never released. Back then the company would mail the masters to you if you wanted 'em, free of charge, and Dad usually wanted them, and he had a lot of master records, but I don't recall ever hearing those. I think the record company wrote us wanting us to come up there. I don't remember them making that picture; there were so many pictures in so many papers, especially when we toured up there in North Carolina and such; Dad told me that I should save all of them, that some day someone would want 'em, but I never did. Should have. We came right back after we finished making those records, though. I don't remember whether or not the three of us were regularly playing together."

The interview with Uncle Dave is reflective of Uncle Dave's philosophy; though we don't have the records from the session, this interview is some consolation.



GIBBS BROTHERS & CLAUDE DAVIS

Little information available. Davis is presumably the Columbia recording artist. (He also recorded for Brunswick again in 1930, in Atlanta; and for other companies. Ed.) Line-up: singing with mandolin, steel guitar, guitar.

CLAYTON & HIS MELODY MOUNTAINEERS

Recorded two 1930 sides. The group comprises two fiddles, guitar and banjo. On "June Wedding Waltz" the guitar is played Hawaiian-style, and it is tempting to suggest Walt McKinney as the musician; but this is only a guess.

(Photograph of Uncle Dave Macon from mid-'20s Vocalion list.)

TENNESSEE TRIO

A black group, listed in "Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1942." Known locally as "the Armstrong boys." Played standards like "Baby Face," "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby," in addition to standard blues fare. Actually played in the Vine Street area. Personnel: Howard Armstrong (fiddle), Roland Martin (banjo), Carl Martin (guitar), unknown (string bass). (This is a probable line-up, but several of the musicians played several instruments.)

In an interview, Carl Martin recalled: "The fellows beat us out of the record, though; that's what discouraged me from lots of recording because - it was Brunswick - they beat us out - a fellow called Brown. The record was supposed to be under my name but he put his name on it... /We/ recorded those numbers in the St James Hotel in Knoxville. Brunswick had their outfit there; they had come through there. They wrote us letters; if we had any talent, music and like that, they were going to put the studio up in the hotel and for us to come up there. We went up there and we made the pieces. They know when the record's right. They had wax; they make it on the wax. When they put that wax away then he said, 'You'll hear from me in a month.' He never did write back and so I said to myself, 'Well, they beat us out of the record.' I heard that record but I had to pay to hear it, on the vendor." (78 QUARTERLY 1:2 /1968/.)

The band's two sides were issued in the old time series (Vo 5472) as by the TENNESSEE TRIO and also in the "race" series (Vo 1517) as by the TENNESSEE CHOCOLATE DROPS. Carl Martin and Howard Armstrong are playing together again, and have recorded for Rounder.

BESS PENNINGTON

Recorded two numbers in 1930; might have been a woman named Press Pennington, from Pennington Gap, Va., but little information is available. Singing with guitar.

UNCLE JIMMY THOMPSON

The famous fiddler who originated the Grand Ole Opry. These were his last recordings, made shortly before his death. (They have been reissued on several budget LPs, together with his other, Columbia, sides. Ed.)

MAYNARD BAIRD & ORCHESTRA

A noted jazz band in the area, but many traditionally oriented musicians knew and respected Baird, and some even played with him. The two 1930 sides on Vo 1516 have been reissued by the IAJRC on their sixth LP, with useful notes by Dick Rachaelson.

ALEX HOOD & HIS RAILROAD BOYS

The careers of Hood and the other members of his band are discussed fully in Donald Lee Nelson's article "John V. Walker: Corbin's Finest" in JEMFQ 27. This also sheds some light on the group that recorded the "Hatfield-McCoy Feud" in 1930. John Walker, fiddler in Hood's band, often placed high in the famous LaFollette fiddling contests in LaFollette, Tenn. Personnel: John V. Walker (fiddle), Alex Hood (banjo), Clyde Whittaker & Bert Earls (guitars). "Corbin Slide" also features talking by Bill Brown.

About the remaining artists, not listed above, little is known at this time.

/Editor's Note: these include:

LEOLA MANNING - a black gospel singer with piano and guitar accompaniment; her "Arcade Building Moan" and "Satan Is Busy In Knoxville" (Vo 1492), remarkable topical/religious compositions, will be discussed in a future OTM;
the SENIOR CHAPEL QUARTETTE, an unaccompanied black gospel group;
the ETOWAH QUARTET, a piano-accompanied white gospel group, which recorded also for Columbia;
CAL WEST, a yodelling singer-guitarist;
and LOUIS BIRD, who sang with fiddle and guitar accompaniment, and may have been connected with the Kentucky Birds (Elmer, Connie a.o.), who recorded for Victor and Gennett./

Thus one of the largest old time music sessions to be held in Tennessee came to a conclusion. As the last musicians left the St James Hotel to return to their homes, few could realise the extent to which the deepening Depression would affect their lives and their music. Some of them would continue to play regularly throughout the hard times; others would soon quit music and go to work at more regular jobs. Few of the records were to sell well, and some of the musicians even today were unaware that their records had even been issued.

The fact that this session marked, in a sense, the end of an era is underscored by an item that appeared in the Knoxville papers as the session was ending. It involved Charlie Oaks, the famous singer of the start of the old time music age, who, with his blind wife, was now reduced to playing for nickels in Market Square. The paper quoted Oaks, "whose voice a few years back was heard on talking machine records all over the country," as saying:

"There is no work we can do here. Both of us can sing, so we sing and keep ourselves off straight-out charity. The most my wife and I ever make is around \$10 on Saturday. Our average collection on weekdays is less than \$5. And we are not begging. . . . Talking machine people were anxious to pay me for making records. Surely my voice is not so bad now that I'm cheating the people who give me a nickel now and then."

As Charlie Oaks was singing in the street, the Brunswick recording engineers were packing their equipment and getting ready to head back north. □

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